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Street Children: St. Louis and the Transformation of American Reform, 1832-1904

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by

William McGovern

Committee in charge:

Professor Rachel Klein, Chair
Professor Frank Biess
Professor Mark Hanna
Professor Rebecca Plant
Professor Nicole Tonkovich

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Vita

2000 – 2005 Bachelor of Arts, History, Philosophy, and Political Science, University of Pittsburgh

2008 – 2010 Master of Arts, American History, Duquesne University

2010 – 2016 Doctor of Philosophy in History, University of California, San Diego

Publications

"Constructing Children's Charities in Oakland: Review of *A City for Children: Women, Architecture, and the Charitable Landscape of Oakland, 1850-1950*, by Marta Gutman." *The Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era* 14, no. 3 (July 2015): 470-71.

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Street Children: St. Louis and the Transformation of American Reform, 1832-1904

by

William McGovern

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Professor Rachel Klein, Chair

“Street Children” argues that St. Louis shaped the nation’s child reform movement and that the Civil War inspired reformers to seek novel solutions to child reform in the following decades. During the war, a cascade of refugees, orphans, and freed slave children descended on St. Louis, straining its existing children’s institutions. The dissertation illuminates and recovers the lives of

many of the marginalized children struggling under wartime hardship. Reformers reckoning with the crisis produced new institutions and a new consensus that the state owed care to displaced and orphaned children of Union soldiers. After the war, child reformers expanded their focus and drew from German thought and familial reform models intended to boost the state's role in child reform and fold marginalized children into real and imagined institutional families. This dissertation links St. Louis to a growing national and international child reform movement that laid the foundation for Progressive Era child reform.

Introduction

In 1860, after welcoming the last of their six children into the world, John and Melissa Rose could not have imagined that in five years all of their children would be orphans. Like many Americans, Rose and his family had made their way west from Tennessee. Settling in Arkansas in the mid-1850s, he acquired land and started a farm in Sugar Loaf Township that was apparently large enough to support his young family.[1] Although Arkansas was a slave state, Rose was not a slaveholder, and when Arkansas voted to secede from the United States, John Rose enlisted as a private in the Union army. After he was killed by "Guerrilla Indians," Melissa Rose and her children fled to St. Louis where she died in a refugee home in March of 1865.[2] Several of the children, including Winnie, Jesse, Henry, and Leroy ended up in an institution established for the children of Union soldiers on the outskirts of St. Louis. One by one the Rose children left the institution to be incorporated into other families. Whether the siblings ever saw each other again is unknown, but as late as 1870, the seventeen-year-old Jesse still lived as a printer's apprentice in the home of

[1] See, Schedule 1.,—Free Inhabitants in Sugar Loaf Township, Sebastian County, Arkansas, Microfilm Roll M653_50, *1860 United States Federal Census*, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, DC, 24. Census records from 1860 list Winnie as Winney.
[2] Entry 11: Jessy Wilman Rose and Winny F. Rose, Records of Admissions and Discharges, 1865-1869, Civil War Soldiers' Orphans Home (CWOH), Vol. 65, St. Louis Protestant Orphans Asylum Records, 1834-1940, State Historical Society of Missouri, St. Louis, MO. Records originally list Winnie as Winny and Jesse as Jessy, but later use their names confirmed in census records.

Edward Clark in Grayville, Illinois.[3] Winnie, by then twenty years old, lived hundreds of miles away in Crawford, Missouri in the home of Joseph Lambeth.[4] The shattering of the Rose family seems unremarkable. Countless families suffered comparable losses both on and off battlefields. Yet the seemingly unending stream of desperate children who made their way to St. Louis during the Civil War inspired sweeping changes in the child reform movement that would have far-reaching consequences.

This dissertation argues not only that St. Louis was a central player in America's nineteenth-century child reform movement, but also that the crisis of the Civil War years made that city a catalyst for the emergence of a new state-centered vision of child reformation that foregrounded a familial model associated with German reformist practices. It locates St. Louis within a national and even international network of child reform, but also excavates the lives of marginalized children who struggled to survive under the most challenging circumstances. Most broadly, this dissertation argues that Progressive Era child reform sank deep roots in Civil War St. Louis.

In the decades before the Civil War, rapid structural changes altered the physical and social landscape of American cities and towns. Between 1820 and 1850, the population of the United States grew more than 140 percent, from

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[3] See, Schedule 1.—Inhabitants in Grayville Precinct, White County, Illinois, Microfilm Roll M593_289, *1870 United States Federal Census*, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, DC, 24.

[4] See, Schedule 1.—Inhabitants in Crawford Township, Osage County, Missouri, Microfilm Roll M593_796, *1870 United States Federal Census*, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, DC, 2. It is unclear what Winnie's relationship with the Lambeth's was. Records list Winnie's occupation as "at home," perhaps indicating she was a relative, adopted, or a domestic servant.

9,638,131 million people to 23,191,876 million.[5] By the 1850s, a surge in European immigration accelerated population growth dramatically. The Bureau of the Census estimated that between 1820 and 1860 the nation added well over five million people from abroad, and half of that number after 1850.[6] In 1860, nearly forty percent of all foreign-born people living in the United States were from Ireland, and greater than thirty percent were from Germany.[7] Undoubtedly many such immigrants hoped for better opportunities in the United States, but many fled famine in Ireland and repression following failed revolutions in German states.

During these decades, Americans became decidedly less rural. This is not to say that they abandoned farming life altogether. Some of the most dynamic demographic shifts came as a result of westward migration. As networks of roads, canals, and railroads connected eastern cities with western farms, many migrants left the East seeking new opportunities and fleeing declining prospects at home. Yet, rapid population growth came largely at the expense of the countryside. Cities such as Chicago, Cincinnati, and St. Louis surged in population over just several decades.[8] In 1840, Chicago claimed 4,470 residents. Two decades later, it was home to 112,172 people. Over the

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[5] Table X—Population of the United States in *The Seventh Census of the United States: 1850* (Washington: Robert Armstrong, Public Printer, 1853), xxxi.
[6] *Population of the United States in 1860; Compiled from the Original Returns of the Eighth Census* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1864), xviii-xxvi.
[7] Nativities of Foreign Residents in *Population of the United States in 1860; Compiled from the Original Returns of the Eighth Census*, xxviii.
[8] Table 7. Population of the 100 Largest Urban Places: 1840 in Population of the 100 Largest Cities and Other Urban Places in the United States: 1790 to 1990, Population Division Working Paper No. 27 (Washington: Population Division of the U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1998), accessed on April 10, 2015, https://www.census.gov/population/www/documentation/twps0027/twps0027.html.

same period, Cincinnati grew from 46,338 to 161,044 residents, and St. Louis expanded from 16,469 to 160,773 people. In 1860, all three placed in the largest nine cities in the entire country.

These decades also inaugurated the transition from agriculture and artisanal production to wage labor and manufacturing. Although by the middle of the century the United States remained largely rural and agricultural, a greater proportion of the population was engaged in manufacturing than ever before. In 1820, eight-three percent of Americans were engaged in agriculture––nearly five times many people who engaged in commerce or manufacture.[9] By 1850, nearly forty-five percent of men engaged in agriculture, nearly twenty percent in non-agricultural labor, and nearly thirty percent in "commerce, trade, manufactures, mechanic arts, and mining."[10] The transition toward commerce and manufacturing coincided with a shift away from skilled artisan production toward unskilled wage labor, and many recent arrivals to cities and towns found themselves employed in deskilled industries. Between 1840 and 1860, by far the greatest numbers of immigrants coming the United States were classified as laborers and farmers—men and women with few skills to offer employers other

[9] Aggregate Amount of Each Description of Persons in the United States and Their Territories in *Census for 1820* (Washington: Gales and Seaton, 1821), 18. It is unclear whether this figure includes the labor of enslaved people.

[10] Table LI.—Employments of the Free Male Population of the United States Over Fifteen Years of Age—1850 in *The Seventh Census of the United States: 1850* (Washington: Robert Armstrong, Public Printer, 1853), lxxx.

than their labor.[11] The men, women, and children who filled growing numbers of low wage jobs made up the American urban working class.

St. Louis was at the forefront of these trends. Between 1830 and 1860, the city's population grew from under 5,000 to 163,000 people.[12] By 1850, it was the eighth largest city in the nation, and, by 1870, it was the fourth largest city in the country. The bulk of the population arrived as a result of internal migration and European immigration. By 1850, the foreign-born made up nearly fifty-five percent of the St. Louis county population.[13] Irish immigrants constituted twenty percent of Missouri's total foreign-born population, German immigrants more than sixty percent.[14] In 1860, the foreign-born constituted less

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[11] Occupation of Passengers Arriving in the United States from Foreign Countries during the Forty-One Years, Ending with 1860 in *Population of the United States in 1860; Compiled from the Original Returns of the Eighth Census*, xxii. The 1860 Census indicates that from 1841 to 1850, 281,229 laborers and 256,880 farmers, out of 1,768,175 total people, arrived in the United States from abroad. Between 1851 and 1860, 527,639 laborers and 404,712 farmers, out of 2,874,687 total people, arrived in the United States from abroad.

[12] Table 6. Population of the [Largest] 90 Urban Places: 1830 n Population of the 100 Largest Cities and Other Urban Places in the United States: 1790 to 1990; and Table 9. Population of the 100 Largest Urban Places: 1860 in Population of the 100 Largest Cities and Other Urban Places in the United States: 1790 to 1990. The census of 1830 listed 4,977 residents.

[13] Table of Counties, Districts, and Parishes in the United States, 1850. Population—White, Free Colored, and Slave—Foreign-Born—Dwellings and Families in *The Seventh Census of the United States: 1850* (Washington: Robert Armstrong, Public Printer, 1853), ci. By the eve of the Civil War, 428,222 non-slave Missouri residents had moved there from other states, and an additional 160,541 were immigrants. Migrations of the Native Free Population in *Population of the United States in 1860; Compiled from the Original Returns of the Eighth Census*, xxxiii; and Location of Foreign Residents in 1860 in *Population of the United States in 1860; Compiled from the Original Returns of the Eighth Census*, xxix. This number constituted a staggering fifty-five percent of the state's total free population. The total free population of Missouri was 1,067,081. See, State of Missouri, Table No. 2—Population by Color and Condition in *Population of the United States in 1860; Compiled from the Original Returns of the Eighth Census*, 286-87.

[14] Nativities of the Population. Table XV—Nativities of the Population of the United States—Continued. Place of Birth—Foreign in *Seventh Census of the United States: 1850*, xxxvi. By the end of the next decade, Irish immigrants approached thirty percent and German immigrants nearly sixty percent. See, Location of Foreign Residents in 1860 in *Population of the United States in 1860; Compiled from the Original Returns of the Eighth Census*, xxix.

than fourteen percent of Missouri's total population.[15] Yet, St. Louis boasted a greater proportion of immigrants than any large city in the entire country.[16] An incredible sixty percent of St. Louis residents were born outside of the United States.

St. Louis rested uneasily at the nexus between North and South, East and West, free and slave. Standing on the Missouri shore of the Mississippi River, the free soil of Illinois was plainly visible—little consolation to the men, women, and children auctioned on the St. Louis courthouse steps. In 1820, the Missouri Territory was home to just under 10,000 slaves, 1,810 of whom lived in St. Louis County.[17] By 1850, the county contained just shy of 6,000 slaves.[18] Evidently, the city contained fewer enslaved people. The 1860 census indicated just over 1,500 slaves living in the city and more than 1,700 free blacks.[19] Free blacks possessed limited legal and civil rights. Although dwarfed by white inhabitants, slaves and free blacks featured prominently in a number of explosive political controversies. In 1836, a white mob dragged Francis McIntosh, a free black man, from his prison cell and burned him alive. The

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[15] Percentages of the Native, the English, and the Irish Population in Each State and Territory in 1860 in *Population of the United States in 1860; Compiled from the Original Returns of the Eighth Census*, xxxi.

[16] Principle Cities and Towns; Native and Foreign Population in *Population of the United States in 1860; Compiled from the Original Returns of the Eighth Census*, xxxi-xxxii. St. Louis held this number by a wide margin. The next closest cities, Chicago, Milwaukee, and San Francisco, hosted just barely fifty percent foreign-born. Buffalo, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Detroit, and New York each had between forty-five and forty-eight percent foreign-born populations.

[17] Aggregate of the Whole Number and Enumeration of Persons in the Territory of Missouri in *Census for 1820*, 159. The state contained 196 free black people, and St. Louis County had 367 free blacks.

[18] Table of Counties, Districts, and Parishes in the United States—1850 in *The Seventh Census of the United States: 1850*, ci.

[19] State of Missouri, Table No. 3—Population of Cities, Towns, &c. in *Population of the United States in 1860; Compiled from the Original Returns of the Eighth Census*, 297.

following year, Elijah Lovejoy, an abolitionist newspaper editor who condemned the heinous attack and fled St. Louis for Alton, Illinois after his printing press was destroyed, was also murdered by a proslavery mob. Lovejoy's martyrdom galvanized antislavery support. In 1846, St. Louis abolitionists helped Dred Scott sue for his freedom, and the case ended up before the United States Supreme Court. The resulting decision, issued in 1857, shocked much of the nation and deepened an already growing political divide between North and South.

St. Louis grew with the development of manufacturing and commerce. In 1860, the city produced more than 27,600,000 dollars worth of goods.[20] Its most valuable industries were milling (flour and corn meal), liquor, machinery, iron goods, processed pork and beef, soap, candles, and refined sugar. Linked to other regions by river and, increasingly, railroads, many of these goods reached the national market. The greatest number of people were employed in brick making, clothing production, and machinery and iron goods manufacturing, and boot and shoe fabrication. The city was also host to burgeoning capital and banking operations.[21] By 1870, manufacturing had tripled from the previous decade, and the total value of the city's manufactures stood only behind New York and Philadelphia.[22] A testament to its urban economy, Missouri was the

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[20] State of Missouri, Table No. 1—Manufactures, by Counties, 1860 in *Manufactures of the United States in 1860; Compiled from the Original Returns of the Eighth Census* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1865), 310-12.
[21] McCandless, *A History of Missouri,* vol. II (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 1973), 153-55.
[22] William E. Parrish, *A History of Missouri*, Vol. 3: 1860 to 1875, Vol. 3 (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 2001), 223.

only slave state to attract significant numbers of immigrants, most of whom lived in St. Louis.[23]

Demographic and market changes made cities and towns like St. Louis bustling hubs of production and commerce, but also produced social problems on a scale unseen by previous generations. Urban residents, particularly the poor and working-class, faced overcrowded, unsanitary, and dangerous living conditions characterized by disease, high rates of mortality, and general hardship. Low wages and seasonal unemployment compounded these problems, and growing numbers of families lived without food or housing security.

For poor St. Louis children, urban life involved a mix of danger and independence. Many children enjoyed a great deal of freedom from adult supervision, but few distinctive places to play or socialize. City streets, alleys, and buildings entertained children, but also led to frequent accidents that left children maimed or dead. In Missouri, sixty percent of people who died were fifteen years old and younger, and all children faced the threat of disease, abuse, and victimization.[24] Working-class children faced the additional burdens of poverty and the routines of physical labor from an early age.

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[23] Few slave states attracted significant numbers of immigrants with the exception of Missouri. Missouri had nearly twice the number of foreign-born residents as Louisiana—the slave state with the next largest number of immigrants.[26] More than eight-six percent of immigrants settled in free states. See, *Population of the United States in 1860; Compiled from the Original Returns of the Eighth Census*, xxx.

[24] "Table I.—Deaths in the Year Ending June 1, 1860, In States, by Districts" and "Table IV.—Deaths in the Year Ending June 1, 1860, According to Sexes and Ages" in *Statistics of the United States, (Including Mortality, Property, &c.,) in 1860; Compiled from the Original Returns and Being the Final Exhibit of the Eighth Census* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1866), 3, 44-45.

Poor and working-class children were among the chief targets of the middle-class social reform organizations that grew in response to new urban social problems. Population growth and the transition to wage labor made traditional approaches to dealing with orphaned and needy children antiquated. In previous decades, such children were incorporated into other households, often as apprentices or servants. Once indentured, apprenticed children exchanged their labor for training, food, clothing, and shelter from a master craftsman. However, growing numbers of poor and orphaned children outstripped the supply of apprenticeships, especially as artisans faced increasing pressure to deskill labor, increase production, and pay wages. Middle-class commentators complained that boys and girls committed thefts, scavenged in the streets, developed vicious habits, and maintained immoral associations. Cities and private organizations turned to institutions to provide care and correction for orphans, "juvenile delinquents," and abandoned and poor children. In fact, early nineteenth-century child reformers were among the first to use the term juvenile delinquent to describe children accused of committing crimes. This trend emerged earliest in the nation's largest and oldest cities, such as Baltimore, Boston, New York, and Philadelphia. In 1800, the United States contained six orphanages; fifty years later, New York alone boasted sixteen times that number.[25]

[25] Steven Mintz, *Huck's Raft: A History of American Childhood* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004), 157.

A variety of concerns motivated child reformers.[26] Many of them were guided by deep religious convictions to assist the needy and vulnerable, proselytize immigrant children, and even perfect society. Others hoped to combat growing social disorder in cities by removing children whom they saw as immoral and criminally-inclined from other citizens. In short, many reformers viewed children as objects to be pitied and saved, as well as to be feared and

[26] Antebellum child institutions—orphanages, manual training schools, and houses of refuge—have been the subject of intense study. The motivations of social reformers have been the subject of intense debate. A number of foundational studies argued that reformers sought to combat perceived "social disorder" created by rapidly developing American cities. See, David J. Rothman, *The Discovery of the Asylum: Social Order and Disorder in the New Republic* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Co, 1971) and Paul Boyer, *Urban Masses and Moral Order in America, 1820-1920* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1978). While not dismissing reactions to the city, others have emphasized class conflict as a motivating factor. See, Michael Katz, *In the Shadow of the Poorhouse: A Social History of Welfare in America* (New York: Basic, 1996); Eric Schneider, *In the Web of Class: Delinquents and Reformers in Boston, 1810s-1930s* (New York: NYU, 1992); Peter C. Holloran, *Boston's Wayward Children: Social Services for Homeless Children, 1830-1930* (Salem: Fairleigh Dickenson, 1989); Bruce Bellingham, "'Little Wanderers': A Socio-Historical Study of the Nineteenth Century Origins of Child Fostering and Adoption Reform, Based on Early Records of the New York Children's Aid Society" (PhD diss, University of Pennsylvania, 1984); Robert Mennel, *Thorns and Thistles: Juvenile Delinquents in the United States, 1825-1940* (Hanover: University of New England, 1973). Also see, Michael Meranze, *Laboratories of Virtue: Punishment, Revolution, and Authority in Philadelphia, 1760-1835* (Chapel Hill: UNC, 1996). A number of studies of orphanages have sought to balance these perspectives. See, Timothy Hacsi, *Second Home: Orphan Asylums and Poor Families in America* (Cambridge: Harvard, 1997); Priscilla Ferguson Clement, "Children and Charity: Orphanages in New Orleans, 1817-1914," *Louisiana History* 27, no. 4 (1984): 337-51; Judith Ann Dulberger, "Refuge or Repressor: The Role of the Orphan Asylum in the Lives of Poor Children and their Families in Late-Nineteenth-Century America," (PhD diss, Carnegie Mellon, 1988); Marcy Kay Wilson, "'Dear little living arguments': Orphans and Other Poor Children, their Families and Orphanages, Baltimore and Liverpool, 1840-1910," (PhD diss, University of Maryland, College Park, 2009). For encyclopedic discussions of many St. Louis social reformer and institutions see, Katherine T. Corbett, *In Her Place: A Guide to St. Louis Women's History* (St. Louis: Missouri Historical Society Press, 1999). Timothy Hacsi concludes that although class-based desires for social control were common to the asylum movement, particular asylums reflected the distinct needs and religious affiliations of their administrators and communities, and that until "the 1880s, orphan asylums were widely, though not unanimously, viewed as the best way to care for poor children outside of their own homes." According to Hacsi's findings, orphan asylums sprang into existence due to large numbers of orphans and half-orphans created during waves of disease epidemics but also as an effort to regulate poor children. However, Hacsi also points out orphan asylums displayed not just a fear of the poor, but a genuine desire to shield children from harmful associations with adults in poorhouses and reflected the particular needs and religious beliefs of each institution's administration. In fact, orphan asylums, according to Hacsi's findings, were more likely to be Catholic than one of the many evangelical sects most noted for their involvement in antebellum reform. Hacsi, *Second Home,* 4 (quote).

reformed. Although apparently motivated by genuine benevolence, reformers exuded distain for working-class habits, norms, and values. For the most part, reformers (and middle-class observers generally) linked poverty, crime, squalor, and drunkenness with personal immorality among immigrants and the working class rather than rapid urban expansion and economic marginalization. They tended to see working-class parents as ineffective, idle, and immoral. So-called child-savers often invoked *parens patriae*—the legal right of the state to protect children—to sever parent-child relationships. Houses of refuge—juvenile reformatories that sprang up in New York, Philadelphia, and other American cities beginning in the 1820s—regularly seized custody of children from parents deemed unable to educate, care for, or shield children from vicious influences. Courts gave legitimacy to the practice.[27]

Lacking confidence in working-class parents, social reformers created variety of institutions to provide discipline and order, as well as to socialize children to embrace piety, thrift, and hard work. They crafted orphanages, manual training schools, and asylums for "juvenile delinquents," but the movement for free compulsory public education represented the clearest outgrowth of the impulse to socialize working-class children. Motivated by both philanthropy and condescension, the advocates of common schools worked to provide basic education to all children, especially those whose families were least able to afford school tuition, and habituate children to the routines and

[27] The most notable example is Pennsylvania Supreme Court decision in *Ex Parte Crouse*, which upheld the right of the Philadelphia House of Refuge to incarcerate Mary Ann Crouse against her father's wishes. See, Mintz, ***Huck's Raft***, 163; Christine Stansell, *City of Women: Sex and Class in New York, 1780-1860* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1987), 215.

regularity of wage work. Many working-class families resented the intrusion and resisted pulling their children from the labor market. In the early 1850s, Massachusetts and New York City passed compulsory education laws mandating that all children attend school.

Antebellum reformers reflected the growing belief that childhood should be shielded from the hardships and realities of adulthood, and they sought to extend this principle to all St. Louis children.[28] Education reformers hoped public schools would provide a distinctive space that sheltered children from hard labor and the dangers of urban life. In the decades before the Civil War, they increasingly focused attention on children who seemed most in need of protection or correction: the poor, orphaned, and "delinquent." The number of institutions targeting these children proliferated rapidly. Reformers hoped that separating children from negative influences on the streets provided the best hope to "reclaim" children educated in vice and immorality.

Administrators of antebellum children's institutions typically operated from a set of assumptions about women's special capacity to nurture children

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[28] For more on the emergence of this "sheltered" perspective on childhood see, Steven Mintz, *Huck's Raft: A History of American Childhood* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press 2004), Chapter 4; Julia Grant, *Raising Baby by the Book: The Education of American Mothers* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1998), chapter 1. For the role of literature in popularizing and reflecting this view of childhood see, Karen Sanchez-Eppler, *Dependent States: The Child's Part in Nineteenth-Century American Culture* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005); Gillian Avery, *Behold the Child: American Children and Their Books, 1621-1922* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994); James Holt McGavran, *Romanticism and Children's Literature in Nineteenth-Century England* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1991); Judith Plotz, "Perpetual Messiah," in *Regulated Children/Liberated Children*, ed. Barbara Finkelstein (New York: Psychohistory Press, 1979); Peter Coveney, *The Image of Childhood, the Individual and Society: A Study of the Theme of English Literature* (Baltimore: Penguin Press, 1967). The emergence of "sheltered" childhood also reshaped middle-class children's play and material culture. See, Howard Chudacoff, *Children at Play: An American History* (New York: New York University Press, 2007) and Karin Calvert, *Children in the House: The Material Culture of Early Childhood, 1600-1900* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1994).

within the "domestic sphere."[29] Few institutions resembled anything like a family, but they sought to deploy the imagery of the family and the influence of women as reformative forces. The idealized middle-class family—in which the home functioned as a retreat from corrupt city streets and the challenges of business and politics—served as a model for teaching working-class children morality and hard work. Reformers argued that even poor children with living parents needed the domestic influence middle-class women. Their assumption was that working-class parents failed to provide for the material or moral wellbeing of their offspring. Most organizations were staffed with female administrators and workers except the House of Refuge—the city's institution for juvenile delinquents. Despite being primarily run and staffed with men, the House of Refuge also promoted the rhetoric of family and domesticity along with a rigid disciplinary regimen.

The Civil War made life for poor and working-class children especially difficult. During the war, St. Louis witnessed a spike in commitments for child abandonment, vagrancy, and crime. As parents and teachers joined or were drafted into the army, many already-struggling families faced increased pressure. Enduring hardship and loosened supervision, many children committed thefts to survive and lived with peers in abandoned buildings, empty

[29] For more on domesticity see, Steven Mintz and Susan Kellogg, *Domestic Revolutions: A Social History of American Family Life* (New York: Free Press, 1988), chapter 3; Mary Ryan, *Cradle of the Middle Class: The Family in Oneida County, New York, 1790-1865* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981); Nancy F. Cott, *The Bonds of Womanhood: "Woman's Sphere" in New England, 1870-1835* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977), chapter 2; Barbara Welter, "The Cult of True Womanhood: 1820-1860," *American Quarterly* 18, no. 2 (Summer 1966): 151-74.

lots, and basements.[30] Some even dug caves beneath the city. At the same time, the very institutions created to combat juvenile delinquency served as spaces that drew working-class children together. Many likeminded and socially positioned children forged longstanding relationships that brought them in and out city courts for years.

The war also brought thousands of refugees from the South, both white and black. The majority were children.[31] Large numbers of displaced children from throughout Missouri and the Mississippi Valley overwhelmed existing city

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[30] For non-war accounts of urban child independence, vagrancy, organizing, and crime see, Timothy J. Gilfoyle, "Street Rats and Gutter-Snipes: Child Pickpockets and Street Culture in New York City, 1850-1900," *Journal of Social History* 37, no. 4 (Summer 2004): 853-882; Vincent DiGirolamo, "Newsboy Funerals: Tales of Sorrow and Solidarity in Urban America," *Journal of Social History* 36 (Fall 2002): 5-30; Sanchez-Eppler, *Dependent States*, chapt. 4; E. Anthony Rotundo, *American Manhood: Transformations in Masculinity from the Revolution to the Modern Era* (New York: Basic, 1993), chapters 2 and 3. One of the pioneering works on children's agency is David Nasaw, *Children of the City: At Work and At Play* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1985). Nasaw demonstrated how turn-of-the-century urban children were able to form distinct social spaces within the adult worlds that surrounded them. As Joseph M. Hawes and N. Ray Hiner note, "Nasaw was a pioneer but he had to wait a long time before other scholars followed the trail he had blazed." See Hawes and Hiner, "Hidden in Plain View: The History of Children (and Childhood) in the Twenty-First Century," *Journal of the History of Childhood and Youth* 1, no. 1 (Winter 2008), 44. For an overview of poor and delinquent children in turn-of-the-century St. Louis see, Bonnie Stepenoff, *The Dead End Kids of St. Louis: Homeless Boys and the People Who Tried to Save Them* (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 2010). Although it makes mention of some antebellum and reconstruction-era aspects of children's lives, the text focuses mainly on children in late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century.

[31] For the broader impact of the Civil War on children see, James Marten, ed., *Children and Youth in the Civil War Era*, ed. James Marten (New York: NYU, 2012); Anya Jabour, *Topsy-Turvy: How the Civil War Turned the World Upside Down for Southern Children* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2010); Marten, *Children for the Union: The War Spirit on the Northern Home Front* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2004); Marten, *The Children's Civil War* (Chapel Hill: UNC, 1998); Emmy Werner, *Reluctant Witnesses: Children's Voices from the Civil War* (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1998). For the experiences of child soldiers during the Civil War see, Mintz, *Huck's Raft*, 120-25; Dennis M. Keesee, *Too Young to Die: Boy Soldiers of the Union Army, 1861-1865*; (Huntington, WV: Blue Acorn Press, 2001); C. Clifton Wisler, *When Johnny Went Marching: Young Americans Fight the Civil War* (New York: Harper Collins, 2001); Jim Murphy, *The Boys' War: Confederate and Union Soldiers Talk About the Civil War* (New York: Clarion, 1990); William B. Styple, *The Little Bugle: The True Story of a Twelve-Year-Old Boy in the Civil War* (Kearney, NJ: Bell Grove, 1998); Sandra A. Kendell, *Drummer Boys of the Civil War* (Gettysburg, PA: Thomas Publications, 1996).

institutions. The Western Sanitary Commission, initially founded to assist wounded soldiers, joined a host of other child-focused institutions to provide shelter to families and children. The organization established several asylums for refugees and freed slaves. The Commission greeted many white refugees with a mixture of pity and suspicion, lamenting their poor manners and work habits, as well as suspect loyalty to the Union. Faced with increasingly limited options and pressure from reformers, many parents turned their children over to aid agencies. By contrast, the Western Sanitary Commission emphasized acclimating black children to wage labor as well as supplying food, clothing, and shelter.

The decades following the Civil War represented a significant shift in the nature of child-saving. Growing numbers of child reformers criticized so-called congregate institutions that housed large numbers of children and employed rigid systems of discipline. Organizations produced a number of strategies to provide care in more family-like settings or in actual families. Orphanages and reformatories increasingly employed the family system—the practice of grouping smaller children in cottages under the care of a house parent. Other organizations greatly expanded on the efforts of the New York Children's Aid Society which in the 1850s began sending train cars full of poor, abandoned, and orphaned children to live with families in the countryside and throughout the West. The practice, known as placing out, greatly accelerated after the Civil War. Advocates of placing out believed that they were removing pauper and immigrant children from bad parents and dangerous urban environments while

relocating them within non-immigrant, moral, and wholesome rural families.[32]"We have taken boys who were running wild in the streets of the city, whose parents could not control them," one New England Home for Little Wanderers publication flatly declared, "and placed them in homes in the West, who are now respectable young men."[33] Against the backdrop of the Civil War––a conflict that brought irreparable pain and suffering to many thousands of families—the turn toward the family as an institutional tool became especially powerful.

Perhaps the most significant outcome of wartime child-aid efforts was the emergence of a new discourse about the obligation of the state to care for soldiers' orphans. Reformers and lawmakers argued that the sacrifices of fathers to support the Union demanded that the state fill the role of father when they died. Practically, aid organizations founded soldiers' orphans homes and

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[32] Holt, O'Connor, and Schuller reached something of a rough agreement about the centrality of class and ethnicity to the placing-out phenomenon. Reformers fed off of class-based cynicism, believing that even non-orphans were better off with new families in the countryside than working-class families in major cities. However, other factors were also at play. Marilyn Irvin Holt has argued that the long-distance placing out system emerged in the 1860s primarily as a response to conditions of poverty and overpopulation in eastern cities and labor shortage in the West. See, Holt, *The Orphan Trains: Placing Out in America* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1992), 3. According to Holt, advocates operated out of a concern for improving the lives of the nation's urban youth, but they also responded to anxieties about the negative influence of the poor on society. See Holt, 43. According to Stephen O'Connor, Charles Loring Brace, the most vocal of placing out proponents, pioneered the practice of loading train cars full of poor and orphaned children and shipping them to small Midwestern and Western towns to boost efficiency and cost savings in urban youth reform. See Stephen O'Connor, *Orphan Trains: The Story of Charles Loring Brace and the Children He Saved and Failed* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 2001), 103-04. However, Kayla Schuller goes further, demonstrating that the ideology underlaying the orphan train movement incorporated both sentimental and scientific discourses. According to Schuller, they might been seen as engaging in a form of proto-eugenics. Schuller argues that unlike pre-Civil War reformers, postwar reformers thought that improved environments would have a positive effect not only on the children themselves but also the nation's biological stock. Schuller, "Sentimental Science and the Literary Cultures of Proto-Eugenics," (PhD Diss, University of California, San Diego, 2009), 159, 193.

[33] *Little Wanderer's Advocate*, (Boston: s.n, 1865), 99.

schools throughout the nation, including in St. Louis. The children of fallen soldiers suffered little of the stigma of prewar orphans and wartime refugees. In fact, the discourse of obligation to soldiers' children produced real differences between how refugees and orphans were treated by the state. While refugees, among whom many were also orphans, and freed children garnered much sympathy, soldiers' orphans were more likely to find adoptive homes and less likely to subjected to rigorous manual labor training or pressed into indenture.

Many of the reformers who were involved in wartime aid emerged as prominent figures during this era. Inspired by the philosophy of Hegel, they emphasized the state as a vehicle for advancing child reform. William Torrey Harris, one of the leading members of this philosophical movement, turned once again to public schools to shelter children from danger and bad influences. As superintendent of St. Louis public schools, Harris implemented the first public kindergartens in the nation, hoping to counter influence of city streets among working-class children. Harris and others also turned toward the family as a forced for reform. At the close of the war, reformers and intellectuals founded the American Social Science Association, which, along with other organizations, popularized the family system.

By the end of the century, many reformers throughout the country shared the faith of St. Louis reformers in the state's ability and obligation to protect children and childhood. Buoyed by this conviction and building on the antebellum practice of private examinations and trials for St. Louis children accused of crimes, legal reformers produced courts that, in theory, offered

children rehabilitation instead of punishment. Harris, as United States Commissioner of Education, and many educators threw their support behind other Progressive less celebrated causes. Harris and his colleagues hoped to bring "civilization" to American Indians and nonwhite children in newly acquired territories abroad, promoting the removal of Indian children from their homes and manual training for "inferior" races.

Reformers from across the nation shared the conviction that the state possessed an obligation to protect children and childhood. Trained experts, including social workers, psychologists, and doctors, gradually replaced the voluntary reformers of previous generations. Progressive reformers turned their attention to a variety of issues ranging from child labor, cruelty, and sexual exploitation to juvenile justice, education, and health.[34] These movements were grounded in the belief that the state could solve social problems and that full force of the government ought to ensure the separation of childhood and adulthood.[35] In addition to new laws that barred children from work and sex with adults, Progressives also established safe and supervised spaces for

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[34] Michael Grossberg, "'A Protected Child': The Emergence of Child Protection in America," in *American Public Life and the Historical Imagination*, Wendy Gamber, Michael Grossberg, and Hendrick Hartog, eds. (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2003), 213-39.

[35] Analysis of Progressives' motivations yielded similar interpretations to those of antebellum child reform. For accounts that emphasize class conflict (albeit to varying degrees) see, Katz, *Shadow of the Poorhouse*; Schlossman and Stephanie Wallach, "The Crime of Precocious Sexuality: Female Delinquency in the Progressive Era" *Harvard Educational Review* 48, no. 1 (1978), 65-94; Anthony Platt, *The Child Savers: The Invention of Delinquency, 2nd Edition* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1977); Stephen Schlossman, *Love and the American Delinquent: The Theory and Practice of "Progressive" Juvenile Justice, 1825-1920* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1977). For accounts that emphasize class, race, and social control see, Alexandra Minna Stern, *Eugenic Nation: Faults & Frontiers of Better Breeding in Modern America* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: UC Press, 2005); Michael Willrich, *City of Courts: Socializing Justice in Progressive Era Chicago* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2003).

children to play, such as playgrounds, and recreation centers. Progressive reforms, like those of previous generations, cut with a double-edged sword, improving child health and welfare, but ensnaring countless children in the machinery of courts and institutions.

Deeply influenced by philosophical ideas associated with German reformers and immigrant scholars, St. Louis reformers developed and popularized many foundational conceptions about childhood, institutions, and state obligation that shaped child reform by the end of the nineteenth century. As Missouri intellectuals, reformers, and educators expanded their influence nationally, their ideas and approaches helped to shape reform throughout the country.

Methods and Sources

Historians of childhood routinely lament the limited availability of primary source material produced by children themselves, and the result is that we still know relatively little about the lives of marginalized children during the middle of the nineteenth century. Peter Stearns notes, the "issue . . . involves the virtually unprecedented problems of getting information from children themselves, as opposed to adult perceptions and recommendations and adult-centered artifacts."[36] For this reason, works that have been most successful at piecing together the lives of midcentury children tend to offer distinctively middle-class

[36] Peter Stearns, "Challenges in the History of Childhood," *Journal of the History of Childhood and Youth* 1, no. 1 (2008), 34.

perspectives. For the most part, this reflects the availability of diaries, letters, and memoirs produced by children from families of considerably more means than the child subjects of this study.[37] The majority of sources dealing with working-class children typically were produced by jurists and reformers uninterested in preserving the voices of their subjects. This inherent bias is particularly useful for understanding the outlook of reformers, but problematic for understanding poor and working-class children.

This study attempts to address some of the methodological difficulties of studying children. Following in the traditional of Christine Stansell's study of antebellum working-class women, this dissertation reads sources produced by reformers and jurists against the grain.[38] These sources shed light on the ways adults tried to comprehend or regulate the lives of children, but careful reading also hints at how children adapted to the world that surrounded them.

Chapters one and three in particular suggest an approach to remedying the dilemma of recovering the voices, motivations, and perspectives of marginalized children. In particular, they analyzes material culled from thousands of criminal court cases involving children throughout the course of

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[37] Peter Stearns, "Challenges in the History of Childhood," *Journal of the History of Childhood and Youth* 1, no. 1 (2008), 34. Representative of midcentury middle-class childhood include Rotundo, *American Manhood* and Marten, *The Children's Civil War*. However, as Stearns points out, some historians have ignored the problem of class altogether, making "larger generalizations about a category such as childhood, based on what turns out to have been upper- or middle-class evidence. See Stearns, "Challenges in the History of Childhood," 37. Also see, Mary Jo Maynes, "Age as a Category of Historical Analysis: History, Agency, and Narratives of Childhood," *Journal of the History of Childhood and Youth* 1, no. 1 (2008): 114-124.

[38] Christine Stansell, *City of Women: Sex and Class in New York, 1789-1860* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois, 1982). For applications of this approach in the study of children see, Nasaw, *Children of the City*.

the Civil War. On occasion, children offered testimony—as victims or perpetrators—that hint at the challenges facing children and the motivations that guided them. More frequently, the files include basic information about charges, witness testimony, descriptions of items stolen or acts of violence, and who was arrested with whom. Chapter three uses information from court documents and detailed records kept by the city's House of Refuge to map the social world formed by marginalized children during the war. Through the application of social network analysis, I am able to make sense of complex relationships and interactions formed among more than one-thousand otherwise forgotten children. The types of associations highlighted in this chapter suggest broader relational patterns that extend to children able to evade detection by courts and institutions.

Much of this dissertation relies upon manuscript collections from Missouri and Massachusetts, as well as sources published in cities throughout the Northeast and Midwest. Manuscript collections, which include records from reform institutions and other organizations highlight both the fine-grained, day-to-day occurrences of child institutions in St. Louis and the processes by which ideas formed and circulated more broadly. In addition to institutional records, I have been fortunate to uncover criminal case files and court documents that include descriptions of children and occasionally the testimony of children themselves. These rarely seen documents offer significant details about the daily lives of ordinary children.

Chapter One: Children and Childhood in Antebellum St. Louis

In antebellum St. Louis, children of all social classes faced significant hardship, but life was especially challenging for the children of the poor and working class. I addition to disease and high rates of child mortality, they confronted violence and, sometimes, hunger, abuse, and hard labor. Yet, these children also enjoyed a substantial degree of independence from adult supervision and opportunities to socialize and play.

Hardship

On the eve of the Civil War, the United States was a young society. Of the nation's thirty-one million inhabitants, more than half were under twenty years of age.[39] More than forty percent were under fifteen. The typical American would live his or her life surrounded by children, including at home, at work, and on the streets. Children lived their lives in spaces shared with adults, and in growing cities such as St. Louis, parents, schoolteachers, and other adults were never that far away.

Life for many children was hazardous and often short. Of the 17,654 people whose deaths were reported in Missouri in 1860, 10,637 (or sixty percent) were under fifteen years old, and forty-eight percent were under the

[39] "Table J.—Population of the United States in 1860, in districts" in *Statistics of the United States, (Including Mortality, Property, &c.,) in 1860; Compiled from the Original Returns and Being the Final Exhibit of the Eighth Census* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1866), xxxvi.

age of five.[40] In an era in which few children enjoyed even basic standards of safety at home, at work, or in public, gruesome and fatal injuries were common. Accidents transformed even mundane children's play into potentially fatal experiences. For instance, while playing hide and seek in her own home, one five-year-old girl died after she "caught fire as she ran by the [furnace] grate" and "In a short time the other children heard her scream. They tried to get in but could not . . . The poor child was discovered in one corner of the room enveloped in flames."[41] During the first month of 1861 alone, the *Daily Missouri Republican* reported countless accidents involving children, including a three-year-old boy whose head was crushed by a horse, several near and actual drownings, a boy killed after slipping off a moving street car, a stabbing, a boy who fell to his death from a building, a girl who burned to death playing with matches, and numerous severe beatings at the hands of parents.[42] However,

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[40] See, "Table I.—Deaths in the Year Ending June 1, 1860, In States, by Districts" and "Table IV.—Deaths in the Year Ending June 1, 1860, According to Sexes and Ages" in *Statistics of the United States in 1860*, 3, 44-45. These statistics are useful as a rough guide. However, the U.S. Bureau of the Census report notes that, "The [mortality] report is far from being as complete as desirable . . . It is very apparent that the whole number of deaths which occurred in the year was not furnished. Although it would seem extremely probable, indeed, almost certain that so important an event as death in a house or family would not be forgotten or fail to be reported, yet it must be considered that many families dissolve in the course of a year. The head—the father or mother, or both—may die, and the survivors, if any, separate, and become incorporated into other families, leaving none to tell the events of their former connexion [sic]." See, *Statistics of the United States in 1860*, xxiii.

[41] "Distressing Accident," *Daily Missouri Republican* [St. Louis], 20 January 1861.

