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Sanctuaries into Fortresses: Refugees and the Limits of Social Obligation in Progressive Era America

By

Erica Anne Lee

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the

requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

History

in the Graduate Division

of the

University of California, Berkeley

Committee in charge:

Professor Brian DeLay, Chair
Professor David Henkin
Professor Marianne Constable

Summer 2017

Sanctuaries into Fortresses: Refugees and the Limits of Social Obligation in Progressive Era America

by Erica Lee

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Abstract

Sanctuaries into Fortresses:
Refugees and the Limits of Social Obligation in Progressive Era America

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Erica Anne Lee

Doctor of Philosophy in History

University of California, Berkeley

Professor Brian DeLay, Chair

This dissertation describes the historical development of American refugee relief before and during the Progressive Era, with special emphasis on the two transformative cases: the Great San Francisco Earthquake and Fire of 1906, and the borderland refugee crisis that attended the Mexican Revolution of 1910-1920. These catastrophes helped change notions of social obligation that had been contested in the United States for more than a century. While rare, appeals for federal relief in the Early Republic and antebellum era laid the groundwork for a new consensus about what the federal government was obligated to provide sufferers of catastrophe at home and abroad. Congressional representatives seized upon past examples of foreign aid to demand the same assistance for constituents and citizens. In so doing, they gradually domesticated foreign aid and forged a new tradition of federal disaster relief. The contours of state-sponsored relief continued to fluctuate as the boundaries of U.S. territory and citizenship dramatically expanded in the nineteenth century.

These changes culminated in the establishment of a new catastrophe relief regime established in 1906 amidst the ruin of the premier city of the West: San Francisco. As governments and people from around the world generously responded to the humanitarian crisis by sending aid to their fellow nationals and family members in distress, the United States boldly asserted sovereignty over those suffering from disasters within its borders. That precedent and innovations in international law compelled civilians, benevolent societies, federal troops, immigration agents, and local officials to respond to refugees of Mexico's Revolution with energy and compassion only a few years later. Key architects of San Francisco's relief program from the U.S. Army and the American National Red Cross moved from the Bay Area to the Mexican border. In the borderlands, these authorities established a refugee relief regime would have lasting consequences for the U.S.-Mexico border and for the borders of social obligation in the United States. The new refugee relief regime was contradictory; compassionate and violent, humanitarian and inhumane, it helped to produce the militarized border zone of the twentieth century.

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Acknowledgements

An exceptional group of family, friends, and advisers made this project possible. I would caution anyone against writing a dissertation unless undertaken as the advisee of Brian DeLay, Marianne Constable, and David Henkin. Brian DeLay saw the possibilities of the project when I could not and cheered me through endless doubts and very rough drafts with a warm, curious smile. Marianne Constable talked me through the project even when she might not have realized it and lent much-needed clarity towards the end. David Henkin provided unmatched patience, kindness, and thoughtfulness during all seven years of my graduate training; I will graduate due to his mentorship. Mary Ryan, Cybelle Fox, Margaret Chowning, and Mark Peterson lent expertise and encouragement at critical junctures. Of course, all errors are my own. James Vernon, Margaret Chowning, Elena Schneider, Erin Leigh Inama, and Mabel Lee made the History Department humane and supportive of graduating students, for which I am very grateful. I also thank undergraduate mentors that guided me to embark upon this endeavor years ago: Mary Stieber, Peter Buckley, Brian Swann, Elizabeth O’Donnell, Litia Perta, Michael Wintroub, Jill Stoner and Darcy Grimaldo Grigsby.

Colleagues who became my closest friends kept me in the game. I can’t adequately describe my gratitude for the friendship, camaraderie, and ideas of Bathsheba Demuth, Sophie Fitzmaurice, Becca Herman Weber, Danny Kelly, Yana Skorobogatov, Sarah Gold McBride, Peggy O’Donnell, Jason Rozulmalski, Julia Shatz, and Tim Wright. They are all brilliant scholars, but more importantly, they are kind and generous friends that made Berkeley home for the past even years. Julia, Peggy, and Becca lent particularly invaluable support during the last few months for which I am deeply grateful. Poker nights and lunches in the circle with Joey Kellner, J.T. Jamieson, Katie Harper, Julia Wambach, Sam Robinson, Sam Wetherell, Brendan Shanahan, Liz Chadwick, and Ari Edmundson sustained me through the day-to-day grind of grad school, so did evenings with Sam Groden and Alexandra Havrylyshyn and meetings with Kate Scheibel, Jasmine Hughes, Rose Kantor, and everyone in BA. Critical words of advice from Jacqui Shine, Radhika Natarajan, Jenni Allen, and Zoe Griffith lent words of wisdom that I relied on for years. Heartfelt thanks to friends who stepped in as colleagues and lent their perspective on the project when I was losing hope: Uri Wegman, Kfir Cohen, Dave Elzer, Katerina Kourkoula, Rayyane Tabet, Stephen Martin, and Kate Glassman. Brilliant conversations and careful readings by Berkeley’s borderlands dissertation group made the dissertation so much better and more enjoyable—thanks to Bobby Lee, Alberto García, Julia Lewandowski, Sophie Fitzmaurice, Bathsheba Demuth, and Brian DeLay. The students I’ve been honored to teach at Berkeley reminded me of the joy of learning and reinforced my commitment to this project. Wendy Villalobos, Jun Lee, and Alexis Boyd taught me more than I could teach them.

Thanks to Shalene Jha and Ashish Desphande, Patty and Dan Gold, Cecilia Turrent, and Adela and Frederico Garcia Moreno for housing and orienting me during research trips—your extraordinary hospitality and local know-how pushed me forward. I’m especially thankful to Melisa Galván and David Tamayo for giving so much time during their own research trips. I’m grateful for the expertise of archivists at the San Diego Red Cross, UCSD Special Collections, SDSU Archives, Bancroft Archives, the National Archives, Texas State Archives at Austin, Benson Latin American Collection and Dolph Briscoe Center for American History at University of Texas, Austin, the Organization of American States, and the Archivo General de la Nación. Different versions of this project reflected the openness and time of the staffs at Casa del Migrante in Tijuana and Matamoros, Casa Azteca, Brownsville Community Health Clinic,

United Way-Brownsville, Brownsville Community Development Corporation, Lower Rio Grande Economic Development Council, YMCA San Diego and Casas YMCA de Menores Migrantes. Funding from the U.S. Department of Education, the Townsend Center Mellon Discovery Program, and the University of California made the research possible.

My family talked me through countless crises of confidence and provided encouragement, meals, visits, and videos of new family additions. Monica and Rick Lee's inexhaustible faith pushed me to surmount so many obstacles—especially at the finish line. Finally, to the person that has trumpeted every achievement, championed every idea, empathized with every setback, allayed every doubt, and kept me happy and laughing through it all: I will never be able to reciprocate in full, so I will just say a tearful thank you.

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Sanctuaries into Fortresses
Refugees and the Limits of Social Obligation in Progressive-Era America

Introduction

In early December 1910, several mid-size towns on the northern border of Chihuahua, Mexico were deserted nearly overnight. Years of intense drought left the surrounding land cracked and dry. Even the snow that fell on winter nights felt like dry, icy pebbles.[1] For days, residents of Ojinaga had heard rumors that hundreds of armed men were coming to take control of the town. Part of a broad coalition attempting to overthrow Mexico's president in one of the early conflicts of the Mexican Revolution of 1910-1920, these men reportedly planned to confront the federal army in Ojinaga's dusty streets.[2] Similar rumors upset neighboring towns, and soon provoked a desperate regional exodus. Two-thousand-odd men, women, and children fled their homes and crossed the Rio Grande into the United States. Facing an influx of mostly poor, desperate, and occasionally armed Mexicans, Southern Texans implored U.S. troops to act: "People are flocking to the border from interior towns ...[to] pass on into the 'land of the free' for protection. It is up to Uncle Sam to see that they and we are protected."[3]

That appeal might surprise those familiar with the U.S.-Mexico border today, or those knowledgeable about the long history of the region's racialized violence. When the *El Paso Herald* cried out for the United States to protect Mexican refugees, scientists had already embraced ideas that criminality, alcoholism, and feeblemindedness were transmitted from generation to generation; these eugenicist theories would soon legitimate campaigns for race-based sterilization, anti-miscegenation, and immigration restriction campaigns.[4] That year, the U.S. Immigration Commission chaired by Senator William Dillingham produced a forty-two volume report that assessed the social desirability of immigrants according to their race and ethnicity; one of the lead commissioners lectured publicly on the "Racial Problem of Immigration."[5] Moreover, hostility towards Mexicans and Americans of Mexican descent in the

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[1] "Weather Bulletin," *Palestine Daily Herald,* December 13, 1910, 6. Ernest Bicknell, *Pioneering with the Red Cross: Recollections of an Old Red Crosser* (New York: Macmillan, 1935) 150.

[2] This was part of an early episode of the Mexican Revolution. For overviews of the Revolution, see Alan Knight, *The Mexican Revolution,* two volumes (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1986); and John Mason Hart *Revolutionary Mexico: The Coming and Process of the Mexican Revolution* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987) and *Empire and Revolution: Americans in Mexico Since the Civil War* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002).

[3] "Mexicans Flee from Ojinaga to Texas," *El Paso Herald*, December 9, 1910, 1.

[4] See Alexandra Minna Stern, *Eugenic Nation: Faults and Frontiers of Better Breeding in Modern America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005) Introduction and chap. 2, and "Buildings, Boundaries, and Blood: Medicalization and Nation-Building on the U.S.-Mexico Border, 1910-1930," *The Hispanic American Historical Review* 79:1 (1999) 41–81; Mae Ngai, "Architecture of Race in American Immigration Law: Reexamination of Immigration Act of 1924," *Journal of American History* 86:1 (1999) 7–92.

[5] The Dillingham Commission was charted by the restrictive Immigration Act of 1907. See David Tichenor, *Dividing Lines: The Politics of Immigration Control in America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002) 131-147, and Ngai, "Architecture of Race." Katherine Benton-Cohen, "Other Immigrants: Mexicans and the Dillingham Commission of 1907-1911," *Journal of American Ethnic History* 30:2 (2011) 33–57.

Southwest in the first decades of the twentieth century motivated lynchings, segregated urban development, vitriolic political campaigns and electoral policies intended to disenfranchise nonwhite voters in the first decades of the twentieth century.[6] This pervasive hostility towards immigrants makes the *Herald's* call for the protection of Mexico's refugees all the more arresting.

This dissertation historicizes the appeal to extend protection to the refugees who arrived at America's borders in 1910 despite these profound racial tensions and xenophobic trends. *Sanctuaries into Fortresses* describes the historical evolution of American refugee relief before and during the Progressive Era, with special emphasis on two transformative cases: The Great San Francisco Earthquake and Fire of 1906, and the borderland refugee crisis that attended the Mexican Revolution of 1910-1920.[7]

These catastrophes helped transform notions of social obligation that had been contested in the United States for more than a century. In the late eighteenth century, foreign refugees successfully appealed to the United States for humanitarian assistance in the face of natural and political catastrophes. While rare, appeals for federal relief in the Early Republic and antebellum era laid the groundwork for a new consensus about what the federal government was obligated to provide sufferers of catastrophe at home and abroad. Congressional representatives seized upon past examples of foreign aid to demand the same assistance for constituents in their districts. In so doing they gradually domesticated foreign aid and forged a new tradition of federal disaster relief. The contours of state-sponsored relief continued to fluctuate as the boundaries of U.S. territory and citizenship underwent dramatic expansion in the nineteenth century, alternately privileging and excluding indigenous peoples, residents of U.S. territories, citizens of individual states, slaves and freemen, Confederate refugees and sympathizers, residents of newly annexed territories abroad, and foreign sufferers beyond U.S. borders.

This slow, halting expansion culminated in the establishment of a new catastrophe relief regime established in 1906 amidst the rubble and ruin of San Francisco. As governments and people from around the world generously responded to the humanitarian crisis by sending aid to their fellow nationals and family members in distress, the United States boldly reasserted sovereignty over those suffering from disasters in U.S. territory. The federal state claimed the supreme, if not exclusive, power to provide relief to the deserving within its political territory.

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[6] On the lynchings, see William D. Carrigan and Clive Webb, "The Lynching of Persons of Mexican Origin or Descent in the United States, 1848 to 1928," *Journal of Social History* 37:2 (2003) 411-438, and Nicholas Villanueva, Jr., *The Lynching of Mexicans in the Texas Borderlands* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2017). On segregated development and inequitable politics, see Amy Bridges, *Morning Glories: Municipal Reform in the Southwest* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997). On the race riots, see Miguel Antonio Levario, *Militarizing the Border: When Mexicans Became the Enemy* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2012) chaps. 2-3. On racially motivated political campaigns, see See Shawn Lay, *War, Revolution, and the Ku Klux Klan: A Study of Intolerance in a Border City* (El Paso: Texas Western Press, 1985) 78-85.

[7] On this early wave of Mexican migration, see George Sánchez, *Becoming Mexican American: Ethnicity, Culture, and Identity in Chicano Los Angeles, 1900-1945* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993); Jorge Durand, "Migration Policy and the Asymmetry of Power: The Mexican Case, 1900–2000," in Nancy L. Green and François Weil, eds., *Citizenship and Those Who Leave: The Politics of Emigration and Expatriation* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2007); Lawrence Cardoso and David Fitzgerald consider this period as a period of mass Mexican emigration, paying attention to the "push" factors of war and upheaval. Lawrence A. Cardoso, *Mexican Emigration to the United States, 1897-1931: Socio-Economic Patterns* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1980); David Fitzgerald, "Inside the Sending State: Politics of Mexican Emigration Control," *International Migration Review* 40:2 (2006) 259–93 and *Nation of Emigrants: How Mexico Manages its Migration* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009).

That precedent and evolving practices in international law compelled civilians, benevolent societies, federal troops, immigration agents, and local officials to respond to refugees of Mexico's Revolution with comparable energy and compassion. Connections between these two events were more elemental and direct than most realize. The lead architects of San Francisco's relief program from the U.S. Army, the U.S. Departments of War, and the American Red Cross moved from the Bay Area to the Mexican border. In the borderlands, these authorities established a refugee relief regime that would have lasting consequences for the U.S.-Mexico border and for the borders of social obligation in the United States. Agents from the American Red Cross collaborated with both the U.S. military and local benevolent organizations to establish camps for refugees in which the desperate could secure shelter, food, clothing and medical treatment for one night or ten months.[8]

The new regime was contradictory; compassionate and violent, humanitarian and inhumane. In both San Francisco and the borderlands, American soldiers and benevolent societies worked together to construct an elaborate system of refugee camps within U.S. borders, one that limited or prohibited mobility and disciplined disobedient charges. Thus, the impulse in San Francisco and South Texas to deploy the army to help provide shelter, medical care, and food for desperate refugees was new to the Progressive Era, an era when sanctuaries became fortresses.[9]

Contrary to prevailing historiography, this dissertation highlights continuities between humanitarian responses to refugees of disaster and war, citizens and foreign nationals, at a transformational moment in the evolution of U.S. social policy. Citizenship and race have proved decisive criteria in the capacity of U.S. residents to access both private and public welfare services, particularly since the initiation of federal welfare programs for civilians in the 1930s.[10] But before then, citizenship was not a prerequisite to compassionate assistance. Seen as innocent victims of unforeseeable events, sufferers of great catastrophes have historically enjoyed the sympathy of both neighbors and strangers.[11] Over the nineteenth and twentieth centuries a consensus emerged in the minds of Americans high and low that the federal government was obligated to aid sufferers of both man-made and natural catastrophes within (and, occasionally, without) U.S. borders. Federal humanitarian relief for victims of catastrophes was, at its birth, accessible to both citizens *and* migrants. But, crucially, by the Progressive Era the relief regimes that emerged out of this broadly humanitarian ideal subjected recipients to base, confining, and sometimes fatal conditions.

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[8] For a recent history of the Red Cross, see Julia Irwin, *Making the World Safe: The American Red Cross and a Nation's Humanitarian Awakening* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013). On the rise of the International Committee of the Red Cross that predated the American branch, see John Hutchinson, *Champions of Charity: War and the Rise of the Red Cross* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1996).

[9] This arrangement presents a stark contrast to the arrangement between the army and the local police in the post-catastrophic city of Chicago after the fire in 1871. See Karen Sawislak, *Smoldering City: Chicagoans and Great Fire, 1871-1874* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995) chap 1.

[10] Cybelle Fox, *Three Worlds of Relief: Race, Immigration, and the American Welfare State from the Progressive Era to the New Deal* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012) and "Unauthorized Welfare: The Origins of Immigrant Status Restrictions in American Social Policy," *Journal of American History* 102:4 (2016) 1051-1074. Michael Katz, *The Undeserving Poor: From the War on Poverty to the War on Welfare* (New York: Pantheon, 1989).

[11] See Michele Landis Dauber, *The Sympathetic State: Disaster Relief and the Origins of the American Welfare State* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013) 15, 24, and chap. 7, and her article on the topic, "Fate, Responsibility, and 'Natural' Disaster Relief: Narrating the American Welfare State," 33:2 (1999) 257-318; Rozario, *The Culture of Calamity,* 55; Jacob Remes, *Disaster Citizenship: Survivors, Solidarity, and Power in the Progressive Era* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2015) 8. One exception is Adi Ophir's exploration of the modern "catastrophic state" that tends to both the victims of war and "natural" disasters. "The Two-State Solution: Providence and Catastrophe," *Theoretical Inquiries in Law* 8.1 (2007) 117-160.

Part of the contribution of this dissertation is to document the crystallization of the belief that the federal government had a responsibility towards victims of catastrophes. Second, it dissertation documents the development of large-scale punitive refugee camps in the United States on the basis of the idea of federal responsibility, long before the case of Japanese internment and or the rise of the immense refugee internment regime after the First World War in the Middle East and Europe.[12] This research joins recent studies in the history of the U.S.-Mexico borderlands that examine how actors on the ground shaped the boundary as much as legislators in D.C.[13] To that critical work it adds the story of how humanitarian responses to refugees contributed to the militarization of the border during the critical period of the Mexican Revolution.[14] Heavily researched powerbrokers in agribusiness, mining, and state government were not the only regional stakeholders appealing to the United States to send down troops, surveillance tools, and deploy resources to tend to cross-border migrants.[15] Benevolent societies, sympathetic civilians, hospitals, and churches appealed for a greater law enforcement presence in part because the Army, in partnership with the Red Cross, had developed a national identity as a force to oversee large-scale humanitarian catastrophes and refugee regimes.

Scope and Terms

This research began as a pairing of two case studies connected by common actors, ideas, and institutions. As I followed my sources backward in time, these cases proved to be elements of a larger story on the shifting boundaries of social obligation. That story begins in the late eighteenth century, as legislators working for the new republic considered the extent of the obligations of the government towards sufferers within and beyond the boundaries of its citizenry. From the founding of the republic through the end of the nineteenth century, the pattern of federal relief for catastrophic events was surprisingly consistent. Constituents appealed to their Congressional representatives for individual grants-in-aid, lacking any conceit that such events were the responsibility of the federal government. The U.S. Civil War proved an exceptional moment of expanded U.S. refugee relief for citizens and non-citizens, but after the war relief regressed into ad-hoc solutions to individual disasters, determined by local politics and the persuasiveness of Congressional representatives of beleaguered communities.

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[12] See Claudena Skran, *Refugees in Inter-War Europe: The Emergence of a Regime* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995); Bruno Cabanes, *The Great War and the Origins of Humanitarianism, 1918-1924* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014); Peter Gatrell, *The Making of the Modern Refugee* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013) 29-45; Tara Zahra, "'Condemned to Rootlessness and Unable to Budge': Roma, Migration Panics, and Interment in the Habsburg Empire," *American Historical Review* 122:3 (2017) 602-726.

[13] See, for example, Brian DeLay, *War of a Thousand Deserts: Indian Raids and the U.S.-Mexican War* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008); Rachel St. John, *Line in the Sand: A History of the Western U.S.-Mexico Border* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011); Kelly Lytle Hernández, *Migra! A History of the U.S. Border Patrol* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010); Deborah Kang, *The INS on the Line: Making Immigration Law on the US-Mexico Border, 1917-1954* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017).

[14] On how the Mexican Revolution initiated border militarization, see Levario, *Militarizing the Border*; St. John, *Line in the Sand,* chap. 5*;* Villanueva, *The Lynching of Mexicans,* chap. 2*;* Juan Mora-Torres, *The Making of the Mexican Border* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2001); Arnoldo De León, ed., *War Along the Border: The Mexican Revolution and Tejano Communities* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2011). For counterpoints that emphasize the post-Revolutionary urbanization of the borderlands, See Oscar Martínez, *Border Boom Town: Ciudad Juarez since 1848* (Austin: University of Texas press, 1978) and *Troublesome Border* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1988); (Paul Ganster and David Lorey, *The U.S.-Mexican Border into the Twenty-First Century*, 2nd ed. (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2008).

[15] On the role of agribusiness in the shaping of U.S. immigration, see Benny J. Andrés Jr., *Power and Control in the Imperial Valley: Nature, Agribusiness, and Workers on the California Borderland, 1900-1940* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2014); Kitty Calavita, *Inside the State: The Bracero Program, Immigration, and the INS* (New York: Routledge, 1992); Oscar J. Martínez, "Border Conflict, Border Fences, and the 'Tortilla Curtain' Incident of 1978-1979," *Journal of the Southwest* 50:3 (2008) 263-278. On the Texas Rangers, see Kelly Lytle-Hernandez, *Migra!,* Part 1; Charles H. Harris and Louis Sadler, *The Texas Rangers and the Mexican Revolution: The Bloodiest Decade, 1910-1920* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2004); and Villanueva, *The Lynching of Mexicans*.

That changed following the San Francisco Earthquake and continuing through the Mexican refugee crisis. Americans responded to these events at the height of the Progressive Era, as rapid urbanization, international immigration, economic transformation, and concomitant social inequality compelled ordinary citizens and elected officials to reimagine the social obligations owed by private corporations, social elites, and state institutions to ordinary citizens facing old age, sickness, injury, unemployment poverty, indebtedness, or disaster. Popular and state responses to the earthquake and Mexican refugee crisis ushered in new expectations about what individuals and the state owed towards those suffering from catastrophic situations. As border cities, the crises that struck San Francisco, San Diego, El Paso, Brownsville, and Presidio became profoundly international affairs that implicated foreign heads-of-state, international benevolent societies, domestic ideas of social obligation and international legal regimes. These perceived foreign entanglements in domestic affairs provoked federal officials to assert American sovereignty over the exercise of humanitarian aid within national borders. Such assertions laid the groundwork for new claims upon the federal government from those on the ground for humanitarian assistance for sufferers of catastrophe regardless of citizenship status. Critically, neither long-term residence nor intention to stay was requisite for disaster relief. Indeed, the presumed imminent departure of Mexican refugees underpinned many arguments in favor of their appeals for assistance. That so many individuals of different social classes, races, nationalities, and circumstances garnered a place among the deserving despite penurious social policies, the rise of eugenicist science, and widespread contempt for the needy is exactly what makes these historical subjects and their self-fashioned guardians so worthy of analysis.[16]

The dissertation concludes with the dismantling of the refugee relief regime at the U.S. boundary as the Mexican Revolution waned and the simultaneous launch of a humanitarian campaign of unprecedented scale abroad after the outbreak of the First World War. When Herbert Hoover rallied American sentiment and purses to fund an extraordinary humanitarian effort for starving Belgians and Armenians, he implemented the humanitarian tactics and institutions born in San Francisco and the border towns on a radical new scale.[17]

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[16] The subjects studied here were labeled refugees by state authorities and ordinary citizens due to their sudden displacement and suffering at the hands of unforeseeable crises; property loss also played a critical role in assessing their losses. In this sense, they are distinct from the refugees often described in the twentieth-century literature on the stateless. See, for example, Sharif Gemie, Fiona Reid, and Laure Humbert, who define refugees as the people produced by the fortification of national boundaries and citizenship regimes. *Outcast Europe: Refugees and Relief Workers in an Era of Total War, 1936-1945* (London: Bloomsbury, 2012) 5.

[17] On the American humanitarian campaigns in Europe during and after the First World War, see Merle Curti, *American Philanthropy Abroad* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1963) 224-300; Bertrand Patenaude, *The Big Show in Bololand: The American Relief Expedition to Soviet Russia in the Famine of 1921* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002); and Bruno Cabanes, *The Great War and the Origins of Humanitarianism,* chap. 4.

The research for this project originated in correspondence between officials and relief workers on the ground during individual rescue efforts in the cities of San Francisco, San Diego, Douglas, Brownsville, and El Paso. Those conversations eventually spanned a much broader Western geography of relief that stretched from Sacramento down to Los Angeles, San Ysidro across to the southernmost tip of Texas. The funds, sympathy, humanitarian actors, benevolent societies, and elected officials who arrived to aid the refugees at the Western periphery of the U.S. ultimately broadened the contours and expectations of Progressive-Era welfare practices. This response built on a longer tradition of American disaster relief that took shape around the country's frontiers, western territories, and international trading zones—where the authority of the U.S. operated without the constraints of federalism. These western histories of humanitarianism, social welfare, and Progressivism promise to broaden a field that often gravitates around the Atlantic World.[18]

I define refugee and catastrophe broadly, reflecting the capacious meaning of the terms in the relevant archives. In the post-catastrophic environs of both San Francisco and the Mexican border, the term "refugee" referred to the uprooted, homeless, sometimes hungry and sometimes wounded individuals who appealed to authorities for mercy. They included the rich and the poor, the white and non-white, citizens and foreign nationals, residents of the United States and temporary sojourners. According to citizens' private correspondence, legislative debate, journalistic accounts, and ultimately state policy, all of these subjects were eligible, however temporarily, for public relief and widespread sympathy—even in the absence of a legal status as a refugee.

Historians of "disaster" judiciously take care to distinguish the term from calamity, catastrophe, and crisis.[19] I foreground the term catastrophe, a term conceptually rooted in an event that produces historical change.[20] But I employ all of these terms because the sources on which I rely used them interchangeably, a slippage that I find meaningfully illuminates the continuities between how ordinary people and state agents perceived those suffering from a variety of devastating events beyond their control—whether those events be the product of man-made political violence, sudden environmental events, or a combination of both. The catastrophes examined in this dissertation encompassed both human and environmental factors. The devastation of San Francisco's earthquakes and fires reflected its inhabitants' architectural, insurance, and policing practices; the course of Mexico's Revolution turned upon droughts, famines, and epidemics emerging from both political and environmental forces. These cases and their predecessors qualified as catastrophes because they produced refugees and changed the boundaries of who was considered worthy of compassion and aid.

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[18] Exceptions include Thomas A. Krainz, *Delivering Aid: Implementing Progressive Era Welfare* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2005) and George Sánchez, *Becoming Mexican American*.

[19] Thoughtful definitions include Rozario, *The Culture of Calamity,* 11-13, who sees his sources use the terms interchangeably; Stephen Biel, ed., *American Disasters* (New York: NYU Press, 2001) 5-8, who extricates war and political violence from his edited volume on disasters because they are "perceived as a separate category of experience and a separate subject for study," and Michele Landis Dauber, who imputes the meaning of disaster from disaster narratives, stories in which "claimants are afflicted by sudden, unforeseeable events over which they have no control and for which they are morally blameless" in *The Sympathetic State,* 5-7 and 36-51.

[20] Etymologically, a catastrophe is "an overturning, sudden turn, a conclusion." Now, the term has evolved to signify a final, disastrous end; an event that subverts the order of things or sudden upheaval, and a sudden, widespread, fatal disaster. "catastrophe, n." *Oxford English Dictionary Online,* January, 2016, http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/28794?redirectedFrom=catasstrophe#eid (Accessed January 6, 2016).

Historiography, Sources, and Method

How did Americans understand the limits of their social obligation, and how did those limits change over time? That question underpins the following chapters. Three main bodies of literature lend clarity to the events that followed the refugee crises of San Francisco and the Mexican border: those analyzing the history of disaster politics, national borderlands, and the evolution of humanitarianism and social welfare, particularly as they were shaped by immigration and race.

Scholars of American disaster politics have shown how shared experience of unforeseen crises elicited popular support that would have been unimaginable under other conditions. From seventeenth-century New England through the end of the twentieth century, Americans, particularly those in power, have seen opportunities for progress, profit and renewal in the ruins left behind by urban fires, hurricanes, earthquakes, and man-made catastrophes.[21] This "culture of calamity" evolved from the Puritanical to the postmodern to legitimate the boom and bust rhythms of American capitalism.[22] Despite all that changed between the famines of the seventeenth century and the hurricanes of the twentieth, the distribution of relief quite often reflected the distribution of capital—benefitting the affluent and reinforcing pre-catastrophic social boundaries.[23]

How did disasters catalyze or constrain the growth of state power? Political historians continue to debate whether great emergencies like the Civil War, the Chicago Fire of 1871, and the Great Depression evinced the opportunistic growth or remarkable feebleness of local, state, and federal state power.[24] After the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991 left the United States as the lone world police power in an age of terrorist attacks and humanitarian crises, legal scholars assessed the growing conflict between dispassionate constitutionalism and the passions inflamed upon seeing images of the emaciated chest of a Bosnian concentration camp inmate or bandaged and bleeding Tutsi refugee children.[25] This dissertation tries to understand some of the basic ideas underlying these debates, namely, how ordinary citizens came to understand the United States and its humanitarian partners as the institutions that should respond to such catastrophic events, and why Americans felt any obligation to catastrophe's victims.

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[21] Ted Steinberg perhaps makes this point most forcefully when considering how federal flood insurers, tourist offices, and developers underwrote the building and rebuilding of human settlements in disaster-prone areas. See his *Acts of God: The Unnatural History of Natural Disaster in America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

[22] Rozario, *The Culture of Calamity*.

[23] See, for example, Matthew Mulcahy on how hurricanes consolidated land in the hands of fewer planters and empowered insurers and creditors in the Caribbean in the sixteenth and seventeenth century. *Hurricanes and Society in the Greater Caribbean, 1624-1783* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006). See David Jones on how epidemics spread much more rapidly among uprooted indigenous groups than European-American migrants in the first centuries of European settlement of North America. *Rationalizing Epidemics: Meanings and Uses of American Indian Mortality sine 1600* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2004). See Karen Sawislak on how urban relief agencies ultimately concentrated political power in the hands of more affluent Chicagoans, as opposed to the Irish and German immigrants who disproportionately lost their homes. *Smoldering City: Chicagoans and the Great Fire, 1871-1874* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995).

[24] One of the key works that has elaborated a theory on how catastrophes in the U.S. could set into motion a "ratchet effect" that consolidated and expanded state power is Robert Higgs, *Crisis and Leviathan: Critical Episodes in the Growth of American Government* (New York: Oxford University press, 1987). Among those that have instead detailed the weakness of state and federal responses to catastrophes since the late eighteenth century are Patrick Roberts, *Disasters and the American State: How Politicians, Bureaucrats, and the Public Prepare for the Unexpected* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013); Christine Rosen, *The Limits of Power: Great Fires and the Process of City Growth in America* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986); Dauber, *The Sympathetic State;* Gareth Davies, "Dealing with Disaster: The Politics of Catastrophe in the United States, 1789-1861," *American Nineteenth Century History* 14:1 (2013) 53–72; Howard Gillman, "Disaster Relief, 'Do Anything' Spending Powers, and the New Deal," *Law and History Review* 23:2 (2005) 443–50.

Why did Americans sympathize with and tend to suffering Mexicans living across the national boundary? How did the border shape the emerging U.S. humanitarian regime? The history of the American borderlands suggests that the political significance of gifts, charity, and expressions of sympathy was only amplified in spaces of plural sovereignty. The Great Lakes region featured powerful gifting traditions that enabled French, British, American, and Algonquian traders, political leaders, and translators to maintain and negotiate power without resorting to force.[26] In the eighteenth and nineteenth century Southwest borderlands, social obligations wove Comanche, Pueblo, Ute, Apache, Navajo, and Spanish captives and host families into "communities of interest" that defied the contours of tribe, state, and race.[27] The creation of the U.S.-Mexican border in 1848 reflected the successful campaign of Americans who fashioned themselves as guardians of desert settlers suffering at the hands of barbarous indigenous tribes unable to secure protection from the Mexican state.[28] Yet prevailing historiography treating the period following the U.S.-Mexico War of 1848 has not paid as much attention to compassion, care and conventions of social responsibility. Borderlands histories recall a world in which racist and brutal law enforcement, vigilantes, smugglers, cartels, corrupt local officials, and the vestiges of the region's indigenous tribes traffic in violence, weapons, migrants, prostitution, slaves, and illegal goods.[29] Largely unseen are the benevolent societies, churches, volunteers, and humanitarians who also shaped and were shaped by a highly militarized border zone.[30] This study shows that humanitarianism was key to the production of a militarized border. Compassion and violence were mutually constitutive parts of the southern border security regime.

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[25] Sanford Levinson outlines this debate and contributes in "Constitutional Norms in a State of Permanent Emergency," *Georgia Law Review* 40:3 (2006) 699-751.

[26] Richard White, *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650-1815* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

[27] James Brooks, *Captives and Cousins: Slavery, Kinship, and Community in the Southwest Borderlands* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002).

[28] DeLay, *War of a Thousand Deserts*.

[29] A few path-breaking recent works have begun to cast light on the transnational publics of the twentieth century borderlands. See Geraldo Cadava, *Standing on Common Ground: The Making of a Sunbelt Borderland* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2013) and "Borderlands of Modernity and Abandonment: The Lines within Ambos Nogales and the Tohono O'odham Nation," *The Journal of American History* 98:2 (2011) 362-383.

[30] The scholarship on border NGOs and humanitarianism work is concentrated in the era since the Sanctuary Movement of the 1980s, when churches and community organizations in the Southwest launched a campaign to provide shelter, transportation, and other basic needs for refugees fleeing civil conflict in Central America. See Hilary Cunningham, *God and Caesar at the Rio Grande: Sanctuary and the Politics of Religion* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995). For scholarship on borderlands humanitarian work beyond the Sanctuary movement, see Cecilia Menjívar, "Serving Christ in the Borderlands: Faith Workers Respond to Border Violence," in Pierrete Hondagneu-Sotelo, ed., *Religion and Social Justice for Immigrants* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2006) 104-121; Rebecca Dolhinow, "Caught in the Middle: The State, NGOs, and the Limits to Grassroots Organizing Along the US–Mexico Border," *Antipode* 37:3 (June 2005) 558–580; Kathleen Staudt and Irasema Coronado, *Fronteras No Más: Toward Social Justice at the U.S.-Mexico Border* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002); Maria Lorena Cook, "'Humanitarian Aid is Never a Crime': Humanitarianism and Illegality in Migrant Advocacy," *Law & Society Review* 45:3 (September 2011) 561-591; Kristina M. Campbell, "Humanitarian Aid is Never a Crime? The Politics of Immigration Enforcement and the Provision of Sanctuary" *Syracuse Law Review* 63 (2012) 999-1045.

How do instances of post-catastrophic border relief speak to the broader history of modern humanitarianism and social welfare policy? Providing humanitarian aid for sufferers of catastrophe has been common practice for centuries. Historians trace modern European humanitarianism to the emergence of elaborate contract and credit networks that bound together strangers across great distances; a disaster that befell a debtor also befell a contractor.[31] Expanding transportation and communications technologies reinforced this bond, channeling images of suffering strangers alongside appeals to sympathetic respondents to take action.[32] The social, material, and communicative networks so basic to modern life expanded the boundaries of the public into all those bound by suffering and sympathy – a transformation that carried deep implications for how modern citizens understood their obligations to one another.[33]

Yet the history of social welfare in the United States does not cleanly fit the contours of that narrative, itself rooted in the history of western Europe. To help a stranger, or support institutions that help strangers, requires some sense of identification and reciprocity. We help others because we imagine their suffering to be our own. We hope that if we one day suffer like the stranger, somebody will help us. Some scholars argue that pluralism undermines this sense of social solidarity or trust.[34] In that vein, several histories of U.S. social policy show how the country's long tradition of slavery and migration brought together people of so many different races, cultural histories, languages, and ethnicities who made poor building blocks for a strong welfare state.[35] Instead, the United States produced a welfare state that largely benefitted those classified and perceived as white, reinforcing rather than diminishing its social divisions.[36] American small banks, credit networks, residential neighborhoods, schools, religious institutions, and unions were often founded to serve particular demographic groups, and they remain shockingly segregated in the present day.

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[31] Thomas L. Haskell, "Capitalism and the Origins of the Humanitarian Sensibility, Part 1," *The American Historical Review* 90:2 (1985) 339–361; 352 & 356.

[32] Ibid., and Thomas Laqueur, "Bodies, Details and the *Humanitarian Narrative*," in Lynn Hunt, ed., *The New Cultural History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989) 176–202.

[33] Haskell, 356.

[34] Robert Putnam, "*E Pluribus Unum:* Diversity and Community in the Twenty-First Century," *Scandinavian Political Studies* 30:2 (2007) 137-174; Joseph Carens, "Immigration and the Welfare State," in Amy Gutman, ed., *Democracy and the Welfare State* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988). For a recent reevaluation of this theory that attributes low trust to white bias among non-whites, versus general distrust among heterogeneous groups, see Maria Abascal and Delia Baldassarri, "Love Thy Neighbor? Ethnoracial Diversity and Trust Reexamined," *American Journal of Sociology* 121:3 (2015) 722-82.

[35] For example, Lizabeth Cohen discusses how ethnic and racial diversity undermined a sense of common identity among Chicago's industrial workers until the crisis of the Depression and effective CIO organizing efforts cultivated "a culture of unity" across ethnic and racial lines, *Making a New Deal: Industrial Workers in Chicago, 1919-1939* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990); Eric Rauchway argues that immigration undermined social spending in the United States "because earlier-arrived Americans did not always react eagerly to their new fellow countrymen…." in *Blessed Among Nations: How the World Made America* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2007) 94.

[36] See for example, Ira Katznelson, *When Affirmative Action Was White: An Untold History of Racial Inequality in Twentieth-Century America* (New York; London: W.W. Norton, 2005); Christopher Howard, *The Hidden Welfare State: Tax Expenditures and Social Policy in the United States* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997); Jill Quadagno, *The Color of Welfare: How Racism Undermined the War on Poverty* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994); David Roediger, *Working toward Whiteness: How America's Immigrants Become White: The Strange Journey from Ellis Island to the Suburbs* (New York: Basic Books, 2005) and Fox, *Three Worlds of Relief.*

This dissertation offers insight into one small but important thread of the American welfare state that evolved differently. In these cases, victims of catastrophes of different races, social classes, linguistic backgrounds, ethnicities, and citizenship were deemed deserving of public support – temporarily. Over time their guardians grew resentful, and the public's sympathy found other worthy causes. This research suggests that there are important historical episodes in which the citizens and lawmakers of the United States saw fit to aid some of the most reviled populations within its borders—namely Chinese and Mexican migrants. A broad cross-section of the population in and near the United States could gain access to public relief, but one that stood apart in its brief duration and fierceness.

Sources

I rely on a wide variety of sources to access the elusive historical phenomenon of social obligation. My research suggested that even organizations in the business of charity were more inclined to document who they actually assisted than who they believed worthy of assistance or most importantly, who requested their assistance. Catastrophes transformed these documentary practices. They supercharged the work of benevolent and state institutions and also generated a trove of documentation on the extents and limits of social obligation.[37] Catastrophes produced rich archives attesting to where and how people attempted to find help; to the conditions under which they felt compelled to provide help and to whom; and to shifting notions of responsibility and authority. This source base makes catastrophes ideal objects for historical analysis. The sources utilized here reveal how charitable institutions and people behaved following extraordinary events, and also shed light on the ideas about the government, civil society, and social obligation that prevailed under more ordinary circumstances.

While this study employs a wide variety of published and unpublished sources, each chapter is grounded in sources specific to its primary site of analysis. To understand the contours of the civil society that rushed to the aid of San Francisco's disaster-stricken urbanites, I rely primarily upon correspondence sent to the city's mayor, relief societies, and state governor and newspaper accounts of aid given and received. The private and public accounts documenting the trafficking of aid and empathy into and out of the city reveal the contrasts between pledges and actual contributions of relief. To analyze the history of federal relief for sufferers of catastrophe, I relied mostly on official records of Congressional bills and debates and utilized newspaper accounts to understand popular reaction to legislation in different areas of the country and world. Finally, I drew upon records of agencies of the U.S. military, the U.S. Immigration Service, and local benevolent societies that built the sophisticated refugee relief regimes on the ground. Correspondence between D.C. headquarters and field offices, supply records, refugee registration cards, budgets, and meeting minutes illuminated how policies were conceived, enacted, and changed in the halls of the federal legislator and on the ground in San Francisco and at the border. This wide range of sources helps to capture humanitarian responses to these catastrophes in ways both ephemeral—maudlin expressions of sympathy and abstract pledges of support—and concrete—the number, cost, locations, and conditions of latrines established in refugee camps. The selection of sources reflects the relative scarcity of writings by refugees rather than by the officers, benevolent workers, journalists, and civilians who considered and sometimes managed their condition.[38]

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[37] Remes makes a similar point in *Disaster Citizenship,* 4.

Organization

The chapters that follow generally move closer in space and forward in time in their analysis of how the story of U.S. state humanitarianism developed. Each chapter locates in one social site the dissertation's overarching question. How did Americans understand the limits of their social obligation as members of a civil society, a state, a city, and a refugee camp? Within each of these categories, the subjects under study additionally expressed an obligation to the broadest category of all—humanity. But how they recognized, defined, and demonstrated humanity changed according to membership in these different communities.

Chapter 1 asks why so many civilians and benevolent societies at a great distance lent their sympathy and aid to San Francisco's sufferers in 1906 that ultimately culminated in a radical reshaping of relief for those suffering from large-scale catastrophes in the United States. How did distant Americans, Londoners, New Zealanders, Bostonites, union workers, fraternal society members, and elected representatives locate the boundaries of their obligation towards San Franciscans after the great catastrophe? I use letters and records sent to relief officials in San Francisco as well as demographic statistics, newspaper accounts, and philanthropic publications to understand the motives behind those who sympathized with the victims and were compelled to take action to alleviate their suffering. As had occurred before 1906, benevolent societies, kin networks, diasporic communities, and trade unions came to the aid of friends and family whom they feared had suffered from the catastrophe in San Francisco. This common pattern was heightened in the case of San Francisco in part because new telecommunications structures had intensified expectations that loved ones could be accessed, frightening millions across the world when the city went quiet.

The expectations about and the response of the federal government is the focus of Chapter 2. It shows that popular expectations that the United States would respond to great catastrophe gradually developed out of discrete Congressional allocations for international aid that supported U.S. foreign policy goals, particularly in the Western hemisphere. Relatively modest foreign relief expenditures created a precedent exploited by Congressional representatives to gain relief for constituents suffering from environmental and political catastrophes back home, even if doing so required "setting aside the Constitution" and its apparent restrictions on domestic social welfare expenditures. Federal disaster relief radically transformed after the San Francisco earthquake and fire of 1906, when nationalist sentiments prompted federal officials to rebuke humanitarian aid from abroad. Survivors and their sympathizers demanded a greater federal role after the foreign aid refusal, establishing an idea that the state was responsible to all sufferers within its borders. When a new refugee crisis arose on the country's southern border, the central architects of San Francisco's refugee regime adapted their ideas, institutions, and practices to the conditions of the U.S.-Mexican borderlands.

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[38] Further research into the lives that refugees went on to live and how they documented their experience on public support or living in the refugee camps could provide critical insights into how refugees conceived of the public's obligation to them and the efficacy of American philanthropy. Even more important would be an understanding of how the experience of being a refugee in the U.S. shaped refugees' ideas about the scope of American humanitarian assistance or state-based social welfare towards other sufferers—the refugees of the First World War who were often denied entry to the United States, those who lost their homes to the floods of 1927, or the many who went hungry or homeless as a result of the Great Depression. These questions largely fall beyond the scope of this dissertation, which tries to understand how American civilians and officials understood their obligation to those suffering from unforeseen crises.

Chapter 3 homes in on the refugee crisis at the Mexican border to explore how Americans civilians and officials living at the scene of a great catastrophe responded to suffering within their immediate vicinity. Under what conditions did El Pasoans and San Diegans demonstrate compassion towards unfamiliar, immigrant, or refugee sufferers they encountered in the wake of catastrophe? This chapter follows the story of the locally stationed law enforcement officers who protested the immigration laws they were hired to enforced during these catastrophes to instead act on behalf of a personal appeal to the "dictates of humanity." It argues that the Mexican Revolution produced the first wave of immigrants to be officially classified as refugees, and that this status originated in the on-the-ground actions and practices of immigration inspectors and evolved into official policy approved in D.C. headquarters. But urbanites did not only take in refugees, they also exported their humanitarian campaigns beyond U.S. borders and into Mexico, laying the groundwork for an international campaign eventually overseen by the Departments of War and State. Progressive-Era border cities, like the metropolises of the East and Midwest, imagined new and expansive roles for the state and benevolent organizations. But these new visions took on an international import in the borderlands.

Borderland refugee camps are the subjects of the fourth and final chapter. It asks how federal officials, army agents, benevolent society workers, civilians, and refugees understood their obligation towards refugees within the camps. These purportedly humanitarian spaces descended into violence and changed the cities, states, and societies within which they worked. Humanitarian ideas and relatively brutal relief institutions were born of the same moments, actors, impulses, and ideas about who refugees were and what they were owed. Mexican refugees were subjected to violence and inhumanity within and outside of the camps during this foundational moment in the history of the U.S.-Mexican borderlands. But much of that inhumanity was born of compassion; of initially lawful and humanitarian action, taken on behalf of feelings of sympathy and recognition of extraordinary suffering. As the refugee crisis wore on for weeks, months and years, borderlands residents and humanitarians turned their attention to distant, new and worthy sufferers embroiled in the outbreak of the First World War in Europe, leaving the refugees outside their cities under the care of an increasingly powerful military presence in the borderlands.

Chapter One

Civil Society

Aiding Distant Kin after the 1906 San Francisco Earthquake and Fire

On April 19, 1906, Katherine Appleby read the previous evening's paper in Burlington, Vermont, and trembled. Splayed across the front in large ominous letters was a headline with few details: EARTHQUAKE IN SAN FRANCISCO. All that was known was that the earthquake "wrecked the city," killed thousands, and set off a series of uncontrollable fires. Reports were incomplete, telegraph and telephone wires were severed, and thus "the extent of the disaster [was] not yet known."[1] Heart pounding, she wrote a desperate letter to her brother in Berkeley begging for a telegraph no fewer than four times: "The thing reads hideously distance from you makes it all the worse."[2]

It is unsurprising that a distant relative would become anxious about kin living at the epicenter of a major earthquake. Yet Katherine Appleby also obsessed over something else— the sudden sense of distance from her brother. She preoccupied herself with the cessation of communication from San Francisco and the lack of a wire from her brother, as if his silence indicated the worst.[3] She begged for a telegraph no fewer than four times. The breakdown of communication heightened the meaning of the catastrophe for her because it prevented her from knowing that her brother had survived. According to Appleby, her extraordinary fear emanated from what she did not know, what she did not hear, and a long-distance connection she could not make.[4] The gulf between Kate and her brother became real in a way that it had not been the night before, setting off her imagination that "anything had befallen" him.

The San Francisco earthquake has been historicized as a crucial episode in the rise of disaster reporting, seismic engineering, and environmental insurance. It should also be seen as a pivotal moment in the history of America's mobility and urbanity—a moment in which far-flung Americans, Europeans, Australians, and Latin Americans suddenly had to confront their distance from loved ones who had moved to the frontier city. So many states, cities, trade organizations, fraternal orders, diasporic communities, companies, and families clamored for information on members of their community. These disparate, distant actors together formed post-catastrophic San Francisco's civil society, that is, they composed a voluntary, associational community that encompassed the earthquake's victims. What compelled these dissimilar, far-flung individuals and organizations to come to San Francisco's aid?

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[1] "Earthquake in San Francisco," *Bennington Evening Banner,* April 18, 1906, 1.

[2] Katherine Leslie Appleby to A.C. Lawson, April 19, 1906, Andrew C. Lawson papers, 1885-1951: BANC MSS C-B 602, Box 01:16, The Bancroft Library and Archives. Appleby does not actually say that she trembled, but her writing indicates as much, and she did explicitly express feelings of anxiety, dread, and terror.

[3] The lack of wire may have functioned like the "Dead Letters" well-known in the decades prior, whose "waylaid status raised the possibility of human death." David Henkin, *The Postal Age* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007) 160.

[4] Appleby explained her fear to be based in what she imagined but could not verify. David Hume and Adam Smith both understand sympathy as a function of the human imagination. For Hume, the principle of sympathy is "nothing but the conversion of an idea into an impression by the force of imagination." Sympathy varied according to distance: "the breaking of a mirror gives us more concern when at home, than the burning of a house, when abroad, and some hundred leagues distant." But the idea of great distance could ignite passions as well, as when the idea of a great mountain range is heightened by the knowledge that it is very distant; both scale and remoteness contribute to its sublimity. David Hume, *Treatise on Human Nature,* II, Part III, T.H. Green and T.H. Grose, eds. (New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1909) 208-212. Adam Smith, meanwhile, describes sympathy as the byproduct of visual observation and imagination: "When we see a stroke aimed, and just ready to fall upon the leg or army of another person, we naturally shrink and draw back our own leg or our own arm…." He attributes this reaction to the fact that through 'the imagination we place ourselves in [the sufferer's] situation, we conceive ourselves enduring all the same torments, we enter as it were into his body…." Adam Smith, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* (London: G. Bell, 1911) I: I:3-6. In this case, Appleby's reaction seems to be in response to a sudden change to her sense of distance; her imagination is heightened by the combination of distance and fear.

