



Surrogate Ministers: Women, Revivalism, and Maternal Associations in Vermont

At the peak of the revival cycle, Congregational women began organizing maternal associations; in the process, they shifted their focus from indirect support of the evangelical movement to an exclusively female effort—one that effectively domesticated the work of revivalist ministers, moving it from the church to the home.

By MARILYN S. BLACKWELL

After the fourth annual meeting of the Brattleboro Maternal Association in the summer of 1838, secretary Marcia Knowlton assessed the society's progress. "Whether any soul has been converted to God through our instrumentality," she remarked, "is a question which we have no desire to decide, but we have some reason to hope that during the interesting season of revival recently enjoyed in this place, a number of the children belonging to our association have been brought into the fold of Christ." If this were the case, "even in one solitary instance," she declared, "we would say 'Not unto us, not unto us, but to *thy name*.'" Closing her remarks with prayer, Knowlton pledged members to be more faithful in the discharge of their duties as mothers and in their efforts at early conversion of their children.¹

Where did Knowlton's sense of maternal mission originate? Clearly, her motivations—and those of the association's other fifty members—were related to the evangelical impulse underlying many female benevolent organizations of the early nineteenth century. Nancy Cott, Keith Melder, Ann Boylan, and other historians have detailed the extent of these activities. Mary Ryan, who has analyzed changes in family life

during the early nineteenth century, has shown the important role women's associations played in fostering youthful conversions during the revivals that swept the "burned over district" of New York.² But Vermont historiography has given little attention to the connection between women and revivalism. Both Randolph Roth and P. Jeffrey Potash found that significant numbers of adolescents, particularly children of church members, professed their faith during the revivals of the 1830s, and they acknowledge that married women outnumbered men as church members before the great revivals erupted. But neither historian has focused on women's participation in the revival process or detected an institutional basis for women's activism.³ Marcia Knowlton's zeal sparks unanswered questions: How did women's associations contribute to revivalism in antebellum Vermont, and in turn, how did the revivals influence the development of women's evangelical activities?

Few records of women's voluntary societies have survived to enable us to construct a clear pattern of female activity in the antebellum period, which may account for the absence of women's involvement in Vermont histories. Of the evangelical churches—Congregational, Baptist, and Methodist—records exist of only a handful of Congregational women's associations. Only rarely did local church historians of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries mention early women's societies. More helpful are the lists of associations in the annual reports of the state evangelical societies, such as the Vermont Bible Society and the Vermont Domestic Missionary Society. Used in conjunction with comparative records from New Hampshire and Massachusetts, these reports reveal the development of women's religious association during the period.

Maternal societies, such as the one Marcia Knowlton joined in Brattleboro, did not emerge spontaneously; they evolved from earlier women's religious organizing and at the same time represented a turning point in that process. Female benevolent activity in Vermont, lasting over two decades before the 1830s, helped prepare for the revivals as women supported parallel male organizations. At the peak of the revival cycle, Congregational women began organizing maternal associations; in the process, they shifted their focus from indirect support of the evangelical movement to an exclusively female effort—one that effectively domesticated the work of revivalist ministers, moving it from the church to the home. This article briefly traces the development of women's religious organizing in the state, details the participation of women in Brattleboro's religious institutions as a case study of the revival period, and assesses the role of maternal societies in the evangelical movement.

WOMEN'S RELIGIOUS ORGANIZING

In the first two decades of the nineteenth century, benevolent women began their activities by donating money or goods to gospel teaching in frontier areas. As members of local "cent" societies, women gave a penny per week, which these groups forwarded yearly to state or national religious organizations, such as the Vermont Bible Society, the Vermont Missionary Society (later the Vermont Domestic Missionary Society), the American Board of Foreign Missions, the American Education Society, and the Vermont Tract Society. These men's groups supported ministers' education, missionaries, and the printing and distribution of Bibles. Sometimes labeled the "evangelical united front," these efforts usually involved an elite group of women at the local level connected to the established church.⁴ Women in Jericho, for example, believed "that Christians are under solemn obligation to do all in their power for the furtherance of the gospel." This sense of collective responsibility as Christians spurred them to create one of the earliest missionary societies in Vermont in 1806, and to contribute annually to all of the larger evangelical associations over the next two decades.⁵ In Benson, members of the female cent society believed they were part of a vast organizing effort to promote "the cause of Christ in the world" by "contributing their property together with their prayers, for the spread of the gospel in the dark regions of the earth."⁶ During this period, Congregational women organized at least sixty-nine female benevolent societies in fifty-seven towns in Vermont. Annual contributions were relatively small, from just a few dollars in the early years to as much as \$45 from societies in the larger communities, but the combined contributions of these associations represented significant support for the spread of the gospel.⁷