[42] For example, see, "Shocking Accident—A Child Crushed to Death under a Horse's Hoofs," *Daily Missouri Republican* [St. Louis], 9 January 1861; "Rescued from Drowning," *Daily Missouri Republican* [St. Louis], 16 January 1861; "Serious Accident," *Daily Missouri Republican* [St. Louis], 16 January 1861; "Distressing Accident—A School Boy Killed by a Street Car," *Daily Missouri Republican* [St. Louis], 18 January 1861; "Perilous Situation of a Child," *Daily Missouri Republican* [St. Louis], 25 January 1861; "Horrible Accident—A Boy falls through the Hatchway of a Building and is Killed," *Daily Missouri Republican* [St. Louis], 28 January 1861; "Death from Burning," *Daily Missouri Republican* [St. Louis], 29 January 1861; "Recorder's Court," *Daily Missouri Republican* [St. Louis], 30 January 1861; "A Wife's Troubles and a Husband's

disease likely killed far more children than accidents. Without the benefit of modern medicine or standards of hygiene, illnesses hit the youngest especially hard.

Threats to a person's life began early. Nearly twenty-three percent of all deaths reported in Missouri in 1860 occurred among children in the first year of life.[43] Disease was likely the primary cause, but infants also fell prey to infanticide. For example, the body of an infant who had been smothered to death was discovered buried in an unofficial grave at the Grace Church cemetery.[44] Whoever buried it attempted to provide a proper burial. The presence of a freshly dug grave prompted officials to exhume the body. Most infants never received such treatment. Residents regularly discovered infants stashed in the city, including one found strangled and abandoned in a vacant lot or another partially eaten by rats.[45] Little evidence exists to suggest the motives of parents who killed their infant children, but, given the social stigma surrounding out of wedlock pregnancy and the financial burdens facing so many working-class immigrant families, infanticide was likely a strategy for preserving social standing and limiting family size. It is equally possible that, taking into account high infant mortality rates of the era, many parents informally disposed of stillborn and infants who died of natural causes, and authorities mistook such

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Jealousy," *Daily Missouri Republican* [St. Louis], 31 January 1861; "Another Child Burned to Death," *Daily Missouri Republican* [St. Louis], 31 January 1861.

[43] Calculated based on figures presented in: "Table IV.—Deaths in the Year Ending June 1, 1860, According to Sexes and Ages" in *Statistics of the United States in 1860*, 44-45.

[44] "Another Infanticide," *Daily Missouri Republican* [St. Louis], 27 December 1858.

[45] "Supposed Infanticide," *Daily Missouri Republican* [St. Louis], 13 January 1861; "An Infant Eaten Up by Rats," *Daily Missouri Republican* [St. Louis], 28 January 1861.

children for victims of malice. In any event, putting the intentional killing of infants aside, the first year of life proved the most dangerous for all St. Louis children.

Danger persisted as children grew, and Missouri proved more violent than most states. In 1860, it had the sixth highest murder rate and fourth highest homicide rate in the nation—ranking above more populous states such as New York and Pennsylvania.[46] Sometimes this violence extended to children. In January of 1861, two boys reported being attacked by a group of boys at a skating pond. After William Murray struck Robert Hughes on the head with a pair of ice skates, "Hughes turned upon him, and a scuffle ensued. They both fell, young Hughes underneath, and . . . he drew out a sharp knife and stabbed young Murray in the ribs."[47] Both Hughes and Murray survived the incident. The bulk of nonfatal injuries, particularly fistfights, likely went unreported.

Boys had no monopoly on victimization. Girls lived under the constant threat of sexual exploitation. On June 6, 1858, two men groped and kissed a pair of girls as they sat on their doorstep. The unknown men fled after the assault. Even though the girls, both under the age of ten and daughters of the city's "most respected citizens," enjoyed elevated social status, they remained susceptible to sexual assault. Not surprisingly, poor, working-class, fatherless

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[46] See, "Table III.—Deaths in the Year Ending June 1, 1860" in *Statistics of the United States in 1860*, 5-43. States with higher murder rates included, in descending order, New Mexico, Texas, California, Louisiana, and Kentucky, suggesting that such violence was most often a southern, western, and rural phenomenon.

[47] "A Bloody Fight among Boys," *Daily Missouri Republican* [St. Louis], 27 January 1861.

girls were especially vulnerable. Consider the testimony of Nancy Catherine Hindman against James McGuire:

> Nobody was [at home] but me and my sister . . . She is five years old. We where [sic] up stairs playing . . . My mother was out sewing . . . [James McGuire] came up stairs sent my sister down for some water. [H]e then pulled up my clothes. [T]hrew me on the floor and unbuttoned his britches. Said if I would not tell my mother he would give me a new dress or something . . . [H]e hurt me between my legs . . . I did nothing. [T]ried to cry. [H]e held his hand over my mouth.[48]

Nancy never indicated why she failed to report the rape to her mother. Days passed, but soon Nancy complained of pain and "trouble about making water." Only after her mother, Jane Hindman, took Nancy to a physician did the attack come to light.

Along with many other victims of sexual assault, Nancy's social position made her especially vulnerable.[49] Hindman was a widow who supported her two young girls by working outside of her home. On a practical level, her need to support her family meant that her young children spent a considerable amount of time unsupervised and therefore vulnerable. However, on a deeper

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[48] State of Missouri v. James McGuire, 27 June 1862, St. Louis Recorder's Court (SLRC), Microfilm Roll C43919, Circuit Court Records of St. Louis County (CCR), County and Municipal Records, Missouri State Archives, Jefferson City, Missouri.

[49] As Diane Miller Sommerville has shown, in the antebellum South, poor girls who suffered assault often faced intense scrutiny from courts which were as likely to trivialize their claims as they were to mete out harsh sentences. See, Sommerville, "'I Was Very Much Wounded': Rape Law, Children, and the Antebellum South" in Merrill D. Smith, ed., *Sex Without Consent: Rape and Sexual Coercion in America* (New York: New York University Press, 2001), chapter 7. Christine Stansell, has also demonstrated the vulnerability of working-class girls in nineteenth-century New York City. See, *Stansell, City of Women: Sex and Class in New York, 1789-1860* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1982). For more on the broader context of sexual crimes against children see, Stephen Robertson, *Crimes Against Children: Sexual Violence and Legal Cultures in New York City, 1880-1960* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 2005); Smith, Merrill D., ed., *Sex Without Consent: Rape and Sexual Coercion in America* (New York: New York University Press, 2001); LeRoy Ashby, *Endangered Children: Dependency, Neglect, and Abuse in American History* (New York: Twyane Publishers, 1997).

level, Hindman's status as a working widow opened her and her children to suspicion and scrutiny. Hindman devoted much of her testimony to defending her morality before a court that apparently shared widespread middle-class suspicion of working-class women. She denied knowing her daughter's accused assailant. Under cross-examination, she noted, "I make a living by going out sewing & taking work home. [H]ave no gentleman acquaintances in town, have not made any acquaintances, do not know [McGuire]. [D]o not know any person of that name." Nancy's testimony that she had once seen McGuire while her mother was at home likely complicated matters. Regardless, court proceedings seemed to focus as much on indicting Hindman's maternal mettle as establishing McGuire's guilt or innocence.

Although attacks such as the one perpetrated against Nancy Hindman were hardly isolated (notwithstanding that most likely went unreported and unprosecuted), the law provided only minimal deterrence against harassment and sexual abuse.[50] The legal structure of Missouri contributed to the conditions in which sexual violence against children flourished. By establishing the age of consent at twelve, Missouri law assumed that sex was consensual unless teenage victims could produce evidence of physical resistance.[51] For

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[50] For example, see, State of Missouri v. Dick Rourke, 21 September 1861, SLRC, Microfilm Roll C43902, CCR; State of Missouri v. Harrison Ampson, 21 May 1861, SLRC, Microfilm Roll C43909, CCR; State of Missouri v. John Anderson, 27, May, 1861, SLRC, Microfilm Roll C43909, CCR; State of Missouri v. R.S. Price, 5 November 1862, SLRC, Microfilm Roll C43917, CCR.

[51] Hardin, Charles H., *The Revised Statutes of the State of Missouri, Revised and Digested by the Eighteenth General Assembly, during the Session of 1854 and 1855, Vol. I* (Jefferson, MO: James Lusk, 1856), 564. State rape laws also prescribed a two-tiered system that mandated castration (instead of prison) for a "negro or mulatto" convicted of rape.

children under twelve, prosecutors did not face the same burden of proof. However, as Nancy Hindman's testimony suggests, it is likely that judges factored into their decisions the degree of resistance put forth even by young victims of sexual assault. Courts routinely issued light sentences for child rapists, such as Harrison Ampson, who received five months in county jail for an assault and attempted rape of a young child, Lena Voonberg.[52]

Young girls also faced the possibility of sexual victimization from other children. In one particularly distressing case, Molly Riley suffered repeated abuse from neighborhood boys a week before being raped by an adult named William Buckley, who lived across the street. The whole ordeal came to light after Molly, just four-years-old at the time, complained of discomfort to her mother, Mrs. Hannah Riley. Mrs. Riley took Molly to see doctor Wilford M. Wiley who discovered "strong symptoms of Gonerhea" [sic] as well as "the appearance that there had been some attempt to commit violence on the child."[53] When interrogated by the Chief of Police, John E.D. Cozzins, Buckley admitted a "connection with the little girl."[54] However, Buckley protested that he had, in fact, been seduced by Molly. Buckley declared that Molly had invited him into the cellar where the assault took place and "that the boys in the neighborhood had had connection with her before him."[55] Mrs. Riley conceded that "about a week previous [to the rape, Molly] had complained to me that little

[52] State of Missouri v. Harrison Ampson, 21 May 1861, SLRC, Microfilm Roll C43909, CCR.
[53] State of Missouri v. William Buckley, 21 March 1863, SLRC, Microfilm Roll C43925, CCR.
[54] State of Missouri v. William Buckley, 21 March 1863, SLRC, Microfilm Roll C43925, CCR.
[55] State of Missouri v. William Buckley, 21 March 1863, SLRC, Microfilm Roll C43925, CCR.

boys had played with her privates."[56] Riley's neighbor," Eliza Booth, confirmed Molly's complaints. Despite the fact that prosecutors regarded the sexual attack as reprehensible, Buckley and his attorney suggested that the four-year-old Molly, by virtue of exposure to sexual knowledge with several boys, might be capable of seducing a grown man by inviting him into a cellar. [57]

The repeated sexual violence suffered by Molly Riley at the hands of other children hints at surprisingly casual attitude toward sexual experimentation among working-class children. The testimony presented by Molly's mother, neighbor, and even Buckley suggests that the repeated touching of Molly's genitals by "little boys" was open knowledge. The fact that Mrs. Riley chose to address the unwanted touching informally rather than through legal channels suggests that she and others in her working-class community were substantially less disturbed by sexual activity among children than between children and predatory adults.

Despite such dangers, working-class children enjoyed few spaces separate from the adult world. The typical working-class family crowded into a small tenement—often a single room—that afforded few spaces for indoor play. In 1861, a police officer discovered one family of recent arrivals to the city "in a basement, on a floor, damp and exposed as the very street outside, trying to

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[56] State of Missouri v. William Buckley, 21 March 1863, SLRC, Microfilm Roll C43925, CCR.
[57] Although there is no evidence to suggest that this strategy was effective as a defense, such a defense did occasionally produce acquittals in the late eighteenth century and perhaps later. See, Beth Bailey, "The Vexed History of Children and Sex," in *The Routledge History of Childhood in the Western World*, ed. Paula S. Fass (London and New York: Routledge, 2013), 196-97; Christine Stansell, *City of Women: Sex and Class in New York City, 1789-1860* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1987), 87-88.

cover themselves with a single counterpane—no bed, no fire, actually starving."[58] Not all families experienced such suffering. However, for many marginalized families, survival ranged from absolute destitution to humble subsistence. F.S.W. Gleason, superintendent of the St. Louis House of Refuge, noted that many children lived in homes "where from eight to twelve persons herded in one small, filthy apartment which served the threefold purpose of kitchen, dining room and bedroom."[59] This situation was not unique to St. Louis. Throughout the country urban working-class children possessed few spaces designated specifically for play or socializing.[60]

Children used the city for their own purposes, but independence carried substantial risks. In an era before playgrounds, recreation centers, and youth sports, children constructed their own sites of play. Boys transformed buildings under construction and the ladders within them into places to climb and explore.[61] Children rode their sleds in the streets and played in vacant lots throughout the city.[62] Sometimes parents attempted to control and limit their

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[58] "Destitution in St. Louis," *Daily Missouri Republican* [St. Louis], 17 January 1861. The Missouri Republican did not identify Captain Fealy as a police officer. However, the Fealy is listed in the *St. Louis City Directory, 1859* (St. Louis: R.V. Kennedy and Co., 1859), 157.
[59] *Fifth Annual Report of the Officers of the House of Refuge; St. Louis. Presented April 1st, 1859* (St. Louis: Missouri Democrat, 1859), 25.
[60] Not until the 1870s and 1880s did many cities begin to incorporate playgrounds, kindergartens, and youth centers, such as the YMCA and YWCA, in an effort to provide safe, supervised alternatives to unrestrained play on city streets. See, Howard Chudcoff, *Children at Play: An American History* (New York: New York University Press, 2007), 68-97; Joe L. Frost and Irma C. Woods, "Perspectives on Play in Playgrounds," in Doris Pronin and Doris Bergen, eds., *Play from Birth to Twelve: Contexts, Perspectives, and Meanings*, 3rd Ed. (New York: Routledge, 2015), 337-48; Dominick Cavallo, *Muscles and Morals: Organized Playgrounds and Urban Reform, 1880-1920* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1981), chapters 1-2.
[61] "Horrible Accident," *Daily Missouri Republican* [St. Louis], 28 January 1861.
[62] State of Missouri v. James A. Johnson, 3 September 1870, St. Louis Police Court (SLPC), Microfilm Roll C43760, CCR; "Supposed Infanticide," *Daily Missouri Republican* [St. Louis], 13 January 1861; "Another Accident," *Daily Missouri Republican* [St. Louis], 22 February 1861.

children's independence. One mother, unable or unwilling to take her young daughters to church, locked them in a room at home "so they would not go out upon the street."[63] The strategy to protect her unsupervised children—likely employed by many parents—produced horrifying results when the youngest caught fire while playing near the fireplace.[64]

Children could not always look to parents as their sole means of support. Many of them worked to help support their working-class families. Records suggest that most of these children earned wages performing farm labor, working in factories and shops, or performing domestic service.[65] Although middle-class reformers hoped children would spend more time in school, few opposed waged child labor. Many celebrated the industriousness of children and advocated inculcating habits of hard work as a means to reducing child poverty and criminality. Evidently, inadequate pay or unavailability of work pushed many children to steal. Each year the House of Refuge—the city's primary juvenile reform institution—recorded dozens of children admitted for crimes ranging from petty larceny to robbery.[66]

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[63] "A Child Fatally Burned," *Daily Missouri Republican* [St. Louis], 7 March 1861.
[64] "A Child Fatally Burned."
[65] Records from the St. Louis House of Refuge list a wide variety of occupations for children including, baking, barroom, work on boats, butchering, diarying, errands, farming, foundry, gilding, glassworks, hemp factory, housework, news boy, nursing, plumbing, printing, theater, and tobacconist. See: St. Louis House of Refuge Admittance Register, St. Louis Orphanages and Institutions, Archives of the St. Louis City Recorder (SLCR), St. Louis, MO, 53-70.
[66] *Fifth Annual Report of the Officers of the House of Refuge*, 9.

Child Labor and Public Schools

In the decades before the Civil War, St. Louis reformers harbored a constellation of interrelated ideas about children that further marginalized children of the working class. Middle-class ministers, child advice experts, educators, and parents increasingly regarded children as innocent, vulnerable, and in need of protection. They held that children should be sheltered from the burdens and knowledge of adulthood, including profanity, sex, and work. The widespread adoption this sheltered, romantic view of childhood among the middle class can be traced, in part, to structural changes in the antebellum United States that moved men's labor outside of the home, contributed to declining birth rates, and, in urban middle-class homes, produced more emotionally intensive forms of motherhood. The urban middle class imagined the home as a distinctive space, separate from the competitive and individualistic public sphere—a sphere in which women supposedly cast a spiritual and moralizing glow over their husbands and children.[67]

These developments placed a wedge between expected roles of men and women, but also between adulthood and childhood. Many middle-class parents believed their children's time was best spent at home under the care of mothers or at school. (At the same time they tended to minimize the extent to which the new middle-class household depended upon the labor of domestic

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[67] Steven Mintz and Susan Kellogg, *Domestic Revolutions: A Social History of American Family Life* (New York: Free Press, 1988), chapter 3; Mary Ryan, *Cradle of the Middle Class: The Family in Oneida County, New York, 1790-1865* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981); Nancy F. Cott, *The Bonds of Womanhood: "Woman's Sphere" in New England, 1870-1835* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977), chapter 2; Barbara Welter, "The Cult of True Womanhood: 1820-1860," *American Quarterly* 18, no. 2 (Summer 1966): 151-74.

servants.) Medical and parental advice literature reinforced this model of middle-class domesticity as the ideal and placed a great deal of stress on mothers to measure up.[68] The development of specialized furniture, clothing, toys, and nurseries reflected the emerging consensus that children possessed different needs and natures than adults.[69] With fewer children leaving their homes to learn a trade, many remained at home longer, transforming middle-class childhood into an extended period of dependency unknown by previous generations.

In this context, questions began to emerge about the widespread use of child labor. In some sense, work had always been part of children's lives—a part of the process of being incorporated into patterns of domestic life.[70] By the time of the American Revolution, elite and more affluent middling families began substituting formal schooling for work, but for the typical child labor was a part of everyday life from a very young age. And, with the growth of wage labor, children increasingly found themselves working in mills and shops.[71] However, by the 1850s, reformers were questioning prevailing practices, and middle class families no longer depended on their children's contributions for survival. This was especially true of the children of the growing merchant class of St. Louis.

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[68] For more on the influence of advice manuals and mothers' education see, Julia Grant, *Raising Baby by the Book: The Education of American Mothers* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1998), chapter 1.

[69] For more on how shifting views about childhood affected play and material culture see, Howard Chudacoff, *Children at Play: An American History* (New York: New York University Press, 2007) and Karin Calvert, *Children in the House: The Material Culture of Early Childhood, 1600-1900* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1994).

[70] John Demos, *A Little Commonwealth: Family Life in Plymouth Colony* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970), 139-44.

[71] Sharon Braslaw Sundue, *Industrious in Their Stations: Young People at Work in Urban America, 1720-1810* (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press, 2009), chapter 3.

For these children, formal schooling increasingly replaced sustained productive labor. Education provided boys with necessary training to enter professional and business careers. Middle-class children who worked often put their nascent educations to use as clerks and shopkeepers' assistants. Meanwhile, the young women who earned wages as domestic employees freed prosperous mothers and daughters from an array of household tasks. These developments, first emergent among antebellum middle-class families, set in motion the sacralization of childhood—the process by which children's emotional value increased as their economic value declined.

And yet, as Vivian Zelizer has noted, the movement by middle-class reformers to pull children from the workplace, based on children's perceived emotional pricelessness and economic uselessness, was largely incomplete by the end of the nineteenth century.[72] Child labor remained the norm for working class and rural children, not to mention the children of slaves. The children of farmers surrounding St. Louis routinely performed rigorous agricultural work, and most rural families regarded physical labor as necessary agricultural training. Children learned farming from parents and relatives, as well as through apprenticeships. In the city, working-class children felt broader structural changes more keenly. By the middle of the century, wage labor was increasingly the norm for a majority urban men. St. Louis was no exception. Along the levee, merchant houses depended upon the labor of unskilled

[72] Vivian Zelizer, *Pricing the Priceless Child: The Changing Social Value of Children* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1985).

dockworkers to load and unload ships hauling goods along the Mississippi River. The city's growing manufacturing sector required wage workers as well even though wage work did not entirely replace skilled trades.

These trends extended to children who joined both the ranks of artisans and wage workers. One St. Louis institution recorded the occupations of many of its subjects in its admittance registry.[73] Poor girls generally entered domestic service, reflecting the limited opportunities for working-class women in manufacturing. Boys worked as bakers, barbers, boat caulkers, brick layers, butchers, candle makers, carpenters, carriage boys, hatters, printers, mail carriers, newsboys, and shoemakers. Others labored in brick yards, hotels, iron foundries, mills, saloons, and steam boats, as well as in cotton, hemp, match, and tobacco factories. Few adults, regardless of social background, exhibited any squeamishness about boys working long hours. For instance, the *Daily Missouri Republican* celebrated the efforts of two young boys, aged nine and ten, who stemmed tobacco for nearly seventeen hours in a single day for seventy-five cents in order to "help their mother."[74]

Questions about how to best direct the labor of children set up inevitable conflicts between middle-class reformers and working-class families and these tensions played out first in the context of public schools. Like many American cities, St. Louis began building its municipal school system in earnest in the 1830s. In April 1833, the state legislature established the Board of President

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[73] Admittance Register, St. Louis House of Refuge (SLHOR), St. Louis Orphanages and Institutions, St. Louis City Recorder (SLCR), St. Louis, MO, 21-53.
[74] "An Example for Boys," *Daily Missouri Republican* [St. Louis], 25 September 1858.

and Directors of the St. Louis Public Schools. By December 1837, the first two school houses were completed, and the Board began advertising for pupils.[75] Yet in 1840, only about one in five school children attended public schools, and not until the 1850s were public schools educating the majority of the city's children.[76] Public schools faced a stigma in the public mind over their association with pauper schools. In St. Louis, religious charities often provided free or inexpensive education to poor children. For example, in 1836, the Eliot's Unitarian Church of the Messiah established the Mission Free School for impoverished children in the church's basement.[77] An Episcopal Church and several Catholic orphanages ran similar schools. Many feared that tuition free education "would open the schools to the lowest classes in the community, who would take possession of them, and would drive the better classes away and degrade the schools, so they would not be more respectable than the 'ragged schools' of European cities."[78] Whatever their reservations, middle-class families began placing their children in public schools, and by 1859, the school system enrolled more than 10,000 students.[79]

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[75] *First Annual Report of the General Superintendent of the St. Louis Public Schools, for the Year Ending July 1, 1854* (St. Louis: Chambers & Knapp, 1854), 52.
[76] Selwyn Troen, *The Public and the Schools: Shaping the St. Louis System, 1838-1920* (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 1975), 11.
[77] Charlotte Eliot, "History of the Mission Free School," Series 8, Box 1, William Greenleaf Eliot Personal Papers (WGEPP), Washington University of St. Louis Archives (WSTLA), St. Louis, MO.
[78] *First Annual Report of the General Superintendent of the St. Louis Public Schools, 1854*, 60.
[79] *Annual Report of the President, Superintendent, and Secretary to the Board of St. Louis Public Schools, for the Year Ending July 1st, 1859* (St. Louis: R.P. Studley and Co., 1859), 29. The report indicates 11,366 students attended schools at least part of the year. However, 1,255 students were registered twice because they transferred schools. Most students attended only part of the year. The *Report* indicates only 4,901 attended more than six months.

Not all working-class families regarded public schools favorably. In 1850, parochial schools enrolled nearly as many students as public schools. By 1860, public schools clearly pulled ahead, but parochial schools continued to grow at a rapid pace, more than doubling their student population in the same decade.[80] Many immigrant families, particularly Irish Catholics, must have regarded the public school system as a bald attempt to destroy their children's ethnic and religious identities. Controversy between Protestant education reformers and working-class Catholic families, particularly over the use of the King James Bible in classrooms, animated debates about implementing public education in many cities.[81] St. Louis was no exception. Public school officials celebrated systemized curriculum. "That the system of public instruction possesses immeasurable advantages over the private system is too palpable to be questioned," noted Superintendent of Public Schools, John H. Tice. "The private teacher either more or less has to sacrifice his independence and a sense of duty, to accommodate his requirements to a conformity with the whims and caprices of the parent and child, or of both."[82] In short, the advantage claimed by Tice—that a public school student received the exact same education in

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[80] Troen, *The Public and the Schools*, 34.

[81] This controversy has been extensively covered by a range of historians. See, William J. Reese, *America's Public Schools: From the Common School to "No Child Left Behind"* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005); Vincent P. Lannie, Alienation in America: The Immigrant Catholic and Public Education in Pre-Civil War America," *The Review of Politics* 32, no. 4 (Oct. 1970), 503-521,Michael B. Katz, *The Irony of Early School Reform: Educational Innovation in Mid-Nineteenth Century Massachusetts* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1968); Lannie, "William Seward and Common School Education," *History of Education Quarterly* 4, no. 4 (Sept. 1964), 181-192; Joseph J. McCadden, "Bishop Hughes versus the Public School Society of New York," *The Catholic Historical Review* 50, no. 2 (Jul. 1964), 188-207; Ray Allen Billington, *The Protestant Crusade, 1800-1860: A Study of the Origins of American Nativism* (New York: MacMillan, 1938).

[82] *First Annual Report of the General Superintendent of the St. Louis Public Schools, 1854*, 70.

every school—served as a primary objection of parents seeking an education that respected particular religious and cultural perspectives. In 1848 and 1849, representatives of the Catholic community vigorously opposed a city real estate tax, designed to expand funding for public schools. Opponents of the tax argued that Catholic schools ought to receive a portion of any tax levied upon all St. Louis residents. Catholic suspicions must have been heightened when promoters of the school recruited teachers from Massachusetts.[83] The tax eventually passed over opposition, but only after its proponents committed the school system to nonsectarianism and barred any version of the Bible (Protestant or Catholic) from public instruction.[84] The adoption of nonsectarian curriculum committed the schools to a program that appeared evenhanded to its creators, but which privileged middle-class, white, Protestant values to the exclusion of others. The president of public schools, Samuel H. Bailey, regarded public schools as "one of the most important institutions of [the] city, to be hereafter closely identified with its progress, and to operate most powerfully in the production of all those elements which for the character of the intelligent and virtuous citizen."[85] As a result, parochial schools remained a vital aspect of St. Louis education, particularly among working-class immigrants.

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[83] Troen, *The Public and the Schools*, 41.
[84] Troen, *The Public and the Schools*, 40-42; Charlotte C. Eliot, *William Greenleaf Eliot: Minister, Educator, Philanthropist* (Boston and New York: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1904), 75; Eliot, Journal of William Greenleaf Eliot, November 1852-March 1860, Series 1, Box 1, Item 4, WGEPP, WSTLA, 14.
[85] *Annual Report of the President, Superintendent, and Secretary to the Board of St. Louis Public Schools, 1859*, 8.

Conclusion

Many children experienced a significant amount of independence, sometimes with heart wrenching consequences. To middle-class reformers, educators, and ministers—those most likely to adopt a romantic, sheltered view of childhood—the independence of working-class and poor children was especially troublesome. Reformers' suspicions of working-class children grew from the reluctance of many parents to adopt this emerging view of childhood. Public schools provided reformers a vehicle to put these ideas into practice, providing spaces that separated children from adults. The resistance of many working-class parents to public schooling suggests that educators' ideas about children and childhood were not universal.

What most concerned reformers was the fact that unschooled children were, for the most part, very poor and unregulated. Public and parochial schools only reached a fraction of the total population of children. The president of public schools estimated that thirty percent of school aged children—approximately 8,000 in number—received no schooling at all.[86] Reformers responded by formulating a variety of institutions aimed at this group of children. The proliferation of organizations and institutions for poor, orphaned, and delinquent children signaled a commitment to providing a sheltered childhood to all children. Of course, actual practices rarely lived up to reformers' aspirations.

[86] *Annual Report of the President, Superintendent, and Secretary to the Board of St. Louis Public Schools, 1859*, 8.

Yet, the creation of child-focused reform institutions continued to accelerate in the years leading up to the Civil War.

Chapter Two: Child Reform in Antebellum St. Louis

The decades before the Civil War witnessed the emergence of new understandings and norms about childhood. Increasingly, intellectuals and reformers viewed children as innocent and vulnerable, and childhood as a distinctive period of life that should be cordoned off from the harsh realities of adulthood. This new consensus about the meaning of childhood had wide-ranging results. Prominent reformers reimagined children's role in the world and the obligations of adults to children. Reformers sought to teach children the virtues of hard work and introduce them to routines of wage labor, but also hoped to encourage all St. Louis children to attend public schools. School in particular reflected the shifting understanding of childhood, both sheltering children from the rigors and dangers of the adult world and conditioning them to wage labor.

In St. Louis, William Greenleaf Eliot proved to be one of the most influential thinkers on the subject of childhood and his biography offers a window into the city's child reform movement. A Unitarian minister by training, Eliot was concerned about suffering on many fronts. Before the Civil War, he founded several child-focused institutions, including the City Mission, the Mission Home, and the Mission Free School. He was a prominent supporter of the public schools. In fact, he proposed a real estate tax designed to fund public education. During and after the war, he was easily the most recognized social reformer in the city, and he remained active in the field until his death in 1887.

During one visit to St. Louis, Ralph Waldo Emerson proclaimed Eliot the "Saint of the West."[87]

Eliot was born in New Bedford, Massachusetts in 1811, but after his father's business career faltered, the Eliot family moved to Washington, DC, where William Greenleaf Eliot, Sr., received an appointment as chief examiner in the auditing office of the U.S. Postal Department. As the descendant of a long line of prominent Bostonians, William Jr.'s direct relatives included a prominent pastor, a state legislator, a state supreme court justice, and the first patriot sheriff of Boston who read the Declaration of Independence from a State House balcony in 1776.[88] Even before completing his studies at Harvard's Cambridge Divinity School, he decided to begin his ministry in St. Louis. In 1834, just months after being ordained by Boston's Unitarian Church, he made his way west and founded the Church of the Messiah. As the first Unitarian minister to hold a pulpit west of the Mississippi, he used his position to craft reform organizations and engage in discussion among social reformers. He recorded in his journal that it is the duty of a minister "to say what he thinks upon every question of right & wrong."[89] Apparently, Eliot took this seriously.

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[87] James E. Miller, *T.S. Eliot: The Making of an American Poet, 1888-1922* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2005), 10; Eric Sandweiss, *St. Louis in the Century of Henry Shaw: A View Beyond the Garden Wall* (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 2003), 31.

[88] Charlotte C. Eliot, *William Greenleaf Eliot: Minister, Educator, Philanthropist* (Boston and New York: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1904), 2-6. Also see, Eliot, *Family Genealogy Book* (Unpub, n.d.), Series 3, Box 1, Folder 15, William Greenleaf Eliot Personal Papers(WGEPP), Washington University in St. Louis Archives (WSTLA); William Horace Eliot and William Smith Porter, *Genealogy of the Eliot Family* (New Haven, CT: George B. Bassett & Co., 1854); James Edward Greenleaf, *Genealogy of the Greenleaf Family* (Boston: Frank Wood, Printer, 1896).

[89] William Greenleaf Eliot, Journal of William Greenleaf Eliot, November 1847-October 1848, Series 1, Box 1, Item 1, WGEPP, WSTLA, 4.

He addressed topics ranging from temperance and gambling to antislavery.[90] In addition to social reform, he was was dedicated to alleviating suffering during times of crisis. During a cholera epidemic in 1849 that claimed more than four thousand lives, Eliot nervously ministered to his congregants, keeping detailed records of the sick and dead.[91]

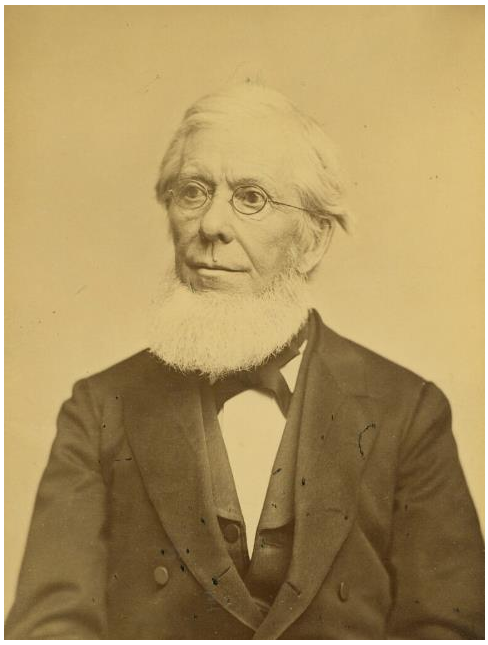

Figure 1. Photo, William Greenleaf Eliot, a Unitarian minister, leading social reformer, and cofounder of Washington University in St. Louis. Image courtesy of the *Missouri History Museum*, St. Louis, Missouri.

[90] Eliot, Journal of William Greenleaf Eliot, November 1847-October 1848, Series 1, Box 1, Item 1, WGEPP, WSTLA.

[91] Patrick E. McLear, "The St. Louis Cholera Epidemic of 1849," *Missouri Historical Review* 63, no. 2 (January 1969), 179. The official figure of deaths from cholera was 4285. However, the figure was likely much higher since many deaths during the epidemic were registered as "unknown causes." See, Eliot, Journal of William G. Eliot, St. Louis, MO, October 1848-August 1849, Series 1, Box 1, Item 2, WGEPP, WSTLA; Eliot, *William Greenleaf Eliot*, 45-50.

Eliot's conception of child nature reflected the softening attitude toward sin that characterized liberal Protestants.[92] He rejected Calvinist definitions of original sin, denying the inherent sinfulness of infants and young children. Eliot believed children possessed "original imperfection . . . which the child inherits from his parents."[93] In short, Eliot detached human imperfection from the concept of sin. "We are born with a mixed constitution," Eliot wrote, "physical, intellectual, and moral."[94] He held that these elements "originally came from the

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[92] Attitudes toward children and sin evolved slowly. Americans inherited centuries of sometimes conflicting attitudes and opinions. In some ways, the influence of the Puritans loomed large. Harboring particularly austere attitudes toward childhood, Puritans viewed children as stained by original sin. "As innocent as children seem to be to us," declared Jonathan Edwards, "yet if they are out of Christ, they are not so in God's sight. But are young vipers, and infinitely more hateful than vipers." See, Jonathan Edwards, *The Great Awakening*, ed. C.C. Goen (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1972), 394, quoted in Allison P. Coudert, "Educating Girls in Early Modern Europe and America," in *Childhood in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance: The Results of a Paradigm Shift in the History of Mentality*, ed. Albrecht Claussen (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2005), 394. As a result, many counseled parents to stamp out idleness in children and "Break their will that you may save their souls." See, Philip Greven, *The Protestant Temperament: Patterns of Child-Rearing, Religious Experience, and the Self in Early America* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1977), 151, quoted in Coudert, "Educating Girls in Early Modern Europe and America," 394. Of course, not all early Americans subscribed to puritanical beliefs. Many historians highlight the enduring influence of enlightenment thinkers John Locke and Jean Jacques Rousseau in shaping subsequent attitudes toward children. Locke's *Some Thoughts Concerning Education* (1698) advocated softer forms discipline and systematized education even for very young children. He suggested that children were *tabula rasa*—blank slates adults might write upon—in terms of intellect, but not necessarily temperament. Therefore, education should reflect children's particular "natural genius and constitution" and be the result of study of "their natures and aptitudes." John Locke, *Some Thoughts Concerning Education* (Mineola, NY: Dover, 2007), 46. Despite his stress on the individuality of each child, Locke argued that education required the development of self-control and self-denial as practice for submitting to reason as adults. Rousseau popularized views on child nature, explicitly rejecting the notion of inherent sinfulness, which proved influential to later Romantic childhood theorists. In particular, Rousseau's *Émile* (1762) declared that nature should guide practices of parenting and education and, perhaps most significant, suggested that children should enjoy childhood, reflecting upon it with nostalgia later in life. This conception of childhood marked off childhood as a distinctive period of life that should be separated from the adult world—in terms of education, physical spaces, practices of play and leisure, and material culture aimed specifically at children. By early decades of the nineteenth century, these ideas had percolated throughout religious, educative, and parental advice literature.

[93] Eliot, "Regeneration" in *Discourses on the Unity of God: And Other Subjects, Printed for the American Unitarian Association* (Boston: Crosby, Nichols, and Company, 1853), 133.

[94] Eliot, *Discourses on the Unity of God*, 134.

hand of God, [and] were pronounced to be good."[95] Turning the Calvinist doctrine of innate depravity on its head, Eliot suggested that human imperfection was not the mark of sin, but rather the stamp of divine creation. Whereas strict Calvinists generally regarded demanding infants as possibly wicked and damned, Eliot recognized the infant's desires as the natural outgrowth of God-created humanity. He cast self-love as self-preservation, arguing that the infant's indulgence in pleasure and "angry resistance" to the unpleasurable followed from God-given nature. This goodness continued as a child developed higher faculties above the purely physical. Inherent within even the smallest child rests a sense "of right, of just, and of truth . . . very weak, but also very correct."[96]

Eliot's view of children reflected the influence of Transcendentalist thinkers who posited that children naturally possessed an intuitive moral and spiritual sense. The New Englander, A. Bronson Alcott, described the child as "a Type of Divinity."[97] Eliot no doubt knew of Alcott. The men travelled in overlapping social circles in New England, and Alcott made several of journeys to St. Louis in the 1860s to discuss philosophy with a number of New England expatriates.[98] Eliot suggested that children possessed instinctive morality. As he put it, "the instincts of childhood upon all moral subjects are sure to be

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[95] Eliot, *Discourses on the Unity of God*, 134-35.
[96] Eliot, *Discourses on the Unity of God*, 134-35.
[97] Mintz, *Huck's Raft*, 76.
[98] A. Bronson Alcott, a renowned Boston transcendentalist intellectual, educator, and reformer, traveled to St. Louis multiple times to meet with the St. Louis Philosophical Society. See Record Book, 1866-1871, A1440, St. Louis Philosophical Society, St. Louis History Museum (STLHM), St. Louis MO; and Henry Brokmeyer Correspondence, 1861-1865, Box 1, A0655 William Torrey Harris Papers, STLHM.

right."[99] Although he never accepted Alcott's theory of child divinity, Eliot suggested that all children were born with a inborn sense of morality. The task of the parent or teacher was to guide the intellectual and moral development of the child, rather than mold a formless character and intellect. According to Eliot, a child's intellect developed alongside the moral constitution of the child, performing one of two functions. Intellectual development strengthened either the physical or moral sensibilities of the child. Only at this stage of development did Eliot recognize the potential influence of adults. Although the natural temperament of a child played the determining role, education and example might also guide physical and moral maturation.

Socializing children to perform sustained labor remained a vital aspect of child reform thought and practice. Nineteenth-century intellectuals regarded children's labor as a central component of proper moral, intellectual, and civic development. Although Eliot vigorously supported the public education, he did not believe schooling should entirely replace labor. In addition to his support for the public school system, he championed evening schools that allowed children to work during the day and manual training schools for poor children that emphasized practical skills. Eliot declared that labor produced contentment and protection from temptation to sin. He believed that idle time gave adults and children the opportunity to ponder forbidden thoughts and to act upon wicked desires. For this reason, Eliot argued that children—still in a period of moral development—needed to work. Eliot preached, "The children of the rich are

[99] Eliot, *Discourses on the Unity of God*, 135.

under double temptation and often enter upon an inheritance of self-indulgence, of effeminate virtue or sin."[100] By freeing children from the obligation to work, affluent parents visited upon their children "calamity and disgrace!"[101] Eliot argued that labor also produced resoluteness in times of calamity and moral training. Habituation to hard work helped children develop perseverance in order to overcome temptation during future difficulties.

Eliot was among the St. Louis reformers who created institutions and charities aimed at children prior to the Civil War. Guided by the conviction that children might be "reclaimed" from the ills of ignorance, poverty, immorality, vice, orphanhood, and crime, reformers engaged in a vigorous institution-building effort that, by the eve of the Civil War, had reshaped the lives of thousands of St. Louis children. Charity workers established an overlapping array institutions that provided education, food and clothing, supervision, and shelter to the city's most marginalized children. Many families welcomed much needed assistance, but they also chaffed at prescriptions that permanently separated families, emphasized stern discipline and intensive labor, and obliterated ethnic and religious identities.

In most cases, the groundwork for such institutions was laid in cities throughout the northeastern states, far removed from St. Louis. Reformers elevated maternal domesticity as a force for individual and social change. In many instances, charity workers claimed to model institutions on the family and

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[100] Eliot, *The Dignity and Moral Uses of Labor. A Discourse Delivered in the Church of the Messiah* (St. Louis: Keemle & Hager, 1855), 6.
[101] Eliot, *The Dignity and Moral Uses of Labor*, 6.

employed women to put middle-class Protestant domestic values into practice. In other instance, institutions mirrored organizations established in Northeastern metropolises—most notably New York—that hoped to stamp out poverty and crime among working-class children and families. While such institutions also laid claim to domesticity, they tended to emphasize patriarchal authority, discipline, and labor.

Beginning in the 1830s, St. Louis reformers created a variety of institutions, including several Catholic orphanages, Diocese, and Protestant voluntary associations. In subsequent years, the number of orphanages grew and other child-focused institutions proliferated. In 1852, Eliot founded the City Mission to provide food and material assistance to poor families and their children. In 1854, female Protestant reformers founded the St. Louis Girls' Industrial School, hoping to offer poor girls basic educations and training in domestic service. The same year, the city created the St. Louis House of Refuge in order incarcerate children accused of crimes, as well as provide shelter for needy or unruly children who slipped through the cracks of the city's patchwork system of benevolence child-focused institutions.