This chapter examines messages of sympathy and pledges of funds, food, aid workers, medical supplies, troops, and clothing to consider why so many responded to San Francisco's catastrophe so generously. That unprecedented outpouring of relief and interest has made the 1906 earthquake and fire a transformational event in histories of American disaster relief. Understanding why San Francisco's catastrophe enthralled so many millions all over the world is necessary to assess the resulting relief and its consequences in 1906 and after. This chapter analyzes the content and form of the messages sent to provide humanitarian relief to San Francisco's victims. First, the chapter historicizes the communications technologies and practices that enabled Katherine Appleby to send her message, worry at her brother's silence, and expect his immediate reply. It then explores the religious, scientific, and cultural significance invested in sudden environmental events like the earthquake and subsequent fires. These histories of communication and catastrophe offer critical context to the countless newspaper articles published and aid letters sent in the wake of the fire that preoccupied themselves with the breakdown in a long-distance communication culture that sustained families, diasporic communities, trade associations, and businesses when members relocated to the frontier city of San Francisco. The distance that separated San Francisco from these cities, families, and communities around the world expanded into an abyss in the days and weeks after the earthquake—compelling so many to reassert their ties, send material aid, and request information about their associates. The sudden outpouring of humanitarian aid thereby showcased that the frontier city of San Francisco was, like so many border cities, less an American city than a metropolis of tradesmen, New Yorkers, Floridians, investors, Parisians, masons, daughters, tourists, and migrants with connections all over the world.

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Desperate longing for a wire from friends was one of the most commonly reported reactions to the news of San Francisco's great earthquake. San Franciscans experienced the catastrophe that began on April 18 as an earthquake, then a series of fires, sporadic violence, and periodic famine. For everyone else in the United States, Latin America, Europe, and Australia, the catastrophe of 1906 produced shock at the destruction of a communication and transportation network upon which individuals, companies, and states around the world depended.

In the century before the earthquake, the invention of the steam-powered engine, public investments in canals, roads, and railway networks, a cultural preoccupation with landownership and western migration, and the mechanization of labor induced large-scale migration from the country to the city, from the East to the West.[5] The advent of steam power pushed railroad tracks across the Mississippi in the 1850s and granted ordinary people access to distant places in which to work and forge a home.[6] Demographers estimate that only one-third to one-half of individuals living in America stayed put for more than 10 years between in the third quarter of the nineteenth century—a metric that far exceeds the mobility of most Americans today.[7] As a result, a far greater proportion of nineteenth-century Americans than Americans today lived somewhere other than they were born in towns populated by fellow long-distant migrants. Moving was so fundamental to the lives of nineteenth-century New Yorkers that they celebrated an annual Moving Day, and the native-born Americans of some cities formed their own small urban ghettoes.[8] For Alexis de Tocqueville, it was the dream of social mobility that drove Americans to live "separated from each other by great distances" and to be "perpetually on the move."[9] After 1880, fewer Americans moved between states. But more and more were migrating to America's cities from the country and abroad—a migration exemplified in the extraordinarily diverse population of the westernmost city of San Francisco.[10]

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[5] See Conrad and Irene B. Taeuber's overview of nineteenth century rural-to-urban migration induced by an industrializing economy and westward migration induced by state incentives and economic promise in *The Changing Population of the United States* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1958) 106–11.

Americans on the move grew particularly reliant on transportation and communication technologies like the railroad, the telegraph, the postal system, and eventually the telephone to stay connected to the people and places they left behind.[11] The design of the telegraph in the 1830s and 1840s did not radically change how most Americans communicated with each other—typically only affluent individuals, officials, and businesses could afford the high costs of telegraphic communication through the mid-twentieth century.[12] Until 1845, receiving a letter qualified as a somewhat extraordinary event that came at significant expense to the sender.[13] Electric telegraph service remained so expensive decades after its commercialization in 1844 that one senator remarked, "If an individual in common life now received a telegraphic dispatch he fears that it means death or disaster."[14]

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[6] Wolfgang Schivelbusch, *The Railway Journey: Industrialization of Time and Space in the Nineteenth Century* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986) 32-38.

[7] See Donald H. Parkerson, "How Mobile were Nineteenth-century Americans?" *Historical Methods: A Journal of Quantitative and Interdisciplinary History* 15:3 (1982) 99-109. Steven Hersovici, "Migration and Economic Mobility: Wealth Accumulation and Occupational Change Among Antebellum Migrants and Persisters," *Journal of Economic History* 58:4 (1998) 927-956. John Modell, "The Peopling of a Working-Class Ward: Reading, Pennsylvania, 1850," *Journal of Social History* 5:1 (1971) 71–95; See also Laurence Glasco, "Migration and Adjustment in the Nineteenth-Century City: Occupation, Property, and Household Structure of Native-born Whites, Buffalo, New York, 1855," In Tamara K. Hareven and Maris A. Vinovskis, eds., *Family and Population in 19th Century America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978) 154–178. For scholarship on the contemporary American trend of "settling down," see Claude Fischer, "Ever-More Rooted Americans," *City & Community* 1:2 (2002) 177-198; D'Vera Cohn and Rich Morin, "Who Moves? Who Stays Put? Where's Home?" *Pew Research Center,* Accessed Jan 22, 2016; Brian Joseph Gillespie, "Historical and Recent Trends in American Mobility," in Gillespie, ed., *Household Mobility in America* (Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 2017) 29–47; Thomas Bradley Foster, "Rooted or Stuck? The Causes and Consequences of American Mobility Decline" (Ph.D. Diss., University of Washington, 2017).

[8] Kenneth Scherzer, *The Unbounded Community: Neighborhood Life and Social Structure in New York City, 1830-1875* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1992).

[9] Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America,* trans., Henry Reeve (New York: George Adlard, 1839) 1:384.

[10] Patricia Kelly Hall and Steven Ruggles, "'Restless in the Midst of Their Prosperity': New Evidence on the Internal Migration of Americans, 1850-2000," *Journal of American History,* 91:3 (2004) 829-846.

[11] Telephone use, like telegraph use, was initially constricted by expense. Access gradually spread from rural areas to cities, from the West and Midwest to the East, and much more slowly from elites to the working poor. To understand the expense, consider that in 1888, telephone service costs $4 per month in Los Angeles, claiming approximately 10% of a nonfarm worker's wages. Costs declined over the next ten years but remained too expensive for most to afford home service, excluding affluent urbanites and remote farm owners who used it for business and emergency purposes. A 1902 national census on telephone use recorded over 3,000 independent telephone companies operating in the United States. San Francisco had the densest telephone network, at 111 telephone per 1000 residents, likely due to inexpensive, measured-rate service and zealous telephone company marketing in the area. Claude Fischer, *America Calling: A Social History of the Telephone to 1840* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992) chaps. 4, 5, and 7.

But the momentousness of long-distance communication diminished as the cost of postal communication declined in the mid-nineteenth century and thousands of rural and urban areas gained access to telephone service by the turn of the twentieth century. Dramatic reductions in the cost of postage in 1845 transformed the frequency and ease of interpersonal long-distance communication for almost every American.[15] Innovations in photographic technology during the third quarter of the nineteenth century soon after enabled friends, family, and lovers to exchange and treasure images of one another while physically separated.[16] In San Francisco, local boosters like John Sabin made telephony accessible to women and working urbanites by putting pre-paid "nickel-in-the slot" telephones in Laundromats, newsstands, hotels, boarding housings, cigar stores, and private residences.[17] While most phone calls were made locally, and long-distance telegraph remained beyond the means of ordinary Americans, each technology could be deployed in times of crisis. Urban and rural telephony both had roots in the needs of civilians to communicate in times of crisis—telephone companies and industry magazines encouraged residents to subscribe to services to report urban fires and rural floods and encouraged cities to organize emergency services through telephone networks.[18] AT&T advertised their products as emergency technologies in the first decade of the twentieth century. A businessman working late could telephone and "reach his family in a moment" to explain his absence and exchange "a few words [to] relieve all anxiety."[19] So by 1906, the culture of long-distance communication had matured to the point where most Americans expected to be able to reach a loved one in times of emergency. Many even expected that fears of a possible crisis could be put to rest by the sound of the absent voice.

Together, these communications practices revolutionized social ties among exceptionally mobile nineteenth and early twentieth century Americans.[20] Increasingly mobile Americans remained connected to their friends, so that they could maintain a "place at home even while living at a great distance."[21] The regular and rapid transmission of postal letters brought distant people near—a phenomenon that proved particularly precious to Americans whose family migrated to search for gold, work their own land, or go to war.[22] This heightened connectivity accustomed ordinary Americans to expect that they could reach others immediately, especially in emergencies.

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[12] Simone M. Müller, "Beyond the Means of 99 Percent of the Population: Business Interests, State Intervention, and Submarine Telegraphy," *Journal of Policy History* 27:3 (2015) 439-464.

[13] David Henkin, *The Postal Age,* Chap. 1. Richard John, *Spreading the News: The American Postal System from Franklin to Morse* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995) 148-152.

[14] Senator Orville H. Platt (R-CT), *Congressional Record,* January 19, 1883, 48th Congress, 1st session, 1334-1335. Quoted in Richard John, *Network Nation: Inventing American Telecommunications* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press) 2010, 185.

[15] Henkin, *The Postal Age,* introduction.

[16] Amy Lippert, "Consuming Identities: Visual Culture and Celebrity in Nineteenth-Century San Francisco," (Ph.D. Diss., University of California, Berkeley, 2009); Martha Sandweiss, *Print the Legend: Photography and the America West* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002).

[17] John, *Network Nation,* 306.

[18] Fischer, *America Calling*, 176.

[19] 1910 Pamphlet Advertisement for AT&T in New York, quoted in Fischer, *America Calling,* 158.

[20] In this chapter, I use the term Americans to refer to the resident population of the United States that participated in the long-distance communications and news-reading culture discussed here, not exclusively those of legally recognized American nationality. This is not meant to diminish the different identities and legal distinctions drawn around nationality and ethnicity in the nineteenth or early twentieth centuries, even if immigration restrictions before the 1875 Page Act and the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act were more localized and poorly enforced than those that came after. I use the term because a variety of ethnic and immigrant subgroups collaborated in the print culture

By the turn of the twentieth century, San Franciscans developed a distinctive reliance on communication technologies to sustain relationships across great distances and rapidly changing populations. When the discovery of gold transformed the small frontier outpost into a burgeoning city in 1849, miners, their families, and other ordinary San Franciscans exchanged personal photographs, lithographs, letter sheets and narratives in an attempt to establish individual identities in a far-flung city on the frontier in which everyone was a stranger.[23] Through the antebellum era, letters from loved ones provided a critical link to their lives back East, and need for communication turned the opening of the post office into a scene of great commotion.[24] But San Franciscans also shared blood, memories, and capital with millions of people around the country and the world. Those relations were suddenly cut off from the stricken city after the earthquake and fire. Millions of Americans felt the loss of distant kin as the copper threads that had bound them together failed, driving them to send money, letters, and telegrams that they knew would not reach the Bay, to hold vigils, and to pray. The catastrophe was experienced as the new and sudden palpability of distance between the city and all of those who knew its residents. Nineteenth-century technological and cultural innovations had bridged the distance between San Francisco and the outside world in remarkable and unprecedented ways; the earthquake and fire had suddenly and painfully reopened that distance. The catastrophe, as experienced by people outside of the city, was in part a catastrophe of silence, distance, and disconnection from the city and its inhabitants.

The Changing Meaning of Catastrophe

Victims of catastrophes like San Francisco's earthquake were not always considered worthy of or eligible for aid. Through the eighteenth century, European Americans typically understood catastrophes as Acts of God — events beyond human control but symptomatic of human impiety. Pilgrim pastor John Robinson encouraged his congregation to thank God for the earthquake that terrified New England in 1638, as a "deserved curse" and "fatherly correction to

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discussed here, while also forming distinct subcultures. For an overview of immigration restrictions put in place before 1875, see Aristide Zolberg, *A Nation by Design: Immigration Policy in the Fashioning of America*. (New York: Russell Sage, 2006). Of course, different immigrant, ethnic, and cultural subgroups accessed news and utilized communications technology in different ways. See, for example, Andrew R. Heinze, *Adapting to Abundance: Jewish Immigrants, Mass Consumption, and American Identity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992) and David Gerber on American immigrants' epistolary practices in the nineteenth-century. David Gerber, "Epistolary Ethics: Personal Correspondence and the Culture of Emigration in the Nineteenth Century," *Journal of American Ethnic History* 19:4 (2000) 3–23, and David Gerber, *Authors of Their Lives: The Personal Correspondence of British Immigrants to North America in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: NYU Press) 2006.

[21] Henkin, *The Postal Age,* 124.

[22] Ibid., 5 and Chap. 5.

[23] Lippert, "Consuming Identities," 7.

[24] John, *Spreading the News,* 150-151.

us."[25] The First Great Awakening traced its origins to "his late providence ye Earth-quake" that rumbled through Boston on October 29, 1727 and provoked congregants to confront their sins.[26]

Dominant interpretations of the cause of earthquakes and other environmental disasters remained extraordinarily stable for hundreds of years in the United States and Europe. Enlightenment-era *philosophes* living in Europe, Britain, and colonial America passionately insisted that earthquakes and similar calamities were evidence of volcanic activity and other environmental disruptions, not retribution from a divine God. But popular consensus remained largely unchanged, especially among faithful Catholics and Protestants. In November 1755, an earthquake leveled most of Lisbon and killed at least 20,000 predominately Catholic civilians. But Catholics across the Atlantic world professed gratitude that God's "divine justice" had punished the sinful and his "merciful loving kindness" had spared the faithful, rejecting any secular interpretations of the event.[27] Protestant leaders meanwhile saw the earthquake as confirmation of Catholic perversion. In his sermon on the quake, Boston First Church pastor Charles Chauncy surmised that "tempests, famines, pestilences, earthquakes and the like" were instruments "to awaken the attention of a careless world, and call them to the faith, and fear, and service of the great sovereign of the universe."[28] Methodist minister John Wesley published his *Serious Thoughts Occasioned by the Late Earthquake at Lisbon* to explain that God punished the predominately Catholic Lisbon not for impiety but for the Inquisition.[29] The faithful also saw God's hand in the selection of the earthquake's saviors and survivors. Rescuers and the rescued emerged from the rubble in Lisbon with elevated status precisely because they had been spared. Catholics made saints of several women rescuers, while some English saw signs of a Protestant God's hand in the fact that all but a dozen Protestants "were saved in a miraculous manner, beyond all expectation of escaping."[30]

Such sanctified interpretations of catastrophes ultimately yielded to the emergence of empirical sciences in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Geologists and naturalists rationalized seismic activity as the result of subterranean earthquakes or sudden changes in pressure rather than an act of God. Secularizing catastrophes redeemed their victims. Prominent Swiss geologist Edward Seuss assured audiences during a public lecture circuit in 1880 that catastrophes were uniquely democratic, non-national events: "As in an instant all social borders, all differences of class fall away and all are equal, equal in their degree of helplessness and misery."[31] Because all were equally subject to such catastrophes, no victim necessarily deserved their fate.[32] No longer objects of divine retribution or salvation, survivors of earthquakes and other large-scale environmental events garnered aid and sympathy from civilians, religious and charitable organizations, and governments as victims of unforeseeable crises beyond individual control.

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[25] John Robinson, "New Essays; or, Observations Divine and Moral," in *The Works of John Robinson* (Boston: Doctrinal Book and Tract Society, 1851) 1:143. Quoted in Kevin Rozario, *The Culture of Calamity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press) 40. See also Maxine Van de Wetering, "Moralizing in Puritan Natural Science: Mysteriousness in Earthquake Sermons," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 43 (1982) 417-438; Charles Edwin Clark, "Science, Reason, and an Angry God: The Literature of an Earthquake," *New England Quarterly* 38:3 (1965) 340-362.

[26] Robinson, "New Essays," quoted in Rozario, *The Culture of Calamity,* 42.

[27] Jonathan Israel, *Democratic Enlightenment: Philosophy, Revolution, and Human Rights, 1750-1790* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011) 40.

[28] Charles Chauncy, *A Sermon Occasioned by the late Earthquakes in Spain and Portugal, as well as New-England.* (Boston: Edes and Gill, 1756) 11-12

[29] Israel, *Democratic Enlightenment*, 40

[30] Ibid., 46.

[31] Hamann, Eduard Suess als liberal Politiker, 88-89. Quoted in Deborah R. Coen, *Earthquake Observers: Disaster Science from Lisbon to Richter* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013) 151-152.

Survivors generated an even more profound sense of social obligation as scientists enlisted them to help document, sense, measure and potentially even predict earthquakes in the first decades of the nineteenth century.[33] As amateur earthquake scientists, survivors protected the public from further catastrophes —did the public not owe them aid in return for their assistance?

Scientists and clerics were not the only voices offering interpretations of catastrophes, of course, and ordinary people did not passively receive the ideas espoused from pulpits and lecterns. Individuals who did not experience catastrophes first-hand often learned of them through what communications scholar Richard Brown termed a 'contagious' diffusion of information—news that traveled from person-to-person regardless of relationships or social barriers.[34] In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, this diffusion often depended on one's proximity to an event—spatially or perceptually. Thus, news of urban epidemics frequently travelled between large cities, whereas news of Civil War battles extended across national territory.[35] So, the territory in which a news story disseminated marked the boundaries of the relevant community, illuminating otherwise unseen ties. A catastrophe referred to an event and a community—a community of those who might recognize themselves among its innocent victims.

As communications tools and practices changed in the nineteenth century, so did public reaction to sudden calamities like earthquakes, fires, or industrial accidents. The rise of a popular but sensational mass media in the nineteenth century lead some journalistic accounts of catastrophic events to read as little more than profit schemes. Unbelievable reports of a 1907 earthquake that struck Messina, Italy in 1907 prompted a satirical journal to stage a conversation between two foreign special correspondents: "You write of two hundred thousand dead, my dear colleague?' 'Why not!' answered the one addressed. 'I am paid by the corpse.'"[36] But such public and private distrust of mass media reports did not foreclose widespread interest in news of catastrophic events. Instead, it bolstered the credibility of eyewitness accounts of great calamities. Personal narratives of the physical experience of an earthquake gained the status of documentary evidence that could be trusted to convey truth in the absence of credible journalism.[37]

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[32] Martha Nussbaum offers a thorough historical accounting of the cognitive structure of compassion, founded in her readings of the narratives and philosophy of Sophocles and Aristotle. Sophocles' version of the tale of Philoctetes, whose unforeseeable misfortune provokes him to beg for compassion: "seeing that all mortal life lies open to risk and terrible affliction: good things can happen, but the opposite can also happen. The person who is outside of suffering ought to look out for terrible affliction, and when someone's life is going well, then above all he should watch out, lest he be ruined unawares." In short: compassion is the reaction to an appreciation of shared risk, if not shared fate. Aristotle's *Rhetoric* expands on this definition. Three factors must be present to elicit compassion: the presence of serious suffering, the belief that the suffering is deserved, and the belief on the part of the compassionate that he risks feeling as the suffering does. Martha Nussbaum. *Upheavals of Thought: The Intelligence of Emotions*. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001) 304-342.

[33] Coen, *Earthquake Observers*, 19-30.

[34] Richard Brown, *Knowledge is Power: The Diffusion of Information in Early America, 1700-1865* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989) Chap. 10.

[35] Ibid., 247.

[36] "Vom Tage," *Simplicissimus* 13 (1909) 727, quoted in Coen, *Earthquake Observers*, 46.

In several ways, the spread of transportation and communication infrastructure and newly complicated, engineered, and interconnected built environments radically transformed what catastrophes were and how they were experienced. By the mid-nineteenth century, many Americans understood catastrophes to have meaning far beyond the constraining debates on divine or natural origins. When San Francisco's earthquake struck in 1906, civilians as far as Kansas, New York, Mexico City, and Europe experienced the catastrophe as a sudden spatial abyss that opened up around the cosmopolitan city, cutting off contact among geographically dispersed families, ethnic communities, fellow nationals, and trading partners.

Absent an Authoritative Account

Newspapers first reported that the disaster at San Francisco was signaled upon hearing that there was no news – or no word – from the city at all. A Reuter's telegram from Chicago announced to the *Wall Street Journal* that the telegraph companies there were entirely without communication with San Francisco.[38] Chicago journalists had concluded from this lack of information and reports from the Sacramento office of the Western Telegraph Company that there was a significant earthquake in the vicinity and that San Francisco had been hit. Silence signaled the extent of the catastrophe, as when major newspapers in Mexico, Peru, and Cuba reported that they could offer readers few details due to the fact that the city remained uncommunicative.[39] Hundreds of articles on the disaster ran within one day of the event, printing what was and was not known from these side-by-side, interweaving truth, fiction, fact, and rumor. The *Washington Post* published a typical piece one day after the earthquake. Headlines crying "Number of Dead Estimated at Seven Hundred…Property Loss, One Hundred Million Dollars," preceded articles disclaiming that "[i]t is impossible now to say anything definite of the loss of life, since the city is practically cut off from communication with the world."[40] Indeed, a *Washington Post* reporter relayed from on-site in San Francisco "One would be foolish to set any estimate, for the city has been thrown into such confusion what with the shock, the fall of the buildings, and the uncontrollable fires that followed, that no counting of the dead is possible…."[41] The same day, the *New York Times* published strikingly different statistics on the disaster's toll, counting five hundred dead, two hundred million dollars' damage, and severed telegraph and telephone communications that left the Postal Company "the only one that managed to get a wire out of the city." Within hours, it too was "forced to suspend."[42] The *Tribune* echoed: "There are no newspapers, no street cars, almost no communication with the outer world…No one at present can tell what the loss of life has been."[43]

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[37] Experts in the nineteenth-century United States and Europe believed that the capacity of ordinary observe and measure earthquakes rivaled that of seismographs. Such faith in amateur earthquake science helped bolster the credibility of journalists who featured eyewitness accounts. Coen, *Earthquake Observers*, 149-152.

[38] Initial newspaper reports originally contained little information beyond that detailing the scale of the communications breakdown and how reporters overcame the information vacuum. "There was no direct communication with the city till about 12.30 New York time. Then this dispatch came from Oakland…At about the same time this dispatch was received from San Francisco direct.…Another western Union wire says that Los Angeles reports say the Southern Pacific people cannot run beyond Bakersfield, owing to the fact that the water tanks have been thrown." "San Francisco Disaster," *Wall Street Journal,* April 19, 1906, 7. "The War Department has received indirect information which places the killed at 1,000," "Washington Feels the Vibration," *Wall Street Journal,* April 19, 1906, 7.

[39] "Miles de Muertos" *El Comercio* (Lima) April 19, 1906, 1

[40] "Earthquake and Flames Bring Death and Ruin to City of San Francisco: Number of Dead Estimated at Seven Hundred; Injured, One Thousand, and Property Loss, One Hundred Million Dollars," *Washington Post,* April 19, 1906, 1.

[41] Ibid.

Incredible reports and rumors of the disaster-stricken city moved at a far faster pace than personal correspondence. Within hours of the earthquake, news had reached the East Coast that disaster had befallen San Francisco. But critical details remained unknown- the extent of the disaster, the number of lives lost, and plans for relief. President Roosevelt himself telegraphed California Governor George Pardee in Sacramento seven hours after the disaster: "Hear rumors of great disaster through an earthquake in San Francisco but know nothing of the real facts," and later confessed, "It was difficult at first to credit the news of the calamity that had befallen San Francisco"[44] Governor Pardee responded that he, too, knew little, as the broken telegraph communication solidified the distance between Sacramento and San Francisco, but assured correspondents that the calamity was "no doubt …very serious."[45] In the absence of confirmed facts, rumors encouraged distant readers to imagine the worst.

Ruptured communications intensified the "terrible suspense" so many friends, associates, family, and officials felt from afar. The days of telegraphic silence following the catastrophe thus became days in which anyone could imagine catastrophe befalling those to whom they had even tenuous connections -- their sister, mother, father, son, brother, uncle, business partner, neighbor, Senator's daughter, or fellow countrymen. Some, like Miss Mendum of Washington, D.C., "endeavored to get a telegram through to find out if her husband was alive, but was unable to do so."[46] For travelling San Franciscans, the communications breakdown proved particularly difficult. Attorney Ralph Reiss learned about the disaster after seeing the headlines at a Chicago newsstand. He vainly sought to telegraph through to family and friends in the city, but received no reply.[47] Survivors that were able to correspond after leaving the city explained their silence. "My dear Peter, I know you have been very anxious about me the past few days as San Francisco has not been a real pleasant place to be in. After the earth quake, the wires and all communication with the outer world was cut off but as soon as I could get out of Frisco I wired you," wrote James Warren, acknowledging that his wire was never received.[48]

The complicated human decision-making and electric logistics of telegraphic communications were made apparent as anxious friends and relatives tried to communicate with loved ones in the city. Messages were filed at local telegraph stations, but telegraph operators held them until official and outgoing messages had been cleared. Then, operators telegraphed messages westward as speedily as possible, but the "congestion and confusion of the service was indescribable," nearly 10,0000 messages to the earthquake area were awaiting transmission from Chicago alone.[49] The communication breakdown itself became a shared experience among so many Americans— making headlines and encouraging exchanges of sympathy. In Chicago, Washington, D.C., New York, civilians, officials, and businesses felt the shock of the catastrophe through the shock to immediate and constant long-distance communication and transportation. Indefinite delays of railroad, mail service, and ferries to San Francisco made headlines.[50] Survivors' initial letters asked about the condition of other cities, having assumed that the quake had repercussions beyond San Francisco. Attorney Archibald Treat wrote his sister in Nevada, recalling his anxiety about her well-being after the event: "We had heard nothing from the outside world whatever. A rumor reached us that Los Angeles was in ruins, and that Chicago had slipped off the map."[51] The catastrophe had made time effectively stop by disrupting the telegraph, news, and trains that set the pace of urban and industrial life in the early twentieth century. For this reason, it was no surprise that the communication failure rivaled the loss of life in headlines around the country.

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[42] "Over 500 Dead, $200,000,000 Lost in San Francisco Earthquake," *New York Times,* April 19, 1906, 1.

[43] "The San Francisco Horror," *The Chicago Tribune,* April 19, 1906, 6.

[44] Theodore Roosevelt to George Pardee, April 18, 1906, Aid for San Francisco: telegrams, George Pardee Papers: BANC MSS C-B 400 Ctn 01:12, The Bancroft Library and Archives.

[45] George Pardee to Roosevelt, April 18, 1906, Aid for San Francisco: telegrams, George Pardee Papers: BANC MSS C-B 400 Ctn 01:12, The Bancroft Library and Archives.

[46] "Actors Fear for Friends in Wrecked City," *The Washington Post,* 19 April 1906, 3.

[47] "Seek Tidings from Home," *Chicago Daily Tribune,* April 19, 1906, 8.

[48] James Warren to Pete, April 21, 1906, MS 3461, California Historical Society, The San Francisco Earthquake and Fire Digital Collection.

[49] "Minneapolitans Vainly Seek News of Friends," *Minneapolis Journal,* April 19, 1906, 7.

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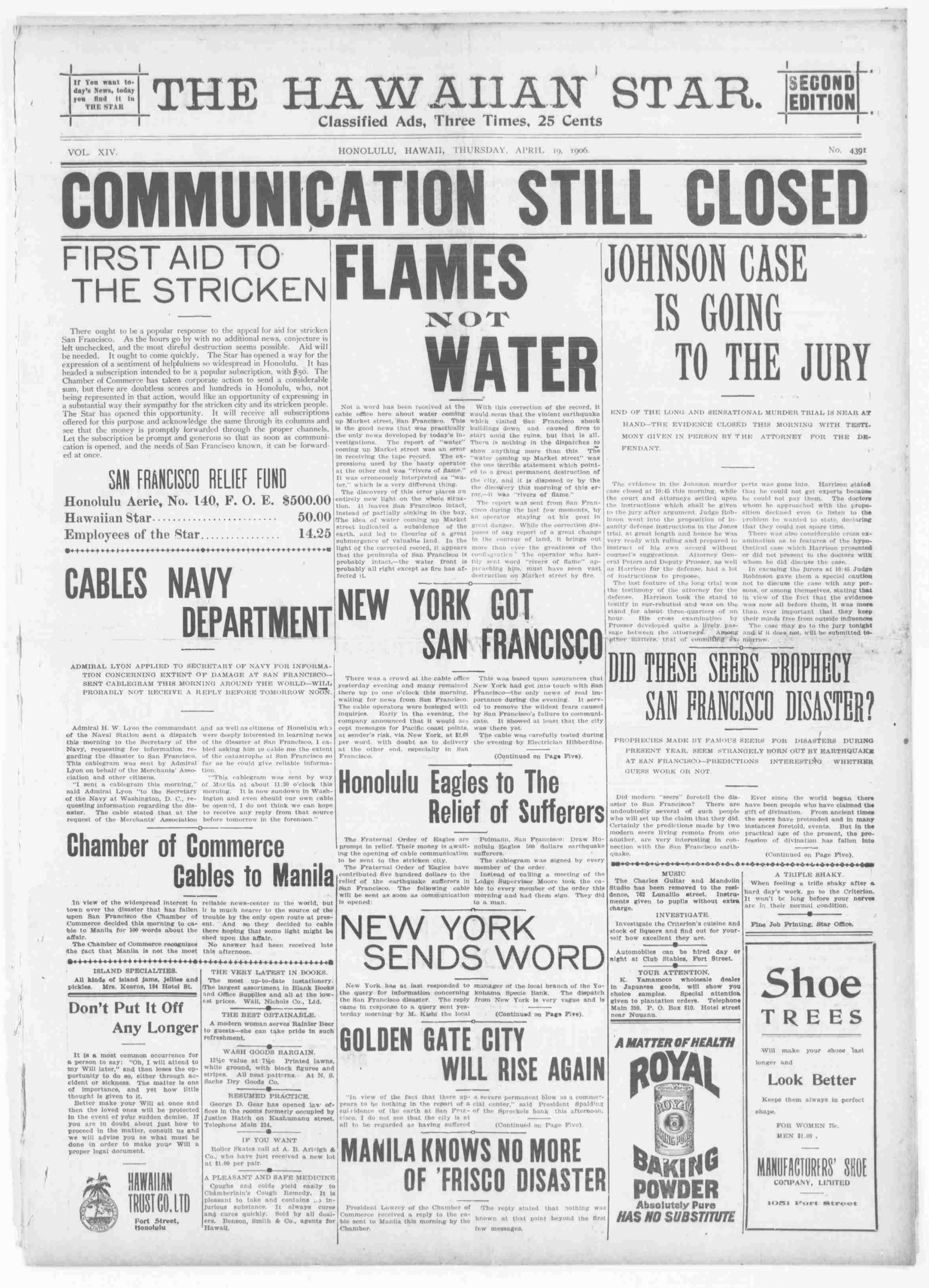
[50] "Stops Mails and Trains," *Chicago Daily Tribune,* April 19, 1906, 8.

[51] Archibald J. Treat to Eleanor Treat, April 27, 1906, California miscellany: additions, bulk 1829-1981: BANC MSS 73/122 c: 164, The Bancroft Library and Archive. Available through the San Francisco Earthquake and Fire Digital Collection.



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VOL. XIV. HONOLULU, HAWAII, THURSDAY, APRIL 19, 1906. No. 4391

COMMUNICATION STILL CLOSED

FIRST AID TO THE STRICKEN

There ought to be a popular response to the appeal for aid for stricken San Francisco. As the hours go by with no additional news, conjecture is left unchecked, and the most direful destruction seems possible. Aid will be needed. It ought to come quickly. The Star has opened a way for the expression of a sentiment of helpfulness so widespread in Honolulu. It has headed a subscription intended to be a popular subscription, with $50. The Chamber of Commerce has taken corporate action to send a considerable sum, but there are doubtless scores and hundreds in Honolulu, who, not being represented in that action, would like an opportunity of expressing in a substantial way their sympathy for the stricken city and its stricken people. The Star has opened this opportunity. It will receive all subscriptions offered for this purpose and acknowledge the same through its columns and see that the money is promptly forwarded through the proper channels. Let the subscription be prompt and generous so that as soon as communication is opened, and the needs of San Francisco known, it can be forwarded at once.

SAN FRANCISCO RELIEF FUND

Honolulu Aerie, No. 140, F. O. E.	$500.00
Hawaiian Star	50.00
Employees of the Star	14.25

CABLES NAVY DEPARTMENT

ADMIRAL LYON APPLIED TO SECRETARY OF NAVY FOR INFORMATION CONCERNING EXTENT OF DAMAGE AT SAN FRANCISCO—SENT CABLEGRAM THIS MORNING AROUND THE WORLD—WILL PROBABLY NOT RECEIVE A REPLY BEFORE TOMORROW NOON.

Admiral H. W. Lyon the commandant of the Naval Station sent a dispatch this morning to the Secretary of the Navy, requesting for information regarding the disaster to San Francisco. This cablegram was sent by Admiral Lyon on behalf of the Merchants' Association and other citizens.

"I sent a cablegram this morning," said Admiral Lyon "to the Secretary of the Navy at Washington, D. C., requesting information regarding the disaster. The cable stated that at the request of the Merchants' Association and as well as citizens of Honolulu who were deeply interested in learning news of the disaster at San Francisco, I cabled asking him to cable me the extent of the catastrophe at San Francisco so far as he could give reliable information.

"This cablegram was sent by way of Manila at about 11:30 o'clock this morning. It is now sundown in Washington and even should our own cable be opened, I do not think we can hope to receive any reply from that source before tomorrow in the forenoon."

Chamber of Commerce Cables to Manila

In view of the widespread interest in town over the disaster that has fallen upon San Francisco the Chamber of Commerce decided this morning to cable to Manila for 100 words about the affair.

The Chamber of Commerce recognizes the fact that Manila is not the most reliable news-center in the world, but it is much nearer to the source of the trouble by the only open route at present. And so they decided to cable there hoping that some light might be shed upon the affair.

No answer had been received late this afternoon.

ISLAND SPECIALTIES.

All kinds of island jams, jellies and pickles. Mrs. Kearns, 184 Hotel St.

Don't Put It Off Any Longer

It is a most common occurrence for a person to say: "Oh, I will attend to my Will later," and then loses the opportunity to do so, either through accident or sickness. The matter is one of importance, and yet how little thought is given to it.

Better make your Will at once and then the loved ones will be protected in the event of your sudden demise. If you are in doubt about just how to proceed in the matter, consult us and we will advise you as what must be done in order to make your Will a proper legal document.

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WASH GOODS BARGAIN.

12½c value at 7½c Printed lawns, white ground, with black figures and stripes. All neat patterns. At N. S. Sachs Dry Goods Co.

RESUMED PRACTICE.

George D. Gear has opened law offices in the rooms formerly occupied by Justice Hatch on Kaahumanu street. Telephone Main 214.

IF YOU WANT

Roller Skates call at A. B. Arleigh & Co., who have just received a new lot at $1.00 per pair.

A PLEASANT AND SAFE MEDICINE

Coughs and colds yield easily to Chamberlain's Cough Remedy. It is pleasant to take and contains no injurious substance. It always cures and cures quickly. Sold by all dealers. Benson, Smith & Co., agents for Hawaii.

FLAMES NOT WATER

Not a word has been received at the cable office here about water coming up Market street, San Francisco. This is the good news that was practically the only news developed by today's investigations. The report of "water" coming up Market street was an error in receiving the tape record. The expressions used by the hasty operator at the other end was "rivers of flame." It was erroneously interpreted as "water," which is a very different thing.

The discovery of this error places an entirely new light on the whole situation. It leaves San Francisco intact, instead of partially sinking in the bay. The idea of water coming up Market street indicated a subsidence of the earth, and led to theories of a great submergence of valuable land. In the light of the corrected record, it appears that the peninsula of San Francisco is probably intact,—the water front is probably all right except as fire has affected it.

With this correction of the record, it would seem that the violent earthquake which visited San Francisco shook buildings down and caused fires to start amid the ruins, but that is all. There is nothing in the dispatches to show anything more than this. The "water coming up Market street" was the one terrible statement which pointed to a great permanent destruction of the city, and it is disposed or by the the discovery this morning of this error,—it was "rivers of flame."

The report was sent from San Francisco during the last few moments, by an operator staying at his post in great danger. While the correction disposes of any report of a great change in the contour of land, it brings out more than ever the greatness of the conflagration. The operator who hastily sent word "rivers of flame" approaching him, must have seen vast destruction on Market street by fire.

NEW YORK GOT SAN FRANCISCO

There was a crowd at the cable office yesterday evening and many remained there up to one o'clock this morning, waiting for news from San Francisco. The cable operators were besieged with inquiries. Early in the evening, the company announced that it would accept messages for Pacific coast points, at sender's risk, via New York, at $2.68 per word, with doubt as to delivery at the other end, especially in San Francisco.

This was based upon assurances that New York had got into touch with San Francisco—the only news of real importance during the evening. It served to remove the wildest fears caused by San Francisco's failure to communicate. It showed at least that the city was there yet.

The cable was carefully tested during the evening by Electrician Hibberdine.

(Continued on Page Five).

Honolulu Eagles to The Relief of Sufferers

The Fraternal Order of Eagles are prompt in relief. Their money is awaiting the opening of cable communication to be sent to the stricken city.

The Fraternal Order of Eagles have contributed five hundred dollars to the relief of the earthquake sufferers in San Francisco. The following cable will be sent as soon as communication is opened:

Polmann, San Francisco: Draw Honolulu Eagles 500 dollars earthquake sufferers.

The cablegram was signed by every member of the order.

Instead of calling a meeting of the Lodge Supervisor Moore took the cable to every member of the order this morning and had them sign. They did to a man.

NEW YORK SENDS WORD

New York has at last responded to the query for information concerning the San Francisco disaster. The reply came in response to a query sent yesterday morning by M. Kishi the local manager of the local branch of the Yokohama Specie Bank. The dispatch from New York is very vague and is

(Continued on Page Five).

GOLDEN GATE CITY WILL RISE AGAIN

"In view of the fact that there appears to be nothing in the report of a subsidence of the earth at San Francisco, I do not see that the city is at all to be regarded as having suffered a severe permanent blow as a commercial center," said President Spalding of the Spreckels bank this afternoon.

(Continued on Page Five).

MANILA KNOWS NO MORE OF 'FRISCO DISASTER

President Lowrey of the Chamber of Commerce received a reply to the cable sent to Manila this morning by the Chamber.

The reply stated that nothing was known at that point beyond the first few messages.

JOHNSON CASE IS GOING TO THE JURY

END OF THE LONG AND SENSATIONAL MURDER TRIAL IS NEAR AT HAND—THE EVIDENCE CLOSED THIS MORNING WITH TESTIMONY GIVEN IN PERSON BY THE ATTORNEY FOR THE DEFENDANT.

The evidence in the Johnson murder case closed at 10:45 this morning, while the court and attorneys settled upon the instructions which shall be given to the jury after argument. Judge Robinson went into the proposition of insanity defense instructions in the Jones trial, at great length and hence he was very ready with ruling and prepared to instruct of his own accord without counsel's suggestions. Attorney General Peters and Deputy Prosser, as well as Harrison for the defense, had a lot of instructions to propose.

The last feature of the long trial was the testimony of the attorney for the defense. Harrison took the stand to testify in sur-rebuttal and was on the stand for about three-quarters of an hour. His cross examination by Prosser developed quite a lively passage between the attorneys. Among other matters, that of consulting experts was gone into. Harrison stated that he could not get experts because he could not pay them. The doctors whom he approached with the proposition declined even to listen to the problem he wanted to state, declaring that they could not spare time.

There was also considerable cross examination as to features of the hypothetical case which Harrison presented or did not present to the doctors with whom he did discuss the case.

In excusing the jurors at 10:45 Judge Robinson gave them a special caution not to discuss the case with any persons, or among themselves, stating that in view of the fact that the evidence was now all before them, it was more than ever important that they keep their minds free from outside influences.

The case may go to the jury tonight and if it does not, will be submitted tomorrow.

DID THESE SEERS PROPHECY SAN FRANCISCO DISASTER?

PROPHECIES MADE BY FAMOUS SEERS FOR DISASTERS DURING PRESENT YEAR, SEEM STRANGELY BORN OUT BY EARTHQUAKE AT SAN FRANCISCO—PREDICTIONS INTERESTING WHETHER GUESS WORK OR NOT.

Did modern "seers" foretell the disaster to San Francisco? There are undoubtedly several of such people who will set up the claim that they did. Certainly the predictions made by two modern seers living remote from one another, are very interesting in connection with the San Francisco earthquake.

Ever since the world began there have been people who have claimed the gift of divination. From ancient times the seers have pretended and in many instances foretold, events. But in the practical age of the present, the profession of divination has fallen into

(Continued on Page Five).

MUSIC

The Charles Guitar and Mandolin Studio has been removed to the residence, 762 Lunalilo street. Instruments given to pupils without extra charge.

INVESTIGATE.

Investigate the Criterion's cuisine and stock of liquors and find out for yourself how excellent they are.

Automobiles can be hired day or night at Club Stables, Fort Street.

YOUR ATTENTION.

K. Yamamoto wholesale dealer in Japanese goods, will show you choice samples. Special attention given to plantation orders. Telephone Main 399. P. O. Box 810. Hotel street near Nuuanu.

A MATTER OF HEALTH

ROYAL BAKING POWDER

Absolutely Pure

HAS NO SUBSTITUTE

A TRIFLE SHAKY.

When feeling a trifle shaky after a hard day's work, go to the Criterion. It won't be long before your nerves are in their normal condition.

Fine Job Printing, Star Office.

Shoe TREES

Will make your shoes last longer and

Look Better

Keeps them always in perfect shape.

FOR WOMEN 75c.
MEN $1.00 .

MANUFACTURERS' SHOE COMPANY, LIMITED

1051 Fort Street

Figure 1: Front Page of *The Hawaiian Star,* April 19,1906, on the communications breakdown that resulted from the San Francisco earthquake and fires.

So distressing were the communications delays that they provoked the editors of the *Tulsa Daily World* to write a compassionate open letter to readers with friends in San Francisco:

> the history of all such calamities teaches the value of patient waiting, even though the waiting means days and nights of anguish. Amidst such horrors only those in authority can work successfully, and they are to be depended on to do, as they have always have done, the best possible for the anxious ones in every corner of the land.[52]

Entreaties like these brought the disaster home, making victims out of those who anxiously awaited news from afar. Covering the survival of San Franciscans alongside the anxiety, anguish, and horrors of Tulsans made San Francisco's earthquake into Tulsa's tragedy. But the demonstration of sympathy was not an abstract sentiment cultivated through stories of anonymous suffering. To the contrary, few details or coherent stories had yet to arrive, and it was not anonymous strangers but rather friends and relatives whose possible suffering was thought to provoke anguish among Tulsans.

After four hours, one telegraph wire was restored to service. That connection was feverishly reported but yielded few real connections for those anxiously awaiting news.[53] Telegrams seeking news from the Bay Area besieged operators; they were ultimately held back in order to receive "messages of reassurance, or otherwise, from the scene of disaster."[54] Long lines of survivors formed to send messages to distant love ones; they persisted overnight and into the next day.[55] Regardless, the congestion of messages was so extensive that Western Union estimated a ten-day delay for all private messages flowing out of or into the Bay Area. Even the terrified, homeless, and hungry survivors desperately lamented the communications breakdown. "No mail gathered nor distributed – no telephone – no messenger boys…. I'll bet you couldn't imagine Milwaukee all disappeared and you camped out in Shooting park somewhere and Aunt Katie in Bay View somewhere and you unable to find out whether she was dead or alive, could you?"[56]

Telegraph operators gained heroic status amidst the chaos and anxiety brought about by the communication breakdown. Major newspapers like the *Minneapolis Journal* celebrated "heroic" and "courageous" telegraph operators who "stuck to posts…despite great personal danger."[57] Newspapers in major cities reported on the brave telegraph operators who had not slept for days after the disaster to keep media outlets across the country informed.[58] Tales of the operators ferrying messages across the bay in boats and commandeering abandoned transmitting offices appeared across the country. Technicians who courageously protected long-distance communication while "surrounded by severe explosions of illuminating and sewer gas" almost always animated the first new reports of earthquake, while police, fireman, or officials sometimes went unmentioned.[59] At the same time, journalists and survivors trumpeted the risky efforts ordinary individuals took to deliver telegraphic messages to loved ones. The affluent Josephine Baxter, wife of a regional water company owner, admired how her friend Dr. Cree left his refuge in San Francisco to go "on through the terrible heat and burning portion of the city, risking his life to deliver messages to all our dear ones."[60] Sending a telegram or a letter became a cause worth dying for.

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[52] "To the People of Tulsa," *Tulsa Daily World,* April 19, 1906, 3.

[53] "San Francisco Disaster," *Wall Street Journal,* April 19, 1906, 7.

[54] "Chicago People in Much Anxiety, Many Vainly Await Word from Relatives and Friends in San Francisco," *Chicago Daily Tribune,* April 19, 1906, 8.

[55] "Chicago People in Much Anxiety," *Chicago Daily Tribune,* April 19, 1906, 8.

[56] Earthquake Letter from Bertha, Berkeley, Calif. to Elsa Billerbeck in Milwaukee, May 13, 1906, 4. BANC MSS 98/67. The Bancroft Library and Archive. Available through the San Francisco Earthquake and Fire Digital Collection.

[57] "Heroic Operators Gave World News," *Minneapolis Journal,* April 19, 1906, 5.

[58] "Story of Disaster in Dots and Dashes: The Man Who Sent it Here Hadn't Slept in Three Days," *New York Times,* April 22, 1906, 3.

Distant Kin

Amid this sudden dearth of information from the San Francisco, Vermonter Katherine Appleby was not the only far-flung individual to imagine the worst had befallen her loved one. Individuals living far beyond Northern California bemoaned the horrific, impressionistic tales of the city's ruination and expressed extraordinary generosity towards the earthquake's victims. Within hours of the disaster, President Roosevelt, the YMCA-Los Angeles, and the Governor of Saskatchewan had telegraphed offers of relief. Within a day, pledges for relief arrived from individuals, officials, and private organizations in New York, Boston, Washington, D.C., Los Angeles, Philadelphia, Portland, Seattle, Wisconsin and St. Louis, among others. In the course of two days, humanitarian aid poured in from beyond America's borders from individuals and statesmen in Mexico City, Europe, the Caribbean, and East Asia in letters written to California Governor George Pardee. Nearly one hundred of these letters from those two days survive, with authors as varied as distant prime ministers and schoolchildren in Delaware. These notes of sympathy took remarkably similar form. Many read this like exemplary pledge of support:

> The dire calamity that has overtaken your state and especially the fair city of San Francisco causes profound sorrow and gloom throughout our colony. The New Zealand government have through the Secretary of State communicated with President Roosevelt the desire to be allowed to extend practical sympathy by sending twenty-five thousand dollars to assist ameliorating condition sufferers large number New Zealanders in your state and earnest desire is to help. (sic)
> —Telegram, Richard Seddon, Premier, New Zealand, April 20, 1906[61]

Notice that the writer first expressed shock at the scale of the catastrophe, as well as the resulting distress felt at a distance – be it from Oregon, Chicago, New York, London, or New Zealand. Seddon assured California Governor Pardee that what had "overtaken your state" caused deep distress "throughout our colony," linking the fates of San Francisco and his own islands New Zealand over 6,700 miles away. Second, the writer noted the amount of the relief pledge and the means of delivery. Given that many rails, telegraphs, and banks were cut off, the logistics of delivery were almost as important as the items being delivered. Finally, Seddon acknowledged that San Francisco's disaster was not simply a distant crisis that warranted humanitarian relief. New Zealanders were living in San Francisco, as were the friends, family, and associates of so many when the news broke that a massive earthquake had brought ruin to one of the most cosmopolitan cities on earth.[62]

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[59] "San Francisco in Ruins Result of Earthquake," *Bennington Evening Banner,* April 19, 1906, 1.

[60] Josephine Baxter to her Parents, April 23, 1906, California miscellany: additions, bulk 1829-1981: BANC MSS 73/122 c, The Bancroft Library and Archive. Available through the San Francisco Earthquake and Fire Digital Collection.

[61] Premier Seddon New Zealand to Governor George Pardee, April 20, 1906, Aid for San Francisco, George Cooper Pardee papers 1890-1941: BANC MSS C-B 400 Ctn 01:13, The Bancroft Library and Archives. Included in the collection "Aid for San Francisco" at the Bancroft Archives are over one hundred exchanges between Governor Pardee and mayors, organizations, governors, heads of state, and individuals to profess official sympathy and pledge relief.