At first these efforts appear to have had little direct impact on women's local communities because the bulk of their contributions supported missionary work elsewhere. But during the 1820s, some women's groups began redirecting their efforts locally, which helped to establish both their moral leadership and their status in their own communities. In what has been interpreted largely as a class effort, wives of community leaders defined new standards of female behavior; by encouraging a strict Christian morality, they wielded considerable social influence as they carved out a female role beyond the household.⁸ Mary Goss, a member of Montpelier's Female Foreign Mission Society, noted her local concerns in 1821: "Vice and immorality greatly prevail," she explained, but "Praying circles have recently been instituted and a system of visiting from house to house established."⁹ The Female Bible Society of Royalton, which generously donated to the Vermont Bible Society

every year, began supplying Bibles to local families through committees in each school district. In Montpelier, the Tract Society solicited the help of local women for a similar scheme in 1830.¹⁰

This effort to “save Souls” was often synonymous with charity for the poor and enhanced women’s self-sacrificing image in the community. Indeed, evangelicals sometimes used the word “poor” interchangeably with unredeemed. The Benson Young Ladies’ Bible Society sought out the poor who were “destitute of the word of life” in order to supply them with Bibles. In 1825 the Craftsbury Female Benevolent Society voted to prepare a box of garments for Indian missions and to devote the rest of their time to helping the “needy in our own town.” Three years later, just as religious revivalism erupted in Caledonia County, they voted to use the society’s work for “support of the gospel at home.”¹¹ Alms and conversion efforts went hand in hand.

Young women also participated in spreading the gospel as they cooperated with men in organizing and teaching Sunday schools. Typically ministers and community religious leaders mobilized adolescents in Bible classes to prepare them for teaching younger children in Sunday school. In 1815 thirty-six-year-old Hannah Wells, daughter of Reverend William Wells of Brattleboro, gathered a class of young women for Bible study while her father organized a prayer meeting for young men. When Wells’s class of young women became too large for her to handle, she enlisted help from the newly formed “ladies praying circle,” which supplied additional teachers; meanwhile, a Sunday school for boys opened at the village schoolhouse. These classes, usually held in the summer months, were not formally organized as part of the village church until 1822.¹² Sunday school leaders often sought to gather all the children in town as a means to spread the gospel and to encourage good behavior and church attendance on Sunday. Religious leaders in Greensboro organized Sunday schools in the town’s school districts, and in Hardwick and Craftsbury as well, in 1817. Children in Montpelier could attend one of three Sabbath schools founded in 1816.¹³ By the time the Vermont Sunday School Union, a nondenominational organization led by Congregationalists, coalesced in 1825, membership included 48 schools with 2,053 scholars and 313 teachers in the state. Two years later, the number of scholars had quadrupled to 8,061; by 1832 Vermont leaders could boast 427 Sunday schools in a population of 280,000, or one school for every 655 residents.¹⁴

Beyond the immediate goals of teaching piety and instilling “orderly conduct,” these classes were designed to eventually effect conversions leading to church membership. Leaders from Bridport reported, “It is a means of enlarging our congregations, and is an animating exhibition to

parents and all who feel for the interest of the young.”¹⁵ The Sunday school effort in Greensboro resulted in fifty-five new members in the Congregational church and twenty at the Baptist church.¹⁶ As the young adults who taught Sunday school spread the gospel, they reinforced their own piety, and it is likely that many became full church members. These evangelicals included both young men and women, but as historian Ann Boylan suggests, the role held particular resonance for young women, who had few other avenues for “useful and significant” work. For some, Bible classes and Sunday school teaching led to missionary activities; for others it spurred participation in local benevolent organizations. In this way young women were drawn outside the home while remaining within the confines of women’s nurturing tradition just as young children were becoming the focus of the evangelical movement.¹⁷