Charity in Antebellum St. Louis

Commentators in St. Louis, much like those in other major cities, viewed the urban environment itself as a source of potential vice and moral dissipation. According to charity workers, poverty—closely associated with ignorance, intemperance, and vice—passed from one generation to the next as the result

of inadequate family life and parenting. John H. Tice, superintendent of St. Louis public schools noted, “It cannot be questioned that the habits formed in youth go with us, with some modifications, through life . . . It is well known how sadly many parents fail in the government of their children, and the formation of habits of industry, integrity, order, and punctuality. Disorder reigns supreme in the family, and even parents have the weakness to confess that they have no control over their children”[102] Of course, this assessment was not limited to St. Louis. In fact, similar attitudes toward families of the laboring classes dominated reform discourse throughout antebellum northern cities.[103]

In St. Louis, few institutions addressed the problem of urban poverty directly. By the 1850s, many reformers questioned the once-pervasive practice of providing “outdoor” poor relief—charity distributed directly to the needy outside of an institution and with little oversight over recipients—on the basis of its increasing cost and the assumption that indiscriminate assistance to the able-bodied produced perpetually dependent paupers.[104] As a result, St. Louis reformers generally dispensed assistance in the context of institutions. Chief among such institutions was the city workhouse, which provided the indigent shelter and food. This institution was hardly an example of benevolence.

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[102] *First Annual Report of the General Superintendent of the St. Louis Public Schools, for the Year Ending July 1, 1854* (St. Louis: Chambers & Knapp, 1854), 25.
[103] Michael Meranze, *Laboratories of Virtue: Punishment, Revolution, and Authority in Philadelphia, 1760-1835* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 237-38, 267-70; Christine Stansell, *City of Women: Sex and Class in New York, 1789-1860* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1987), 32-35; Ronald G. Walters, *American Reformers, 1815-1860*, Revised Ed. (New York: Hill and Wang, 1997), 176-82.
[104] Michael Katz, *In the Shadow of the Poorhouse: A Social History of Welfare in America* (New York: Basic Books, 1996), 13-22.

Residents, unable to pay fines imposed by municipal courts for city ordinance violations such as vagrancy or disturbing the peace, were confined to pay off their debts.[105] Charities made few systematized efforts to provide for the material needs of the poor out of doors.

One notable exception was Eliot's City Mission, which was located in part of the Church of the Messiah's chapel building and supported with church funds.[106] The City Mission offered clothing and other forms of assistance to the most needy residents of the city, but assistance was not guaranteed. The City Mission employed a visiting agent to locate and screen potential recipients. The organization identified and dispensed aid only to the "worthy" poor. Between October 1854 and April 1855, it processed 406 applications for assistance, mostly from families. Of the 1,259 people seeking charity, the inspectors of the City Mission deemed only 957 as worthy. "In some instances, if the children were found to be suffering," the report noted, "assistance was given to families where the parents were unworthy of relief."[107] The visiting agent lamented that the City Mission turned away who more than 200 children "who, though perhaps not in physical suffering, were exposed to the worst influences of idleness, intemperance and vice."[108]

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[105] *The Revised Ordinances of the City of St. Louis, Revised and Digested by the Fifth City Council* (St. Louis: Chambers and Knapp, 1843), 478.
[106] Eliot, Notebook 3, Journal of William Greenleaf Eliot, September 1849-December 1852, Series 1, Box 1, Item 3, WGEPP, WSTLA, 161.
[107] "Report: Presented to the Charitable Association of the Church of the Messiah by their City Missionary, the Rev. C.G. Ward, May 13, 1855," May 23, 1855, Notebook 4, Journal of William Greenleaf Eliot, November 1852-March 1860, Series 1, Box 1, Item 4, WGEPP, WSTLA, 78.
[108] "Report: Presented to the Charitable Association of the Church of the Messiah by their City Missionary, the Rev. C.G. Ward, May 13, 1855," May 23, 1855, Notebook 4, Journal of William Greenleaf Eliot, November 1852-March 1860, Series 1, Box 1, Item 4, WGEPP, WSTLA, 78.

While many reformers regarded marginalized children with pity, they also saw them as potential threats to social order. In 1848, Eliot declared, the city gave birth to "a host of idle and vicious boys growing up to be a curse to our city."[109] By 1855, evidently, little progress had been made. Reverend C.G. Ward, after visiting more than 300 impoverished children in their homes, lamented that instead of school, such children "have no opportunity of learning anything but lessons of idleness, beggary and theft. A new swarm of paupers and criminals is thus coming forward, to be the curse and burden of future years."[110] Ward was not alone in this belief. Most reformers were apt to conflate poverty, parental neglect, and criminal behavior. Thus, in 1854, the New York Children's Aid society noted that "in 1849 the city was home to almost 10,000 vagrant children, and of which a reported 2,955 supported themselves by thieving."[111] New Yorkers complained that vagrant children engaged in organized crime, running complicated pickpocket rings and luring victims to remote places to be robbed by older accomplices. Other boys sold counterfeit books, ran off with baggage or pinched small amounts of goods as they landed on the docks.[112]

Reformers also feared that the spread of crime and social suffering among children signaled moral contagion. One St. Louis charity worker noted,

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[109] Eliot, Notebook 1, Journal of William Greenleaf Eliot, November 1847-October 1848, Series 1, Box 1, Item 1, WGEPP, WSTLA, 145.
[110] "Report: Presented to the Charitable Association of the Church of the Messiah by their City Missionary, the Rev. C.G. Ward, May 13, 1855," May 23, 1855, Notebook 4, Journal of William Greenleaf Eliot, November 1852-March 1860, Series 1, Box 1, Item 4, WGEPP, WSTLA, 78.
[111] *First Annual Report of the Children's Aid Society, February 1854* (New York: C.W. Benedict, 1854), 4.
[112] *First Annual Report of the Children's Aid Society,1854*, 5.

"in our cities with their teeming thousands, vice flourishes with a spontaneity truly appalling. Here, in our crowded thoroughfares, where the masses congregate and stagnate, the elements of corruption are formed, and moral cesspools created which the most stringent sanitary measures alone can abate."[113]

The development of child-focused organizations and institutions reflected the widely shared belief that children were highly susceptible to both positive and negative influences. By the 1850s, many reformers wondered whether children and adults ought to receive charity or punishment in the same spaces. Integration within both the city jail and workhouse provoked particular anxieties. St. Louis reformers worried that children might acquire many of the habits and vices of hardened adult criminals and paupers. "Take . . . [the St. Louis] calaboose and workhouse together," Eliot argued, "and they train and graduate in wickedness more than any school or church in the city can educate in virtue."[114] He saw children's character as malleable—subject to significant revision based on surrounding influences. Of course, external influences were as likely to lead a child toward morality and discipline as toward criminality and vice. As a result, cohabitation with morally questionable adults struck reformers as especially concerning. Nearly a decade after the city established a House of Refuge—a large institution designed for abandoned, neglected, orphaned, and criminal children—reformers still complained that the city jail provided

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[113] *Sixth Annual Meeting of the Girls' Industrial Home* [s.l.: s.n, n.d.], 5.
[114] Eliot, *Statement of the Actual Condition of the Prisons in the City and County of St. Louis; Prepared after Careful Inspection, and Respectfully Addressed to His Fellow Citizens* (St. Louis: Democrat Office, 1865), 5.

dangerous contact between adults and child prisoners awaiting eventual transfer. Children overheard conversations of “ribaldry and cursing” that threatened to “pollute the ear.”[115] Eliot complained sarcastically about a “ten year old boy crouched up in a corner crying . . . he was a homeless child, consigned by the tender mercies of a civilized community to this pleasant retreat, where he would remain . . . in company of whatever reprobates might be put in with him.”[116]

Although boys tended to face arrest and incarceration at higher rates, than girls, reformers generally viewed girls as susceptible to negative influences. “It is a well attested fact,” one reformer argued, “that girls taken from [overcrowded and impoverished homes] are far more dangerous to society—far more degraded in their feelings and desires, and consequently far more difficult to manage and control than boys . . . the once pure—almost angelic being is transformed in her nature to a mere wreck of her former self.”[117] Drawing from reform discourse that characterized prostitutes as either misguided and desperate innocents or hardened vice-ridden seducers and moral reprobates, this characterization of girls posited that only a thin line separated the reformable from the irreformable.[118] This sentiment also suggested that once descended into vice, girls were more difficult to “reclaim.” Anxieties about female sexuality reflected the efforts of reformers to firmer boundaries between

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[115] Eliot, *Statement of the Actual Condition of the Prisons*, 4.
[116] Eliot, *Statement of the Actual Condition of the Prisons*, 4.
[117] *Fifth Annual Report of the Officers of the House of Refuge; St. Louis. Presented April 1st, 1859* (St. Louis: Missouri Democrat Book and Job Office, 1859), 25.
[118] Stansell, *City of Women*, 191-92.

childhood and adulthood. Throughout the nineteenth century, reformers cordoned off increasingly large swaths of human behavior as belonging to the adult world, beginning with sex. This effort was so vigorous that many saw childhood as intrinsically asexual.

Reformers hoped that within the walls of each institution, children might be shielded from the negative influences of the city and bathed in the positive example of charity workers. Charles Loring Brace, founder of the New York Children's Aid society, noted, the "change of circumstances, the improved food, the daily moral and mental influences, the effect of regular labor and discipline, and . . . Religion . . . [that] substitute a higher moral sense for the low moral instincts which [impoverished children] obtained from their parents."[119] It was precisely this belief that helped to inspire the formation of children's charities. Since the first decades of the nineteenth century, reformers argued that children required special spaces for reform. The New York House of Refuge, founded in 1825, launched a movement to remove children from the harmful influences of the streets and supposedly immoral households. The number of orphanages in the state expanded from a handful at the beginning of the century to nearly one-hundred by the 1850s, each forming "a carefully controlled environment where children would learn the values of industry, sobriety, and self-control."[120]

Charity workers regularly made the case that the reformation of children was possible only when children were removed from the bad influences of

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[119] Charles Loring Brace, *The Dangerous Classes of New York, and Twenty Years' Work Among Them* (New York: Wynkoop & Hallenbeck, 1872), 45-46.
[120] Mintz, *Huck's Raft*, 157-58.

family. The courts followed suit. Judges routinely upheld the authority of the state to remove children from families judged to be insolvent or morally questionable.[121] Regard for due process was notably absent. In St. Louis, applicants for charity found every aspect of their lives scrutinized. The City Mission pressured families to enroll children in public schools. Whenever agents uncovered evidence of adult or child crime or neglect, they reported families to city authorities. These reports resulted in children being removed from their homes and placed in the city's House of Refuge. "Our great aim in helping the poor, City Missionary, Reverend C.G. Ward, wrote, "should be to save their children from . . . exposure [to crime and vice], to provide for them a means of education, and to form them in habits of industry and virtue."[122] It was this desire to "form" children that underlay the growing array of St. Louis children's institutions. Evidently, institutions themselves attempted to lure children from abusive and neglectful homes without the knowledge of parents. One visiting agent asked a young girl, "If we find you a good home, would you be willing to leave your mother secretly?"[123] Although the agent acknowledged that the institution had no legal right to place the child in another family without

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[121] The principle of *parens patriae* was first established centuries earlier in English common law. However, by the early nineteenth century, many courts revived the principle and increasingly applied it in circumstances that suggested class hostility. See, LeRoy Ashby, *Endangered Children: Dependency, Neglect, and Abuse in American History* (New York: Twyane Publishers, 1997), 236; Michael Meranze, *Laboratories of Virtue: Punishment, Revolution, and Authority in Philadelphia, 1760-1835* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 292; Michael Grossberg, *Governing the Hearth: Law and the Family in Nineteenth-Century America* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1985), 236-37;

[122] "Report: Presented to the Charitable Association of the Church of the Messiah by their City Missionary, the Rev. C.G. Ward, May 13, 1855," May 23, 1855, Notebook 4, Journal of William Greenleaf Eliot, November 1852-March 1860, Series 1, Box 1, Item 4, WGEPP, WSTLA, 78.

[123] *Fourth Annual Report of the Girls' Industrial Home of St. Louis, MO* (St. Louis: R.P. Studley, 1858), 11.

the consent of her mother, the charity worker promised, “God will watch over you if you are good.”[124]

Homes for Orphans

Throughout the nineteenth century, the loss of one or both parents proved a common experience for many children. As many as thirty percent of children of American children under fifteen years old were orphans.[125] All available evidence suggests St. Louis at least kept pace with these trends. Certain years proved more devastating than others. In 1849, cholera swept cities throughout the nation. With its primitive water and sanitation systems, St. Louis was especially vulnerable. The disease claimed the lives of approximately ten percent of city’s population during the five month epidemic.[126] Thousands of terrified residents fled as carts and wagons brought many of the dead to be dumped in makeshift graves along the banks of the Mississippi River’s Quarantine Island. Although the disease respected no social class or ethnic group, impoverished, crowded immigrant neighborhoods suffered most.[127] This was not the city’s first outbreak of cholera, nor would it be the last. In 1832, St.

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[124] *Fourth Annual Report of the Girls’ Industrial Home of St. Louis,* 11.
[125] Stephen O’Connor, *Orphan Trains: The Story of Charles Loring Brace and the Children He Saved and Failed* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), 98.
[126] Official reports indicated 1,556 people died in the epidemic. Charles E. Rosenberg, *The Cholera Years: The United States in 1832, 1849, and 1866* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 115-20; William W. McPheeters, “History of the Cholera Epidemic in St. Louis in 1849,” *St. Louis Medical and Surgical Journa*l 7 (1850), 97-102. An 1848 sheriff’s census put the population of St. Louis at 73,364. See, John Thomas Scharf, *History of Saint Louis City and County, From the Earliest Periods to the Present Day*, Vol. 2 (Philadelphia: Louis H. Everts and Co., 1883), 1017.
[127] Rev. John Rothensteiner, *History of the Archdiocese of St. Louis in Its Various Stages of Development from A.D. 1673 to A.D. 1928*, Vol. II (St. Louis: Blackwell Wieland Co., 1928), 18.

Louis, then a town of about 6,000 residents, found itself devastated by epidemic cholera, and in 1866, a minor outbreak once again struck the city. Whether during epidemics or not, every year St. Louis children found themselves orphaned in large numbers.

The cause of orphans, generally regarded as more innocent, deserving, and vulnerable than impoverished adults, attracted vigorous support. As early as 1832, women began organizing for their care when the Female Charitable Society, notable for its inclusion of both Protestant and Catholic members, proposed establishing an institution. When the interfaith orphanage failed to materialize, the movement splintered. In 1832, the Sisters of Charity—a Catholic order—opened a hospital and home for orphaned boys.[128] The facilities opened just in time for cholera to devastate the city beginning later the same year. By 1834, the Sisters of Charity expanded into a home large enough to accommodate both boys and girls. By the 1840s, the Sisters of Charity added the St. Mary's Female Orphan Asylum and St. Philomena's Orphan Asylum and Free School to their management.[129] However, unlike Protestant orphanages, the institution reflected uniquely Catholic prerogatives, such as the mandates of the order of the Sisters of Charity to care for the sick, widows, and orphans. For

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[128] Rothensteiner, *History of the Archdiocese of St. Louis in Its Various Stage of Development from A.D. 1673 to A.D. 1928, Vol. I* (St. Louis: Blackwell Wieland Co.,1928), 315, 448.
[129] Rothensteiner, *History of the Archdiocese of St. Louis, Vol. I*, 809. When the Sisters of Charity moved to a larger facility in 1836, the Sisters of St. Joseph took over the empty building and established the Sisters of St. Joseph Orphanage opened. See, Rothensteiner, *History of the Archdiocese of St. Louis, Vol. I*, 635. Also see, History of the St. Mary's Orphanage, Folders 1-4, Record Group 11-3, St. Mary's Box 1, Daughters of Charity Archives, Province of St. Louis, St. Louis, MO. At the time the research for this project was conducted, the archives were in St. Louis, MO. However, they have since been relocated to St. Joseph House in Emmitsburg, MD.

funding it was heavily dependent upon the patronage of the Bishop and Diocese.

The city's middle-class Protestant women also pursued plans for an orphanage. In 1834, women of the Second Presbyterian Church founded the St. Louis Association of Ladies for the Relief of Orphan Children. After winning the approval of the city's leading minsters, the association began accepting orphaned children. The first child, Enoch Henry Smith, did not enter an orphanage, but rather the home of Mrs. Moses Scott, a woman employed by the board of directors to shelter the children. Seven additional children followed within the year. By December 1835, the association opened the doors of a small cottage on the northern edge of the city and transferred its six children there. In addition, the Asylum operated a school for orphans and neighborhood children. In 1853, it changed its name to the St. Louis Protestant Orphan Asylum. From its start, the institution was inherently a female endeavor.[130] The women raised funds from throughout the city as well as from Boston—the former home of many reformers.[131] Also, the women likely led the effort to locate and rent their first property.

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[130] The managers and officers of the association consisted entirely of women, though the founders (typical of antebellum charities) selected two men for prominent positions: Reverend Chaderton served as chairman and Reverend Potts as secretary. Aside from providing a sense of legitimacy, it is unclear what influence the men exerted over the institution.

[131] H.I. Stagg, *History of the Founding and Progress of the St. Louis Protestant Orphan Asylum, Prepared at the Request of the Board of Managers* (St. Louis: s.n., 1891), 6. Charitable work gave women greater claims to public space than was typically acknowledged by reformers at the time. See, Marta Gutman, *A City for Children: Women, Architecture, and the Charitable Landscapes of Oakland, 1850-1960* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 201), 30-31, 35; Mary Ryan, *Women in Public: Between Banners and Ballots, 1825-1880* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990), 99-100

Women's public activities deployed the ideology of maternal domesticity, which celebrated women's role as mothers and, increasingly, extended the boundaries of the so-called "women's sphere."[132] From the beginning, Asylum reports characterized its charity workers and children as a "family." Administrators of one St. Louis orphanage claimed is was, "an institution where the helpless and destitute orphan of either sex is protected, and nourished, and religiously, and morally educated with the affectionate care of *parents*."[133] One report declared that the children "remain in the Asylum, healthy and happy, unconscious of a parent's loss by the maternal care they receive."[134] Such maternalist rhetoric supported reform women's claims to segments of public space. They emphasized the vulnerability of orphans and by implication their womanly obligation to offer assistance. "The cause of the orphan is one which appeals to every sympathy of the heart," declared the Asylum's *First Report*, "cast upon the wide world, cold and friendless, with none of to care for or sympathise [sic] in its wants . . . little helpless beings, houseless and forlorn, destitute of friends and unprotected."[135]

While the saccharine appeals to save "friendless" orphans helped the organization secure donations, many of its children were not, in fact, orphans at

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[132] Ann Boylan, *The Origins of Women's Activism: New York and Boston, 1797-1840* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), chapter 2; Lori D. Ginzberg, *Women and the Work of Benevolence: Morality, Politics, and Class in the 19th-Century United States* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), chapter 1; Mary Ryan, *Cradle of the Middle Class*, chapter 3; Stansell, *City of Women*, 69-75; Cott, *Bonds of Womanhood*, 154-59.

[133] *The Fourth Annual Report of the Ladies' Protestant Orphan Association of Saint Louis* (St. Louis: Office of the Missouri Saturday News, 1839), 1 (emphasis added).

[134] *Seventh Annual Report of the St. Louis Association of Ladies for the Relief of Orphan Children. 1842* (St. Louis: Republic Office, 1842), 3-4.

[135] *The First Annual Report of the Ladies' Protestant Orphan Association of St. Louis* [1835] (s.l.: s.n., n.d.), 2.

all. As Timothy Hasci has noted, by the middle of the century, most orphan asylums throughout the country admitted increasing numbers of half-orphan and impoverished children with living parents.[136] Penelope Smith, secretary of the Asylum, conceded "we had received many children whose parents either from personal affliction of poverty, were unable to care of their offspring, thereby rendering them objects of charity."[137] In fact, as of 1840, only nine of the institution's twenty-one children were orphans. Evidently, administrators wrestled with the idea of extending charity to the children of potentially unworthy parents, but Smith defended the practice:

> Some may think that this course will encourage idleness, intemperance and infamy. It may be, but in our humble opinion it will not increase these vices; for by taking children away from these contaminating scenes of depravity we, in a measure, check its growth and remove these tender plants to a more genial soil where they can acquire strength to bloom forever . . . we would be willing to receive all such unfortunate little ones, to set before them examples of piety and industry, with the cherished hope of making them useful members of society.[138]

Smith argued that the Asylum offered impoverished children an escape from their defective families, and, even more importantly, the positive influence of middle-class domesticity.

The baldly assimilationist goals of the institution generated profound suspicion among the city's working-class whose children predominated in the Asylum. Within its first year, two of the first eight children brought to the

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[136] Timothy Hasci, *Second Home: Orphan Asylums and Poor Families in America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997), 63-64, 113-14.
[137] *The Fifth Annual Report of the Protestant Orphan Association of Saint Louis, Missouri* (St. Louis: Argus Office, 1840), 4.
[138] *Fifth Annual Report of the Protestant Orphan Association of Saint Louis*, 4-5.

institution were reclaimed by their mother who "was unwilling that her children should be educated in the protestant faith."[139] Surging rates of Irish and German immigration throughout the 1850s made conflicts between Protestant reformers and Catholic recipients of charity increasingly frequent.

Swelling numbers of immigrants evidently fueled animosity, and in 1850, German Catholics appealed to the St. Louis Diocese for the establishment of a German Catholic orphanage.[140] The following year, the German St. Vincent Orphan Society opened its doors and by winter was home to thirty German Catholic children. In 1845, the Diocese even established the School for Catholic Colored Girls, which provided education to free blacks, as well as to slave children on Sundays. However, Rev. John Rothensteiner lamented, "owing to a strong prejudice of the slave-holding population who feared serious consequences from an educated Negro element, the school had to be discontinued."[141]

Industrial Schools & Homes

By the 1850s, a number of new city charities confirmed the practice already underway in many orphanages of providing shelter and care for impoverished non-orphan children. Of course, this development was not unique to St. Louis. By the 1850s, charity workers throughout the nation understood that conventional solutions to poverty and social suffering—such as work and

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[139] *First Annual Report of the Ladies' Protestant Orphan Association*, 2.
[140] Rothensteiner, *History of the Archdiocese of St. Louis*, Vol. II, 22-23.
[141] Rothensteiner, *History of the Archdiocese of St. Louis*, Vol. I, 859.

poor houses—provided unsuitable care and failed to reach many needy children. In 1853, Charles Loring Brace, secretary of the New York Children's Aid Society, noted that "Asylums and City Institutions for the vagrant and homeless . . . did not reach a vast magnitude of neglected children."[142] He pushed for the opening of workshops and lodging houses for destitute boys and "Industrial Schools" for girls. Industrial schools aimed not to teach skills useful in the emerging industrial economy, but rather to instill industriousness and train girls for entry into domestic service. The Industrial School movement, Brace argued, moved beyond providing food and shelter to impoverished children, "teaching industry and habits of application, by inculcating . . . refinement, purity, self-sacrifice and Christian obligation [to] . . . check and prevent the worst effects of poverty."[143]

The successes of New York's Five Points House of Industry served as inspiration for the St. Louis Girls' Industrial Home. One St. Louis charity woman reflected, "The reformation which accomplished so much for the Five Points, New York, a few years since, gave us fresh impulse to this class of charities throughout the country at large. The harrowing details of destitution and crime which were then disclosed roused a spirit of inquiry in the minds of the benevolent, and upon investigation it was found that each city contained its

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[142] *First Annual Report of the Children's Aid Society. February, 1854* (New York: C.W. Benedict, 1854), 7.
[143] Brace, *Address upon the Industrial School Movement, Delivered at a Meeting of the Ladies Industrial Schools, at University Chapel, November, 1857* (New York: Wynkoop, Hallenbeck & Thomas, 1857), 10.

'Five Points.'"[144] In 1853, many of the leading women gathered to constitute "a plan to rescue from their lives of idleness those little girls whose best employment and whose sole ambition was, to beg!"[145] On February 11, 1854, the committee to establish a Girls' Industrial School met at the Unitarian Church of the Messiah, and set down plans to raise funds.[146] The women followed the model established by urban antebellum reform organizations decades earlier, soliciting donations from Protestant churches throughout the city and printing public appeals city newspapers.

By making public appeals and renting space in the city, female reformers staked modest, but important, claims to public space and discourse. One such appeal implored, "Shall we allow, can we suffer such children to grow up in idleness and sin, when they might be rescued, and made happy and useful members of society? . . . Will not you who read these few words, and who have not yet contributed to our enterprise, bestow some amount . . . in aid to our limited funds, as early as possible?"[147] Mid-nineteenth century attitudes toward

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[144] *Sixth Annual Meeting of the Girls' Industrial Home* [s.l.: s.n, n.d.], 5-6. The report likely refers to the Five Points House of Industry, established in 1850 and which catered to the needs of impoverished adults and children. See, *Second Annual Report of the Trustees of the Five Points House of Industry, Made to the Incorporators, March 1, 1856* (New York: s.n., 1856). Brace's Children's Aid Society founded a number of its own industrial schools, the first established in New York's fourth ward. The industrial schools ran by the Children's Aid Society were not located in Five Points.

[145] *First Annual Report of the Board of Managers of the Girls' Industrial School, October 31st, 1854* (St. Louis: Missouri Democrat Office, 1854), 3.

[146] In 1855, the respected reformer and minister of the Church of the Messiah, William Greenleaf Eliot, moved to establish an industrial school for boys. In April, Eliot began searching for and secured a home for the Boys' Industrial School.[84] However, few records from this institution survive. It continued at least into 1857, when it was listed in: Robert V. Kennedy, *Kennedy's Saint Louis City Directory for the Year 1857* (St. Louis: R.V. Kennedy, 1857), 32, 140.

[147] "The Girls' Industrial School," [Newspaper clipping], Journal of William Greenleaf Eliot, St. Louis, MO, November 1852-March 1860, Series 1, Box 1, Item 4, William Greenleaf Eliot

women's domesticity served to legitimate their mission as well as the methods of the Industrial School. One commentator argued that the proposed school was "a 'labor of love' [that] cannot fail to stir up the pure of heart . . . in a sphere where Woman's most hallowed, sacred 'rights' are unquestioned. A mother's love or wife's devotion shows . . . that woman's excellencies and capacities are measured only by the magnitude of the objects calling them forth."[148] From its inception, founders of the school made it clear that maternal influence—specifically middle-class and Protestant—was to function as the primary agent of reform. In many ways, the Industrial School, as a space of maternal influence and middle-class domesticity, mirrored orphanages such as the Protestant Orphans' Asylum.

However, the Industrial School's mission departed sharply from the city's orphanage. It functioned as a day school for impoverished children, providing meals, clothing, supervision, domestic training, and basic education. Whatever middle-class influences the girls experienced were never intended to elevate them beyond working-class self-sufficiency. "The object of the Institution," the school's secretary, Elizabeth W. Clarke, proclaimed, "is not to make fine ladies, but useful women."[149] One report even listed as one of the main reasons for establishing the institution as: "difficulty of procuring faithful domestics in our

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Personal Papers (WGEPP), University Archives, Washington University (WSTLA), St. Louis, St. Louis, MO, 43.

[148] "Industrial School for Girls," 8 February 1854, *Daily Missouri Republican* [St. Louis].

[149] *Third Annual Report of the Girls' Industrial School* [s.l.: s.n, n.d.], 3.

families."[150] Most students returned to their homes each evening, although the school occasionally provided temporary overnight shelter for orphaned children or those unable to return home for periods of time. By 1859, the school educated 300 children a year.[151] The school also employed a committee to "visit the pupils of the Institution at their homes" in order to gather "information of the condition of the poor."[152] The school's organizers provided instruction in "branches of female industry as may enable them to earn a respectable living—including, also, an elementary English education."[153] In short, the school provided girls with basic literacy and writing skills, along with training for domestic service work.

The school's administration sought to moralize destitute children by creating a space that simulated a middle class home environment. Students were among the poorest of the city's children, and in many cases their mothers did waged work. According to official reports, they included beggars and the children of "'washwomen' . . . [who] have to 'keep house,' if such a term can be applied to a rickety old shanty or basement."[154] Impoverished families could ill afford the trappings of middle-class life. A "shanty" or basement, could never replicate even the most spartan middle-class home. The charity sough to compensate for these deficiencies. The original Industrial School operated out of a rented house on Seventh Street. "This house, although scarcely sufficient

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[150] *Seventh Annual Report of the Girls' Industrial Home of St. Louis* (St. Louis: R.P. Studley, 1860), 5.
[151] *Sixth Annual Meeting of the Girls' Industrial Home*, 9.
[152] *Sixth Annual Meeting of the Girls' Industrial Home*, 9.
[153] *First Annual Report of the Board of Managers of the Girls' Industrial School*, 9.
[154] *Fourth Annual Report of the Girls' Industrial Home of St. Louis*, 7.

size for the purpose to which it has been appropriated," one administrator wrote, "has been made quite comfortable, and every possible means have been taken to render it pleasant and healthful to the children."[155] Moreover, since begging on the streets and looking after younger siblings interfered with these girls' ability to attend school, the Industrial School endeavored to provide an alternative to public school. In 1857, the Industrial School purchased and moved into the St. Louis Brewery. Although Clarke complained the new building was still "too small to accommodate our numerous family with anything but a moderate degree of comfort," the change enabled more girls to live in the institution.[156] That same year, the organization began referring to itself as the Girls' Industrial Home.

While reform women certainly believed poverty limited the opportunities of working-class children, they regarded defective domesticity and motherhood as even more dangerous. Although reformers heaped scorn upon working-class fathers—particularly those who abandoned their families or drank too much—charities reserved the harshest condemnations for mothers. One 1858 report noted, "Surely no harder lot ever falls to childhood than that expressed by the words—*a drunken mother*."[157] A report the following year described the mothers of several students as "worthless" and "vicious."[158] The account went on to detail examples of a "degraded mother raved at the door in a drunken

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[155] *First Annual Report of the Board of Managers of the Girls' Industrial School*, 4.
[156] *Fourth Annual Report of the Girls' Industrial Home of St. Louis,* 6.
[157] *Fifth Annual Meeting of the "Girls' Industrial Home"* [1858] [s.l.: s.n, n.d.], 8. Emphasis in original.
[158] *Sixth Annual Meeting of the Girls' Industrial Home*, 10.

frenzy" and a "mother [who] has, step by step, lost all self-respect."[159] Clarke argued, "It is for a class of children which Orphan Asylums and Public Schools cannot reach, that this Institution is opened—children more unfortunate than orphans, whose parents, unable themselves to afford them the support and protection which their helplessness requires, are yet too fond, or ignorant in many instances, too depraved to yield them up to the control of those who would provide them with permanent homes and the comforts of life."[160] In short, children were better off relying on the charity of strangers than living with impoverished and defective parents.

This belief exposed a tension between the reformers' ideology and practice. Female reformers argued that marginalized children flourished under maternal influences, and they saw many working-class parents as worse than no parents at all. Yet, the Industrial School failed to cut ties between children and their families, generally limiting the girls' exposure to middle-class domesticity to the daylight hours. The managers acknowledged, "we readily admit that those who have full control of the time and persons of children, have a much better opportunity to benefit them."[161] As the institution grew, its managers placed greater emphasis on pressuring mothers to surrender guardianship, severing ties between impoverished mothers and their children.

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[159] *Fifth Annual Meeting of the "Girls' Industrial Home"* [1858], 8.
[160] *Second Annual Report of the Board of Managers of the Girls' Industrial School, October 29th, 1855* (St. Louis, Ustick, Studley & Co.,1855), 5.
[161] *Second Annual Report of the Board of Managers of the Girls' Industrial School,* 5. One report noted, "As a general rule our children are not allowed to visit their parents, whose rooms are too often dens of infamy and crime, and subject always to scenes of profanity, intemperance and ribald songs." See, *Seventh Annual Report of the Girls' Industrial Home of St. Louis* (St. Louis: R.P. Studley and Co., 1860), 6.

Reformers moved beyond merely subverting parental influence to inverting authority within working-class households. The New York reformer, Charles Loring Brace, noted, "We have attempted directly to reach but one portion of [the impoverished]—the children—believing that effort for them is the most hopeful and practical, and that, through them, the parents can best be affected."[162] In St. Louis, the managers of the Girls' Industrial Home hoped their students "may be the messenger of mercy to their parents, and that the lessons of virtue learned at the school may extend to them also."[163] In short, reform women hoped each girl—converted to middle-class, American norms of domesticity, class, and religion—would serve as a missionary to her parents. The willingness of female reformers to intervene in parent-child relationships suggests a profound suspicion and disrespect of working-class households.

The House of Refuge

On May 12, 1857, dozens of officials from more than twenty reform institutions first gathered at the Children's Aid Society and then traveled to the New York House of Refuge to discuss the best methods to combat the growing problem of juvenile delinquency in cities across America.[164] Many of the country's largest cities were represented, including Baltimore, Boston, Brooklyn, Chicago, Cincinnati, New Orleans, New York, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh,

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[162] *Second Annual Report of the Children's Aid Society. February, 1855* (New York: M.B. Wyknoop, 1855), 4.
[163] *Sixth Annual Meeting of the Girls' Industrial Home*, 10.
[164] *Proceedings of the First Convention of Managers and Superintendents of Houses of Refuge and Reform in the United States of America Held in the City of New York* (New York: Wynkoop, Hallenbeck, and Thomas, 1858).

Rochester and Providence. Although administrators from a variety of types of institutions attended, the most common type were houses of refuge—– institutions aimed at the reformation of juvenile delinquents. By the 1850s, such institutions were common, especially in large cities. In 1825, the Society for the Reformation of Juvenile Delinquents in the City of New York founded the nation's first House of Refuge.

Despite their initial efforts to shelter children from the impact of adult penitentiaries, New York's House of Refuge adopted practices aimed at adult prisoners. Convinced of the malleability of children—their vulnerability to corruption and capacity for moral improvement—–the institution's officers initially aimed to shelter children from the harsh discipline and polluting influences of adult jails and penitentiaries.[165] Beyond separating youthful offenders from adults, House of Refuge administrators advocated softer, non-corporal methods of discipline, arguing "Obedience thus procured, not by stripes, but by a reformation of [a child's] mind, will be willing, cheerful, and lasting."[166] Simply put, reformers hoped to change the hearts of children. In 1826, the president of the Society, Cadwallader D. Colden, admonished the New York House of Refuge's superintendent, Nathaniel C. Hart: "A child may be made quiet and industrious by beating, but it seldom happens, I believe, that kindheartedness,

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[165] David J. Rothman, *The Discovery of the Asylum: Social Order and Disorder in the New Republic, Revised Ed.* (Piscataway, NJ: AldineTransaction Publishers, 2009), 210-15; Robert Mennel, *Thorns and Thistles: Juvenile Delinquents in the United States, 1825-1940* (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1973), chapt. 1; Robert S. Pickett, *House of Refuge: Origins of Juvenile Reform in New York State, 1815-1857* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1969).

[166] *Second Annual Report of the Managers of the Society for the Reformation of Juvenile Delinquents, in the City of New York* (New York: Mahlon Day, 1827), 11.

morality, and intelligence are induced by whipping."[167] Yet, actual practices quickly incorporated those of adult penitentiaries, including corporal punishment, solitary confinement, and forced labor. Within its first few years, the House of Refuge erected a high exterior wall and stone buildings with individual cells. Within three years, Philadelphia and Boston opened similar institutions, and, over the next three decades, many cities followed.

Opening its doors in 1854, the St. Louis House of Refuge was a relative latecomer.[168] According to its original mandate, the institution was to admit children through a variety of channels and for a number of reasons. First, the institution was for boys under of sixteen-years-old and girls under fourteen convicted of a crime who were liable to incarceration in the work house, jail, or penitentiary.[169] Parents might also request that their children be housed in the institution. (The common explanations for these requests involved destitution or inability to control "incorrigible" children.) Last, the institution admitted children deemed abandoned, neglected, improperly exposed, as well as children found begging or living in a house of prostitution (or having a prostitute as a mother). Such children did not need to be convicted of a crime. The Act the Establish the House of Refuge empowered city officials to incarcerate such children in the

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[167] *Second Annual Report of the Managers of the Society for the Reformation of Juvenile Delinquents*, 43.

[168] The House of Refuge began accepting inmates in July 1854. However, the institution was not officially incorporated by the State of Missouri General Assembly until February 29, 1855.

[169] "An Act to Establish the House of Refuge in St. Louis County" in *The Ordinances of the City of St. Louis, State of Missouri, Digested and Revised by the City Council of Said City, in the Years 1855-6* (St. Louis: George Knapp and Co., 1856), 174. The act also allowed children compelled to testify as witnesses to be held in the House of Refuge if deemed appropriate by the courts.

House of Refuge.[170] In criminal cases, discretion to place children in the House of Refuge rested entirely with the judge hearing each case.

In addition to providing an age-segregated space for incarcerating marginalized children, the law establishing the institution reconfigured juridical practices involving children. In particular, it dictated that children charged with jailable felonies and misdemeanors possessed the right to a private examination and trial, unless their parents or guardians demanded a public trial.[171] St. Louis reformers and lawmakers evidently borrowed the idea of private examination and trial for minors from other municipalities. For instance, the act establishing the Cincinnati House of Refuge (1845) established the practice in Cincinnati court system.[172] Although not unique to St. Louis, the law served as a step toward the two-tiered justice system established at the close of the nineteenth century that subjected adults and juveniles to different mechanisms for establishing guilt and meting out punishment.[173]

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[170] "An Act to Establish the House of Refuge in St. Louis County," 176.
[171] "An Act to Establish the House of Refuge in St. Louis County," 175.
[172] "Art. III—The Cincinnati House of Refuge," *The Pennsylvania Journal of Prison Discipline and Philanthropy* V, no. IV (October 1850), 242; *Second Annual Report of the Board of Directors of the House of Refuge, to the General Assembly of the State of Ohio, and the City Council of the City of Cincinnati, for the Year Ending Sept. 30, 1852* (Cincinnati: Cincinnati Gazette Company Print, 1853), 5. Although the act allowed for the creation of a Cincinnati House of Refuge in 1845, the institution did not open until 1850.
[173] By the 1860s, the practice had spread to many states and territories. For instance, see, "An Act to incorporate the Guardian Society and reform juvenile offenders in the District of Columbia [July 1, 1862]" in *Acts and Resolutions of the Second Session of the Thirty-Seventh Congress, Begun on Monday, December 2, 1861, and Ended on Thursday, July 17, 1862* (Washington, D.C.:, Government Printing Office, 1862), 208; "An Act to amend an act to incorporate the Board of Managers of the Louisville House of Refuge [March 3, 1861]" in *Charter of the City of Louisville, KY, Approved March 24, 1851, with All the Amendments to Same Now in Force, and Acts of the Legislature Pertaining to the City of Louisville to this Date. December 1, 1862* (Louisville, KY: L.A. Civill, Printer, 1862), 90; "Chap. 1760—An Act to authorize the establishment of Houses of Refuge. Passed April 16, 1857" in *The Public Statutes at Large, of the State of Ohio Vol. IV. 1854-1860* (Cincinnati: Maskell E. Curwen, 1861), 2965.

Administrators remained committed to the practice of private examination and trial for children, and that commitment occasionally put the courts and House of Refuge administrators at loggerheads. In its *Tenth Annual Report*, the institution's superintendent, F.S.W. Gleason, complained that the County Marshall held children awaiting trial in the county jail for as long as two weeks before being called before a judge. Gleason protested, "We think that children who are so unfortunate as to be tried for crime, should, in all cases, have a *private examination and trial* . . . and that children should not be taken from the House of Refuge for trial until the Court is ready to attend to their examination and trial."[174] Instead, he hoped children might be spend the time between arrest and trial, up to "*the day and hour of the appointed trial*," in the House of Refuge.[175] Gleason was evidently unconcerned about the guilt or innocence of accused children. Rather, simply being arrested signaled that a child was in need of reformation.[176] Gleason argued that, while awaiting trial, jails subjected children to moral contamination from adult prisoners and denied detained children "employment . . . discipline or instruction."[177]

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[174] *Tenth Annual Report of the Officers of the House of Refuge. St. Louis, MO. Presented April 1, 1864* (St. Louis: Evening News Office, 1864), 17. Emphasis in original.
[175] *Tenth Annual Report of the Officers of the House of Refuge*, 17. Emphasis in original.
[176] Jacques Donzelot has pointed to this phenomenon in his landmark analysis of the twentieth-century juvenile court system in France. Donzelot argues that juvenile courts, social workers, and educators focus on providing therapeutic responses to perceived delinquency rather than attempting to establish guilt or innocence. Whether a child committed a crime is beside the point, and insistence on innocence indicates both guilt and duplicity. Donzelot argues the function of such courts is not to establish guilt or innocence, but to reform children and working-class families. See, Donzelot, *The Policing of Families*, Trans. Robert Hurely (New York: Pantheon Books, 1979), 106-17.
[177] *Tenth Annual Report of the Officers of the House of Refuge*, 17.

In the same vein as other city charities, directors of the House of Refuge cloaked the institution in the language and ideology of domesticity. They also emphasized order and discipline. In contrast to reformers affiliated with the female-centered organizations, the all-male managers and superintendents of the House of Refuge espoused what might be considered a patriarchal inflection of middle class family ideals. In 1857, they declared that the institution "extended the comforts of a good home, . . . kindness and parental care."[178] This was the norm within houses or refuge and reform schools throughout the nation. One report of the New York House of Refuge noted that its superintendent "exercises a moral influence over the children, and treats them as one family, over which he is the head."[179] While attending the First Convention of Managers and Superintendents of Houses of Refuge and Schools of Reform, held in New York in 1857, Gleason, argued: "The government in Schools of Reform should, so far as circumstances will admit, conform to that of the well-regulated Christian family, where gentleness and kindness, united with judicious persuasion and salutary correction are the means by which obedience is enforced and government maintained."[180] Years later, Gleason noted the balance discipline and domesticity, declaring: "We have never confined ourselves exclusively to the use of moral suasion in the discipline of our family, and yet we have constantly aimed to avoid the necessity

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[178] *Second Annual Report of the Board of Managers of the St. Louis House of Refuge*, 8.
[179] *Eighteenth Annual Report of the Managers of the Society for the Reformation of Juvenile Delinquents* (New York: Mahlon Day and Company, 1843),10.
[180] F.S.W. Gleason, "Modes of Government in Reformatories," in *Proceedings of the First Convention of Managers and Superintendents of Houses of Refuge and Reform* (New York: Wynkoop, Hallenbeck, and Thomas, 1858), 135.

of resorting to the infliction of *corporal punishment* . . . We have unfalteringly maintained that the principle that *prompt obedience should be enforced* . . . not forgetting at the same time that the rights of the child should be sacredly guarded."[181] Patriarchal domesticity advocated filial affection, but placed greater emphasis on order, obedience, and discipline—ideas which contrasted with those of maternal-influenced institutions that provided care to impoverished, abandoned, and orphaned children.