Many imagined the catastrophe befalling neighbors, friends, children, husbands, and wives when they sent aid and sympathy to San Francisco's political representatives. Christine B Labarraque of Boston wrote to the Governor, "Will you send me word about my people in Tres Pinos. suspense is terrible." Colonel Horace D. Ranlettt of Boston begged, "For old times sake Governor please try locate and succor my wife who was alone eleven twenty six Valencia St." Local newspapers listed all residents known to be traveling to San Francisco as well as family members of locals who might be in danger.[63] The *New York Times* reported on local elites who were anxious to hear about the condition of friends and relatives in San Francisco, noting that the wife of the President of US Steel Corporation had indicated that she would be arriving in San Francisco on the eve of the earthquake, and that the sister-in-law of Charles Schwab was known to be visiting the city on the day of the earthquake. Newspapers in Mexico City reported on the "great sensation" that erupted once news of the earthquake arrived among the American families living in Mexico, many of whom had kin in the "destroyed city." Tradesmen's organizations like the Minneapolis chapter of bank clerks telegraphed their San Francisco branch to offer monetary aid and sympathy.[64] Towns as distant and small as Bennington, Vermont (home of Katherine Appleby) reported on the worry of residents with relatives in San Francisco. The local newspaper reported that "Mr. and Mrs. John C Coleman, parents of Mrs. A J Holden live there and the latter family spent the winter there having returned only a few days ago."[65] To people like the AJ Holden, Katherine Appleby, and Horace Ranlett, San Francisco was a city of strangers *except* for one family member, or a few friends, or a few business partners, any of whom may have been hurt by the catastrophe.

San Franciscans lucky enough to be away from the city during the disaster garnered attention from their host cities and newspaper outlets. "The full horror of the San Francisco disaster was appreciated most keenly by residents of that city who happened to be in Chicago yesterday," noted the *Daily Tribune* in the day after. After hearing of the quake, San Franciscan Robert Redmond rushed to the City Clerk of Chicago crying "My God. I'm afraid my wife and children are killed. I must get back by the first limited."

Even state agents took time in their official communications to ask after their loved ones and associates; making the official exchange of sympathy aid quite personal. U.S. Representative Julius Kahn desperately tried to learn of the condition of his wife when telegraphing condolences and pledges of financial support to the California Governor.[66] Other officials had daughters living in the city and sons attending the University of California whom they could not reach. Governor Frank Frantz of the Oklahoma Territory telegraphed: "As special and urgent will you get message through to Doctor McNutt 2511 Pacific Avenue San Francisco requesting him to communicate with Capt. Fitzhugh Lee… as to welfare of family." Governor Curtis Guild of Massachusetts assured Governor Pardee that money was "pouring in" from private sources and that he had called a special legislative session for the provision of relief. Then he asked: "Have you any news of two of Massachusetts most prominent citizens, James Higgins, staying St. Francis Hotel, San Francisco, and Prof. Wm. James, Lecturing Leland Stanford University."[67] The provision of state aid may have come on behalf of an entire citizenry. But those sending the funds were individuals as well as state agents, and they used their official channels to seek information about those close to them.

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[62] On San Francisco's real and perceived cosmopolitan quality, see Roger Lotchin, *San Francisco, 1846-1856: from Hamlet to City* (Urbana: University of Illinois, 1997) chap 5; Barbara Berglund, *Making San Francisco American: Cultural Frontiers in the Urban West, 1846-1906* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2007); Philip Ethington, *The Public City: The Political Construction of Urban Life in San Francisco, 1850-1900* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

[63] "Chicago People in Much Anxiety," *Chicago Tribune,* April 19, 1906, 8; "Chicagoans Visiting in San Francisco Are South by Anxious Relatives," April 22, 1906, *Chicago Tribune,* 5.

[64] "Minneapolitans," *Minneapolis Journal,* April 19, 1906.

[65] "Lack of News Causes Worry," *The Bennington Evening Banner,* April 19, 1906.

[66] "Shock is Felt all over Globe," *Chicago Daily Tribune,* April 19, 1906, 5

Aid often arrived alongside individual solicitations for information. Precipitous declines in the value of railway stocks and securities followed news of the disaster, due largely to the "uncertainty created by the difficulty in getting news from the scene of the disaster."[68] In response, United Rail Stockholders in D.C. began to piece together intermittent details from survivors' accounts to map out damage in the city—and specifically to their rail lines and related assets.[69] Meanwhile, investors in New York and London pledged aid and expressed condolences, but did so while subtly requesting information on the state of their property. Agents of the Atlas Insurance Company in London and New York sent telegrams to their branch in San Francisco anxiously requesting information alongside of a pledge of $5,000.[70] Donations poured in to Governor Pardee's office during the first 48 hours after the event – when details were few, possible losses innumerable, and contact most difficult to secure between survivors and associates outside the city.

In this way, a type of a market emerged between anxious, distant associates eager for information and officials in need of humanitarian aid that could relay knowledge of local conditions or residents. Some donors subtly noted their desire for further information on the state of San Francisco. When sending aid to the city after the earthquake, Lieutenant Governor of Saskatchewan Amédée Forget expressed hope and belief that the rumors were false: "Words fail to give vent to the feelings with which the reports are being received here, and we all trust to soon learn that they have been more or less exaggerated."[71] Governor Pardee replied in detail within ten days despite being overwhelmed with famine relief efforts and early plans for reconstruction. He thanked Forget for his "profound appreciation for [Forget's] very liberal gift," and then explicitly responded to his hope that reports had been exaggerated. Pardee communicated updated information on the known dead, the duration and costs of the fire that followed the earthquake, and the loss of civic structures. Similar exchanges became normal among the Governors of the United States. Governor Guild of Massachusetts telegraphed Pardee to express "deepest sympathies" for San Francisco, and insisted that his people "wanted to help."

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[67] Curtis Guild to George Pardee, April 20, 1906, Aid for San Francisco, George Cooper Pardee Papers: BANC MSS C-B 400 Carton 01:12, The Bancroft Library and Archives.

[68] "United Railways of San Francisco: News of the Earthquake Causes Heavy Selling of Securities Holders," *Wall Street Journal,* April 20, 1906, 2.

[69] Ibid.

[70] Joint Manager, Fire Department to F.J. Devlin, April 25, 1906, Atlas Insurance Company Records: BANC MSS 89/206 c: v. 1: Lock 02, The Bancroft Library and Archives.

[71] Lt. Governor of Saskatchewan Amédée Forget to George Pardee, April 18, 1906 and Pardee to Forget, April 30, 1906, Aid for San Francisco, George Cooper Pardee papers: BANC MSS C-B 400, Ctn 01:12, The Bancroft Library and Archives.

In turn, Pardee replied to note the course of the fire through both commercial and residential areas and the consequences for local employment. Guild replied, "money pouring in," and asked for updates on Massachusetts's prominent citizens, to which Pardee replied immediately.[72] Guild's telegram suggested that his compassion was not engendered by details of the suffering bodies of others, as it may have been in earlier humanitarian moments.[73] Instead, it was engendered partly through the desire for details, specifically those that concerned donors' constituents, families, business partners, and friends.

The disaster-stricken city evoked so much sympathy not only due to the idea of shared humanity.[74] It was, additionally, the connections to kin, friends, fellow tradesmen, nationals, and business associates of San Franciscans that obligated so many to relieve the aid of those suffering. By 1880, San Francisco already had the highest proportion of foreign-born residents of any large city in the United States— 45%.[75] This exceptional diversity persisted into the twentieth century. By 1910, the city counted 284,655 first or second-generation European or Mexican immigrants, 10,582 Chinese, and 4,518 Japanese within a population of 416,912— making approximately three-quarters of residents first or second generation immigrants.[76] The city was also home to Americans from all over the country. A sampling of the Census manuscripts reveals that less than one-third of city residents were born in California, let alone San Francisco.[77] Almost all San Franciscans had a former home and community far beyond the boundaries of the city. These individual communities provided a type of insurance to the city in a time of calamity, each offering to take care of their own.

Most Bostonians, Chicagoans, Philadelphians, New Zealanders, Londoners, and Chinese who learned of the disaster from afar immediately appeared to think of the one or two loved ones living in the stricken city—an emotional catastrophe of an unprecedented scale and scope in modern America. Local newspapers reported on the "unallayed anxiety" of residents with friends and family in San Francisco under headlines reading "Grand Forks People Unable to Hear from Relatives in and Around San Francisco—Mayor Duis Proffers Assistance and Sympathy." The newspaper celebrated how residents would "undoubtedly display their liberality" not as simply as a display of sympathy so much as a desperate attempt to hear from loved ones or secure their well-being. The article concluded with a "complete list of Grand Forks people in and around San Francisco at the time of the calamity."[78] Journalists around the country chronicled the anxiety of local immigrant populations reacting to news of a disaster that may have injured their loved ones.[79] *The Washington Post* covered the sight of hundreds of local Chinese migrants, "in a ferment of excitement to learn the details of the affair" because "almost every one has friends or relatives in the stricken city." Reports of the suffering of local Chinese and Irish, populations articulated the diverse national origins of the city's population.[80] International news outlets like *The Irish Times* assured readers that donations would go to aiding countrymen abroad: "In helping San Francisco we Irishmen will be helping our own flesh and blood, for there is a large Irish population in the city, and many homes throughout Ireland to-day are waiting anxiously for tidings of relatives and friends."[81] It was the city's extraordinary diversity, youth, and lack of longstanding domestic community that endeared it to so many beyond its borders.

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[72] Guild to Pardee, April 20, 1906; Pardee to Guild, April 20, 1906, Aid for San Francisco, George Cooper Pardee papers, BANC MSS C-B 400 Ctn, The Bancroft Library and Archives.

[73] Tom Laqueur, "Bodies, Details, and the Humanitarian Narrative," in Lynn Hunt, ed., *The New Cultural History* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1989) 176-204.

[74] As Lynn Festa explains, eighteenth century British abolitionism often serves as the origin of modern humanitarianism, due to its extra-local sphere of obligation and responsibility and its commitment to helping humanity as such. Festa shows how the aesthetics of sentimentality in the British novel helped to engineer a broader sense of social obligation among readers, making visible unseen suffering. "The problem abolitionists encounter is that this humanity is *not* seen. People allow the slave trade to continue, [William] Wilberforce declares, 'because they do not see; because some among us, receive the profits, and do not see, the sufferings of their fellow creates; because the objects, as they actually exist, are not allowed to obtrude upon their vision, and interpose the reality of things between these Gentlemen's consciences and their calculations.' The task of the sentimental is to incite feeling so as to overcome these barriers in order to make that humanity visible. Sentimental tropes thus create detailed, particularized descriptions of suffering others: synecdoche allow the suffering of masses to be condensed into a single unthreatening figure." "Humanity without Feathers," *Humanity: An International Journal of Human Rights, Humanitarianism, and Development,* 1:1 (2010) 3-27.

[75] Brian John Godfrey, Table 1: The Foreign Born as a Percentage of the Total Population in Ten Large American Cities, 1860-1980, "Inner-City Neighborhoods in Transition: The Morphogenesis of San Francisco's Ethnic and Nonconformist Communities" (Ph.D. Diss., UC Berkeley, 1984).

[76] In 1910, almost a third of the city's residents were counted as "foreign-born white." In 1900, the census counted 13,954 Chinese and 1,781 Japanese. United States Bureau of the Census, "Population Schedule of the 13th census of the United States," California, San Francisco County, Washington: National Archives and Records Service, 1910, retrieved from Internet Archive, https://archive.org/details/13thcensus1910po0101unit.

[77] Ibid. This roughly matches the numbers of Americans born out of state in San Francisco's birth, death, and marriage statistics from the California State Board of Health Records in 1907. These records calculate that about 41.9% of white mothers were born in California, and 32% of white decedents were born in California. *Appendix to the Journals of the State and Assembly of the Thirty-Seventh Session of the Legislature of the State of California* (Sacramento: W.W. Shannon, 1907) 3:95-110.

Many distant benefactors knew one person or at most a few people who might have been injured or killed. Each began to imagine great tragedy befalling those few associates – a cause they felt both obligated and able to remedy. Many thousands may have died; many more may have been injured; many more may have been rendered homeless or hungry. But those horrific numbers were not exclusively what mobilized Labarraque, Frantz, or Rantlet to send aid. They were sending aid in part to help their few friends and family who *might* have fallen victim to the catastrophe. Aid and sympathy poured in partly because San Francisco was a city of immigrants with strong social ties to distant communities.[82] Humanitarian aid sent to the city of San Francisco was often intended to remain within the family, the association, or the ethnic group. The Modern Woodsmen of America appealed to all of its members to contribute individually, but not before wiring $5,000 specifically to relieve the "afflicted and suffering Woodmen of California."[83] Russians migrants in Chicago gave money to Russian migrants in San Francisco. The San Francisco Relief and Red Cross Funds received hundreds of letters from family around the country donating on behalf of kin, friends, and business associates along the lines of one they reprinted from the brother of a refugee: "I want you to come with all your family and share our home until you get all rested up and see what is best to be done. Old frozen Michigan ain't the worst place after all."[84] Indeed, so many individuals sent donations to particular churches, organizations, or associates that it "interfered seriously with the work of relief," an obstacle overcome by abandoning any effort to find intended recipients.[85] Assistant Superintendent of the San Francisco Red Cross Rehabilitation Department Charles J. O'Connor complained at length about the cost of tracing and delivering aid intended for specific individuals. Even more frustrating were the claims that donors filed against the city's relief committees when individual donations did not reach the hands of intended recipients.[86] Donors often articulated their obligation to others within a distinctly defined community: their extended family, their professional association, an ethnic group, or a nationality.

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[78] "Anxiety Yet Unallayed," *The Evening Times* (Grand Forks, N.D.) April 19, 1906, 5.

[79] Andrea Davies Henderson argues that post-earthquake relief reinforced the ethnic boundaries of the city's social landscape, "Reconstructing Home: Gender, Disaster Relief, and Social Life after the San Francisco Earthquake and Fire, 1906-1915" (Ph.D. Diss., Stanford University, 2005) 35–42.

[80] "Earthquake Excites Chinese in Washington," *Washington Post,* April 19, 1906, 3.

[81] Editorial, *The Irish Times,* April 20, 1906, 6.

[82] A contemporary analogue would be the Indian Ocean Tsunami of 2004. Because many of the Southeast Asian areas affected were American and European tourist destinations, it proved one of the deadliest contemporary events in a number of distant countries, including Germany, Finland, Sweden, Switzerland, and the UK. Sweden's Prime Minister spoke about the "national trauma" of the event, noting that the "catastrophe [is], the worst in our times." "Sweden Reels from Tsunami Disaster," *DW,* March 3, 2005. On the tenth anniversary of the event, the Swedish Church and state held memorials for victims in both Thailand and Sweden. "The Wave Sweden will never forget." *The Local,* Swedish edition, Dec 22, 2014.

[83] Modern Woodmen of America, "The California Disaster," April 23, 1906, *Biennial Report of the Head Clerk for the Biennial Term Begun* (Egbert, Fidlar, & Chambers, 1908) 23.

Beyond the direct connections between immediate kin and well-known associates lay the somewhat more tenuous connections that suddenly intensified in the wake of the catastrophe. Much of the news out from California concentrated on locals who had connections to a potential victim of the catastrophe. Actors in Washington, D.C. made headlines on April 19, as "nearly all the people playing here had friends in the city, and not a few relatives."[87] Most of the associates remained anonymous, but the paper took time to note that two companies that had recently put on shows in D.C. were travelling through San Francisco at the time of the earthquake, and were known to have "stopped at the hotels within the district which suffered so severely." Newspapers in Kansas, New York, D.C., Chicago, and Walla Walla, all ran stories of locals who wanted news of their friends, the anxiety they felt, and their preparations for the worst. Mexico City newspapers reported that locals in the American colony had "direct interests" in receiving news of the catastrophe so as to learn of the fate of their parents, friends, and business partners in San Francisco.[88] Commonly, lists would appear of locals' relatives: "Mrs. Mary Sharp, sister of City Treasurer Parks; Stella Levy, a sister, and Mrs. H Goldstein, an aunt of Julius Levy; a brother and sister of Ben Selling, father of Mrs. Levy; wife and son of F.M Burke, clerk at the penitentiary, and mother and father of E.R. Thompson."[89] Almost any personal connection to the catastrophe could become newsworthy in the estimation of those living far from San Francisco. Each new story brought local readers closer to specific individuals in San Francisco, encouraging a sense of social obligation to friends' affiliates, friends, and kin.

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[84] Charles J. O'Connor, "Organizing the Force and Emergency Methods," In *San Francisco Relief Survey* (New York: Survey Associates, 1913) 64.

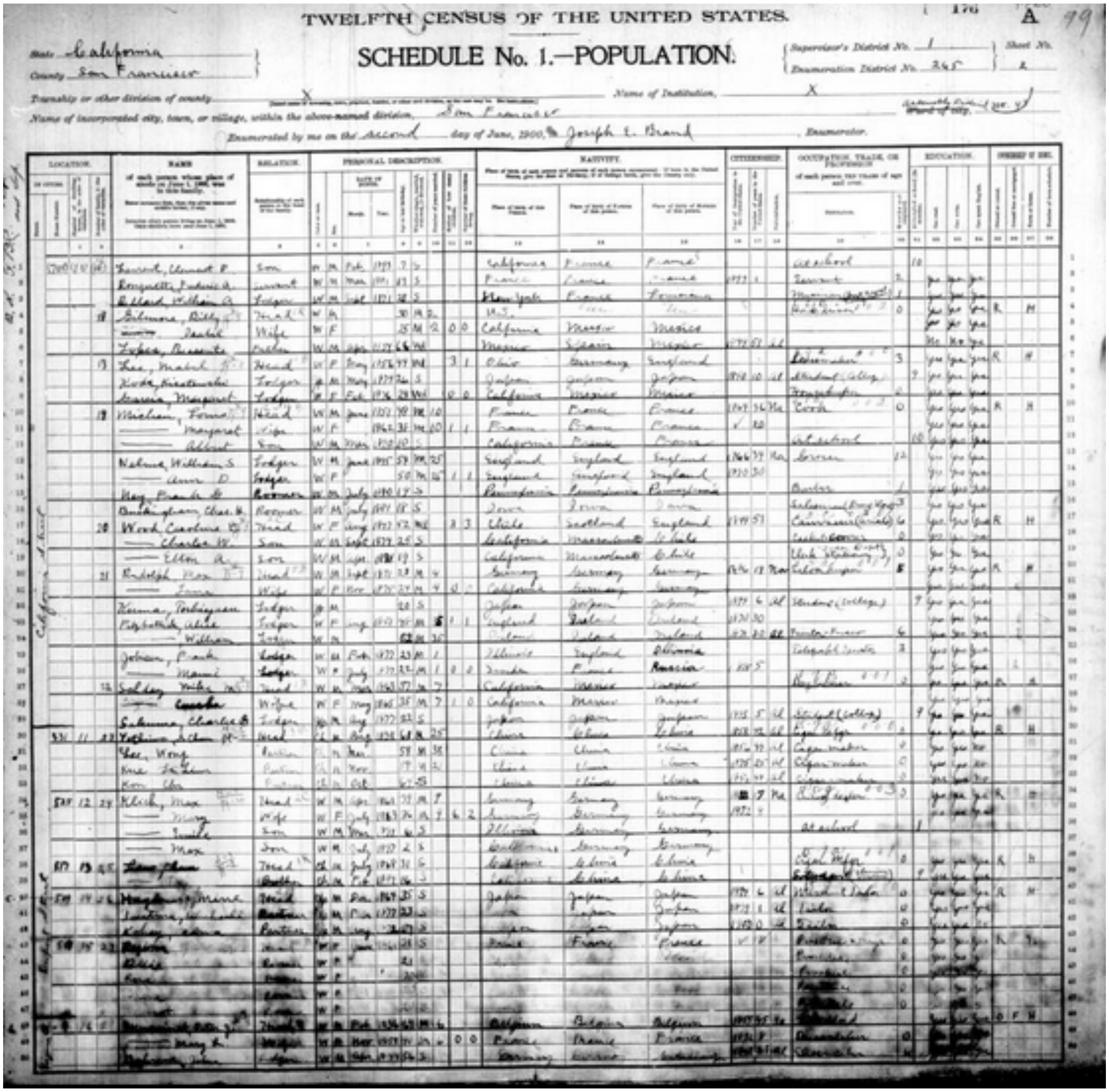
[85] Ibid.

[86] Ibid.

[87] "Actors Fear for Friends in Wrecked City," *The Washington Post,* 19 April 1906, 3.

[88] "La catastrophe en San Francisco – La Fraternidad internacionale," *El Pais* (Mexico City) April 20, 1906, 1.

[89] "Walla Walla Relatives Want News," *Evening Statesmen,* April 19, 1906, 5.



TWELFTH CENSUS OF THE UNITED STATES.

176 A 99

SCHEDULE No. 1.—POPULATION.

State California
County San Francisco
Supervisor's District No. 1
Enumeration District No. 245
Sheet No. 2
Township or other division of county X
Name of Institution, X
Name of incorporated city, town, or village, within the above-named division, San Francisco
Enumerated by me on the second day of June, 1900, Joseph E. Brand, Enumerator.

Figure 2: Census Manuscript from 12th U.S. Census (1900) showing the birthplaces of San Francisco residents and their parents.

News of the safety of friends and relatives likewise garnered media attention. Major newspapers published lists of locals visiting California who were known to have survived, underscoring the personal connections between the cities. "It was with a great sigh of relief that Albuquerqueans learned today…that the Western Union Telegraph company had established communication with San Francisco…" The *Los Angeles Times* regularly reported updates on the security of missing Angelenos and locals' bank deposits, and reassured readers about the fate of Charles Seyler, Jr. "Not a word had been heard from him at his home until yesterday morning, when his father received a short dispatch from him dated at Oakand (sic)." The Seylers finally spoke using long distance telephone, while the Kimballs learned the same of their daughter and four sorority sisters through the telegraph.[1] Postal communications with city residents remained difficult for months after the disaster, and notes about the irregular distribution and collection of letters garnered as much attention as the onset of martial law in much of survivors' correspondence.[2] Survivors sometimes anticipated the anxiety of their loved ones and went to extreme lengths to deliver messages across great distances. Attorney James R. Tapscott wired his mother, in Virginia, only a day after the event, because he wanted "to let you know that we were safe for I felt sure that the Eastern newspapers had even then reported the awful disaster which befell San Francisco…and that you would be anxious about us."[3]

Officially, that humanitarian aid disbursed after the catastrophe was distributed to any and all survivors. But many benefactors expressed a motivation to send funds to San Francisco for reasons distinct from a sense of obligation to a distant stranger based on their common humanity. For these donors, well-established relationships among family, friends, ethnic or national community, or business associates and trading partners obligated them to contribute funds, sympathy, food, and clothing to San Francisco. In this sense, San Francisco's catastrophe ignited a national and global humanitarianism that reproduced the social politics of the city. Before the earthquake ruined San Francisco, the city's political culture depended upon the servicing of "needs" of distinct urban groups—women, blacks, immigrants, laborers, and elite men.[4] The city's Progressive politics emerged from the ruins of a singular, monolithic "public welfare", and mobilized the public sphere to appeal to and construct the needs and desires of the city's diverse population within the boundaries of distinct social groups. Aid patterns after the earthquake only solidified these social and ethnic boundaries.

At that same time, scientists, journalists, and civilians referenced current ideas in seismology and geology to draw connections between the earthquake and their own place in the world. Dozens of places all over the world reported local trembling resulting from the catastrophe. The earthquake was "felt in Kansas", "felt in Austria," and traced back to the eruption of Mt. Vesuvius, "whose eruption doubtless started a severe wave movement through the crust of the earth."[5] Other catastrophes were soon linked to the shock—the recent earthquakes on the Island of Formosa (Taiwan), as well as past tremors in India, Britain, Japan, and Ecuador. Lay accounts of cutting-edge seismographic technology and astronomical observations emphasized their capacity to register rumblings that occurred at great distances rather than to detect imminent threats or determine causes. A year after the event, the *New York Times* asked, “is there any connection between the great earthquakes of San Francisco, Jamaica, and Mexico and the minor seismic tremors reported of late in the West Indies and Southern Europe?” According to the “latest theories” of one of the leading geologists in the country, Robert T. Hill, San Francisco, central Mexico, Jamaica, Madrid, and Constantinople were all perched upon the same volcanic bedrock. Hill’s theory departed significantly from the widely-accepted consensus on earthquake activity at the time, which imagined two narrow bands of seismic activity around the Pacific and through the Himalayas. Hill’s theory instead postulated that the activity of an enormous seismic zone from California through Eastern Asia was evident in the San Francisco catastrophe.[6] Early seismic detection devices in Sarajevo and Barcelona were reported to register the quake, and it was said to break a sensitive device in Florence.[7] Reports like these reflected decades-long invitations by experts to laymen to report any geological sensations in the hopes of developing a global map of seismological activity.[8] Any distant individual could feel viscerally and geologically connected to the events in San Francisco, and perhaps reconnect to suffering loved ones at the quake’s epicenter. Survivors also began to situate themselves within a global event as they reached out to friends and family after the quake; as when one penned in the hours after the event, “I am wondering if you felt this and it seems as if it must have reached all over the earth.”[9]

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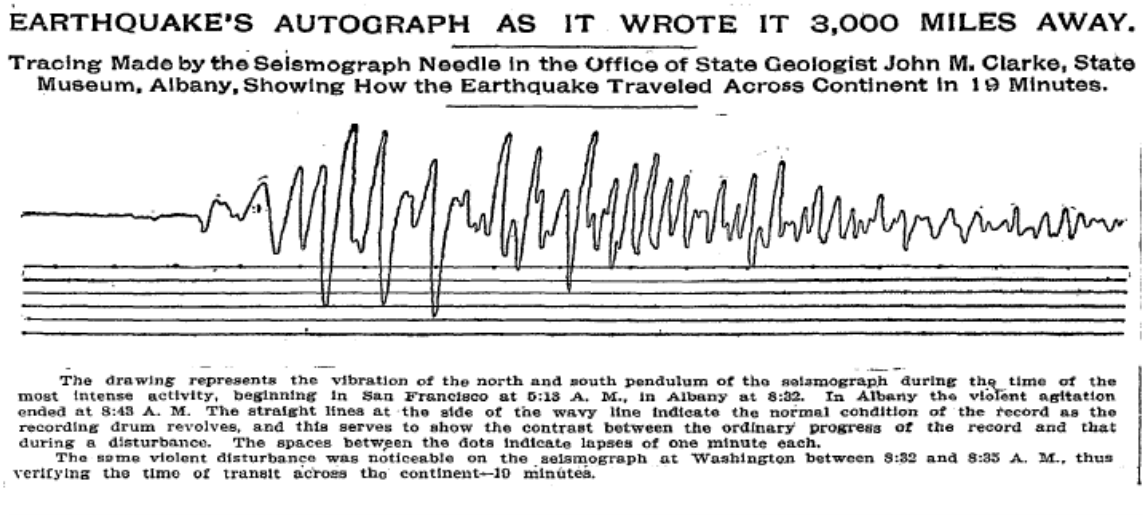
[1] "Tidings of Cheer for Anxious Hearts," *Los Angeles Times,* April 21, 1906, 8.

[2] W.H. Hawgood to Mary Frances Burgess, April 1906, Letters written to Mary Frances Burgess from San Francisco at the time of the 1906 earthquake and fire: BANC MSS 72/88C, The Bancroft Library and Archives.

[3] James. R. Tapscott to Mrs. I.J. Tapscott, April 22, 1906, 1, California miscellany: additions, bulk 1829-1981: BANC MSS 73/122 c:15, The Bancroft Library and Archives.

[4] Ethington, *The Public City,* 402- 416.

[5] "Felt in Kansas," *Topeka Daily State Journal,* April 19, 1906, 2; "Shock Felt in Great Britain," "Italy Shocked, Too," *Minneapolis Journal,* April 19, 1906, 4; "Shock Felt in Austria," *New York Tribune,* April 19, 1906, 1; "Terrible Catastrofe – El Terremoto en San Francisco," April 19, 1906, *El Imparcial* (Mexico City) 1.



EARTHQUAKE'S AUTOGRAPH AS IT WROTE IT 3,000 MILES AWAY.

Tracing Made by the Seismograph Needle in the Office of State Geologist John M. Clarke, State Museum, Albany, Showing How the Earthquake Traveled Across Continent in 19 Minutes.

The drawing represents the vibration of the north and south pendulum of the seismograph during the time of the most intense activity, beginning in San Francisco at 5:13 A. M., in Albany at 8:32. In Albany the violent agitation ended at 8:43 A. M. The straight lines at the side of the wavy line indicate the normal condition of the record as the recording drum revolves, and this serves to show the contrast between the ordinary progress of the record and that during a disturbance. The spaces between the dots indicate lapses of one minute each.

The same violent disturbance was noticeable on the seismograph at Washington between 8:32 and 8:35 A. M., thus verifying the time of transit across the continent—19 minutes.

Figure 3: Seismographic representations ran in newspapers in the U.S. and Europe to illustrate how the San Francisco quake registered thousands of miles away. Some accompanying texts explained the technology in dramatic fashion, noting that some instruments were broken due to the power of the event. “Over 500 Dead, $200,000,000 Lost in San Francisco Earthquake,” *New York Times,* April 19, 1906, 1.

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[6] “Professor Robert T. Hill,” *The New York Times,* April 21, 1907.

[7] “La catastrophe de San Francisco et les appareils de Florence,” *L’Echo de Paris,* April 20, 1906, 3.

[8] Deborah Coen, *The Earthquake Observers,* 101.

[9] Hawgood to Burgess, April 19, 1906.

Conclusion

Individual relationships and intimidate correspondence became fundamental to the meaning and humanitarian response to the 1906 San Francisco earthquake and fire. Like other catastrophic events, the meaning of the earthquake and fire of 1906 was shaped by what communications scholar Megan Finn refers to as "information infrastructure": the people, technologies, and industries that communicated information about the event.[10] Newspapers reprinted information that traveled among individuals and within communities—making personal communications both the means and content of official reporting on the catastrophe.

The fact that so many sufferers at the California periphery could call upon benevolent organizations, companies, and foreign states was not lost upon legislators and state agents in Washington, D.C. Federal officials expressed appreciation for the outpouring of sympathy while weighing the role the United States in the provision of relief. U.S. armed forces stationed in San Francisco immediately mobilized after the first, major earthquake struck, while federal troops throughout the West rushed to join them to reestablished order and streamline the distribution of clothing, shelter, food, and emergency medical care after the earthquake. The U.S. Army, the American Red Cross, the City of San Francisco, and the prominent local civilians began to divide up responsibility for San Francisco's 400,000 survivors. While federal troops went to work, some Congressional legislators began to outline plans to federally guarantee the city's loans, while others insisted that plans for national assistance lay outside the "legitimate province of Congressional action."[11] In a moment in which the frontier city could call upon so many entities for support in times of disaster, what responsibility did the United States have to those living at its periphery? That question loomed large in the minds of American nationalists in the federal government, financiers and insurers frantic over the destruction of capital investments in San Francisco, and survivors making their ways through the ruins of their neighborhoods as U.S. troops arrived to distribute food, shelter, and tending to the wounded.

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[10] Megan Finn, "Information Infrastructure and Descriptions of the 1847 Fort Tejon Earthquake," *Information & Culture: A Journal of History* 48:2 (2013) 194-221.

[11] The Senate, National Aid for Rebuilding San Francisco, May 7, 1906, Committee on Finance, 59th Congress, 1st Session, Report No. 3435, 4905.

Chapter Two

The State

Establishing the Borders of Responsibility

Anna Blake lived for nearly three months in the care of the federal government in 1906. In the days prior to the earthquake in San Francisco she had undergone surgery, and after the disaster she required care that could only be provided in the refugee camps. Blake was the daughter of a prominent local attorney, the grand-niece of a State Supreme Court justice, and a diligent correspondent whose letters to her mother carefully documented the transforming health infrastructure of the ruined city.[1] Within days of the earthquake, Blake reassured her mother that her hospital had access to ample provisions and was not subject to the food shortages plaguing survivors still camped among the ruins. "Armour [Meatpacking Company] is reported to be sending a train with supplies and Rockefeller has sent another $100,000" she reported, "so don't worry." Succor from benevolent societies including the Red Cross, the Sisters of Charity, and a few Catholic Priests instilled Anna with hope that she and the city would mount a full recovery. "I am going to grit my teeth and stand it…Everyone does the best one can." Anna's trust in the powers of private relief soon yielded to a conviction that the federal government—not the Sisters of Charity—would tend to her needs. As she faced another fatal threat two weeks later, "I thought the rest of the city was burning and was frightened for you," she wrote to her mother, who had remained among the surviving private residences. But as a refugee in the hospital staffed by the U.S. Army and Red Cross hospital, Anna worried little for herself. "Of course the soldiers would take care of us."[2]

Blake's ambivalence revealed that many entrenched ideas about government were up for debate. What, exactly, was the federal government according to a San Franciscan in 1906? Was it the hope of populists and progressives seeking checks on the abuses of big business? Or was it another monopoly, resented by ordinary citizens who felt subject to the whims of big business and big government? Was it a congregation of anti-democratic experts who sought to affirm efficiency and order above all, or the ally of ordinary people? In the wake of the disaster, Blake and others revised their understandings of the state's role in their lives.

How did Blake become so certain that soldiers would come to her aid? What obligations did federal officials feel towards civilians encountering catastrophe? Conversely, what did sufferers of catastrophe believe the government owed them? This chapter traces the evolving expectations of the federal government to provide relief to refugees uprooted by large-scale disaster. It shows why, in 1906, civilians facing catastrophe looked beyond private charity and began to not only hope for relief from the state, but, unprecedentedly, to expect it. This new expectation reflected changing norms of disaster relief. Importantly, they laid the groundwork for the events that took place over the course of a decade at the U.S.-Mexican border and the construction of an elaborate humanitarian infrastructure to care for Mexican refugees arriving at America's gates. More fundamentally, new expectations about disaster relief reflected a deep and momentous shift in conceptions of self and state. A culture that celebrated self-sufficiency and private initiative came to demand state relief for civilians' suffering. These shifts in popular expectations helped fuel far-reaching changes in other realms of American political economy, in popular ideas about worker's rights, the government's role in funding public works, and the legitimacy and constitutionality of social welfare.[3]

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[1] In 1915, one of Blake's poems became the theme song to the Panama-Pacific International Exposition, and she published many other in nationally renowned magazines later in her career. Louis S. Lyons, ed., *Who's Who Among the Women of California: An Annual Devoted to the Representative Women of California with an Authoritative Review of their Activities in Civic Social, Athletic, Philanthropic Art and Music, Literary, and Dramatic Circles* (San Francisco: Security Publishing Company, 1922) 603.

[2] Anna Blake to Mother, May, 1906. The Anna Blake Mezquida Papers, 1788-1975: BANC MSS 73/188 c: Box 4:26. Letter 3. The Bancroft Library and Archives.

The Foreign Origins of the Humanitarian State

Not every catastrophe provoked such profound changes in what ordinary people thought the state should do in the face of catastrophe. Large-scale atrocities, both natural and man-made, had stimulated debate among American statesmen and civilians throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Through the early twentieth century, relief was largely brokered by individual representatives appealing to Congress or provided to lone constituents petitioning for small, discrete grants of aid. Most government representatives expressed their relationship to suffering citizens as one between a donor and a supplicant.[4] Such charitable gifts did not establish any categorical federal responsibility towards victims. Indeed, the first government grants of relief to sufferers, as opposed to servicemen, went to aliens.

The United States first addressed the issue of refugee relief in response to the Haitian Revolution, which in the 1790s drove thousands to the cities of the eastern U.S. seaboard like "a flood of impure lava" erupting from a volcano in the Caribbean. At the time, Saint-Domingue was a critical trading partner of the U.S., second only to Great Britain.[5] After months of relying on local support, Americans considered friends and trading partners to the refugees appealed to Congress in 1794 to provide funds to help clothe, feed, and shelter the refugees on the basis of their common humanity, regardless of political concerns.[6] At the time, many legislators expressed skepticism that the Constitution could or should be interpreted to grant the United States power to provide social welfare to civilians.[7] Yet the particularly impassioned legislator Abraham Clark of New Jersey insisted that in "a case of this kind, we were not to be tied up by the Constitution." His proclamations reflected fears among his colleagues of federal excess veiled by the instinctive call to charity.[8] Further calls to act on behalf of "the law of nature, the law of nations…and every moral obligation that could influence mankind" failed to sway the majority of legislators.[9] The issue, several legislators insisted, was neither sympathy nor compassion. It was constitutional power. Recently resigned Secretary of State Thomas Jefferson counted himself among those skeptical of such action, cautioning that a temporary outlay of federal assistance could result in a permanent expansion of federal powers. Privately, he was more sympathetic. "I deny the power of the general government to apply money to such a purpose but I deny it with a bleeding heart. It belongs to the state governments. Pray urge ours to be liberal."[10] Even those who had voted in favor of relief admitted that in doing so, they had exceeded the limits of their power. The proposed relief bill stalled, and with it hopes for any federal support for refugees.

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[3] See Michele Landis Dauber's path-breaking work showing how New Dealers cited federal disaster relief expenditures as legal precedents that legitimated their social welfare proposals. This chapter builds upon her arguments by looking at the individual debates around early disaster relief expenditures, their international origins, and the expectations they engendered among constituents. Dauber argues that even strident Madisonian Republicans found reason to believe that disaster victims were deserving of relief and eligible to receive it through a liberal reading of the U.S. Constitution's general welfare clause. However, this chapter shows that there was, in fact, much debate about the constitutionality of providing relief to civilian disaster victims, as opposed to servicemen, through the Civil War era. It argues that international precedents were central to rhetorically legitimating Federal expenditures for citizens within the United States. See *The Sympathetic State: Disaster Relief and the Origins of the American Welfare State* (Chicago: University Of Chicago Press, 2012) and "The War of 1812, September 11th; and the Politics of Compensation Symposium: After Disaster: The September 11th Compensation Fund and the Future of Civil Justice - Ninth Annual Clifford Symposium on Tort Law and Social Policy," *DePaul Law Review* 53:1 (Winter 2003) 289–354; and "Let Me Next Time Be Tried By Fire: Disaster Relief and the Origins of the American Welfare State 1789–1874," *Northwestern University Law Review* 92 (1998) 967–1034.

[4] This idea may have derived from the British tradition of disaster relief. Parliament intermittently allocated spending on hurricane relief in Barbados and Jamaica in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. However, after the Seven Years War concluded and Parliamentary leaders received increasing criticism from American colonists, they prioritized disaster relief elsewhere. Survivors of a series of hurricanes in 1780-1781 received an unprecedented $120,000 sterling from Parliament as part of an attempt to demonstrate the benefits of British subjecthood for those living in the Americas. Matthew Mulcahy, *Hurricanes and Society in the British Greater Caribbean, 1624-1783* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008) 180-188.

[5] See Hickey, Donald R. "America's Response to the Slave Revolt in Haiti, 1791-1806," *Journal of the Early Republic* 2:4 (1982) 361–79; 363.

Months later, the measure gained new life as representatives of the host states cast refugee relief as an obligation of the United States to its own citizens. Thomas Scott of Pennsylvania entreated Congress to provide relief for the residents of the City of Baltimore, a city that had taken in more than 300 refugees over a few months' time in the fall of 1793, with a population of only 13,500 at last count.[11] According to Scott, the city had come “under siege” from refugees and was unquestionably deserving of assistance from the United States. “If they were invaded by an army, we certainly would assist them, and where is the difference… whether they be an army of fighters, or an army of eaters?” Jefferson may have understood the question of relief to be one of a “bleeding heart,” but Scott and his allies cast state relief in much different terms. Congress was not participating in charity but reinforcing a military alliance among the states. Ultimately, the relief provided to refugees was understood as a grant to states, cities and citizens, so much so that even opponents of federal relief were compelled to acknowledge that such aid was “the universal wish of our constituents.”[12] Mayors of host towns both sympathized with the refugees and lamented the violation of law and custom that required docking ships to pay for the costs of any indigent civilians aboard. One wrote directly to President Washington, imploring him to respect “Justice as well as Law” to allocate funds from the French collected by Congress through customs duties.[13] Other townsmen lobbied the president by describing first the suffering of the refugees they had sheltered and their own as overtaxed altruists:

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[6] The appeals to the U.S. were explicitly made to provide support to the state and local relief committees who had organized and provided support to the refugees in the form of clothing, food, and accommodations with locals. Ashli White provides a detailed account of the relief efforts in *Encountering Revolution: Haiti and the Making of the Early Republic* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010) chap. 2.

[7] See Michele Landis Dauber, "Let Me Next Time Be 'Tried by Fire,': Disaster Relief and the Origins of the American Welfare State, 1789-1874," *Northwestern University Law Review* 92 (1998) 967-1034. She explains that, beginning in the 1790s, even Jeffersonian Republicans came to accept that victims of disaster relief were eligible for relief funds under Article 1, Section 8, the general welfare clause. The case of the refugees from Saint-Domingue was one of the first critical cases to clarify this interpretation.

[8] Quote by Abraham Clark (NJ). Clark stridently argued that refugees needed to be considered an obligation of fellow man, regardless of nationality or class. "Were Algerines cast upon the mercy of America, in such a situation, he would pay them the same tribute of humanity. The French Ambassador had restricted his services to a particular class of people. It was not the business of the house, whether the refugees at Baltimore were democrats or aristocrats. They were men, and as such were entitled to compassion and to relief." Quoted in Thomas Hart Benton, *Abridgment of the Debates in Congress, from 1789 to 1856* (New York: Appleton, 1857) 1:474-475, hereafter *Abridgment*. David P. Currie has argued that this debate was the most important of the 3rd Congress in *The Constitution in Congress: The Federalist Period, 1789-1901* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997) 188.

[9] Elias Boudinot (NJ) *Congressional Record,* 3rd Congress, 1st session (1794) 4:168-174. This sentiment echoed the doctrine delineated by Emer de Vattel in the *Law of Nations,* a foundational text on modern international relations: "The offices of humanity are those succours, those duties, which men owe to each other, as men, that is, as social beings formed to live in society, and standing in need of mutual assistance for their preservation and happiness, and to enable them to live in a manner conformable to their nature." *The Law of Nations, or Principles of the Law of Nature Applied to the Conduct and Affairs of Nations and Sovereigns* (London: G.G. and J. Robinson, 1797) II: I:133-135. As Vattel noted, this idea dated back at least to Cicero, who wrote, "Others again who say that regard should be had for the rights of fellow citizens, but not for foreigners, would destroy the universal brotherhood of mankind; and, when this is annihilated, kindness, generosity, goodness, and justice must utterly perish; and those who work all this destruction must be considered as wickedly rebelling against the immortal gods. For they uproot the fellowship between humans." *De officiis* III.vi.28.

[10] Thomas Jefferson to James Monroe, July 14, 1793, in John Catanzariti, ed., *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995) 26:501–503.

> We claim no Merit for the little we have done but sincerely Lament that our Powers will permit us to do no more, else Congress and the Executive would have been saved the trouble of this Application[.] No longer able to avert a Calamity disgraceful to Humanity we conceive ourselves bound to lay before the President of the United States the dreadful Scenes about to take place that the Power’s of Gover’nment may be exerted to prevent them, and that we may be hereafter saved the painful Sensations of having been Silent Spectators of Scenes of Misery which timely Exertions on our parts might have been prevented.[14]

By drawing attention to their exhausted purses and overflowing compassion, the citizens of Baltimore made the suffering of refugees their own. In this way, they turned a petition for relief for humanitarian relief for refugees into a petition for Congress to alleviate the miseries of its own citizens. Ultimately, even James Madison agreed that the Constitution warranted relief if understood to assist citizens hosting refugees, and the House resolved to appropriate $15,000 for the refugees in want in February, 1794.[15]

Political and financial calculations directly shaped ideas of social obligation. Congressional representatives and citizens in host cities were moved by the stories of hitherto wealthy slaveholders who had been reduced to refugees after violent slave revolts, looting, and depredations. Relief expenditures thus functioned as grants to allies in the Atlantic institution of African slavery against the looming threat of a fully emancipated republic of free slaves in the Atlantic World.[16] Moreover, the funds appropriated proved deeply insufficient, only temporarily infusing locally elected relief boards for as little as two months.[17] Relief board leaders in New York, Baltimore, Charleston, and Philadelphia continued to raise funds to meet the basic needs of the refugees through local newspapers and door-to-door campaigns.[18] Finally, constitutional debates over the grants of relief did not reference the fact that the U.S. would likely pay only a small fraction of funds spent on refugees. A longstanding doctrine mandated that states reimburse foreign states that had been compelled to cover the costs of their indigent nationals and conflicts. In this tradition, the United States ultimately deducted its expenses for Saint Dominguan refugees from the principal of the debt it owed to France for expenses incurred during the American Revolution.[19]

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[11] As estimated by one French consul living in New York at the time. The United States would ultimately host over 15,000 Saint Dominguans seeking asylum from the Haitian Revolution and its aftermath. See Ashli White, “A Flood of Impure Lava”: Saint Dominguan Refugees in the United States, 1791-1820” (Ph.D. Diss., Columbia University, 2003), hereafter “Flood,” and White, *Encountering Revolution*. The population of Baltimore in 1790 was 13,503. Campbell Gibson and Kay Jung, “Historical Census Statistics on Population Totals by Race, 1790 to 1990, and By Hispanic Origin, 1970 to 1990, For Large Cities and Other Urban Places in The United States,” Table 21, Maryland, Working Paper No. 76, U.S. Census Bureau (2005)
https://www.census.gov/population/www/documentation/twps0076/twps0076.pdf.

[12] Benton, *Abridgment,* 1:474-475.

[13] Mayor of Norfolk Mayor Robert Taylor to George Washington, Jan 30, 1794, in Christine Sternberg Patrick, ed., *The Papers of George Washington*, *1 January–30 April 1794* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2009) 15:155–157.

[14] William Patterson et. al. to George Washington, January 30, 1794, In Philander D. Chase and William M. Ferraro., eds., *The Papers of George Washington* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2009) 19:328–330.

[15] Benton, *Abridgment*, 1:474-475.

Yet the debate over Haitian refugees echoed for decades to come. As Scott and Jefferson debated the issue of refugee relief in the Halls of Congress, farmers and other civilians in Western Pennsylvania watched their property burn to the ground. What came to be known as the Whiskey Rebellion turned hundreds of houses to ashes and plagued ordinary citizens in Pennsylvania for years.[20] Victims like Benjamin Wells lobbied their representatives to appeal to the federal government for relief, and Foster and others eventually secured funds from an Act of

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[16] White, "Flood," 73. American ambivalence towards French refugees from Saint-Domingue gave way to impassioned pleas for assistance in 1793, when Jacobin and member of Société des Amis des Noris Léger Félicité Sonthonax, commissioner in Saint-Domingue, was forcibly freed from arrest by counterrevolutionary forces under General François Galbald. Sonthonax successfully mobilized black republican troops in Haiti against white colonists and called for full emancipation, against the wishes of most metropolitan Republicans and colonists. Stories of atrocities and rampages at the hands of slaves provided an effective evil against which white slaveholders could unite—Jacobin, Royalist, or sympathizer of either side. The *Virginia Chronicle's* maudlin accounts of refugees asked Americans to "view with compassion the accumulated distress of those…nurtured in the lap of ease, affluence & plenty, now reduced almost to…penury, and observe what their conscience will dictate." Quoted in Thomas Paramore, *Norfolk: The First Four Centuries* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1994) 103. For more on the emergence of sympathy for Haitian refugees, see Robin Blackburn, "Haiti, Slavery, and the Age of Democratic Revolutions," *William and Mary Quarterly* 63:4 (October 2006) 643–674. See also Winston C. Babb, "French Refugees from Saint-Domingue to the Southern United States, 1791-1810" (Ph.D. Diss., University of Virginia, 1954) chap 14.

[17] The fund breakdown for the initial $10,000 was as follows, in proportion to the refugees who took up residence in each state: Georgia, 500, South Carolina 1750, North Carolina 250, Virginia 1450, Maryland 20000, Pennsylvania 1000, New York 1750, Connecticut 50, Rhode Island 1000, and Massachusetts 250. The remaining 5000 was reserved "to redress inequalities" as refugee counts solidified. Edmund Randolph to George Washington, February 27, 1794, in Sternberg, *The Papers of George Washington* 15:284–288.

[18] Ashli White, "Flood," Chap 2.

[19] Eighteenth-century legal theorist Emer de Vattel codified this ancient tradition in the *Law of Nations*. In a few cases, towns even passed off the impoverished native born as immigrants so as to receive funds to cover their expenses. Kunal Parker, *Making Foreigners: Immigration and Citizenship Law in America, 1600-2000* (London: Cambridge University Press, 2015) 109-112. The tradition of reimbursing host states for the cost of indigent nationals abroad survived the First World War and was the subject of a conference convened by the League of Nations. See Committee of Experts on Assistant to Indigent Foreigners and the Execution of Maintenance Obligations Abroad (1933), League of Nations Doc. C. 1O. M. 8. 1934. IV.