Christian education for youth through the development of Sunday schools stemmed in part from an emerging view of children as innocent and moldable and the movement to educate citizens for the new Republic. During the first half of the nineteenth century, child rearing through affection and persuasion gradually replaced Calvinist discipline in many middle-class families, yet parents also expected to establish firm control over their children through moral training at an early age.¹⁸ Publications in Brattleboro of a *Miniature Bible* for children in 1816 and a small prayer book for Sunday schools in 1826 reflected this new child-centered approach. Small enough for a child’s pocket, the tiny volumes summarized Biblical lessons in simple form; both stressed “habits of piety in early life” and “dutiful and humble” behavior toward parents, teachers, and relations.¹⁹ In a similar vein, the Sunday School Union promoted a reward system to encourage Bible memorization. Children who learned Scripture lessons received small books and special library privileges. As one superintendent reported, this “operates as a powerful stimulus upon the scholars to learn the lessons perfectly, and to behave with propriety.”²⁰ Evangelical parents—and particularly mothers who assumed greater responsibility for educating young citizens in the new Republic—envisioned early religious training as the means to maintain parental authority and instill regular habits in children.

WOMEN’S EVANGELICAL ACTIVITIES IN BRATTLEBORO

Maternal societies, whose members focused even more directly on youthful conversion, arose not only out of this push for Christian education and the tradition of female religious benevolence, but also from the climate of religious enthusiasm and the divisions it fostered in Vermont communities. The evidence from Brattleboro’s Congregational churches shows how women participated in church expansion over two

decades beginning in 1814. That year the First Congregational Church of Brattleboro split as members from the East Village organized a new church in the growing commercial center to improve attendance and control church leadership. During the controversy, both the older church in West Brattleboro and the new Centre Church in Brattleboro Village grew dramatically; women represented approximately three-quarters of new members over the next two years and became important sources of support for both ministers.²¹ In Brattleboro Village, women not only helped organize the new church but also operated a Fund Society to support the church and initiated the Female Friendly Association for Religious and Charitable Purposes in 1816. Led by prominent and wealthy Sally Holbrook, members of this group committed themselves to gaining Christian knowledge, praying for “the revival of religion,” and cultivating “a spirit of sympathy for the afflicted.” At first married women, many of whom were the wives of local merchants and manufacturers, dominated the leadership, but increasingly they brought their adolescent daughters into the society, where they set an example of female piety for them and established a generation-bridging female elite in the community.²² Remembered as much for their display of “white caps, calashes and ribbons, and . . . stately dress” as for their “Christianizing influences,” they met every Wednesday afternoon and became, according to church historian Charles Day, a “source of spiritual power.” “Marked not only by piety but by a dignity, nobility and courtliness of manner that could not be forgotten,” this group of women constituted the “main spiritual prop” of the village ministry.²³

During the 1820s, as commercial activity and population in Brattleboro expanded, religious diversity increased, fracturing the Congregational establishment. Methodist, Universalist, and eventually Baptist groups formed in town, spurring Congregational leaders to bolster their efforts at Christian education. Both Congregational churches drifted increasingly toward Calvinist orthodoxy, requiring public professions of faith for membership. In the early 1830s, ministers of both churches enlisted outside evangelists to conduct protracted meetings in their parishes, spurring revivals similar to those in other towns in the Connecticut River Valley, first in 1831 and then in 1833 and 1834. During the “great accession,” which began September 11, 1831, at a prayer meeting in the village schoolhouse, the Centre Congregational Church gained sixty-six new members.²⁴ But controversy over the shift toward orthodoxy and the emotionalism of the revivalists splintered the Congregational community again. In the East Village, disgruntled members left the Centre Congregational Church to form a Unitarian society in 1831, and three years later disagreements with the minister over reviv-

alism caused his dismissal. In West Brattleboro, Universalists staged a “preach-in” on November 24, 1833, to demand use of the church for their meetings.²⁵

During this period of religious fervor and denominational competition, when Congregational ministers were heightening the importance of conversion, evangelical mothers in the village sought a more active role in Christian education. While male religious leaders sought to provide poor young men with education, female leaders organized a committee to encourage parents to send their children to Sunday school. In February 1834 they formed the Brattleboro Maternal Association. Half of its fifty members also belonged to the Female Friendly Society, but unlike the earlier association, the new group encouraged any mother in the community to join, which expanded the membership beyond the Brattleboro elite to the wives of artisans and farmers.²⁶ These women responded to the divisiveness in the community and to a renewed sense of mission by asserting a universal role for mothers in fostering Christian conversion. They welcomed new female church members to that responsibility. Indeed, two-thirds of the members of the maternal society joined the Centre Congregational Church between 1831 and 1838. The appeal to a unifying motherhood became a means to heal community divisions, at least among these women, and to find what they believed was a sacred calling.