All children passing the threshold of the institution were deemed delinquent, but criminal conviction was not a requirement. Although the vast majority of children admitted to the institution were committed for quasi-crimes including abandonment by parents, destitution, vagrancy, incorrigibility, need of protection, and parental neglect, such children received treatment equal to that of convicted criminals.[182] As far as administrators were concerned, children abandoned by their parents or found begging existed on a spectrum of delinquency that culminated in serious crimes such as larceny or stabbing.[183] To reformers, poverty and crime were part and parcel of the same moral

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[181] *Fifth Annual Report of the Officers of the House of Refuge*, 35.

[182] An analysis of the Admittance Register from the time the House of Refuge opened until the close of 1860 indicates that just twenty-six percent of entries listed criminal activity (most likely larceny) as the cause of admission. See, Admittance Register, SLHOR, SLCR, 1-70. Count excludes children returned for running away from the institution.

[183] See, *Second Annual Report of the Board of Managers of the St. Louis House of Refuge, January 1st, 1857* (St. Louis: Missouri Democrat Job Rooms, 1857), 4. David J. Rothman noted, "The founders of orphan asylums and houses of refuge shared fully with the proponents of other caretaker institutions a fear that anyone not carefully and diligently trained to cope with the open, free-wheeling, and disordered life of the community would fall victim to vice and crime." Rothman noted that orphaned and impoverished children lacked adequate supervision from the worst elements of city life and were believed to be, in some sense, destined to become juvenile delinquents. See Rothman, *Discovery of the Asylum*, 210 (quote); Mennel, *Thorns and Thistles*, 13.

environment. The child of impoverished, incapable, or even deceased parents was, according to this theory, an embryonic moral dissolute.

As a result, administrators subjected every child entering the House of Refuge to the same regimen of discipline and reform. In September 1856, the institution began implementing the grade system, which involved four separate categories—punishment, probation, amelioration, and reward—intended to reflect each child's behavioral and moral progress. They also prescribed rewards and punishments to promote movement through the grades. Gleason outlined the grade system as follows: "Each new-comer is placed in the division of Probation, or in Grade No. 3; if his or her conduct is good during the first month, he is promoted to the division of Amelioration, or Grade No. 2; but if his conduct is bad, he is degraded to the division of Punishment, or No. 4."[184] The institution reserved a final grade, truth and honor, for children who escaped any punishment or reprimand for three consecutive months. Such children received less supervision, including freedom to make trips into the city and eventual release. Gleason never indicated what happened when children failed to progress through the grades. However, the records indicate that numerous children who entered the institution for without criminal histories remained incarcerated for years longer than children originally committed for serious criminal offenses.[185]

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[184] *Second Annual Report of the Board of Managers of the St. Louis House of Refuge*, 9.

[185] Instances of the phenomenon are legion. Take for example Chrishan Herman and Mary Mahan. Both were admitted in 1856 within a month of each other for incorrigibility and larceny, respectively. Despite being admitted for a noncrime, Herman languished in the Refuge nearly

Each week inmates, instructors, and administrators attended a weekly meeting to discuss the children's behavior and publicly mete out praise and reprimands. Evidently, Gleason preferred public shame to corporal punishment. "We place greater reliance," he noted, "on the good example of those who are induced, by kind treatment, deport themselves well, than we do upon the influence of terror which is occasioned by severe treatment."[186] However, Gleason reserved corporal punishment for those children who participated in "open rebellion against proper discipline."[187]

House of Refuge officials hoped to extend the institution's disciplinary reach beyond its walls, but their efforts often failed to work as intended. Administrators desired to instill within children a sense of morality, responsibility, and self-discipline. Yet, the methods undertaken to achieve this effort—subjecting children to rigorous supervision that included keeping a detailed tally of good and bad behavior—gave officials only limited confidence in the resilience of personal reform. Once outside of the institution, children depended on self-discipline rather than external supervision, sometimes with disastrous results. For example, Gleason published a letter received from a former inmate who, although placed in the grade of honor and permitted to visit his family

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two years, while Mahan was discharged in about six months. See, Admittance Register, SLHOR, SLCR, 11-12.

[186] *Second Annual Report of the Board of Managers of the St. Louis House of Refuge*, 10-11.

[187] *Second Annual Report of the Board of Managers of the St. Louis House of Refuge*, 10 (quote); F.S.W. Gleason, "Modes of Government in Reformatories" in *Proceedings of the First Convention of Managers and Superintendents of Houses of Refuge and Reform*, 139.

unattended, escaped and was later incarcerated in the county jail.[188] Therefore, administrators argued that indenturing children with local merchants and farmers would remove the children from bad influences and place them within households with more reliable guardians. As Gleason observed, "Judging from our past limited experience, we are of the opinion that inmates should in nearly every instance be discharged by indenture. The reasons are obvious . . . the consciousness that [the children] are looked after by those who have an interest in their welfare cannot but exert a salutary influence upon their conduct."[189] The institution regularly sent inquiries to the adults who had indentured children to determine if the children continued to behave and received proper care.

Outside of obeying rules and regulations, reform centered on manual labor and education. For six hours a day, boys practiced farming, gardening, shoemaking, tailoring, trunk-making, and knitting.[190] Girls attended to domestic duties, including washing, making and mending clothing, and cleaning dormitories and bedding. Records suggest that the children produced a surprising volume of goods. In one year the tailor shop alone made more than 2,000 items and repaired more than 1,500 others.[191] The same year, boys crafted nearly 1,000 pairs of shoes and repaired nearly 300 more. Girls knit nearly 600 pieces and repaired almost 1,800 items. The goods made by

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[188] *Fifth Annual Report of the Officers of the House of Refuge; Saint Louis. Presented April 1st, 1859* (St. Louis: Missouri Democrat Book and Job Office, 1859), 29.
[189] *Third Annual Report of the Officers of the House of Refuge*, 18.
[190] *Second Annual Report of the Board of Managers of the St. Louis House of Refuge*, 5-7; *Third Annual Report of the Officers of the House of Refuge, Saint Louis, MO. Presented April 1st, 1857* (St. Louis: Missouri Democrat Book and Job Office, 1857), 19.
[191] *Fourth Annual Report of the Officers of the House of Refuge, Saint Louis. Presented April 1st, 1858* (St. Louis: Missouri Democrat Book and Job Office, 1858), 13.

children served dual purposes. First, administrators hoped to offset the cost of maintaining the children. The shoes, clothes, and food produced by the House of Refuge went to feed and clothe its children. Officials also sold excess goods to city merchants and contracted out boys' labor, adding several thousand dollars to the institution's budget.[192] Even more important than financial gains, administrators noted the "means employed for the reformation of the class of young persons committed to this Institution are labor and instruction . . . means which, if properly employed by all parents and guardians of children, will prevent juvenile delinquency altogether."[193] Routines of labor buttressed the institution's rigid system of discipline, provided basic skills for future indenture or employment, and conditioned children to the rigors and regularity of adult wage work.

The House of Refuge also assumed responsibility for providing boys and girls with basic education, and, by 1859, the curriculum resembled that found in public schools. Its *Fourth Annual Report* noted that twenty-nine percent of children admitted within the year did not know the alphabet and fifty-eight percent could not write their own names.[194] During its first several years, the House of Refuge provided about four hours of instruction to both boys and girls, stressing reading, writing, and arithmetic.[195] Teachers employed readers and

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[192] *Third Annual Report of the Officers of the House of Refuge*, 20-21.
[193] *Second Annual Report of the Board of Managers of the St. Louis House of Refuge*, 4.
[194] *Fourth Annual Report of the Officers of the House of Refuge*, 17.
[195] *Third Annual Report of the Officers of the House of Refuge*, 12-14.

arithmetic lesson books. They also taught music, geography, and grammar.[196] The institution's head teacher, John H. Raymond especially welcomed music instruction. "I would wish that [the children's] opportunities for instruction might never be less . . . 'Music hath charms to soothe the Savage breast,' and soften the human heart."[197] Gleason even declared that since children developed closer relationships with their teachers and had no ability to be truant, that the children received a superior education than provided in city public schools.[198]

Despite similarities in educational curriculum, schooling for girls centered on containing female sexuality, promoting morality, preventing interaction with boys, and changing the hearts of its children. Many reformers agreed that females possessed a sense of inborn virtue, but were profoundly susceptible to negative influences and, once "fallen," extremely difficult to redeem. Gleason argued that many of the girls were "more degraded in their feelings and desires, and consequently far more difficult to manage and control than boys."[199] Administrators worried that such girls would corrupt their fellow inmates. Teachers "earnestly labored to divert the minds of those under their care, from impure thoughts and unhallowed associations, and induce them to practice goodness *for its sake*."[200] As a result, even well-behaved girls received fewer freedoms, and none were permitted leave the institution unattended. Although teachers attempted to keep girls and boys apart, they complained, "we find that

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[196] *Fifth Annual Report of the Officers of the House of Refuge; Saint Louis. Presented April 1st, 1859* (St. Louis: Missouri Democrat Book and Job Office, 1859), 19-21.
[197] *Fifth Annual Report of the Officers of the House of Refuge*, 22.
[198] *Fifth Annual Report of the Officers of the House of Refuge*, 27-28.
[199] *Fifth Annual Report of the Officers of the House of Refuge*, 25.
[200] *Fifth Annual Report of the Officers of the House of Refuge*, 26. Emphasis in original.

the opportunities afforded for learning each others names, and becoming partially acquainted, are greater than they should be . . . having a tendency to revive in their minds former impure associations . . . [and] retard their complete reformation."[201]

Conclusion

Despite the best intentions of charity workers, institutions could never fully smooth the hardships of midcentury urban life for all of the city's most marginalized children. Children and families, suspicious of both the motives and methods of reformers, evaded and resisted assistance and efforts to change behavior. Moreover, even the most motivated and well-funded institutions never contemplated let alone accomplished overturning pervasive structural causes of poverty and crime. Their efforts did as much to buttress the harshest elements of unregulated capitalism as to ameliorate it. The aid, training, and education offered by city charities and institutions aimed to foster self-sufficiency, not upward mobility.

The system of institutions, homes, and asylums created in the decades before the Civil War during its best moments was overtaxed. Few could have predicted the effect war would unleash among marginalized families. Children struggled to adapt to the rapidly shifting circumstances of wartime St. Louis, and many among the most tenuously positioned families suffered immeasurably. Many children were forced by circumstances or simply took advantage of new

[201] *Fifth Annual Report of the Officers of the House of Refuge*, 27.

possibilities to make their own way. By the middle of the war, refugees and war orphans joined the ranks of already large numbers of suffering and nominally independent children.

Chapter Three: Children in Civil War St. Louis

On May 10, 1861, Harry Stephenson pushed out of his schoolhouse at the corner of 15th and Olive streets to marvel at the columns of troops marching through the street. Awestruck, Stephenson recalled, it "was my first glimpse of War! . . . we stood in front of the school, our books under our arms, spellbound with astonishment."[202] Soldiers filled the streets curb to curb. Men, women, and children thronged the sidewalks. Stephenson, enjoying a short dinner recess, forgot to eat—his "heroes" just out of arms reach. In 1861, the possibility of war could still stir exhilaration in the hearts of middle-class schoolboys like Stephenson. If the city's marginalized children—those most likely to suffer from poverty, face arrest, or spend part of their childhoods on the street—felt excitement about the brewing conflict, the feeling was short lived.

News of secession reverberated throughout the nation, but in few places as loudly as St. Louis. For decades, Missouri stood at the center of divisive political struggles, including the Missouri Crisis, Bleeding Kansas, and the *Dred Scott* case. Home to a militant proslavery movement and determined abolitionist community, the border state was also strategically important. On May 10, 1861, Union troops, under the command of Captain Nathaniel Lyon, attempted to secure the St. Louis Arsenal by forcing the surrender of a large contingent of pro-secessionist state militia at Camp Jackson, Missouri. As federal troops

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[202] Philip Daingerfield Stephenson, *The Civil War Memoir of Philip Daingerfield Stephenson, D.D.: Private, Company K, 13th Arkansas Volunteer Infantry, Loader, Piece No. 4, 5th Company, Washington Artillery, Army of Tennessee, CSA*, Nathaniel Cheairs Hughes, Jr., ed. (Baton Rouge, LA: LSU Press, 1998), 1.

escorted the captive militiamen through the city, a confusing eruption of gunfire rang out between volunteer German soldiers and a crowd of jeering onlookers, leaving nearly thirty people dead.[203] One boy watching the mayhem recalled, "We could not see for the smoke, but when carriages and wagons filled with men, women, and children covered with blood, some dead, some wounded begun to pass, we saw something most serious had happened."[204] The following day, mob violence surged. When a compromise deal to halt the escalating tensions between Governor Claiborne Jackson and federal forces collapsed the next month, the situation in Missouri quickly deteriorated. The governor fled the capital, Jefferson City, to southern Missouri, with the now Brigadier General and commander of the U.S. Army of the West Lyon in following after. In his absence, a state Constitutional Convention met, declared the governor's seat vacant, and established a pro-Union provisional government, albeit one ambivalent to the authority of the national government.[205]

Federal troops struggled to secure Missouri, and on August 10, 1861 casualties began to mount as Union and Confederate forces met in the first major battle west of the Mississippi River. The Battle at Wilson's Creek, near

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[203] Adam Arenson, *The Great Heart of the Republic: St. Louis and the Cultural Civil War* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011), 115-17; Louis S. Gerteis, *Civil War St. Louis* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2001), 99-114; William E. Parrish, *A History of Missouri*, Vol. 3: 1860 to 1875, Vol. 3 (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 2001), 13-14; Arthur R. Kirckpatrick, "Missouri in the Early Months of the Civil War," *Missouri Historical Review* 55 (April 1961), 235-66.

[204] S.H. Chauvenet, "St. Louis in the Early Days of Civil War and the Capture of Camp Jackson," 23 May 1932, A0286, Civil War Collection, 1860-1977, St. Louis History Museum, St. Louis, MO, 4.

[205] Gerteis, *Civil War St. Louis*, 133-36; Parrish, *A History of Missouri*, 30-32.

Springfield, generated more than 1,000 fatalities on both sides, including Lyon, and left many more wounded.[206] In response to the formation of secessionist guerrilla groups throughout the state and outbursts of violence within the city, the newly-appointed commander of the Army of the West, General John C. Frémont, declared martial law in St. Louis on August 14, 1861.[207] Enforcement of the order meant civilians could not enter or leave the city without a pass.

For the poor children of St. Louis, the war proved especially disruptive.[208] Even before the war, life for those living on the social margins was not easy. Many children faced extreme poverty, violence, sexual victimization, and unsanitary living conditions, as well as significant risk of death from accidents and disease, and sexual victimization. Disruptions to authority produced by the Civil War exacerbated already difficult circumstances. A rise in commitments of children for abandonment, larceny, and vagrancy tracked closely with the war. However, the war also produced new opportunities for children to form associations with peers, engage in leisure, and gain increased independence. Forced by circumstance or preference, many children lived with their fellows in basements, empty lots, and even caves dug beneath the city. While many

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[206] Gerteis, *The Civil War in Missouri: A Military History* (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 2012), chapter 3; Parrish, *A History of Missouri*, 29.

[207] See, Joseph M Beilein, Jr. and Matthew C. Hulbert, eds., *The Civil War Guerrilla: Unfolding the Black Flag in History, Memory, and Myth* (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 2015; Gerteis, *Civil War St. Louis*, 127-61.

[208] For a broader treatment of children during the Civil War see, James Marten, ed., *Children and Youth during the Civil War Era* (New York: New York University Press, 2012); Anya Jabour, *Topsy-Turvy: How the Civil War Turned the World Upside Down for Southern Children* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2010); Marten, *Children for the Union: The War Spirit on the Northern Home Front* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2004); Marten, *The Children's Civil War* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1998).

engaged in acts of theft for survival, others stole to retain their independence from adults and avoid incarceration in city charities.

The conditions of nineteenth-century life make it difficult to know much about these children. Few if any kept diaries or wrote memoirs. None grew up to be business or political leaders. Whatever thoughts or dreams they had, scrawled onto scraps of paper or shared with families or friends, vanished long ago. However, tucked away within thousands of court case files and institutional records, children's voices long lost to history occasionally speak. Whenever possible they have been included in the pages that follow. Their words and actions provide a glimpse of the lives and relationships children constructed during the Civil War.

Marginalized Children in Civil War St. Louis

For children living on the social margins, war brought even more profound misery. One of the clearest indicators was a shift in crime rates. Chief of the St. Louis Metropolitan Police Department, John E.D. Couzins, noted a marked increase in crime during 1862, attributing the increase "to the influx of soldiers and bad influences of the war in our midst."[209] By the end of 1864, yearly arrests climbed nearly twenty-eight percent above levels just two years earlier.[210]

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[209] John E.D. Couzins, "Police Report. Report of Police Arrests for 1862—Comparative Statement for Six Years Last Past," *Daily Missouri Republican* [St. Louis], 4 January 1863.
[210] Calculated using statistics from: Couzins, "Annual Report of Police Arrests for 1864," *Daily Missouri Republican* [St. Louis], 6 January 1865. Although Couzins pinned the rise in crime on the presence of the army, it seems that most often soldiers encountered the legal system as

Following the news of secession, marginalized children faced everyday challenges that produced increases in commitments to the House of Refuge related to property crimes, abandonment, vagrancy, prostitution, and destitution (figure 2). Figures suggest a dramatic increase of such commitments between 1861 and 1865, which closely track with the course of the war itself. By 1867, most categories nearly returned to prewar levels. These increases suggest an increase in social misery that filtered immediately and directly to marginalized families and, by extension, to their children. Abandonment stood outside of this general trend, ramping up later in the conflict and remaining high throughout the remainder of the decade. The escalation of abandonment between 1863 and 1869 correlated with the emergence of a refugee and orphan crisis during the same years as thousands fled violence and hardship throughout Missouri and other Mississippi Valley states.

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victims of crime rather than its perpetrators. For example, Charles Berky, Lieutenant Colonel of the 4th Iowa Regiment, was bludgeoned and robbed in a dark alley. State of Missouri v. Charles McCawley, 1 December 1862, SLRC, Microfilm Roll C43923, CCR.

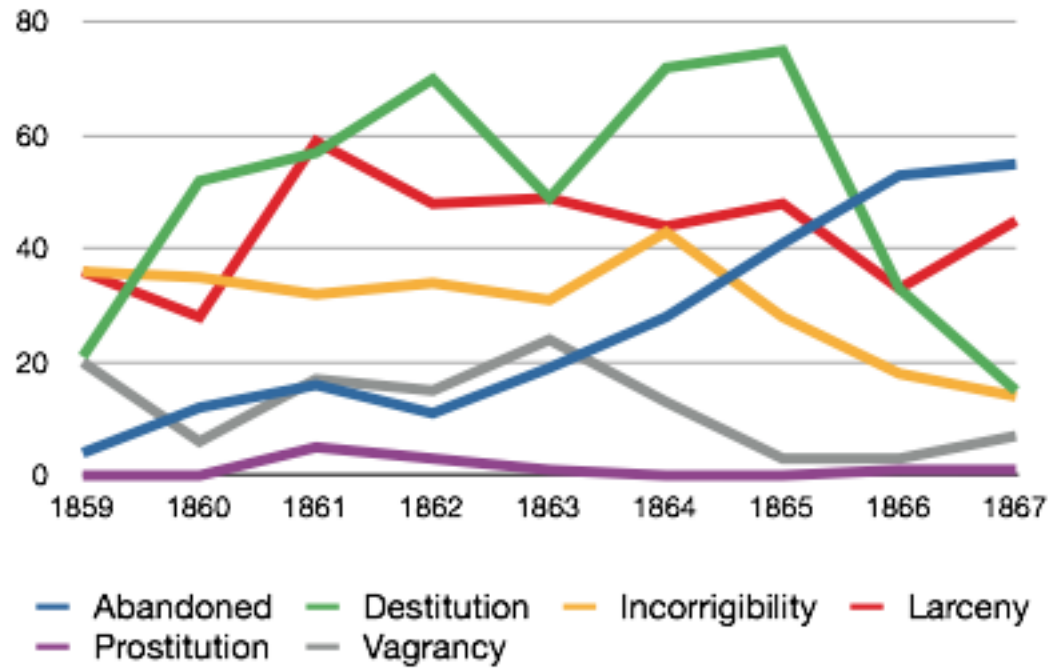

Figure 2. Line graph, Commitments to House of Refuge, 1859-1867[211]

The war disrupted traditional forms and channels of authority. On the surface this was linked to the simple reality that the conflict drew away thousands of men thereby weakening political, legal, and social institutions. On a practical level, disintegration of authority meant many that children lived with less supervision and care. Disruption to authority occurred almost immediately. Recruitment and eventually conscription into the army, continuing late into the war, meant that men spent years away from their families and jobs. The impact

[211] Figures tabulated from St. Louis House of Refuge Admittance Register, St. Louis Orphanages and Institutions, Archives of the St. Louis City Recorder (SLCR), St. Louis, MO, 91-187. For the sake of clarity, this chart combines property crimes (such as petty larceny, grand larceny, larceny, robbery, pickpocketing, and pilfering), behavioral non-crimes (such as bad behavior, laziness, and incorrigibility), incidents of homelessness (such as abandonment and "want of a home"), conditions of abject poverty (such as destitution, neglect, and improperly exposed), and crimes of transiency (such as running away, vagrancy, and wandering). Causes of commitment that did not conform to these categories or that did not offer an adequate basis for comparison were not included.

on public schools was particularly dramatic. Early in 1861, the primary social institution directed toward children, the St. Louis public schools, closed for six weeks.[212] "The four years which followed the outbreak of the late war were," one school report reflected, "full of perplexity to the Directors . . . Not only was no advancement made, but the troubles at one time reduced the schools to about one-third their former magnitude. Teachers were dismissed, school-houses closed, and tuition fees were changed."[213]

Disruptions to authority, including the absence of fathers and male relatives, left girls even more vulnerable to victimization than before the war. On February 10, 1862, the Sisters of Charity sent two of their students, Fanny Kennedy and Mary Ann Sheridan, into the city "to sell chances for a raffle for the benefit of the orphans."[214] The girls entered the shoe store of H.A. Minor. Instead of purchasing raffle tickets, Minor offered each girl five cents if she would return the next day and read the correct time on his shop clock. The following morning, Fanny and Mary Ann returned, hoping to receive their nickels. According to Fanny, "when we first went in [Minor] asked the clerk if he had been to the post office he said yes. [H]e then told him to go again." Although

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[212] *Seventh and Eighth Annual Reports of the Superintendent and Secretary to the Board of St. Louis Public Schools for the Years Ending August 1, 1860-61, and 1861-62* (St. Louis: R.P. Studley and Co., 1862), 7.

[213] *Thirteenth Annual Report of the Board of Directors of the St. Louis Public Schools for the Year Ending August 1, 1867* (St. Louis: Missouri Democrat Book and Job Printing House, 1867), 124.

[214] Sworn statement of Fanny Kennedy. See, State of Missouri v. H.A. Minor, 17 February 1862, St. Louis Recorder's Court (SLRC), Microfilm Roll C43919, Circuit Court Records of St. Louis County (CCR), County and Municipal Records, Missouri State Archives, Jefferson City, Missouri.

neither girl could correctly read the shop clock, Minor began fitting them for shoes. Fanny recalled the events that followed:

> We sat down and he tried some shoes on us and pinched our feet and legs . . . At that time put his finger under my clothes and inserted his finger in my person, he then said if we would go up stairs with him he would give us each a new pair of shoes. [H]e shut the door and we both went up stairs with him in the second story to a vacant room . . . [H]e then sat down on the floor and took me across his lap, unbuttoned his pantaloons and took out his thing inserted his thing in to my person. I told him I did not want to be there it would make my thing big. [H]e hurt me. [H]e then gave me ten cents and I came down stairs.

During the rape, Mary Ann fled the store and waited across the street. When Fanny finally emerged the two went back into the store, grabbed two pairs of shoes and fled. Minor succeeded in chasing Fanny down and seizing a pair of shoes. Mary Ann confessed to the theft when she arrived home, and her father paid Minor. Sadly, the sexual assault on Mary Ann and Fanny was not isolated.[215]

Financial necessity drove many children to engage in theft and other crimes to supplement waning family resources. In nearly every case it seems that poverty drove thefts by children. For example, Lawrence McCord, Jr. confessed to stealing thirteen dollars from a neighbor's house. McCord gave his mother five dollars and spent the balance on "things that he needed."[216] McCord, the oldest of six children and son of an impoverished Irish immigrant

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[215] For example, see State of Missouri v. William Buckley, 21 March 1863, SLRC, Microfilm Roll C43925, CCR.

[216] State of Missouri v. Lawrence McCord, 7 October 1862, SLRC, Microfilm Roll C43918, CCR.

laborer, likely committed occasional thefts to supplement his family's income.[217] He was not alone. An analysis of census data for children admitted to the House of Refuge four or more times between 1860 and 1866 suggests few children acted for reasons other than financial hardship.[218] Within these families, nearly all heads of household were common laborers, and only one family claimed real property.[219]

Among this class of children—those most likely to find themselves in the courts and House of Refuge—the war reconfigured social relationships.[220] In many cases, due to increases in commitments, institutions replaced neighborhoods and even ethnicity as the primary source of social connection. Circumstances thrust children together in institutions and produced lasting friendships that sometimes spanned the course of the war. Take for example the case of Mitchell Nimmow who was institutionalized six times. In 1860, he was working in a barroom, likely contributing wages to his family. At the behest

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[217] Census records indicate McCord's parents possessed no real estate or personal estate property. Lawrence McCord appears as "Lorenz McCord." See, Schedule 1.—Free Inhabitants in St. Louis Ward 1, St. Louis County, Missouri, Microfilm Roll M653_647, 1860 United States Federal Census, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, DC, 110.

[218] In approximately half of such cases, census records could not be located. In addition, a number of children were in the House of Refuge during the actual census evaluation, meaning no evaluation of family circumstances could be made.

[219] See, Schedule 1.—Free Inhabitants in St. Louis Ward 5, St. Louis County, Missouri, Microfilm Roll M653_647, M653_651, 1860 United States Federal Census, 29, 132-33; Schedule 1.,—Free Inhabitants in St. Louis Ward 9, St. Louis County, Missouri, Microfilm Roll M653_650, 1860 United States Federal Census, 30, 38, 367. Flynn's household was excluded from this calculation since it appears he was living in a boarding house or perhaps the home of his employer, a saloon-keeper named James Hinchcliff.

[220] Conclusions in this section have been drawn from analysis of the social networks of children brought before the criminal court system, as well as those incarcerated in the House of Refuge, in St. Louis between 1860 and 1865. The network includes 1,074 nodes. This project employs: Steve P. Borgatti, Martin G. Everett, and Linton C. Freeman, UCINET for Windows: Software for Social Network Analysis (Analytic Technologies, 2002) (network analysis) and M. Bastian, S. Heymann, and M. Jacomy, Gephi: An Open Source Software for Exploring and Manipulating Networks (International AAAI Conference on Weblogs and Social Media, 2009) (visualization).

of his parents, Mayor Oliver D. Filley admitted him to the House of Refuge for incorrigibility.[221] Evidently, reformative efforts failed, and Nimmow escaped less than a month later. However, his freedom proved short lived, and he was returned to the House of Refuge.[222] Although Nimmow remained only until April 23, 1860, he came into contact with a number of other children, including Owen Smith, Patrick Devinney, Patrick Quinn, and Bryan Cannon, who would become central to Nimmow's social network (figure 3). Nimmow's next stay in the House of Refuge came after being arrested in December 1860 for grand larceny. Accused of stealing "fifteen ladies' hoods" and "fifteen dozen [pairs of] hosing," he must have intended to sell the goods. However, this time he faced the court with accomplices: John O'Connell and Milton Frame.[223]

[221] As noted in the previous chapter, the House of Refuge admitted children for non-crimes, such as incorrigibility, at the authorization of their parents and certain city officials.
[222] The House of Refuge register is unclear about the precise timeline of Nimmow's escape and recapture. His initial intake is listed as February 24, 1860, his escape as March 17, 1860, and his reincarceration as February 26, 1860. See, St. Louis House of Refuge Admittance Register, SLCR, 57-58.
[223] State of Missouri v. Mitchell Nimmow, et al, 18 January 1861, SLRC, Microfilm Roll C43905, CCR.

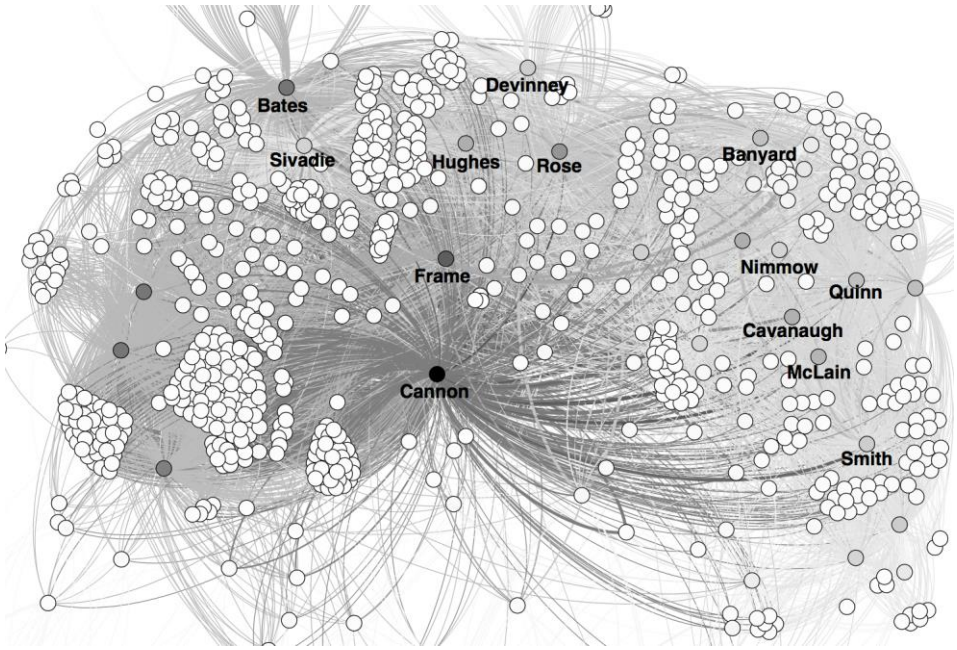

Figure 3. Network graph, Social Network of Children Admitted to House of Refuge, 1860-1866.[224]

Nimmow's impact on Frame was profound.[225] Frame's arrest for larceny along with Nimmow and O'Connell was his first brush with the court system. A

[224] This graph was rendered in Gephi and employs the Force Atlas algorithm. It has not been manually adjusted. Ken Cherven describes the Force Atlas layout as "a classic force-based algorithm that draws linked nodes closer while pushing unrelated nodes farther apart." See, Cherven, *Mastering Gephi Network Visualization* (Birmingham, UK: Packt Publishing, 2015), 56. Put in its simplest terms, those nodes (individual children) furthest from the center of the graph tend to have fewer and weaker connections to the other nodes in the graph. Those nodes closer to the center of the graph possess more and stronger connections. The nodes are shaded by degree. Darker nodes indicate higher numbers of and stronger ties to other nodes. In short, children with a higher number of strong connections to other children (such as being incarcerated multiple times with one another or being arrested together) appear darker in color. Edges (lines indicating ties between nodes) are shaded and thickened by intensity of tie. Weak ties are barely (if at all) visible. The darkest and thickest lines in this graph typically represent relationships between children who have been arrested with each other one or more times, but occasionally represent siblings placed in the House of Refuge at the same time. The social network was compiled using UCINet. Within the network, children incarcerated together were assessed a tie strength of "1." Children incarcerated together two or more times received a tie strength of "2." Children who were arrested together or placed in the institution for the same event (such as a brother and sister placed in the institution for destitution) received a tie strength of "4." Children arrested together more than one time received a tie strength of "5."

[225] It was something of a surprise that Frame involved himself with crime at all, since his family was nominally better off than most of his compatriots. A widower with five children, Frame's father owned $1000 in real estate and $200 in personal estate. Schedule 1.,—Free Inhabitants

cascade of arrests and incarcerations followed. Between 1860 and 1864, courts sent Frame to the House of Refuge for larceny seven times and for vagrancy and stabbing once each.[226] Frame stepped out of the institution for the last time on July 1, 1865. While clearly an outlier (Frame held the dubious distinction of the most stays in the House of Refuge during the 1860s), he played a central role in uniting marginalized children throughout the city. Like Nimmow, he established many enduring relationships during his first and subsequent institutionalizations. After the courts sent Nimmow, Frame, and O'Connell to the House of Refuge, the trio met other notables including Martin McLain, John Rose, Owen Cavenaugh, and James Gorman.

Children who entered the House of Refuge because of parental neglect, poverty, or misbehavior at home often returned through the courts months or years later with children they met during their initial visit. Others shared connections forged within the institution. In short, virtually all lines of the social world of the city's marginalized children ran through the House of Refuge. For example, during 1860, Bryan Cannon served two sentences, one for vagrancy and one larceny. During his second stay, Cannon met up with Nimmow, Quinn, and McLain. Less than two years later, the three were jointly convicted of larceny.[227] Similarly, Samuel Banyard and John Rose met during the summer of 1861 after they were incarcerated for incorrigibility and destitution, respectively. During their stay the boys evidently formed a close friendship and

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in St. Louis Ward 5, St. Louis County, Missouri, Microfilm Roll M653_647, 1860 United States Federal Census, 132-33.

[226] St. Louis House of Refuge Admittance Register, SLCR, 69-138.

[227] St. Louis House of Refuge Admittance Register, SLCR, 91-92.

were twice arrested together three years later for larceny and burglary. During the summer of 1861, Banyard also evidently forged a connection with Frame, and the two were arrested together in 1863 with a third boy, Joseph Hughes.[228] Courts sentenced Hughes and Frame together to the House of Refuge twice.

Although just a fraction of the larger social network, the dizzying array of connections sketched above demonstrates the complexity of relationships among marginalized children. Bonds forged in the House of Refuge transcended geographical location. During the war, institutions replaced neighborhoods in bringing marginalized children together, and many built and maintained social networks that spanned multiple noncontiguous city wards.[229] Perhaps even more significant, the relationships formed in the House of Refuge and subsequent arrests hint at the social organization of marginalized boys outside of institutions. The gregarious criminality of boys such as Nimmow and Frame might indicate that marginalized boys formed and operated criminal gangs. However, significant gaps in arrests and incarcerations suggest that

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[228] Like many of the above boys, Hughes first became acquainted with the House of Refuge for a non-crime. In 1856, city officials removed him and his brother from an allegedly neglectful home.

[229] For example, a clique including Milton Frame, John O'Connell, and James Gorman spanned at least three nonadjacent city wards. For Frame, see: Schedule 1.—Free Inhabitants in St. Louis Ward 5, St. Louis County, Missouri, Microfilm Roll M653_647, 1860 United States Federal Census, 132-33. For Gorman, see: Schedule 1.—Free Inhabitants in St. Louis Ward 3, St. Louis County, Missouri, Microfilm Roll M653_655, 1860 United States Federal Census, 138. The 1860 census includes two possible entries for O'Connell, each listing a child of age and ethnicity matching the description provided in the House of Refuge Register. See, Schedule 1.––Free Inhabitants in St. Louis Ward 8, St. Louis County, Missouri, Microfilm Roll M653_652, 1860 United States Federal Census, 63; Schedule 1.,—Free Inhabitants in St. Louis Ward 10, St. Louis County, Missouri, Microfilm Roll M653_654, 1860 United States Federal Census, 80-81.

boys only occasionally committed thefts, burglaries, and robberies as need or opportunity presented themselves.

Few boys seemed to subsist entirely on the proceeds of thefts. In fact, records indicate that many boys arrested for larceny received income from employment in barrooms, factories, foundries, and shops. Others sold newspapers on the streets or worked on boats and farms. Before the court, boys offered few explanations for their actions. In fact, court officers rarely recorded any statements from youthful defendants. When words made it to paper, they typically took the form of a plea: either “I am guilty as charged” or “I am not guilty as charged.” St. Louis courts required no detailed admissions of guilt, and children rarely offered complex defenses. One can, however, speculate about their motives. Given the poverty of children committed to the House of Refuge it seems likely that the proceeds of theft often went to their struggling families, and parents regularly turned to theft to support their young children. In 1862, Police arrested Kate Lamb for stealing fine china.[230] Within three years Lamb, forced by abject poverty, placed her children in the House of Refuge.[231] Another mother, Margaret Smith, admitted to stealing because she “had four children to take care of and was so poor.”[232]

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[230] State of Missouri v. Kate Lamb and Margaret Bradley, 21 August 1862, SLRC, Microfilm Roll C43923, CCR.
[231] St. Louis House of Refuge Admittance Register, SLCR, 159-60; Schedule 1.—Free Inhabitants in St. Louis Ward 3, St. Louis County, Missouri, Microfilm Roll M653_655, 1860 United States Federal Census, 139. Michael Lamb was a steam boatman with no real estate and $15 in personal estate. Kate was a washwoman. Both were illiterate and Irish immigrants.
[232] State of Missouri, v. Margaret Sinn and Margaret Smith, 9 April 1861, SLRC, Microfilm Roll C43903, CCR.

It was not uncommon for adults to work with children in the commission of petty crimes. While children occasionally stole shoes or coats—goods that they may have used—many stole with the intention of selling their loot. In such cases, boys attempted to exchange stolen items for cash. For instance, a twelve-year-old boy, Joseph Kehl, sold a stolen watch to Ben Miller for forty-five dollars.[233] It seems unlikely Miller truly believed the transaction was legitimate though he testified against Kehl. Other adults proved even more complicit in youthful theft. For example, a man named Thomas Hannegan and an unnamed boy entered George Casper's shoe store, and "the boy asked for a pair of congress shoes. Since they were a little tight, he would call in again and gave his measure."[234] Shortly thereafter, Casper's employee noticed that a pair of shoes was missing, and a police officer, having detained Hannigan in the interim, arrested him. In October of 1863, an adult, Edward Sewell, picked a watch from William Bane's pocket in a crowded barroom. Bane demanded his watch back, and when Sewell denied the theft, Bane called him a "liar and thief." However, the watch was not found on Sewell during a search. Apparently, he had slipped it to an accomplice. A boy, Thomas Loftus, later testified: "I was standing next to [Sewell] . . . & Bane missed his watch—Deft. said search me—Deft. handed me the watch & chain . . . I returned the watch to deft. after he came out of [the] barroom."[235] In other cases, parents seemed to use their

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[233] State of Missouri v. Joseph Kehl, 28 November 1863, SLRC, Microfilm Roll C43923, CCR.
[234] State of Missouri v. Thomas Hennegan, 30 November 1861, SLRC, Microfilm Roll C43918, CCR.
[235] State of Missouri v. Edward W. Sewell, 15 October 1863, SLRC, Microfilm Roll C43924, CCR.

children to distract store clerks in order to commit thefts.[236] Cases such as those regularly dotted the juridical landscape of Civil War St. Louis.

More often, children stole with their peers, working together to acquire spending money. For instance, John Leary, a thirteen-year-old-boy, testified that one evening "before dark [he] saw [Jack Williams] take a bolt of calico from Peter White & Co, corner of 4th and Olive. [H]e gave it to me and I gave it to a boy by the name of Brady. We all three went up to the corner of 8th & Franklin Avenue. [D]efendant and Brady went in to a store next door to the corner, the understanding we were to divide the money the calico sold for."[237] Williams should have stuck to the plan. When the boys emerged from the store, they failed to give Leary his cut. After their arrest, Leary testified against Williams. Despite his cooperation with the police, Leary failed to escape the House of Refuge. He was committed for being "dangerously exposed"—a term often applied by administrators to children exposed to bad influences.[238] Some of the thefts proved quite lucrative. William Schamberg, James Frought, John Williams, and a number of other boys broke into a clothing store, making off with about $3,000 in cash and clothing.[239]

Marginalized children participated in the city's working class leisure culture—a culture that often centered around drinking. For decades taverns and

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[236] For example, see: State of Missouri v. Augusta Goetz, et al., 23 May 1863, Criminal Court, Microfilm Roll C43915, CCR; State of Missouri v. Mary McDonald, 27 April 1863, SLRC, Microfilm Roll C43924, CCR.
[237] State of Missouri v. Jack Williams, 27 September 1861, SLRC, Microfilm Roll C43902, CCR.
[238] St. Louis House of Refuge Admittance Register, SLCR, 83-84.
[239] State of Missouri v. William Schamberg et al., 29 June 1861, SLRC, Microfilm Roll C43903, CCR.

saloons offered working-class men an opportunity for inexpensive, homosocial camaraderie.[240] In St. Louis, German immigrants—who flooded the city following the failed revolutions of 1848—opened breweries and beer gardens throughout the city. Sitting atop a honeycomb of cavernous limestone, the city proved ideal for beer making. Brewers tapped into cool underground caves that created a stable environment for the fermentation of beer, even during sweltering summers. Others excavated caves, opening underground beer gardens, such as Ulrig's Cave, that catered to the drinking crowd, which often included entire families. By the 1860s, barrooms and theaters populated blocks throughout the city. Despite regular crackdowns, unlicensed dram shops, dance halls, and gambling establishments continued to operate.[241] One observer, William Greenleaf Eliot, lamented, if you visit a "place of evening amusement, where games of chance or skill are the attraction, or the second or third rate theaters . . . You would find there young persons . . . taking the shortest road to

[240] Richard Stott, *Jolly Fellows: Male Milieus in Nineteenth-Century America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009); Elaine Frantz Parsons, *Manhood Lost: Fallen Drunkards and Redeeming Women in the Nineteenth-Century United States* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003); Ann Fabian, *Card Sharps and Bucket Shops: Gambling in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York: Routledge, 1999); Amy S. Greenberg, *Cause for Alarm: The Volunteer Fire Department in the Nineteenth-Century City* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998); Michael Kaplan, "New York City Tavern Violence and the Creation of a Working-Class Male Identity," *Journal of the Early Republic* 15, no.4 (Winter 1995): 591-617; W.J. Rorabaugh, *The Alcoholic Republic: An American Tradition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979).