[20] For a general overview of the Whiskey Rebellion, see Thomas Slaughter, *Whiskey Rebellion: Frontier Epilogue to the American Revolution* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986); Gordon Wood, *Empire of Liberty: A History of the Early Republic, 1789-1815* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009) Chaps. 3 & 5, and Ronald Formisano, *For the People: American Populist Movements from the Revolution to the 1850s* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008) chap 3.

Congress in 1795.[21] This is often cited as first instance of federal disaster relief, and some historians treat Wells and those who joined him as the first class of claimants eligible for federal assistance on the basis of suffering. But Congress did not see Wells as a victim of disaster; they saw him and other claimants primarily as servicemen during a civil insurgency. Wells and his fellow petitioners became U.S. beneficiaries only because their property was destroyed when, "at great personal hazard, [they] distinguished themselves by persevering exertions to carry the laws into effect; and that the losses which they sustained proceeded solely from their zeal in support of the public authority."[22] Indeed, these suits prompted the Committee of Claims to clarify that:

> If the petitioners furnished supplies for the army, or had their property taken or used by the public, the powers of the accounting officers are adequate to the settlement and liquidation of their demands; but if their demands are not of a nature to come within the authority of such officers for settlement, they must stand on the same basis with all others…[and] Government have never made a general rule to compensate people who have suffered in a similar manner.[23]

Wells may have perceived the destruction of his property to be a catastrophe suffered through no fault of his own, but he demanded relief as a participant of war. When the Senate drafted his grant of relief, it made clear that it was seen as compensation for the public use of his private property—for services rendered. Those who secured relief due to the Whiskey rebellion were not innocents whose suffering constituted a legitimate claim upon a benevolent United States. They were vendors or servicemen compensated for their goods and services.

The first cases of federal response to natural disasters built more upon the precedent of the Whiskey Rebellion than the Saint Dominguan refugee crisis. Devastating fires in the towns of Savannah, South Carolina in 1796, Portsmouth, New Hampshire in 1802 and Norfolk, Virginia in 1804 did not produce general clamors for federal relief. In the wake of each disaster, locals went about recovery as other American communities had for decades; individuals found shelter with friends and neighbors as they rebuilt, and adjacent towns sent goods and funds to the suffering. Congressmen treated petitioners as commercial partners facing fiscal constraints more than sufferers.

An exception here helped prove the rule. Savannah's representative in the House tried and failed to convince Congress to provide relief funds to the city after it reportedly suffered the most significant conflagration in the history of the Carolinas. "He said they [Congress] had granted assistance to the sufferers by fire at St. Domingo; and surely if it were justifiable to grant relief to foreigners in distress, it was at least equally so when the objects were our own citizens."[24] After extensive debate as to the precedent such relief would set, the House voted 55-24 against granting $15,000 to the city. After the fire at Portsmouth in 1802, five townsmen,

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[21] An Act to provide some present relief to the officers of government and other citizens who have suffered in their property by the insurgents in the western counties of Pennsylvania, 1 U.S.C 423 (1795).

[22] Oliver Wolcott, Secretary of the Treasury, Indemnity for Losses Sustained by the Insurgents in 1794. Communicated to the House of Representatives, April 2, 1800, *American State Papers* 36, Committee of Claims, 114.

[23] Dwight Foster (MA), Indemnity for Losses Sustained by the Militia in 1794. Communicated to the House of Representatives, April 5, 1798, *American State Papers* 36, Committee of Claims, 102.

[24] William Smith (DR-South Carolina), *Annals of Congress,* 4th Congress, 2nd session (1796) 6:1711-1728. Benton, *Abridgment,* 2:39-44.

Nathaniel Adams, John Goddard, Daniel Humphreys, John Langdon and James Sheafe, organized a relief association that appealed to similar committees in nearby towns, who organized to raise and distribute relief funds.[25] Portsmouth eventually received $45,000 in charitable donations from cities including Philadelphia, Trenton, and Savannah to cover an estimated $200,000 in losses.[26] The five men distributed funds in an entirely discretionary fashion, "among such of the sufferers as they think proper."[27] Meanwhile, a number of merchants seeking relief by other means turned to the U.S. Collector's office in Portsmouth, entreating the United States to provide debt relief. Eliphalet Ladd "prayed to be exonerated from the payment of duties" on salt imported the previous September, and asked to be released from the debt due to the destruction of the salt and the remainder of his property in the fire of Portsmouth.[28] The Department of Commerce and Manufacturers reviewed and approved his petition and those of other indebted merchants who demonstrated personal loss without any sustained debate as to whether the government could constitutionally provide succor to suffering citizens. These were simply financial transactions between creditors and debtors

The issue of whether to provide relief after the fire in Norfolk, Virginia in 1804 followed the model of Portsmouth. Norfolk was no stranger to catastrophe. The town had been a primary destination of Saint Domingue's refugees in 1793. Former mayor Thomas Newton had personally visited many of the refugees scattered in residences throughout the town, and furtively appealed to Virginia's governor that thousands had been "taken out of water & thrown on board the vessels without cloathes or any subsistence whatever. I beg you to do what you can." While many refugees sailed on to the larger cites of Baltimore and Philadelphia, Norfolk accommodated more refugees as a proportion of its population than any other in the United States—2,000 refugees alongside 3,000 residents.[29] One of Norfolk's more esteemed refugees chronicled the town's generosity as well as its efforts to lobby Congress to provide funds to "unfortunates" like himself.[30] Norfolk's experience with catastrophe and familiarity with

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[25]For example, A town meeting in Lyndeborough, New Hampshire, on March 1, 1803, selected a committee of give to respond to the sufferers at Portsmouth. While local historians could not locate papers suggesting that the men of Lyndeborough granted Portsmouth's request for aid, the historians believed "the character of the men composing the committee forbids us to think that they were either indifferent to the suffering or inefficient in affording relief." The town did record their donation of "large contributions of money and provisions from all quarters" for another fire at Portsmouth in 1813. Dennis Donovan and Jacob Andrews Woodward, *History of the Town of Lyndeborough, New Hampshire, 1735-1905* (Lyndeborough: Tufts College Press, 1906) 1:274-275.

[26] John M. Whiton, *Sketches of the History of New-Hampshire from Its Settlement in 1623 to 1833* (Concord: Marhs, Capen, and Lynch, 1834) 171-172. The New Hampshire Fire and Marine Insurance Company was founded as the town rebuilt in 1803.

[27] Nathaniel Adams, *Annals of Portsmouth, Comprising a Period of Two Hundred Years from the First Settlement of the Town* (Portsmouth: Published by the Author, 1825) 324-325. Adams did note that the committee kept records "which was open for inspection of every one, who desired to see it."

[28] "Retrospective View: January 28," *National Intelligencer* (Washington, D.C.) February 9, 1803.

[29] Thomas C. Parramore, *Norfolk: The First Four Centuries* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1994) Chap 8. For an account of Norfolk from the perspective of a refugee during the Haitian Revolution, see Kenneth Roberts & Anna M. Roberts, trans. *Moreau de St. Méry's American Journey*, *1793-1798 (*Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1947) 49-50. The author explains that Norfolk became the center of the Haitian-French refugee population because it was Virginia's largest commercial port and thus one of the first ports of entry for many fleeing the Haitian and French Revolutions; it was the "first asylum for these unfortunates." The refugees of Saint Domingue remained in Norfolk because most were too poor to move on, because some wanted to retain their slaves, and most found it easier to survive in the region's comparatively warm weather.

[30] Ibid., pp. 50, 58-59, and 273. Details on local and private subscription efforts may be found in the *Virginia Chronicle,* July 13, 1793 and August 24, 1793.

Congressional disaster relief, such as it was, may have encouraged individuals to turn to the federal government after a fire razed 300 homes and a number of central warehouses.[31] But if the people of Norfolk attempted to present themselves as supplicants deserving of mercy, Congress granted them relief as debtors–or not at all. The Senate quickly passed an act to aid fire victims, but the only persons relieved were those indebted to the United States for duties on destroyed merchandise. The relief came in the form of debt extensions or cancellations commensurate with contemporary policies towards debtors, including those not facing catastrophic circumstances.[32] Congress granted these extensions with an explicit understanding that it was in the interest of the United States to preserve the solvency of its debtors. It was an act of financial prudence, not sympathy. As in Savannah, the relationship of Congress to fire survivors in Norfolk was constructed as a relationship of a creditor to a debtor, nothing more.

In the Early Republic, citizens and state officials alike therefore understood the obligation of the federal government to its citizens suffering from catastrophe in strictly financial terms. The federal government assumed the role of a reasonable, even compassionate creditor or a corporation with broad understandings of its obligation to vendors and contractors. In both roles, the states acted to ensure their investments and commercial relationships in the first decade of their alliance. This simple idea did not change depending on whether the disaster-stricken debtors were suffering from politically motivated violence or unforeseen acts of God. Congress only assumed the pretense of altruism when sufferers were foreign nationals. When starving and penniless French refugees from Saint-Domingue landed in Norfolk, Baltimore, New York, and other ports in 1794, the federal government awarded monetary transfers to each city in order to feed and shelter the foreign nationals and relieve exhausted almshouses. The United States was called upon by the citizens of the towns to provide relief "to these unhappy Sufferers, Who without some Aid from the United States must soon perish…every source of assistance here being so entirely exhausted as to render all hope of future Contributions from our Citizens not only unreasonable but vain."[33] In the face of catastrophe, the United States could provide relief either as a lenient creditor to its indebted citizens or as a humanitarian agent to foreign nationals. But citizens did assume the federal government had an obligation to provide food, funds, or supplies to ease their suffering after disaster. Multiple debates among congressman from across the country and political spectrum resolved in agreement that the Constitution prohibited the United States from granting direct aid to citizens suffering from catastrophe. That responsibility remained with private citizens, neighbors, cities, and states.

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[31] Notably, newspaper accounts published throughout the New England and Atlantic region stressed that the fire consumed "the most populous and wealthy part of Norfolk entirely consumed," and that "the distress is inconceivable; many families who were rich, are now entirely ruined…" "Norfolk, February 25," *The Reporter* (Vermont) March 10, 1804.

[32] This action recognized the fact that the fire had consumed many of the imports that had indebted the fire victims. The United States suspended duties payments for several years, and in some cases cancelled payments altogether. For a social and cultural approach to creditor-debtor relationships in and with the United States in the Early Republic, see Bruce Mann, *Republic of Debtors: Bankruptcy in the Age of American Independence* (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 2002). Mann describes in detail how the interests of the United States suffered when its debtors lost property to disaster: "What gave the interplay between debtors and creditors such urgency at this juncture was that, when the specter of failure loomed, there was no way to end the duet without leaving one party, and usually both, poorer. Even in flush times, debtors and creditors dealt with one another with a weather eye on what the law permitted—bargaining in the shadow of the law, as it were. When insolvency threatened, the shadowed lengthened" (17). He also dedicates attention to the moral dimensions of debtor-creditor relationships during that time, noting that compassion and cruelty often entered into moral assessments of creditors' actions towards insolvent debtors. For this reason, the provision of charity and absolution of debt or acknowledgement of bankruptcy could be seen as coequal gestures. Minister Samuel Moody distinguished insolvent debtors who were "Diminished and brought Low by the Holy Providence of God" and those who "made themselves Poor by hearkening to Satans Temptations" (Quoted in Ibid., 67, see also 84-85). A foundational part of the moral economy of debt in the Early Republic was the absolution of debts of those struck by providence, an idea that first gained popular approval after economic changes during the Seven Years War, the Revolutionary War, and the French Revolutionary Wars indebted a plurality of citizens and the majority of merchants, mitigating much of the moral stigma attached to delinquent debtors. Commercial bankruptcy relief gained popular support as bankruptcy transformed a sign of moral failure to evidence of laudable entrepreneurial risk-taking, realized in state and federal Bankruptcy relief laws like the short-lived Bankruptcy Act of 1800. The position of the federal government towards merchants indebted on the importation of goods exemplifies contemporaneous consensus on the ideas that merchants (much less so individuals) should be relieved of debt produced by the vicissitudes of fortune. Peter J. Coleman describes a similar phenomenon in the early nineteenth century in *Debtors and Creditors in America: Insolvency, Imprisonment for Debt, and Bankruptcy, 1607-1900* (Washington: Beard Books, 1999) 17, 67, 84-85. Both works show how changing norms did not provide relief to less affluent Americans, who continued to face imprisonment for personal debts or those amassed by tax collectors on behalf of neighbors. In Massachusetts, relief for poor debtors came in the form of one-month prison limits, after which indigent debtors remained liable for their debts. Indigent debtors like Ephraim Ballard did not benefit from gestures of charity like those taken on behalf of the United States after the fires; Ballard spent over a year in and out of debtors' prison after his town did not collect sufficient taxes to pay its debt to the state. Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, *A Midwife's Tale: The Life of Martha Ballard, Based on Her Diary, 1785-1812* (New York: Random House, 1991) 265-282.

At least that was the consensus, until an earthquake struck Venezuela. On April 28, 1812, Venezuelan Commissioner to the United States Telésforo de Orea abandoned his campaign to seek U.S. recognition of Venezuela. A new crisis eclipsed the independence movement. An earthquake trapped and killed tens of thousands in the republican stronghold of Caracas, dwarfing the devastation wrought by Spanish troops who had been trying to suppress Venezuela's insurrection since 1810. Orea pleaded to U.S. consular agent Alexander Scott and Secretary of State James Monroe:

> We who survive the catastrophe not only have to lament the loss of fathers, sons, friends, and thousands of our fellow citizens, but find that our lives are threatened in thousands of ways. Without shelter from the hardships of weather, deprived of the food that was yielded by the fields and that have been buried under the ruins, without any immediate help, hunger, lack of protection and the sternness of the weather are going to cap the climax of misery and desolation, unless some provident hand intervenes in such a great calamity.[34]

Orea entreated Monroe to make the United States into the "provident hand" that would rescue the city and its beleaguered troops from catastrophe. By excepting Venezuela from the current embargo, sufferers could appeal directly to American citizens and thereby "receive succor from the compassion and generosity of every individual." Orea appealed to both Monroe's compassion and his republicanism, insisting that the destruction of the city's mills and machinery eradicated any hope of staving off Spanish troops. An embargo suspension would legitimate Venezuelan independence, establish friendly relations between the two Americana republics, and “be an appropriate tribute to suffering humanity.”[35] Humanitarian aid would save both republicanism and republicans.

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[33] William Patterson et. al. to George Washington, January 30, 1794, in Philander D. Chase and William M. Ferraro., eds., *The Papers of George Washington* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2009) 19:328–330.

[34] Telésforo de Orea to James Monroe, Washington, D.C., April 28, 1812, Document 565 in Manning, *Diplomatic Correspondence of the United States Concerning the Independence of Latin-American Nations* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1925) 2:1153-1154.

Congress lavished attention on the Caracas earthquake within days of receiving word from Orea. Representative Thomas Newtown Jr. of Virginia penned an impassioned plea to the President of the United States to take pity upon civilians who were suffering unspeakable devastation through no fault of their own in support of a bill that authorized the executive to export $30,000 in food provisions to the victims.[36] When the bill entered committee for review, no objections were made. Instead, John C. Calhoun successfully demanded that the donation be increased to $50,000, which was overwhelmingly approved. Unlike the bills for the sufferers in Portsmouth or Norfolk to grant minimal loan modification, the earthquake sufferers in Venezuela could expect to fill their bellies with the help of the United States. None of the recipients had any claims to U.S. citizenship, and all of them and lived over 2,000 miles beyond the boundaries of the United States.[37] The bill passed the House on May 4. On May 8, the bill was put to vote, and the United States Senate voted unanimously to grant disaster relief to thousands of unknown Venezuelans on the other side of the globe.[38]

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[35] Eliga Gould details the importance of international recognition for each emerging republic to become “a nation among nations” through his study of the American search for recognition among European nations. Treaties between a respected independent state and a newly independent republic reinforced the sovereignty and legitimacy of both states. *Among the Powers of the Earth: The American Revolution and the Making of a New World Empire* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2012). In turn, Caitlin Fitz makes the case that both American citizens and statesmen believed Latin American independence to similarly offer legitimacy to the U.S. model. Caitlin Fitz. *Our Sister Republics: The United States in an Age of American Revolutions* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2016). Piero Gleijeses takes an opposing view, suggesting that statesmen’s sympathy for Latin American independence ran shallow and that Americans (particularly those working in shipping) rallied around the cause to exploit the opportunity for business and heroism after the conclusion of the War of 1812. “The Limits of Sympathy: The United States and the Independence of Spanish America,” *Journal of Latin American Studies* 24:3 (1992) 481-505. Edward P. Pompeian similarly finds that the desire to see republicanism spread abroad while maintaining lucrative trade relations and economic dominance in the Western hemisphere resulted in American ambivalence towards Latin American independence. “Spirited Enterprises: Venezuela, the United States, and the Independence of Spanish America, 1789-1823” (Ph.D. Diss., William and Mary, 2014). An interesting reconciliation of these three perspective may be seen in the case of American privateers who collaborated with Spanish American insurgents to support both independence and their pocketbooks. David Head, *Privateers of the Americas: Spanish American Privateering from the United States in the Early Republic* (Athens: University of George Press, 2015). For overviews of the geopolitical calculations and ideological sympathies that animated United States relations with emerging Latin American republics, see Arthur P. Whitaker, *The United States and the Independence of Latin America, 1800-1830* (New York: Norton, 1964); Rafe Blaufarb, “The Western Question: The Geopolitics of Latin American Independence,” *American Historical Review* 112:3 (2007) 742-763; J.C. Stagg, *Borderlines in Borderlands: James Madison and the Spanish-American Frontier, 1776-1821* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009).

[36] Newtown was familiar with the genre; nearly twenty years earlier, his father was the official who had surveyed the penniless and homeless refugees arriving from Saint-Domingue to Norfolk that would eventually receive federal aid.

[37] The witnesses to the devastation, whose testimony compelled this unprecedented show of humanitarianism, also lacked U.S. citizenship. Later that year, U.S. Consular agent Alexandar Scott visited Caracas to testify to the horrors; he found only one house standing in the town of La Guaira, and “Caracas…an heap of ruins.” He estimated that thirty thousand lives and four million dollars in real property had been lost. But he did not visit the site until well after the aid had already been appropriated. Alexander Scott to James Monroe, November 16, 1812, Document 567, in Manning, *Diplomatic Correspondence,* 2:1159-1163.

[38] Benton, *Abridgment,* 4:521-533. *An Act for the Relief of the Citizens of Venezuela*, 2 Stat. 730 (1812). Judith Ewell contextualizes this measure, showing that Venezuelan political leaders embraced the U.S. as a potential guardian against European intervention at the time. *Venezuela and the United States: From Monroe’s Hemisphere to Petroleum’s Empire* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1996) 20-21.

No representative questioned the constitutionality of federal aid for individuals, including foreign nationals. The only controversy surrounding the Venezuelan relief bill was whether or not it should also lift the embargo for Venezuela. Detractors dismissed the embargo rider as a partisan effort that departed from the nonpartisan, magnanimous relief bill for Venezuelans. Republicans were eager to support earthquake relief to shore up the strength of republican troops and sentiment in Caracas. In particular, President James Madison heralded Latin American independence movements as testament to the strength of the United States' example and the inevitability of hemispheric American independence and republicanism.[39] Seen in this way, the bill did not threaten republicanism through federal overreach. To the contrary, humanitarian relief offered a means through which the United States could offer assistance to the fledgling republic while remaining officially neutral in the European-colonial wars of independence. The opportunity to ward off European rule in the Western Hemisphere and spread the model of republican government supplanted any previous expressed concerns that federal relief undermined the very republicanism promised by the Latin American independence movements. Indeed, the bill's most vigorous supporters were Republicans; party spokesman Nathaniel Macon introduced it to the floor for a final vote and extolled the "sacred cause of distant and oppressed humanity."[40]

Venezuelans privately expressed disappointment at the relative paucity of the American donation and frustration at the ongoing effects of the Embargo Act of 1807 and Non-Importation Act of 1809, which had greatly reduced U.S. trade with Venezuela.[41] Unfortunately for the disaster victims, much of the food relief was seized by British and Spanish troops before it could make its way to republican hands and survivors' mouths.[42] Still, Consular Agent Scott assured

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[39] On the support for Latin American independence movements among U.S. elected officials, see John Lewis, *The American Union and the Problem of Neighborhood: The United States and the Collapse of the Spanish Empire, 1783-1829* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998). On the utility of this particular aid package to that cause, see Harold A. Bierck, Jr., "The First Instance of U.S. Foreign Aid: Venezuelan Relief in 1812," *Inter-American Economic Affairs,* 9:1 (1955) 47–59.

[40] Benton, *Abridgment,* 4:531-533.

[41] To understand the relative worth of $50,000 in 1812, consider that U.S. trade with the port of La Guaira (the main port of Venezuela) averaged approximately $90,000 a month during Venezuela's independence wars (1807-1812), and represented approximately 35% of the port's trade. Typically, this port handled almost all of foreign trade into and out of Venezuela. Although that proportion wavered as a result of the embargos and war, the U.S. became Venezuela's primary trading partner in 1808 and remained so throughout the wars. $50,000 represented about 0.2% of the U.S. federal income in 1812. Manuel Lucena Salmoral, "The Commerce of La Guaira with the United States during the Venezuelan Revolutionary Juncture, 1807-1812," in Jacques A. Barbier and Allan J. Kuethe, eds., *The North American role in the Spanish Imperial Economy,* 1760-1819 (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984) 158-176. Judith Ewell, *Venezuela and the United States,* chap.1. When the U.S. created silver dollars in the late 18th century they were declared equal to the reliable Spanish peso. While the War of 1812 and Latin American Wars of Independence destabilized both currencies, sources in 1812 still treated them as equal in value. Harold F. Peterson notes this in context of the earthquake relief passage *Argentina and the United States: 1810-1960* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1964); Tatiana Seijas and Jake Frederick discuss the relative reliability of the Spanish dollar in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century at greater length. *Spanish Dollars and Sister Republics: The Money That Made Mexico and the United States*. (New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2017).

[42] "Relief for Venezuela," *Congressional Record*, 12th Congress, 1st session (May 1812) 24:1377-1378. Telésforo de Orea to James Monroe, Washington, D.C., April 28, 1812, Document 565 in Manning, *Diplomatic Correspondence*, 2:1153-1154; Alexander Scott to James Monroe, November 16, 1812, Ibid., 1159-1160; Robert K. Lowry, U.S. Consul at La Guaira to John Graham, Chief Clerk of the Department of the United States, Nov 30, 1816, in Ibid., 1169-1171. On U.S.-Venezuelan relations during the Latin American wars for independence, see E. Taylor Parks, *Colombia and the United States, 1765-1934* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1935) 60-62. Caitlin Fitz's history of pro-Latin American republicanism in the United States shows how American statesmen and civilians selectively told

Monroe that the Venezuelan republicans received U.S. relief "with the gratitude it deserved," and conceded that it had "averted the horrors of famine." Indeed, Venezuelan diplomats celebrated the gift as an act of official recognition and gesture of friendship even as the earthquake's victims continued to starve. In both design and reception, the relief package functioned as a gesture of diplomatic solidarity rather than charity.[43]

But the Caracas earthquake aid measure had consequences far beyond the realm of Venezuela's war for independence or diplomatic relations between the U.S. and Latin America. It constituted the first of several acts of foreign humanitarian relief that Congressional representatives would seize upon in efforts to legitimate petitions for relief on behalf of U.S. citizens. However paltry the aid provided to Venezuela, it transformed Congressional consensus regarding of the responsibility of the federal government to relieve the suffering of its citizens. Strategic legislators would uphold the Venezuela relief bill as precedent to win federal assistance for constituents and friends who had suffered from a range of catastrophes. Domestic disaster relief as it emerged later in the nineteenth century was effectively imported foreign aid.[44]

Domesticating Foreign Aid

Immediately before Venezuela's disaster, an equally powerful earthquake struck the St. Francis River Valley in the Missouri Territory. The New Madrid Earthquakes of 1811 and 1812 displaced a thriving community of Shawnees, Delawares, Chickasaws, Cherokees, as well as Spanish, French, British, and American settlers who had poured into the Missouri Territory after the Louisiana Purchase. So strong were the tremors that they were felt as far away as New York City and erratically rang the bell of a local steeple more than seven hundred miles away in

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and celebrated stories of hemispheric independence, flattening Latin America's complex race relations and neutralizing the abolitionist components of Latin American independence movements in *Our Sister Republics*. Mark G. Jaede discusses how newspapers served to broadcast and manufacturer impassioned support for the Latin American independence movements, and how the U.S. government fanned or quelled those feelings in diplomatic exchanges as they negotiated wartime relationships with Britain, Spain, France, and the emergent Latin American Republics. See "Brothers at a Distance: Race, Religion, Culture and U.S. Views of Spanish America, 1800-1830" (Ph.D. Diss., The State University of New York at Buffalo, 2001).

[43] The legacy of the donation influenced perceptions of the meaning of the Monroe Doctrine and U.S. humanitarianism in the region through at least the end of the nineteenth century. Americans journalists meeting with Venezuelan diplomats during the Venezuelan-British boundary dispute of 1895-1899 concluded that "Venezuela look[ed] confidently to the United States for aid" due to previous sympathetic acts, including the earthquake relief mission. According to journalist Richard Harding Davis, Venezuelan diplomats claimed to read the Monroe Doctrine through such sympathetic gestures. "Venezuela's hope of aid, and her conviction, which is shared by all the Central American republics, that the United States is going to help her and them in the hour of need, is based upon what they believe to be the Monroe doctrine. The Monroe doctrine as we understand it is very different thing from the Monroe doctrine as they understand it…." Richard Harding Davis, "The Paris of South America," *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* 92 (1895-1896) 114-115.

[44] Congress intermittently and unpredictably provided aid to catastrophe sufferers abroad. Only weeks after the Venezuelan earthquake, a petition for the relief of famine sufferers in the Canary Islands overwhelmingly failed because the petitioners did not convince the legislature that "the people of the Canary Islands were suffering under a severe calamity, and require prompt relief…[like] the distressed and afflicted people of Venezuela." Notably, this ruling came from Newton, the representative who had led the appeal for Venezuela. "Famine in the Canary Islands," Communicated to the House of Representatives, May 22, 1812, *American State Papers,* 38:321.

Charleston, South Carolina.[45] Suffering on the part of the indigenous inhabitants had not garnered Congressional sympathy on par with Venezuela's sufferers. But Congress had turned their attention to white American property-owners who had lost land in the disaster. The General Assembly of the Missouri Territory petitioned Congress on the grounds that these victims, white landholders, deserved treatment equal to the foreign sufferers in Venezuela:

> Many of … our unfortunate fellow-citizens are now wandering about without a home to go to or a roof to Shelter them from the pitiless Storms-And whereas the best light in which these Calamities are viewed by the enlightened humane government of the United States, has been conspicuously manifested, by their liberal Arbitrations in favor of the Sufferers at Carracas *(sic)*; This General Assembly Cannot therefore doubt but what it will be equally ready to extend relief to a portion of its own Citizens, under Similar Circumstances.[46]

Congress obliged, and within a year resolved to provide land tracts of 160 to 640 acres of federal land that land-owning sufferers could trade for their ruined parcels.[47] Unfortunately, speculators from St. Louis heard about the bill before word reaching the New Madrid region, and hurried to the site to quickly buy up the titles for pennies from the desperate victims. It took a dozen additional acts of Congress over the course of more than forty years to perfect the titles and resolve fraudulent claims that resulted from the hastily designed relief package. But the controversy helped Congress clarify its new role as benefactor towards those suffering from catastrophe. Attorney General W.M. Hirt invalidated New Madrid claims from landowners whose chain of title indicated a purchase after the earthquake because "the law was passed to help the poor, who had been rendered indigent by the visitation of God; not to enrich the speculator."[48] Congress fashioned itself an altruist.

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[45] "An Earthquake," *The Philadelphia Repertory,* December 28, 1822, 255. It is surprising that not more has been written about the New Madrid earthquakes, which were likely the strongest seismic events in U.S. history. The disaster radically changed the social and physical landscape of the St. Francis River Valley and galvanized support for Shawnee chief Tecumseh's pan-tribal "Indian league." Tecumseh's followers prophesied that he would stomp his foot and make the "whole earth tremble" to realize the anger of the gods towards Anglo-American violence, an event which coincided with some of the New Madrid quakes. The few historians that do examine the political, social, and cultural responses to the earthquakes include James L. Penick, *The New Madrid Earthquakes,* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1976); Jay Feldman *When the Mississippi Ran Backwards: Empire, Intrigue, Murder and the New Madrid Earthquakes* (New York: Free Press, 2005); and Conevery Bolton Valenčius, *The Lost History of the New Madrid Earthquakes* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013).

[46] "Resolution of the General Assembly of the Missouri Territory for the relief of inhabitants of the County of New Madrid who have suffered by earthquake," January 12, 1814, Doc. No. 306692, Petitions and Memorials, 1805-1951, RG 233: Records of the U.S. House of Representatives, 1789-2015, NARA-D.C.

[47] An act for the relief of the inhabitants of the late county of New Madrid, H.R. 43, 13th Congress (1915). The use of land as social welfare represented a new turn in disaster relief and was part of a broader strategy of the American state to use the public domain as social welfare, veterans' compensation, education, infrastructure, and debt financing Ariel Ron, "The Hidden Development State: The Public Domain and the Federal Government in the Nineteenth Century," Unpublished Manuscript, 2012.

[48] Attorney General W.M. Wirt, "The Opinion of the Attorney General, relative to the location of New Madrid claims," May 11, 1820, reprinted in *General Public Acts of Congress Respecting the Sale and Disposition of the Public Lands* (Washington, D.C. Gales and Seaton) 2:9-10. So many of the patents ended up in the hands of speculators that having claim to a New Madrid tract was considered a shorthand for fraud within just years of the disaster. Penick, *New Madrid Earthquakes,* 120-121.

But few believed that Congress could take on an altruistic role without either clear constraints or great risk of abuse. The petition that reignited debates over the limits of federal relief came from someone intimately familiar with federal government outlays for suffering Venezuelans: the shipper contracted to deliver the aid. Joseph Forrest lost his schooner when it was seized by Spanish forces upon arrival into the Venezuelan port, on the grounds that the shipment was contraband intended to aid an insurgency.[49] No less a figure than Secretary of State John Quincy Adams sympathized with Forrest and wrote in support of his petition to Congress to compensate him for damages. Adams conceded that the United States had no legal obligation to Forrest. As a private contractor, Forrest had accepted the risks of the many dangers at sea including capture by a foreign government.[50] But Adams suspected that the state's obligation towards Forrest transcended contract. Forrest and Congress were bound to one another by "a national act of beneficence and humanity." The United States had contracted with the ship owner on "a virtuous impulse of the highest order; it was beneficence, to relieve the distress of other nations and tongues."[51] Could Congress act as a humanitarian towards distant strangers and an unfeeling merchant to its own citizens?

> If the Congress justly concluded that they were discharging their most imperious duty to their constituents by appropriating their money to alleviate the distresses of a distant and foreign land, would not the same, or at least a congenial sentiment, warrant them in extending their bounty to their own citizens, who, in the very act of carrying their munificence into effect, fall into unmerited misfortune? Will they suffer their own countryman to find his ruin in the very fulfillment of their gratuitous kindness to foreigners?[52]

Adams pressed Congress to articulate how it could mobilize "beneficent feeling" and "sacrifice pecuniary interest to a higher principle" on behalf of foreigners while neglecting its own citizens.

The House rejected Adams's provocation. As individuals, all of the representatives claimed to possess "generous sympathies…for the sufferings of a fellow-citizen." American citizens suffering from a fate comparable to the foreigners would have "unquestionably" received the same succor from Congress. But Forrest's and the Venezuelans' claims differed in kind: Forrest sought relief from an "ordinary accident…such as might happen every day" rather than the extraordinary suffering of the Venezuelans. A grant of relief for a typical accident would create a limitless number of legitimate claims. North Carolina Representative Lewis Williams asked, "who can define the limit at which it may be possible to withhold munificence from the claims of suffering and distressed humanity?"[53] To act simply upon sympathy towards other citizens suffering from life's ordinary trials clearly lay beyond the boundaries of what was right. Discounting Adams's argument that Forrest had found himself the victim of an unforeseeable "calamity no less dreadful" than the earthquake, Mississippi Senator Thomas Hill Williams relegated Forrest's claim to the realm of contracts and liability.[54] The shipper been hired and paid according to ordinary procedure. He had sacrificed nothing as part of the humanitarian mission. For this reason, he could not hope "to share with Government the beneficence of character with the transaction might impart." The claim was denied. In its plurality, Congress rejected the idea that either citizens or foreign nationals had superior claims upon its munificence. Instead, a consensus emerged that the question of citizenship was irrelevant.

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[49] Spain seized the ship on grounds that the cargo was essentially military and not humanitarian aid, otherwise the United States would have appealed to the Spanish colonial state to authorize the vessel's arrival. The Spanish Courts charged that "had the object of the Government of the North really been to relieve the unhappy inhabitants of Venezuela…the Spanish Consul could not have refused the aforesaid certificates when applied to such acts of humanity; and hence the court inferred it as clear that the sole object of the Government of the United States was to support the people of Venezuela in the obstinacy of their criminal independence." U.S. Secretary of State John Quincy Adams, On the Petition of Joseph Forrest, February 26, 1816, reprinted in *Annals of Congress,* 15th Congress, 1st Session (1917) 31:464-468.

[50] Jonathan Levy, *Freaks of Fortune: The Emerging World of Risk and Capitalism* (Princeton: Princeton U Press, 2012) especially Chap. 1.

[51] Adams, Petition of Joseph Forrest, February 26, 1816, 468.

[52] Ibid.

But within only a few years, subsequent Congresses revived the debate over whether the Venezuela relief act had been proper and Constitutional. Legislators acknowledged that the claims of citizens sought nothing more than "the extension of that benevolence that produced the act for the relief of the people of Venezuela." As subsequent outbreaks of violence, natural disasters, and personal tragedies befell its citizens, Congress attempted to draw ever-stricter boundaries around who it was obligated to help. Congressional debates before and after the 1812 precedent often returned to the conclusion that "the plea of hardship and compassion, can never be acted upon, but with the extremest hazard of abuse." Sentimentality and a visceral sense of interdependence may have formed the twin currents in a humanitarian wave that swept the Atlantic World and mobilized movements like abolitionism.[55] But those factors did not mobilize U.S. humanitarian relief by themselves. A sympathetic and humanitarian U.S. state emerged as citizens refused to let Congress forget the charity they had shown sufferers living abroad.[56]

At the same time that Congress was debating claims like Forrest's, they were also facing a wave of petitions and critical media attention on the issue of Revolutionary War veterans' pensions. Multiple campaigns by impoverished veterans for support, with the fierce backing of public opinion, made their way to Congress and were roundly rejected. "Congress cannot undertake the support of paupers merely because they may have been at some period of their lives engaged in the public service." Expanding moral sympathy towards the old, infirmed, and impoverished revolutionary veterans ultimately compelled Congress to increase disability pensions originally granted to soldiers in 1783. But legislators insisted that the gesture was one of benevolence—not justice or law. An isolated act of charity did not change the obligation of the government toward its veterans.[57] Notably, none of the petitions referenced the Venezuela precedent—perhaps because they were authored by veterans and not Congressmen. Congress deliberated at length over their obligation towards suffering republicans abroad and at home without any clear sense that relief for the former mandated relief for the latter.

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[53] Lewis Williams (DR-NC), *Annals of Congress,* 15th Congress, 1st Session (1917) 31:464-468.

[54] U.S. Secretary of State John Quincy Adams, letter on Petition of Joseph Forrest, February 26, 1816, reprinted in *Annals of Congress,* 15th Congress, 1st Session (1917) 31:464-468. This argument was delivered to refute Adams's argument that Forrest was indeed suffering from a "calamity no less dreadful [than the earthquake], though inflicted by their fellow-creatures." Adams made the point that the state of civil war preempted any attempt by Forrest to seek out authorization to use the port, and thus the ship was lost without "any fault or neglect of the master…or its owner."

[55] The most cited historical treatments credit the rise of humanitarianism and particularly the mobilization of empathy for strangers to two main innovations. Cultural historians have emphasized the rise of sentimental literature and documents that sought to build a visceral, emotional connection between readers and distant sufferers. See for example Lynn Festa, "Humanity Without Feathers," *Humanity: An International Journal of Human Rights* 1:1 (2010) 3-27; Thomas Laqueur, "Bodies, Details, and the Humanitarian Narrative" in Lynn Hunt, ed., *The New Cultural History* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1989) 176-204; and Laqueur, "Mourning, Pity, and the Work of Narrative in the Making of 'Humanity,'" in Richard A. Wilson and Richard D. Brown, eds., *Humanitarianism and Suffering: The Mobilization of Empathy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009) 31-57. Thomas Haskell argues that capitalism and particularly credit networks, not literature, was responsible for creating a new sense of interconnection among distant strangers. "Capitalism and the Origins of Humanitarianism," Parts 1 & 2, *The American Historical Review* 90:2 (1985) 339-361 and 90:3 (1985) 547-566.

[56] U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee of Claims, *On the Petition of Joseph Forrest* (January 23, 1818) 15th Congress, 1st session, S. doc. 77, Serial 2:1.

The War of 1812 laid waste to the homes of thousands of Americans living on the U.S.-Canadian borderlands, provoking hundreds of claims for federal relief. Hundreds of property owners proceeded to file memorials with Congress seeking compensation for damages through public land grants or monetary transfers. Out of those petitions emerged a raucous debate over whether a government could or should be compassionate.[58] Republican Albert Tracy introduced a bill on behalf of claimants known as the "Niagara sufferers" to the House of Representatives in 1824, casting the measure as a debt owed citizens acting in common cause with the wartime government: "What is the nature and character, and what is the extent, of the obligation which a whole community owes to its individual members for losses sustained during a state of warfare from acts of the enemy?" Opponents of the relief bill rejected the idea that the United States could be indebted to citizens of sovereign states. To Philip Barbour of Virginia, the idea was nothing more than a redistribution scheme that served the frontier at the expense of the interior (particularly his home district). Those that chose to live on the frontier took a calculated risk, and often provoked the conflicts for which they suffered. Residents of the older states marched and mobilized at their own expense to rescue belligerent frontiersmen. Even if the War of 1812 had concluded, Barbour insisted that granting relief to the 1812 claimants could set a dangerous precedent, and the United States could not possibly indemnify citizens against the costs of potential future frontier conflicts without expanding its moral jurisdiction beyond any reasonable limit.[59] But Tracy maintained that the government had a humanitarian obligation to sufferers, and

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[57] John Resch, *Suffering Soldiers: Revolutionary War Veterans, Moral Sentiment, and Political Culture in the Early Republic* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1999) 84-118.

[58] Representative Daniel Cady (F-NY), who had assessed the damages as a member of the State Assembly, estimated that two hundred homes were ruined and twelve to sixteen hundred individuals had been displaced. *Congressional Record,* 18th Congress, 2nd Session (1825) 1:110-126.

[59] Ibid., Barbour compared the acts of a compassionate government to those of a charitable person. "I can, indeed, suppose a case where a whole extensive district of country is laid waste by an incursion of the enemy, and all its inhabitants reduced to ruin. How far such a case might address itself to the sympathy of the Government, what appeals it might make to compassion and humanity, how far it might melt our feelings or call for our charity, is a question wholly different from the question we are now arguing. We are now speaking of what has, for distinction's sake, been called a perfect obligation. Such as might arise from the case I have supposed can only amount to what is called an imperfect obligation.... A man is under such imperfect obligation to give to any miserable fellow creature whom he can without impropriety relieve. But he cannot be forced to do so. There existing nothing like that sort of obligation by which a man is bound to pay his debts. The appeal, in one case, is to liberality, to pit, to compassion, in the other case it is to strict and naked justice. The difference is immense. The only obligation is tangible—it can be measured—it can be reduced to a fixed and definite limit. The other is of a nature which can neither be limited nor measured—it eludes our scrutiny—it is a thing of feeling merely." Barbour's statement reflected the idea that only those whose properties were seized by the government were eligible for relief, as such damages could be easily measured. Barbour did not make exceptions for veterans. Indeed, he explicitly repudiated the Act of 1816 that had increased pensions for veterans by emphasizing its charitable nature: ""I was always opposed to the act of 1816—but when it had passed and became a law, the Committee of Claims…honestly endeavored to carry it into effect, not viewing the claim of the sufferers as a right which the Government had been forced to allow, but as a claim of suffering fellow-men to whom relief had been extended as an act of compassion and charity." Ibid.

"though it might not be of a legal kind, was nevertheless something more than a mere appeal to humanity." Tracy envisioned a government that acted as an empathetic individual when circumstances warranted it: the government "must be humane, …even where no connection whatever has previously existed between the sufferer and its own acts." But Barbour saw a compassionate government as a limitless government whose obligations towards its citizens could never be measured or discharged.

When sympathy failed to rouse support for the bill, Tracy and other representatives accused Congress of privileging distant strangers over American citizens:

> Suppose, for illustration, that the Niagara frontier, instead of being waste by a savage enemy, had suffered equal injury by an earthquake. Could there be a question that, in such a case, there would exist an obligation on the Government to afford what relief was in its power? Could he not refer to more than one example in which the Government had done this, not only to its own citizens, but even to foreigners? The people of New Madrid, in Missouri, when suffering from the effect of earthquakes in that portion of the Union, had received relief from the Government; and even the people of Venezuela, who resided at a distance from our boundary, had been relieved by the Government in a still more liberal manner.[60]

Representative Cady of New York and Representative Campbell of Ohio reinforced Tracy's argument. They cast a bill providing $250,000 in relief towards Niagara claimants as well within the U.S. humanitarian tradition established in a line of relief measures for the Whiskey Rebellion, land grants to French migrants defrauded of property in the Ohio territory in 1794, the refugees from Saint-Domingue, and the sufferers of the calamity in Venezuela.[61] Cady admitted that he had once doubted that Niagara's appellants had suffered to the extent that they claimed. But, he had "asked my conscience whether I believe this Government ought to do something for these claimants, and whether we are prohibited from doing it. I have also read the constitution…and am told that it was adopted 'to promote the general welfare.'"[62] Even opponents of the bill were quick to clarify that they supported a compassionate response modeled on previous bills for foreign relief. Representative James Buchanan of Pennsylvania denounced the provision of limitless relief to victims of British raids. But he qualified his position, insisting that he would "mitigate their calamities, not indemnify them for their losses…they are entitled to the compassion of a paternal Government."[63] As soon as the United States extended aid beyond its borders, it established a "humane…duty" that could not be easily revoked when it came to aiding its own citizens. Precedent established that the government was humane—up for question was only whether it was just and would tend to its own as it had others. Ultimately, then, appeals to humanity did not secure Congressional support for the sufferers at Niagara —the Venezuela precedent did.

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[60] *Congressional Record,* 18th Congress, 2nd session (1824) 1:74-90.

[61] The U.S. granted land, rather than monetary transfers or debt restructuring, as a form of relief was to the Galliopolis settlers. These French migrants were sold land in Ohio County by the Scioto Company, land that in fact belonged to the Ohio Company. About one third of the victims died while dealing with malaria and other disease, while others attempted to re-purchase the land from the Ohio Company or moved back East. The U.S. eventually donated land to the settlers called the "French Grant." For further detail see R. Douglas Hurt, *The Ohio Frontier: Crucible of the Old Northwest, 1720-1830* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996) 194-197; and Jeffrey Paul Brown, *The Pursuit of Public Power: Political Culture in Ohio, 1787-1861* (Kent, Ohio: Kent State University Press, 1994) 22-25.

[62] Alan Taylor convincingly explains the exceptional brutality of the War of 1812 by analyzing it as a civil war that violated all traditionally held "laws of war," rather than a war between two nations or a war of independence. *The Civil War of 1812: American Citizens, British Subjects, Irish Rebels, and Indian Allies* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2010). See pages 255-270 for further information on the raids, loss of property, and refugee crisis in the Niagara Valley.

Tracy's conception of the humanitarian state idealized the history of the United States to lay out a vision for the government's future. As soon as federal agents appropriated treasury funds to purportedly relieve the suffering of those beyond U.S. borders, it established a precedent of responding to an "imperfect obligation," an obligation based upon compassion that transcended the powers ascribed the government by the Constitution. That obligation was unwritten and unenforceable. That the obligation was first fulfilled beyond U.S. borders was, perhaps, unsurprising. The domain beyond U.S. sovereignty provided an ideal space in which the U.S. could escape its constitutional constraints to fulfill unwritten obligations to suffering individuals. Furthermore, the fact that the state had acted charitably towards nonlocal individuals distinguished it from previous philanthropic traditions. The sympathetic U.S. state was, specifically, aiding humans—not citizens.[64] The pitiful and needy in Venezuela or arriving from Saint-Domingue were eligible for direct relief even when independent citizens could receive relief only as debtors or vendors. Congressional representatives could express sentiment and pity for distant non-citizens without consulting the Constitution. But among their own citizens they felt compelled to exercise far more scrutiny over claims and far more respect for Constitutional constraints on Congressional power. The humane American state was born abroad. It was only after legislators and citizens established a precedent far beyond American borders that civilian relief came home.

In 1834, the Committee of Public Lands elaborated the emerging idea that providing for the suffering at home and abroad was a fundamental American value, inextricable from the ideals of individual freedom and the rule of law. Committee member Senator George Poindexter explained how American citizens were obligated to provide for refugees of foreign despots, in this case Poles who had fled to the United States after fighting for independence from the Russian Empire:

> The committee thinks that, in granting the prayer of the petitioners, this government will manifest a proper regard for the sufferings of the unfortunate of all countries who may be cast on our shores; a comity due from one portion of the human family to another, which ought to be acknowledged and felt by all; and thereby exhibit to the civilized world a glowing contrast between the arbitrary rulers who oppress and persecute these exiled patriots and fallen defenders of liberty, and the chivalry of a free people who receive them with a friendly welcome, and provide for their immediate necessities. The noble example may not be lost in its effect on the great cause of free principles.[65]

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[63] James Buchanan (D-PA) *Congressional Record,* 18th Congress, 2nd Session (1825) 1:110-126.

[64] Lynn Festa attempts to define the human and humanitarianism in the late eighteenth century through the example of British abolitionism. Humanitarianism is often traced to this moment because of its "nonlocal sphere of action and its categorical investment in humanity as such." "Humanity Without Feathers," *Humanity: An International Journal of Human Rights* 1:1, (Fall 2010) 3-27.

[65] Senator Poindexter (D-MS), On The Application of Polish Exiles for Land for Settlement. Communicated to the Senate. April 29, 1834. *American State Papers*, 34, *Public Lands,* 1237.

Senator Poindexter suggested that the U.S. commitment to liberal democracy required it to accept and extending material aid to refugees arriving at U.S. borders. The appeal was successful, and on June 30, 1834, Andrew Jackson signed into law a bill granting the 234 Polish exiles tracts in Illinois or Michigan at $1.25 an acre. While many of the Polish settlement beneficiaries never secured their plot of land due to confrontations with squatters and internal conflicts in the exile community, the ideal of the humanitarian state gained strength.[66]

Poindexter's commitment to providing humanitarian relief to refugees reflected a commitment to burnishing the international reputation of the United States. Social welfare extended by the United States had the power to uphold family, country, and civilization alike. But it was not only foreign nationals and sympathizers who mobilized the precedents in Venezuela and Saint-Dominque. Relatively elite citizens and their legislators inveighed Congress in 1835 to extend significant relief measures to those who had lost property in the Great Fire in New York: "The United States had been liberal, generous, to the sufferers at Caraccas, and by his vote should not be less liberal to our own citizens at New York."[67]

Over time, legislators relied upon the history of Congressional foreign relief to authorize social welfare for those suffering from poverty as well as calamity. In the decades before the Civil War, an increasingly industrialized economy splintered social bonds among artisans, forced small landowners to migrate to cities, and reduced many to poverty. Poorhouses and almshouses managed by states, cities, and private charities buckled under the increasing demand for services even as Northern middle-class women led a burgeoning culture of reform nurtured in voluntary associations.[68] The proliferating poor forced many Americans to confront a persistent question with new urgency. What did the federal government owe its most vulnerable—the impoverished and mentally ill? Senator Solomon Foot of Vermont appealed to Congress on behalf of the "indigent insane" whose plight had exhausted the resources and compassion of their home towns. According to Foot, "this large and increasing class of citizens, suffering under the most direful calamity which can befall a human being"—debilitating mental illness—were owed no less sympathy than other sufferers of calamity who had garnered aid and sympathy from the United States. Foot advocated that the Federal Government serve the wellbeing of the unfortunates and their home cities through a generous grant of lands in the public domain to each State. Grants could serve as sites for new asylums or be sold to provide welfare funds for afflicted residents. Foot cited what had become, at that point, a well-known doctrine: the Venezuela sufferers' bill and the subsequent grant to lands of victims of the New Madrid Earthquake. Such expenditures had become commonplace—Congress had appropriated fund for sufferers of the Alexandria fire and had utilized federal ships to ship provisions to the Irish and Scottish famine sufferers in 1847. "These were all objects of charity, of benevolence, and humanity," Foot recalled, showing that Congress had historically acted on behalf of humanitarian causes. Congress was obligated to act on behalf of its own poor and mentally ill citizens as it had acted towards "a foreign people.". By the 1850s, Congress had not only funded infrastructure projects and soldiers' pensions but had given "money and employed its ships to furnish provisions to the sufferers from earthquake, [and] from fire or famine, in foreign lands, as well as in our own; [then]…why, in the name of common justice, and of common humanity, may we not grant lands…to all the States…to aid them in making suitable provisions for the proper care and treatment of the thirty thousand of our fellow-beings?"[69]

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[66] Historian of Polish migration James Pula suggests that the grant could have become the basis of a "New Poland" were it not for these obstacles. See *Polish Americans: An Ethnic Community* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1995) Introduction.