MATERNAL SOCIETIES AND CHILDHOOD CONVERSION

Brattleboro’s evangelical mothers were not only inspired by local events but also by their connections to an extensive network of women pledged to childhood conversion. Like others in the Northeast, these women followed a plan for organizing maternal associations that had been outlined in *Mother’s Magazine*, a monthly periodical first published in Utica, New York, in January 1833. Hired by the Utica Maternal Association, the magazine’s editor, Abigail G. Whittelsey, promoted the spread of maternal associations and circulated literature on Christian child rearing.²⁷ The first maternal society on record had been organized in Portland, Maine, in 1816. Subsequently, Congregational women in Boston adopted the Portland constitution and rules of operation; by 1825 they had circulated 2,000 copies of the constitution to inspire other groups. It opened with the words: “Deeply impressed with the importance of bringing up our children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.” The exact same wording is found in the constitution of the maternal association of Jericho Centre, Vermont, organized in 1833. The constitution of the Brattleboro Maternal Association began: “Regarding it as a christian duty to train up our children in the nurture

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& admonition of the Lord.”²⁸ In some areas ministers’ wives took the lead in organizing these associations. In 1833, for example, the wives of Congregational ministers in Cheshire County, New Hampshire, across the Connecticut River from Brattleboro, formed a regional association and then promoted the organization of maternal societies in each town in the county by sending agents and subscriptions to *Mother’s Magazine* to facilitate the effort. By 1836 they could report the organization of thirty-eight maternal associations in two New Hampshire counties.²⁹

It is unclear whether a similar system operated among clergymen’s wives in Vermont, but maternal societies did emerge in the larger towns or where women had established a tradition of religious benevolence. Records or specific reference to thirteen societies exist; it is likely there were many more. Larger commercial towns, like Montpelier, Burlington, Middlebury, Woodstock, and Bradford comprise nearly half the list. Societies also appear in New Haven, Jericho, Benson, Craftsbury, Newbury, Wardsboro, and Royalton, where Congregational women had previously formed religious organizations or revivalism was intense.³⁰ Many began operation in 1835. That year the annual report of the Vermont Domestic Missionary Society noted that “pious mothers are beginning to feel that the great principles of the gospel may be made to control the mind and conscience . . . at a very early age.” Minutes of the Vermont Congregational Convention for 1836 noted that maternal societies were “extensively organized” in the state but not “duly appreciated”; the following year the organization reported that “associations are multiplied to aid” mothers in their efforts to raise “virtuous youth.”³¹ In 1838 Sophia A. Hewes of Chelsea began editing her own monthly, *The Mother’s Book and Young Lady’s Companion*. She planned to tap a ready-made distribution system through maternal societies in the Connecticut River Valley and offered free printed constitutions for every twenty copies sold. In 1841 she even promoted the organization of a state maternal society, but there is no evidence that it ever materialized.³²

Through this literature and preprinted constitutions, mothers became acquainted with a uniform system of operation and also connected with an ecumenical movement for Christian education. Members of maternal societies met monthly to pray for their children’s conversions and to read and discuss Christian child-rearing literature. Many groups accumulated extensive libraries of religious books and periodicals, which they circulated among themselves and other mothers in the community. The Brattleboro society read aloud from Caroline Fry’s *Scripture Principles of Education* (1833) and Lydia Sigourney’s *Letters to Mothers* (1838). Sigourney, who believed that mothers were the only “universal agent of civilization,” explained that Christian mothers labored for both

God and country. “Mothers, the blessing of this ministry is ours,” she exhorted. “The religion of a new-born babe, is the prayer of its mother.”³³ Members relied on the community of women in their local societies and the connection to this larger group of like-minded women whose writings were published in *Mother’s Magazine* to bolster their religious leadership in the household and their authority over children.

In contrast to women’s earlier evangelical efforts, these women focused inward on self-improvement and the development of Christian values at home, rather than elsewhere. Mothers who assumed the responsibility for shaping childhood character modeled piety through their own example. This burden weighed heavily on members of the Brattleboro Maternal Association. As Marcia Knowlton explained, children’s “character & condition for time & eternity is generally determined during the short period of infancy & childhood & determined too by maternal influence & example.”³⁴ Members of maternal societies committed themselves to daily prayer with their children and to preventing them from developing “pride, vanity, or worldly-mindedness.” The children, who included daughters sixteen and under and sons twelve and under, came to quarterly meetings, where the minister provided an appropriate sermon. In the benevolent tradition, members also pledged to protect and instruct children whose mothers had died.³⁵ This commitment allayed women’s fears for their children after their own deaths and indicated how exclusively these mothers had assumed the role of Christian educators, for they did not trust that surviving fathers would assume the task. Mourning a member’s death in 1841, the secretary of the Brattleboro group recorded: “She has left three young children in this world of temptation and adverse influences—with no mother’s eye to watch over them—no mother’s voice to admonish and counsel—no mother’s prayer to call down the blessing of our Heavenly Father upon them.”³⁶