[241] The number of such cases are too prolific to cite individually here. However, the St. Louis court system processed hundreds of cases for selling liquor without a license or operating unlicensed gambling facilities every year.

manhood by aping the vices of men."[242] These vices Eliot referred to were drinking, gambling, and "coarse jokes and vulgar exhibitions."[243]

One might dismiss Eliot's concerns as the moralizing of a noted middle-class reformer; however, records indicate that children regularly found easy access to such establishments. For example, in 1863, Eliza Meyer complained of four boys who wandered into her saloon one afternoon for beer and cigars. After serving them two glasses of beer and two cigars, Meyer was distressed that the boys shorted her five cents on their bill. She must have been more upset upon learning that during the argument about the bill one of the boys had emptied her cash drawer.[244] Boys also found comfort in the city's dance halls. Owen Cavanaugh and John Mahon—boys who served as important bridge figures in the city's social network of marginalized children—had their evening at a "low dance house" disrupted when Ulysses Harrison shot John Massey to death.[245] Outside of adult drinking establishments, children found ways to imbibe. The *Daily Republican* reported "a crowd of persons . . . collected at the corner of Green and Fifth streets . . . attracted thither to see a boy only six years old, who was beastly drunk and lying in the gutter."[246] Courts regularly

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[242] William Greenleaf Eliot, *The Lost Birthright: A Sermon for the Young* (Boston: John Wilson and Son, 1863), 7-8.
[243] Eliot, *The Lost Birthright*, 8.
[244] State of Missouri v. John Thompson, 2 June 1863, SLRC, Microfilm Roll C43903, CCR.
[245] "Serious Shooting," *Missouri Republican* [St. Louis], 10 November 1860. The court compelled both boys to testify, even placing Cavanaugh in the House of Refuge for two months to ensure he showed up in court. Evidence suggests that Cavanaugh built important relationships in the House of Refuge while being held as a witness. He was later arrested with a group of boys including Brian Cannon and Samuel Banyard. State of Missouri v. Ulysses Harrison, 6 February 1861, Criminal Court, Microfilm Roll C43907, CCR; St. Louis House of Refuge Admittance Register, SLCR, 67-68.
[246] "Beginning Young," *Daily Missouri Republican* [St. Louis], 17 July 1858.

placed children in institutions for drinking, including Mary Ann Stuart, a fourteen-year-old girl placed into the House of the Good Shepard in 1861.[247]

But children also relied on illicit proceeds simply for survival. In late 1861, Patrick Quinn, with the help of three other boys, slipped goods into his coat belonging to C.B. Hubbell's store.[248] He was arrested and sent to the House of Refuge. It was not his first time. Quinn had been in the institution four times during the previous year and a half, managing to escape three of those times. As a fugitive, Quinn would have found it difficult to keep a job and probably would have survived on income from stolen goods. The sheer volume of children admitted to city institutions for abandonment, vagrancy, or want of a home suggests that Quinn was not alone. From 1861 through 1866, more than 240 children were admitted for such complaints.[249]

Many children, either compelled by circumstances or drawn by the excitement of the streets, found ways to survive by living with groups of other children, independently of their parents. One mother "was compelled to leave home for a short time, and to compel [her son] William to stay at home she stripped him naked and hid his clothes. He, however, found some old ragged clothes, which he donned and left, staying away all night, and was arrested by

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[247] "At the Recorder's," *Daily Missouri Republican* [St. Louis], 2 February 1861. The House of Refugee admitted five children explicitly for drunkenness between 1861 and 1867. See, St. Louis House of Refuge Admittance Register, SLCR, 69-176.
[248] State of Missouri v. Patrick Quinn, 22 November 1861, SLRC, Microfilm Roll C43903, CCR.
[249] St. Louis House of Refuge Admittance Register, SLCR, 69-176.

the police."[250] Some boys, such as John Rose, possessed the resources and wherewithal to stay at one of the city's many boarding houses.[251] Yet, it seems this option proved elusive to many others. Specific evidence about how and where these children lived remains scant. One account from January 1865 reported the discovery of a cave, "twelve feet deep and nine feet square, covered with pine plank, and fitted up snugly and comfortably" in which "[t]hree boys and a colored man" lived along with a cache of stolen goods.[252] In the 1870s, Joseph Dacus and James Buel noted:

> For lodging places, in the summer time, the street boys are at no loss. They crawl into basements, go into lumberyards, find beds under old sheds, and often sleep on the green of some vacant lot . . . In the winter season . . . the tribes of this class have established headquarters in caves, which they have excavated in some vacant lot; some take possession of untenanted buildings and establish themselves in the cellars, where they crowd together to keep themselves warm. The police know of more than a half dozen caves excavated by these street boys, which are capable of accommodating twelve to twenty-five boys each.[253]

Given the availability of shelter in institutions, the fact that children lived in circumstances such as these suggests that at least some children preferred the independence and solidarity of living with other children to the confines of city

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[250] Report by John M. Tice, Visiting Agent, April 1870, Meeting Minutes of the Board of Managers of the House of Refuge, 1869-1886, St. Louis Orphanages and Institutions, SLCR, 26-27.
[251] State of Missouri v. John Rose, 5 March 1861, SLRC C43903, CCR.
[252] "Robbers Cave," *Daily Missouri Republican* [St. Louis], 26 January 1865.
[253] Joseph A. Dacus and James William Buel, *A Tour of St. Louis; or The Inside Life of a Great City* (St. Louis: Western Publishing Company, 1878), 411.

charities and reformatories. In February 1865, one incarcerated boy expressed his sentiments by burning down an entire wing of the House of Refuge.[254]

Between 1861 and 1866 only nine children proclaiming themselves in need of a home entered voluntarily.[255] By contrast, the institution admitted sixty-one children for "wandering" or vagrancy, apparently without their consent. The managers of the reformatory released many of those children to parents and family members. These facts suggest that life on the streets held a profound appeal even to those with homes. For instance, one fourteen-year-old girl preferred "to play the role of housekeeper" to a dozen boys living in a cave than remain in "her wretched home."[256]

Whatever its relative advantages, life on the streets was not without serious dangers. Children faced the constant threat of arrest and incarceration. While many likely faced victimization at the hands of adults, others faced serious violence from their peers. For example, in February of 1862, Milton Frame stabbed another boy, for which Frame served nearly six months in the House of Refuge before escaping.[257] The following year Henry Parker sliced

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[254] The boy responsible for lighting the fire was under fourteen years old. For those operating the institution, the arson was especially distressing since it destroyed part of the New House of Refuge, built several years earlier, but not occupied until the month before the fire. The building served as a hospital for much of the war. *Eleventh Annual Report of the Officers of the House of Refuge, St. Louis, MO* (St. Louis: Evening News Office, 1865), 7. Apparently, some adults preferred the House of Refuge to military service, choosing to disguise themselves as minors in order to evade capture as deserters. See, *Tenth Annual Report of the Officers of the House of Refuge, St. Louis, MO* (St. Louis: Evening News Office, 1864), 12.

[255] St. Louis House of Refuge Admittance Register, SLCR, 69-176.

[256] Dacus, *A Tour of St. Louis*, 411.

[257] St. Louis House of Refuge Admittance Register, SLCR, 91-92.

the face of Edward O'Brien at the Bowery Theater. O'Brien testified his attacker shouted, "You young son of a bitch what do you want?"[258]

The War's Children

As the war dragged on, waves of children flocked to St. Louis. The city emerged as a regional center for wounded soldiers, refugees, escaped slaves, and eventually newly freed men, women, and children. Many refugees fled the Confederacy with little more than their lives. One report on war refugees noted that the group was composed "almost entirely of helpless women and children, widows, orphans and half orphans, often sick or debilitated by disease, poorly clad and bare-footed, with a few bundles of bedding, on arriving here, have no friends to go to, have fallen upon the charity of the Commission and of the Government."[259] Children constituted half of all refugees.[260]

Although child refugees found some assistance from military and private organizations, many suffered immeasurable hardship. After Arkansas guerrillas murdered a Union loyalist, his wife and children fled the state. Along the way "rebel marauders" took the family's oxen, wagon, and remaining possessions, the men declaring, "You say your husband is dead; how did he die? Put to death for being a traitor? G-d d-n him, served him right."[261] One child refugee, after waiting with the family's possessions "all night on the levee, and all the

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[258] State of Missouri v. Henry Perkins, 28 December 1863, SLRC, Microfilm Roll C43924, CCR.
[259] *Report of the Western Sanitary Commission of the White Union Refugees of the South* (St. Louis: Rooms of the Western Sanitary Commission, R.P. Studley and Co., 1864), 3-4.
[260] Calculated based on statistics provided in: *Report of the Western Sanitary Commission of the White Union Refugees of the South*, 6-8.
[261] *Report of the Western Sanitary Commission of the White Union Refugees of the South*, 13.

next day without food," received word his mother died overnight at Benton Barracks (an army barracks, hospital, and refugee camp established during the war).[262] The suffering of refugees did not end when families reached the city limits. One legally blind woman, Susan Hargrave, and her four children walked hundreds of miles from Arkansas to Missouri, eventually gaining passage on a train to St. Louis. Once in the city, charity workers persuaded her to give up her children and had her transferred to the city hospital for eye surgery. One report noted that after "she gave them up willingly, knowing it to be a necessity, and for their good," she "died of consumption, after having been entirely restored to sight."[263] However, the report glossed over the most disturbing details of the Hargrave children's experience. First, while in the custody of the Mission Street Home—a charity and orphanage run by the city's leading reformer, William Greenleaf Eliot—"Four men enticed them into an alley & put the [two Hargrave] girls into a covered wagon & drove off! They were too much frightened to cry out & when they saw the River . . . they thought the men were going to throw them into it!"[264] Amazingly, the children were located and returned to St. Louis by order of Major General Grenville Dodge. Second, Susan Hargrave did not die as reported. In fact, when she demanded that her children be returned, Eliot resisted. For two years, he and Hargrave battled for custody in the courts. In 1866, nearly three years after Hargrave first turned over her children, the

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[262] *Report of the Western Sanitary Commission of the White Union Refugees of the South*, 11.
[263] *Report of the Western Sanitary Commission of the White Union Refugees of the South*, 5.
[264] William Greenleaf Eliot to Thom. Eliot, 30 December 1864, Series 2, Box 2, William Greenleaf Eliot Personal Papers, University Archives, Washington University, St. Louis, St. Louis, MO.

Supreme Court of Missouri dismissed Eliot's final challenge for custody, and Hargrave regained her children.[265]

For slaves the path toward freedom could prove equally traumatic. In response to years of brutal guerrilla raids, many pro-Union slaveholders moved to St. Louis for safety and brought their slaves with them.[266] Outside of the city, circumstances were far more hazardous. For years, federal forces stationed in Pilot Knob attracted escaped slaves (also known as "contrabands" prior to emancipation) seeking freedom within Union camps.[267] In 1864, when Confederate cavalry, led by Maj. General Sterling Price, swept through Missouri, the federal government provided mules and a wagon to Robert Bryant's family to escape from Pilot Knob to St. Louis. Along the way, Confederate soldiers attempted to captured them. The whole family took to the woods, but became separated. Bryant recalled, "I got lost out in de woods for three days . . . If I see'd somebody comin' in de woods I would go and hide."[268] For three weeks, "bushwhackers" pursued Bryant and a slave woman from house to house, until mother and son reunited. Many of the refugees who made it to St. Louis, many

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[265] William G. Eliot v. Susan Hargrave, 1866, Folder 05, Box 545, Location 15B/6/7, Supreme Court Case Files, Missouri State Archives, Jefferson City, Missouri.

[266] For example, during the war, Delicia Patterson's master, a Union loyalist, brought his family to St. Louis, most likely to escape violence from Confederate guerrillas. However, when the state of Missouri ordered immediate the emancipation of slaves in 1865, Patterson's mistress objected, declaring: "She is as much our nigger now as she was the day you bought her 2 years ago and paid $1500 for her." "Delicia Had Some Temper: Interview with Delicia Patterson," *Slave Narratives: A Folk History of Slavery in the United States from Interviews with Former Slaves, Vol. X Missouri Narratives* (Washington, DC: Works Progress Administration, 1941), 213.

[267] According to records of the Western Sanitary Commission, the government refugee camp at Pilot Knob was home to between 1,000 and 1,500 white refugees and about as many refugee slaves. See, *Final Report of the Western Sanitary Commission from May 9th, 1864, to December 31st, 1865* (St. Louis: R.P. Studley and Co., 1866) 92-93.

[268] "Slave Married 4 Times: Interview with Robert Bryant," in *Slave Narratives*, 55.

found their way Benton Barracks. Although white refugees received free assistance, the War Department required all able bodied adult contrabands to work for their rations.[269] Among the former slaves at Benton Barracks was Mary Bell, who assisted her mother in washing laundry. Most slaves regarded life at the Barracks a significant improvement over slavery. "I had never been to school," Bell recalled; "I attended school at Benton Barracks and went about six or seven months with de soldiers."[270]

Child abandonment escalated among families already struggling to support their children at the start of the war. Between 1860 and 1865, commitments to the House of Refuge for abandonment tripled.[271] By 1867, there was nearly a five-fold increase over prewar rates. For instance, between 1861 and 1862, city authorities removed Bridget and John Leonard from their home three times for neglect, destitution, and improper exposure.[272] Leonard's father, a steam boatman with few assets, struggled to support his family.[273] On August 24, 1865, the children entered the House of Refuge a final time as "abandoned."[274] Other children fared even worse. Julia Quinn, sent to the

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[269] *Final Report of the Western Sanitary Commission*, 86.
[270] "She Loves Army Men: Interview with Mary A. Bell," *Slave Narratives*, 29-30.
[271] Figures tabulated from St. Louis House of Refuge Admittance Register, St. Louis Orphanages and Institutions, Archives of the St. Louis City Recorder (SLCR), St. Louis, MO, 91-187. See Figure 1.
[272] St. Louis House of Refuge Admittance Register, SLCR, 77-78, 89-90, 99-100.
[273] According to census records, Bridget and John Leonard's father owned no real estate and claimed one-hundred dollars in personal estate. In all likelihood, the Leonard family took in boarders to make ends meet, since the census indicates an adult and child with a different surname living in the household. Schedule 1.—Free Inhabitants in St. Louis Ward 9, St. Louis County, Missouri, Microfilm Roll M653_650, 1860 United States Federal Census, 38.
[274] St. Louis House of Refuge Admittance Register, SLCR, 155-56.

House of Refuge in 1862 for committing burglary and larceny, voluntarily returned November 20, 1863.[275] Evidently, she had no other place to go.

By 1863, the extent of the crisis had deepened. As the army drafted men into service, many families struggled to survive. For example, the father of Katie and Ellen Murphy "deserted and was arrested . . . He did not provide for his family for two years."[276] After Frederick and Joseph Vogel's father, a private in the Missouri Cavalry, died, the boys' mother, suffering from mental illness, vanished in the city leaving her boys with a charity.[277] For most families the loss of the primary breadwinner proved too much to overcome. For instance, when Napoleon and Lafayette Bradfield's father joined the army, both children were placed into the House of Refuge.[278] Even into the 1870s, the House of Refuge paid private institutions, such as the Protestant Orphan's Asylum and St. Joseph's Roman Catholic Orphan Asylum, to house overloads of abandoned children.[279] The children of former slaves were especially vulnerable. From

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[275] St. Louis House of Refuge Admittance Register, SLCR, 103-04, 121-22. A Julia Quinn of the same age is listed in the 1860 census as an Irish immigrant who lived with an evidently unrelated carpenter's family with no assets of any kind. However, House of Refuge records list Quinn as of Missouri birth with Irish parentage. For census record see, Schedule 1.,—Free Inhabitants in St. Louis Ward 8, St. Louis County, Missouri, Microfilm Roll M653_652, 1860 United States Federal Census, 203.

[276] Entry 4: Katie and Ellen Murphy, Records of Admissions and Discharges, 1865-1869, Civil War Soldiers' Orphans Home (CWOH), Vol. 65, St. Louis Protestant Orphans Asylum Records, 1834-1940 (SLPOAR), State Historical Society of Missouri, St. Louis, MO.

[277] Entry 6: Frederick and Joseph Vogel, Records of Admissions and Discharges, CWOH, SLPOAR.

[278] Entry 22: Napoleon and Lafayette Bradfield, Records of Admissions and Discharges, CWOH, SLPOAR; St. Louis House of Refuge Admittance Register, SLCR, 113-14.

[279] Meeting Minutes, 15 February 1870, Meeting Minutes of the Board of Managers of the House of Refuge, 1869-1886, St. Louis Orphanages and Institutions, SLCR, 8.

1864 through 1867, the House of Refuge admitted seventy-nine abandoned black children and ninety-eight white children.[280]

Many children struggled to cope with the death of their parents. For instance, George Greenwood, found himself orphaned at age four. Confederate guerrillas killed his father in his own bed, and Greenwood's mother fled with her children to St. Louis, where she died in the Benton Barracks hospital.[281] In all likelihood the children witnessed their father's brutal murder and mother's death. One could only speculate at the impact of the trauma the boys suffered. George was placed in the Soldiers' Orphans Home. One of his brothers, Benjamin, went to live with a shoe dealer in St. Louis, and the other brother, William, was sent to live with a family in Illinois. Clearly, many children showed great difficulty adjusting to the loss of parents and institutional life. On a snowy day in April 1865, Napoleon Bradfield, join by Gustav Cramm, William Evelerm and Albert Sanford, fled the Soldiers' Orphans Home "having intentions to try the world on their own account."[282] The boys ended up at the home of Cramm's sister, whom they hoped would provide them with shelter. She refused, and the Home denied readmission to Cramm and Eveler. Two years later, administrators

[280] St. Louis House of Refuge Admittance Register, SLCR, 107-188. Included in this figure are a single instance of "want of a home" and four voluntary entries by children. Interestingly, evidence suggests the institution was not racially segregated. No mention of the practice could be located in the institution's annual reports or board of managers' meeting minutes.
[281] Entry 3: George Greenwood, Records of Admissions and Discharges, CWOH, SLPOAR.
[282] Visiting Committee Report, Fourth Week in April, Visiting Committee Records, CWOH, SLPOAR.

discharged Sanford, noting that he “was a very bad boy and was demoralizing the other children. Talked about setting the Home on fire.”[283]

Conclusion

Few could have predicted the tremendous impact war would inflict upon children living in St. Louis. Not only did the crisis produce hardship and suffering, it fundamentally and forever transformed the very course of thousands of young lives. For marginalized children—those already teetering on the brink on the eve of war—the change was most profound. Circumstances thrust many families deeper into poverty and suffering, breaking apart families and forcing children together in institutions throughout the city. The relationships children formed reconfigured the social world of marginalized children, producing for many a greater solidarity with peers and independence from adults. However, midway through the Civil War, refugees and contraband children inundated the city, again fundamentally altering how children lived their lives.

While children struggled to adapt to the shifting conditions produced by war, charity workers and reformers rushed to save the most vulnerable of society. Refugees, freed, and orphaned children, often deeply traumatized by their experiences, elicited sympathy. As the following chapter will show, the rhetoric, networks, and institutional practices crafted to assist this class of

[283] Entry 17: Albert and Rebecca Sanford, Records of Admissions and Discharges, CWOH, SLPOAR.

children dramatically reshaped how people thought about the very notion of childhood itself. In particular, the response to soldiers' orphans helped to codify the notion of childhood as a distinctive stage of life in need of special protections.

Chapter Four: "City of Refuge:" Homes and Asylums for the War's Children

When Aline Hicks recalled her childhood in St. Louis, she was filled with memories of school, her first "beau," and the flowers in her yard of her home. "Then came the war," she remembered, "and we were in the middle of it."[284] Soon a soldiers hospital, barracks, arsenal, soldiers' prison, and even the headquarters of the Western Department of the Union Army flanked her girlhood home on nearly every side. She remembered "large bodies of soldiers . . . daily marching past our house" and meeting General John C. Frémont at Army headquarters with her father, the secretary of the St. Louis Home Guard.[285] She reminisced about the glee of seeing Nellie Grant (daughter of Ulysses S. Grant) play the Little Old Lady Who Sat in a Shoe at a fair to raise funds for the care of wounded soldiers, freedmen, and refugees. Hicks recollected, "With cap and kerchief and spectacles she was seated in the heel of a large shoe, on a counter of a booth where dolls and toys were sold . . . [I] used often go [sic] and talk to her and sometimes she would get out of her shoe and we would roam the whole building together."[286] However, not all of

[284] Reminiscences of Mrs. Aline Sheafe Taylor Hicks, [n.d.], B259, Civil War Collection, 1860-1977, St. Louis History Museum, St. Louis, MO, 5.
[285] Reminiscences of Mrs. Aline Sheafe Taylor Hicks, 5 (quote), 6. The Home Guard was a pro-Union militia formed at the outset of hostilities.
[286] Reminiscences of Mrs. Aline Sheafe Taylor Hicks, 12, 13 (quote). Hicks's mother served on the Art Committee for the Mississippi Valley Sanitary Fair, which benefited the Western Sanitary Commission. The Commission was the primary aid organization serving wounded soldiers in the Mississippi Valley during the Civil War, and its efforts are discussed in detail below.

Hicks's experiences were sanguine. A short time into the war, looking from behind her mother's skirt, she witnessed bloodied and wounded soldiers being transported to a hospital from behind her mother's skirt. She also saw a hanging at the jail.[287] Of course, Hicks was not alone. St. Louis lay at the center of the Civil War in the Mississippi Valley. War came swiftly, as did the war's casualties.

St. Louis and the Mississippi Valley Refugee Crisis

St. Louis emerged early on as the Mississippi Valley's largest magnet for displaced civilians. The Western Sanitary Commission (WSC)—established in 1861 to care for wounded soldiers—became central to the effort to deal with the crisis. William Greenleaf Eliot formulated the plan to reform the city's military hospital system which was badly overburdened by the sudden onset of war. The plan was for a voluntary organization, operating under the sanction of the Union Army, that would assist wounded and sick soldiers in Missouri.[288] On

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[287] Reminiscences of Mrs. Aline Sheafe Taylor Hicks, 9.

[288] Eliot recorded that he began "investigating [the] Military Hospital business" and held a number of "long talks" with the wife of General Charles C. Frémont," Commander of the Union Army's Department of the West, before submitting his proposal. See, Journal Entry, 31 August 1861, Journal of William Greenleaf Eliot, St. Louis, MO., April 1861-June 1863, Series 1, Box 1, Item 6, William Greenleaf Eliot Personal Papers (WGEPP), University Archives, Washington University (WSTLA), St. Louis, St. Louis, MO, 57. For original proposal in Eliot's hand, see Suggestions for Sanitary Commission for the Department of the West, (Draft) 3 September, 1861, Notebook 6, Journal of William Greenleaf Eliot, April 1861-June 1863, Series 1, Box 1, Item 6, WGEPP, WSTLA, 59-60. The plan authorized the creation of the Western Sanitary Committee—its purpose to "carry out . . . sanitary regulations and reforms as the well-being of the soldiers may demand." See, Order by Major General John C. Frédmont, 5 September 1861, Box 2, Folder 21, Western Sanitary Commission Records (WSC), William Greenleaf Eliot Papers (WGEP), Missouri History Museum (MHM), St. Louis, MO. Included in these responsibilities were locating and fitting buildings for use as hospitals, visiting and making recommendations for the improvement of army camps, and providing food and supply aid throughout the Western Department.

September 5, 1861, Frémont signed the order creating the Western Sanitary Commission.[289] Eliot tapped several of the leading businessmen of St. Louis, all of whom were members of his church, to lead the institution. James E. Yeatman, a wealthy industrialist and the only southerner in the WSC leadership, served as president. Eliot was secretary.

The WSC's experience catering to soldiers translated directly to the service of orphans. Soldiers' homes, complete with matrons, donated clothing and food, and care for the sick and permanently crippled served as models for later institutions designed to care for freedmen and war orphans. Indeed, official WSC literature presaged the rhetoric it would employ in support of founding freedmen's and soldiers' orphans homes, one report declaring, "many soldiers returning home from the army on furlough, or discharged from the service, and of others returning to their regiments, arriving in our large cities and centres [sic] of travel without the means of paying hotel expenses, often falling into bad associations, or suffering neglect for want of a home."[290]

Staggering numbers of refugees, including destitute former slaves, converged on St. Louis in the early years of the war, and organizations such as the WSC, Ladies Union Aid Society, and Ladies Freedmen's Relief Association rushed to provide much needed humanitarian aid. While escaped slaves sought freedom, white refugees, many of whom professed to be displaced Unionists, hoped to salvage their lives. A beacon of safety in an otherwise tumultuous

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[289] See, Envelope from Frédmont's order with note by William G. Eliot, Order by Major General John C. Frémont with envelope, September 5, 1861, WSC, WGEC, MHM.
[290] See, *Report of the Western Sanitary Commission for the Year Ending June 1st, 1863* (St. Louis: Western Sanitary Commission Rooms, 1863), 21.

South, St. Louis attracted men, women, and children from Arkansas, Alabama, and Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, Tennessee, and Texas, as well as parts of Missouri. As the major rail and water hub linking the South to the Midwest, the city served as an understandable waypoint for those seeking refuge in the Union. The Commission secured and paid the railroad fare for many of the "more energetic and capable" refugees who had friends or relatives living elsewhere in the Union.[291] By October of 1864, the Commission secured transportation for 202 men, 493 women, and 682 children, "besides many young children under four years of age, who passed without any fare being charged."[292] For those with no connections to the Union, St. Louis served as a temporary refuge in which to wait out the war.

Children constituted half of all refugees, many of whom fled the Confederacy with little more than their lives.[293] A WSC report on white refugees noted, this "class, consisting almost entirely of helpless women and children, widows, orphans and half orphans, often sick or debilitated by disease, poorly clad and bare-footed, with a few bundles of bedding, on arriving here, have no friends to go to, have fallen upon the charity of the Commission and of the Government; for having no residence here, they did not come within the range

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[291] *Report of the Western Sanitary Commission of the White Union Refugees of the South* (St. Louis: Rooms of the Western Sanitary Commission, R.P. Studley and Co., 1864), 3.
[292] *Report of the Western Sanitary Commission of the White Union Refugees of the South*, 8.
[293] One WSC report notes its Walnut Street Home in St. Louis hosted 1001 adult and 1163 child refugees between September 1864 and September 1865. Prior to 1864, the WSC secured railway passage north for 695 adult and 682 child refugees. See, *Report of the Western Sanitary Commission of the White Union Refugees of the South*, 6-8.

of the charitable institution of the city."[294] These exiles found shelter and care at the Commission's Refugee Home on Elm Street in St. Louis until a second and larger wave of displaced people overwhelmed the institution.

Guerrilla fighting along the western Missouri border exacerbated an already growing humanitarian crisis. On August 21, 1863, Confederate guerrilla leader William Quantrill led an early morning raid on the pro-Union town of Lawrence, Kansas. Reverend H.D. Fisher—Union Army chaplain and WSC traveling fundraising agent—was, by chance, recuperating from illness with family in Lawrence and witnessed the slaughter. Fisher recalled: "With demonic yells the scoundrels flew hither and yon, wherever a man was to be seen, shooting him down like a dog. Men were called from their beds and murdered before the eyes of wives and children on their doorsteps."[295] According to Fisher, when Quantrill and his men rode out of town several hours later, 154 homes and businesses lay in ashes, 100 women widowed, 200 children orphaned, and 185 men dead.[296] Two-thirds of the town's inhabitants became refugees in a matter of hours. Responding to the aggressive and intractable Confederate insurgency, General Thomas Ewing issued General Order no. 11, evicting all residents of Missouri's western counties—Bates, Cass, Jackson, and Vernon. Ewing hoped to eradicate the sanctuaries of rebel guerrillas who poured into Kansas inflicting terror. However, the order effectively displaced thousands of civilians, swelling the already massive numbers pouring into

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[294] *Report of the Western Sanitary Commission of the White Union Refugees of the South*, 3-4.
[295] Rev. H.D. Fisher, *The Gun and the Gospel: Early Kansas and Chaplain Fisher*, 2nd Ed. (Chicago and New York: Medical Century Co., 1897), 189.
[296] Fisher, *The Gun and the* Gospel*,* 191.

Missouri. At Springfield, the westernmost outpost in the state, refugees were not “encouraged to remain there, and have generally found their way in Government wagons to Rolla, and thence by [train] cars to St. Louis.”[297]

Figure 4. Painting, George Caleb Bingham’s *Martial Law, or Order no. 11* depicts the eviction of approximately 20,000 residents in Western Missouri along the Kansas border. The order, given by General Thomas Ewing, was intended to quash the continued insurgency of pro-secessionist guerrillas. The order applied to all people living in the four county area, regardless of loyalty. It did little to mitigate the Confederate resistance and exacerbated an already alarming refugee crisis. Image courtesy of *State Historical Society of Missouri*.

By the summer of 1863, the federal government began transporting refugees directly to St. Louis. Observers noted: “Many of them were women, with small children, poorly clad, often bare-footed, brought up the river on

[297] *Report of the Western Sanitary Commission of the White Union Refugees of the South*, 19.

Government steamers, and landed here, without the means of procuring a place of shelter for a single night. Their husbands had been killed in the war, had been murdered by guerrillas, had been conscripted into the rebel army, or had died from the effects of exposure, in lying out in the woods, in dens and caves of the earth, to escape the blood-hounds of the rebel conscription."[298] Some found temporary shelter in the police station, and on September 1, 1864 the Commission opened a second refugee home on Walnut Street in St. Louis. Within a year the Walnut Street home hosted 322 male, 679 female, and 1163 child refugees.[299] It was headed by Reverend J.G. Forman who held joint appointments as an army Chaplain and secretary of the WSC.

The cause of displaced refugees intensified the collaboration between the Sanitary Commission and the federal government. While the WSC was established as a private organization operating with authority under the Union army, after 1863, the two organizations became increasingly entwined. In its work to transport refugees away from areas of greatest suffering, provide for the physical needs of refugees, and eventually return refugees to their former homes, "the Commission has acted partly as agents of the Government and partly with funds entrusted to it for such uses."[300] One Commission report noted, "In all these labors in behalf of the refugees in this city, the Commission has enjoyed the friendly sanction and active co-operation of all our Department and

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[298] *Report of the Western Sanitary Commission of the White Union Refugees of the South*, 4.
[299] *Report of the Western Sanitary Commission of the White Union Refugees of the South*, 6.
[300] *The Western Sanitary Commission. What it Does with Its Funds. Why It Should Be Aided in Its Work*. (s.l.: s.n., 1864), Massachusetts Historical Society (MHS), Boston, MA, 8.

District Commanders."[301] In addition to providing funds, supplies, and transportation to refugees, the army lent its financial backing to refugee care institutions. For example, the Army funded the refugee home at Walnut Street and the WSC supplied the furnishings and management.

The job of housing and feeding the refugees fell to the federal government, with support from the Sanitary Commission. Growing numbers of migrants overwhelmed the Walnut Street home, and the army continued to transport refugees to Benton Barracks in St. Louis. The Army constructed the barracks on the grounds of the St. Louis Agricultural and Mechanical Association's St. Louis Exposition fairgrounds, and the barracks grounds housed troops, a hospital, and, increasingly, refugees who lived in renovated horse and cattle stables. The government directed funds to the construction of a refugee facility in southern St. Louis, which the army hoped would house "two thousand persons, it being found desirable to bring all the destitute refugees, now subsisting on the Government at Springfield, Rolla, Pilot Knob, Cape Girardeau, and elsewhere, to a central point, where they can be more easily sent to homes and places of employment."[302] However, after a fire destroyed the partially completed structure, refugees had no choice but to remain at the Barracks.[303] In 1864, E.D. Townsend, Assistant Adjutant General to the

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[301] *Report of the Western Sanitary Commission of the White Union Refugees of the South*, 9.
[302] *Report of the Western Sanitary Commission of the White Union Refugees of the South*, 6.
[303] In addition to mutual cooperation and Union disbursement of funds and supplies for the care of the displaced, the Army forced wealthy secessionists of St. Louis to fund the Refugee Home on Elm Street. *Report of the Western Sanitary Commission of the White Union Refugees of the South*, 4.

Secretary of War, issued General Order, no. 30, authorizing the federal government to provide rations for refugees and contrabands at risk of starvation.

Publicly, officials and supporters of the Sanitary Commission described refugees as courageous supporters of the Union, driven from their homes by violent Confederates. From this perspective, refugee assistance was a patriotic duty. Those who provided aid to wounded soldiers saw their actions as a natural outgrowth of support for the Union cause. Supporting those victimized and displaced for their loyalty extended this patriotic service even further. According to the Commission, refugees fled "the homes out of which they were driven because they hated treason and were hated by traitors" and sought "protection and charity within the Union lines, all for their love of the old flag, under which their fathers had fought in the last war with Great Britain, and which was still to them the symbol of American Independence and Liberty."[304]

Privately, agents of the Sanitary Commission engaged in much handwringing about the self-sufficiency and political sympathies of adult refugees. One report estimated that in its many camps and homes established throughout the Mississippi Valley, only one-tenth of refugees could read and write.[305] The president of the WSC, Yeatman, wrote of white refugees: "This class of people, we find, are inferior, in many respects, to the recently emancipated negroes. They have all the false pride and arrogance engendered by the institutions of the South, without having been taught to labor, considering

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[304] *The Western Sanitary Commission. What it Does with Its Funds. Why It Should Be Aided in Its Work*, 2, 8.
[305] *Report of the Western Sanitary Commission of the White Union Refugees of the South*, 9.

that it is degrading to work, because 'niggers work.' They are ignorant, and have all the vices of ignorance."[306] He conceded that the Commission treated refugees as paupers, finding that they were unable or unwilling to work. If they were sent home without government aid, Yeatman argued, they would starve to death. An observer at the Pilot Knob army camp noted that "colored refugees . . . have been far more self supporting . . . planted their door-yards with vegetables, and kept them looking clean, and their children healthy, while the white refugees utterly neglected any such efforts to help themselves."[307] One Baptist minister visiting refugees in a St. Louis refugee institution reached similar conclusions. He noted that a white family who "were clothed in rags and were barefooted" lived in a "cheerless apartment [where] there was neither stove nor bed . . . [and] slept on straw and ate from the hand of charity."[308] A black refugee at the same institution managed to secure a broom, bed, and stove, and, according to the minister, "he greatly distanced his squalid white neighbors."[309] Yeatman believed that slavery unleashed "paralyzing effects upon the industry of the poor whites of the South . . . rendering them a far less hopeful class of our population than the negroes whom they much despise, and affect to consider so much inferior to themselves."[310]

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[306] Yeatman to O.O. Howard, 1 May 1864, reprinted in *Final Report of the Western Sanitary Commission*, 112.
[307] *Report of the Western Sanitary Commission of the White Union Refugees of the South*, 15.
[308] Galusha Anderson, *The Story of a Border City during the Civil War* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1908), 255.
[309] Anderson, *The Story of a Border City during the Civil War*, 254, 257-58. Anderson, a Baptist minister, even dissuaded a white refugee woman from joining his church by falsely claiming that a black man employed by his church was actually a member, playing on "the deep prejudice of the poor whites against negroes."
[310] *Report of the Western Sanitary Commission of the White Union Refugees of the South*, 15.

At the heart of this appraisal lay the suspicion that many refugees from Southeastern Missouri and Arkansas were, in fact, rebel sympathizers—wives and children of Confederate soldiers. Many refugees claimed to support the Union and swore oaths of allegiance. However, agents of the Commission believed that for many threat of starvation rather than loyalty prompted refugees to seek sanctuary behind Union lines.

Condescension toward southern whites also bore the marks of antebellum charity practices that separated the deserving from the undeserving poor, but also worked to underscore race. To reformers, poverty, ignorance, illiteracy, and reluctance to engage in wage labor placed many white refugees in the category of undeserving poor. Former slaves escaped this designation initially and were often celebrated for their cleanliness of habits, hard work, and willingness to work for wages. The perceived distinctions between black and white refugees resulted in different aid strategies based in racial difference. Although reformers' positive assessment of freed people's abilities and dispositions soured over the course of the war, the racialization of humanitarian assistance did not.

Homes for Child Refugees and War Orphans

The war wreaked havoc on families. Many of the children who flocked to St. Louis to save their lives brought memories of horrifying violence and deep psychological trauma. A variety of organizations and individuals provided food, clothing, shelter, education, and sometimes homes. Alongside longtime orphan

activists, officers of the Western Sanitary Commission turned more squarely toward the cause of abandoned and orphaned children. This redefined purpose breathed new life into the WSC. It established a number of homes for the care of orphaned and refugee children, both white and black, and, in doing so, launched its longest running humanitarian project. When the war ended, casualties ceased to mount. Slavery lay dead and buried. Soldiers returned home. However, the dead were not raised: orphans remained orphans. For many, the struggle was just beginning.

The WSC assisted the most marginalized victims of war, and in so doing, it reflected the outlook and personal experience of the organization's founder, William Greenleaf Eliot. Eliot's notebooks span more than thirty years and list numerous births and deaths of children in his ministerial care. Hand-scrawled notes and glued-in newspaper clippings forever entombed the dead. One such page noted the death of three-year-old Annie Flowers Harding just above the baptisms of Frank, Harry Foster and Alice Thayer.[311] During the nineteenth century, childbirth was almost as likely to produce death as life, and one-fifth of American children never lived to see their sixth birthdays.[312] Child death touched most every household. As the minister of the Church of the Messiah Eliot celebrated new life and grieved early death far more than the average person. However, familiarity offered little comfort at the deathbed of his own child. Eliot wrote his aunt, "The death of our dear baby was a terrible blow:

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[311] Journal Entry, 23 September 1863, Journal of William Greenleaf Eliot, April 1861-June 1863, WGEPP, WSTLA, 174.

[312] Samuel H. Preston and Michael R. Haines, *Fatal Years: Child Mortality in Late Nineteenth-Century America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991).

almost too much to bear . . . We have six precious children left, but fear to think how many have been taken from us."[313]

Many children arriving on the St. Louis levee teetered on the verge of starvation and death. Residents lamented that entire boatloads of refugee families, landing in the most destitute conditions, slept on the banks of the river. Only desperation drew families to St. Louis. Mothers and children abandoned their farms after the Confederacy conscripted their husbands. Children witnessed their pro-Union fathers murdered and homes burned. Widows loaded their last possessions and children into simple wagons and hobbled toward Union lines. When "feeble and sickly" parents died, "entire families of orphans" fell upon the charities of the city.[314] One widow fled Arkansas, only to die in the St. Louis Refugee Home. Another left her oldest child on the levee to watch their meager possessions while she proceeded on foot with the rest of her children to Benton Barracks. She hoped to find shelter for her family and a hospital for herself. Although her eldest boy was to receive word from his mother the next day, he never saw her alive again.[315]

The most fortunate white refugee children found temporary homes in the city's orphan asylums. Between August and November of 1864, the Sanitary

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[313] Eliot to Aunt, 6 April 1862, Series 2, Box 2, WGEPP, WSTLA (quote). In 1862, he recorded, "Jan 21, 1862. Of membranous croup—after two days of illness, John, our darling baby [died]: 2 yrs & 12 days old." See Journal Entry, 23 September 1863, Journal of William Greenleaf Eliot, April 1861-June 1863, WGEPP, WSTLA, 109. Eliot's daughter, Ada, drowned as the result of an iceskating accident February 20, 1865. She was sixteen years old. See, Charlotte Chauncy Stearns Eliot, *William Greenleaf Eliot: Minister, Educator, Philanthropist* (Boston and New York: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1904), 342.

[314] *Report of the Western Sanitary Commission of the White Union Refugees*, 10.

[315] *Report of the Western Sanitary Commission of the White Union Refugees*, 10.

Commission sent forty children to the Mission Free School and the Protestant Orphan Asylum. Other orphanages also opened their doors. While these institutions predated the war, the rapid influx of refugees redirected their benevolent energies toward displaced children. Early in Missouri's crisis, a Protestant Orphan Asylum report proclaimed: "Although our country's sorrows have absorbed almost every other object, yet 'our love has not all died out, nor its altars grown cold;' the voice of the orphan has been heard amid the strife, and at a time when most needed, friends and resources have been provided."[316]

However, these institutions proved ill-equipped to handle orphaned refugees. An 1865 report noted:

> During the past year the charities of the Asylum have been somewhat taxed in dispensing to the refugees—a class of beings ofttimes so utterly wretched and diseased, that, while it was hardly consistent with the design of the institution to admit them, it would have been contrary to the dictates of humanity to deny them that assistance without which they would have been desolate indeed.[317]

Many refugee children simply died. Of the 36 refugee children admitted to the Asylum between March 1864 and March 1865, eight died within just two weeks of entry. The report claimed, "Some of them were so diseased that they died in one, two, or three days after being brought here, and one, admitted at 8 o'clock A.M., died at 4 in the afternoon."[318] The Girls' Industrial Home recalled, "one

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[316] *Twenty-Eighth Annual Report of the Protestant Orphan Asylum of St. Louis* (St. Louis: Sherman Spencer, Printer, 1863), 5.
[317] *Thirtieth Annual Report of the Protestant Orphan Asylum of St. Louis* (St. Louis, George Knapp & Co., 1865), 6.
[318] *Thirtieth Annual Report of the Protestant Orphan Asylum of St. Louis*, 6.