[67] Cave Johnson (D-TN), *Congressional Record,* 24th Congress, 1st Session (1836) 12:2576-2596. Johnson suggested amendments to the proposed relief bill that would limit the length of bond payment deferrals, but supported the measure even without amendments. New York Representative Hiram Hunt delivered a convincing defense of the relief bill, arguing that the payment deferrals and suspensions for importers would eventually benefit all the fire sufferers and retailers, as importers would not feel an impulse to immediately collect payment. The economic logic behind this form of disaster relief also animated Bellamy Storer's (OH) impassioned endorsement of the bill. He explained his constitutions took "a deep interest in the passage of this bill," due to their indebtedness to New Yorkers De Witt Clinton and Robert Fulton, whose canal and steamboat projects that connected Ohio to the economies of the Eastern seaboard. "The citizens of Ohio can never be unmindful of New York, while they remember her Clinton and her Fulton….[Clinton's] presence was invoked at the commencement of [Ohio's] great canal, and he broke the first ground where there is now a continued water communication of more than three hundred miles." Ibid., 2583.

[68] The broad historiography of nineteenth-century social welfare in the United States reflects the distinct ideas on how to treat the poor, sick, orphaned, and elderly that emerged at different places and changed over time. So-called indoor relief provided by residential workhouses, poorhouses, hospitals, and asylums gained popularity in the early nineteenth century amid suspicions that outdoor relief enabled indolence. Overviews of developments over the course of the century include Michael Katz, *In the Shadow of the Poorhouse: A Social History of Welfare in America* (New York: Basic Books, 1986) and William Trattner, *From Poor Law to Welfare State* (New York: The Free Press, 1979) Sean Wilentz and Seth Rockman give incisive accounts on how the rise of contract labor and resulting precarity among laborers in New York and Baltimore intensified the demand for outdoor and indoor relief by the mid-1820s. By mid-century, these intensifying demands for relief encouraged many affluent officials and civilians to see poorhouses and hospitals as enabling widespread idleness. Sean Wilentz, *Chants Democratic: New York City and the Rise of the American Working Class, 1788-1850* (New York: Oxford, 1984); Seth Rockman, *Scraping By: Wage Labor, Slavery, and Survival in Early Baltimore* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 2009). Mary Ryan charts the welfare and organizational work undertaken by urban women in the Erie Canal environs to tend to

Senator Foot relied upon a tradition in which Congressmen attempted to domesticate the humanitarian character of international relief. Countless instances of federal appropriation enabled the Senator to defend the constitutionality of land grants for the benefit of certain groups of citizens. Grants of land bestowed to fund internal improvements, schools, and settlement illustrated that land grants had become common. But Foot stressed the history of relief for the refugees from Saint-Domingue, Venezuela, and Ireland to establish that the American state had assumed a new character. Foot and his supporters took pains to show that when the occasion demanded, the United States had evolved into a humanitarian actor altogether unlike a Jeffersonian decentralized agrarian republic, a Hamiltonian commercial republic, or a Whiggish American System.[70] Moreover, the United States had inhabited a humanitarian role in response to the suffering of non-citizens and foreigners, to whom they had no constitutional responsibility. In these moments, the United States became a government that could work as a humanitarian

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unattached populations that migrated to industrializing towns, Ryan, *Cradle of the Middle Class: The Family in Oneida County, New York, 1790-1865* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981) 210-225. For a history of the shift in responsibility for the mentally ill from communities to state governments, see Gerald Grob, *The Mad Among US: A History of the Care of America's Mentally Ill* (New York: The Free Press, 1994); and Lynn Gamwell and Nancy Tomes, *Madness in America: Cultural and Medical Perceptions of Mental Illness before 1914* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995).

[69] Senator Foot (W-VT), *Congressional Globe,* 33rd Congress, 1st session (1854) 23:1058-1070. The House of Representative's Committee on Public Lands authored a thorough discussion on the implication of the bill's expansion of federal powers. U.S. Congress, House of Representatives, Committee on Public Lands, *Indigent Insane: A Report (to accompany H.R. No. 7),* 33rd Congress, 1st session, 1854, House Rep. 125.

[70] These competing visions are laid out in Drew McCoy, *The Elusive Republic: Political Economy in Jeffersonian America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1980) and Daniel Walker Howe, *What Hath God Wrought: The Transformation of America, 1815-1848* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

actor, capable and obligated to provide aid to suffering people. Foot's argument thus became rather modest in comparison to the history of federal relief: if Congress could provide aid to people, could it not provide aid to citizens? Were citizens to be excluded from the bounds of the humanitarian state?

Foot's insistence that members of Congress treat their own constituents with at least as much generosity as they treated foreigners helped to convince the Senate, and ultimately the House, to pass the bill. But the history of foreign U.S. humanitarian aid became even more critical after President Franklin Pierce vetoed Foot's bill. Pierce lamented that it was his Constitutional duty "to resist the deep sympathies of my own heart in favor of the humane purpose sought to be accomplished." The president protested the very idea that the Constitution warranted and sanctioned the Federal Government to act charitably. A federal government that acted charitably towards some must act charitably towards all. Such power garnered suspicion from a Democratic President recently accused of being a "mere tool and puppet of the Slave power" by antislavery Democrat after he deserted the party.[71] To Pierce, it was the 'highest and holiest duty" of American citizens to provide for those who suffered by "the mysterious order of Providence." But no such duty rested upon the United States. A Congress that acted generously towards its citizens would not merely exceed its constitutional obligations—it would subvert "the whole theory upon which the Union of these States is founded." The purposes of the Federal Government were well-defined, and pertained only to the mutual defense against belligerent powers at home and abroad for the maintenance of peace between and among the States. Pierce repudiated Foot's broad interpretation of the general welfare clause that had enabled previous disaster relief expenditures, arguing that such a reading would obviate the rest of the Constitution that so carefully described, delimited, and enumerated the powers of the United States.[72] Pierce chastised those who used "tributes to humanity" to obliterate state sovereignty and spelled "the beginning of the end" of the federal project. He even insisted that the objects of Foot's sympathies would suffer alongside state power as the "foundations of charity…dried up at home."[73]

As soon as the veto message came to the Senate floor, Foot and his allies rebuked Pierce's constitutional challenge by citing precedents enacted under James Monroe and John Quincy Adams for the benefit of the deaf, dumb, and foreign. Foot railed against the idea that federal relief was unconstitutional, noting that its Framers had found it suitable to give liberally to civilians. "I must be allowed to think still, that James Madison had some knowledge of the Constitution—what powers it conferred on Congress, its restrictions and limitations—and that he knew tolerably well what he was about when he signed the fifty thousand dollar appropriation bill for Venezuela."[74] The case of Venezuela became particularly important not only because its beneficiaries were non-citizens, but because stalwart republican James Madison passed the bill.[75]

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[71] David Wilmot (R-PA), quoted in Frederick Blue, *No Taint of Compromise: Crusaders in Antislavery Politics* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2005). Wilmot conceived of the failed legislative amendment to prohibit slavery in territories annexed from Mexico after the conclusion of the U.S.-Mexican War.

[72] The relevant clause reads: "The Congress shall have Power To lay and collect Taxes, Duties, Imposts and Excises, to pay the Debts and provide for the common Defence and general Welfare of the United States; but all Duties, Imposts and Excises shall be uniform throughout the United States." U.S. Constitution, Article 1, Section 8.

[73] U.S. Congress, Senate, *Message from the President,* May 3, 1854, 33rd Congress, 1st Session, S. Doc. 54, Serial 698, 8.

[74] *Congressional Globe*, 33rd Congress, 1st Session (1854) 23:1058-1082.

[75] Madison's support for the Venezuelan earthquake victims may be credited to the politics of the War of 1812 and the Spanish-American wars of Independence. Madison cast the hemisphere's conflicts as a unified war of

Foot's allies then excited the very fears of tyrannical state power that had undermined the social welfare bill in the first place.

> If it be true that we have power to appropriate money to alleviate the sufferings of the starving inhabitants of foreign lands, and the indigent insane of foreign lands, and yet it is incompetent for Congress to apply a dollar of money, or an acre of land, either to provide for the suffering poor or the indigent insane of our own country!... "What," men would say, "here were thirteen Colonies which were separated from the mother country in consequence of the oppression of their rulers; they fought through a bloody war to establish their independence, and soon afterwards finding it necessary to establish a Constitution for the benefit of their own people within their own borders, they gave unlimited power, under the Constitution, to the Legislature to raise money by duties and taxes on their own people, and to apply it to all the foreigners in the world, but strictly prohibited them from using a dollar of it for the benefit of themselves![76]

According to Whig Senator George Badger, historical foreign aid precedents actually required Congress to act on behalf of its own citizens. The United States had already demonstrated their Constitutional power to provide aid to suffering civilians. To exclusively deploy that power for the benefit of foreigners would effectively steal from citizens, revealing the United States to be little better than the British Parliament. Pierce's veto impassioned social reformers, Whigs, Southern Democrats, and free soilers alike as it closed the door to federal assistance for the nation's poor and bolstered the arguments of Southerners intent on protecting the power of the states.[77] Ultimately, Foot and his followers failed at passing a subsequent measure, hindering efforts to enlist the federal government in assistance for the poor and mentally ill for decades to come.[78]

But the narrative about international aid proved much more persistent than the efforts on behalf of the mentally ill. Decades of usually successful appeals for domestic disaster relief demonstrated that the assumption that the state had an obligation towards suffering citizens was bolstered by the aid for refugees and foreign nationals at home and abroad. The sufferers at New Madrid, Alexandria, and social reformers like Senator Foot made much of international relief precedents in order to extend their reach and expand their purview to cover catastrophes like

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independence and republicanism against European imperialism. See Caitlin Fitz, "The Hemispheric Dimensions of Early U.S. Nationalism: The War of 1812, Its Aftermath, and Spanish American Independence," *Journal of American History* 102:2 (2015) 356-379.

[76] George Badger (W-NC), "The beauty of this system would be to confine our liberality to foreigners, and not only that, but to foreigners in foreign lands. While foreigners are abroad we may help them; but the moment they touch our own shores our power to help is gone." *Congressional Globe*, 33rd Congress, 1st Session (1854) 23:1060-1070.

[77] A good example of the vitriolic backlash against Pierce's veto includes Whig Senator John Clayton's speech on the veto. *Congressional Globe*, 33rd Congress, 1st Session (1854) 23:993. David P. Currie details the concerted opposition against Pierce's veto among different political factions in "The Constitution in Congress: The Public Lands, 1829-1861," *The University of Chicago Law Review* 70:3 (2003) 783-820. Robin Einhorn analyzes antebellum tax policies in the North and South to show how the logic of states' rights and small government protected slave societies from the legitimate threat of a strong federal government. *American Taxation, American Slavery* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006).

[78] Lawrence Vale, *From Puritans to the Projects: Public Housing and Public Neighbors* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2007) 98-99. Stephen John Hartnett, "Franklin Pierce and the Exuberant Hauteur of an Age of Extremes: A Love Song for America in Six Movements," in M.J. Medhurt, ed., *Before the Rhetoric Presidency* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2008) 106-165.

poverty and illness as well as fire and war. More often than not, their tactics succeeded and catalyzed the evolution of domestic federal social policy and disaster relief out of diplomatic aid. It mattered little that the federal agents who sought relief for refugees from Saint-Domingue and Caracas did so to protect slavery and U.S. trade interests as much as to relieve the suffering. The tradition of U.S. humanitarian relief was born out of chattel slavery, war, and hemispheric ambitions. The question of aiding foreigners, beyond serving strategic international interests, met fewer Constitutional obstacles than the claims of citizens within the U.S. Foreign nationals, refugees, and those living in distant lands could not make enforceable claims upon U.S. funds or resources—they posed no threat of becoming a "class of claimants" as had the sufferers of the Whiskey Rebellion raids and Revolutionary War veterans. It was likely for this reason that the aid they secured was relatively paltry. Nonetheless, American Congressman exploited these exceptional grants of material aid and sympathy to sufferers abroad to secure domestic relief. When they did, citizen petitioners and legislators advocating on their behalf also nurtured a myth that the U.S. overextended its power and resources to foreigners to the detriment of its own citizens.

Refugees in Their Own Land

The coming of civil war in 1861 brought catastrophe into the homes and lives of Americans throughout the country. To be a refugee became common for Southerners both black and white.[79] Elizabeth Allston recalled her journey with her mother to safety in 1865. "We were never out of the sight of dead things, and the stench was almost unbearable. Dead horses all along the way and, here and there, a leg or an arm sticking out a hastily made too-shallow grave...the effort being to starve the inhabitants out, no living thing was left."[80] Allston's memory testified to the evisceration of ordinary life experienced by all in the region. Hundreds of thousands lost their lives; millions lost homes, kin, and cities due to forces beyond their control. Northerners marveled at the ruination wrought upon the South, by their own hands. A surgeon drafted into the Wisconsin 5 regiment saw in smoldering bricks evidence of families destroyed: "whilst looking over the sad ruins, [he] thought of the young persons who had grown up here, and whose every hour of happiness was in some way associated with their beautiful homes; of old men who had been born and raised here, and who had known no other home of widowed mothers, with dependent families, whose homes here constituted their sole wealth on earth."[81] Common expectations about what the federal government should do to alleviate an unprecedented scale of destruction came under pressure as Southerners, Union soldiers, consumers, nurses, families, and businessmen experienced a dramatic overturning of everyday life.

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[79] Here I use the definition of refugees put forth in the records of Union soldiers and Northern benevolent workers that described slaves and white civilians, mostly yeomen displaced by the state of war. But another idea of the refugee circulated among rebel slave owners. Slave owners gave new meaning to the idea of the "refugee" as they worked to obstruct slaves from fleeing their dominion. Masters "refugeed" their slaves to the deep south, to prevent them from encountering union troops and/or fleeing northward to free territory (Ira Berlin, *Slaves No More: Three Essays on Emancipation and the Civil War* (New York: Cambridge University Press) 57-58.

[80] Quoted in Heather Cox Richardson, *West from Appomattox: The Reconstruction of America After the Civil War* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007) 17.

[81] Diary of Alfred Lewis Castleman, March 1862, in *The Army of the Potomac, Behind the Scenes: A Diary of Unwritten History: from the Organization of the Army ... to the Close of the Campaign in Virginia, About the First Day of January, 1863* (Milwaukee: Strickland & Co., 1863) 288.

The arrival of Union troops to Southern plantations uprooted millions who lived between slavery and freedom for months or even years. As the relationship of both rebels and slaves to the Union remained undefined, millions devolved into stateless, impoverished, and starving peoples without legitimate claim to the government's purse.[82] Some reports extolled these black refugees for their relative self-sufficiency and vigor, especially in comparison to their white neighbors. In the borderland states six months after the Emancipation Proclamation, the American Freedmen's Inquiry recognized that "the number of poor whites succored has been greater than that of poor blacks," even though both groups were "equally…arrested in their ordinary course of labor" by the ongoing state of war.[83] Perceptions of the former slaves' self-sufficiency worked to justify frugality on the part of the federal government's humanitarian efforts. There was no need to provide relief beyond irregular alms for the few. But some officials went beyond expressing instrumental platitudes about the refugees' docility and industry. Captain Hooper of the Port Royal appreciated that most refugees were also potential soldiers and demanded that "all colored refugees be treated with justice and humanity."[84] H.R. Brinkerhoff, a Northern Officer travelling through Mississippi in 1865, mourned for the "hungry, naked, foot sore, and heartless, aliens in their native land, homeless and friendless."[85] But compassion for the refugees was far from universal. After his infamously brutal campaign through the South, William Tecumseh Sherman lambasted "refugees (white and black) who have clung to our skirts, impeded our movements, and consumed our food."[86] Sherman wrote frequently of the burden of refugees and his eagerness to clean his troops of their presence. Yet however much women, children, and disabled might be "a burden and an encumbrance to the army and the cause," they still "deserve[d] care and kind treatment at our hands," insisted Major General BM. Prentiss from Arkansas. He extensively documented the measures he took to provide assistance or send refugees north, "believing it to be [his] duty to do what may tend to relieve these loyal people." The boundary between personal obligation and state-sponsored relief blurred as union troops mobilized the state resources they had on hand to relieve the suffering immediately in front of them out of an expressed sense of humanity, loyalty, and forethought. In doing so, they improvised a policy of large-scale state-organized relief for refugees.

Union soldiers and bureaucrats often demonstrated an even greater sense of responsibility to the white refugees displaced by battle, sieges, famine, and destroyed infrastructure. Cities swelled with refugees even as their infrastructure and supply lines came under attack. The population of Atlanta ballooned from 15,000 to 35,000 as hungry southerners fled from rural environs in search of food.[87] The same Union soldiers who described Southern soldiers with revulsion expressed compassion for the women and children they left behind. One bemoaned the fate of "three or four families of genuine refugees, women and helpless children, without shelter, in the open air, whose male protectors have volunteered or have been forced into the rebel army. The condition of these sufferers and strangers, is truly heart-rending."[88] By caring for refugee and child refugees, the Union demonstrated humanity and emasculated southern men.[89] Many soldiers found themselves "put in charge" of refugees born of the war, and at least one confessed that while he would not "say it was exactly a "labor of love," he nevertheless "conceived it my duty."[90] To be sure, federal relief did not confirm Union culpability for the refugees' suffering. To the contrary, Union soldiers were more likely to see relief as legitimating their humanity vis-à-vis the Southerners who had put refugees at risk. An army chaplain reveled in the fact that seemingly all of the 4,000 refugees who applied for assistance at his relief station regaled him with stories of suffering at the hands of rebels that they vowed to avenge.[91] Not all Union soldiers were ready to accept the somewhat simplistic view of Southern refugees as victims to Confederate depredations. Volunteer infantryman John Myers saw the hungry as victims of a "destruction created by themselves;" a judgment that often disqualified the needy from support.[92] But Myers believed the refugees' plight demanded a compassionate state response regardless of fault. "All the food they have is what is doled out to them by the Post Quarter Master. Their sufferings in the future, unless compassion is taken upon them, will be great indeed."[93] In the eyes of self-fashioned benevolent Union troops, Southerners caused their own pain and the Union relieved it. In the end, their suffering was too excessive to ignore. Myers continued, "Not one-quarter the horrors of this wicked rebellion will ever be known, especially that inflicted upon helpless women and innocent children."[94] Relief became a federal obligation as soldiers and civilians realized that the war's destruction transcended what was previously thought possible, even imaginable.

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[82] American Freedmen's Inquiry Commission, *Preliminary Report Touching the Condition and Management of Emancipated Refugees, Made to the Secretary of War by the American Freedmen's Inquiry Commission, June 30, 1863* in *Report of the Secretary of War,* 38th Congress, 1st session, Sen. Doc. 53 (1864). Linda Kerber has argued that refugees included those that were legally stateless as well as those who were unable or unwilling to turn to the state for protection. Statelessness is "a condition that changes over time, dynamically created and re-created by sovereignties in their own interests, defining the vulnerable in ways that affirm the invulnerable." In other words, states create citizens but also the citizens' foil. The Civil War recast the category of the "citizens' other," previously including slaves, free blacks, indigenous persons and foreign nationals; during the war, that category was extended to refugees. Linda Kerber, "Toward a History of Statelessness in America," *American Quarterly* 57:3 (2005) 727-749.

[83] American Freedmen's Inquiry Commission, *Preliminary Report,* 18.

[84] Ibid.

[85] Quoted in Yael A. Sternhell, *Routes of War: The World of Movement in the Confederate South* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2012) 175.

[86] William Tecumseh Sherman to Military Division of the Mississippi, March 12, 1865, in *Supplemental Report of the Joint Committee on the Conduct of War* (Washington: GPO, 1866) 1:343.

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[87] Andrew Smith, *Starving the South: How the North Won the Civil War* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2011) 168.

[88] Diary of John C. Myers, October, 1864, in *A Daily Journal of the 192 Regiment, Pennsylvania* (Philadelphia: Crissy & Markley, 1864) 151-152.

[89] Diary of George Sharland, November, 1864, in *Knapsack Notes of Gen. Sherman's Grand Campaign through the Empire State of the South* (Springfield: Jackson & Bradford, 1865) 68.

[90] Letter from William McLain, February 1864, in *Soldiers' Letters, from Camp, Battle-field and Prison* (New York: Bunce & Huntington, 1865) 472. McLain did eventually transfer this duty to the Cordelia Harvey, who cared for soldiers and "refugees, either black or white" for several years during the war. But McLain did not suggest the work was beneath him, and indeed considered Mrs. Harvey "one of the best and noblest women [he] ever knew."

[91] George S. Bradley letter to unknown, March 25, 1864, in *The Star Corps: or, Notes of an Army Chaplain, During Sherman's Famous March to the Sea* (Milwaukee, Wis.: Jermain & Brightman printers, 1865) 304.

[92] A critical part of securing aid in nineteenth- and twentieth-century America was establishing blamelessness for poverty or injury. The deserving poor were typically those visited by catastrophe, injury, or accident. Michelle Landis Dauber, *The Sympathetic State*, Chap. 4; and "Fate, Responsibility, and 'Natural' Disaster Relief." Increasing numbers of industrial accidents transformed American legal practice as blameless victims came to be seen as deserving of protection and compensation regardless of the risk they assumed as workers. John Fabian Witt, *The Accidental Republic: Crippled Workingmen, Destitute Widows, and the Remaking of American Law* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2004). Children were commonly considered deserving of relief even under Ronald Reagan's evisceration of the American welfare state for this reason. Edward Berkowitz, *America's Welfare State from Roosevelt to Reagan* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1991) 144-145.

[93] Diary of John C. Myers, October, 1864, in *A Daily Journal of the 192 Regiment, Pennsylvania* (Philadelphia: Crissy & Markley, 1864) 151-152.

[94] Ibid., 203.

Regardless of their personal sentiments towards the suffering, troops living and working amid a massive refugee crisis quickly came to appreciate the need for state intervention. Most slaves fled or were liberated from dominion years before the fourteenth amendment established their citizenship. In the chaotic interim, federal officials classified these subjects and many displaced southern whites as refugees and took up the urgent issue of their "condition and management."[95] Physicians like O.H. Browning appealed to the Union to relieve existing private charitable organizations by providing more comprehensive care for former slaves taking refuge in army camps. In the absence of guidance from Congress or Lincoln, many Union army officials and volunteers established refugee camps for escaped slaves, freedmen, and whites displaced by the war.[96] The admitted were typically women, children, and elderly relatives of slave Union volunteers or rebel troops. Conditions in the camps were typically deplorable—a Sanitary Commission observer remarked upon the "extreme destitute and suffering" of the camps. But, they were considered to be the most humane possible alternative to leaving refugees to fend for themselves.[97] The camps were considered real but unavoidable burdens upon the purses, labor, and duties of the army. Union General Benjamin Butler lamented the particular annoyance of child refugees while also acknowledging that his "duty as a human man is very plain."[98] General Samuel Curtis set up a contraband campus in mid-July 1862 and within ten days became overwhelmed by "a perfect 'Cloud' of negroes being thrown upon me for Sustenance & Support."[99] Refugees were believed to be obligated to the state as much as the state was obligated to them. As a result, life as a refugee often entailed compulsory labor or conscription. One federal official working in South Carolina confirmed that "nearly all the refugees join the army," most as volunteers.[100] Humanitarian relief could be a military tool to transform non-citizen refugees into soldiers.

To be sure, most troops and civilians who expressed support for state-sponsored relief for the suffering also expected that aid would be temporary. Nashville relief worker Nelson Oviatt wrote to Tennessee Governor Andrew Johnson to ask the state to transport three refugees to a nearby town lest they become permanent charges of the federal government.[101] There were still efforts by government agents in charge of relief to relocate refugees in the care of kin and thereby reduce their claims upon the public dole. And many generals refused to admit refugees—white or black—into their care out of professed desires to protect soldiers' health and safety from the disease and vice such undesirable populations might bring. But even such violent repudiations of refugees' appeals demonstrated a transforming consensus around what the state was to provide and what civilians were owed. Several historians have argued that freed black refugees' demands for humanitarian relief, work, shelter, food, and medical care from Union soldiers redefined freedom and citizenship around social welfare.[102] But state-sponsored relief was not tied to citizenship; it was explicitly channeled to non-citizen refugees, rebels, and freed people.

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[95] On the evolution of federal policy towards slaves in Confederate States, see Ira Berlin, *Slaves No More*. On the particular case of slaves in Union States and borderland states, see Barbara Fields, *Slavery and Freedom on the Middle Ground: Maryland During the Nineteenth Century* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985).

[96] On the contraband camps, see Chandra Manning, "Working for Citizenship in Civil War Contraband Camps," *Journal of the Civil War Era* 4:2 (2014) 172-204.

[97] Drew Gilpin Faust, *This Republic of Suffering: Death and the American Civil War* (New York: Random House, 2008) 139.

[98] Leslie A. Schwalm, "Between Slavery and Freedom: African American Women and Occupation in the Slave South," in LeeAnn Whites and Alecia P. Long, eds., *Occupied Women: Gender, Military Occupation and the American Civil War* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2009) 143.

[99] Ibid., 147.

[100] John A. Hedrick to Benjamin S. Hedrick, March 13, 1864, Benjamin S. Hedrick Papers, Duke University. Quoted in Leon Litwack, *Been in the Storm So Long: The Aftermath of Slavery* (New York: Random House, 1979) 75. The notion that the state or the military should assist refugees was not exclusively a northern idea. Some southern volunteers saw their obligation to the Confederacy returned through the Confederacy's obligation to their wives and children. On the history of Civil War refugee camps, see Richard D. Sears, *Camp Nelson, Kentucky: A Civil War History* (Louisville: University Press of Kentucky, 2015); David Silkenat, *Driven from Home: North Carolina's Civil War Refugee Crisis* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2016) esp. chap. 2.

[101] Nelson Oviatt to Governor Andrew Johnson, Nashville, January 23, 1865, in LeRoy P. Graf, ed., *The Papers of Andrew Johnson,* Vol. 7, *1864-1865* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press) 425.

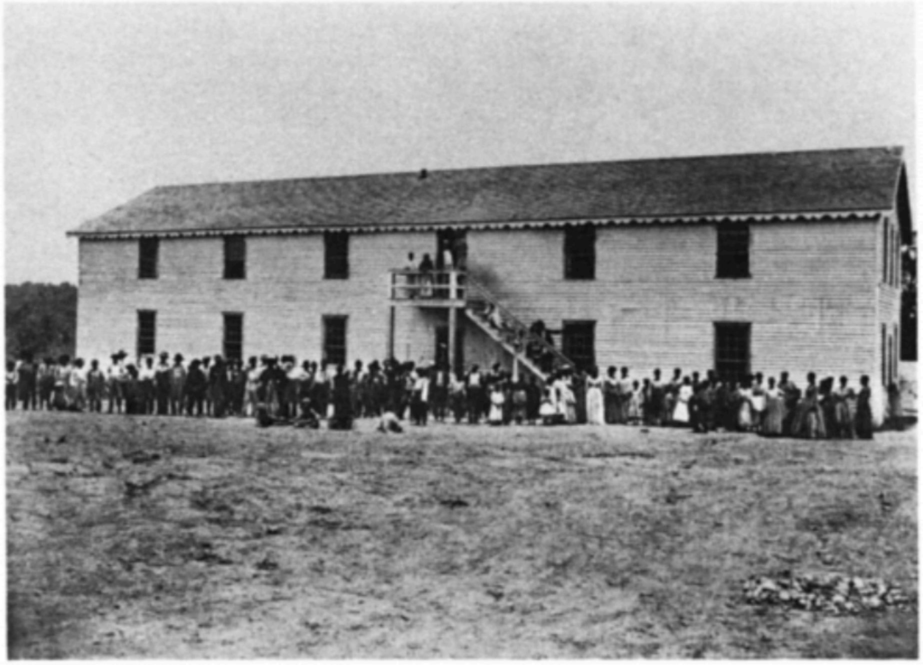

Figure 4: Photograph, Camp Nelson refugees, 1864. From Richard Sears, The Register of the Kentucky Historical Society 85:1 (Winter 1987) 29-45.

Benevolent workers who were recruited to the South to attend to soldiers were quick to turn their attention to the sympathetic women and children refugees left in the wake of the military campaigns. Mary von Olnhausen mourned for the orphaned and widowed refugees she nursed in North Carolina. "For us, we are full of refugees… they are a great care; but I had to do it; those poor blind eyes were too strong for me." Olnhausen felt so compelled by the suffering before her that she committed to "keep them till some provision can be made for them by the Government or the father can come for them." Olnhausen saw the federal government and absent fathers as similarly responsible for the orphaned refugees in her charge, expressing relief that "one of the soldiers will adopt the youngest if his father will give him up entirely."[103] Nurses tending fallen troops dominate both the image of and scholarship on wartime humanitarianism.

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[102] See Jim Downs, *Sick from Freedom: African-American Illness and Suffering during the Civil War and Reconstruction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

[103] Mary Phinney von Olnhausen, May 6, 1864, in *Adventures of an Army Nurse in Two Wars* (Boston: Little, Brown, & Co., 1903) 355.

But a significant portion of nurse labor went to civilians in the war-torn South. Mrs. Joseph Thompson wrote to friend Eliza Newton Wollsey Howland, both "busily at work for the refugees," to report on civilian relief efforts in towns from Memphis to Cedar Keys that had endured repeated conquest and recapture. Thompson appreciated that troops alongside of her had focused attention on the area "where destitution was most appalling," organizing receipt and distribution of second-hand clothing and potatoes to the countless refugees.[104] Olnhausen, Thompson, and their correspondents were far from exceptional. Abby Woolsey pitied the "poor creatures, homeless and hungry; these winter days must go hard with them in those border towns where the tide of war has stranded them."[105] She was not alone in her belief that Southerners were deserving of care and innocent of the catastrophic conditions that befell them.

Refugees escaping slavery proved less effective objects of sympathy. Olnhausen boasted about how she adopted "three of the lousiest, dirtiest, raggedest little things you ever saw in your life" to take care of, but expressed "outrage" when a regiment of freed troops temporarily occupied one of the Union barracks she attended.[106] Olhausen was careful never to refer to former slaves as refugees, reserving that term for the white Southerners whom she thought more obviously deserving of care. By contrast, army nurse Eliza Howland made habitual visits to replace the threadbare clothes of the "poor creatures" in 1862.[107] Sentiments towards the former slaves varied widely; but large numbers of Union army nurses understood them to refugees, objects of a wartime welfare regime.

After the war's end, radical Republicans continued to see freedpeople as refugees as they designed their vision for Reconstruction. On March 3, 1865, Congress passed an "Act to establish a Bureau for the Relief of Freedmen and Refugees" to distribute provisions, clothing, fuel and arrange shelter for "destitute and suffering refugees and freedmen, and their wives and children." Towards this end, the Bureau adapted the model of managing ad-hoc refugee camps established by Union soldiers for slaves who fled plantations for their own services. Soldiers who had overseen the relief camps during the Southern campaigns were soon recruited into administrative positions to oversee the creation of the Bureau's scaled-up refugee camps, called Government Home Colonies, wherein refugees were typically put to work on plantations.[108] In first ten months of its operation, a quarter of bureau expenditures were used for the condition of refugees—most of them poor yeomen who had lost their home or livelihood to the Southern conflicts.[109] In the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands, the U.S. established its first large-scale antipoverty program and bureaucracy—aiding almost 150,000 a day within five months. At the end of 1868, the Bureau of Freedmen and Refugees had distributed twenty million food rations, five million of which went to white refugees.[110]

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[104] Mrs. Joseph Howland to Eliza Newton Woolsey Howland, December, 1864, in Georgeanna Woolsey Bacon and Eliza Woolsey Howland, eds., *Letters of a Family during the War for the Union 1861-1865* (Privately published, 1899) 1:353 – 354.

[105] Abby Howland Woolsey to Harriet Gilman, December 21, 1864, Ibid., 637.

[106] Olnhausen, *Adventures*, 143, 173.

[107] Eliza Newton Woolsey Howland to Joseph Howland, 1862, *Letters,* 1:249-250.

[108] J.W. Alvord to the Secretary of War, February 20, 1867, reprinted in *Annual Report of the Secretary of War* (Washington, GPO:1967) 651-653. The appointed director of the bureau was Union General Otis Howard, who had attempted to ward off refugees from his camps. The initial assistant commissioner from North Carolina was Horace James, who had been overseeing refugee camps for two years in the state as Superintendent of Negro Affairs.

[109] Letter from the Secretary of War, Bureau of Freedmen and Refugees, Dec 6, 1866, (H.Ex.Doc. 7) 39th Congress, 2nd Session.

Few, if any, of the legally-defined class of beneficiaries of these new anti-poverty and labor programs were citizens. The legal status of white Southern refugees remained in question as factions within Congress and President Johnson battled over the terms of reconciliation. Freed slaves' citizenship was not conferred until the passage of the fourteenth amendment in 1868. But the bureau was not designed for citizens. It was designed to provide for a region that had become, in the words of Commissioner Oliver Otis Howard, "an asylum for the thousands of refugees who flocked within our lines [and] form almost every section of the south."[111] Legislators discussing the Bureau's activities frequently concerned themselves with refugees, civilians defined not by their legal status as slave or free, but by their material condition as uprooted sufferers.[112] The bureau was established for "the supervision and management of all abandoned lands, and the control of all subjects relating to refugees and freedmen," and its most powerful authority lay in its capacity to transfer land "for the use of loyal refugees and freedmen." [113] Refugees occupied a conceptual middle ground in federal agents' and soldiers' understanding of erstwhile slaves encountered before 1868. The colonies they occupied were to "provide a place of refuge and a *home"* for those "thrown upon the Bureau for support." Bureau officials authored reports that conflated sites of compulsory labor with "ready place[s] of refuge."[114] This idea rarely provoked controversy among the Congressmen who reviewed the data, as refugees were neither property nor citizens with full rights, but rather humans in need of temporary relief, resettlement, and work. Congressional justification of the Bureau's work was not based on an obligation to freedmen, but the need to ameliorate a massive refugee crisis after a catastrophic period of upheaval and violence. This refugee crisis was central to the Bureau's mission, not secondary to the project of integrating former slaves into a free labor economy.

The Civil War made a large-scale refugee crisis a part of everyday life. The refugee could be a loyal American citizen who fled across the southern border into the arms of charitable Mexicans to escape Confederate troops, a slave who fled a plantation, or a volunteer combatant enlisted or forced into service for the Confederacy. All of these destitute, uprooted refugees became part of everyday life for Union soldiers, benevolent workers, newspaper readers, and Southerners. Such constant confrontation with large-scale suffering galvanized support for federal relief. In previous decades, Congressmen had used the term refugee as a pejorative to describe fugitives from the law or traitors. Only refugees of natural or man-made catastrophes proved more sympathetic to legislator. The Civil War did not transform beliefs about whether or not refugees were eligible for federal relief—that idea had become commonplace over the decades since the Haitian Revolution and Venezuelan earthquake. Instead, the war domesticated catastrophe and established federal relief as a necessary response to the uprooting of millions of subjects living between slavery and freedom.

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[110] On the breakdown of populations aided by the Bureau of Freedmen and Refugees, see Mary Farmer-Kaiser, *Freedwomen and the Freedmen's Bureau: Race, Gender, and Public Policy in the Age of Emancipation* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2010). The clearest precedent was the agency established to distribute lands for those attacked during the War of 1812. See Dauber, "The War of 1812."

[111] Carny Cossé Bell, "'Because they are Women'": Gender and the Virginia Freedmen's Bureau's 'War on Dependency,'" in Paul Alan Cimbala and Randall Miller, eds., *The Freedmen's Bureau and Reconstruction: Reconsiderations* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1999) 164.

[112] The ubiquity of refugees in the work and records of the Freedmen's Bureau often goes unmentioned in historical treatments of Reconstruction. Leslie A. Schwalm finds that Union soldiers, like Southern Women, often reserved the sympathetic term "refugee" for whites, and referred to uprooted former slaves most often as "contraband of war" or "contrabands." While this might have been a more common term through 1863, a number of Union soldiers' journals and public documents reflect that the official mind of the Union saw displaced slaves and blacks in the South as refugees. Schwalm, "Between Slavery and Freedom," 141.

[113] An Act to Establish a Bureau for the Relief of Freedmen and Refugees, 13 Stat. 507 (1865).

[114] Thomas Conway, *Final Report of the Bureau of Free Labor,* Department of the Gulf to Major General E.R.S. Canby (New Orleans: 1865).

From Refugee Resettlement to Disaster Relief

The apparent consensus that the federal government could provide aid for refugees of unforeseeable catastrophe outlived the Civil War, but it was intermittently and unpredictably applied. Within only a few years' time, an extraordinary fire claimed the lives of three hundred mostly poor German and Irish immigrants and consumed over $200 million in property in the bustling city of Chicago. Cities all over the country and the Atlantic world sent material aid and condolences. Congress sent no aid at first, but immediately passed a formal resolution sending sympathy to the city. But the channels of private charity were exhausted before most Chicagoans could even come to grips with the enormous task of rebuilding. Representatives from the stricken region soon delivered maudlin stories to Congress, convincing fellow legislators to grant the city relief on lumber tariffs, essentially subsidizing purchases for building materials.[115] These modest measures provoked raucous debate not over whether the federal government should act, but over the paucity and form of the aid. Boosters from rival cities saw tariff modifications as an unfair burden on their own business. They demanded that Congress use general taxation, not targeted tax expenditures, so that "the burden of relief…[would] be borne equally and alike by all." Their demands went unheeded and the controversial issue of federal responsibility to those rendering homeless and helpless by disaster.

Skepticism towards federal intervention was particularly rampant among Southern states seeking to reverse the political and social changes wrought by the Civil War and Reconstruction. In 1874, massive flooding from the Mississippi River left towns in Louisiana, Mississippi, and Arkansas under water and 25,000 people homeless and on the verge of starvation. At the onset, federal legislators creatively interpreted a levee-repair bill passed years earlier to allocate modest funds for sufferers directly impacted by levee failure. But as victims' claims mounted and a humanitarian crisis loomed, the Senate fought over a bill authorizing $60,000 in relief. Detractors urgently cautioned against continued federal overreach in the region and insisted that the Treasury not spare a dime until all of the affected States had exhausted their funds. Senators from the supplicant states saw the relief bill as a power play authored by newly-elected African American representatives in the House and decried the "great danger of demoralizing the people whom we sought to relieve." Republican Senator Alcorn (Mississippi) insisted that the United States need not be "wanting in benevolence and in sympathy" to realize that it could not come to the aid of every citizen facing "improvidence." Yet Alcorn made clear that he would continue to support aid for infrastructural projects chartered in the wake of the flooding. He "had confidence and faith in the Corps of Engineering of the Government of the US…full faith, and our people would have faith in them, while they are without faith in their local governments" as the latter sought continued direct relief for flood sufferers. Alcorn's sentiment pushed back against the postwar consensus, decades in the making, that the federal government had broad powers and responsibilities in the face of domestic disaster. In his eyes, the government should be responsible to only those who had lost property, not those suffering from injury, death of loved ones, hunger, or sudden homelessness. Relief for those sufferers would come through employment on the Army Corps projects, not direct transfers or provisions. The Senator could secure federal relief without enfeebling suffering citizens or subordinating state responsibility as long as relief went to levees and roads rather than people.

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[115] When Boston suffered from a large conflagration a year after Chicago's disaster, the federal government signaled that it had rescinded any pretense of responsibility towards sufferers. Congress refused to allow drawbacks on tariffs for imported lumber, as had been granted to Chicago, and provided no other material support to the disaster-stricken city. See Christine Rosen, *The Limits of Power*: *Great Fires and the Process of City Growth in America* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986) 175, 245.

While Southern Senators decried the expansion of the federal government into the realm of disaster relief, popular support continued to grow among ordinary civilians in the postwar era—especially when their own lives and property were at stake. Ordinary and elite civilians appealed directly to federal agents, Congress and the President for provisions to supplement local and state efforts when suffering from a devastating conflict or flood. A conflict between the Canadian government and Métis tribes in the Manitoba region forced hundreds of refugees across the border into Montana in 1885. Local residents and newspapers began to call for deportation in the fall of 1887, insisting that "we have enough Indians and half-breeds on the American side of the line to take care of without allowing wandering camps of alien renegades from across the border to come into our settlements."[116] But the refugees lobbied federal agents, at least two of which soon "spoke in praise" of the sufferers to their superiors and agreed to receive and feed them. Ultimately, Commissioner of Indian Affairs J.D.C. Atkins appealed to the Secretary of Interior and the U.S. Congress to communicate his sense of responsibility to "pay suitable regard to the pitiable stories told of their poverty and suffering" despite the fact that the refugees "[had] no rights on this side of the international line." Congressional delays prompted further appeals from Atkins, who insisted that "the dignity of the Government requires that they be given a place somewhere...."[117] Atkins and his inferiors continuously acknowledged that the refugees lacked rights in the United States. But that had no bearing on the situation or the necessity of humanitarian aid—indeed, it underscored the moral urgency of the situation. "As a simple act of humanity," the agents provided food to the homeless, starving, but industrious Indians. The obligation was not based on formal rights, the duty of a government towards its citizens, or Constitutional law. It was based on the dignity and humanity of the Government and its human representatives.

This idea increasingly inflected the appeals of citizens to their government. The President himself was soon lobbied for relief after the Mississippi Valley flooded yet again, in 1897. The Citizens Relief Committee of Memphis wrote President McKinley seeking the "cooperation and support of the National Government" after local resources had been exhausted. Local governments acknowledged their incapacity to meet the demands of flood victims and "reluctantly confessed their inability to further cope with this distressing situation unaided by relief from the [federal] Government."[118] President McKinley quickly moved to relieve the 7,000 refugees rendered homeless by the flood; and supporters in the Senate confidently assured skeptics that "no constitutional questions will be raised to-day when we propose to legislate in the face of a great disaster." They were correct—the bill to appropriate $200,000 for the cause easily passed.[119] By the turn of the twentieth century, then, concerns over the constitutionality of disaster relief had subsided. Relief rarely rested on Constitutional grounds, and sufferers were as often non-citizens as citizens.

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[116] "Those Cree Indians Again," *The River Press,* September 21, 887, 4. Martha Harroun Foster, *We Know Who We Are: Métis Identity in a Montana Community* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2006) 160–170.

[117] J.D.C. Atkins, Commissioner of Indian Affairs, to the Secretary of the Interior, April 18, 1888, reprinted in U.S. Congress, The Senate, The Committee on Foreign Relations, *Report to accompany amendment to H.R. 8293,* 54th Congress, 1st Session, Report 821, 1-7.

[118] U.S. President, Appropriation for the Relief of the Sufferers by the Recent Floods in the Mississippi Valley, 55th Congress, 1st session, 1898, S. Doc 25.

But federal relief was hardly automatic or uncontested by the turn of the century, as became clear after the city of Galveston was obliterated by a hurricane in 1900. A hub of inter-American trade, Galveston became known as the "Wall Street of the West" among the East Coast financiers who made it their home and projected visions of limitless urban growth at the intersection of the Eastern Seaboard and the growing Caribbean and Latin American markets. It was thus unsurprising that newspapers around the country obsessively covered the storm that leveled the city and took an estimated 8,000 lives—making it, to this day, the deadliest natural disaster in American history according to official counts. Despite the national attention, succor for the survivors was almost entirely provided by regional cities and overseen by the locally-run Central Relief Committee.[120] Under the struggling leadership of Clara Barton, the American Red Cross donated just $17,000 to a city whose losses numbered in the hundreds of millions; the U.S. Army remained embroiled in warfare in the Philippines after annexing the territory from Spain in 1898.[121] It was the State of Texas that backed the bonds of the major infrastructure projects launched to raise the city and prevent future disasters; the U.S. remained entirely absent from the project. This absence was due largely to the lack of interest of local and state political leaders in federal intrusion. Local leaders instead took the crisis as an opportunity to re-charter the city with a newly centralized, strengthened government. Galveston's sufferers only intermittently appeared in the national press or before Congress as hopeless refugees.

The Galveston case showed the while Congress and the broader American public could be convinced that the Constitution permitted federal appropriations for homeless refugees, federal relief was not yet expected, particularly without pressure from local powerbrokers.[122] But Galveston would be the last major disaster within the boundaries of the United States in which the federal government would not serve as a major player. Decades of violent conflicts between laborers and industry titans compounded the social upheaval wrought by the Civil War and economic depressions had left many middle-class Americans searching for order. Public health officials in San Francisco, benevolent workers in New York City, and local officials in Galveston resolved these conflicts partly through the creation of different local bureaucracies and urban plans that promised to restore order over cities teeming with immigrants and disgruntled workers.[123] These new intellectual and political currents emboldened Congressional representatives, federal agents, and an incoming Progressive President to expand the domain of the federal government in the lives of civilians. Sites of catastrophe invited federal intervention, and the public would soon come to expect that the federal government would respond to disaster as a humanitarian actor not only for sufferers abroad but for full citizens living within sovereign states.

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[119] Senator Jacob Harold Gallinger (R-NH). The relief bill distributed the funds to the War Department for work in concert with local authorities. *Congressional Record,* 55th Congress, 1st Session (1897) 30:635-640.

[120] A few of the city's financiers and powerbrokers saw opportunity in the ruins and used the disaster to entirely reframe the city's political structure to include an expanded bureaucracy and a more powerful commission, the first iteration of a model that would proliferate throughout the South and West in the 20th century. Patricia Bellis Bixel and Elizabeth Hayes Turner explain the local political context in *Galveston and the 1900 Storm: Catastrophe and Catalyst* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2000) 225. Amy Bridges narrates the spread of this nonpartisan city manager system throughout the southwest. *Morning Glories: Municipal Reform in the Southwest* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997). "Subscription Funds," *The Economist*, Sept 22, 1900, 1338.

[121] Marian Moser Jones, *The American Red Cross from Clara Barton to the New Deal* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2013) chap. 6.

[122] Gareth Davies argues that federal disaster relief before the Civil War was negligible due to pervasive fatalism and skepticism of federal bureaucracy. Davies rightly shows that the logistics and scale of federal disaster relief before the Civil War paled in comparison to twentieth century relief expenditures. However, it seems equally important to acknowledge that legislators explicitly ignored Constitutional constraints to initiate these antebellum relief measures, and helped establish a class of deserving sufferers to contrast with undeserving needy around which more comprehensive social policy was written. Gareth Davies, "Dealing with Disaster: The Politics of Catastrophe in the United States, 1789–1861," *American Nineteenth Century History* 14:1 (2013) 53-72.

The Ethical Monroe Doctrine

It is difficult to mark the exact moment Congress learned of San Francisco's collapse. It likely spread through rumor the day of the earthquake to the aides and representatives with family in the area. By the next morning, a pall had fallen over the Capitol. Business begrudgingly began after a prayer for the victims but "there was no heart or interest in the bills under consideration." A silence fell over the room as one of California's representatives approached the podium. Julius Kahn, the longtime representative from San Francisco, was anxiously awaiting word on his wife, and could be seen jumping at every report that came in. But he finally collected himself, and emotionally appealed for mercy for his constituents and presumably his own family. He recounted shocking details wired from the scene—500 bodies had already been carried into the morgue, 54 city blocks were flattened, and the city of Berkeley was purportedly demolished. With universal support and no debate, Kahn introduced a joint resolution to put the U.S. Army, Navy, and Treasury at California's disposal. Tents, rations, funds, vessels, and any other aid were to be immediately delivered. After the vote, the House adjourned in sympathy with those suffering from the "extraordinary revolution of nature."[124]

By that time, President Theodore Roosevelt had already telegraphed California Governor George Pardee twice to confirm newspaper reports and offer sympathy. The gesture mirrored that of dozens of mayors, governors, and heads of state from around the United States, Latin America, Asia, and Europe, reflecting ritualistic exchange of sympathy among elected officials following events like the Chicago Fire of 1871 and the eruption of Mont Pelée in French Martinique in 1902. Roosevelt twice offered federal assistance. But Pardee politely refused Roosevelt's offer, noting that State troops had already been deployed. Pardee understood federal assistance as military assistance—nothing more.

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[123] Robert Wiebe gives a synthetic account of the postbellum labor conflicts and the rise of a bureaucratically-minded middle class that supported an expansive, centralized federal government. *The Search of Order, 1877-1920* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1967). For an account on the postbellum conflicts between industry leaders and workers in America's urban centers, see Sven Beckert, *The Monied Metropolis: New York City and the Consolidation of the American Bourgeoisie, 1850-1896* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001). Christine M. Boyer and Susan Schweik both trace how Progressive city planning emerged at the expense of a city's undesirables. Christine M. Boyer, *Dreaming the Rational City: The Myth of American City Planning* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1983). Susan Schweik, *The Ugly Laws: Disability in Public* (New York: NYU Press, 2009).