Emerging at the height of the revival cycle in Vermont, maternal societies represented a product of religious enthusiasm and division rather than its cause. In Brattleboro, 125 young men and unmarried women joined the church in the 1833–34 revivals, just as the maternal society was forming. Another revival and upsurge in church membership occurred in 1838 and it is possible, as Marcia Knowlton hoped, that mothers were partly responsible for bringing an additional forty-five young people into the two churches at that time.³⁷ But it is more likely that women’s earlier evangelical activities—the support of missionaries, the training of daughters in praying circles, and the promotion of Sunday schools—were more significant in fostering Vermont revivalism. Evidence of these activities indicates that women created an active organizational culture in Vermont that facilitated the expansion of

church membership, roughly matching the pattern Mary Ryan found in western New York. But unlike Ryan's findings for Utica, where the organization of maternal societies preceded the great revivals, the development of these associations in Vermont appears to have been the result of revivalism.³⁸ They helped sustain Christian child rearing after the revival cycle had subsided and into the late 1840s. That work took place largely in the home, not at church, and could no longer be measured strictly by church membership. According to the annual report from the Maternal Association of Wardsboro in 1845, such work was "unheeded, and often unrequited" but "not *less important* than the work of men," for mothers' influence created the wealth of a nation through training of "honest and industrious youth."³⁹

Even as they focused on childhood conversion, these women's organizations functioned largely to supply mutual support for mothers, many of whom were overwhelmed with domestic burdens. It is not surprising that they had difficulty retaining members, particularly in more rural settings. During the 1840s members of the New Haven Maternal Society repeatedly bemoaned the poor attendance at meetings; fifty-two mothers and 120 children belonged to the group, but only nine or ten attended meetings. Despite their hopes for a revival in 1847, they despaired a year later. "Many who apparently were deeply anxious," the secretary explained, "have again relapsed into careless indifference."⁴⁰ The society in Brattleboro suspended meetings in 1846 and revived the organization briefly between 1861 and 1863. Not as focused on conversion, these mothers were probably more successful in bolstering their own piety and instilling the self-control and good habits required for their children to achieve middle-class status.

It is clear that the 1830s marked a turning point for this group of women and their sense of responsibility for the promotion of Christianity. The organization of maternal societies expanded the membership in benevolence, by enlisting any mother to the sacred charge, and institutionalized a shift in women's focus from distant frontiers and the support of male religious activities to their own households and a specifically female religious and family role.⁴¹ As Christians, these mothers transformed their collective responsibility into personal responsibility for their children's futures. The role promoted a commonly held ideology of Christian Republicanism and bolstered existing gender norms. At a time when interest in childhood development was on the upsurge, maternal societies clearly helped women define their importance in reproduction and carve out an exclusive role as spiritual mothers. In this way they connected the divine order to their daily lives while moving the locus of moral and religious training to the home from the church.

In the broader context of antebellum reform, however, this was a conservative movement. It domesticated the revival and missionary impulse by channeling women's activism back into the family, particularly in comparison with the activities of a smaller number of women who became involved in reform movements: temperance, moral reform, anti-slavery, and eventually women's rights. Some members of maternal societies sympathized with the cause of temperance and moral reform as these issues appeared in the pages of *Mother's Magazine*, but most were wary of challenging male behavior directly.⁴² When maternal societies reemerged after the Civil War in a more secular version to promote good mothering, they appeared even more conservative compared to other women's extensive reform efforts. Yet in the antebellum period, they helped fortify evangelical women when revivalism waned. As Sophia Hewes exclaimed in 1841, "In seasons of declension and coldness, the flame of piety is still found burning, and the spirit of prayer prevailing at the maternal meeting."⁴³

NOTES

¹ Brattleboro Maternal Association, Record Book, 18 July 1838, Centre Congregational Church, Brattleboro, Vt.