[child] has been taken from us—'t was [sic] 'the babe of the house,' a sweet, little innocent, the child of a soldier, which was called home while its father was away fighting . . . its angel spirit passed from earth to Heaven, to join its mother, who died at Camp Benton during the past winter."[319]

Not all orphans were refugees, and many of the children housed in orphanages had more than one living parent. For many families, the father's military service meant destitution at home. As a result, mothers were compelled to place their children in orphan institutions. One intake document noted that the children of Angus and Mary Ann McKinnon found shelter at a home because "during the absence of the father while in US service, the children suffered from cold & hunger . . . for this reason shelter was provided at Home until Mr McKinnon received his discharge."[320] For others, the simple hardships of poverty remained, and war certainly did little to mitigate their sufferings. Familiar circumstances of poverty, sickness, and misfortune ripped children from families just as efficiently during wartime. Between April 1863 and April 1864, one-third of all children received into the House of Refuge were admitted for destitution, neglect, or being dangerously exposed.[321]

Similarly, the St. Louis Girls' Industrial School provided education for children unable to attend public schools. During the war, a number of half-

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[319] *Charter, By-Laws, and Ninth Annual Report of the Girls' Industrial Home of St. Louis, MO* (St. Louis: R.P. Studley and Col., 1862), 5.
[320] Entry 19: Mary Ann, Catherine, and Angus McKinnon, Records of Admissions and Discharges, 1865-1869, Civil War Veterans' Orphans (SOH), St. Louis Protestant Orphans Asylum Records, 1834-1940 (SLPOA), State Historical Society of Missouri (SHSM), St. Louis, MO.
[321] *Tenth Annual Report of the Officers of the House of Refuge, St. Louis, MO* (St. Louis: Evening News Office, 1864), 8.

orphans found their way to the school. According to officials of the Industrial School, “many a pale mother, plying her needle and thread, in her own lonely garret, or perchance in one of the crowded work rooms recently opened, blesses the wide-open doors of an Institution which gives to her little ones protections and sustenance also, during her long day’s work, while she sighs . . . over the unknown fate of her husband, whose soul has passed away . . . in some of the human hecatombs while now desecrate our land.”[322]

The heavily sentimentalized rhetoric employed by administrators of the Girls’ Industrial School evoked the same tropes employed by antebellum reform women. Reports of the institution conjured up images of poor, suffering widows and innocent children in need of assistance and protection. This suggests a great deal of continuity in the perspectives of many reformers that linked antebellum and wartime reform.

The confluence of child refugees, orphans, and impoverished children overwhelmed St. Louis institutions. Even before the war the supply of marginalized children outstripped resources. During the war, institutions designed to care for orphaned and impoverished children took in refugees and children of soldiers. An administrator of the Girls’ Industrial Home lamented, “In consequence of the great number of persons crowding into St. Louis as a ‘city of refuge,’ we have been compelled daily to reject applicants most deserving . . .

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[322] *Charter, By-Laws, and Eighth Annual Report of the Girls’ Industrial Home of St. Louis, MO* (St. Louis: R.P. Studley and Col., 1861), 5.

while eighteen have been transferred to other homes."[323] This same official summed up the problem as: "In addition to the wants of our own poor, always urgent, we have refugees from various States, constantly presenting themselves. In many instances the applicant is the child of a soldier, who, returning from many a hard fought battle and weary night watch, finds his home a scene of pandemonium, his children out-casts, more desolate than if they were motherless."[324] In the waning years of the conflict, this last group—the children of soldiers—attracted special attention.

Soldiers' Orphans

In 1864, one WSC publication recalled the death of soldier, lamenting that "one bullet . . . has killed a man in the prime of young life, and made a widow and four orphans . . . And yet this was merely a representative bullet—representative of tempests of bullets throughout the land which are filling it with widows and orphans."[325] Many in St. Louis sensed that soldiers' orphans might best be cared for in separate institutions, and this sentiment was widely shared throughout the country. In closing his second inaugural address, Abraham Lincoln implored the nation "to care for him who shall have borne the battle and for his widow and his orphan, to do all which may achieve and cherish lasting

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[323] *Eleventh Annual Report of the Girls' Industrial Home of St. Louis, MO* (St. Louis: R.P. Studley and Co., 1864), 5.
[324] *Tenth Annual Report of the Girls' Industrial Home of St. Louis, MO* (St. Louis: R.P. Studley and Co., 1863), 5.
[325] *The Daily Countersign* [St. Louis], 17 May 1864, located in St. Louis Fairs and Expositions Collection, St. Louis Mercantile Library, University of Missouri, St. Louis, St. Louis, MO.

peace among ourselves and with all nations."[326] This newly-conceived obligation of the state as a surrogate spouse and parent to the wives and children of fallen soldiers was not limited to the Union. For instance, Mississippi resolved that "the State pledges herself to to her soldiers that those dear ones they have left behind them shall not want whilst Mississippi has it in her power to assist them."[327] Although such pledges resulted in few concrete results during the war, the plight of orphaned children gradually received increased attention. Late in the war, a number of private soldiers' orphans homes cropped up throughout the Union.

In 1866, Pennsylvania became the first to establish a state system of soldiers' orphans institutions, followed by a number of others, including Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Ohio, and Wisconsin.[328] One administrator of the Pennsylvania state system traced the roots of the movement to a single encounter between Governor Andrew Gregg Curtin and two soldiers' orphans begging for food on Thanksgiving day in 1863. "Great God!" Curtin exclaimed, "is it possible that the people of Pennsylvania can feast this day, while the children of her soldiers who have fallen in this war beg bread from door to

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[326] Abraham Lincoln, "Second Inaugural Address of Abraham Lincoln," Saturday, 4 March 1865.
[327] "Resolution of thanks to the mothers, wives, sisters and daughters of this State", 5 December 1863 in *Laws of the State of Mississippi, Passed at a Called and Regular Session of the Mississippi Legislature, Held in Jackson and Columbus, Dec. 1862 and Nov. 1863* (Selma, AL: Cooper & Kimball, State Printers, 1864), 227. For a more detailed treatment, see, Stephanie McCurry, *Confederate Reckoning: Power and Politics in the Civil War* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010), 134.
[328] Robert H. Bremner, ed., *Children and Youth in America: A Documentary History, Vol. II, 1866-1932* (Oxford: American Public Health Association, 1971), 259

door!"[329] Curtin later declared before the United States Sanitary Commission, "Let the widow and her dependent offspring become . . . *the children of the State*, and let the mighty people of this great Commonwealth nurture and maintain them . . . and that dying, the *justice*, not the charity, of the country has provided for the helpless survivors."[330]

In Missouri, the Western Sanitary Commission led the movement. After purchasing the Webster College building, the Commission began raising an endowment fund to support its Soldiers' Orphans' Home. In its appeal for funds, the Home' endowment fund committee declared, "the soldiers' orphans are the people's children, and common justice requires that . . . the loss of their natural guardians should be made good."[331] Unlike its refugee institutions, the new home would not be tainted by Confederate inhabitants. Only the children of Union soldiers killed during the war might gain admission to the home, and the WSC estimated 200 such orphans and half orphans might receive care upon the home's opening. In February 1865, the Missouri legislature approved a funding bill supporting the Orphans' Home endowment.[332] Unlike many of the WSC's wartime refugee homes, the orphans home found a partner in the state government rather than the federal army.[333] Although it received state funds,

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[329] James Laughery Paul, *Pennsylvania's Soldiers' Orphan Schools: Giving a Brief Account of the Origin of the Late Civil War, the Rise and Progress of the Orphan System, and Legislative Enactments Relating Thereto* (Philadelphia: Claxton, Remsen & Haffelfinger, 1876), 32.
[330] Paul, *Pennsylvania's Soldiers' Orphan Schools*, 33. Emphasis in original.
[331] "Soldiers' Orphans' Home, St. Louis MO," 2 January 1865, *Daily Missouri Republican* [St. Louis].
[332] *Journal of the Senate of the State of Missouri at the Regular Session of the Twenty-Third General Assembly* (Jefferson City, MO: W.A. Curry, 1865), 435, 440.
[333] The Soldiers' Orphans' Home received ongoing state funding from fines and penalties for violations of Missouri coal and petroleum oils laws. See, *The General Statutes of the State of*

the Home remained a privately-administered institution. A later observer of remarked of Home's twenty-acre campus: "The building, of stone and bricks, is on an eminence, from which stretches a landscape of beauty. During the winter the children find amusement in the ample halls; in summer the flowers and foliage invite them to the open air."[334] It is unclear whether any children of black soldiers ever applied for admission, and the institution never admitted any. The absence of black children suggests that the WSC did not place the children of black and white soldiers on equal footing. To the extent that the organization was willing to assist black children, it did so in separate institutions.

Few extant records describe the orphan home in detail; however, it is clear the home departed little from the idealized domesticity of St. Louis's prewar orphan asylums. Notes from the first visiting report stressed that a "pleasant home feeling seemed to pervade the house."[335] Most of the children lived in the main house, although there was also a smaller cottage often used to quarantine sick children and caretakers during times of illness. By April of 1865 thirty-five orphans called the institution home, and its administrators spoke of them as a family. Although founded by the WSC and funded by the state and city's leading men, the Home operated under the Board of Lady Managers, which ran the affairs of the institution and hired its all-female staff.

Missouri: Revised by Committee Appointed by the Twenty-Third General Assembly, Under a Joint Resolution of February 20, 1865, Amended by the Legislature, and Passed March 20, 1866 (Jefferson City, MO: Emory S. Foster, 1866), 436.

[334] Mrs. H.I. Stagg, *History of the Founding and Progress of the St. Louis Protestant Orphan Asylum* (St. Louis: s.n., 1879), 10-11.

[335] Visiting Committee Report February 1865, Old Soldiers' Orphan Home Visiting Committee Records, 1865-1869, St. Louis Protestant Orphans' Asylum (1834-) Records (POA), 1834-1940, State Historical Society of Missouri (SHSM), St. Louis, MO.

It is most likely that the Home bore more than a passing resemblance to the Mission Home. WSC founder, William Greenleaf Eliot, established the Mission Home in 1856. It offered out-care to the poor, shelter to homeless adults and orphaned children, and ran a Free School.[336] Evidently, the Mission Home and Soldiers' Orphans' Home maintained a close relationship. Records between 1865 and 1869 indicate no less than twenty-seven transfers of children between the two institutions.[337] George Greenwood demonstrates the close relationship between the Mission Free School and Soldiers' Orphans' Home. Greenwood's father was murdered in his bed by guerrillas, and his mother died as a refugee in Benton Barracks. After having been sent to the Mission Free School the young George arrived at the Orphan's Home on February 4, 1865. That December he was sent back to the Free School, but returned to the Home sometime thereafter. In 1869, the Home discharged Greenwood, but he returned a month later. He left the home for good in 1872. The Soldiers' Orphans' Home quickly reached capacity and by November of 1865 sent a number of children to the Mission home while an additional building was constructed.

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[336] Eliot, Notebook 4. Journal of William Greenleaf Eliot, November 1852-March 1860, Series 1, Box 1, Item 1, WGEPP, WSTLA, 97, 125-30.

[337] The number of transfers was derived from an analysis of the Soldiers' Orphans' Home admissions and discharge registry, spanning from 1865 to 1869. See, Civil War Veterans' Orphans, Records of Admissions and Discharges, POA, SHSM. For one such example see, Visiting Committee Report 9 & 12 Nov[ember] 1865, Old Soldiers' Orphan Home Visiting Committee Records, 1865-1869, POA, SHSM. For more on Eliot's relationship to the Soldiers' Orphans' Home see, Charlotte Chauncy Stearns Eliot, *William Greenleaf Eliot: Minister: Educator, Philanthropist* (Boston and New York: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1904), 62.

Institutional Practices during the War

Soldiers' orphans and child refugees were part and parcel of the same crisis, but reformers strained to sever their commonalities. Charity workers awarded the children of soldiers who died in service to the Union special status. Reformers wove the sacrifice of fathers into the very fabric of the orphans' biology. Refugee orphans whose Union-supporting fathers were murdered by Confederate guerrillas often elicited comparable sympathies, but refugees rarely rose evoked more than pity, and sometimes became objects of suspicion or even distain. This was especially the case for rural refugees who lacked access to education or the cultural norms of the reformist class. Just as before the war, children orphaned and abandoned as the result of poverty or illness were met with a mixture of compassion and condescension. For example, after an Arkansas refugee girl refused to accept a position in domestic service arranged by WSC president Yeatman, he told her mother to "let her rot."[338] These viewpoints placed wartime orphan care strategies at loggerheads with each other. Reformers drew the sharpest divisions between black and white children. Yet, conflicting attitudes also created distinctions in the treatment of white war orphans and refugees. Children's status as refugee orphans or soldiers' orphans largely determined whether they would be pressed into indentured labor contracts or find adoptive homes.[339]

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[338] Anderson, *The Story of a Border City during the Civil War*, 254.

[339] Poor and abandoned children elicited less sympathy than refugee and soldiers' orphans. Between April 1863 and April 1864, the House of Refuge placed twenty-seven of the 157 inmates discharged during the course of the year in apprenticeships (long-term indenture contracts). See, *Tenth Annual Report of the Officers of the House of Refuge, St. Louis, MO.*

The orphaned children of refugees were indentured at high rates. Between March 1864 and March 1865, more than eighty percent of children admitted to the Protestant Orphan Asylum were refugees, and refugees accounted for nearly sixty-five percent of all children placed outside of the Home.[340] It is clear that demand for homes far outstripped supply. The Girls' Industrial Home placed twenty-five children in homes during 1863, "some adopted as children in families, where the 'sun-light of love' brightens their life. Others, not quite so fortunate, are bound out to service until the age of eighteen."[341] WSC administrators labored to usher refugees out of the city into private homes. For example, Rev. J.G. Forman advertised in the *Missouri Daily Republican* that the organization had refugee "women with families of children . . . and orphan children" that "in many localities in the country . . . would be serviceable to the inhabitants, in various capacities, while in the city

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Presented April 1, 1864 (St. Louis: Evening News Office, 1864), 11. Since most children had parents, House of Refuge administrators released the majority of children to their families or simply discharged them. When looking at only the children admitted for non-crime poverty offenses—abandonment, dangerously exposed, destitution, vagrancy, and want of a home—the numbers become clearer. The House of Refuge indentured one abandoned or impoverished child for every two it returned to its parents. This figure is produced from an analysis of the House of Refuge admittance and discharge register. It is notable that the record is incomplete, occasionally neglecting to detail the conditions of discharge or to whom a child was discharged. These incomplete entries are not included in this figure. See, Admittance Register, St. Louis House of Refuge (SLHOR), St. Louis Orphanages and Institutions, St. Louis City Recorder (SLCR), St. Louis, MO, 109-128. According to its records, during this span of time a single child was "Provided with a home," although it is unlikely this child was adopted. The House of Refuge sent three children to orphan asylums in the city.

[340] *Thirtieth Annual Report of the Protestant Orphan Asylum of St. Louis* (St. Louis: George Knapp & Co., 1865), 7.

[341] *Tenth Annual Report of the Girls' Industrial Home of St. Louis, MO* (St. Louis: R.P. Studley and Co., 1863), 4.

they are a charge to the Government, for want of employment, and by reason of their non-residence and destitution."[342]

Soldiers' orphans seemed to fair better at finding permanent homes than their counterparts. Although records are more incomplete than not, what survives of the indentures and adoptions made through the Soldiers' Orphans' Home suggest that such children were far more likely to end up in an adopted home than in an indenture. The institution indentured at least nineteen orphans and arranged the adoption of no fewer than twenty-one.[343] However, status as a veteran's orphan failed to shelter children in all circumstances. For instance, Mary Ann and Margaret Scales, aged eight and ten, respectively were abandoned by their mother shortly after their father joined the army. Despite their father's status as a Union soldier, both ended up in the House of Refuge.[344]

Whether finding a home through indenture or adoption, children had few guarantees of safety or happiness. The ability of a child to find permanent adoptive family rather than a binding labor agreement stemmed largely from legal practice. Missouri law allowed that children might be forcibly removed from parents and bound out to other parties if the children had been abandoned or subjected to destitution.[345] Only children whose parents died or relinquished

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[342] "Wanted—Situations for families of refugees and freed people in the country," 2 January 1865, *Daily Missouri Republican* [St. Louis].
[343] Civil War Veterans' Orphans, Records of Admissions and Discharges, POA, SHSM
[344] Entries 1569-1570, Admittance Register, SLHOR, SLCR, 123-24; "Abandoned Children," *Daily Missouri Republican* [St. Louis], 6 January 1864.
[345] *The Revised Statutes of the State of Missouri, Revised and Digested by the Eighteenth General Assembly, during the Session of 1854 and 1855, Vol. I* (Jefferson City: James Lusk,

their parental rights might enjoy the possibility of finding an adoptive home. However, nothing in law or common practice ensured that the conditions facing children within adoptive homes were better than those in indentured ones. Adults who pursued adoption were likely guided by sentimental concerns, whereas those who pursued indenture were motivated by the need for children's labor. As a result, adopted children were probably better treated than indentured children. Nevertheless, the historical record demonstrates that adoption was no bar against abuse, maltreatment, or coldness. The lengths institutions to which extended themselves (or claimed to extend themselves) testifies to the commonness of the mistreatment of adopted and indentured children. A number of homes placed children for a trial period, after which a placed child might object to the placement and return to the institution.[346]

The discourse of sacrifice enabled certain mothers to press claims as war widows in order to garner material support for their children. Often refugee mothers turned to the city's child institutions under the pressure of illness or poverty. In other circumstances, parents used orphan homes for their own ends. One child whose "father has lately died on the battle field, and his mother, unworthy of the sacred name, had left him to suffer and die uncared for" found temporary shelter in the Protestant Orphans Asylum before succumbing to

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Public Printer, 1856), 188-89; *The General Statutes of the State of Missouri: Revised by Committee Appointed by the Twenty-Third General Assembly, Under a Joint Resolution of February 20, 1865, Amended by the Legislature, and Passed March 20, 1866* (Jefferson City, MO: Emory S. Foster, 1866), 474-75.

[346] *Charter, By-Laws, and Eighth Annual Report of the Girls' Industrial Home of St. Louis, MO* (St. Louis: R.P. Studley and Col., 1861), 5; *Thirteenth Annual Report of the Protestant Orphan Asylum of St. Louis*, April 3d, 1848 (St. Louis: New Era Office, 1848), 7.

typhoid fever.[347] His mother's motivations are unknowable. Asylum officials seems more likely she was unable to care for the child due to illness or poverty. simply wanted to be free of the duties of motherhood. It is equally likely that she might have made the difficult to surrender the child for which she could not afford to care in an institution.

Many parents used orphan asylums as part of a survival strategy. For instance, Louisa Harris, unable to care for her daughter Sarah, placed her at the Orphans' Home until she was old enough to enter the city's Blind Asylum.[348] Mary McVeigh placed her two children, Mary Jane and John Robert, in the Soldiers' Orphans' Home "untill [sic] they are educated in a condition to do something for themselves say 5 or 6 years at which time if the Mother is not in a condition to take them away and care for them we have the right to find places for them."[349] McVeigh collected her children the following year when her situation stabilized. She was not alone. Many parents, including both widows and widowers, admitted children to the Soldiers' Orphans' Home. Records between 1865 and 1869 suggest that no fewer than 119 children were admitted to the institution by a living parent.[350] Parents reclaimed at least 67 children from the institution between 1865 and 1869. However, at least twenty-two

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[347] *Twenty-Eighth Annual Report of the Protestant Orphan Asylum of St. Louis* (St. Louis: Sherman Spencer, Printer, 1863), 5-6.
[348] Entry 29, Civil War Veterans' Orphans, Records of Admissions and Discharges, POA, SHSM.
[349] Entry 64, Civil War Veterans' Orphans, Records of Admissions and Discharges, POA, SHSM.
[350] Figures from an analysis of: Civil War Veterans' Orphans, Records of Admissions and Discharges, POA, SHSM. In some cases records did not indicate whether living parents intended to collect their children or to whom their children were discharged. Cases including such ambiguity have been excluded from figures listed in this paragraph.

children, admitted with the understanding they would be collected by a living parent at a later date, never saw their parents again. For example, Sarah Williams, whose husband was missing in action, left her children, Mary Jane and Melissa Ann, at the home with a promise to return once she was able to support them. Letters went unanswered, and she never came back.[351] Other parents vanished, died, or went insane.

The amount of labor expected of children reflected distinctions drawn by reformers between war orphans and refugees and poor children. All children's institutions stressed the virtues of labor and personal industry, but the extent to which administrators put this belief into practice varied widely. With the exception of the House of Refuge, few required significant productive labor. For instance, the first matron of the Soldiers' Orphans' Home hoped to teach the home's girls to knit in order to "cultivate habits of industry."[352] Yet frequent complaints that the children's clothes were threadbare and inadequate suggests that the children were incapable of repairing their clothes, much less producing their own.[353] The home employed a cook, gardener, laundress, and seamstress instead of compelling the children to perform the basic tasks needed to operate. Even the Girls' Industrial Home—an institution whose founding charter declared

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[351] Entry 10, Civil War Veterans' Orphans, Records of Admissions and Discharges, POA, SHSM.
[352] Visiting Committee Report February 1865, Old Soldiers' Orphan Home Visiting Committee Records, 1865-1869, POA, SHSM. Emphasis in original.
[353] Visiting Committee Report 1st Week in March 1865, Old Soldiers' Orphan Home Visiting Committee Records, 1865-1869, POA, SHSM; Visiting Committee [Report] First Week in July 1865, Old Soldiers' Orphan Home Visiting Committee Records, 1865-1869, POA, SHSM; Visiting Committee [Report] 9 and 12 Nov[ember] 1865, Old Soldiers' Orphan Home Visiting Committee Records, 1865-1869, POA, SHSM.

its purpose as “reclaiming and teaching habits of industry” to destitute, neglected, and orphaned children—required relatively little formal work outside of sewing.[354] Its official rules were mute on the question of labor altogether. In most cases, institutions taught industrious habits—not actual skills—through discipline, education, and routine. Managers left the formal training of poor and orphaned children to their masters or adoptive parents.

The primary outlier was the House of Refuge. As detailed in chapter one, it stressed the reformative value of labor—a practice that continued through the war. Its 1865 *Annual Report* declared: “The House of Refuge is a manual labor-school . . . [that] ‘reconciles the stern necessities of social order with the benevolent impulses of the heart.’”[355] Since the asylum was founded to reform children accused or convicted of crimes, its administrators hoped that the cultivation of steady work habits would serve as the vehicle by which to reintegrate marginalized children into the community. Since inmates of the House of Refuge had engaged in, or at least been exposed to, vicious and immoral behavior, administrators assumed such children needed to be thoroughly reformed and taught habits of discipline neglected by presumably immoral parents. By contrast, orphans required little or no reform since their condition was not the product of immoral influences. Rather, orphan asylums sought to reproduce the habits of industry assumed to be instilled in a typical household.

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[354] *Charter and By-Laws and Ninth Annual Report of the Girls’ Industrial Home of St. Louis* (St. Louis: R.P. Studley and Co., 1862), 13.
[355] *Eleventh Annual Report of the Officers of the House of Refuge. St. Louis, MO. Presented April 1st, 1865* (St. Louis: Evening News Office, 1865), 5.

Freedmen's Children during the War

War gave rise to extreme suffering among the slaves of the Mississippi Valley. Missouri followed a tortuous path toward emancipation. Since the state was under nominal federal control throughout the war, Missouri slaves were not officially freed by Lincoln's emancipation proclamation in 1863. On July 1, 1863, the Missouri Constitutional Convention issued a gradual emancipation law ensuring that most slaves would be freed between 1876 and 1893.[356] The law promised to immediately free slaves sold or brought to secessionist states. However, this provision, apparently, went unenforced. In November of 1863, Eliot complained to Major General Schofield that slaveholders were selling people across state lines with impunity.[357] The 1863 ordinance never emancipated a single slave. In 1865, the state legislature passed a measure granting immediate emancipation.

Nonetheless, enslaved people took what the state of Missouri refused to give. Before 1865, a steady stream of fugitive men, women, and children from Missouri joined freed people from surrounding states flocking behind Union lines. They confronted dire circumstances. By November of 1863, the WSC estimated at at least 50,000 freedmen sought refuge behind Union lines in the

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[356] The Missouri ordinance of emancipation abolished slavery on July 4, 1870. However, slaves over forty years of age would remain servants for life, those under twelve would remain in servitude until they reached twenty-three years old, and those between twenty-three and forty years of age would be emancipated on July 4, 1876. Slaves brought into Missouri from another territory and slaves removed to secessionist states would receive immediate emancipation. See *The Missouri State Convention, and its Ordinance of Emancipation. Speech of Charles D. Drake, Delivered in St. Louis, July 9, 1863* (St. Louis: s.n, 1863), 5-6.

[357] Eliot to Maj. Gen. J.M. Schofield, 9 November 1863, Box 2, Folder 21, WSC, WGEP, MHM.

Mississippi Valley. Appealing directly to Lincoln, the WSC lamented that these freedmen "have no shelter but what they call 'brush tents,' . . . [and] are very poorly clad—many of them half naked . . . The sick and dying are left uncared for, in many instances, and the dead are unburied."[358] In response, the WSC began assisting escaped slaves. Yet, the WSC followed a different prescription black refugees and orphans than it had for white refugees and soldiers' orphans.

The transition from slave to free labor shaped the center of reform efforts. In 1864, James Yeatman, president of the WSC, published a report on freed labor in the Mississippi Valley. At first glance, it seemingly had little to do with the crisis facing freedmen in the St. Louis region. The report contained a series of recommendations that would establish a government bureaucracy to lease abandoned plantations, oversee working conditions, negotiate labor contracts, and ensure payment of minimum wages for former slaves.[359] However, the report is suggestive of reformers' attitudes toward the labor of former slaves. It conveys a singularity of purpose with Army generals who hoped to force freedmen to be self-sufficient and attempted to win the support of Confederate planters by reestablishing a reliable system of labor. The proposed bureau would hire superintendents and agents to supervise the proper treatment of

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[358] Circular Letter from WSC to Abraham Lincoln, 6 November 1863, Box 2, Folder 21, WSC, WGEP, MHM.

[359] James E. Yeatman, *Suggestions of a Plan of Organization for Freed Labor and the Leasing of Plantations Along the Mississippi River, Under a Bureau of Commission to Be Appointed by the Government* (St. Louis: Rooms of the Western Sanitary Commission, 1864), WSC, MHS, 3-8. It is likely Yeatman became familiar with this system during an 1863 tour of army freedmen's camps. See, Yeatman, *A Report on the Condition of the Freedmen of the Mississippi, Presented to the Western Sanitary Commission, December 17th, 1863* (St. Louis: Western Sanitary Commission Rooms, 1864).

freemen and guard against fraud and abuse, as well as operate infirmary farms for "the infirm, the helpless, and for young orphan children."[360] Yeatman advocated vagrancy laws to force the unwilling to work and set a graduated scale of minimum wages for freed men, women, and children that allowed for differences in physical ability. These proposals mirrored efforts throughout the Union-occupied South. Yeatman's proposal echoed those of Gen. Nathaniel P. Banks who initiated the move toward wage labor in Louisiana. Although the WSC plan added minimum wages, both proposals advocated a system of compulsory wage labor.[361] Yeatman hoped the proposed policies would enable freedmen to eventually lease or purchase their own land and stem "[t]he disposition of colored people . . . to congregate in cities, towns, or communities of their own."[362] Above all, he insisted that former slaves "should be taught that freedom is not a license to live a life of idleness, but liberty to work for themselves instead of a master."[363] More importantly, from the standpoint of the Sanitary Commission, the proposal addressed the crisis of refugee freedmen by tying former slaves to the land, rather than bringing them to St. Louis or other large cities for support.

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[360] Yeatman, *Suggestions of a Plan of Organization for Freed Labor*, 6.
[361] Lawrence Powell, *New Masters: Northern Planters during the Civil War and Reconstruction* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1998), chapt. 5; Eric Foner, *Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution, 1863-1877* (New York: Perennial, 2002), 54-56.
[362] Yeatman to O.O. Howard, 1 May 1864, reprinted in *Final Report of the Western Sanitary Commission from May 9th, 1864 to December 31st, 1865* (St. Louis: R.P. Studley & Co., Printers, 1866), 114.
[363] Yeatman to O.O. Howard, 1 May 1864, reprinted in *Final Report of the Western Sanitary Commission*, 114.

The proposed care of freed slave children varied little from that of freed adults. Yeatman suggested that "All over the ages of twelve years will be required to labor."[364] Boys and girls between twelve and fifteen years of age would be entitled to the same wages as the lowest-graded adult male or female. Employers also had to employ or provide for the children of any adults hired as laborers. The WSC also hoped families would remain intact. In particular the plan championed rights of marriage and called for those living together as husband and wife to be compelled to marry.[365] The Commission argued that "[t]here should be schools established in convenient localities, and all children between the ages of six and twelve years should be required to attend them."[366] Motherless children who were too young to perform labor would be cared for in Commission-run homes.

The most precariously positioned freedmen—women and young children—found care within segregated aid organizations in St. Louis. By 1864, the WSC and army outgrew both refugee homes in St. Louis and the accommodations at Benton Barracks. The Commission persuaded the army to

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[364] Yeatman, *Suggestions of a Plan of Organization for Freed Labor*, 4.

[365] The effort to encourage and even coerce former slaves to marriage was not limited to St. Louis or the Mississippi Valley. As Laura Edwards and Amy Dru Stanley have shown, although many former slaves welcomed the marriage contract as a mechanism to wrest control over black families from slaveholders, many freed people were reluctant to enter into marriage contracts. Legislators moved to legalize slave marriages as the clergy and philanthropists pressured cohabitating freedpeople to get married. For some reformers marriage was a moral question, but for others it shifted financial obligations from slaveholders to freedpeople's families. Sometimes, former slaves agreed to legal marriage only after facing threats of criminal prosecution. See, Laura F. Edwards, *Gendered Strife and Confusion: The Political Culture of Reconstruction* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1997), 31-65, and Amy Dru Stanley, *From Bondage to Contract: Wage Labor, Marriage, and the Market in the Age of Slave Emancipation* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 44-46.

[366] Yeatman, *Suggestions of a Plan of Organization for Freed Labor*, 7.

convert the Lawson Hospital on Broadway into the Refugee and Freedmen's Home. The Home was placed under the superintendence of Rev. Forman, who held joint positions as WSC secretary and army chaplain. The army covered the costs and held ultimate administrative control of the home. However, much of the administration was left to the Ladies' Union Aid Society, Ladies' Freedmen's Relief Association, and detached soldiers. The home's inhabitants and administration were segregated: The Ladies' Freedmen's Relief Association cared for freedmen. The Ladies' Union Aid Society cared for refugees. More than 3,000 found shelter and sustenance there. Although the institution initially filled to capacity—600 refugees and freedmen—only 300 remained by mid-1865.

The segregation of the Home mirrored WSC policies that forced freed people, but not white refugees, into the labor market. The Home provided the means of basic survival and functioned as a school. "One of the great benefits of this Refugee and Freedmen's Home consisted in its being a school," a WSC report noted, "where all the refugee women and freedwomen who were in health were required to do housework, cooking, and laundry work; were paid moderate wages, with which to clothe themselves and children; and taught some of the first lessons of a better civilization."[367] Reformers hoped both poor southern whites and freed slaves might acquire a basic education in civilized living and the virtues of wage labor. However, the similarities ended there. Neither the Commission nor anybody else suggested that white refugees

[367] *Final Report of the Western Sanitary Commission*, 108.

required intervention from the federal government to ensure a smooth transition into wage labor. The WSC assumed its benevolent paternalism should extend beyond the doors of the Home and into the labor market.

The Commission pursued policies designed to shoehorn slave children into the wage labor system with limited protections. It is not surprising that the WSC centered its humanitarian efforts on transforming slaves into wage laborers. The Commission's leadership mostly consisted of men drawn from St. Louis's financial elite. For instance, Yeatman, president of the organization, was a well-educated southerner who earned a fortune in iron manufacturing, banking, and railroads. Carlos Greeley, WSC treasurer, grew wealthy from the wholesale grocery, railroad, mining, and banking industries.[368] All were members of Eliot's church, and all, with the exception of Yeatman, were from New England.[369] In pursuing a government-mediated labor contract system, Yeatman sought to shelter freedmen from the avarice of their former masters and implement minimum wages on the behalf of slaves unpracticed in negotiating their labor in the market.[370] These government protections extended to children. Yeatman hoped that children under twelve years of age would be sheltered from steady labor and acquire the rudiments of education.

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[368] John Thomas Scharf, *History of Saint Louis City and County, from the Earliest Periods to the Present Day* (Philadelphia: Louis H. Everts & Co., 1883), 550-52; James Neal Primm, *Lion of the Valley: St. Louis, Missouri, 1764-1980* (St. Louis: Missouri Historical Society Press, 1998), 251-52. George Partiridge, merchant was also a wholesale grocer. See, Scharf, *History of Saint Louis City and County,* 878; and Walter B. Stevens, *St. Louis: The Fourth City, 1764-1911, Vol. II* (St. Louis and Chicago: S.J. Clarke Publishing Co., 1911), 633.

[369] William E. Parrish, "The Western Sanitary Commission," *Civil War History* 36, no. 1 (March 1990), 19.

[370] Martin Ruef, *Between Slavery and Capitalism: The Legacy of Emancipation in the American South* (Princeton: Princeton, 2014), 22.

Slave children could never hope for such protections—neither could children under the employ of their former masters. However, the proposal demanded that children as young as thirteen be forced into the labor market under statutory penalty. For black children, childhood ended at the age of thirteen.

While the WSC could never ensure that its program would be adopted by the federal government, it was able to shape institutions within St. Louis. As early as 1864, leading members of the WSC petitioned the city government to provide funding for public schooling to free black children.[371] Evidently, the petition found a receptive audience. By the end of the year, 1,500 black children received instruction in the city's five free colored schools. However, the city contributed only five hundred dollars. Free blacks and the WSC raised the rest of the funds. A separate Board of Education for Colored Schools, "composed of colored men, aided and counselled [sic] by several of our most eminent and patriotic citizens, and particularly by members of the Western Sanitary Commission," oversaw and ran the schools.[372]

Evidently, the WSC also took seriously its recommendations to provide homes for young orphaned freed slaves. The Commission purchased a property on Twelfth Street in St. Louis and set aside funds to cover operating expenses.[373] The home—consisting of two small cottages and a schoolhouse–

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[371] Yeatman, Eliot, Carlos S. Greeley, and George Partridge to Hon. Steven Barlow, 4 August 1864, Box 1, Schools Collection, MHM.
[372] *Eleventh Annual Report of the Board of Directors of the St. Louis Public Schools for the Year Ending August 1, 1865* (St. Louis: R.P. Studley and Co., 1865), 26.
[373] The WSC also turned over its Soldiers' Orphans Home in Vicksburg, MS, to the National Freedmen's Aid Commission, so that the latter might establish a freedmen's orphans home.

–opened with twenty-four black orphans, who were soon joined by eighty more from northwestern Missouri at the order of Brigadier General Sprague.[374] Commissioners hoped that the home would also care for the children of widowed freedwomen, allowing mothers to support themselves in the labor market.[375] The Freedmen's Orphan Home Association—an organization of benevolent women—managed the home with the assistance of "intelligent and worthy colored women."[376]

The Freedmen's Orphan Home sometimes treated black children better than their white counterparts in public institutions. For the most part the institution disregarded recommendations established in Yeatman's report in favor of institutional practices common to white orphans' asylums. Sometimes the Freedmen's Orphans Home even offered stronger protections to black children than required by law. Indenture contracts stipulated that children under fourteen were entitled to three months of schooling a year. At the age of fourteen, an indentured child could choose a guardian or remain in her current indenture under a wage agreement until age eighteen. The Home's wage contract stipulated girls should receive four dollars a month, and boys would earn seven dollars monthly. These stipulations far exceeded the basic

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See, Yeatman to O.O. Howard, 10 August 1865, reprinted in *Final Report of the Western Sanitary Commission*, 118.

[374] *Final Report of the Western Sanitary Commission*, 125; "Yeatman to D.C. Jaccard," 22 July 1865, *Final Report of the Western Sanitary Commission*, 129-130.

[375] Yeatman to O.O. Howard, 10 August 1865, reprinted in *Final Report of the Western Sanitary Commission*, 118.

[376] *Final Report of the Western Sanitary Commission*, 125.

requirements established by law and suggest that the Home assigned at least some privileged status all children affected by the war.

At the same time, the state of Missouri actively sought to weaken the authority of black parents over their children. Missouri's child indenture laws remained unchanged since first drafted decades earlier. State law made no exceptions for age in the indenturing the young children of the poor. The state maintained the right to forcibly remove and bind out any child who was or might become a public charge or if his parents were chargeable or drunkards.[377] Evidently, the House of Refuge made regular use of this provision. For instance, on September 9, 1865 the institution indentured two sisters, aged five and ten, who had been abandoned in the city.[378] Poor black children faced possible removal and indenture as well. However, Missouri added a number of parental moral offenses—ranging from habitual gambling and drinking to prostitution and thievery—that gave cause to remove black children from their parents until adulthood.[379] Law allowed that such children might be bound either to an individual or benevolent institution. It is unclear how many freed children (if any) were placed in the Freedmen's Orphan Home by authorities under these provisions. However, the Home clearly made use of the law to indenture black

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[377] *The General Statutes of the State of Missouri: Revised by Committee Appointed by the Twenty-Third General Assembly, Under a Joint Resolution of February 20, 1865, Amended by the Legislature, and Passed March 20, 1866* (Jefferson City, MO: Emory S. Foster, 1866), 474.
[378] Admittance Register, SLHOR, SLCR, 139-40.
[379] *The General Statutes of the State of Missouri: Revised by Committee Appointed by the Twenty-Third General Assembly, Under a Joint Resolution of February 20, 1865, Amended by the Legislature, and Passed March 20, 1866* (Jefferson City, MO: Emory S. Foster, 1866), 477.

children. Whenever the institution neared capacity it indentured its oldest children.

Aside from the Freedmen's Orphans Asylum, the Commission's dedication to freedmen was short lived, largely due to forces from outside of Missouri. The sufferings of former slaves provoked the sympathy among northern liberals. The WSC led the effort to stimulate that sentiment in an effort to raise money, acquire supplies, and thereby offer shelter and education to the recently emancipated people of the Mississippi Valley.[380] However, during the final year of war, organizations to the north, such as the New York National Freedmen's Relief Association, Cincinnati Western Freedmen's Relief Association, Chicago Northwestern Freedmen's Relief Commission, and Associations of Friends from Indiana and Iowa, descended upon the Mississippi Valley.[381] The WSC reported, as a result "there came to be less necessity for the Western Sanitary Commission to expend its labors in this direction."[382] At war's end, the newly established Freedman's Bureau—bringing the full force

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[380] The WSC sent agents throughout the country raising donations of money and supplies explicitly to assist freedmen. See, Yeatman to Rev. H.D. Fisher, 10 November 1863, Letter of Instruction, Massachusetts Historical Society (MHS), Boston, MA. Members of the WSC also made personal appeals for support of freedmen in the Mississippi Valley. See Samuel J. May to Eliot, 24 March 1863, Series 2, Box 2, WGEPP, WSTLA. For more on WSC freedmen's fundraising see, Freedman's Relief Committee, 1863[?], MHS; *The Western Sanitary Commission. What it Does with Its Funds. Why It Should Be Aided in Its Work*. (s.l.: s.n, 1864), MHS, 8. Included in this effort was the Mississippi Valley Sanitary Fair in 1864. The fair raised nearly $17,000. See, *General Report of the Mississippi Valley Sanitary Fair, Held in St. Louis, May 17, 1864, with the Acknowledgement of the Western Sanitary Commission* (s.l.: s.n., 1864). Another report estimated that about $3.50 had been raised for each inhabitant of the city, "while the cities of New York and Philadelphia . . . raised about $1.67 for each inhabitant." *Final Report of the Western Sanitary Commission from May 9th, 1864 to December 31st, 1865* (St. Louis: R.P. Studley & Co., Printers, 1866), 3.

[381] *Final Report of the Western Sanitary Commission, from May 9th, 1864, to December 31st, 1865* (St. Louis: R.P. Studley & Co., 1866), 123-24.

[382] *Final Report of the Western Sanitary Commission*, 124.

and funding of the federal government to the assistance of freed slaves—– rendered the WSC redundant.[383]

Conclusion

Focus on the suffering of children laid the groundwork for a blossoming child-focused reform culture. Unlike the war, which ended in 1865, the hardships produced during conflict lasted into the next generation. Reformers who sought to alleviate children's suffering during the war failed to provide lasting solutions. On January 11, 1871, the Western Sanitary Commission turned over control of its final orphan home—–the St. Louis Soldiers' Orphans Home—–to the Protestant Orphan Asylum and appropriated remaining WSC funds to the care and education of orphaned and Union soldiers' children.[384] The Protestant Asylum relocated to the Webster Groves campus but continued to "extend care to the soldiers' orphans who remained at the Home, and to such

[383] The Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands—–established in March 3, 1865 to manage the labor, education, and security of freed peoples and refugees throughout former slave territories—–evidently preferred the city of St. Louis and state of Missouri to foot the expense of caring for orphaned and impoverished refugee and freed children. The Bureau's regional commissioner, J.W. Sprague, regarded the St. Louis Refugee and Freedmen's Home's two-thousand-dollar monthly government subsidy too costly and ordered the institution shuttered. See, Gen. J.W. Sprague, "Report of Missouri and Arkansas, by Brigadier General J.W. Sprague, assistant commissioner," in *Executive Documents Printed by Order of the House of Representatives during the First Session of the Thirty-Ninth Congress of the United States of America, 1865-66, Vol. II* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1866), 364. Yeatman complied. The Bureau's activities in Missouri were short lived. By September 1865, less than 300 freedmen received direct assistance from the Bureau. See, William E. Parrish, *A History of Missouri, vol. II, 1860-1857* (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 2001), 151. The headquarters of the Missouri and Arkansas branch moved from St. Louis to Little Rock, Arkansas in October of 1865, and the Bureau's activities in Missouri thereafter were negligible.