[124] "Roosevelt Offers the Nation Aid," *Chicago Daily Tribune,* April 19, 1906, 7. "House Takes Action," *The Washington Post,* April 19, 1906, 3.

Despite the governor's reluctance, the role of the federal government in San Francisco's recovery had already taken a radical turn. Hundreds of troops within the National Guard were at work with the Regular Army within six hours of the disaster, patrolling areas at risk of fire, quelling crowds on the cusp of riot, and escorting convicts in local prisons to turn them over to custody of the United States at Fort Mason.[125] The forceful appearance of U.S. troops in the streets of San Francisco reflected the equally dramatic reconfigurations of federal power afoot in D.C. After the German-owned *Hamburg-American Steamship Company* pledged $25,000 to San Francisco's relief fund, Roosevelt wrote a gracious but firm letter to the U.S. Congress insisting "there is no need of any assistance from outside our own borders."[126] Controversial parts of the letter was quickly republished in newspapers from New York to Oregon, Chicago to Nebraska affirming that "the United States will grapple alone with the situation…foreign countries will not be asked to contribute."[127] Offers extended directly to Roosevelt from China, Japan, Britain, Germany and elsewhere were diplomatically but firmly refused as journalists, elected officials, and some civilians committed themselves to the idea that "the United States would take care of its own."[128]

Offers from China, Germany, Japan, and Britain, among others, were courteously refused in the days after Roosevelt's embargo on foreign aid, representing a severe break with the ancient tradition of providing aid for indigent nationals living or working abroad.[129] Most of the official expressions of sympathy expressed a strange combination of altruism and nationalism. Heads of State from Guatemala, Chile, Mexico, China, Germany, Britain, New Zealand, and Japan, and others offered aid to Roosevelt in part out of horror at the thought of suffering humanity, but also to specifically aid their own diasporas living in San Francisco, people to whom they expressed a legal and social obligation. To formally legitimate such affective ethnic and national ties within the United States was unacceptable as far as Roosevelt was concerned, even treasonous. A strident assimilationist, he later called to abolish ethnic designations in the United States and demand that all Americans grow up as "Americans pure and simple, Americans and nothing else."[130] In San Francisco's crisis Roosevelt found a potent opportunity to assert national power over the invisible, ephemeral ties that bound kin across great distances and state boundaries.[131]

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[125] Lt. Col. MM Ogden, "Report of Relief Measures," May 29, 1906, George Cooper Pardee Papers: BANC MSS C-B 400, Ctn 2:22, The Bancroft Library and Archives.

[126] "Message from the President," April 21, 1906, reprinted in *Congressional Record,* 59th Congress, 1st session (1906) 40:5669.

[127] "Nation to the Relief," *Heppner Gazette* (Oregon) April 26, 1906, 2.

[128] "Lauds Roosevelt Action," *Chicago Daily Tribune,* April 24, 1906, 3

[129] One of the first codifications of this practice in the United States was the "Act for the Relief and Protection of American Seamen," *U.S. Statutes at Large* (1796) 1:477–78. A similar doctrine was codified internationally at the International Congress for Charitable Relief in Brussels in 1856. The idea would be revisited in the League of Nations in 1934. See Report to Council from the Committee of Experts on Assistance to Indigent Foreigners and the Execution of Maintenance of Obligations Abroad (1933) League of Nations Doc. C. 1O. M. 8. 1934. IV. For a truly exceptional account of the history of diplomatic protection for the civilians abroad, among other topics of immeasurable import and timeliness, see Dr. Christopher A. Casey, Esquire, "Abroad: Law, Migration, and Capital in an Age of Globalization" (Ph.D. Diss. UC Berkeley, 2017).

[130] Theodore Roosevelt, "America for Americans," Speech at St. Louis, May 31, 1916, reprinted In *The Works of Theodore Roosevelt* (New York: National Ed, 1926) 18:278-79.

[131] When the message was first read to the Senate, Senator Newlands of Nevada – who would later prove an ardent supporter of federal aid to San Francisco – asked to speak upon the bill. However, Senator Bailey of Texas refused

International media outlets reacted swiftly to Roosevelt's assertion of national responsibility for those suffering within U.S. borders. The German press decried the decision as a fundamental threat to international amity, a profound insult to the German nation, and an attack upon the "sovereign rights of universal morality."

> In terms of the law of nations, considered purely from the view of politics, the first Monroe Doctrine certainly enjoyed a complete justification from the American point of view, although it was much too focused on simply strongly offending the pride of the old European powers. A transfer of this Monroe Doctrine onto ethical grounds, however, as President Roosevelt has done—dictating a border to all non-Americans in the confirmation of their general love of humanity--is, if one is permitted to say so, something like a violation of the sovereign rights of our universal morality. Of course, there is no courtroom in which such violations and injuries in the area of ethics can be prosecuted. Their effects can only be moderated somewhat by the further development of human feeling. Luckily, this new ethical Monroe Doctrine of President Roosevelt is not so developed as to forbid all non-Americans any expression of simple sympathy for an American catastrophe. Here there is a gap in this Rooseveltian "Americanism", which the President himself, despite all his "smartness", will not try to close. The ethical Monroe-Doctrine finds its limits in the universally valid doctrine of ethics.[132]

The *Berliner Tageblatt* read Roosevelt's refusal of foreign aid as an assertion of sovereignty over a sphere newly subject to state authority: the "love of humanity." If, as James Sheehan argues, sovereignty is best understood as a "set of claims made by those seeking or wielding power, claims about the superiority and autonomy of their authority," then the *Tageblatt's* charge certainly was warranted. Roosevelt's "ethical Monroe Doctrine" articulated a form of sovereignty over morality and suffering hitherto absent from diplomatic relations. So strident was the German criticism that it prompted its own media event in Mexico, Britain, and the U.S.

Voices from the French, British, Chinese, and Mexican media struck a more conciliatory tone, but still registered concern for foreign nationals and for the precedent set by refusing aid. The *Manchester Guardian* cautioned that a refusal of help from Britain could sour Anglo-American relations. Most French newspapers made little of the policy, except to chide German hysteria; one noted that the German interpretation suggested that any country that accepted foreign aid or condolences was ostensibly extending an invitation to "come and reclaim its territory."[133] Mexico City's *El País* meanwhile cast the event as a reinforcement of the Monroe Doctrine that forcefully expressed that "the United States has nothing in common with the nations of the Old World," deepening the divide between the two territories.[134] The media firestorm revealed how the exchange of sympathy and aid within diasporic communities demonstrated the persistent strength of ethnic ties in an age of ballooning migration. Roosevelt's

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to yield the floor to Newlands. "Foreign Offers of Aid to California Sufferers," *Congressional Record,* 59th Congress, 1st session (1906) 40:6316-6317.

[132] Translation by Tim Wright, "Roosevelt's New Monroe Doctrine," *Berliner Tageblatt,* April 23, 1906; "La Presna Alemana Juzga Severamente La Actitud del Presidente Roosevelt," *El Pais,* April 25, 1906, 1; "How Europe Regards our Refusal of Charity," *The Literary Digest* 32:20 (May 1906) 767-768.

[133] "Amour-Propre Américain," *L'Aurore,* April 26, 1906, 1; "Le refus des secours étrangers," *Le Dernière Heure,* April 25, 1906, 3; "Le secours," *Le Rappel,* April 24, 1906, 1.

[134] "La Presna Alemana Juzga Severamente La Actitud del Presidente Roosevelt," *El Pais,* April 25, 1906, 1.

ban on international aid reasserted national borders over that traffic in aid empathy that grew after the rise of global humanitarianism. Compassion, the relationships between donors and sufferers, and the exchange of charitable aid across political borders created a new field onto which state power could be projected.

A number of media outlets at home and abroad celebrated Roosevelt's contention that aid and compassion were best proffered within national borders. London's *Westminster Gazette* respected Americans "all the more" for their grace and self-sufficiency. The *Manchester Guardian* argued that it was the German newspapers, not Roosevelt, who had made clear that "the offer of help was made with a political motive rather than from genuine concern." The *Chicago Tribune* highlighted the retired U.S. ambassador General Stewart L. Woodford's loud defense of Roosevelt's policy, trumpeted at a dinner for socialites in New York. Woodford explained that Roosevelt simply showed that the "United States would take care of its own; would rise equal to the terrible occasion; would feed their own hungry; would clothe their own naked." Performing both compassion and independence, "the nation, as a nation, would set an example to other nations."[135] According to Woodford, domestic state-sponsored humanitarianism fulfilled a responsibility of a nation-state towards those within its own borders. Humanitarian aid exchanged across state lines challenged the capacity of a nation-state to fulfill its obligation to its own citizens and residents, and thus challenged national sovereignty itself.

Unsurprisingly, Roosevelt's refusal provoked offense and concern by heads of state and journalists beyond U.S. borders. Some would-be donors immediately expressed concern over the condition of nationals who had migrated to the disaster-stricken city. The Empress of China, upon learning that her donation of $250,000 had been refused, implored the United States to ensure that the distribution of local relief reach Chinese nationals who had suffered extreme discrimination in the San Francisco Bay. Her appeal prompted Roosevelt to intervene in the distribution of aid by locals on the scene—much to their annoyance. Japan's ambassador to the United States dispatched a committee of relief workers to ensure care for Japanese nationals; the committee funded its efforts through donations from other members of the diaspora living on the West Coast rather than those abroad.[136]

Despite the widespread shock, Roosevelt's policy towards humanitarian aid aligned with his ongoing effort to establish the United States as the guardian of the Western Hemisphere.[137]

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[135] "Lauds Roosevelt Action," *Chicago Daily Tribune,* April 24, 1906, 2. Woodford was not a lone voice. *The Summary,* the first prison newspaper in the country, published a long editorial defending Roosevelt's policy. The editor wrote that "to receive money for the sufferers in the West would have been an acknowledgement…that the nation was unable to appropriate the necessary money…without crippling its resources." The responsibility of the president was first to "uphold the dignity of the nation no matter what the cost." *The Summary* (Elmira, NY) 34:19 (1906) 4.

[136] Trumbull White, Richard Linthicum, and Hubert D. Russell, *The Complete Story of the San Francisco Horror: Scenes of Death and Terror* (Chicago: H.D. Russell, 1906) 168.

[137] Roosevelt Speech at Arlington, May 30, 1902, *Compilation of the Messages and Speeches of Theodore Roosevelt, 1901-1905* (Washington, D.C.: Bureau of National Literature and Art, 1906) 29-34. According to Daniel Rodgers, Roosevelt conceived of social ties that "always ran toward the nation, the state, and the social whole," versus neighborhood-oriented reformers like Jane Addams. Rodgers, "In Search of Progressivism," *Reviews in American History* 1:4 (1982) 113-132; 125. In 1898, as Assistant Secretary of the Navy, Roosevelt lead the supposed liberation of the Philippines, Puerto Rico, Guam, and Cuba from Spanish rule, and then worked in the Philippines to establish imperial oversight over school construction, public health, and Filipino governance. In the State of the Union address of 1904, Roosevelt crafted a corollary to the Monroe Doctrine that asserted the United States as an international policeman of the hemisphere, preventing any European military from intervening in the private or public business of the Americas. At the same time, American economists, bankers, and professional managers

His insistence that American dominion was the only "effective means of putting a stop to cruelty in the Philippines" deepened those ambitions in the Pacific. And Roosevelt himself laid out a version of a moral Monroe Doctrine in his 1904 State of the Union Address when he vowed to mobilize the U.S. on behalf of cases "in the interest of humanity at large," to fulfill the country's "manifest duty" to aid of those suffering from atrocities.[138] The 1906 policy was thus one of Roosevelt's many extensions of American power over new domains. [139]

Giving without receiving also incorporated values embedded in late nineteenth-century American bourgeois culture. Marcel Mauss has explained that a gift exchange establishes a type of equality between the giver and recipient, as the giver honors the recipient and the recipient does the same in turn. This mutual recognition of honor helps "to produce a friendly feeling between the two persons concerned."[140] Rejecting a gift destabilizes that mutual acknowledgment of honor. As Georg Simmel has argued, those who rejected gifts privileged freedom, independence, and individuality over the bonded interaction that results from a gift exchange.[141] In this framework, a generous giver could establish superiority by refusing to accept a gift. Into the late twentieth-century Anglo-American World, donors who gave without promise or

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worked with Latin American states to establish central banks, spread the gold standard throughout the hemisphere, and consolidate debts, establishing a "scientific" and fiscal oversight of the region. Emily Rosenberg*, Financial Missionaries to the World: The Politics and Culture of Dollar Diplomacy, 1900-1930* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1999). Roosevelt joined Brooks Adams, Josiah Strong, and Alfred Thayer Mahan in the efforts to expand American markets overseas, believing that the closing of the frontier spelled disaster for American well-being. William Applebaum Williams, *The Tragedy of American Diplomacy* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1972).

[138] The doctrine was specifically designed to justify the deployment of the U.S. military into Cuba and to condemn atrocities against Jews and Armenians in Eastern Europe. But his sweeping statements may well have laid the groundwork for the doctrine of humanitarian intervention asserted later in the century to legitimate American intervention in the Balkans, Africa, and the Middle East. Gary Bass, *Freedom's Battle: The Origins of Humanitarian Intervention* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2008).

[139] The new humanitarian aid policy additionally weakened traditions of inter-cultural gift-gifting in the American borderlands. French traders enticed Algonquian leaders into military and trade alliances through gifts of knives, guns, clothing, and tobacco in the Pays d'en Haut before the outbreak of the Seven Year's War. In this case, the French gift-provider did not monopolize power over the recipient, but did express love and generosity towards his allies that subordinated rival European powers in the region. Indeed, gifting was not exclusively an exchange between donors and beggars. Richard White, *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650-1815* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991) 112-119. For earlier treatments of European traditions of gift-giving, see Felicity Heal, *The Power of Gifts: Gift-Exchange in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014). Studies of gift-giving among indigenous North Americans in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries have demonstrated how reciprocal gifting established equality between two people or two powers. James Brooks' description of captive exchange among indigenous, Spanish and Mexican polities in the New Mexican borderlands in the centuries preceding the mid-19th century functioned as a type of gift exchange. Both systems established a form of social and political currency outside of the capitalist framework, in which women, children, and slaves were abducted and traded to maintain and restore honor. Like a gift economy, the captive economy extracted power from familial love and demonstrations of honor. The abduction of a beloved could momentarily establish equality between two profoundly unequal societies, and the assimilation of the abducted into the family of the abductor was necessary for him to build a family over which he could establish patriarchal rule. James Brooks, *Captives &Cousins: Slavery, Kinship, and Community in the Southwest Borderlands* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002).

[140] Marcel Mauss explains that a gift "necessarily implies the notion of credit." For this reason, the "obligation of worthy return is imperative. Face is lost forever if it is not made or if (not of) equivalent value." *The Gift: Forms and Functions of Exchange in Archaic Societies,* Ian Cunnison, trans., (London: Cohen & West, 1966).

[141] Georg Simmel, "On Faithfulness and Gratitude," *The Sociology of Georg Simmel,* Kurt H. Wolff, ed. and trans. (Glencoe, Il: The Free Press, 1950) 391.

possibility of return were extolled for their altruism, establishing a peculiar but potent kind of power due to their superior generosity.[142] Roosevelt attempted to solidify the power of that position by refusing to play the part of the receiver.

By refusing aid, the United States additionally avoided assuming the posture of a subservient state indebted to a metropole. Less than a decade before San Francisco's disaster, American imperialists justified military intervention in Cuba as a gift to republicans fighting for independence. But Cuban leaders saw the gift of American trusteeship as tantamount to dominion. General Antonio Maceo of the Cuban Army of Independence recognized **"**[i]t is better to rise or fall without help than to contract debts of gratitude with such a powerful neighbor."[143] According to this logic, international humanitarian relief moved only from the direction of the powerful to the powerless, the metropole to the colony. The United States could weaken its standing as a donor nation by deigning to become a recipient. Roosevelt's aid refusal reversed these power dynamics by affirming that the country would care for all earthquake sufferers within its borders, without restrictions on nationality. Such a policy returned the United States from a position of profound need into a guardian state once again. In doing so, Roosevelt delineated a new understanding of territorial sovereignty. Nation-states had the authority to regulate the exchange of aid and sympathy across national borders; they also had an obligation towards foreign nationals living within those borders. Civilians and statesmen from the United States who had virulently decried federal assistance to the needy, particularly immigrants, were now being invited to see that aid as a show of profound strength.[144] The United States had recently established itself as a preeminent and reliable humanitarian and moral actor in the world, waging war against the Spanish. Roosevelt solidified that reputation through humanitarian means. But his assertions of exclusive responsibility for the suffering promised a level of commitment that would prove unsustainable.

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[142] Richard Titmuss argued that a donor garners power by giving something that cannot be repaid in any direct chain of events: donation, particularly blood, is purest form of altruism because it lacks any guarantee of a return gift. *The Gift Relationship* (New York: Vintage Books, 1971). Ian Tyrell's history of humanitarianism in the 1890s notes that the United States was neither the exclusive nor greatest giver during this time; Britain held that place. Among the causes of American humanitarian aid and work were the Russian famine of 1891-1892, the Indian famines of 1896-1897 and 1899-1900, and the Armenian Massacres of 1894-1896. The extent of U.S. humanitarian work in Cuba and the Philippines was grossly distorted by imperialist ideas of racial superiority that legitimated U.S. state-building. Ian Tyrrell, *Reforming the World: The Creation of America's Moral Empire* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010) chap. 5. For a good discussion of this problem and the coercion and violence underpinning American humanitarian work in Cuba and the Philippines, see Justin Jackson, "The Work of Empire, The U.S. Army and the Making of American Colonialisms in Cuba and the Philippines, 1898-1913" (Ph.D. Diss., Columbia University, 2014) Introduction, chaps. 2 and 3. Sources on campaigns into Cuba and the Philippines during and following the Spanish-American War that would fit with contemporary notions of humanitarianism include Clara Barton, *The Red Cross in Peace and War* (Washington, D.C.: American Historical Press, 1906); and Christine Ardalan, "Clara Barton's 1898 Battles in Cuba: A Reexamination of Nursing Contributions," *Florida Atlantic Comparative Studies Journal* 12:1 (2010) 1-20.

[143] Antonio Maceo to Frederico Pérez Carbó, July 14, 1896, in José A. Portuondo, ed., *El pensamiento vivo de Maceo* 3rd ed. (Havana: Instituto Cubano del Libro, 1971*)* 94. Quoted in Louis A. Pérez, "Incurring a Debt of Gratitude: 1898 and the Moral Sources of United States Hegemony in Cuba," *American Historical Review,* 104:2 (1999) 356-398; 356. The pretense of humanitarian intervention in Cuba was so strong that even anti-imperialist U.S. statesmen Carl Schurz celebrated the Cuban War for Independence as "a war of liberation, of humanity, undertaken without any selfish motive…a war of disinterested benevolence."

[144] An enormous body of literature is devoted to understanding the practice of denying social welfare to immigrants in the United States. For studies of the policing of social welfare along lines of citizenship and ethnicity in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, see Susan Schweik, *The Ugly Laws: Disability in Public* (New York: NYU Press, 2009); Cybelle Fox, *Three Worlds of Relief: Race, Immigration, and the American Welfare State from the Progressive Era to the New Deal*. On how this divide was later established between immigrant and citizen mothers, Gwendolyn Mink, *Wages of Motherhood: Inequality in the Welfare State, 1917-1942* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995). Xenophobic fears about immigrant dependency informed and challenged local campaigns to deploy coercive social welfare programs like sanitary surveys, home visits, vaccination drives, forced indoor relief as tools

The Widening Circle of Federal Obligation

The assurance that the U.S. would care for its own turned almost everyone into a victim of the San Francisco earthquake. Voices from the world of finance and trade used Roosevelt's commitment to American independence to demand far greater U.S. intervention to shore up spiraling insurance markets. The financial organ *The Statist* implored the executive to take care of Americans as a condition of preventing others from doing so. "President Roosevelt has refused foreign aid for the San Francisco sufferers on the express ground that the American people are able and willing to take care of all Americans who deserve relief. Therefore, he is bound to do what he can to make sure that San Francisco shall not suffer because of his action." News that the U.S. Treasury had already disbursed millions of dollars to San Francisco relief efforts were taken as partial realizations of Roosevelt's promise. But it was demanded that the Treasury and the government "continue to send more" if Roosevelt were not to punish the victims even further.[145] *The Economist* took heart in the actions of the Treasury to send gold to New York and offset a panic rooted in claims made on East Coast insurers. International stock and insurance markets continued to plummet for weeks, but by late May the magazine continued to observe that the central contribution to the recovery was the U.S. Treasury. "So complete has been the relief to the monetary tension," the magazine boasted, that money was now flowing from San Francisco east.[146] Out of Roosevelt's refusal to allow foreign states to care for those residing in the U.S., and even his own presumptuous insistence that "we can take care of our own," came the beginnings of a new, powerful idea that the federal government was responsible to American residents who fell victim of a large-scale catastrophe—including those suffering from the financial aftershocks. After decades in which Congress and the President had demonstrated ambivalence towards disaster victims, survivors and investors asserted that responsibility to alleviate these sufferers lay first with the federal government.

As financiers pressured Congress to stabilize insurance markets, other fearful civilians, benevolent society workers, and philanthropists decried Roosevelt's new exercise of executive power because it burdened Americans with the task of caring for immigrants. The California Club of Women announced that "we hold that the denial of the right to contribute on the ground of nationality is wrong, harmful, and without precedent," and concluded that foreign donors "unquestionably had in mind the fact that thousands upon thousands of their nationality will

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to assimilate and discipline immigrants, often interpreted as means of social control. The settlement movement exemplified this trend. See William Trattner, *From Poor Law to Welfare State: A History of Social Welfare in America* (New York: The Free Press, 1974); Mina Carson, *Settlement Folk: Social Thought and the American Settlement Movement, 1885-1930* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990); George E. Pozzetta, ed. *Americanization, Social Control, and Philanthropy* (New York: Garland, 1991); Paul Boyer, *Urban Masses and Moral Order in America, 1820-1920* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992).

[145] "The Money Outlook," *The Statist: A Journal of Practical Finance and Trade* (1906) 57:772.

[146] "The United States," *The Economist,* May 5, 1906, 766; and May 16, 1906, 887.

require assistance."[147] Journalists as well as earthquake victims denounced Roosevelt's rejection of international aid to sufferers, particularly aid from foreign donors who gave in order to succor fellow nationals. The California Club was not alone in resenting the burdens placed upon existing charitable organizations to compensate for the lost foreign aid, particularly when the beneficiaries were themselves first or second-generation immigrants. The San Francisco Commercial Community protested that they were "obliged to care for many destitute foreigners," and it was thus most irrational to reject foreign assistance.[148] Yet plenty of civilians and journalists who supported the aid restrictions offered similarly nationalist arguments. Editorials in steel- and lumber- manufacturing regions, for example, argued that Congress should not lift tariff restrictions on building materials bound for reconstruction efforts in the stricken city, because "San Francisco would be ashamed to rebuild with foreign steel."[149]

For months after the disaster, San Francisco officials and boosters appealed to the federal government to fulfill their ethical obligation to provide aid to the city. The former San Francisco Mayor James Phelan wrote to Congress, urging the body to guarantee city bonds that would expedite the city's reconstruction. Fiscal interventions like this, he argued, were entirely commensurate with federal investments into railroad development within the United States and in the Philippines. Like their nineteenth-century counterparts, Congressional representatives from California and elsewhere argued that Roosevelt was obligated to provide aid because the federal government had recently been so generous towards those suffering beyond U.S. borders. Judge W.W. Morrow, a former congressman, was sent to the Capitol in June to secure Congressional support for a building and loan corporation that was to finance mortgages of earthquake sufferers. When challenged about the constitutionality of his request that the Government deposit millions of dollars in a San Francisco relief corporation, Morrow insisted that "Under the 'general welfare" clause of the Constitution we have a precedent….similar precedents are offered in the legislation regarding Cuba and the Philippines."[150] In the Senate, Francis Newlands echoed the point when asked why the U.S. should be so generous towards San

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[147] "Women of California to Accept Foreign Aid," *New York Times,* April 25, 1906, 5.

[148] "New York's $100,000,000 For San Francisco," *New York Times,* May 2, 1906, 1; "President Explains Attitude;" *San Francisco Call,* May 4, 1906, 1. "Foreign Aid is Declined," *Sacramento Union,* May 4, 1906, 1

[149] "Tariff Repeal Not Needed," *Cameron County Press,* May 31, 1906, 2. "The Blind May See," *The Commoner* (Lincoln, Neb) May 4, 1906, 3. But many more editorials supported the tariff suspensions as an act of public aid for the sufferers. "Help San Francisco," *The Lexington Intelligencer* (Lexington, MO.) May 19, 1906, 2. "Banquo's Ghost," *The Times Dispatch* (Richmond, VA.) May 2, 1906, 4. The *Fair Play,* a weekly sympathetic to Democrats, dedicated a full page to the controversy. It supported Senator Newlands's request for aid of over 100 million through tariff suspensions as an acknowledgement that Congress was obliged to aid suffering civilians before the steel trusts that benefited from the tariffs. "On Granting Subsidies," *Fair Play* (Saint Genevieve, MO) June 30, 1906, 4.

[150] U.S. Congress, House of Representatives, Committee on Appropriations: *Hearing Concerning Proposed Relief of San Francisco,* 59th Congress, 1st session, 1906, 1-30. One of Morrow's challengers dismissed the argument on the basis that the power of the U.S. abroad exceeded that at home: "the Philippines are a territory of the United States, and we have obviously greater power to deal with the Territories than with States." Morrow and his colleagues from San Francisco referred to the appropriations and relief provisions sent to Cuba and the Philippines during occupations conducted throughout the course of the Spanish-American War, and the humanitarian justification for war. Morrow was perhaps best known for his strident support of restricting immigration from China. On the humanitarian or paternalistic justification for war, see Robert Endicott Osgood, *Ideals and Self-Interest in America's Foreign Relations: The Great Transformation of the Twentieth Century* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1953); Louis A Pérez, *Cuba in the American Imagination: Metaphor and the Imperial Impulse* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008); and Ian Tyrrell, *Reforming the World*, particularly Chap 5. A relevant primary source is Andrew Draper, *The Rescue of Cuba: An Episode in the Growth of Free Government* (Boston: Silver, Burdett & Co, 1899).

Francisco after providing nothing to drought sufferers in the Midwest only a few years earlier. His answer was clear: The scale of funds sent to Cuba and the Philippines dramatically changed expectations about what legislators could ask of the Treasury. He railed "that a country that could spend $200,000,000 in the cause of humanity for the purpose of freeing Cuba, that a country that can spend $300,000,000 for the purpose of instructing the Filipino people in the science of self-government, can certainly afford to lend its credit…essential to the general welfare of the country."[151] Exploiting the President's and Congress's posturing that military intervention in Cuba and the Philippines was the product of a humanitarian impulse, Morrow demanded that Congress aid citizens suffering from atrocities as generously they had foreign nationals**.**

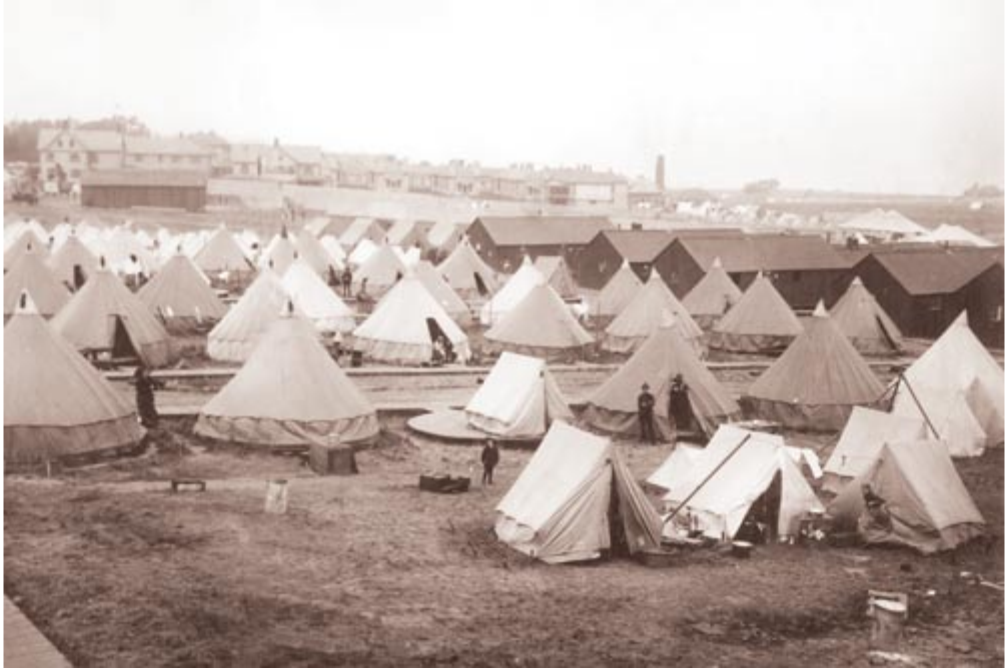

Figure 5: Photograph, The U.S. Army refugee camp at the Presidio that housed 16,000, 1906. Courtesy of the National Park Service, Golden Gate NRA.

Congressional pressure and Roosevelt's pledge to provide for all of those within U.S. borders emboldened federal officials determined to bring order and relief to San Francisco. Secretary of War William Howard Taft drew upon a long history of setting aside constitutional restraints on federal power in the face of catastrophe. "Anything in my control, although not authorized by law to do so, shall be placed at the disposal of the distressed and homeless people of San Francisco," he vowed within days of the disaster.[152] Military personnel from the U.S. Army, U.S. Navy and the National Guard of California inundated the city within hours of the first, devastating earthquake, led by acting commander of the Pacific Division and veteran of the Philippine campaign General Frederick Funston. Troops from military and navy bases all over California and the Pacific were immediately ordered to Fort Mason to oversee the security and aid efforts. Within four days, 3000 federal troops were reported to have "taken systematic charge of the principal portion of the city entrusted to their care."[153] Roosevelt called the Red Cross into service, swept aside the organization's internal hierarchy, and installed the General Secretary of the New York Charity Organization Society Edward T. Devine as the leader of the San Francisco effort.[154] Devine reported directly to the Secretary of War and the President, so that the joint Red Cross-federal effort effectively avoiding any democratic process or even the bureaucratic procedures of the Red Cross itself. Within just days of the earthquake, Congress had appropriated 2.5 million dollars for relief, all federal military agencies were ordered to provide all possible assistance including reporting to Fort Mason. By the end of the first week, a significant part of the city was under full control of the federal troops—their security, housing, medical care, and food all provided by a collaborative effort led by the U.S. Army, the U.S. Navy, the American Red Cross with the help of the National Guard and local police.[155] Federal involvement of this scale was unprecedented. Yet legislators across the country joined San Francisco boosters in imagining federal relief efforts on a much greater scale. Congress debated proposals to provide additional funds of anywhere from 10 million to 100 million dollars to the shattered city.

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[151] *Congressional Record,* 59th Congress, 1st session (1906) 40:6243-48.

[152] Secretary of War Taft to James Phelan, May 1, 1906, reprinted in Ibid., 6185.

A number of concurrent forces led to the expansive role of the federal government in the streets of San Francisco. The scale of the damage and growing interest in robust public bureaucracies among the reform-minded civil servants, urban professionals, and social workers, undoubtedly encouraged distant citizens, congressional legislators from multiple parties, and Red Cross agents to support large-scale federal assistance.[156] But these same broader cultural forces were at work in disasters that immediately preceded San Francisco's, and did not yield the same spectacular involvement of the United States. Outside of the efforts made on behalf of the Civil

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[153] "3000 Federal troops in City," *San Francisco Call,* April 23, 1906, 2.

[154] Jones, The American Red Cross, 117-120.

[155] Highlights in the recent historiography on the San Francisco earthquake and fire includes works by Joanna Dyl, who casts the earthquake as evidence of continuity rather than transformation in the environmentally-contingent evolution of the city. "Urban Disaster: An Environmental History of San Francisco after the 1906 Earthquake" (Ph.D. Diss., Princeton University, 2006). Andrea Davies Henderson's *Saving San Francisco: Relief and Recovery after the 1906 Earthquake* shows how the work of women in the relief effort and refugee camps reinforced gender and class divides in the post-catastrophic city well after reconstruction began. Kevin Rozario offers a compelling account of the critical role of catastrophe in the history, culture, and persistence of American capitalism epitomized in the national preoccupation with San Francisco in 1906 in *Culture of Calamity: Disaster and the Making of Modern America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007).

[156] Centralized bureaucratic organizations promised to ameliorate some of the most vexing problems of industrialized and particularly urban America in the minds of some Progressive-era reformers. Dreaming of social harmony in the wake of decades of civil war and violent labor confrontations, some middle-class reformers looked to state bureaucracies to reform, regulate, and organize everything from the industrial workday to the number of windows on a tenement building. The belief that nonpartisan, large-scale bureaucratic organizations could bring scientific rationality to the complex problems of an industrializing, urbanizing society was one strand of the complex politics of Progressivism. Daniel Rodgers, "In Search of Progressivism," *Reviews in American History* 10: 4, 113-132. These languages informed contemporaneous debates on the nature of city planning, social services, and public utilities, all sectors directly relevant to the question of relief for San Francisco. The classic text interpreting the Progressive movement as a type of bureaucratic revolution is Robert Wiebe, *The Search for Order, 1877-1920* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1967) Texts that focus on the bureaucratic movement and state intervention in city planning and urban welfare (both relevant to disaster response) include: Mel Scott, *American City Planning Since 1890* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969); Jon Peterson, *The Birth of City Planning in the United States, 1840-1917* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2003); and Brent Ruswick, *Almost Worthy: The Poor, Paupers, and the Science of Charity in America, 1877-1917* (Bloomington: Indian University Press, 2013) esp. chap. 6. Olivier Zunz discusses the relationship between federal agencies, national organizations, and Progressive-Era philanthropy in chap. 2 and 3 of *Philanthropy in America: A History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011).

War's white and black refugees, the federal government had never been directly involved in the feeding, housing, or nursing of civilians on the scale of the San Francisco relief efforts. Before 1906, federal intervention in disasters was typically restricted to sending supplies or offering tax relief to suffering communities. Such relief was inconsistent, and thought of as gift rather than entitlement. But over the course of the San Francisco relief effort, federal aid transformed from a generous gift from a humane President and sympathetic Congress to a duty of the government on behalf of its citizens. That shift largely emerged from heated debates about what the U.S. had done for those suffering beyond its own borders, and what foreign nationals, in turn, owed suffering Americans. Roosevelt's "ethical Monroe Doctrine" and the cost of purported humanitarian intervention in Latin America and the Philippines catalyzed a dramatic transformation in what ordinary citizens expected of the government during a domestic humanitarian crisis. It was due to this transformation that Anna Blake's sentiment expressed at the beginning of this chapter made sense; disaster survivors came to expect that federal soldiers would take care of them.

Blake was not alone in expecting federal assistance. The young father W.E. Alexander chronicled his escape from his shaking house with his wife and young son in his arms, the latter screaming that he believed his time had come. "My experiences during this catastrophe convince me more than ever that Savings Banks, the telegraph and insurance, both life and fire, should be conducted by the Government." He regretted that private and local entities continued to manage fire hazards and public works, for "[if] this were in the hands of the Uncle Sam, it would be attended to promptly as was everything the Government did."[157] In Alexander's eyes, federal management of city services was safe, efficient, and preferable to either private or local alternatives. He vowed to never to forget how the United States served him. Mrs. W.H Hawgood celebrated that "Alta Plaza and different places are dealing out provisions free to everyone. It is wonderful how well - all are provided for now - or said to be - And people seem to [be] cheerful." Her gratitude also established the benevolence of the troops, despite the growing use of force under a presumed state of martial law. After days of shock and scarcity, she praised the "nice little soldier guarding our street" for bringing her and her neighbors bread.[158] As a humanitarian actor, the United States instituted peacetime military control and social welfare programs with surprisingly little controversy.[159]

Federal humanitarian aid was welcomed by working-class San Franciscans as well as their affluent neighbors. Union organizer Charles Ross was skeptical of boosters' sloganeering that San Francisco would rise like a Phoenix on account of the city's fierce work ethic. "Wait till work begins," he cautioned, "after there is no more necessity of being fed at the expense of the country at large…those who have lost all and must strive through years of toil to regain it will have a chance to prove whether their confidence and hopefulness is real and abiding."[160] Ross was quick to recognize that sensational stories of recovery did not put bread in people's mouths;

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[157] W.E. Alexander account of the 1906 San Francisco earthquake and fire, n.d. California Historical Society, MS 3456, Part of the 1906 San Francisco Earthquake and Fire Digital Collection.

[158] Letter from W.H. Hawgood to Mary Frances Burgess, April 1906, California miscellany: additions, bulk 1829-1981: BANC MSS 73/122, The Bancroft Library and Archives, Part of the 1906 Earthquake and Fire Digital Collection.

[159] Survivors did loudly protest against National Guardsmen, self-deputized volunteers, and local police who participated in the forced evacuation and dynamiting of property in the path of fires.

[160] Charles Ross to A.M. Von Metzke, April 26, 1906, California miscellany: additions, bulk 1829-1981: BANC MSS 73/122 c: 193: letter 1, The Bancroft Library and Archives, Part of the 1906 Earthquake and Fire Digital Collection.

federal aid workers did. The city's workers knew it was folly to think there would soon be "no more necessity of being fed." They would be the ones to do the exhausting manual labor necessary to rebuild. The city would rise again only "through the long toilsome days of self-support."[161] Ross was not one to bemoan federal aid; he was happy to share the real expense of catastrophe with his fellow countrymen.

Instant histories of the disaster enshrined savior-soldiers in epic tales of the American state triumphing over Nature's wrath. One popular account extolled "the soldiers of Uncle Sam, untiring and unafraid amidst horrors and dangers seen and unseen, that stood between half-crazed refugees from the quake and fire and downright starvation and anarchy."[162] Another credited federal troops with the victory against the conflagration; "hundreds of sailors from the United States' warships and hundreds of soldiers joined in the battle, and from midnight until dawn men fought fire as never fire had been fought before."[163] Compassion and bravery did not obscure the fact that the military had taken liberties beyond those sanctioned by the Constitution. But the benevolent narratives wrought in the wake of the catastrophe and circulated throughout the country painted government intervention as an act of war. At stake were the wealthiest and most opulent homes and civic institutions, innocent civilian lives, and civilized order. "Mad, unreasoning panic seized upon the citizens of San Francisco…. [gas] and electric mains were gone and the street lamps were out," until the arrival of infantry from across the Coast instituted martial law "carried out to the letter."[164] In these stories, the Federal Government exceeded Constitutional restraints in a show of compassion. Secretary of War Taft might have conceded that "Congress would have to give him absolution for the violence he had done the constitution in those terrible days." But narrators insisted that even if Taft, General Funston, and the soldiers "violated the law most flagrantly," they "acted as the emergency demanded," resulting in the military's reportedly unprecedented popularity.[165] Tens of thousands of Americans across the country read tales of refugees who "appealed to the soldiers for food, and their appeals were quickly heeded."[166] Legal transgressions were not only warranted; they were necessary in the face of crisis. The dictates of humanity trumped the constraints of law.

Public sympathy towards refugees only increased as newspaper coverage highlighted the resulting mass, sudden homelessness—particularly when it affected the formerly rich. As in previous disasters, it was common to hear about radical reversals of fortune. One refugee was said to "war all her diamonds, having nothing to carry them in, and they look like a mockery….She hasn't had a drink of water for hours."[167] Sights of the strange collapse of social distinctions testified to survivors' resilience and moralized the hierarchy that existed before the disaster: "mistress and maid can together share a crust of bread, and together struggle back to fortune."[168] Maudlin anecdotes like these reinforced fears that every mistress was only one unforeseen disaster away from living as a maid. But they also put forth the idea that both maids and mistresses were equally able to recover from such disasters—that Americans of completely different means were, in moments like these, equal. One editor framed the tragedy of the earthquake as a moment to showcase the American philanthropic spirit—particularly among those with the fewest means. He told of barber who, upon seeing a former client and known millionaire mourning the loss of his ostentatious estate in the city, offered the client his life savings. The humble worker insisted, "Take it. You need it more than I do, with the banks closed."[169] Such stories cultivated sympathy for San Francisco's sufferers. More importantly, they established the worthiness of its victims, who were seen as industrious, generous, and of diverse means. Victims could not be dismissed as either the helpless, undeserving poor or the independent rich. The suffering represented a cross section of the entire citizenry'; all readers could relate to either the desperate poor, the industrious workers, or the once-rich after a precipitous fall.

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[161] Ibid.

[162] White et. al, *Complete Story,* 173

[163] Charles Banks and Opie Read, *The History of the San Francisco Disaster and Mount Vesuvius Horror* (Chicago: Thompson & Thomas, 1906) 48.

[164] Ibid, 58-59.

[165] White et. al, *Complete Story,* 173.

[166] Ibid., 181.

[167] "Pauper Decked in Jewels," *New York Times,* April 30, 1906.

[168] Quote from "San Francisco Back to First Principles" *New York Times,* May 27, 1906. This was one of many anecdotes, poems, and images that democratized famine. See the poem by Charles K. Field, "Barriers Burned: A Rhyme of the San Francisco Breadline, *Sunset* 17:5 (1906) 236, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley. See also, "Soup Kitchens for the Needy: Relief Applicant to Get Meal Tickets," *San Francisco Call* May

Stories like these naturalized the receipt of government aid.[170] Media coverage abounded of the "richest capitalists" left penniless. "If the situation continues he, as well as his neighbors, will have to be fed by the Government."[171] Millionaires could stand in the bread line that represented the charity of private donors but also the federal government. It was this story that set apart the chronicles of the San Francisco disaster from those of the Chicago and Boston fires. In this case, the "unity of humanity" was demonstrated not only or primarily by individual donors giving voluntarily, but by a nation responding collectively through the federal government. "Congress for the first time has voted to aid directly a city in distress within the bounds of our country," trumpeted the *Complete Story of the San Francisco Horror.*[172] While not entirely accurate, the sentiment echoed in tens of thousands of copies of the book produced that year. Hundreds of thousands of Americans encountered captivating stories in local newspapers and dollar books about rich and poor, citizens and immigrant San Franciscans honorably receiving unprecedented sums of government assistance.[173] *The Complete Story* exemplified the genre of door-to-door dollar books that brought the epic of San Francisco into the home of ordinary Americans across the country.[174] Each tome wed dramatic survivor stories to the

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9, 1906, 8; "Singleton Has a Close Call," *Los Angeles Times,* April 21, 1906; "First Desolate Sunday: RICH MEN IN BREAD LINE," *New York Times,* April 28, 1906.

[169] *Chicago Tribune,* April 19, 1906, 1.

[170] Susanne Leikam documents the particular potency and urgency of bread line narratives in the United States, 1906 being the moment at which the breadline became a national icon. The idea was born in the U.S. in 1870s New York, at the behest of philanthropist-baker and millionaire Louis Fleischmann, who handed out bread and coffee to workers out in the very early morning. She argues that the visible wealth of recipients and the appearance of military troops alongside dispensaries reinforced a sense of order after the 1906 catastrophe that rescued it from a practice associated with the idle poor. "Visualizing Hunger in a 'City of Plenty': Bread Line Iconographies in the Aftermath of the 1906 San Francisco Earthquake and Fire," *American Studies* 58:4 (2013) 583-606.

[171] See for example, "First Desolate Sunday: RICH MEN IN BREAD LINE," *New York Times,* April 28, 1906; April 28, 1906; "Homeless Thousands Flee Before Fiery Avalanche...Nob Hill, with Homes of Celebrated Millionaires, Swept Away," *Washington Post,* April 20, 1906; "Rich of Yesterday in Breadline of Today," *New York Times,* April 30, 1906.

[172] White et. al., *Complete Story,* 108.

[173] This estimate reflects the popularity of these books at the time, as discussed in Jay White, "'God's Ark': Subscription Book Publishing and the *Titanic,*" *Acadiensis* 28:2 (1999) 93-118.

[174] Others include: Richard Linthicum, *San Francisco Earthquake Horror: Comprising also a Vivid Portrayal of the Recent Death Dealing Eruption of Mt. Vesuvius* (Chicago, 1906). Charles Eugene Banks, *The History of the San Francisco Disaster and Mount Vesuvius Horror* (Chicago: unknown, 1906). Charles Morris, *The San Francisco*

mundane details of Congressional accounting on behalf of San Francisco. The tedium of public donations, internal federal communications, and the actions taken by Taft as both Secretary of War and President of the American Red Cross grounded each story and lent transparency and legitimacy to an opaque federal aid regime. *The Doomed City* celebrated "Congress, [that] regardless of precedent or law, did what the heart said was humane and reason said was sane and necessary," to appropriate millions for refugees.[175] *The Complete Story* celebrated the bureaucratic aid process, as "in this way matters were made systematic and authoritative assurances given that the contributions of the nation would be honestly and economically distributed to those in need." It noted that "30,000 refugees were fed by the government" in the first few days; "provisions were bountifully supplied to all who made application, and there was no suffering from hunger."[176] The government also compelled private citizens to accommodate refugees, with General Funston going through the spared residential neighborhoods to "make every household give over his spare room to refugees."[177] Xenophobia encouraged San Franciscans to go along—volunteers could offer their rooms to friends; those who resisted "had to take whomsoever the Red Cross sent, even Chinese and new arrivals from Hungary." Immigrants were scorned but not ineligible for relief; indeed, publications like *the Complete Story* celebrated the idea that government-sponsored Red Cross forced citizens to aid them.[178]

But the visibility of military aid provoked unease and distress from many survivors. The affluent Carroll Beal confided in her friend Mary Burgess her discomfort at having to take rather than purchase food and necessities, however briefly: "We couldn't buy, so just had to take our bread + such things as we stood in line with others. It's an endless subject so I'll quit it."[179] Perceptions of federal soldiers-turned-aid workers depended heavily on the identity of the refugees. Chinese immigrants were particularly vulnerable in the first few days after the earthquake. Survivors recalled local volunteers from the National Guard condoning and sometimes participating in raids of Chinese businesses; witnesses also reported troops assaulting Chinese refugees with the butts of their rifles.[180] Thousands likely died in the earthquake, but were never found or counted due to their disposability from the perspective of the local and federal government.[181] As a result, Chinese consular representatives arranged to repatriate some of the most vulnerable widows and elderly Chinese citizens, fearing the conditions they might

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Calamity by Earthquake and Fire: A Complete and Accurate Account of the Fearful Disaster which Visited the Great city and the Pacific Coast, the Reign of Panic and Lawlessness, and the Plight of 300,000 Homeless People and the World-wide Rush to the Rescue (New York: Scull, 1906); Sydney Tyler, *San Francisco's Great Disaster A Full Account of the Recent Terrible Destruction of Life and Property By Earthquake, Fire and Volcano in California and at Vesuvius* (Philadelphia: P.W. Ziegler Co, 1906) Marshall Everett, *Complete Story of the San Francisco Earthquake: The Eruption of Mount Vesuvius and Other Volcanic Outbursts and Earthquakes* (Chicago: the Bible House, 1906) Frank Thompson Searight, *The Doomed City A Thrilling Tale* (Chicago: Laird & Lee, 1906)

[175] Searight, *Doomed City,* 95.

[176] White et. al., *Complete Story,* 165-166.

[177] Ibid.

[178] Ibid.

[179] "Chrysanthemum" (Carroll) Beal to Mary Frances Burgess. Letters written to her from San Francisco at the time of the 1906 earthquake and fire: BANC MSS 72/88 c, The Bancroft Library and Archives, University of California, Berkeley.

[180] Formal complaint of Chinese Consul-General in SF Chung Pao-hsi to Governor George Pardee that "National Guard was tripping everything of value in Chinatown." Erica Y. Z. Pan, *The Impact of the 1906 Earthquake on San Francisco's Chinatown* (New York: P. Lang, 1995) 52.

[181] Gladys C. Hansen and Emmet Condon, *Denial of Disaster: The Untold Story and Photographs of the San Francisco Earthquake of 1906* (San Francisco: Cameron and Co., 1989).

endure in post-quake San Francisco. But the United States federal government was quick to act on widespread reports that Chinese victims were not receiving necessary relief, and the U.S. Army was conspicuously absent in reports of violence towards Chinese nationals.[182] Upon Roosevelt's direction, the Acting Secretary of War wrote ordered commanding Army General Funston to ensure that all aid agencies were "furnish[ing] same shelter and camping facilities to Chinese as to others…Government supplies must be furnished and Government protection afforded to all alike and all suffering relieved without regard to nationality."[183] Roosevelt additionally sent Victor Metcalf, the Secretary of Labor and Commerce, to oversee the management of relief on the ground, especially as it pertained to Chinese nationals. He found that the local Citizens' Relief Committee had segregated Chinese refugees into their own poorly attended camps. Metcalf brokered a deal between the Chinese Consul, the Citizens' Relief Committee, and the U.S. Army to put the latter in charge of the Chinese camps with the "expressed gratification" of the Chinese Consul.[184] Local Red Cross officials and elected officials publicly rebutted the allegations in an open letter republished in newspapers nation-wide, insisting that all was being done for all sufferers "in accordance with the dictates of humanity, in a manner worthy of Americans, and in the common brotherhood of men."[185]

The debate over the relief received by Chinese was not necessarily representative of sincere concern for a group that was uniquely resented by Americans, and especially Californians. American border and immigration policy was built upon a foundation of anti-Chinese sentiment. Indeed, Asian exclusion policies proved so popular and mobile that they were enacted in eighteen countries in the Western Hemisphere.[186] But federal agents, urban elites, and humanitarian workers were all loath to publicly admit that these immigrants would be excluded from receiving disaster relief aid. Representatives of the U.S. Government insisted that "the Chinese…were cared for in the same systematic and satisfactory manner" as other refugees, and regularly invited the local Chinese ambassador to inspect the camps to ensure "the proper care of his destitute countrymen."[187] They might be legitimately barred from the territory of the country, or the protections of citizenship—but no one seemed to publicly argue that they could be denied relief in the wake of a catastrophe.