² Nancy F. Cott, *The Bonds of Womanhood: "Woman's Sphere" in New England, 1780–1835* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977), chap. 4; Keith Melder, "Ladies Bountiful: Organized Women's Benevolence in Early Nineteenth Century America," *New York History* 48 (1967), 231–254; Ann M. Boylan, "Evangelical Womanhood in the Nineteenth Century: The Role of Women in Sunday Schools," *Feminist Studies* 4 (October 1978), 62–80; Mary P. Ryan, *Cradle of the Middle Class: The Family in Oneida County, New York, 1790–1865* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), chap. 2. For maternal societies see, Richard A. Meckel, "Educating a Ministry of Mothers: Evangelical Maternal Associations, 1815–1860," *Journal of the Early Republic* 2 (Winter 1982): 403–423.

³ Randolph A. Roth, *The Democratic Dilemma: Religion, Reform, and the Social Order in the Connecticut River Valley of Vermont, 1791–1850* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 195–219; P. Jeffrey Potash, *Vermont's Burned-Over District: Patterns of Community Development and Religious Activity, 1761–1850* (Brooklyn, N.Y.: Carlson Publishing, 1991), 161–183.

⁴ For women's contributions to these societies, see for example, *First Report of the Vermont Bible Society, Communicated to the Society, at their Annual Meeting at Montpelier, October 21, 1813* (Montpelier, Vt., 1813) and subsequent reports, hereafter cited as *Annual Report Vermont Bible Society; Address to the Churches and Congregations of Vermont, by the Trustees of the Vermont Missionary Society. To Which is Prefixed the Last Report of the Trustees, and the Last Report of the Treasurer. May 1814* (1814) and subsequent reports, hereafter cited as *Annual Report Vermont (Domestic) Missionary Society*. See also Benson Young Ladies' Bible Society, Record Book, 1817–1835; Female Missionary Society, Montpelier, Vermont, Records, 1812–1816, Bethany Congregational Church Records, Microfilm, Reel F; Constitution and Record Book of the Female Cent Society, Barnet, Vermont, 1828–1835; Craftsbury Female Benevolent Society, Record Book, 1825–1828, all at Vermont Historical Society, Montpelier, Vermont (hereafter VHS). For an overview of the evangelical movement, see Daniel Walker Howe, "The Evangelical Movement and Political Culture in the North during the Second Party System," *Journal of American History* 77 (March 1991), 1216–1239. On the "evangelical united front," see Charles I. Foster, *An Errand of Mercy: The Evangelical United Front, 1790–1837* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, Press, 1960).

⁵ Articles of the Female Religious Society in Jericho, 1806, Records of the Ladies Cent Society Jericho Centre Vermont, Congregational Library, Boston, Mass. For an example of ministers' appeal to women's Christian duty, see Chester Wright, *A Sermon, Preached Before the Female Mission Society in Montpelier, 1816* (Montpelier, Vt.: E.P. Walton, 1817).

⁶ Benson Female Cent Society, Record Book, 1815, VHS.

⁷ For a comprehensive listing of benevolent societies in Vermont, see Conrad Edick Wright, *The Transformation of Charity in Post-revolutionary New England* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1992), 266–269. See also *Annual Report Vermont Bible Society, 1813–1835; Annual Report Vermont (Domestic) Missionary Society, 1814–1838.*

⁸ Ryan, *Cradle of the Middle Class*, 83–127; Lori D. Ginzberg, *Women and the Work of Benevolence: Morality, Politics, and Class in the Nineteenth-Century United States* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), 36–66.

⁹ Mary Goss to Sophia Brigham [?], 20 December 1821, Bethany Congregational Church Records, Microfilm, Reel A.

¹⁰ *Annual Report Vermont Bible Society, 1835*, 5; Montpelier Auxiliary Tract Society Record Book, October 1828–1830, VHS; Bethany Congregational Church Records, Microfilm, Reel F.

¹¹ Benson Young Ladies' Bible Society, Record Book, 1817; Craftsbury Female Benevolent Society, Record Book, 28 September 1825.

¹² *Third Annual Yearbook of the Centre Congregational Church, Brattleboro, Vermont* (Brattleboro, Vt., 1917), 98–99; Mary R. Cabot, *Annals of Brattleboro, 1681–1895*, vol. 1 (Brattleboro, Vt.: E.L. Hildreth, 1921), 343, 355.

¹³ *Sunday School Repository* 2 (June 1818), 74–75; Abby Hemenway, *Vermont Historical Gazetteer*, vol. 4 (Montpelier, Vt.: Vermont Watchman and State Journal Press, 1882), 394; Goss to Brigham, 20 December 1821, Bethany Congregational Church Records.