[384] Journal Entry, 11 January 1871, Journal of William Greenleaf Eliot, St. Louis, MO., July 1870-June 1871, Series 1, Box 1, Item 7, William Greenleaf Eliot Personal Papers (WGEPP), University Archives, Washington University (WSTLA), St. Louis, St. Louis, MO, 131. The WSC formally dissolved in 1886 when Eliot died.

others as might seek its protection."[385] The Commission and its orphan homes outlasted the war; the institutions it established outlasted the century.

[385] Mrs. H.I. Stagg, *History of the Founding and Progress of the St. Louis Protestant Orphan Asylum* [2nd Ed.], 8.

Chapter Five: Child Reform after the Civil War

On January 2, 1865, Thomas Clement Fletcher declared upon his inauguration as governor of Missouri that "the loyal people of the State, and the soldiers themselves, testify their feeling by generous contributions for the support and education of the children of our dead heroes . . . Give the orphans of war—the children of the People—a home and a culture of mind to fit them for preserving the institutions in defense of which their fathers died."[386] At its surface, Governor Fletcher's statement merely confirmed the massive charitable efforts already underway throughout the state, most notably those of the Western Sanitary Commission. However, at a deeper level, Fletcher captured a profound shift in the way many people viewed those most vulnerable members of society. In casting war orphans as children of the state, he bound together duty, obligation, and patriotism with state paternalism. He would emerge later as a strong supporter of public education and other state-funded, child-focused institutions. Fletcher's outlook grew out of the nation's most violent and bloody war, but it also signaled a new era in which issues related to childhood achieved national recognition.[387]

This chapter maps the process by which reformers, concerned with providing assistance to children displaced and victimized by the Civil War,

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[386] Thomas C. Fletcher, "Inaugural Address, January 2, 1865," in *The Messages and Proclamations of the Governors of the State of Missouri*, vol. IV, eds. Grace Gilmore Avery and Floyd C. Shoemaker (Columbia, MO: State Historical Society of Missouri, 1924), 56-57.

[387] Fletcher even proposed the establishment of a new state university, as well as "the revival of the law providing for a Superintendent of Common Schools." See, Fletcher, "Inaugural Address, January 2, 1865," 57-58.

fanned out across the nation and established the foundation of the post-war child reform movement. Among the central organizations in this process were the St. Louis Philosophical Society and the American Social Science Association. Both institutions, formed at the close of war, disseminated information that shaped post-war child reform.

These efforts rested on the growing perception of children's vulnerability and need for protection from harsh realities of adulthood. St. Louis intellectuals and social reformers emerged as vigorous promoters of this idea, as well as the progenitors of various social institutions that offered children greater protection while delineating new boundaries between adulthood and childhood. In particular, educators and intellectuals identified school and family as institutions in which children would receive protection from the adult world.

National Reform

Although child reform institution-building grew out of war-related aid and charity, there were important pre-war antecedents. During the antebellum period, reformers created a number of national organizations that focused on poor and marginalized children. For instance, in 1857, educators gathered in Philadelphia to form the National Education Association in order to promote the spread of "popular" [public] education.[388] On August 11, 1858, the National Education Association held its first meeting in Cincinnati, drawing together

[388] *The Journal of Proceedings of the National Teachers' Association, at the First Anniversary, Held in Cincinnati, O., Aug. 11, 1858* [sic] (Albany, NY: James Cruikshank, 1858), 17, 38.

officers and representatives from more than a dozen states throughout the nation.[389] Most representatives likely agreed with the declaration of one of the association's vice presidents, Daniel Read, that public "education is in fact, the great idea of our times; and the diffusion among all classes of the means of knowledge, the true democracy of present civilization and progress."[390] As discussed in Chapter Two, in 1857, dozens of representatives from institutions in eleven states gathered in New York City to discuss the reformation of juvenile delinquents in houses of refuge and reform schools.[391]

During the Civil War, the impulse toward national institution-building received a jolt. The Western Sanitary Commission (WSC)—an organization that provided care and supplies to sick and wounded soldiers, refugees, soldiers' orphans, and freedmen in the Mississippi Valley—built a nationwide information-sharing and fundraising network. Although officially sanctioned by the Union Army, the WSC initially was completely voluntary, receiving its funds and supplies from private donations. The Commission secured its first office with funds supplied by its own members and placed ads in St. Louis newspapers petitioning for donations.[392] In St. Louis, the Commission benefited greatly from the efforts of the Ladies Union Aid Society and other such organizations which separately raised funds, secured donations of food and

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[389] Two officers of the newly-formed organization were from St. Louis. The superintendent of St. Louis Public Schools, Ira Divoll, spoke at the meeting.
[390] *Journal of Proceedings of the National Teachers' Association*, 23-24.
[391] *Proceedings of the First Convention of Managers and Superintendents of Houses of Refuge and Schools of Reform in the United States of America* (New York: s.n., 1857).
[392] "Annual Report of the Western Sanitary Commission for the Years ending July 1862, and July 1863" *North American Review* (April 1864), 519-530.

clothing, and coordinated the sewing of hospital garments by soldiers' wives.[393] However, the WSC and its founder, William Greenleaf Eliot, most often looked toward the northeast to fill coffers and store rooms. By 1863, greater than one-third of all cash donations to the WSC originated from Massachusetts, and by 1864, the state funneled some $500,000 in donations, $200,000 of which came from Boston.[394] It is of little surprise, then, that in 1864 the Commission declared, "no two cities are nearer each other than St. Louis and Boston; no two States, than Missouri and Massachusetts."[395]

Deep personal connections between members of the WSC and New England made that region a natural place to begin raising donations. In short order, boxes of supplies arrived at the Commission's main office. In November of 1861 Eliot wrote one donor, "The response form the N.E. women has been admirable;—our hospitals are to be perfectly supplied. No less than 40 boxes are now in transition."[396] Eliot wrote many such letters soliciting gifts and showing gratitude.[397] One 1864 WSC publication remarked, "a New England

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[393] The Ladies Union Aid Society, established in August 1, 1861, donated "253,782 articles [of clothing and food] . . . [and] [o]ver 35,000 hospital garments" as well as nearly $21,000 to the WSC in its first two years. See, *Report of the Western Sanitary Commission for the Year Ending June 1st, 1863* (St. Louis: Western Sanitary Commission Rooms, 1863), 31.

[394] *Report of the Western Sanitary Commission for the Year Ending June 1st, 1863* (St. Louis: Western Sanitary Commission Rooms, 1863), 7-8; "Annual Report of the Western Sanitary Commission for the Years ending July 1862, and July 1863," 524.

[395] "Annual Report of the Western Sanitary Commission for the Years ending July 1862, and July 1863," 524.

[396] Eliot to James Freeman Clarke, 14 November 1861, Box 1, Folder 21, Western Sanitary Commission Records (WSC), William Greenleaf Eliot Papers (WGEP), Missouri History Museum (MHM), St. Louis, MO.

[397] See, Eliot to Huidekoper, 10 November 1861, Series 2, Box 2, WGEPP, WSTLA; Eliot to Mrs. Hall, 10 May 1862, Series 2, Box 2, WGEPP, WSTLA; Eliot to Prof. Huidekoper, 31 March 1862, Series 2, Box 2, WGEPP, WSTLA; Eliot to Mrs. Hall, 11 March 1862, Series 2, Box 2, WGEPP, WSTLA; Eliot to Mrs. Hall, 16 September 1862, Series 2, Box 2, WGEPP, WSTLA; Samuel May to Eliot, 24 March 1863, Series 2, Box 2, WGEPP, WSTLA.

lady, who in the beginning of the war set apart a room in her house as the 'Missouri Room,' and, letting all her friends know of this convenient method of sending articles to St. Louis, as fast as boxes could be filled up, she has received and forwarded goods to the amount of $17,000, and in cash nearly as much more."[398]

The WSC devoted itself to forging a broad, nationwide network of likeminded individuals and organizations. The groundwork for this network was laid by the placement of advertisements in newspapers and the distribution of circulars appealing for aid. In order to support its fleet of floating steamship hospitals, which Eliot lamented were "a heavy drain on our resources," the WSC advertised that "Contributions in money are most needed; they can with this buy materials, and hundreds of loyal women in St. Louis are ready to do the work as may be required."[399] Much of the early network building relied on established contacts. One of the earliest donations to the WSC originated from, Frederic Huidkoper, Eliot's Harvard Divinity School classmate and Unitarian professor of theology at Meadville Theological School in Pennsylvania.[400] Other

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[398] Annual Report of the Western Sanitary Commission for the Years ending July 1862, and July 1863," 523. This "New England lady" was evidently Eliot's sister, Mrs. Thomas Lamb. See Charlotte Eliot, *William Greenleaf Eliot*, 238. By January 1862, Eliot's sister had already sent 12 boxes to the WSC. Eliot to Madam, 23 January 1862, Series 2, Box 2, WGEPP, WSTLA. It is likely that at least some of the animosity between the USSC and the WSC derived from intensive competition for money and supplies. For example, noted Boston education reformer, physician, abolitionist, and director of the USSC, Samuel Gridley Howe, published the following appeal to garner women's aid, *A Letter to Mrs. _____, and Other Loyal Women, Touching the Matter of Contributions to the Army, and Other Matters Connected with the War* (Boston: Ticknor & Fields, 1862).

[399] Eliot to Mrs. Hall, 10 May 1862, Series 2, Box 2, WGEPP, WSTLA; *Appeal for Aid from the Western Floating Hospital: Dollar Subscriptions*, Series 8, Box 1, WGEPP, WSTLA.

[400] Eliot to Huidekoper, 10 November 1861, Series 2, Box 2, WGEPP, WSTLA; A.A. Livermore, "Prof. Frederic Huidkoper," *The Unitarian* 7, (July 1892), 316.

contacts were less direct, yet still had deep connections to Boston and the Universalist church of which Eliot was a minster. These included Samuel Joseph May, a Unitarian minister and abolitionist living in Syracuse, New York, and T. Star King, a Unitarian minister based in San Francisco.[401] King raised an incredible $50,000 for the WSC from his pulpit in 1862.[402]

The success of the WSC depended on the legwork, expertise, and financial connections of its members. Eliot himself made several tours of northeastern cities and towns. For instance, in 1862, he travelled to Philadelphia, New York, and Boston where he toured army hospitals and advocated for the WSC, declaring, "I may be able to do a great deal for sanitary uses, but cannot now tell."[403] The next year he was again moving through the Northeast, with stops in Boston, New Bedford, Newport, and New York. Evidently, the travel was grueling as he confided to his son, "I cannot travel night & day, & shall stop a day or two at Newport. Mr. Yeatman [WSC president] seems anxious about Sanitary funds & I must lay an anchor to windward in Boston. Still I hope to leave N. York westward Friday Am., but shall

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[401] Samuel May to Eliot, 24 March 1863, Series 2, Box 2, WGEPP, WSTLA. Incidentally, King was a branch director of the United States Sanitary Commission, a national organization dedicated to the same cause of the WSC.

[402] Circular of WSC, 25 August 1863, Box 2, Folder 21, WSC, WGEP, MHM. The donation was not soon forgotten. The WSC appealed to Rev. King the following year. For more on King's involvement with the USSC, see Charles J. Stillé, *A History of the United States Sanitary Commission Being the General Report of its Work during the War of the Rebellion* (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott & Co., 1868), 220-27.

[403] Eliot to Mama, 20 December 1862, Series 2, Box 2, WGEPP, WSTLA. In a letter to a longstanding WSC donor, Eliot referenced being "glad at the re-opening of correspondence with Dorchester." See, Eliot to Mrs. Hall, 16 September 1862, Series 2, Box 2, WGEPP, WSTLA.

not kill myself."[404] That Eliot was voted a corresponding member of the Massachusetts Historical Society testifies to his deepening Boston connections.[405] Equally important, agents of the Commission forged national connections. For instance, the WSC appointed Rev. H.D. Fisher as its representative to raise funds and awareness. It recommended he "proceed . . . to Boston, and get together fifteen or twenty of the leading friends of the cause . . . then invite their co-operation and friendly conference as to the best method of awakening an interest and sympathy in the public mind in your mission," encourage the clergy to take up collections, form supporting societies and committees, secure

> "a General Receiving Agent . . [and] Collecting Agents, to assist you in canvassing the towns and cities of New England; [establish] auxiliary committees and agencies, to act in conjunction with the Central Advisory Committee and General Receiving Agent, at Boston . . . endeavor to secure the influence of the public press in favor of your work, and . . . suggest to the more active friends of the movement to aid you by writing articles for the leading newspapers on the subject."[406]

Fisher was to ask for donations of money, clothing, medicine, and food. After setting up an operation in Boston, he was instructed by the WSC to visit and set up collecting agents in the "leading cities of New England, Providence, R.I.; Worcester, Springfield, New Bedford, Lynn, Salem, Lowell, Lawrence, Mass; Portsmouth, N.H.; Portland, Me.; Hartford and New Haven, Conn.; and on your return from your mission to New England, you will also visit New York,

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[404] Eliot to Thomas Eliot, 25 July 1863, Series 2, Box 2, WGEPP, WSTLA; Eliot to Thomas Eliot,10 August 1863, Series 2, Box 2, WGEPP, WSTLA (quote).
[405] Joseph Willard to Eliot, 25 March 1863, Series 2, Box 2, WGEPP, WSTLA.
[406] Yeatman to Rev. H.D. Fisher, 10 November 1863, Letter of Instruction, MHS.

Philadelphia, Newark, N.J.; Syracuse, Rochester and Buffalo; Cleveland, Detroit, Chicago and Cincinnati, and secure what aid you can in those cities."[407] By 1864, official reports listed donations from Massachusetts, New York, Pennsylvania, California, six Midwestern states, England, and Germany.[408]

The St. Louis Hegelians and Education Reform

While benevolence networks fanned out across the nation in an effort to provide for the needs of wounded soldiers, refugees, and displaced children, an intellectual movement increasingly drew St. Louis and Boston intellectuals closer together, laying the groundwork for a new reform program. In St. Louis, the fruits of their work would eventually spark the St. Louis Movement—a philosophical endeavor primarily based in the writings of Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel. In early 1866, after years of informal philosophical discussion and debate, William Torrey Harris, Henry C. Brockmeyer, and other leading Missouri intellectuals formed the St. Louis Philosophical Society.[409] Its members elected Brockmeyer as president and Harris as secretary. "These two men were not only officers," fellow member of the Society and scholar Denton Snider recalled, "but were in essence the Society, and remained as such.[410]

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[407] Yeatman to Rev. H.D. Fisher, 10 November 1863, Letter of Instruction, MHS.
[408] *The Western Sanitary Commission. What it Does with Its Funds. Why It Should Be Aided in Its Work*. (s.l.: s.n., 1864), Massachusetts Historical Society (MHS), Boston, MA; *Report of the Western Sanitary Commission for the Year Ending June 1st, 1863*, 26.
[409] St. Louis Philosophical Society Record Book, 1866-1871, St. Louis Philosophical Society (STLPS), MHM, 15.
[410] Denton J. Snider, *The St. Louis Movement in Philosophy, Literature, Education, Psychology* (St. Louis: Sigma Publishing Co., 1920), 7. For more on the "St. Louis Movement" of Hegelian philosophy, see Britt-Marie Christina Schiller, *The Saint Louis Philosophical Movement* (St. Louis: Webster University, 2009); James A. Good, *A Search for Unity in Diversity: The*

Brockmeyer was a significant figure in both reform and politics. In 1844, he immigrated from Prussia and supported himself in a variety of trades, including tanning, shoemaking, and molding. Before settling in St. Louis in 1856, he briefly studied philosophy at Georgetown University in Kentucky and Brown University.[411] At Brown, he discovered Hegel's *Logic*—"the greatest modern effort in the direction of pure thought," according to Brockmeyer.[412] By the 1860s, he traded foundry work for the practice of law and politics. In 1870, Brockmeyer won a seat in the Missouri state legislature, and participated in the drafting of the state constitution passed of 1875.[413] Between 1877 and 1881, he served as the Lieutenant Governor of Missouri.

Harris emerged as the most influential educator in St. Louis following the Civil War. After withdrawing from Yale University in 1857, Harris migrated to St. Louis and took a took a teaching position with the St. Louis Public Schools the following year and was promoted to principle of the Clay School. In 1867, he became Assistant Superintendent and was appointed Superintendent the following year. Harris remained superintendent until 1880. In addition to leading

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"Permanent Hegelian Deposit in the Philosophy of John Dewey (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2006); Good and Michael H. DeArmey, eds., *The St. Louis Hegelians* (Sterling, VA: Thoemmes Press, 2001); William H. Goetzmann, *The American Hegelians: An Intellectual Episode in the History of Western America* (New York: Knopf, 1973); Henry A. Pochmann, *New England Transcendentalism and St. Louis Hegelianism* (New York: Haskell House, 1948); Kurt F. Leidecker, *Yankee Teacher: The Life of William Torrey Harris* (New York: The Philosophical Library, 1946); Frances A.B. Harmon, "The Social Philosophy of the St. Louis Hegelians" (PhD diss, Columbia University, 1943).

411 Henry C. Brockmeyer, *A Mechanic's Diary* (Washington, D.C.: E.C. Brokmeyer, 1910), 7-8; William Schuyler, "German Philosophy in St. Louis," *The Bulletin of the Washington University Association* 2 (1904), 63-64. Brockmeyer (appearing as Brokmeyer) is listed as a second-year undergraduate at Brown University as of 1854. See, *A Catalogue of the Officers and Students of Brown University, 1854-55* (Providence: Knowles, Anthony, and Co., 1854), 14.

412 Schuyler, "German Philosophy in St. Louis," 65.

413 Snider, *St. Louis Movement in Philosophy*, 101.

the public schools, Harris was a professor of the philosophy of education at the Washington University in St. Louis between 1876 and 1881. The university's co-founder and then-chancellor, William Greenleaf Eliot, was Harris's "personal friend and an admirer of his scholarship and character."[414] During the end of his tenure in St. Louis, Harris taught several sessions at the Concord School of Philosophy in Massachusetts and, after resigning his position in St. Louis, he took a permanent position at the school. In 1889, Harris was appointed the United States Commissioner of Education, a position he held for seventeen years.[415]

The partnership between Harris and Brockmeyer began eight years before they founded the St. Louis Philosophical Society when the two met during a philosophy discussion at the St. Louis Mercantile Library. Still dressed in his foundry work clothes, Brockmeyer challenged Harris's allegiance to the philosopher Victor Cousin, and the two continued their discussion late into the night.[416] Brockmeyer and Harris grew close, intellectually and personally, even living together for a time.[417]

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[414] Evidently, Harris gave regular lectures and participated in administration and board meetings at the university. See, Kurt F. Leidecker, *Yankee Teacher: The Life of William Torrey Harris* (New York: The Philosophical Library, 1946), 396-97.
[415] Leidecker, *Yankee Teacher*, 465-88.
[416] William Schuyler, "German Philosophy in St. Louis," 66.
[417] The Census of 1860 lists Brockmeyer, Harris, and Harris's wife and child living together (possibly as boarders) in the home of a master molder, Samuel Hull. Harris is listed as a schoolteacher and Brockmeyer as a translator of German. See, Schedule 1.—Free Inhabitants in St. Louis Ward 10, St. Louis County, Missouri, Microfilm Roll M653_654, 1860 United States Federal Census, 586-87. Snider reported that the two met in 1858. See, *The St. Louis Movement in Philosophy*, 10. Letters from 1858 and 1859 indicate that Harris and Brockmeyer maintained a vigorous correspondence regarding matters of philosophical discussion. Harris frequently appealed for Brockmeyer's assistance in reading manuscript drafts. For example,

The St. Louis Philosophical Society was as committed to practical action as to understanding metaphysical problems. According to James Good, “the St. Louis Hegelians believed their involvement in politics and social reform was as important as their scholarly work . . . philosophy was a vocation, a practical activity, rather than a profession restricted to cloistered academics.”[418] Brockmeyer and Harris pushed the group to bend philosophical inquiry toward alleviating social maladies plaguing St. Louis and the nation. Harris argued that the state provided the best avenue to meet the group’s ends. He merged individualism and institutionalism, holding that individuals achieved true freedom through the “institutions of civilization,” or, more simply, the state.[419] For Harris, as for Hegel, true freedom went beyond ”freedom of the moment” to “freedom that has the form of eternity.”[420] In other words, freedom is the “passage from impulse to obedience to the social order” and “the individual can feel his own selfhood fully recognized in the requirements of the social order.”[421] According to Harris, institutions of the state provided mechanisms through which the individual was bent to “the organic will of the whole community, and thus made to reflect the divine will.”[422] He celebrated American democracy for achieving this end through free choice rather than force and coercion. The decisions of Brockmeyer to enter politics and Harris to remain within the public

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see, Brockmeyer to Harris, November 1858, Box 1, Folder 26, Kurt Leidecker Collection (KLC), MHM; Brockmeyer to Harris, May 1859, Box 1, Folder 26, KLC, MHM.

[418] Good, *A Search for Unity in Diversity*, 71.

[419] Harris, *Psychologic Foundations of Education: An Attempt to Show the Genesis of the Higher Faculties of the Mind* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1898), 281.

[420] Harris, *Psychologic Foundations of Education*, 282.

[421] Harris, *Psychologic Foundations of Education*, 282.

[422] Harris, *Psychologic Foundations of Education*, 261.

school system reflect their faith in institutions of the state to elevate society and individuals.

Hegel also helped members of the Philosophical Society reckon with the Civil War itself. Harris viewed the Civil War as the result of the historical dialectic—the core of Hegel's theory of history. Harris saw the war as the confrontation of slavery and its negation—individualism, industry, and democracy—that would produce a new concrete universal.[423] The war served as the means by which thesis and antithesis might produce a synthesis. The members of the Society detested slavery, and Brockmeyer even joined in the militia. After facing charges of disloyalty, he won a seat in the state legislature as a war Democrat.

Brockmeyer approached Hegel's ideas with missionary zeal. As president of the Philosophical Society, Brockmeyer pressed his handwritten translation of Hegel's *Logic* into the hands of the group's members who struggled with German editions.[424] Brockmeyer rarely published, and his written influence never matched his personal effect on his fellow intellectuals. To Harris and those closest to him, Brockmeyer possessed a magnetic appeal. Snider later admitted that "in the fall of 1866, I, wishing to see and hear more of [Brockmeyer], entered his law office, professedly as a student of jurisprudence,

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[423] Good, *A Search for Unity in Diversity*, 68-69; Good, "John Dewey's 'Permanent Hegelian Deposit' and the Exigencies of War," *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 44, no. 2 (2006), 293-313; Matt Erlin, "Absolute Speculation: The St. Louis Hegelians and the Question of National Identity," in *German Culture in Nineteenth-Century America: Reception, Adaptation, Transformation*, eds. Lynne Tatlock and Matt Erlin (Rochester, NY: Boydell and Brewer, 2005), 89-106.

[424] Snider, *The St. Louis Movement*, 12. Snider wrote that although Brockmeyer hoped the translation might someday be published it never was, perhaps because many found it wanting.

but really as a pupil of the University of Brockmeyer in person, for he had become to me a personal University."[425] Brockmeyer, Harris, and Snider formed the core of the St. Louis Philosophical Society and the most devoted students of Hegel. Yet the group included other influential thinkers, including public school and university educators such as Thomas Davidson, George Holmes Howison, Alfred Kroeger, and Louis Soldan. The group did not formally admit women as members, but a number of women, including Susan Blow and Anna Brackett maintained close professional and intellectual ties with Harris. Blow and Brackett held positions with the St. Louis Public Schools and published in the *Journal of Speculative Philosophy*—the journal founded in 1867 by the Philosophical Society and edited by Harris.

As Superintendent of St. Louis Public Schools, Harris was well positioned to incorporate Hegelian ideas into efforts for social change. His 1868 report as assistant superintendent cited Goethe in defense of a plan to incorporate more great works into the study of literature. It also channeled Hegel in the proposal to emphasize "the period of internal development, including the growth which unfolded the different elements of our nationality into the antitheses which produced the period of civil war" in history instruction.[426] More importantly to Harris, elementary education was especially profound since it provided young children with the "five windows of the soul" or "tool subjects" of grammar, literature and art, mathematics, geography and history that allowed

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[425] Snider, *St. Louis Movement in Philosophy*, 11.

[426] *Thirteenth Annual Report of the Board of Directors of the St. Louis Public Schools for the Year Ending August 1, 1867* (St. Louis: Missouri Democrat Book and Job Printing, 1867), 58, 65 (quote).

each child to be a rational being.[427] With these basic elements, those who never progressed beyond elementary school would have the ability to acquire knowledge of human culture, or *Bildung*, independently. Students learned their identity within the social order through education, but not through knowledge imparted by their teachers. Rather, the process of self-estrangement, a transformative experience in which children lose themselves in play, fantasy, or literature and return to self, provided the pathway to learning the social order and one's identity within it.

Harris supported a number of innovative reforms. As the principle of the Clay primary school, he oversaw the experimental introduction of a specialized phonetic alphabet, designed by St. Louis educational theorist Edwin Leigh, as a tool for the instruction reading. Upon his ascension to the office of superintendent, Harris introduced the Leigh Method to all of St. Louis public schools in 1867.[428] In 1869, he oversaw the creation of an "Intermediate School" for children with "weak or abnormal minds" who could not keep pace with their peers in age-graded classrooms.[429] He also instituted a system by which advanced students might progress quickly through grades by employing quarterly and sometimes five-week intervals for evaluation and promotion.[430]

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[427] Merle Curti, *The Social Ideas of American Educators with New Chapter of the Last Twenty-Five Years* (Patterson, NJ: Pageant Books, 1959), 315.
[428] *Fifteenth Annual Report of the Board of St. Louis Public Schools for the Year Ending August 1, 1869* (St. Louis: Missouri Democrat Book and Job Printing, 1870), 95-98. Also see, Paul D. Travers and Wallace Z. Ramsey, "Initial Teaching Alphabet a Hundred Years Ago?," *The Elementary School Journa*l 74, no. 5 (Feb. 1974), 274-279.
[429] *Fifteenth Annual Report of the Board of St. Louis Public Schools*, 107.
[430] *Eighteenth Annual Report of the Board of Directors of the St. Louis Public Schools for the Year Ending August 1, 1872* (St. Louis: Democrat Lithography and Printing Co., 1873), 24-27, 81-87; *Nineteenth Annual Report of the Board of Directors of the St. Louis Public Schools for*

During Harris's administration, the number of students receiving German education expanded from 2,476 in 1867 to 18,727 in 1876.[431] During the same period, St. Louis schools were less committed to the instruction of black children. Between 1867 and 1876, the number of children educated in city "Colored schools" grew from 924 to a mere 1,831.[432] In 1870, the city's total black population stood at more than 22,000.[433]

Perhaps the most influential reform introduced in the St. Louis school system was the public kindergarten. In 1870, Elizabeth Peabody—a Massachusetts educator closely associated with transcendentalist thinkers including A. Bronson Alcott and William Ellery Channing, as well as the sister-in-law of Nathaniel Hawthorne and Horace Mann—lobbied Harris to establish a

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the Year Ending August 1, 1873 (St. Louis: Democrat Lithography and Printing Co., 1874), 24-29; *Twentieth Annual Report of the Board of Directors of the St. Louis Public Schools for the Year Ending August 1, 1874* (St. Louis: Democrat Lithography and Printing Co., 1875), 121-48. Arguably, in 1870, Harris invented the basis for the Dewey Decimal System for the classification of books in the St. Louis Public Library, which was under the authority of the public school system. Although when Dewey published his system in 1876, he denied foreknowledge of Harris's system. However, Dewey acknowledged a close resemblance, and Harris evidently regarded Dewey's system as his own. See Melvil Dewey, *A Classification and Subject Index for Cataloguing and Arranging Books and Pamphlets of a Library* (Amherst, MA: Case, Lockwood, and Brainard Company, 1876), 10; Richard J. Kohlbrenner, "William Torrey Harris, Superintendent of Schools, St. Louis, 1868-1880," *History of Education Journal* 2, no. 1 (Autumn 1950), 21.

[431] *Fourteenth Annual Report of the Board of Directors of the St. Louis Public Schools for the Year Ending August 1, 1868* (St. Louis: George Knapp and Co., 1869), 80; *Twenty-Third Annual Report of the Board of Directors of the St. Louis Public Schools for the Year Ending August 1, 1877* (St. Louis: John J. Daly and Co., 1878), 28.

[432] Of the city's 68 public schools, only nine were dedicated to black children. Of the city's 870 teachers, the Colored schools employed only 28, *Fourteenth Annual Report of the Board of Directors of the St. Louis Public Schools*, 14; *Twenty-Third Annual Report of the Board of Directors of the St. Louis Public Schools*, 18.

[433] "Population of Civil Divisions Less Than Counties. Table III—State of Missouri," in *The Statistics of the Population of the United States, Embracing the Tables of Race, Nationality, Sex, Selected Ages, and Occupations from the Original Returns of the Ninth Census* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1872), 194.

kindergarten in the St. Louis Public Schools.[434] In 1860, Peabody established an experimental kindergarten in Boston after reading a pamphlet, written by Friedrich Froebel, the German theorist and educator who invented kindergarten. (She had received the pamphlet from the wife of Carl Schurz, an 1848 revolutionary, Union Civil War commander, newspaper reporter, and Missouri politician.)[435] Peabody's school was the first English-language kindergarten in the United States. In 1867, she traveled to Hamburg for further study of Froebel's system and became an active promoter of kindergarten throughout the nation. In 1872, she encouraged a German kindergarten teacher, Maria Krause-Boelte, to operate a private kindergarten in New York. Peabody's frequent letters to Harris championing kindergarten education and the virtues of Froebel eventually convinced him to open an experimental public kindergarten in St. Louis. The head teacher was Susan Blow—daughter of a wealthy St. Louis industrialist, granddaughter of Dred Scott's one-time slave master, and contributor to Harris's *Journal of Speculative Philosophy*—as its lead teacher.[436] In 1872, Blow wrote to Harris that "shortly after our conversation

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[434] Peabody would eventually join Harris, after his retirement from the St. Louis public schools, on the faculty of Bronson Alcott's Concord School of Philosophy. Bruce Ronda, "The Concord School of Philosophy and the Legacy of Transcendentalism," *New England Quarterly* 82, no. 4 (December 2009), 575-607. Not surprisingly, auxiliary members of the St. Louis Philosophical Society included A. Bronson Alcott and Ralph Waldo Emerson.

[435] Elizabeth Peabody, "The Origin and Growth of Kindergarten," *Education* V (May 1882), 523. Schurtz's connection to Harris and the St. Louis Philosophical Society is unclear. In his account of the society, Snider writes extensively on Schurtz in St. Louis. However, Schurtz was never a member of the Society. See Snider, *St. Louis Movement in Philosophy*, 150-161.

[436] Elizabeth Peabody to Harris, 18 May 1870, Box 4, William Torrey Harris Papers (WTHP), MHM; Peabody to Harris, 25 August 1870, Box 4, WTHP, MHM; Peabody to Harris, 30 January 1871; Box 4, WTHP, MHM. It is evident that by early 1871, Harris had agreed to proceed with the public kindergarten experiment, and that Peabody was active in trying to secure proper training for the teachers in St. Louis. Peabody to Harris, 28 January 1871, Box 4, WTHP, MHM.

upon the Kindergarten system, and the practicality of its introduction into our Public Schools, I came to New York, where I have given the subject careful thought and some practical study."[437] While in New York, Blow trained under Krause-Boelte and, at Harris's suggestion, Blow agreed to open an experimental kindergarten in the Des Peres School in May of 1873.[438] With Harris's active support, the public kindergarten program expanded rapidly, and, by 1876, more than three-thousand children enrolled in the city's thirty kindergartens.[439]

In advocating for kindergartens, Harris and Blow were seeking to make childhood education consistent with current ideas about biological and intellectual development of children. "There are well marked epoch separating the period of childhood from boyhood or girlhood . . . boyhood or girlhood from youth (puberty), and youth from manhood and womanhood" Harris wrote. "In the majority of human beings there is a very important epoch of mental

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For Blow's contributions to the *Journal of Speculative Philosophy*, see: Susan E. Blow, "Dante's Purgatorio," *Journal of Speculative Philosophy* 19, no. 1 (January 1885), 61-79; Blow, "Dante's 'Inferno,'" *Journal of Speculative Philosophy* 18, no. 2 (April 1884), 121-138. In addition, between 1883 and 1885, Blow contributed a multi-part translation of Carl Friedrich Goeschel. For more on Blow's biographical information, see Carol Ferring Shepley, *Movers and Shakers, Scalawags and Suffragettes: Tales from Bellefontaine Cemetery* (St. Louis: Missouri History Museum, 2008), 34-36; "Missouri Women in History: Susan E. Blow," *Missouri Historical Review* 61, no. 2 (January 1967), back cover; John Albury Bryan, "The Blow Family and Their Slave Dred Scott, Part I," *Missouri Historical Society Bulletin* 4 (July 1948), 223-231 and Bryan, "The Blow Family and Their Slave Dred Scott, Part II," *Missouri Historical Society Bulletin* 5 (October 1948), 19-33.

[437] Susan E. Blow to Harris, 14 November 1872, Box 4, WTHP, MHM.

[438] Blow to Harris, 23 March 1873, Box 4, WTHP, MHM; *Twenty-First Annual Report of the Board of Directors of the St. Louis Public Schools For the Year Ending August 1, 1875* (St. Louis: Globe-Democrat Job Printing Co., 1876), 95-102. Evidently, Peabody remained interested in the progress of the kindergarten, even requesting more information to be published in a national report of "genuine Kindergartens now established in the United States." See, Blow to Harris, 10 November 1873, Box 4, WTHP, MHM.

[439] *Twenty-Third Annual Report of the Board of Directors of the St. Louis Public Schools*, 209-10; Blow to Harris, 23 July 1875, Box 4, WTHP, MHM.

emancipation connected with each of the epochs named."[440] According to Blow, "while each stage of development has its own marked and characteristic features, it always depends upon that which precedes and foreshadows that which follows it . . . The greatest mistakes in education are rooted in the failure to recognize and conform to the different stages of natural development."[441] One of more significant implications of this understanding of child development was the emphasis placed on play as a vehicle of instruction. According to Harris, "In play, the child . . . makes practical experiments upon whatever comes within his reach . . . His play contains in it a developing germ . . . From type to type the child proceeds from the empty, formal playthings to more concrete and useful ones, until at last his instinct for play gives way to serious interest in practical life."[442] In short, Harris argued that play prepared children not only for higher stages of learning, but to acquire practical skills and participate in civil society.

Even more important than adequately preparing children for elementary education, kindergarten, according to Harris, might solve social problems among working-class children. As early as 1871, he bemoaned the fact that

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[440] *Twenty-Third Annual Report of the Board of Directors of the St. Louis Public Schools*, 221. In support of his understanding of children's intellectual and biological development, Harris cites: Henry Kiddle and Alexander J. Schem, eds., "Age in Education" in *Cyclopædia of Education: A Dictionary of Information for the Use of Teachers, School Officers, Parents, and Others* (New York: E. Steiger, 1877), 7. The author indicated that at the end of the childhood phase, children benefited from a systematic education conducted by a professional teacher and expressed support for the emerging kindergarten movement. Harris and Blow argued that children under seven were only capable of understanding and arranging "symbols" and that teachers should avoid "theoretical" learning such as reading and writing until the start of boyhood and girlhood.

[441] Blow, *Symbolic Education: A Commentary on Froebel's "Mother Play"* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1894), 26-27.

[442] *Twenty-Second Annual Report of the Board of Directors of the St. Louis Public Schools for the Year Ending August 1, 1876* (St. Louis: Slawson, Printer, 1877), 92-93.

children growing up in the "manufacturing districts" attend school "only three entire years."[443] He maintained that by placing working-class children in school at an earlier age, the schools might provide such children with at least five years of education, compensating for early entry into the workforce. Probably more pressing, Harris argued that kindergarten sheltered children from the dangers of the urban world while protecting society from youths who grew up on the streets. Kindergarten offered a respite to "the children growing up in poverty and crime . . . [l]iving in narrow, filthy alleys, poorly clad and without habits of cleanliness . . . The child who passes his years in the misery of the crowded tenement house or an alley, becomes early familiar with all manner of corruption and immorality."[444] Harris argued that kindergartens "lessen the number of rough, ungovernable youths whose excesses are the menace of the peace of society."[445]

While social reformers long warned of the dangers and negative influences of city streets on children, Harris's argument rested on a newfound emphasis on the lasting impact of early childhood development. In particular, he highlighted the stage between three and seven years of age as especially foundational. "After his third year," Harris argued, "the child becomes social and

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[443] *Seventeenth Annual Report of the Board of Directors of the St. Louis Public Schools for the Year Ending August 1, 1871* (St. Louis: Plate, Olshausen, and Co., 1872), 38. Also quoted in *Twenty-Second Annual Report of the Board of Directors of the St. Louis Public Schools*, 79.

[444] Harris cited an earlier Report, in which he warned that in "certain sections of the city where the influences are corrupting to the children, they being obliged to play on the street, it is decidedly better to have them in school at an early age . . ." See, *Seventeenth Annual Report of the Board of Directors of the St. Louis Public Schools,* 38; *Twenty-Second Annual Report of the Board of Directors of the St. Louis Public Schools,* 79-80.

[445] *Nineteenth Annual Report of the Board of Directors of the St. Louis Public Schools*, 18. Also referenced in *Twenty-Second Annual Report of the Board of Directors of the St. Louis Public Schools,* 81.

hungers for companionship. In the school he can secure with less danger to him than on the street. Such careful training of habits of regularity, punctuality, industry, cleanliness, self-control, and politeness . . . are of priceless benefit to the community."[446] Harris stressed the importance of both peers and educators in child development, warning that "[t]hrough contact with other children in play––where, as happens in cities, the street is the place of this association––his will develops powerfully, and something more is needed for its control than the mere family nurture."[447]

Aside from its obvious influence on education in the United States, the introduction of kindergarten indicated a sea change in the way educators and reformers understood childhood. Education experts like Harris increasingly subdivided childhood into discrete and standardized stages. St. Louis and other school systems increasingly employed age grading—a system by which students progress through school grades according to age-normed assumptions about intellectual and social development—beginning in the middle of the nineteenth century. Kindergarten extended formal education to younger children and prescribed formulas for instruction based on their development.

Within short order, members of the Philosophical Society became widely influential, shaping intellectual discourse into the twentieth century. Although

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[446] *Nineteenth Annual Report of the Board of Directors of the St. Louis Public Schools*, 18. Also referenced in *Twenty-Second Annual Report of the Board of Directors of the St. Louis Public Schools,* 81.

[447] *Eighteenth Annual Report of the Board of Directors of the St. Louis Public Schools*, 18. Also noted in *Twenty-Second Annual Report of the Board of Directors of the St. Louis Public Schools,* 80.

the society forged ties to influential German Hegel scholars, such as Karl Ludwig Michelet and Karl Rosenkranz, the group established some of its closest links with New England Transcendentalists including Ralph Waldo Emerson and Bronson Alcott. *The Journal of Speculative Philosophy* also served as one of the vehicles by which the group achieved outsized influence. A number of Transcendentalist thinkers contributed to the journal, as well as many of the most influential scholars of the later nineteenth century, including G. Stanley Hall, William James, and John Dewey.[448] Upon the publication of his first book, *Psychology*, Dewey wrote to Harris:

> I do not know whether, on occasion of the publication of this my first born, it will be of interest to you to know what gave me the final impetus to philosophic work—but it is of lasting interest to me. When I sent you my first article for the [*Journal of Speculative Philosophy*] I was a school teacher with not much time for work of that sort. But I ventured to ask your opinion of it. Your very kind judgement turned the scale in favor of a plan which I had been considering but rather feared my own ability to carry through—the special study of philosophy with a view to teaching it. So in one sense you are the progenitor of the *Psychology*. . . . I may perhaps, add also that when I was first studying the German philosophers I read something of yours on them of which one sentence has always remained with me—you spoke of the 'great psychological movement from Kant to Hegel'. The remark was rather a mystery to me at the time, but it has gradually become clearer and one thing I have attempted to [do] is to translate a part at lead of the significance of that movement into our present

[448] Harris's connections to New England intellectuals and reformers were particularly close. Among his closest contacts were Ralph Waldo Emerson, Amos Bronson Alcott, and Franklin B. Sanborn. For examples see, William Torrey Harris Diaries, 18 July 1865, Box 1, Folder 5, Kurt Leidecker Collection (KLC), Missouri History Museum (MHM), St. Louis MO; William Torrey Harris Diaries, 18 July 1865, KLC, MHM; William Harris Diaries, August 1865, KLC, MHM. Among the Transcendentalists to publish in the *Journal of Speculative Philosophy* were A. Bronson Alcott, William Ellery Channing, and Franklin Benjamin Sanborn.

> psychological language. I hope you may find that it hasn't lost too much in the process of translation.[449]

It was on the basis of these connections—personal, intellectual, and institutional—formed during and in the years following the Civil War that St. Louis reformers entered the national stage.