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[182] According to historians, military observers, and contemporaneous newspapers, the National Guard were the most frequent offenders. On April 28, 1906, the *San Francisco Chronicle* reported that 150 members of the National Guard in Oakland had looted standing buildings in Chinatown. Quoted in Pan, *Impact,* p. 52. U.S. Army General Frederick Funston publicly reported that there was "no well-authenticated case" of regular army troop shootings, but verified that the National Guard had killed two refugees. Funston, "How the Army Worked to Save San Francisco," *Cosmopolitan Magazine* 41:3 (July 1906).

[183] Telegram from Acting Secretary of War Robert Shaw Oliver to General Frederick Funston, April 23, 1906. Accessed August 1, 2016. San Francisco Virtual Museum Archives. Roosevelt continued to appeal to local officials on behalf of residents of Chinese and Japanese nationality and dissent in nationally-covered conflicts. Roosevelt appealed to the San Francisco School Board in 1906 to decry the segregation of Japanese children in public schools. "Tokyo is Pleased"; "Will Stand Pat," *The Citizen* (Berea, KY) Dec 13, 1906, 7.

[184] Victor H. Metcalf to Theodore Roosevelt. April 26, 1906. Available at the Virtual Museum of San Francisco. Accessed August 1, 2016.

[185] E.E. Schmitz, W.W. Morrow, T.J. Simms, J.D. Phelan, Rabbi Voorsanger, Catherine Felton, Fairfax Wheelan to Theodore Roosevelt. April 1906. Republished in "Frisco Resents President's Act," *Chicago Daily Tribune,* April 25, 1906, p 1. "Frisco Resents Roosevelt Plan," April 25, 1906, *New York Times,* 1.

[186] Erika Lee, At America's Gates: Chinese Immigration during the Exclusion Era, 1882-1943 (University of North Carolina Press, 2003) and Adam McKeown, Melancholy Order: Asian Migration and the Globalization of Borders (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008) 322.

[187] Gen. Adolphus W. Greely, *Earthquake in California: April 18, 1906 – A Special* Report (Washington: GPO, July 1906).

While private aid continued to fund a significant part of the disaster relief measures, the army remained ever-present in the work and story of the recovery of San Francisco. In ongoing newspaper coverage of the disaster, valiant soldiers built or sought out housing for refugees and deployed force where necessary. U.S. soldiers and bureaucrats working with the department of war appeared to tame the most mercenary instincts of former San Francisco Mayor James Phelan, a reviled politician who retained formal charge over the primary local relief organization. While Phelan managed the accounting of relief expenditures, Red Cross officials carried responsibility for the relief distribution.[188] The government organized and staffed emergency hospitals. The government provided initial, if insufficient, stores of bedding. The government was also expected to eventually fund seismological stations where "exact records will be kept" so as to finally understand and prevent or mitigate earthquake damages and deaths.

Humanitarian Border Control and the Making of 'Military Refugees'

In February 1909, American Red Cross agent Charles J. O'Connor took charge of dismantling the refugee relief regime in San Francisco.[189] For nine months, he worked within the offices of the Red Cross in Berkeley, while living in the hills above the town's campus and former refugee camp. Refugees were forced to either purchase or vacate the cottages they had been assigned in the city's sprawling refugee camps. State-financed houses for the aged and infirm were transferred back to the local branch of the Associated Charities. O'Connor detailed each divestment in a tome explaining exactly how future social workers, army officials, and federally-appointed administrators could manage a disaster. Among the key tenets was that the United States government had to oversee large-scale disaster relief. Major emergency response that included refugee camps, food distribution, and long-term rehabilitation efforts required the coordination and efficiency of the United States Army. O'Connor regarded the ARC, "with its permanent organization, its governmental status, and its direct accountability to Congress," the "proper national agency" to work alongside the Army in the face of catastrophe.[190] The U.S. military and Congress successfully worked with the ARC to house, feed, treat, and rehabilitate sufferers of catastrophe without raising fears about increasing federal power.

Less than ten months later, Brigadier General Tasker Bliss tapped O'Connor to oversee an emerging humanitarian crisis at the U.S.-Mexican border.[191] Bliss had collaborated on-site with the ambitious women of the local San Diego Red Cross to rescue and treat those wounded and uprooted during the course of the Mexican Revolutionary battles that had all but obliterated the quiet outpost across the border from San Diego. Local Red Cross President Harriet Ballou reported to her fellow volunteers that "two hundred refugees, almost all women with from one to five children were at Tecarte; utterly destitute, no clothing, tenants, blankets, or food." O'Connor was deployed to San Diego, where he worked in a "joint arrangement of the state department and the Red Cross" to oversee the chaotic effort among local benevolent societies to tend to the refugees.[192]

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[188] Jones, *The American Red Cross,* 121.

[189] Charles J. O'Connor, "Records of Experience of CJ O'Connor in Red Cross Work," July 8, 1919, Papers of Charles J. O'Connor: BANC MSS 79/132, folder eight. The Bancroft Library and Archives.

[190] The Sage Foundation, "Some Lessons of the Relief Survey," in *San Francisco Relief Survey: The Organizations and Methods of Relief Used After the Earthquake and Fire of April 18, 1906* (New York: Survey Associates 1913) 369-370.

[191] "Red Cross Aids Refugees," *New York Times,* March 28, 1911.

As more and more refugees began arriving at San Diego, El Paso, and Douglas, local citizens anticipated the arrival of federal troops to manage the refugee crisis. The federal response to San Francisco offered a clear script. As in 1906, O'Connor, "one of its experienced Lieutenants from San Francisco" was sent down to the region. There he met American Red Cross director Ernest Bicknell, who himself had gained national recognition for his role in San Francisco.[193] The 1906 alumni quickly established a formal partnership with the U.S. Army leadership stationed in the area, and troops throughout the Pacific Division were called to the major bases in San Diego to help manage the growing refugee crisis. As O'Connor had directed in his relief manual, the military took control of transportation, medical care, and most of the housing efforts, while local and national chapters of the Red Cross initiated rescue missions and provided clothing to the refugees.[194] Citizens, officials, and journalists living in the border cities expected no less. Border state newspapers made clear that they expected federal officials to act as they had in earlier refugee crises. Marfa's papers editorialized that "thousands of people from Mexico will be camped on American soil, where they are coming for safety...It is up to Uncle Sam to see that they and we are protected."[195] When word traveled to the border that Congress was stalling on appropriations for relief efforts, regional newspapers howled that their representatives "made Americans ashamed."[196] Even editorials from remote locations in the country endorsed federal humanitarian intervention. A Louisiana newspaper editor acknowledged that thousands of refugees encamped in Presidio would "have to be fed by the United States or they will starve."[197] The fear and reality of violence on the part of the refugees or due to the proximity to Mexico's border conflicts only heightened calls for federal intervention. For their part, the relief workers in the region had just mobilized in response to a national disaster and boasted about their preparations. As the San Diego Red Cross later chronicled, "the entire city of San Diego turned itself inside out to provide clothing, tents, matting, beds, cots and carloads of provisions," for the San Francisco earthquake relief effort. "There followed in quick succession the great Italian earthquake of 1908, the Monterrey, Mexico flood of 1909, and the battle of Tiajuana (sic) in 1911."[198] The Mexican refugee relief effort was unfamiliar as a matter of U.S. foreign or immigration policy but well-rehearsed to those who had been working in the field of disaster relief.

State authorities loudly joined calls for federal intervention to manage unwieldy humanitarian campaigns and prevent violence north of the border. Governor C.B. Colquitt of Texas demanded the intervention of U.S. military to curtail admission of any inadmissible refugees. As benevolent societies in Douglas began treating combatants who came across the border, the Governor of Arizona distinguished benevolence and patriotism.

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[192] Charles J. O'Connor, "Records of Experience," July 8, 1919.

[193] "Red Cross Aids Refugees;" "Interviews with Capital's Visitors," *The Washington Post,* July 3, 1911, 6.

[194] Mary Gale, "A Chapter that Has Served on the Field of Battle," *The Red Cross Courier,* August 18, 1928, 18-23.

[195] "Mexicans Flee from Ojinaga to Texas," *El Paso Herald,* December 9, 1910, 1.

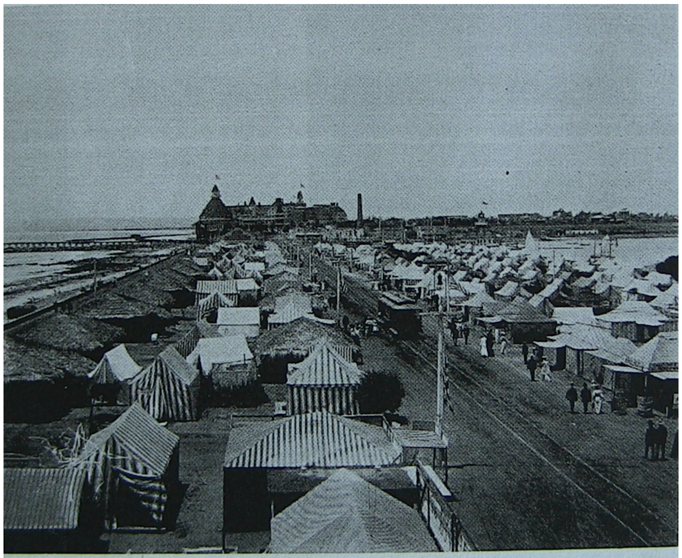
[196] "Money for American Refugees;" "Would Aid Refugees," *El Paso Herald,* August 2, 1912, 4.

[197] "4,000 Mexican Refugees," *The Thibodaux Sentinel,* June 3, 1911, 1.

[198] SDRC, "1898…1952 Dedication Program," Preservation Box "B," Private archives of the SDRC, Imperial County.

> "In the present emergency, any one who willfully aggravates the situation dishonors his country, and puts our government at a disadvantage with Mexico…I call upon all the citizens of Douglas to assist in every way… [to see] that neutrality is observed…. Good citizens should be more concerned in upholding the honor of their own country than in showing their sympathies for or against the government of a neighboring country.[199]

'Good citizenship' required neutrality, in the Governor's eyes, not charity. Americans were asked to be stoic towards refugees and dutiful towards U.S. authorities as they oversaw a growing refugee crisis and expanded the military presence on the border. Since the beginnings of the rebellions in Mexico, officials working within the American Red Cross had openly questioned whether or not their responsibility extended to Mexico's combatant and non-combatant refugees. Before any aid could be extended, the Red Cross and the Geneva Convention of 1864 required that all belligerent forces publicly expressed their allegiance to the laws of war—and their respect for neutral humanitarian organizations.[200] This set a high bar for the multiple warring factions of Mexico, none of which were recognized by the United States for years. Neutrality was included among the tenets of humanitarian work for decades. But as Mexico's conflicts persisted, neutrality became a moral imperative that border state governors wielded in support of heavier military intervention.



Tent City, Coronado, where Red Cross housed and fed 244 refugees fleeing from Mexico in 1911.

—From the historical collection of Union Title Insurance & Trust Co.

Figure 6: Photo of one of SDRC's Mexican Refugee Camps after the 1911 Battle of Tijuana. From *1898-1952 Dedication Program.* San Diego County Chapter of American Red Cross, 4. Red Cross Collection: MS 62. San Diego History Center.

For its part, the United States Army actively helped the Red Cross rescue of mostly American refugees from the Mexican interior. These rescue campaigns quickly made their way into Congressional debate as cities hosting the refugees sought reimbursement. For two years, representatives to the U.S. Congress from U.S. border states carefully narrated the plight of American and some Mexican refugees in hopes of securing federal assistance for rescue efforts based in their home districts. Senator Joseph Bailey of Texas insisted that the refugees were innocent, suffering through no fault of their own from "unspeakable barbarities and cruelties which have been inflicted upon them." For that reason, locals had an obligation to assist and were exhausted by the "great tax on that city." The federal government was obligated to promptly aid the citizens caring for the refugees, just as it was obligated to help the refugees themselves.[201] Bailey and Senator Marcus Smith of Arizona lobbied for funds for the long-suffering refugees, and stridently condemned any suggestion that any of them had fomented rebellion in Mexico or were in any way responsible for their plight.[202]

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[199] "Situation Along Line," *Arizona Republic,* April 20, 1911, 1.

[200] G.W.D., "The Red Cross in Civil Wars," *The American Red Cross Bulletin* 4:1 (1909) 45-46.

Mounting demands for resources from the United States sowed confusion in Congress over what, if anything, Americans owed Mexico's refugees. For a handful of representatives, there was no question that the U.S. federal government had a real and defined obligation to house and provide for the injured, starving, and dying coming across the border, regardless of citizenship. Senator Thomas Martin of Virginia balked at doubts over U.S. responsibility to extend care. "In addition to the considerations of humanity and in addition to the obligations of international law, we are under treaty obligations," he insisted.[203] Martin reminded the Senate of the new codes of international law that required the United States to house Mexico's refugees:

> "these people are held by this administration in accordance with what they consider their duty and the obligation imposed upon this country by the principles and rules of international law. When this band of refugees came to the territory of the U.S., it became obligatory on the US to take them into custody, and it did take them into custody and put them in camps. It had a perfect right to do so….[204]

The extension of care to those seeking asylum was both a legal and moral obligation of the United States, as clearly defined in the 1907 Hague Convention treaty on the treatment of wounded belligerents who sought refuge in neutral territory. According to the treaty, neutral countries bordering upon belligerent countries were obliged to supply the fleeing combatants "with the food, clothing, and relief required by humanity."[205] As Martin saw it, the Convention required the Senate and House to authorize new appropriations on behalf of the refugees—there was no debate to be had. His knowledgeable colleagues agreed; the experienced foreign policy expert Henry Cabot Lodge conceded that, theoretically, states maintained "the naked right of a nation to refuse asylum" but the realities of international law ensured that the U.S. "could not escape from the responsibility."[206] Appealing to a greater responsibility than laws or international treaties stipulated, Charles Bartlett pleaded to fellow representatives in the House:

> The laws of humanity would not have justified the United States Army or the President or the Government of the United States in turning these fleeing soldiers, and the women and children accompanying them, who fled from this battle…We could have stopped them at our own border and refused to permit them to enter, in accordance with the laws of

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[201] "Money for American Refugees," *El Paso Herald,* August 2, 1912, 4.

[202] *Congressional Record,* 62nd Congress, 2nd session (1912) 48:10047-10049.

[203] Senator Thomas Martin (D-VA), *Congressional Record,* 63rd Congress, 2nd session (1914) 51:5040.

[204] Ibid, 5036.

[205] Hague Convention (V) Respecting the Rights and Duties of Neutral Powers and Persons in Case of War on Land, art 12, 36 Stat 2415 (signed October 18, 1907; in force January 26, 1910).

[206] Senator Lodge (R-MA), *Congressional Record,* 63rd Congress, 2nd session (1914) 51:5037.

> neutrality, but the laws of nations and the laws of humanity would not and ought not to consent to that.[207]

Despite their impassioned pleas, Martin and Bartlett found plenty of adversaries in their respective chambers. Several expressed unease over an expensive and humanitarian crisis with no end in sight. Others raised questions about the rights of asylees interned in refugee camps under the supervision of the U.S. Army. Dissent grew more intense when representatives realized that international law stipulated no limits to the care required to grant refugees of war. At hand were requests for ostensibly "indefinite appropriations" to provide for Mexico's refugee combatants.[208]

The Senate proposed a solution that reinforced the changing relationship between social responsibility and territorial sovereignty set in motion by Theodore Roosevelt years earlier. Roosevelt forcefully expressed the capacity of the United States to take care of all of those within its borders, regardless of citizenship or nationality. As Chapter 4 will show, in practice that promise capitulated to the realities of racial segregation, violence in the wake of disaster, and finite federal social relief funds. Nonetheless, many civilians and state officials across the United States believed that the government had set expectations to provide post-catastrophic relief to all living within its sovereign borders. The Senate and the House came to appreciate that The Hague Convention offered flexibility as to how a state could satisfy its humanitarian obligations. Perhaps Senator Henry Cabot Lodge put it best as he affirmed, "It is the duty of no nation, as a matter of international law, to take charge of refugees generally who happen to come across the frontier. That, as the Senator from California has said, is a matter of humanity."[209] The new codes of international law enabled Congress to exclude or include potential sufferers from its doles according to domestic ideas of social obligation.

The House and the Senate proceeded to read The Hague Convention narrowly. For one, Mexico's conflict exceeded the constraints of the Convention. Mexico's war was civil, not international. All but one of its factions—the federal army—lacked recognition by foreign powers. For this reason, most admitted to the U.S. Army camps were non-combatants or unrecognized rebel troops, both of which were unrecognized in the treaty's description of asylum policies towards foreign combatants. Even the most optimistic Senator saw little hope that the cost of the care of unrecognized combatants would one day be reimbursed by the presiding Mexican State.[210] Thus, the United States could only shelter, nurse, and feed rebel combatants or civilians as a strictly humanitarian act— not a legal obligation. As Senator Bristow confessed, "I do not believe in taxing our own people for the benefit of others unless it is done as an act of charity."[211]

The limited mandate of the Convention offered an even more effective solution to Congressmen looking to curtail the involvement of the United States in the burgeoning refugee crisis at the border. According to the international treaty, the federal government had no formal responsibility towards the children, wives, and parents trailing the combatants requesting refuge.

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[207] Representative Bartlett (D-GA), *Congressional Record,* 63rd Congress, 2nd session (1914) 51:5539.

[208] Senator Thomas Martin (D-VA), Ibid., 5036.

[209] Senator Lodge (R-MA), Ibid., 5038.

[210] Senator Smoot (R-UT), *Congressional Record,* 63rd Congress, 2nd session (1914) 51:5041. Smoot explained, "I do not believe we will ever get this money back, and it makes no difference to me if we never do, so far as the expense already incurred is concerned. They are here, and from a humanitarian view we have fed them and clothed them."

[211] Senator Bristow (R-KS), Ibid., 5040.

Indeed, The Hague Convention did not even recognize the women, children, and elderly refugees as subjects of international law. They were "mere refugees," distinct from the military refugees protected by international law. Following these new codes, the U.S. Senate made clear that the humanitarian obligations to each refugee were required only once they had passed into sovereign U.S. territory. "We must refuse absolutely to permit them to enter our territory—by force, if necessary—or, if we permit them to enter our territory, we must comply with our treaty obligations and the laws of humanity and take care of them…"[212] In turn, a consensus emerged in Washington that civilian refugees would no longer be admitted to the United States for asylum.

Women, children, the wounded, and the elderly were thus the first to be sacrificed by the new dictates of international law. Lodge clarified how easily the U.S. could pass a severe curtailment of refugee admissions as a humanitarian policy: "we are acting entirely along the lines of The Hague convention and international law, but not including refugees generally."[213] Specifically, he proposed amending the new provisions of the appropriation bill for the care of refugees at the Southern border so that it covered only combatants, and not "any Mexican who chooses to come across the border and throw himself on our mercy and protection."[214] By the end of a long debate over whether to send $236,000 or $500,000 to the troops tending to the refugee crisis, Utah Senator Reed Smoot delivered the consensus that "the women and children be sent back to that territory….without the amendment….it would be an invitation to the hungry Mexican to come to the United States and be fed and clothed as long as the war lasts."[215] Thus the Senate decided that the boundaries of the United States would be closed to ordinary refugees and humanitarian appeals. Only the intermediary realm of international law afforded a place for desperate foreigners within the territory of the United States.

Conclusion

The new federal standards of humanity came into conflict with relief efforts already unfolding on the ground. The American Red Cross, acting in concert with the U.S. Army, reluctantly embraced renewed calls for neutrality. But numerous civilians and benevolent groups working at the border proved defiant, like some civilians hostile to the Mexican refugees fleeing across the U.S border. The San Diego Red Cross ignored the guidelines of the U.S. Army and crossed the border under what they understood to be an unfulfilled obligation of the United States towards citizens across the line. "Common humanity made it necessary for the Red Cross to take action. Their doctors and nurses had no assurance of safety, but they went across the line, gathered up the wounded, and cared for them, sometimes in Mexico, and sometimes in the States, but without the protection of international law."[216] The esteemed ladies of the San Diego Red Cross were not the only borderlands actors to defy and adapt the directives of the federal government to respond to the unfolding chaos on the ground. The military agents working day-to-day at the border refugee camps found their own ways to satisfy the opposing demands of international law and the dictates of humanity.

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[212] Representative Bartlett (D-GA), *Congressional Record,* 63rd Congress, 2nd session (1914) 51:5538.
[213] Senator Lodge (R-MA), Ibid., 5038.
[214] Ibid.
[215] Senator Smoot (R-UT), Ibid., 5041.
[216] John Van Schaick, Jr., "The International Red Cross in Session," *The Survey* 28:8 (1912) 345-347; 347.

Chapter Three

The City

The "Dictates of Humanity" in the Urban Borderlands

F.W Berkshire was stationed at the El Paso, Texas immigration station on November 23, 1910, when he confronted several dozen disheveled, frantic civilians who had just appeared in town. Each one regaled anyone who would listen with tales of horrific violence engulfing towns mere miles away. The travelers had come only a short distance, and were still in shock when they flooded out of the train station at the center of the city. Among them was a well-off doctor who abandoned his pharmacy and fled with his wife and children after witnessing the fatal shooting of two neighboring storekeepers, the town mayor, and the chief of police. Another, a jeweler originally from New York City, had counted 50 dead bodies in his town plaza after a public battle between the rebel troops and the federal government's army.[1] Berkshire was called upon to inspect everyone for admissibility before they were allowed to pass out of the railroad depot. Overwhelmed, he ignored the procedures that he regularly used to police the international boundary. He concluded that these distressed, disoriented, and suddenly penniless people were refugees deserving of asylum.[2]

How did these migrants become deserving refugees at the Mexican border? This change partly depended on evolving ideas about refugees, crisis, and social obligation forged in the wake of the earthquake of 1906. It also depended upon a rapidly transforming border environment. Since taking office in 1876, Mexican President Porfirio Díaz had liberalized the country's land policies, incentivizing foreign investment in Mexico's mining, railway, communications, and agricultural industries and privatizing previously communal indigenous landholdings.[3] American railroad barons, financiers, and statesmen of both countries celebrated the resulting cross-border commercial relations in contracts and partnership agreements that turned Mexico's public lands into lucrative railroads, streetcar lines, mining companies, and telegraph lines. In 1879, Mexican Secretary of Finance Matías Romero trumpeted that Mexican popular opinion as well as "the present Government of Mexico, and some of her former ones…believe that the building of these [international railroad] lines would be precisely one of the most secure and efficacious means of promoting the development of this nation, and of avoiding, at the same time, future complications and difficulties between the two Republics."[4] By 1892, Brownsville boosters celebrated how grand railroad projects traversing the international boundary would "exert the same influence upon [local] destiny as that… given to well established emporiums of trade like Chicago, St. Louis, Portland and San Francisco."[5] Rails, bridges, and roads spanning the two countries unsettled the distinctions between growing cities on both sides of the border, complicating simple distinctions between Mexicans and Americans, nationals and foreigners, us and them. Border towns became boomtowns.

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[1] "Americans Flee Before Revolt," *The Democratic Banner* (Mt. Vernon, OH) November 25, 1910, 1

[2] Supervising Inspector, El Paso Immigration Station F.W. Berkshire to Commissioner-General of Immigration, December 14, 1910, Mexican Border Situation, Border Officers' Reports, Box 1110, Subject and Policy Files, 1893-1957, Records of the INS: RG 85, NARA-D.C.

[3] On the transfer of indigenous land ownership under during the Díaz regime, see Emilio Kourí, *A Pueblo Divided: Business, Property, and Community in Papantla, Mexico* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004). On foreign investment under Díaz, see On the relationship between these changing land policies and the outbreak of the Mexican Revolution, see, Paul Garner, *British Lions and Mexican Eagles: Business, Politics, and Empire in the Career of Weetman Pearson in Mexico, 1889–1919* (Stanford: Stanford University Press) chaps. 1, 3-5; John Mason Hart, *Empire and Revolution: The Americans in Mexico since the Civil War* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994) and *Revolutionary Mexico: The Coming and Process of the Mexican Revolution*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002).

[4] Mexico Secretaría de Hacienda y Crédito Público Matías Romero, *Report of the Secretary of Finance of the United States of Mexico: Of the 15th of January 1879, on the Actual Condition of Mexico, and the Increase of Commerce with the United States, Rectifying the Report of the Hon. John W. Foster, Envoy Extraordinary and Minister*

New rail connections in El Paso and Laredo in 1881, Nogales in 1882, and Brownsville in 1904 lured wealthy Americans, Britons, Germans, and Mexicans to live and invest in the region with their Chinese, Japanese, Russian, and Syrian laborers in tow. Laredo's population tripled between 1880 and 1890. El Paso's tripled between 1900 and 1910. [6] The extensive trade networks of inhabitants ensured that a significant number of border city residents understood the Spanish and English languages; English had become the common language of business in Mexican bordertowns as early as the 1880s, while some American children attended school in Mexico in order to learn Spanish and pursue business opportunities available to bilinguals.[7] By 1909, U.S. President William Howard Taft stood on the steps of a Mexican customhouse and opined that cross-border infrastructure had fostered a "closer union of feeling between the two peoples, a closer feeling between those responsible for the government of each country."[8] The desert frontier had morphed into a cosmopolitan urban hub, home to individuals with strong familial and commercial ties to cities throughout Mexico, Europe, and the United States.

These social ties helped make border residents matter to American and European investors, officials, and socialites. When Berkshire wrote about the refugees fleeing Mexico, he represented many as locals escaping a crisis of immeasurable human and material costs to all in the vicinity.[9] This chapter charts how the locally stationed immigration officers and benevolent

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Plenipotentiary of the United States in Mexico, the 9th of October 1878. To Mr. Carlisle Mason, President of the Manufacturers' Association of the City of Chicago (New York: N. Ponce de Leon, 1880) 32 (translation of Spanish original). Romero was refuting reports from an American Ambassador to Mexico that the country was not yet safe for foreign investment, hoping to encourage a group of Chicago financiers to engage in cross-border trade. See David M. Pletcher, *The Diplomacy of Trade and Investment: American Economic Expansion in the Hemisphere, 18565-1900* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1998) 82-94.

[5] W.H. Chatfield, *The Twin Cities of the Border: Brownsville and Matamoros* (Brownsville: E.P. Brandao, 1893) 5.

[6] On the urban growth of the region, see Oscar Martinez, *Border Boom Town: Ciudad Juárez since 1848* (Austin: UT Press, 1978); Milo Kearney and Anthony Knopp, *Boom and Bust: The Historical Cycles of Matamoros and Brownsville* (Austin: Eakin Press, 1991); George T. Díaz, *Border Contraband: A History of Smuggling Across the Rio Grande* (Austin, University of Texas Press, 2015).

[7] On language practices in the Porfirian borderlands, see Miguel Tinker Salas, "Sonora: The Making of a Border Society, 1880-1910," in Oscar Martínez, *U.S.-Mexico Borderlands: Historical and Contetmpoary Perspectives* (Wilmington, Del.: SR Books, 1996) 86-97. In 1904 prominent residents of Naco, on the border of Sonora and Arizona, celebrated the opening of school for children from both countries. See Rachel St. John, *Line in the Sand: Line in the Sand: A History of the Western U.S.-Mexico Border* (Princeton: Princeton University Press) 100-101.

[8] Transcript of President Taft's Speech in "Meeting of the President of the United States and the President of Mexico at El Paso, Texas and at Ciudad Juarez, Mexico," Friday October 16, 1909, Records of Notes from the State Department from the Mexican Embassy, Box 53, Commissions and Arbitrations, RG 76: Boundaries and Claims Commission, NARA-College Park, Maryland.

[9] For an outstanding analysis of the human costs of the Revolution, see Robert McCaa, "Missing Millions: The Human Cost of the Mexican Revolution," University of Minnesota Population Center, accessed May 1, 2014, http://users.pop.umn.edu/~rmccaa/missmill/mxrev.htm. See also McCaa, "Missing Millions: The Demographic Costs of the Mexican Revolution," *Mexican Studies/Estudios Mexicanos* 19:2 (2003) 367–400. McCaa estimates that total losses during the Revolutionary period due to war, disease, famine, and decline in birthrates totaled 2.1 million, approximately 14% of the roughly 15 million residents of Mexico in 1910.

societies worked together to cope with the refugee crisis that engulfed the towns at the international boundary between late 1910 through 1917.[10] It first examines immigration officers' responses to the refugees who fled across the border, and how those officers circumvented immigration restrictions in order to provide admission to Mexicans deemed deserving of refuge. It then analyzes the conditions under which immigration officers offered unregulated and uncounted admission into the country in order to maintain order at the border and avoid responsibility for loss of life. As these offers documented their practices to supervisors in D.C., the ad-hoc refugee admissions protocol became part of accepted federal policy. Once within the United States, immigration officers worked with bordertown benevolent societies, businessmen, and Red Cross officials to secure shelter, food, transportation, and medical care for Mexico's refugees. The chapter then documents how the resulting humanitarian infrastructure of makeshift hospitals, newly established Red Cross chapters, volunteer networks, and organizational partnerships initially propped up an international effort by the U.S. Department of State and the American Red Cross to provide funds and food to civilians in the Mexican interior suffering from famine as a direct and indirect result of the Mexican Revolution.

HERALD
CITY NATIONAL BANK
CITY NATIONAL BANK
HAVANA CIGARS
GRECIAN
BEST

Figure 7: Photograph, S. El Paso Street looking toward Pioneer Plaza; Herald Building, White House Department Store, and City ca. 1910-1920, Otis A. Aultman Photo Collection, Border Heritage Center, A0412, El Paso Public Library.

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[10] The total number of Mexicans who migrated into the United States during the first ten years of the Revolution is estimated to be more than 250,000, though many of these are traditionally studied as economic migrants pulled into the United States by the labor demands of the First World War. While admissions stayed high after the U.S. entered war in 1917, the first big jump coincided with the onset of the Revolution, when admissions increased nearly four-fold, from 6,067 in 1908 to 23,238 in 1912. The statistics on record reflect higher crossings in 1912 than in 1918, though these are flawed due to poor record-keeping and lack of counting those that temporarily refugeed in the United States. The quarter of a million Mexican migrants uprooted by the violence, political persecution, destruction, famine, and disease were joined by thousands of Americans who fled due to anti-American sentiment, violence, risk of famine and disease, property destruction, and the explicit evacuation orders delivered by the U.S. President in anticipation of U.S. military interventions in 1914 and 1916. Additionally, thousands more Japanese, Chinese, Syrian, Russian, British, German, Spanish, Turkish, and French nationals fled Mexico and into the United States temporarily or permanently due to the devastation wrought directly and indirectly by the political violence. See Table 431, "Immigrants, by country of last residence–Mexico: 1820–1995," *Historical Statistics of the United States, Millennium Edition Online. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007.*

Border Humanitarianism: The Official Story

In 1910, immigration inspectors like Berkshire were responsible for identifying and excluding a long list of people deemed undesirable and inadmissible to the United States. Fifty years of federal immigration legislation cumulatively excluded all of the following:

1. All idiots, imbeciles, feeble-minded persons, epileptics, insane idiots, and persons who have been insane within five years previous, persons who have had two or more attacks of insanity at any time previously
2. paupers
3. persons likely to become a public charge
4. professional beggars
5. persons afflicted with tuberculosis or with a loathsome or dangerous contagious disease
6. persons not comprehended within any of the foregoing excluded classes who are found to be and are certified by the examining surgeon as being mentally or physically defective, such mental or physical defect being of a nature which may affect the ability of such alien to earn a living
7. persons who have been convicted of or admit having committed a felony or other crime or misdemeanor involving moral turpitude
8. polygamists, or persons who admit their belief in the practice of polygamy
9. anarchists, or persons who believe in or advocate the overthrow by force or violence of the Government of the United State, or of all government, or of all forms of law, or the assassination of public officials
10. prostitutes, or women or girls coming into the United States for the purpose of prostitution or for any other immoral purpose, persons who procure or attempt to bring in prostitute or women or girls for the purpose of prostitution or for any other immoral purpose
11. persons hereinafter called contract laborers, who have been induced or solicited to migrate to this country by offers or promises of employment or in consequences of agreements, oral, written or printed, express or implied, to perform labor in this country of any kind, skilled or unskilled
12. those who have been, within one year form the date of application for admission to the United States, deported as having been inducted or solicited to migrate as above described
13. any person whose ticket or passage is paid for with the money of another, or who is assisted by others to come, unless it is affirmatively and satisfactorily shown that such person does not belong to one of the foregoing excluded classes, and that said ticket or passage was not paid for by any corporation, association, society, municipality, or foreign government, either directly or indirectly
14. all children under sixteen years of age, unaccompanied by one or both of their parents, at the direction of the Secretary of Commerce and Labor or under such regulations as he may from time to time prescribe.[11]

According to the written law, Berkshire and his colleagues were to interrogate every migrant and transcribe their responses onto standardized forms that described the immigrant's body, home, literacy, family, destination, assets, source of travel funds, health, and friends.[12] Inspectors assessed the responses, and, if applicable, sorted arrivals into one of these fourteen ill-defined legal categories so for deportation. The remaining arrivals were then subjected to a medical inspection that would ensure they were free of infectious disease before being placed in the luckiest class of all: the admitted.[13] This exacting procedure was written to ensure that few were admitted simply or quickly.

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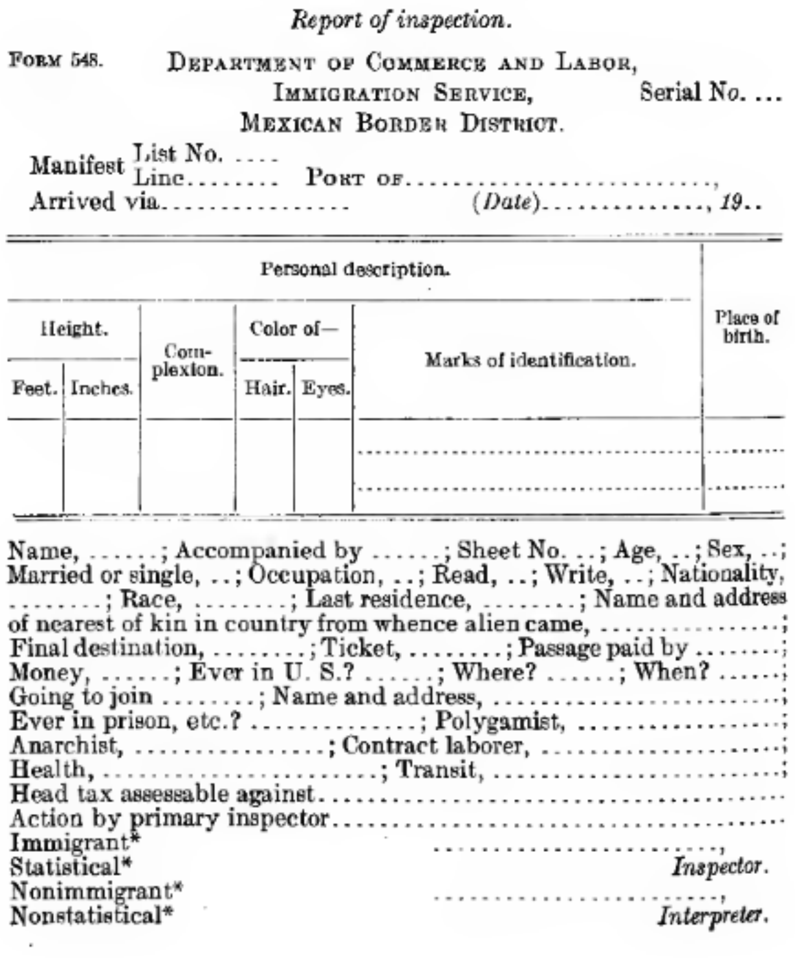
[11] Immigration Act of 1907, 34 Stat. 898 (1907) §2. Additionally, to enter legally, one must have arrived through one of eleven designated ports of entry in American border towns. Ibid.

[12] Ibid. Many historians agree that, in practice, the Act of 1907 was not enforced at the Mexican border and that crossing remained relatively fluid until the passage of the Immigration Act of 1917, due to the strength of local cross-border communities, the meagerness of the federal immigration staffing at the Mexican border, and a preoccupation with Chinese rather than Mexican migration. This chapter affirms that the federal officials relaxed inspections and refusal of entry at the Mexican border during the Revolutionary Years (1910-1920), but argues that the laws were suspended in part because immigration inspectors classified the Revolution's migrants as refugees, and refused to carry out the business of inspection and rejection of inadmissible migrants due to their apparent suffering. For examples of arguments about the ease of pre-1917 Mexican border crossing by Mexican nationals, see, *Migra! A History of the U.S. Border Patrol* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010) chap. 4, and Deborah Kang, *The INS on the Line: Making Immigration Law on the US-Mexico Border, 1917-1954* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), chap. 1.



Report of inspection.

FORM 548. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE AND LABOR,
IMMIGRATION SERVICE, Serial No. ...
MEXICAN BORDER DISTRICT.

Manifest List No. ....
Manifest Line........ PORT OF..........................,
Arrived via................ (*Date*)..............., *19*..

Personal description.						Place of birth.
Height.		Complexion.	Color of—		Marks of identification.	
Feet.	Inches.		Hair.	Eyes.		
					....	....
					....	....

Name, ...; Accompanied by ......; Sheet No. ..; Age, ..; Sex, ..;
Married or single, ..; Occupation, ..; Read, ..; Write, ..; Nationality,
........; Race, ...; Last residence, ...; Name and address
of nearest of kin in country from whence alien came, ...;
Final destination, ...; Ticket, ...; Passage paid by ....;
Money, ...; Ever in U. S.? ......; Where? ......; When? ......;
Going to join ....; Name and address, ...;
Ever in prison, etc.? ....; Polygamist, ...;
Anarchist, ...; Contract laborer, ...;
Health, ...; Transit, ...;
Head tax assessable against...
Action by primary inspector...
Immigrant* ....,
Statistical* *Inspector.*
Nonimmigrant* ....,
Nonstatistical* *Interpreter.*

Figure 8: Form 548 *Report of Inspection,* Immigration Service, The U.S. Department of Commerce and Labor, 1911.

Some local government officials and law enforcement grumbled about the high bar. Elected officials and rank-and-file officers saw the complicated immigration procedures as evidence that neither Mexican nor U.S. officials stationed in D.C. and Mexico City understood that the border region had become a complex urban ecosystem—with machine politics, an expanding built environment, and intricate intercity social relations and trade networks. These sentiments came to a head in 1909, when high-ranking diplomats in Washington and Mexico City proposed to celebrate American-Mexican friendship with an elaborate ceremony in which both presidents would meet, entourages in tow, at the center of a bridge connecting El Paso and Ciudad Diaz. To local officials, such plans were laughably naive. El Paso's Mayor, Joseph Ulster Sweeney, bluntly responded to the Secretary of State, "you evidently do not understand the exact nature and character of that strip of land in the southern portion of this City."[14] True, the area was "policed, cared for, and lighted up by the City," largely because locals were trying to protect the operation of nearby bridges critical to the functioning of regional transportation networks. But it was populated with "miscreants, paupers, and even revolutionaries." Sweeney flatly refused to move local troops from the southern district to accompany the President on his cross-city stunt. The mayor made clear that he prioritized the need to maintain order and ensure the operation of the infrastructure in southern district at all times. Simply put, local law enforcement could ensure the working of the city and its trade networks only if there were no interruptions due to the State's diplomatic theater. The mayor's rebuke did not convince State Department officials to call off their plans, and President William Howard Taft and Porfirio Díaz met with pomp and circumstance on October 16, 1909, just beyond the international bridge at the Ciudad Juarez customhouse, renovated to resemble the Palace of Versailles. The production monopolized the efforts of local law enforcement as well as federal troops of both countries, following the exact plan that Mayor Sweeney deemed a "disaster."[15]

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[13] Ibid. If the officer instead found the migrant inadmissible, he was to detain her or release her on a bond of at least $500 for up to three years while the hearings of her case took place. If his judgment was upheld, the migrant was to be deported back to the country from which she came at the expense of the company that sponsored her journey or the Immigrant Fund.

Local law enforcement would soon confront an international debacle on another scale. In the fall of 1910, only months after Presidents William Howard Taft and Porfirio Díaz met at the border's premier metropolises, factions throughout Mexico launched a fierce revolt against Díaz's rule that unleashed the decade-long Mexican Revolution.[16] In the months and years that followed, the border cities swelled with refugees and border inspectors forced to choose between their professional duties and moral sensibilities.

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[14] El Paso Mayor Joseph U. Sweeney to Acting Secretary of State A.A. Adee, September 28, 1909, Records of Notes from the State Department from the Mexican Embassy, Box 53, Commissions and Arbitrations, RG 76: Boundaries and Claims Commission, NARA-College Park, Maryland.

[15] Ibid.; Acting Secretary of State A.A. Adee to Mayor of El Paso Joseph U. Sweeney, September 15, 1909; Records of Notes from the State Department from the Mexican Embassy, Box 53, Commissions and Arbitrations, RG 76: Boundaries and Claims Commission, NARA-College Park, Maryland.

[16] The Mexican Revolution broke out in the winter of 1910 as liberal politician Francisco Madero organized to unseat dictator Porfirio Díaz, who assumed the presidency in 1876. Diaz's dynamic reign, often termed the Porfiriato, ushered in numerous political, economic, and social changes over the course of thirty-four years. It is most notorious for instigating or encouraging a massive redistribution of land out of the hands of the Catholic Church and communal indigenous villages and into the portfolios of American, British, and German mining, railway, and communication corporations, one of the primary causes of the uprising. For recent, accessible takes include Alan Knight, *The Mexican Revolution: A Very Short Introduction* (New York: Oxford, 2016) and William Beezley and Colin M. MacLachlan, eds., *Mexicans in Revolution, 1910-1946: An Introduction* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press: 2009).

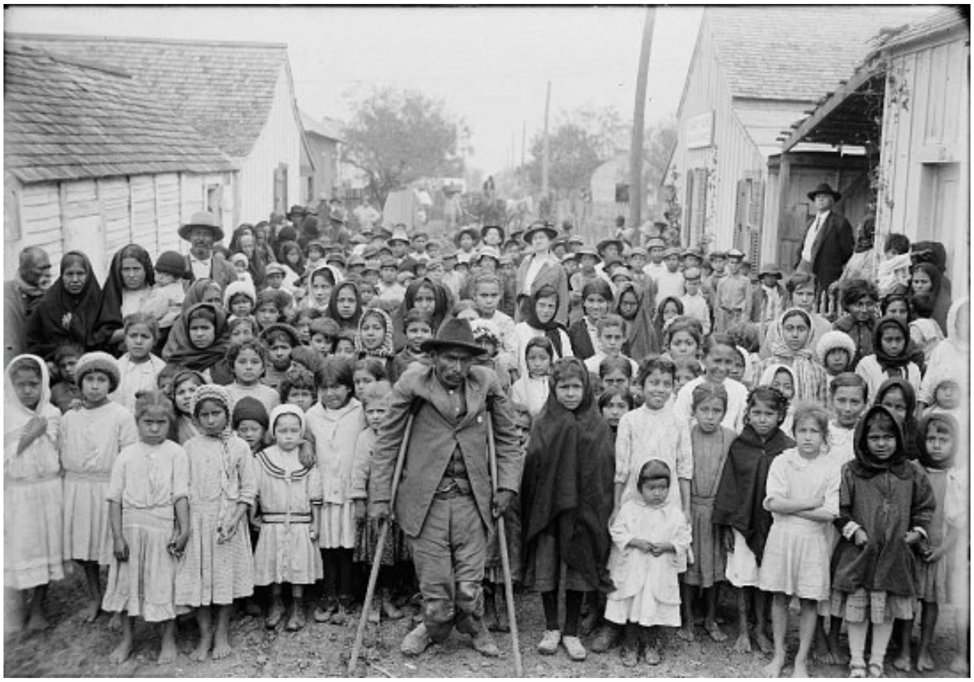

Figure 9: Refugees arriving from Matamoros to Brownsville, June 1913, Robert Runyon Photograph Collection, RUN02467, Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin. Most are housed by friends or the Charity House.

Otto Meng was one of the first officers to cope with the refugee crisis that broke out in the last two months of 1910. Newly stationed in Presidio, Texas during the early days of the Revolution, he scrutinized daily changes in the conditions across the line and mapped the movements of nearby rebel groups. According to his supervisor, Meng kept superiors well-informed of the developments on the border, especially as "great uneasiness" among hundreds of non-combatant women and children drove them across the border in early December. He oversaw them as they took refuge with friends or in tents along the line, reassuring his adviser that all were "expected to return…as soon as quiet is restored" to their homes in Mexico.[17] But, Meng did not restrict the refugees' stay—he admitted them indefinitely. His brief explanation was that the migrants were "families, women, children, and men, non-combatants, who have temporarily left their homes to escape danger" and thus must be treated as "temporary refugees."[18] Meng's supervisor, F.W. Berkshire, was facing a similar situation in El Paso at the same moment. It was perhaps for this reason that Berkshire instructed Meng to stay nearby "to prevent flagrant violation of Immigration laws," but conceded that it was "not deemed expedient to attempt the strict enforcement of said laws in that vicinity under all the circumstances."[19] With that exchange, Meng and Berkshire initiated the first of many reports between individual inspectors who incrementally changed border policies in the region from the early days of the Revolution in 1910 until the D.C. legislators established a new era of restricted cross-border migration with the passage of the Immigration Act of 1917.

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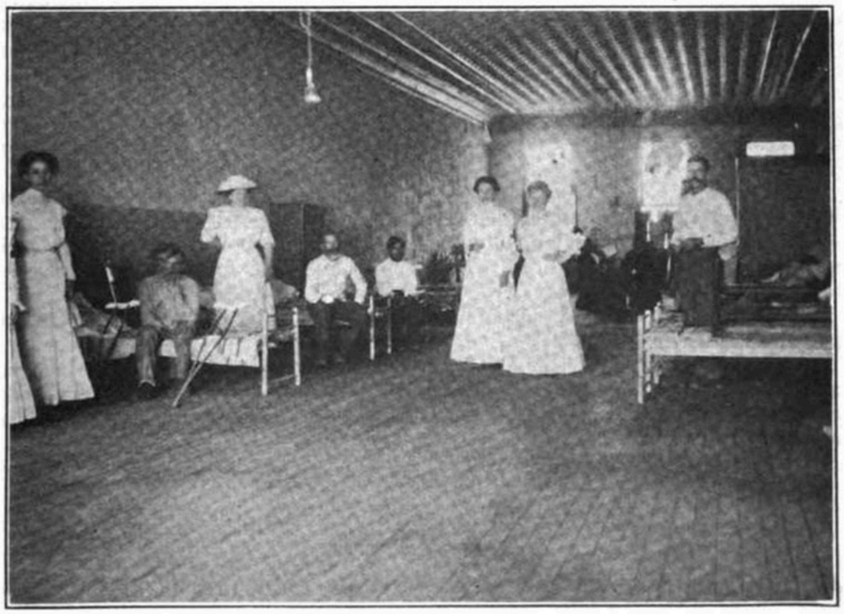
[17] Supervising Inspector, El Paso Immigration Station F.W. Berkshire to Commissioner-General of Immigration, December 14, 1910, Mexican Border Situation, Border Officers' Reports, Box 1110, Subject and Policy Files, 1893-1957, Records of the INS: RG 85, NARA-D.C.

[18] Ibid.

[19] Supervising Inspector, El Paso Immigration Station F.W. Berkshire to Commissioner-General of Immigration, December 23, 1910, Mexican Border Situation, Border Officers' Reports, Box 1110, Subject and Policy Files, 1893-1957, Records of the INS: RG 85, NARA-D.C.