¹⁴ *First Annual Report of the Vermont Sabbath-School Union: Presented at Castleton, September 13, 1826* (Rutland, 1826); *Second Annual Report . . . Vermont Sabbath-School Union* (Montpelier, 1827); Anne M. Boylan, *Sunday School: the Formation of an American Institution, 1790–1880* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), 31.

¹⁵ *Second Annual Report . . . Vermont Sabbath-School Union*, 10–11; Boylan, *Sunday School*, 135–139.

¹⁶ *Sunday School Repository* 2 (June 1818), 75.

¹⁷ Boylan, “Evangelical Womanhood in the Nineteenth Century,” 62–80; quotation from p. 71. See also Sabbath School Records, First Congregational Church, Jericho Centre, 1836–1840, Vermont Congregational Conference Papers, Carton 3, Fl. 5, Special Collections, University of Vermont, Burlington, Vt.; Brookfield Sabbath School Union, Record Book, 1829–1861, VHS.

¹⁸ Boylan, *Sunday School*, 6–21. For child-rearing theory and practice, see Carl Degler, *At Odds: Women and the Family in America from the Revolution to the Present* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), 66–110; Bernard W. Wishy, *The Child and the Republic: The Dawn of Modern American Child Nurture* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1968); Jacqueline S. Reinier, “Rearing the Republican Child: Attitudes and Practices in Post-Revolutionary Philadelphia,” *William and Mary Quarterly* 39 (Jan. 1982), 150–163; Marilyn S. Blackwell, “The Republican Vision of Mary Palmer Tyler,” *Journal of the Early Republic* 12 (Spring 1992): 11–35.

¹⁹ Thomas G. Fessenden, comp., *Miniature Bible, or Abstract of Sacred History. For the Use of Children* (Brattleboro, Vt., 1816); quotation from preface, n.p.; *Prayers For the Use of Sunday Schools. By a Teacher* (Brattleboro, Vt., 1826).

²⁰ *First Annual Report . . . Vermont Sabbath-School Union, 1826*, 10.

²¹ For the religious controversy, see Lewis Grout, *A Second Discourse on the Early History of the Congregational Church and Society in West Brattleboro, Vt. Covering Two Pastorates—25 Years, or From 1794 to 1819* (New Haven, 1894), 10–13; *A Manual for the Use of the Centre Congregational Church of Brattleboro, Vt. 1859* (Brattleboro, Vt., 1859), 5–7; *Third Annual Yearbook, 66–72*; Brattleboro Congregational Church Record Book, 1799–1834, First Congregational Church, West Brattleboro, Vt. New female members between 1815 and 1817 represented 76% (n = 92) at First Church in West Brattleboro and 73% (n = 73) at the Centre Congregational Church in (East) Brattleboro Village. Membership records were taken from *Third Annual Yearbook*, 117–119; First Congregational Church Membership Record Book, 1818–1843, First Congregational Church, West Brattleboro, Vt.

²² Female Friendly Association for Religious and Charitable Purposes, Record Book, 1816–1861, Centre Congregational Church, Brattleboro, Vt.; Cabot, *Annals of Brattleboro*, 355–357; quotation from p. 355.

²³ [Charles Orrin Day], “The Old Church on the Common: An Address Delivered by Rev. C.O. Day on Sunday Evening, Sept. 2,” Miscellaneous clipping, VHS, n.d.; see also Cabot, *Annals of Brattleboro*, 352, 467.

²⁴ Day, “Old Church on the Common.” For revival activity in other towns during the period, see Roth, *Democratic Dilemma*, 187–219.

²⁵ Cabot, *Annals of Brattleboro*, 175–176, 349–352, 385–391, 448–450; quotation on p. 386; *Third Annual Yearbook, 76–85*; Brattleboro Congregational Church Records, 1832–1835; Mary Palmer Tyler Journal, 29 April 1835, Helen Tyler Brown Collection, VHS.

²⁶ Brattleboro Maternal Association, Record Book, 8 February 1834; Mary Palmer Tyler Journal, 22 and 27 May 1834. For the focus on young men, see *Third Annual Yearbook*, 81–82.

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²⁷ Brattleboro Maternal Association, Record Book, 8 February 1834; Meckel, "Educating a Ministry of Mothers," 415.