St. Louis and the Roots of American Social Science

In 1865, a group of New England intellectuals and social reformers founded the American Social Science Association (ASSA). Through the end of the century, the ASSA functioned as the premier social science organization in the United States. According to its constitution the ASSA was founded to "aid the development of Social Science, and to guide the public mind to the best practical means of promoting that Amendment of Laws, the Advancement of Education, the Prevention and Repression of Crime, the Reformation of Criminals, and the progress of Public Morality, the adoption of Sanitary Regulations, and the diffusion of sound principles on questions of Economy, Trade, and Finance."[450] Not surprisingly, the wide-ranging goals of the institution attracted a diverse collection of members. Among the association's membership roles were the university presidents of Harvard and Yale, famed abolitionists William Lloyd Garrison and Samuel G. Howe, *New York Tribune*

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[449] See, John Dewey to Harris, 1 May 1881, Box 2, Folder 15, KLC, MHM and Dewey to Harris, 17 December 1886, Box 2, Folder 15, KLC, MHM (quote). Emphasis in original.
[450] *American Social Science Association: Constitution, Address, and List of Members, July 1866* (Boston: Wright & Potter, Printers, 1866), 3.

editor Horace Greeley, sociologist William Graham Sumner, and numbers of the northeast's most prominent reformers.[451]

The influence of the ASSA extended well beyond the borders of the United States, linking reformers, academics, and intellectuals across the Atlantic—demonstrating an unprecedented internationalism within emergent postbellum social reform. The ASSA included from its inception corresponding members from Canada, Great Britain, Ireland, France, Belgium, Prussia, Italy, and Russia.[452] Perhaps more significant, the ASSA joined a burgeoning international social science movement that included the British Association for the Promotion of Social Science and the International Association of Social Science.[453] Leading members of the these organizations toured institutions and participated in conferences on both sides of the Atlantic.

A number of prominent members of the ASSA possessed close ties to St. Louis reformers. Longtime secretary of the ASSA, Franklin B. Sanborn, maintained a close personal and intellectual relationship with William Harris that predated the formation of the ASSA and lasted decades. For example, in 1865, during a trip to Massachusetts, the two discussed philosophy, and Sanborn

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[451] Several founding members were themselves or had close ties to renowned Boston reformers and transcendentalists. For instance, Frank Sanborn and Samuel Gridley Howe were personal associates of Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau, as well as members of the so-called secret six who funded John Brown's raid on Harper's Ferry.

[452] See, *American Social Science Association 1866*, 5-9.

[453] The British Association for the Promotion of Social Science formed in 1857, and the International Association of Social Science was founded five years later. See, Henry Villard, "Historical Sketch of Social Science," J*ournal of Social Science* (June 1869), 5-11. Members of the ASSA sought to build and retain ties to their European counterparts. Even Samuel Eliot, the ASSA president, traveled to London to meet with the British Association for the Promotion of Social Science on May 24, 1870 for the express purpose of "establishing mutual relations between the two associations." See, "Special Meeting of Council of the British Association for the Promotion of Social Science," *Journal of Social Science* 3 (1871), 230-235.

offered to publish Harris's writings in the *Commonwealth*, a newspaper edited by Sanborn.[454] The following year, when Harris formed the St. Louis Philosophical Society, he was sure to add Sanborn's name as an auxiliary member, and Sanborn later published in the *Journal of Speculative Philosophy*.[455] During the 1870s, Harris joined Sanborn in the ASSA leadership, serving as vice president of the ASSA and the chairman of its Department of Education.[456] The two also taught together at the Concord School of Philosophy.[457]

Regional chapters of the ASSA quickly sprang up around the United States.[458] The St. Louis Social Science Association (SLSSA) formed when William Greenleaf Eliot and Harris, by then a leading figure in the national organization, called together thirty-five of the city's leading philanthropists, scholars, and reformers.[459] Eliot, founder of the Western Sanitary Commission and a number of other St. Louis institutions, enlisted the assistance of James E.

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[454] See, William Torrey Harris Diaries, 18 July 1865, KLC, MHM.

[455] F.B. Sanborn to William Torrey Harris, 3 August 1866, Box 2, Folder 49, KLC, MHM. In 1867, after receiving a copy of the Society's *Journal of Speculative Philosophy*, Sanborn remarked that the "Journal pleases me greatly. I like the resolution of its announcements, and the pitch of its articles." See, F.B. Sanborn to William Torrey Harris, 8 May 1867, Box 2, Folder 49, KLC, MHM; F.B. Sanborn, "The Puritanic Philosophy and Jonathan Edwards," *Journal of Speculative Philosophy* 17, no. 4 (October 1883): 401-421.

[456] *Journal of American Social Science. Containing the Transactions of the American Association* 7 (1874), 338; *Journal of American Social Science. Containing the Transactions of the American Association* 9 (1878), 166-76. Both Harris and Eliot remained in leadership rolls thereafter. In 1880, Harris was elected as a director of the organization, and Eliot as

[457] The institution was established by Bronson Alcott. Alcott was among the ASSA's honorary members, and after his death, Harris and Sanborn wrote a biography and tribute to their mutual friend's philosophy. Sanborn and Harris, *A. Bronson Alcott: His Life and Philosophy*, Vol. I and II (Boston: Roberts Brothers, 1893).

[458] "Introductory Note," *Journal of Social Science: Containing the Transactions of the American Association* 1 (1869), 3.

[459] Minutes of the General Association, 12 April 1877, St. Louis Social Science Association Ledger, 1877-1881, Box 1, St. Louis Social Science Association Records (SLSSA), WSTLA, 25.

Yeatman, former president of the WSC, and George Partridge, former WSC board member.[460] The aims of the SLSSA resembled those of its national counterpart. One SLSSA publication declared that "[w]hatever concerns the welfare of any considerable class in the community comes within the scope of Social Science, which we interpret to mean *a systematic investigation by rational methods of the problems of social well-being.*"[461] During its first meeting, the members of the organization heard presentations on industrial education, the treatment of "Paupers and Tramps," and the "labor question."[462] Subsequent discussions included the administration of public aid in London, as well as approaches to industrial education and youth vagrancy.[463]

The Reform School Conference, held in Boston in 1866, exemplified the American Social Science Association's focus on "orphan and vagrant children and juvenile delinquents."[464] The organizers of the event, the ASSA and its Boston branch, intended the conference to build upon a series of reform school and house of refuge conferences in the late 1850s. An ASSA report of the event lamented the interruption caused by the Civil War to such meetings.[465] Among the men chosen as officers of the meeting were William B. Rogers and F.B. Sanborn, the president and secretary of the ASSA in general, as well as Henry

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[460] As noted in previous chapters, Eliot was founder and president of Washington University in St. Louis, a prominent Unitarian minister, founder of multiple St. Louis reform institutions, and director of the Western Sanitary Commission during the Civil War.
[461] St. Louis Social Science Association Ledger, 1877-1881, Box 1, SLSSA, WUSTL, 2.
[462] St. Louis Social Science Association Ledger, 1877-1881, Box 1, SLSSA, WUSTL, 28.
[463] St. Louis Social Science Association Ledger, 1877-1881, Box 1, SLSSA, WSTLA, 29, 30-35.
[464] "The Reform School Conference," in *Constitution, Address, and List of Members of the American Association for the Promotion of Social Science, July, 1866* (Boston: Wright & Potter, Printers, 1866), 51.
[465] "The Reform School Conference," 51.

Brockmeyer, the cofounder of the St. Louis Philosophical Society. Correspondence in the months before the conference indicates mutual interest in reformatories among Sanborn, Harris, and Brockmeyer.[466] In his opening remarks, Sanborn noted important work being accomplished in "New England and New York, and the Great West."[467]

Following the Civil War, reformers turned to the family as the ideal model for rehabilitating abandoned and wayward children. Attendees of the Reform School Conference debated the merits of the *family system*—a method of housing small numbers of children together in cottages rather than a large institution. The system achieved notoriety after famed educational reformer Horace Mann, while touring European schools, discovered the Rauhe Haus.[468] The institution, located in Hamburg and founded in 1833 by Johann Hinrich Wichern, pioneered a unique approach to the reformation of juvenile delinquents. Rather than gather together dozens of children under a single roof, the Wichern divided the children into separate "families" of twelve boys or girls in nine cottages. A house-father or house-mother guided the children in each family. Wichern hoped that "the children belonging to each [family] look up to

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[466] See note by Kurt Leidecker, 3 September 1940, Box 2, Folder 49, KLC, MHM.
[467] "The Reform School Conference," 58.
[468] Mann visited a wide variety of institutions, falling broadly under the category of schools. He noted, "Under the term 'schools,' I here include all elementary schools, whether public or private; all Normal Schools; schools for the teaching the Blind and the Deaf and Dumb; schools for the reformation of juvenile offenders; all charity foundations for educating the children of the poor, or of criminals, and all orphan establishments." See, Horace Mann, *Report of an Educational Tour in Germany, and Parts of Great Britain and Ireland, 1844* (London: Simpkin, Marshall, and Company, 1846), 8-9.

own particular father or mother, as home-bred children to a parent."[469] Massachusetts was the first state to employ the family system in a state reformatory.[470] Lawmakers explicitly modeled the State Reform School for Girls in Lancaster, Massachusetts, on the family system.[471] Within a number of years, private institutions began to adopt the scheme as well.[472]

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[469] Horace Mann, *Report of an Educational Tour in Germany, and Parts of Great Britain and Ireland, 1844* (London: Simpkin, Marshall, and Company, 1846), 80. In addition to Christianity and domesticity, Wichern stressed the necessity of industrial education. Although children received basic educations in reading, writing, arithmetic, signing, and drawing, the Rauhe Haus emphasized practical learning and self-sufficiency. Every boy worked at one of the Rauhe Haus's workshops making shoes, clothing, fabric, wood crafts, or books, while the girls received training for domestic occupations. "The children were told at the beginning that labour was the price of living," Mann noted "and that they must earn their own bread . . . [Wichern] did not point them to ease and affluence, but to an honourable poverty." See, Mann, *Report of an Educational Tour in Germany*, 79. In 1856, the influential New York reformer and founder of the New York Children's Aid Society, Charles Loring Brace, also visited the Rauhe Haus and expressed admiration that Christian morality, family discipline, and industrious habits were taught among the bucolic simplicity of Wichern's Rauhe Haus. See, Brace, *Home-Life in Germany* (New York: Charles Scribner, 1856), 91-96; Henry Barnard, *Reformatory Education: Papers on Preventative, Correctional and Reformatory Institutions and Agencies in Different Countries* (Hartford, CT: F.C. Brownell, 1857), 108; "The Rough House of Hamburg," *The Pennsylvania Journal of Prison Discipline and Philanthropy* v, no. 1 (January 1850), 208.

[470] "State Industrial School for Girls, at Lancaster, Massachusetts," *The American Journal of Education* IV (1857), 359. Also see, "Address Delivered at the Dedication of the State Industrial School for Girls at Lancaster, Aug. 27th, 1856. By George S. Boutwell, Secretary of the Massachusetts Board of Education," *Boston Daily Advertiser*, 5 September 1856. Boutwell, not surprisingly, was elected vice president of the ASSA in 1866.

[471] One description noted that officials "proceeded to erect, – instead of one large building, surrounded by walls, or forming a wall itself by enclosing a hollow square,—several edifices, plain in their architecture, and arranged to accommodate separate families, forming together a little industrial village around their common chapel." "State Industrial School for Girls," 359.

[472] The family system was particularly well-received in Massachusetts. For example, the New England Home for Little Wanders, Boston Children's Aid Society, and Children's Mission Home each incorporated the family system during the mid-1860s. See, *History of the Origin, Plan, and Success of the Work, of the Baldwin Place Home for Little Wanderers, for Seven Years*, (s.l.: s.n., n.d.), 2. Pamphlet produced by the New England Home for Little Wanderers, publication date unknown. Located in Box 6, Charities Collection (CC), Simmons College Library Archive (SLCA), Boston, MA; *Third Report of the Executive Committee of the Boston Children's Aid Society, from June, 1866, to June, 1867* (Boston: Prentiss & Deland, 1867), 3, 9. See Boston Children's Aid Society Collection, University Archives and Special Collections, University of Massachusetts, Boston, Boston, MA; *Account of the Proceedings at the Dedication of the Children's Mission Home, on Tremont Street, Opposite Common Street, Boston, March 27, 1867* (Boston: Press of John Wilson and Son, 1867), 16. See, CC, SCLA. Even the Massachusetts State Reform School—which for over a decade had housed hundreds of boys using the congregant system—began experimenting with European-inspired models, remodeling a "farm house" and "Peters house" for smaller groupings of boys. See, *Fourteenth*

The benefits of the family system were not lost on St. Louis reformers. In 1865, one year after the founding of the ASSA, representatives of the St. Louis House of Refuge toured juvenile institutions in Massachusetts, Maryland, New York, Ohio, and Pennsylvania in order to evaluate the effectiveness of the family and congregate systems. The visiting committee's report clearly favored the family system. While the report stressed the Cincinnati House of Refuge's "massive bolts and bars" and its "gloomy, depressing influence," it praised the State Industrial School for Girls at Lancaster as "a charming little village" in which "tender attachment existed between the teachers and pupils, each of whom appeared to have found here *a home*, in the fullest an most beautiful sense of that word."[473] "In the congregated plan," the committee argued, "the child loses his or her individuality in the mass, and little good to the person can be accomplished as regards his or her moral education."[474]

Following its tour, the visiting committee made a series of recommendations and drafted a plan to redesign the St. Louis House of Refuge along the lines of the family system (figure 5). Among its primary recommendations was to relocate the institution outside of the city, thereby

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Annual Report of the Trustees of the State Reform School (Boston: William White, Printer of the State, 1860), 4-5. Reports located Massachusetts State Reform School Records, Massachusetts State Archives, Boston, MA. Within several years, directors of the school were referring to these groups as families. See, *Nineteenth Annual Report of the Trustees of the State Reform School* (Boston: Wright and Potter, State Printers, 1866), 6-7. Not surprisingly, the State Reform School's president, Henry Chickering, participated in the ASSA's 1866 Reform School Conference, as did representatives of the Boston Children's Aid Society, New England Home for Little Wanderers, Massachusetts State Industrial School, Boston Asylum and Farm School. See, *American Social Science Association 1866*, 54.

[473] *Twelfth Annual Report of the Officers of the House of Refuge, St. Louis, MO* (St. Louis: Democrat Book and Job Printing House, 1866), 28, 35-56 (emphasis in original).

[474] *Twelfth Annual Report of the Officers of the House of Refuge, St. Louis,* 45.

allowing children to engage in agricultural training, avoid the "contaminating influences" of the city, and remove the need for "prison-like" walls.[475] More significantly, the report included detailed plans for a system of buildings including family houses, and school houses, as well as a probationary building, a workshop, and a chapel. Although the planners believed in the reformatory power of the family system, they balanced this with a conviction that children ought to be segregated by sex and that new inmates should be placed in a probationary building until the children learned self-control. Administrators hoped that gender segregation would limit sexual activity and sharing of sexual knowledge. Probation was to ensure adequate discipline and supervision, as well as limit the contaminating effects of newly-admitted children on those who had made significant progress in reform. Once children passed probation, they would be "provided homes . . . and not mere places of confinement, as some institutions known as reformatories seemed to be."[476]

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[475] *Twelfth Annual Report of the Officers of the House of Refuge, St. Louis,* 39-40.

[476] *Twelfth Annual Report of the Officers of the House of Refuge, St. Louis,* 45. Evidently, the plan languished for lack of funding. Two years later, lack of progress and space compelled the superintendent, F.S.W. Gleason, to request several new buildings on the existing grounds to keep up with growing numbers of children admitted to the institution. Several years later, the requests remained unfulfilled. See, *Fourteenth Annual Report of the Officers of the House of Refuge, St. Louis, MO* (St. Louis: Democrat Book and Job Printing House, 1868), 33; *Sixteenth Annual Report of the Officers of the House of Refuge, St. Louis, MO* (St. Louis: Plate, Olshausen & Co., 1870), 65.

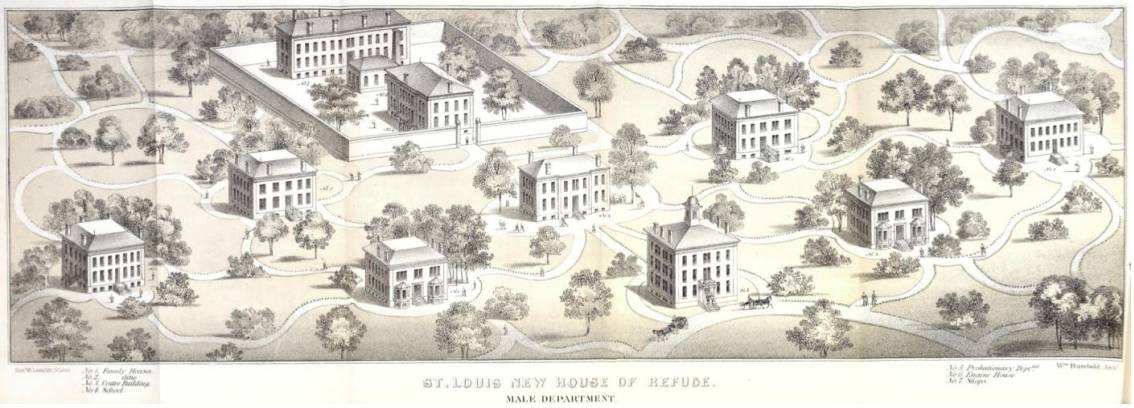

Figure 5. Drawing, Architectural Plan included as part of the proposal to implement the family system at the St. Louis House of Refuge.

In 1874, St. Louis hosted the Third National Prison Reform Congress. The National Prison Association, founded by E.C. Wines—a member of the ASSA executive committee—organized the Congress.[477] Among the representatives of Missouri were former leaders of the Western Sanitary Commission, William Greenleaf Eliot, James E. Yeatman, and George Partridge, as well as William Torrey Harris. Eliot opened the Congress, declaring: "In many parts of this country, not excepting our own state, and in Europe, wise men and thoughtful women are directing their most earnest attention to the difficult but not insoluble problem of saving the neglected children from ruinous temptation, of checking the young in their early offenses by placing them under reformatory and educational restraint . . . This is the great, the radical work for us to do."[478]

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[477] E.C. Wines, ed., *Transactions of the Third National Prison Reform Congress, Held at Saint Louis Missouri, May 13-16, 1874* (New York: Office of the Association [National Prison Reform Association], 1874); *Journal of Social Science: Containing the Transactions of the American Association* 1 (June 1869), 195.

[478] E.C. Wines, ed., *Transactions of the Third National Prison Reform Congress held at Saint Louis, Missouri, May 13-16, 1874* (New York: Office of the Association, 1874), 7.

In many ways, the ideas disseminated in the Congress were a departure from antebellum attitudes toward juvenile delinquents, shifting responsibility for child crime away from children themselves. Suggesting that children lacked culpability for their actions, the Lieutenant-Governor of Missouri, Charles Johnson, argued:

> The truth is, children do not commit crimes. They do things we call crimes; but, with them, the essential of crime, the existence of an intelligent intent to do wrong, rarely exists. They should be treated—all this class—by an enlightened parental system, not of punishment, but of education; and, above all things, they should be freed from the destroying effects of public condemnation and lasting disgrace attendant upon penal incarceration under existing systems.[479]

The family system often dominated discussion, although its exact definition remained a subject of debate. Some institutions claiming to employ the method boasted of families with as many as eighty children, while others contained fewer than half that number.[480] In 1886, the Protestant Orphan Asylum, which in 1871 merged with the St. Louis Soldiers' Orphans Home, reorganized itself according to "the advanced ideas concerning Orphan Asylums, that of conducting them in separate households, erected three cottages" and declared that: "These homes, for such they are designed to be, rather than an Asylum in the ordinary sense, are in charge of House Mothers, who, as the name implies,

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[479] Wines, ed., *Transactions of the Third National Prison Reform Congress,* 12.

[480] For example, The Iowa Reform School maintained families of 80 children. The Indiana House of Refuge for Boys, Ohio Reform Farm School, and Maryland House of Reformation and Instruction for Colored Children placed 50 children in each of their families. The Wisconsin Industrial School for Boys had families of 40 children, and the Massachusetts State Industrial School for Girls and Michigan State Public School for Dependent and Neglected Children each had families of 30 children. See, Wines, ed., *Transactions of the Third National Prison Reform Congress held at Saint Louis,* 110-116, 424-26, 433, and 591.

are required to exercise a motherly care over the children, which they can do more easily with a limited number, than where [sic] all in one building."[481]

Conclusion

Although the reformative power of domestic influence was by no means new in nineteenth-century charitable discourse, the expanding emphasis on integrating children into families stemmed from an effort to heal traumas produced by the Civil War. Many of the men and women who were deeply involved in wartime efforts to shelter displaced and orphaned children remained at the forefront of postwar child reform. In other cases, the connections forged during the crisis of war provided the groundwork for national reform organizations and the channels through which information about children and child reform coursed.

As the realities of wartime violence and the wholesale destruction of countless families saturated the American consciousness, many perceived a need to shelter children from the harsh realities of the adult world and fortify the family.[482] As a result, war discourse that characterized care for institutionalized children in terms of obligation, duty, and state-surrogacy shaped attitudes toward children more generally. In line with this development was the effort to shelter younger and younger children from the world by placing them in kindergarten, as well as integrating institutionalized children into fictive families.

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[481] Mrs. H.I. Stagg, *History of the Founding and Progress of the St. Louis Protestant Orphan Asylum* (St. Louis: s.n., 1891), 10-11.

[482] For more on the role of the Civil War in producing ideas about the need for sheltered childhood and increased maternal influence see, Mintz, *Huck's Raft*, 132.

The most enduring influence of Civil War reform was not felt until the Progressive Era. Shifting attitudes toward delinquent children, the obligation of the state to provide care to orphans, and the capacity of the state to solve social problems facing children—ideas that circulated reform circles in St. Louis and the nation during and following the war—emerged at the center of the progressive's social reform ideology. Efforts to use the state to shield children from work, sex, and violence reached their zenith decades after the war. However, many of the men and women who cut their teeth on social reform during and immediately after the conflict, sharpened them on social policy decades later.

Conclusion

The decades between the late 1880s and early 1900s represented the culmination nearly a century of child reform activity. Progressive reformers built upon the efforts of the previous generation to cordon off childhood from adulthood and protect children from the dangers and influences of the harshest aspects of adult life. Before the Civil War, those most concerned with protecting and reforming children founded a sprawling array of voluntary organizations and child reform institutions. Many reformers were motivated by a mixture of concern for children and a suspicion of working-class parents. Antebellum reformers founded charities, orphanages, and juvenile reform asylums aimed at combating what they saw as the immoral influence of city streets and the social ills of poverty, crime, and ignorance. They found that even their best efforts failed to relieve the worst problems facing the antebellum working class and their institutions were unprepared to cope with the shocks of the Civil War.

The Civil War was a watershed: On one side sat reform efforts that emphasized separating vulnerable and dangerous children in institutions that attempted to reform their character. On the other rested reformers and organizations that increasingly turned to the state to guarantee the protection of childhood. Efforts of reformers during the war to respond to growing numbers of refugees, orphans, and freed slave children produced new attitudes toward children and new approaches to child reform. Intellectuals and educators became convinced that childhood needed even greater protection of the state.

The years following the war witnessed the implementation of these ideas in the fields of education and child reform. At the end of the century, child reformers, joined by a growing cadre of physicians, psychologists, jurists, and social workers, turned even more squarely to the state to save children and childhood in the United States and around the world.

Imperialism and Reform

At the end of the nineteenth century, child reformers began to turn more attention toward nonwhite children in the United States and, after the Spanish-American War, they looked to children around the world. The discourse they produced about the education of nonwhite children centered on the so-called "civilizing mission"—bringing the values of American and European civil society, democracy, culture, individualism, and capitalism to American Indians and nonwhite people in overseas territories. Much has been written on the subject and will not be reproduced here.[483] Yet, notably absent from the existing literature is any recognition of the connection between midcentury social reform and Progressive era Indian and colonial policy. It is possible to draw a line connecting the pre-Civil War attitudes of reformers toward the urban poor (including the industrial schools used to educate working-class children) through the Civil War era discourse of state obligation toward marginalized children to the perceived obligation of reformers to "civilize" nonwhite people.

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[483] Thomas D. Fallace, *Race and the Origins of Progressive Education, 1880-1929* (New York: Teachers College Press, 2015); Fallace, "Education without Theory, Empire without Race," *American Educational Journal* 40, no. 1 (2013), 173-76;

Several aspects of this connection are striking: In the first place, some of the chief architects of the Civil War era discourse of state obligation to children were at the very center of Indian and colonial education policy that stressed the duty of white Americans to civilize nonwhite peoples. Second, while many reformers organized against child labor for white children in the United States, they developed policies that stressed manual and industrial education for Indian and colonized children.

In 1889, the United States Commissioner of Education, William Torrey Harris declared Indian boarding schools a failure, not because they had gone too far, but because "they were not radical enough."[484] He declared: "We owe it to ourselves and to the enlightened public opinion of the world to save the Indian, and not destroy him. We can not [sic] save him and his patriarchal or tribal institution both together. To save him we must take him up into our form of civilization . . . We must establish compulsory education for the good of the lower race."[485] Harris had long supported compulsory education for all children, but only for Indian children did he suggest that the state should "obtain control of [children] at an early age, and to seclude [them] as much as possible" from parents and community.[486] Harris's support for removing an entire generation of Indian children from their parents in the name of "civilization" placed him at the leading edge of turn-of-the-century child reform. Yet, he was no outlier.

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[484] William Torrey Harris, "Introduction," in Gen. T.J. Morgan [Commissioner of Indian Affairs], "Indian Education," *Bureau of Education Bulletin* 1 (1889) (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1890), 3.
[485] Harris, "Introduction," 5.
[486] Harris, "Introduction," 4.

Indian education was among the most extreme outgrowth of the sentiment that the government, not just private individuals and organizations, should intervene on the behalf of children. Ironically, support for Indian boarding schools came at the expense of the families.

Indian children attracted significant attention from Missouri reformers. Henry Brockmeyer, cofounder of the St. Louis Philosophical Society, devoted years of his life to the project. Disillusioned by Missouri politics, Brockmeyer left public life and moved to Indian Territory to bring Hegel, education, and social reform to the Indians living there.[487] Denton Snider, fellow member of the society, recalled, "Once at Muscogee in the Indian Territory I heard [Brockmeyer] explaining the deeper philosophy of deer-stalking in a pow-wow with some Creek Indians. They all seemed to hail him as one of themselves: 'Big Indian, good Indian.' And he looked it—the massive grimace, the coppery tint, the wild eye of him."[488] Brockmeyer even recruited Snider to "start some sort of kindergarten for red children"—a venture which evidently failed.[489]

Harris hoped to bring "civilization" to nonwhite races in the United States through education.[490] As the United States Commissioner of Education, Harris

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[487] Denton Snider to William T. Harris, 26 December 1881, Box 3, William Torrey Harris Papers, Missouri History Museum, St. Louis, MO; Denton Snider, *The St. Louis Movement in Philosophy, Literature, Education, Psychology* (St. Louis: Sigma Publishing Co., 1920), 427.
[488] Snider, *The St. Louis Movement*, 102.
[489] Snider, *The St. Louis Movement*, 258.
[490] Harris's interest in the subject was great enough to serve on an advisor board to the Hemenway Southwestern Archaeological Expedition which studied Indian civilizations in the Southwest. Curtis M. Hinsley and David R. Wilcox, eds., *The Southwest in the American Imagination: The Writings of Sylvester Baxter, 1881-1889* (Tucson, AZ: University of Arizona Press, 1996), 109-80; Sylvester Baxter, *The Old New World: An Account of the Explorations of the Hemenway Southwestern Archaeological Expedition in 1887-88* (Salem, MA: Salem Press, 1888).

threw his full weight behind the civilizing project. He declared, “we have a superior civilization” and “we the right to take the red and yellow and black races, and bring them to our standard and put them on our pedestal of civilization.”[491] Drawing from Hegel’s theory historical development, Harris argued that the Indian

> “is at the tribal stage. He is at the patriarchal stage . . . Above that comes the village community . . . Above the village community comes feudalism, wherein the individual is ground into subordination, so that division of labor can be established. No yellow race has passed through it. The black race has not passed through it except as it has come into the house of bondage. The nations of Europe and America have passed through it.”[492]

According to Harris, nonwhite races would only progress through the stages of development slowly or achieve civilization “vicariously” through education and introduction to civil society.

Harris welcomed the entry of the United States into imperial conquest as a chance to apply his civilizing formula to nonwhite populations abroad. “It has been only a question of time,” Harris declared, “when we should take our place among the nations as a real power in the management of the affairs of the

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[491] Harris, “The Relation of School Education to the Work of Civilizing Other Races,” in *Proceedings of the Thirteenth Annual Meeting of the Lake Mohonk Conference of the Friends of the Indian, 1895*, Isabel C. Barrows, ed. (s.l.: Lake Mohonk Conference, 1896), 36.

[492] Harris, “The Relation of School Education to the Work of Civilizing Other Races,” 37. In support of this position, Harris relayed an anecdote from a “friend [most likely Brockmeyer] . . . living in the Indian Territory told me of an Indian woman, somewhat feeble, who had to go nearly half a mile to get a bucket of water; and on one occasion he had said to her with some wrath, ‘Why don’t you make that lazy boy [a boy about twelve] go and draw your water for you?’ She drew herself up proudly, and said, ‘Do you suppose I would let my son do such things as that?’ She wanted him to be a warrior.” Although Harris does not specifically reference Hegel in this passage, his opinions mirror Hegel’s discussions of race and historical development. See, Allegra de Laurentiis, “Race in Hegel: Text and Context,” in *Philosophy After Kant*, ed. Mario Egger (Berlin: Duncker and Humblot, 2014), 607-639; Michael H. Hoffheimer, “Race and Law in Hegel’s Philosophy of Religion,” in *Race and Racism in Modern Philosophy*, ed. Andrew Valls (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2005), 194-216.

world; when we should be counted with the great powers of Europe in the government of Asia, Africa, and the isles of the sea."[493] According to Harris, American victories in the Spanish-American War marked a "new epoch" in which the United States became "an active agent in the collected whole of great powers that determine and fix the destiny of the peoples on the planet."[494] Foreign domination seemed to confirm the superiority of the white American race, but even more important for Harris were the consequences of imperialism for education. Teachers and educators would be responsible for spreading civilization to nonwhite people around the world. Even more significant, educators would shoulder a "new burden of preparing our united people for the responsibilities of a closer union with Europe, and for a share in the dominion over the islands and continents of the Orient, this new burden will fall on the school systems in the several states, and more particularly on the colleges and universities that furnish higher education. For it is higher education that must furnish the studies in history and in the psychology of peoples which will provide our ministers and ambassadors abroad with their numerous retinue of experts and specialists, thoroly [sic] versed in the habits and traditions of the several nations."[495] In short, the "burden" of educating future generations of white colonial administrators, policy makers, and diplomats—people who would

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[493] Harris, "Address: W.T. Harris, United States Commissioner of Education, Washington, D.C.," *Journal of Proceedings and Addresses of the Thirty-Seventh Annual Meeting Held at Washington, D.C., July 7-12, 1898* (s.l.: National Educational Association, 1898), 49.
[494] Harris, "Address: W.T. Harris, United States Commissioner of Education, Washington, D.C.," 49-50.
[495] Harris, "Address: W.T. Harris, United States Commissioner of Education, Washington, D.C.," 50.

extend the reach and influence of the state throughout the world—was heaviest of all.

The racialized discourse of civilization shaped the education of "child races" in the United States and abroad. Harris's peers increasingly regarded nonwhite people as perpetual children, incapable of the same intellectual or professional achievement as whites, and advocated manual and domestic training. In the United States, this made for vigorous supporters of vocational training schools for black youth such as the Hampton and Tuskegee Institutes, as well as industrial training in newly-acquired territories. Harris argued that American educational policy in Puerto Rico and Cuba should involve suspending local governance and instituting United States military rule, instituting English-language education, dissolving local schools and reopening schools based on the American model, and training students for civil and industrial vocations.[496]

Many of these ideas came into clearest focus at the National Educational Association's meeting at the St. Louis World's Fair (or formally, the Louisiana Purchase Exposition) in 1904. E.B. Bryan, professor of education and social psychology, declared that Filipinos "are a childlike people . . . I wish, when you consider them from a religious standpoint, and from an industrial standpoint, or from the standpoint of government, that you would remember that they are a

[496] Harris, "Educational Policy for Our New Possessions," in *Journal of Proceedings and Addresses of the Thirty-Eight Annual Meeting Held at Los Angeles, California, July 11-14, 1899* (s.l.: National Educational Association, 1899), 77-78.

childlike people."[497] Bryan reported that they "excel in certain things . . . that are based upon memory or imitation" but "in certain other things they do not equal the Saxon child."[498] He declared that only after American occupation began in 1898 did the people of the Philippines receive formal education. Samuel McCune Lindsay, the Commissioner of Education in Puerto Rico, declared that while the island contained "no savage tribes ," there was "no real interest in the education of the masses of the people."[499] American educators founded nearly 1,200 schools ranging from kindergartens to high schools and normal (teacher's) schools. Educators emphasized "nature study and special agricultural work, and . . . considerable provision for manual training and industrial work."[500]

Child Reform in the Progressive Era

By the end of the nineteenth century, a growing consensus developed among doctors, psychologists, and intellectuals that childhood progressed according to predictable stages and norms—a conviction that shaped approaches to social reform efforts. In the postwar period, William Torrey Harris and other educators who had vigorously supported age-grading public schools argued that children's academic abilities correlated with their physical and intellectual development. By the late nineteenth century, a growing number of

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[497] E.B. Bryan, "Education in the Philippines," in *Journal of Proceedings and Addresses of the Forty-Third Annual Meeting Held at St. Louis*, 103.
[498] Bryan, "Education in the Philippines," 103.
[499] Samuel McCune Lindsay, "Education in Porto [sic] Rico," in *Journal of Proceedings and Addresses of the Forty-Third Annual Meeting Held at St. Louis*, 127.
[500] Lindsay, "Education in Porto [sic] Rico," 127.

physicians, responding to persistently high child mortality rates, began to specialize in children's diseases and development. Professional psychologists turned increased attention to childhood development. G. Stanley Hall, among the most well-known child psychologists at the time, emerged as a leader in the field. (Both Hall and his mentor and renowned psychologist William James had published in Harris's *Journal of Speculative Philosophy*.) Hall recruited teachers to survey students in an effort to understand what basic and abstract knowledge students entering kindergarten possessed.[501] Hall and those inspired by his work expanded the "child study" movement, recruiting parents and teachers to assist in studying the intellectual, psychological, and physical growth of thousands of children. A growing cadre of professional child experts published scientifically-grounded childrearing advice manuals and counseled mothers and educators on the how to raise and teach children.[502] Although experts remained divided over the best methods to study and educate children, physicians and child study experts agreed that children developed according to predictable norms and that their observations ought to guide child rearing, education, and reform efforts. The process of producing norms of childhood development also produced a newfound awareness of "atypical" and "abnormal" children who fell outside scientifically derived standards.[503]

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[501] Alice Boardman Smuts, *Science in the Service of Children, 1893-1935* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), 34.
[502] Julia Grant, *Raising Baby by the Book: The Education of American Mothers* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 29-32.
[503] One educator triumphantly remarked at the discovery of such children that a "few years ago not only was the term . . . entirely unknown, but the class of children designated by it was not considered in need of any specialized instruction and education." Maximilian P. Groszmann, "To

Progressive reformers pushed into arenas that had previously attracted little attention based on their new understanding of children's development. Voluntary associations such as the New York Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, founded in 1875, proliferated throughout the nation. These organizations lobbied for child protection legislation and received state sanction to provide social services for children. With the support of local authorities, anticruelty societies investigated mainly the working-class, issued summons, and removed children to institutions.[504] Other organizations, including the Women's Christian Temperance Union, launched campaigns to raise state age of sexual consent laws. The middle-class women leading the effort argued that higher ages of consent would stem the sexual exploitation of girls and combat coerced prostitution, but new laws were just as easily employed to enforce morality among working-class youth. An increasingly accepted sensibility about children guided new reform efforts: reformers argued that children possessed special rights that ought to shield them from the obligations and hardships of

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What Extent May Atypical Children Be Fully Educated in Our Public Schools," in *Journal of Proceedings and Addresses of the Forty-Third Annual Meeting Held at St. Louis, Missouri in Connection with the Louisiana Purchase Exposition, June 27-July 1, 1904* (Winona, MN: National Educational Association, 1904), 754. Increasingly, many reformers advocated that "feebleminded" children were best protected and cared for in specialized institutions rather than in families. The effort to institutionalized the feebleminded disproportionately affected racial minorities. Educators also developed special schools and segregated classes within public schools for children with "subnormal" physical and mental abilities. Children identified as abnormal often received different education and were subjected to further rigorous testing. See, Mary R. Campbell, "Some Laboratory Investigations of Subnormal Children," in *Journal of Proceedings and Addresses of the Forty-Third Annual Meeting Held at St. Louis,* 744-54.

[504] Michael Grossberg, "'A Protected Child': The Emergence of Child Protection in America," in *American Public Life and the Historical Imagination*, Wendy Gamber, Michael Grossberg, and Hendrick Hartog, eds. (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2003), 222.

adulthood. Lawmakers and reformers argued that freedom from coercion and abuse, both physical and sexual, was a right of childhood.

Child advocates guided the proliferation of institutions and spaces for children. These institutions not only safeguarded children physically, they were designed to provide developmentally-appropriate education and social stimulation. States rapidly adopted compulsory education in order to funnel children into schools.[505] Public kindergartens, first developed in St. Louis, rapidly gained in popularity as the century came to an end. Cities also began constructing playgrounds as reformers pressed for more specialized sites for children. The Playground Association of America argued for the construction of playgrounds as safe and hygienic alternatives to city streets where children could be supervised by trained experts.[506] The St. Louis Playground Association extended the movement to St. Louis, and the city created a Public

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[505] Although many municipalities began offering free public education before the war, few actually forced children to attend. Before the war only Massachusetts compelled children to attend school—the only social institution specifically for children. By 1890, twenty-seven states and territories mandated children attend at least some schooling. Michael S. Katz, *A History of Compulsory Education Laws* (Bloomington, IN: Phi Delta Kappa Educational Foundation, 1976), 17-18. The bulk of states passed such laws in the 1870s and 1880s. In 1870, Congress even debated instituting compulsory education nationwide, although the bill never passed. See, J.P. Wickersham, "A National System of Compulsory Education," in *Addresses and Journal of Proceedings of the National Education Association, Sessions of the Year 1871 at St. Louis, MO* (New York: James H. Holmes, Publisher, 1872), 16-25. Five years later, President Ulysses S. Grant indicated his support for nationwide compulsory attendance of schools. Ulysses S. Grant, "Seventh Annual Message, December 7, 1875," in *A Compilation of the Messages and Papers of the Presidents 1789-1897, vol. 7*, ed. James D. Richardson (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1898), 356.

[506] Howard P. Chudacoff notes that "[b]y 1917, there were 3,940 public and private playgrounds in 481 cities, and they employed 8,768 playground directors." See, Chudacoff, *Children at Play: An American History* (New York: New York University Press, 2007), 112.

Recreation Commission that managed its playgrounds.[507] Child activists also founded community centers, youth sports programs, and organizations such as the YMCA that encouraged children to participate in adult structured and supervised activities.

Perhaps the most consequential outcome of the movement to create specialized institutions for children was the development of juvenile courts. As early as the 1850s, St. Louis was among the several cities that offered children the right to private questioning and trial. In the decades that followed, many states and municipalities began experimenting with the use of special judges, probation officers, and social workers when trying children for criminal offenses. These approaches stemmed from the insight that children lacked the same mental capacities as adults and should not bear the same culpability for their actions. In 1899, Chicago opened the nation's first juvenile court which incorporated private examinations, informal procedures, psychological testing, and probation. The court aimed for rehabilitation rather than punishment, and establishing guilt or innocence was beside the point. In 1901, Missouri established an official system of probation for juvenile offenders, and in 1903, created its own juvenile court system.[508]

The preference of juvenile courts to assign supervised probation rather than incarceration signaled a declining faith in institutions. Although juvenile

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[507] Katherine T. Corbett, In Her Place: A Guide to St. Louis Women's History 171; "The Playground Movement in America and Its Relation to Public Education," *Educational Pamphlets* 27 (London: His Majesty's Stationary Office, 1913), 8.
[508] Bonnie Stepenoff, *The Dead End Kids of St. Louis: Homeless Boys and the People Who Tried to Help Them* (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 2010), 64.

reformatories never fully evaporated, the practice of placing children in orphanages did. Participants at the first White House Conference on the Care of Dependent Children in 1909, advocated keeping children within their families rather than institutions.[509] Many states and municipalities began offering mothers parenting education and pensions. The practice of foster care, begun haphazardly by private children's organizations during the middle of the nineteenth century, became formalized and professionalized. St. Louis created the Board of Children's Guardians in 1911 to manage foster placements, and two years later Missouri created the Bureau of Child Welfare to take over the role of foster placement and supervision throughout the state.[510]

Above all, Progressive child reform signaled a consensus that the state was obliged to protect children and safeguard childhood as a stage of life. Legislation prohibiting sex with underage girls and limiting children's ability to work sought to harden the boundaries of childhood just as many states began to mandate that children spend an increasing amount of time protected in the confines of school. State sanctioned social workers and probation officers also expanded the role of protection agencies and juvenile courts into the children's families and homes. Many of the child reformers who rose to prominence during

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[509] Theresa R. Richardson, *The Century of the Child: The Mental Hygiene Movement and Social Policy in the United States and Canada* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1989), 152; Mintz, ***Huck's Raft***, 179-80.

[510] "Work of the Assembly: List of Measures Enacted by Both Houses of the General Assembly of Missouri," *Advertiser-Courier* [Hermann, MO] 27 March 1901; Stepenoff, *Dead End Kids of St. Louis*, 33.

the Civil War emerged as some of the most vigorous supporters of state intervention in all aspects of children's lives.

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