²⁸ For the Portland wording, see Park Street Maternal Association Record Book, 1816–1871, Park Street Church Records; Old South Maternal Association Record Book, 1837–1850, Old South Church Records; Records of the Maternal Association of Jericho Centre, Vermont, 1833–1835, all at Congregational Library, Boston, Mass. For Utica, see Ryan, *Cradle of the Middle Class*, 89. For the Brattleboro constitution, see Brattleboro Maternal Association Record Book.

²⁹ Meckel, "Educating a Ministry of Mothers," 406; New Hampshire Maternal Association, Cheshire County, Records, 1833–1870, New Hampshire Historical Society, Concord, N.H.

³⁰ For mention of these societies, see *Hundredth Anniversary of the Founding of the First Church, Burlington, Vt., February Twenty-Third to Twenty-Sixth 1905* (Burlington, Vt., 1905), 52; *History of the Congregational Church of Middlebury, Vt., 1790–1913* (Boston: Pilgrim Press, 1913), 99; *Hundredth Anniversary of the Founding of Bethany Congregational Church, Montpelier, Vermont, July 19 and 20, 1908* (Montpelier, Vt., 1908), 32–35; *One Hundredth Anniversary of the Organization of the Congregational Church in Craftsbury, Vermont, and Dedication of the Remodeled Church Building, Wednesday November 17th, 1897* (Craftsbury, Vt., 1897), 23. See also Constitution of Bradford Maternal Society, Adams Family Papers, Special Collections, University of Vermont; Brattleboro Maternal Association, Record Book; Maternal Association of New Haven, Vt., Record Book, 1836–1853, VHS; Maternal Association of Jericho Centre Vermont, Record Book, 1833–1835; "Extract from the Report of the Maternal Association of Wardsboro, Vt.," *Mother's Magazine* 13 (1845), 294–296; Reverend L.D. Barrows, "Address to Newbury Maternal Association," *Mother's Book and Young Lady's Companion* 3 (March 1842), 178; *Annual Report Vermont Domestic Missionary Society*, 1838, 26.

³¹ *Annual Report Vermont Domestic Missionary Society*, 1835, 21; *Extracts from the Minutes of the General Convention of Congregational and Presbyterian Ministers in Vermont, at their Session at Castleton, September, 1836* (Windsor, Vt., 1836), 10.

³² Sophia A. Hewes, ed., *The Mother's Book and Young Lady's Companion*, 1 (April 1838); (December 1841), 98.

³³ Lydia Sigourney, *Letters to Mothers* (Hartford, 1838), 12, 28, 33.

³⁴ Brattleboro Maternal Association, Record Book, 12 September 1838.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, Constitution; Maternal Association of New Haven, Vt., Record Book.

³⁶ Brattleboro Maternal Association, Record Book, 5 October 1841.

³⁷ The number of new youthful members is derived from analysis of church membership lists and grand lists for revival years. Young men are those who appear on membership lists but not on the town grand list because they were under twenty-one years of age. Young women are those without "Mrs." as a title. See Brattleboro Congregational Church Records; *Third Annual Yearbook*, 125–128, 130–132; Brattleboro Grand List, 1833–1840, Office of the Town Clerk, Brattleboro, Vt.

³⁸ Ryan, *Cradle of the Middle Class*, 83–127.

³⁹ "Extract . . . Maternal Association, of Wardsboro, Vt.," *Mother's Magazine* 13 (1845), 294–295.

⁴⁰ Maternal Association, New Haven, Vt., Record Book, January 1848.

⁴¹ Some societies did continue support of female missionaries or missionaries' wives to whom they sent literature and instructions for establishing maternal societies among Native American women. See *Mother's Magazine* 5 (October 1837), 236; 6 (October 1838), 230; and Deborah Dawson Bonde, "Missionary Ways in the Wilderness: Eliza Hart Spalding, Maternal Associations and the Nez Percé Indians," *American Presbyterians* 69 (Fall 1991), 271–282.

⁴² For discussion of moral reform and temperance, see Brattleboro Maternal Association Record Book, 20 January 1836, 20 July 1836, 25 September 1839; for disagreement about moral reform, see Cheshire County Maternal Association of Clergymen's Wives, *Minute Book*, 13 June 1838, Fl. 1, New Hampshire Maternal Association, Cheshire County, Records, 1833–1870.

⁴³ Sophia Hewes, "Maternal Associations," *The Mother's Book and Young Lady's Companion* 3 (December 1841), 98. For maternal societies after the Civil War, see Julia Grant, *Raising Baby by the Book: The Education of American Mothers* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 26–29.