Four hundred and sixty-five miles to the west of Meng's post in Presidio, immigration inspector William Soult was also moved to admit into the U.S. dozens of combatants for medical aid in April, 1911. Originally from Washington, D.C., Soult had been in the service about two years and had recently been promoted and transferred from Eagle Pass, Texas to Douglas, Arizona.[20] From his station, he witnessed a public battle in the streets of Agua Prieta on April 13, 1911 that left him unable to carry out federal admissions protocols. Ignoring federal procedures, Soult rushed the injured to a makeshift Red Cross hospital funded and built by the people of Douglas specifically to respond to the urgent crisis across the border in the wake of the battle.[21] Soult's collaboration with these humanitarians made a lasting impression in Douglas: the local chapter of the Red Cross was founded in the course of organizing the Mexican relief efforts in the Spring of 1911.[22]



RED CROSS HOSPITAL AT DOUGLAS, ARIZONA, MAY 20, 1911

Figure 10: Photograph, Red Cross volunteer nurses and officers at the newly opened Red Cross hospital for Mexican wounded, established after the second battle of Agua Prieta by residents of Douglas, Arizona. Photo included in Charles J. O'Connor, "Refugees in Southern California," 21.

To justify his actions, Soult emphasized three main points. First, the people crossing the border were "in no condition to be inspected."[23] As they came across "in a dazed and dying condition[,]"they were in too much pain to withstand the bureaucratic interrogation required under federal law.[24] Second, admitting and treating the refugees was the only humane course of action, since they could not "humanely be turned back into the battle nor denied surgical attention."[25] Finally, local popular sentiment, at the moment, lay with the refugees. Soult insisted that it was "apparent to all" that watched the battle that the refugees needed medical care and safety, not inspection.[26] Indeed, local press in Marfa and Douglas made clear that they expected federal officials to follow Soult's lead. "Thousands of people from Mexico [who] will be camped on American soil, where they are coming for safety...It is up to Uncle Sam to see that they and we are protected."[27] Douglas's papers, meanwhile, sympathized with the affluent "men of prominence and large property owners" in Agua Prieta. Those unfortunates had "been forced to leave their homes and their property" due to the revolutionary conflicts and take refuge on the U.S. side of the boundary, while "longing to get back to their homes."[28] According to Soult's letter to his supervisor, he could most effectively govern the border crisis and appease the local population only by treating the migrants as refugees, not inadmissible combatants. Humanitarian action thus proved the most politically pragmatic response to the crisis.

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[20] "Immigration Man Promoted," *El Paso Herald,* March 2, 1910, 4.

[21] Inspector in Charge Will E. Soult to Supervising Inspector, El Paso Immigration Station F.W. Berkshire, April 14, 1911, Mexican Border Situation, Border Officers' Reports, Box 1110, Subject and Policy Files, 1893-1957, Records of the INS: RG 85, NARA-D.C.; Charles J. O'Connor, "Refugees in Southern California," *The Red Cross Magazine* 6:1 (1911) 16-28.

[22] Charles J. O'Connor, "Refugees in Southern California."

[23] Soult to Berkshire, April 14, 1911.

Soult's unremarkable report on his actions did not present a particularly compelling or sympathetic narrative. He offered no names or descriptions of the wounded refugees in a bid to elicit empathy.[29] He didn't isolate any one victim in a bid for the reader's compassion. He didn't even count the refugees to underscore the scale of the crisis at hand. Soult indulged in no narrative techniques to make the refugees' plight more heroic, or his own actions easier to excuse.[30] Nor did he attempt to invoke the refugees' political affiliation in order to garner sympathy with Americans supporting one or the other faction. Because the migrants could not be inspected, "the writer contented himself with ascertaining their names, as far as possible… however…little could be accomplished."[31] Given that "the writer [was] alone at the station at the beginning of the fight, and the firing being very brisk," he offered only an impressionistic account of the course of events after the wounded were admitted. So, no one could corroborate Soult's assessment of the situation. Finally, because "a considerable number entered at various points," Soult could not provide a clear picture to supervisors in El Paso or in D.C. exactly who and how many crossed from one town, and one state, to the other. He simply and regularly informed his superiors that he would not be enforcing admissions procedures, as it appeared "extremely inappropriate, probably futile to attempt to enforce regulations literally."[32]

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[24] Ibid.

[25] Ibid.

[26] Ibid.

[27] "Mexicans Flee from Ojinaga to Texas," *El Paso Herald*, December 9, 1910, 1.

[28] "Ask Díaz to Step Down as President: Mexicans of Douglas Desire Peace in Mexico," *Bisbee Daily Review*, May 9, 1911, 2.

[29] Tom Laqueur argued that the eighteenth British humanitarian narrative was based on detailed accounts of a lone suffering body, a causal connection between the body and the reader, and finally a mechanism through which the reader could help the body. "Bodies, Details, and the Humanitarian Narrative" in Lynn Hunt, ed., *The New Cultural History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989) 176-202.

[30] Lynn Festa, "Humanity without Feathers," *Humanity: An International Journal of Human Rights, Humanitarianism, and Development* 1, no. 1 (Fall 2010) 3-27. Caroline Shaw has analyzed the particular form the humanitarian narrative took to make Britons responsive to persecuted foreigners in the mid-nineteenth century. Refugees' narratives contained four basic elements: they established the innocence of the refugees, their courage in the face of oppression, the ongoing tragedy befalling those left behind, and the beckoning of British support. Caroline Shaw, "Recall to Life: Imperial Britain, Foreign Refugees and the Development of Modern Refuge, 1789-1905" (Ph.D. Diss., University of California, Berkeley, 2010) chap. 2. See also her book, *Britannia's Embrace: Modern Humanitarianism and the Imperial Origins of Refugee Relief* (New York: Oxford University Press).

[31] Soult to Berkshire, April 14, 1911.

From 1910 to 1915, immigration inspectors stationed in Southern and West Texas, Arizona, and California wrote dozens of reports echoing Soult's appeal to humanity in the face of a crisis at the border. Immigration inspectors in Brownsville, San Diego, El Paso, Douglas, Marfa, Presidio, Eagle Pass, and Campo, California regularly reported that they had abandoned federal procedures for more humane and reasonable courses of action. In December 1910, Berkshire assumed he would receive forgiveness for systematically violating U.S. law when he admitted refugees *en masse*. He even asked the Commissioner-General to approve the new protocol going forward. It was, in his mind, "the only reasonable way of handling the situation."[33] In March 1911, inspectors Clarence Gatley and William Walsh argued that "it [was] evident…that there was considerable suffering," among the refugees at Presidio who were admitted, thus justifying their admission.[34] In October 1913, an inspector at Eagle Pass insisted that "it was apparent to anyone familiar with the situation" that thousands of refugees from Piedras Negras must be let over regardless of formal admissibility.[35]

To explain their incapacity or unwillingness to carry out ordinary inspection procedures, immigration officials on the ground insisted over and over again that they were facing a crisis. In the midst of conditions too appalling for distant officials to understand, immigration inspectors negotiated with their superiors and with the refugees themselves to reconcile conflicts between professional duties and their own sense of social responsibility, decency, and humanity. The inspectors didn't engage in defiant protest. Instead, they extended limited aid to the refugees immediately before them.[36] In exchange, the officers assured their superiors. Individual officers assured their mid-level superiors that they would encourage the refugees to return to Mexico, and reportedly elicited assurances that they would in fact return. One even promised to take "personal responsibility" for those who he had admitted against direct orders, as if to underscore that he was acting as a moral witness as well as an agent of the state.[37]

The personal nature of such individual appeals could obscure the collaborative work of refugee relief. In Douglas, Soult worked with the Red Cross and the medical staff of local smelter Copper Queen Consolidated Copper Company. Forty-five medical personnel and civilians crossed the border after the conflict dissipated to bring the wounded and dead across the line for treatment and burial.[38] On the 17th of April, 1911, victorious federal troops in Mexico refused to let the Red Cross "cross into their city," and erected their own makeshift hospital instead.[39] After several of the wounded in their care died, one representative of the federal troops came across the boundary and borrowed seven stretchers from the newly organized Douglas Red Cross group. The federal then improvised their own hospital in Agua, and flew a four by six-foot flag with a red cross. ARC representative Charles J. O'Connor learned of the federal hospital after he made his way down to the border from San Francisco to contribute to the relief efforts, and tersely reported that "The Red Cross had nothing to do" with the federals' hospital or the flag.

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[32] Will E. Soult report to Supervising Inspector, El Paso Immigration Station F.W. Berkshire, April 17, 1911, Mexican Border Situation, Border Officers' Reports, Box 1110, Subject and Policy Files, 1893-1957, Records of the INS: RG 85, NARA-D.C.

[33] Ibid.

[34] Immigrant Inspector Clarence G. Gatley and Immigrant Inspector William E. Walsh to F.W. Berkshire, March 7, 1911, Mexican Border Situation, Border Officers' Reports, Box 1110, Subject and Policy Files, 1893-1957, Records of the INS: RG 85, NARA-D.C.

[35] Inspector in Charge, Eagle Pass, in F.W. Berkshire, Report to Commissioner-General of Immigration, October 21, 1913, Mexican Border Situation, Border Officers' Reports, Box 1111, Subject and Policy Files, 1893-1957, Records of the INS: RG 85, NARA-D.C.

[36] Both Adam Smith and David Hume argued that people have a natural inclination to aid those whom they see suffering. Adam Smith, *A Theory of Moral Sentiments* (London: G. Bell, 1911); David Hume, *An Inquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1902). Norman Fiering contextualizes Smith and Hume's ideas of "Irresistible Compassion" as part of the Enlightenment belief in a sensible man. "Irresistible Compassion: An Aspect of Eighteenth-Century Sympathy and Humanitarianism," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 37:2 (1976) 196-218.

[37] Inspector in Charge, Eagle Pass, in F.W. Berkshire, Report to Commissioner-General of Immigration, October 21, 1913; Mexican Border Situation, Border Officers' Reports, Box 1111, Subject and Policy Files, 1893-1957, Records of the INS: RG 85, NARA-D.C.

Immigration inspectors also extended refuge to fleeing Chinese migrants, likely the most reviled of all populations living in the border region in the early twentieth century. Anti-Chinese sentiment and the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 arguably gave rise to America's policed and surveyed border regime.[40] In the thirty-two years between the passing of Chinese Exclusion Act and the onset of the Mexican Revolution, the border had become a zone in which American patrolmen identified, chased, captured, imprisoned, deported, and sometimes violently abused Chinese migrants.[41] As a result of this hostility, sizeable Chinese populations rapidly emerged in Mexico's northern border towns after being deported or prohibited from entering the U.S.[42] These migrants often found themselves as unwelcome in Mexico as they had been in the U.S. By the early years of the Revolution, Chinese nationals were subject to frequent, violent public beatings or property destruction in Northern Mexican states.[43] On both sides of the boundary, most poor Chinese workers lived in isolated, overcrowded ghettos. Yet hundreds of Chinese workers received the protection of U.S. immigration inspectors in the Mexican border region beginning in 1910.

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[38] O'Connor, "Refugees in Southern California," 22-23. However, Boundaries were defended and hostilities revealed, but those were primarily among companies, cities, troops, and organizations—not between citizens of distinct states, nor between refugees and border patrol.

[39] Ibid.

[40] Both Erika Lee and Patrick Ettinger argue that American immigration restriction was born of anti-Chinese sentiment. See Erika Lee, *At America's Gates: Chinese Immigration During the Exclusion Era, 1882-1943* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003) chaps. 1, 2, and 5. On the formation of Chinese ghettos and Chinese attempts to evade surveillance through disguise, see Patrick Ettinger, *Imaginary Lines: Border Enforcement and the Origins of Undocumented Immigration, 1882-1930* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2009) chaps. 2 and 5. For a global approach to the importance of anti-Asian sentiment to the rise of modern border control, see Adam M. McKeown, *Melancholy Order: Asian Migration and the Globalization of Borders* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008).

[41] See Erika Lee, *At America's Gates* and Ettinger, *Imaginary Lines*. To evade the eye of U.S. immigration inspectors, Chinese workers sometimes dressed and made themselves up to appear as Mexicans—a far less reviled class of migrant workers.

[42] Robert Romero shows the evolution of very distinct classes of powerful merchants and degraded workers among the Chinese who participated in the U.S.-Mexico border's economic opportunities and exploitation. Robert Chao Romero, *The Chinese in Mexico, 1882-1940* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2010).

[43] Grace Peña Delgado, *Making the Chinese Mexican: Global Migration, Localism, and Exclusion in the U.S.-Mexico Borderlands* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2012) chaps. 3 – 4; Elliot Young, *Alien Nation: Chinese Migration in the Americas from the Coolie Era through World War II* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2014) chaps. 3 and 4; James W. Russell, *Class and Race Formation in North America* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008) chap. 2.

Unusual cases including those of Chinese and Japanese refugees had prompted the creation of what Berkshire described as a new "general practice" that was clear by fall of 1912. In August, Berkshire described to his superiors the policies his office put into place. Upon arrival, refugees were admitted to the United States with the understanding that they or their employers in Mexico would bear the expenses of their stay in the city or the immigration building. Berkshire claimed that most employers in the cases, all of which were American- or British-owned, lived up to their word, remembering that some went out of their way "to furnish any bond that might be required" to ensure the Chinese workers' security and eventual return to Mexico, as "they did not desire to have them confined in the detention quarters if it could be avoided." Berkshire, the architect of this new protocol towards Japanese and Chinese migrants, explained that he "felt … justified" evading the Chinese Exclusion Policy "considering the unusual situation on the border."[44] The sense of crisis was sufficient reason to modify federal procedure and place authority in nearby hands, though he "hoped" that the bureau would approve his office's course of action.[45] In August 1913, Berkshire identified and brokered an agreement with the "recognized leader" among the Chinese of El Paso, Mar Wing Kee, who agreed to care for 75 Chinese refugees *en route* to the city. Consolidating the resources of the immigration inspectors and the Chinese community, the local American Consul worked with Kee to ensure "proper consideration [for] these unfortunate people" who sought to enter the United States "as a place of refuge."[46]

Officers acting on behalf of the Chinese refugees did not rationalize their actions as humane, and their actions explicitly served the interests of influential local American and British businesses. On August 5, 1912, Luther Steward, an Inspector stationed in El Paso, Texas, reported to the Commissioner-General of Immigration that twelve Chinese had been received in local detention quarters, "upon the request of representatives of the Pearson interest in Mexico," who had spoken on behalf of their employees and the Chinese population in Juárez, across the border form El Paso. "Their American friends" had requested that the Immigration service admit the Chinese refugees, and the Pearson Company assured the inspectors that all refugees would return to Mexico once it was safe and advisable to do so.[47] Likewise, Japanese subjects from Chihuahua seeking refuge in El Paso received favorable treatment only after the conclusions of negotiations between the Japanese Ambassador and U.S. Secretary of State William Jennings Bryan.[48] El Paso inspectors also agreed to temporarily accept the city's displaced Chinese at the request of the American Ambassador in Juarez, who "was doubtful whether he could care for all of them" at the consul in Mexico. El Paso's officials did extend such courtesy— "provided the Chinese would pay any expense incident to their maintenance" and would return to Juárez upon cessation of military activity.[49] In the case of Chinese and Japanese workers, refuge was a commodity, traded among borderlands officials and companies as a type of carefully negotiated business transaction.

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[44] Supervising Inspector, El Paso Immigration Station F.W. Berkshire to Commissioner-General, August 22, 1912, Mexican Border Situation, Border Officers' Reports, Box 1110, Subject and Policy Files, 1893-1957, Records of the INS: RG 85, NARA-D.C.

[45] Ibid.

[46] Supervising Inspector, El Paso Immigration Station F.W. Berkshire to Commissioner-General of Immigration, August 29, 1913, Mexican Border Situation, Border Officers' Reports, Box 1110, Subject and Policy Files, 1893-1957, Records of the INS: RG 85, NARA-D.C.

[47] Luther Steward, Acting Supervising Inspector, August 5, 1912, Mexican Border Situation, Border Officers' Reports, Box 1110, Subject and Policy Files, 1893-1957, Records of the INS: RG 85, NARA-D.C.

[48] W.B. Wilson, Supervising Inspector, Immigration Service, El Paso to Office of Secretary of State, January 3, 1914; Mexican Border Situation, Border Officers' Reports, Box 1111, Subject and Policy Files, 1893-1957, Records of the INS: RG 85, NARA-D.C.

The U.S. military also extended refuge out of a sense of obligation towards Chinese residents who had lent assistance to U.S. troops that entered the unfamiliar territory of Northern Mexico in pursuit of combatants who had launched attacks on U.S. soil. Chinese merchants and laborers living in Northern Mexico provided food, labor, and shelter that sustained American soldiers' morale and health, especially after local Mexican communities denied them resources out of fear or nationalist sentiment.[50] General Pershing, who in 1916 famously led an expedition into Mexico in pursuit of Pancho Villa, returned to the U.S. with his troops flanking a group of Chinese refugees. He reasoned, "[a] little thing, merely the honor of the … Expedition and of the United States, requires that protection be given to these faithful camp followers."[51] The Chinese installed miniature, temporary vending stalls in army camps. Pershing's troops relied on Chinese laundries, Chinese food stalls, and Chinese carpentries in the middle of the northern Mexican desert. In Pershing's estimation, his obligation to those who had aided his troops did not end at the U.S. boundary and he lobbied and ultimately won asylum for hundreds of "Pershing's Chinese" as well as Mexican vendors who aided his troops.[52]

More typically, local inspectors remained deferential towards distant supervisors when responding to Chinese immigrants; pity did not nullify policy. Oftentimes Chinese refugees were explicitly granted authority to enter by far higher offices—the Secretary of State and the Secretary of War among them. On June 6, 1911, for instance, the Secretary of State received assurance that the Chinese merchants he had inquired after "were permitted if necessary to seek refuge on the American side of the boundary." Berkshire later noted: "for years, it had been the practice of immigration officials on the Mexican border," if not the policy, "to permit such people to refugee to the U.S."[53] In June 1912, F.W. Berkshire cabled the Commissioner-General on behalf of inspectors in California to "ask permission" to permit several Chinese workers from Mazatlán to take refuge in the United States.[54] Crucially, inspectors sought federal approval before acting on behalf of Chinese arrivals, however desperate their plight. While policy might have been set aside in the case of Chinese and Japanese refugees, the motivation to do so stemmed from diplomatic decisions and favors exchanges from on high.

These new, more relaxed procedures towards Mexican, Japanese, and Chinese migrants did not please the Governor of Texas. Governor C.B. Colquitt directly contacted U.S. President Taft and asked for authority to enforce the border as federal agents softened their stance towards Chinese, Japanese, and Mexican arrivals. "If we can deport alien Mexican population coming here for revolutionary purposes," he argued, it would "save both State and nation much expense."[55] No record of a response is held in the national archives, but the tension apparently intensified as the refugee crisis persisted. In 1913, the Governor began forwarding complaints from Texas citizens enraged by migrants eating their crops and camping on their property, decrying the fact that neither "border patrol, immigration officers, nor the county officials give any adequate protection" from the onslaught of refugees.[56] At that point, Colquitt "begged" the President to remember that if immigration fell "under the laws of this state, [he] could handle [such claims] independently." As it was, Colquitt acknowledged that "neutrality and immigration laws are Federal Statutes, and subject only to enforcement by Federal Authorities," so he simply renewed claims that inspectors resume enforcing laws as they were written.[57] Nonetheless, Berkshire and his colleagues retained their relaxed admissions practices and continued to profess commitments to humane immigration inspection.

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[49] Supervising Inspector, El Paso Immigration Station F.W. Berkshire to Commissioner-General of Immigration, April 17, 1911, Mexican Border Situation, Border Officers' Reports, Box 1110, Subject and Policy Files, 1893-1957, Records of the INS: RG 85, NARA-D.C.

[50] Grace Delgado, *Making the Chinese Mexican*, 131.

[51] Ibid., 132.

[52] U.S. Congress, House, Committee on Immigration and Naturalization, *Registration of Refugee Chinese, November 16, 1921*, 67th Cong., 1st Sess., 1921, H.Rep. 471.

[53] Acting Secretary of Commerce and Labor Benjamin Cable to Secretary of State Philander Knox, June 6, 1911, Mexican Border Situation, Border Officers' Reports, Box 1110, Subject and Policy Files, 1893-1957, Records of the INS: RG 85, NARA-D.C.

[54] Supervising Inspector, El Paso Immigration Station F.W. Berkshire to Commissioner-General, June 6, 1912, Mexican Border Situation, Border Officers' Reports, Box 1110, Subject and Policy Files, 1893-1957, Records of the INS: RG 85, NARA-D.C.

The Mexican migrants were not the only ones who stood to gain from the inspectors' ad-hoc new refugee policy. By seeing and classifying the foreign arrivals as refugees, the officers avoided what they feared most— "grave responsibility" for a "great loss of life."[58] Hannah Arendt argued that the greatest burden of responsibility often falls upon those who execute orders rather than those who give them.[59] But the immigration inspectors working at the Mexican boundary in the first years of the Revolution resisted that rule. By refusing to execute routine procedures and instead creating new ones appropriate to the crisis, the officers transferred such responsibility back up to distant authorities. The inspectors' actions simply reflected their own interest in avoiding moral responsibility for the suffering of refugees, which dovetailed with those of the migrants. The result was an informal refugee policy responsive to the unpredictable violence of the border region.

Colquitt recognized that the officers' appeals for leniency effectively invented an informal refugee policy at the border. Border officials exempted, according to their cumulative counts, tens of thousands of migrants from inspection and admitted them for one stated reason: in the eyes of the officers, the migrants were "unquestionably refugees."[60] Berkshire and his fellow inspectors consistently worked to convince D.C. that they were confronting an exceptional moment, a crisis that demanded ordinary procedures and chains of command be set aside. In late 1910, he succeeded in persuading his superior, Commissioner-General F.H. Larned, to see that suspending enforcement procedures was "the most satisfactory way of handling the situation at this time."[61] In May 1911, Berkshire claimed that "humanity… impelled" him to admit obviously inadmissible refugees from Juarez to El Paso and put them up in a makeshift Red Cross hospital.[62] He again wrote to D.C. in the fall of 1912 to defend the practice of temporarily admitting Chinese refugees, insisting that "no possible harm has or could result from this procedure, but considering unusual situation on border felt such course justified by circumstances, it is hoped Bureau will approve course adopted by this office." [63] In May 1913, recently dispatched U.S. troops changed their policy of turning away or deporting combatants due to "special, local conditions [that] indicated a different course for reasons of humanity."[64] In early October 1913, an Eagle Pass inspector insisted that humanity prevented him from enforcing protocol when residents of the town across the border sought asylum. Two weeks later, the inspector again granted asylum "in the interest of humanity" to thousands of refugees from Piedras Negras after they requested protection from federal troops.[65] Inspectors George J. Harris in Presidio, Texas, Inspector W.H. Robb of Ligatas, Texas, and the Inspector George Heard of San Diego made similar appeals for asylum on behalf of Mexican refugees to their superiors in D.C. Evoking "humanity" licensed locally stationed immigration agents to suspend federal policies in favor of local solutions and makeshift asylum policy. Federal inspectors suspended or loosened immigration enforcement so frequently that it ultimately provoked the ire of the new acting head of the Immigration and Customs department in D.C., W.B. Wilson. In October 1913, Wilson wrote directly to the lowest level immigration inspectors at Eagle Pass and underscored that "the U.S. is under no moral or legal obligation to furnish an asylum to noncombatant aliens."[66]

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[55] Texas Governor C.B. Colquitt to President of United States, November 21, 1911, Mexican Border Situation, Border Officers' Reports, Box 1110, Subject and Policy Files, 1893-1957, Records of the INS: RG 85, NARA-D.C.

[56] Texas Governor C.B. Colquitt to President of United States, Dec, 23, 1913, Mexican Border Situation, Border Officers' Reports, Box 1111, Subject and Policy Files, 1893-1957, Records of the INS: RG 85, NARA-D.C.

[57] Ibid.

[58] Quote from Inspector in Charge, Eagle Pass, in F.W. Berkshire, Report to Commissioner-General of Immigration, October 21, 1913, Mexican Border Situation, Border Officers' Reports, Box 1111, Subject and Policy Files, 1893-1957, Records of the INS: RG 85, NARA-D.C.

[59] Hannah Arendt analyzes the relationship between distance and responsibility in *Eichmann in Jerusalem*. She concludes that the public often holds responsible those who are closest to an egregious act of violence, despite the fact that "the degree of responsibility increases as we draw further away from the man who uses the fatal instrument with his own hands." *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil* (New York: Penguin, 2006) 247. Historically, "personal responsibility" has been more easily seen and punished than the "political responsibility" that rendered bureaucrats, citizens, kin, and bystanders responsible for the violence they ordered, encouraged, or tolerated.

[60] Will E. Soult to Commissioner-General of Immigration, March 27, 1911, Mexican Border Situation, Border Officers' Reports, Box 1110, Subject and Policy Files, 1893-1957, Records of the INS: RG 85, NARA-D.C. Few if any of the hundreds of thousands of Mexican nationals who arrived at the boundary during the Revolution were admissible according to the federal policies. Most fell into the categories of being contract laborers, those likely to become public charges, or those attempting to overthrow a government. Through the racialized perspective from which many European-Americans viewed Mexican nationals, the rest could be dismissed as morally suspect, diseased, or idiotic. But a significant number of inspectors did not see the migrants as morally suspect, diseased,

In their reports, the inspectors insisted that they did not soberly choose to act humanely but rather submitted to the urgent moral instincts that governed them. To grant refuge may have violated national law but adhered to a different and equally powerful order: what was referred to as "the dictates of humanity."[67] Berkshire, Soult, Meng, and their colleagues acknowledged an authority beyond the state to which they submitted in moments of crisis:

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idiotic, anarchistic, economic burdens or illegal workers. At the very least, the inspectors did not believe the migrants to be reducible to those categories.

[61] F.H. Larned to F.W. Berkshire, Dec 23, 1910, Mexican Border Situation, Border Officers' Reports, Box 1110, Subject and Policy Files, 1893-1957, Records of the INS: RG 85, NARA-D.C.

[62] F.W. Berkshire to Commissioner-General of Immigration, May 11, 1911, Mexican Border Situation, Border Officers' Reports, Box 1110, Subject and Policy Files, 1893-1957, Records of the INS: RG 85, NARA-D.C.

[63] Supervising Inspector, El Paso Immigration Station F.W. Berkshire to Commissioner-General, August 22, 1912, Mexican Border Situation, Border Officers' Reports, Box 1110, Subject and Policy Files, 1893-1957, Records of the INS: RG 85, NARA-D.C.

[64] Office of the Secretary of War to the Secretary of Commerce and Labor, May 3, 1913, Mexican Border Situation, Border Officers' Reports, Box 1111, Subject and Policy Files, 1893-1957, Records of the INS: RG 85, NARA-D.C.

[65] F.W. Berkshire to Commissioner-General of Immigration, October 21, 1913, Mexican Border Situation, Border Officers' Reports, Box 1111, Subject and Policy Files, 1893-1957, Records of the INS: RG 85, NARA-D.C.

[66] Acting Commissioner-General of Immigration W.B. Wilson to Eagle Pass Immigration Station, October 9, 1913, Mexican Border Situation, Border Officers' Reports, Box 1111, Subject and Policy Files, 1893-1957, Records of the INS: RG 85, NARA-D.C.

[67] Berkshire to Commissioner-General of Immigration, May 11, 1911. At the time, the word "dictate" held multiple meanings. Given its context here, though, it seemed to oscillate between two: "A generally accepted observation or

> Practically all of the residents of Juarez have taken refuge in El Paso…While it is undoubtedly true that some of the refugees would not have been permitted to enter the U.S under ordinary circumstances, the situation was such that the dictates of humanity impelled their temporary admission….[68]

Berkshire insisted that his own sense of humaneness warranted the suspension of state law. Eagle Pass immigration inspector E.H. Schmidt used a similar logic when he allowed thousands of residents of Piedras Negras to refuge in Eagle Pass during a multiple-day battle between the Carranzistas and Federals in 1913, claiming "humanity forbid[s] any other course."[69] According to these reports, the inspectors were compelled to suspend state law due to their subscription to a higher set of rules.

Whose humanity were these inspectors defending? Berkshire, for one, seemed to be preoccupied with his own humaneness. He saw no ambiguity in the situations he encountered where he chose "the only reasonable and humane course to adopt under the unusual circumstances."[70] Soult, Meng, Berkshire, and their colleagues characterized their actions as instinctive, not high-minded. Moreover, the same actors have appeared morally questionable characters in other histories.[71] The immigration inspectors wavered between being dutiful federal agents and humane people in a given place at a given time. Sometimes, they lobbied for leniency for those suffering in their vicinity. At others, they seemed indifferent, and submitted to the desires handed down to them from afar. Their actions did not reflect extraordinary character but rather ordinary principles—pragmatic responses to the conditions of their life and their job, a desire to shore up their standing among locals, and to stay true to their own moral principles.

Maintaining Urban Order in the Face of Catastrophe

Scholars of borderlands and immigration have many times demonstrated how proximity to conflict or diverse populations could harden or even create concepts of racial, national, and religious difference—with sometimes-violent results.[72] But in the eyes of these refugees, state agents, and civilians, proximity also proved reason enough to offer aid to the suffering. As the

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saying" or "a directive, prescription, or guide to action, deriving from or attribute to conscience, natural impulse, reasons, experience, …; a powerful guiding impulse." *Oxford English Dictionary Online,* "dictate, n.," accessed May 4, 1915, http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/52298?rskey=Nd8rp8&result=1&isAdvanced=false#eid.

[68] Berkshire to Commissioner-General of Immigration, May 11, 1911.

[69] E.H. Schmidt report to Fort Sam Houston, as transcribed in report from Lindley M. Garrison to Commissioner-General of Immigration, October 3, 1913, Mexican Border Situation, Border Officers' Reports, Box 1111, Subject and Policy Files, 1893-1957, Records of the INS: RG 85, NARA-D.C.

[70] F.W. Berkshire to Commissioner-General of Immigration, March 9, 1911, Mexican Border Situation, Border Officers' Reports, Box 1110, Subject and Policy Files, 1893-1957, Records of the INS: RG 85, NARA-D.C.

[71] Soult stood by when his office implemented dehumanizing immigration inspections only a few short years after he entreated his superiors to recognize the humanity of Mexican migrants. Berkshire was accused of corruption after exploiting his authority to illegally contract out immigrant labor. Alexandra Minna Stern, *Eugenic Nation: Faults and Frontiers of Better Breeding in Modern America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005) 62-63. Berkshire was accused of corruption after exploiting his authority to illegally contract out immigrant labor.

[72] See, for example, Peter Sahlins, *Boundaries: The Making of France and Spain in the Pyrenees* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989); Robert Putnam, "E Pluribus Unum: Diversity and Community in the 21st Century," *Scandinavian Political Studies* 30:2 (2007)137-174.

conflict in Mexico wore on, border city officials, immigration inspectors, and benevolent societies attempted to shore up the local economy and avoid personal responsibility for gratuitous suffering. Those twin instincts were ever-present in appeals to "humanity." A type of consensus emerged among border-crossers and border-enforcers, residents of Mexico and residents of America, that certain people should be allowed to pass under certain conditions for the sake of the region and the cities within it. Three parameters governed cases in which inspectors, civilians, and officials set aside federal immigration policies and instead offered aid, refuge, and sometimes residence in American cities. Refugees who fulfilled these qualifications could make effective claims upon the consciences of officials and ordinary people.

First, they had to be from the vicinity of the refuge town. In order to be worthy of a city's, inspector's, or public's obligation, the refugees had to come from the region, ideally the "town opposite" from the border city. Most of those who won refuge were known to locals or were under visible threat by those living in the American born towns and living "in the vicinity"—the informally defined area for which inspectors took responsibility.[73] This idea recalled traditional Spanish ideas of local belonging. *Vecinos,* or neighbors, earned a status between that of kin and citizen in colonial Latin America; residents of neighborhoods or *vecindades* continued to gain recognition in the Mexican Republic and early American California. In practice, the *vecino* was one who lived and owned property in the city for four years and was eligible for political participation. Refugees admitted to American border towns were, in this sense, twentieth-century *vecinos* --lacking in formal citizenship but eligible for recognition through their local residence and status as property-owners. Refugees most often hailed from the greater vicinity of the border towns in which they arrived.

Second, refugees had to have resources or promise to return to Mexico upon cessation of violence. Inspectors and civilians most commonly expressed sympathy for the previously wealthy and propertied who had suddenly fallen onto extremely hard times due to the events of the region. In September 1913, refugees counted among the "representative business men of Chihuahua …were well vouched for by various representative business men of El Paso who had had business dealings with them, and the El Paso Board of Trade took charge of the party and assisted in locating the refugees about the city."[74] Uprooted elites quickly found assistance with "friends"—who made sure to "secure recognition [for the refugees] from the State Department as might be property with view of protecting interests in Chihuahua" and other areas throughout the region.[75] Few garnered as much aid and sympathy as the erstwhile landed elite who had befriended local powerbrokers and thus had "friends to look after them."[76] Stories of their precipitous fall often legitimated any amount of financial assistance from individuals and the community at large. Even combatants could easily win sympathy if they had suffered great loss, as did 25 Villistas troops and their families in Brownsville who won refuge after pleading with inspectors who they had lost their homes and become "absolutely destitute" on account of not being paid after months of soldiering.[77]

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[73] Tamar Herzog, *Defining Nations: Immigrants and Citizens in Early Modern Spain and Spanish America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003); Mary Ryan, "The Mestizo Landscape of San Francisco," unpublished manuscript, July 2015. Jordana Dym located the sixteenth century definition of *vecinos* as "el que tuviere casa poblado aunque no sea encomendero de indios." In practice, the *vecino* was one who lived and owned property in the city for four years and attended council meetings. *From Sovereign Villages to National States: City, State, and Federation in Central America, 1759-1839* (Tucson: University of New Mexico Press, 2006) 15, 295n33. The term derives from a much older Latin phrase *vicinitas*. *Oxford English Dictionary Online,* "vicinity, n.," accessed May 7, 2015, http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/223177?redirectedFrom=vicinity.

[74] F.W. Berkshire to Commissioner-General of Immigration, December 13, 1913, Mexican Border Situation, Border Officers' Reports, Box 1110, Subject and Policy Files, 1893-1957, Records of the INS: RG 85, NARA-D.C.

[75] F.W. Berkshire to Commissioner-General of Immigration, December 16, 1913, Mexican Border Situation, Border Officers' Reports, Box 1110, Subject and Policy Files, 1893-1957, Records of the INS: RG 85, NARA-D.C.

[76] Inspector W.H. Robb to Berkshire, December 6, 1913, Mexican Border Situation, Border Officers' Reports, Box 1110, Subject and Policy Files, 1893-1957, Records of the INS: RG 85, NARA-D.C.

Poorer and indigenous Mexicans—often racialized as being "of the inferior class"—won refuge but with the promise of imminent departure or self-sufficiency. Often, they "formed a common purse and [took] care of their whole number." Still, most of those who gained a place in the city were protected from hunger, at the least. "The people of this city would not permit them to suffer," noted one inspector of the refugees taken in by the City of El Paso.[78] Many did stay and meaningfully incorporated themselves and their family into the American border city societies and economies, even if they continued to straddle the boundary between deserving refugee and undesirable public charge.

Most refugees continually renegotiated the pacts they made with inspectors regarding the duration of their stay. Some "made a promise" to return the other side of the line within the immediate future, as if only waiting for the day's battle to end. Others assured the inspectors with whom they bargained that they would eventually return, but settled into semi-permanent accommodations, opened stores, or even purchased property on the American side of the line. At other times, it seemed the inspector, rather than the refugees, who was making the promise. Inspectors wrote to their supervisors of the "belief" and "confidence" that refugees would return upon cessation of violence without further explanation.[79]

Third, and finally, the refugees appeared most successful when appealing to individual officers. By confronting a single officer, the refugees made clear each officer's personal liability for the consequences of denied admission. Face-to-face negotiations maximized the sympathetic power of the refugees, who appeared gaunt, frantic, wounded, or desperate before officers' own eyes. An individual officer often assumed great responsibility over a given space, especially when it came to admitting or rejecting refugees. A lone inspector in Eagle Pass grew so frustrated with the bureaucratic delays and machinations of County Commissions after repeatedly explaining the situation of refugees in Piedras Negras that he nearly abrogated his role as inspector. So convinced was he that "great loss of life would result if bridge was kept closed," that he decided "owing to the apparent gravity of the situation, he would take personal responsibility" for the refugees, as he was "without authority" to offer them aid or formal asylum.[80] This is not to say that officers were alone in aiding the refugees once they were admitted—to the contrary, local civilians, physicians, and benevolent societies oftentimes provided care once the refugees were on the northern side of the line. But frequently lone officers were the ones who made the decision that, in the face of great emergency, refugees were deserving of admission.

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[77] George J. Heard to Commissioner General of Immigration, December 5, 1913, Mexican Border Situation, Border Officers' Reports, Box 1111, Subject and Policy Files, 1893-1957, Records of the INS: RG 85, NARA-D.C.

[78] Will E. Soult to F.W. Berkshire, reported in Ibid.

[79] F.W. Berkshire to Immigration Bureau, Washington, D.C., October 3, 1913, Mexican Border Situation, Border Officers' Reports, Box 1111, Subject and Policy Files, 1893-1957, Records of the INS: RG 85, NARA-D.C.

[80] Eagle Pass Inspector to F.W. Berkshire, October 21, 1913, NARA, RG 85, Box 1110, and Sargent W.H. Robb, Immigration Inspector to F.W. Berkshire, December 26, 1913, Box 1111, Mexican Border Situation, Border Officers' Reports, Subject and Policy Files, 1893-1957, Records of the INS: RG 85, NARA-D.C.

As the conflict ensued, many Americans realized anew the extent of their interdependence with cities across the line. American businessmen deeply invested in Mexico protested against hasty military responses to the conflict—with both vulnerable properties and people in mind. Colonel Daniel M. Burns, an investor with homes in both Sonora and California, appealed to the readership of the Progressive bulletin, *The Survey*, asking "What Mexico needs from the US is not invading armies or shrapnel, but a little sympathy—a little active help. We have given both without stint to the war-stricken people of Europe. Why not to the people of our nearest neighbor?" Business acumen as well altruism perhaps motivated such sentiments, despite Burns' protests to the contrary. He insisted, "I do not wish to see Mexico blotted out in blood by this nation…. or have tens of thousands of my fellow country-men slaughtered because I chance to have dollars invested there," but his argument was rooted in the logic of debt, credit, and investment. "Just a little work of the practical kind would end at once the feeling of distrust against this…. From the bare standpoint of selfishness, no investment could bring better fruit."[81]

Civilians and businessmen living in the border cities often measured the impact of the revolutionary conflict in terms of economic ebbs and flows. The initial influx of refugees in border cities typically led to an economic boom; many refugees were elite Díaz and later Madero supporters who transferred their wealth to border city banks and real estate. Chihuahua's refugees were credited with filling El Paso's banks, hotels, and department stores for years—and increasing local assessed property values from 38 to 61 million dollars between 1914 and 1918.[82] A booming cross-border arms trade further increased local spending in many Texas border cities. Conversely, the ongoing war practically obliterated the economy of Nogales, Arizona—where the Nogales Foundry and the Nogales Machine shop were both "brought to a standstill" and the town overall suffered from "a material falling off of business."[83] None of the border city economies were insulated from the social and economic effects of the Revolution, and many were defined by it.

Sensational reports about train derailments, explosions, and towns being "cut off" first commanded front-page headlines in border city newspapers. Articles like "Insurrectos Capture a Train: Cut Wires and Leave" typified accounts of the war next door. Over time, reports of upset movement and paralysis of shipments and information became part of everyday life: "Juarez Mail Clerks on Duty Again," "Railroad Again Tied Up to South," "North Western Train Leaves Casa Grandes, but Fails to Arrive in El Paso," "Passenger Train Stranded," "Telegraph Wires Cut."[84] Blackouts unsettled local business and everyday life. "Telegraphic communication below Juarez was cut late this morning before any further news of the riots at Chihuahua city reached the border. Much anxiety is felt here…"[85] Soon, the chaotic conditions of Mexico's rail, communication lines, trade, and food supplies became a regular fact of life in El Paso, Brownsville, Laredo, and Douglas. So great were the disruptions that they could cancel holidays. "Nothing short of a battle in Juarez will awaken El Paso on the nation's birthday," the *Herald* announced, though all fireworks, firecrackers, burning, Chinese bombs, or any explosions were banned, due to the possible confusion with the very real explosives going off nearby.[86] Railroads had the capacity to remap ordinary people's mental and social landscape—connecting individuals with faraway kin, friends, or creditors while distancing them from others living relatively nearby.[87] In the case of the border cities, the breakdown of those lines brought urbanites deeper into the experience of Mexico's war and distanced them from the undisturbed lives of those living farther North. In many ways, the border cities entered war time.[88]

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[81] "Not Shrapnel – But a Little Sympathy," *The Survey* 37:2 (1916) 40-41.

[82] David Lorey, *The U.S.-Mexican Border in the Twentieth Century: A History of Economic and Social Transformation* (Wilmington, Del.: SR Books, 1999) 44-45.

[83] F.W. Berkshire to Commissioner-General of Immigration, March 29, 1911, Mexican Border Situation, Border Officers' Reports, Box 1111, Subject and Policy Files, 1893-1957, Records of the INS: RG 85, NARA-D.C.

[84] *El Paso Herald,* Feb 6, 1912, 2.

[85] *El Paso Herald,* Feb 12, 1913, 1.

The sense of crisis that took over the border cities transformed how local immigration inspectors approached their work. In summer of 1910, the job of the inspector could be described as a hybrid between uneventful local law enforcement and state bureaucrat. The Revolution overturned that reality. Each inspector was suddenly forced to confront, at any given time, hundreds of refugees fleeing for their lives and thousands of fellow urbanites with ambivalent and unpredictable responses to the suffering in the vicinity. Faced with an impossible situation, many inspectors began casting the war refugees as disasters victims—the only type of refugee commonly spoken of in the United States at the time. Their reports described Mexico's destroyed cities and infrastructure, unforeseeable violence, and refugees fleeing conditions brought about by no fault of their own.

Officers and civilians living on the northern side of the border recognized how they, too, had become subject to the chaotic conditions of the Revolution. Immigration inspectors' reports of the ongoing conflicts in Mexico described combat in relationship to their own bodies. One inspector in El Paso reported that a rebel faction had begun to dig trenches - "one … being in plain view of the immigration office," provoking alarm. Gestures like these triggered massive shifts in life in El Paso, for the digging of trenches sent "the usual influx of refugees from Juarez to El Paso."[89] "The situation in this vicinity is very acute," one noted, as 1,000 to 3,500 troops settled in Juárez.[90] Another inspector apologized for the brevity of letters "written under exciting circumstances."[91] Each of the conflicts in the town across the way rendered inspectors physically vulnerable. Numerous times officers wrote in detailed reports of warfare within eyesight: "The position of the insurgents …place[s] this office directly in line with their fire."[92] In describing the geography of conflict, officers betrayed their vulnerability and conception of their own risk, noting that it was only chance that they remained secure, as "fortunately no bullets entered the building."[93] Immigration inspection stations often came "within easy rifle range" as border towns became battlefields. Two individuals in the line of fire were shot and one killed, even while well within the town of Douglas and U.S. jurisdiction.[94] Thus, it was not only the inspectors who experienced such anxiety; entire towns including Douglas were reported engulfed by nearby violence.

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[86] "El Paso to Close Up for the Fourth," *El Paso Herald,* July 3, 1913, 2.

[87] Wolfgang Schivelbusch, *The Railway Journey: The Industrialization of Time and Space in the Nineteenth Century* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986) chap. 3; William Cronon, *Nature's Metropolis: Chicago and the Great West* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1991) 322-323; Thomas L. Haskell, "Capitalism and the Origins of the Humanitarian Sensibility, Part 1," *The American Historical Review* 90:2 (1985) 339–61, and "Capitalism and the Origins of the Humanitarian Sensibility, Part 2," *The American Historical Review* 90:3 (1985) 547–66.

[88] Mary Dudziak defines wartime as the real or imagined suspension of legal and cultural order rather than simply a state of military conflict. Wartime can legitimate the use of force outside the constraints of law or the suspension of rights. *War Time: An Idea, Its History, Its Consequences* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

[89] F.W. Berkshire to Commissioner-General of Immigration, April 17, 1911, Mexican Border Situation, Border Officers' Reports, Box 1110, Subject and Policy Files, 1893-1957, Records of the INS: RG 85, NARA-D.C.

[90] Synthetic report of immigration inspectors submitted to F.W. Berkshire, April 17, 1911, Mexican Border Situation, Border Officers' Reports, Box 1110, Subject and Policy Files, 1893-1957, Records of the INS: RG 85, NARA-D.C.

[91] Ibid.

[92] Ibid.

[93] Ibid.

The destruction of rail routes paralyzed the day-to-day work of inspectors and remapped their jurisdictions. When the Mexican Northwestern stopped running through Juarez, Inspector Clarence G. Gatley was suddenly moved one thousand miles, from El Paso to Columbus, in order to regulate the diverted passenger traffic.[95] On April 10, 1911, Berkshire recorded that the Mexican Central was still inoperable between Mexico D.F. and Juarez, bringing the flow of immigrants and refugees on the connecting Northwestern line to "a stand-still."[96] Thousands of miles of rail lines shut down in Northern Mexico due to destruction, disrepair, or abandonment, transforming the work and geography of immigration inspection. As a result, immigration stations along the boundary began to open, close, and relocate staff in rhythm with the disrupted operations of Mexico's rails. As the effects of the Revolution rippled through the lives of so many on the northern side of the line, perhaps it made sense to aid the injured, threatened, or uprooted. Inspectors expressed that they felt justified offering asylum to those who "cannot reach El Paso by usual mode of travelling" and would "continue to do so until such time as the rail lines are open between Chihuahua and Juarez."[97] Perhaps the rail disruptions assured inspectors that cross-border migration would quickly dissipate, or perhaps the sense of havoc from disrupted transit and trade lines encouraged the inspectors to take extraordinary measures. Whatever the motivation, it was clear that the ruination of cross-border transportation and communication was never far from the mind of those granting asylum to refugees.

Over time, the inspectors began to discern the condition of their surroundings depending on disruptions, delays, or cessation of rail transit, telegraph, and postal service. Cross-border infrastructure worked like remote sensors—allowing officials to read and understand what was happening at a distance. As soon as railroad services were perceived "uncertain", civilians and operators knew that revolutionary forces were in the vicinity of Eagle Pass.[98] The threat of attack soon grew impossible to discern from the ordinary workings of the city's transportation services. One Douglas inspector witnessed the reality of war when waiting for train to arrive from across the border. After several hours' delay without communication, the train slowly pulled into the Agua Prieta station, within eyesight of the waiting officer. Suddenly, as the officer stared across the border at the train, "a burst of flame belched from every car…" and 300 troops hiding inside the train gave chase to the city's federal army. The second object of attack was the Mexican customs house, "about 200 feet diagonally across the road from this office."

Professional and personal imperatives encouraged inspectors to report on two spaces subject to conflict: the immediate border region and cross-boundary transportation and communication lines. Almost any formal report on the border situation tracked warfare near the boundary, refugees crossing into American territory, and the condition of regional railroads. Threats from revolutionary bands that were "gaining strength" were not considered imminent, since they had “not as yet interfered with the operation of the road.”[99] Most extreme were those cases in which neighboring cities were left isolated, as when “C.P Diaz, opposite Eagle Pass, Texas, [was] cut off from communication from the South.”[100] The Immigration Service’s informal jurisdiction extended far beyond national boundaries and encompassed the many avenues that might bring a migrant to the border station.

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[94] Will E. Soult to F.W. Berkshire, April 14, 1911, Mexican Border Situation, Border Officers' Reports, Box 1110, Subject and Policy Files, 1893-1957, Records of the INS: RG 85, NARA-D.C.

[95] F.W. Berkshire to Commissioner-General of Immigration, April 10, 1911, Mexican Border Situation, Border Officers' Reports, Box 1110, Subject and Policy Files, 1893-1957, Records of the INS: RG 85, NARA-D.C.

[96] Ibid.

[97] F.W. Berkshire to Commissioner-General of Immigration, March 27, 1911, Mexican Border Situation, Border Officers' Reports, Box 1110, Subject and Policy Files, 1893-1957, Records of the INS: RG 85, NARA-D.C.

[98] Ibid.

With control of those critical admissions points, local inspectors sanctioned the arrival of thousands of Mexican, Chinese, Syrian, Japanese, Russian, British, and German refugees against written U.S. protocol. Refugees themselves recognized the ease with which they could cross the international boundary during the revolutionary crisis. One of the Mexican nationals who crossed under Soult’s watch fleeing an attack from Pancho Villa “just came over,” remarking on little other than the fact that he arrived by streetcar.[101] Another refugee recalled no barrier to entry: “Between the hospital and the field, there was a bridge,… we came through there, because they weren’t scrupulous about migration. There were Rangers, but I believe they cared more about contraband…they did not bother us at all.”[102] Mexican citizens did not experience stringent admissions procedures, and did not always believe they existed. Enrique Acevedo insisted, “In that era, between 1912 and 1913…there weren’t immigration restrictions.”[103] In the recollections of refugees, the border existed only as a line of refuge, not as a zone of immigration policing.

At least one other Mexican refugee, a former rebel soldier, was impressed by the sympathy of humanitarian workers towards those fleeing or even participating in the conflicts in Northern Mexico. He remembered the arrival of American medical aid in Sonora from Douglas’s medical community: “Then, we were very close to the American line, but we were alone. The wire that had divided Sonora and Arizona was broken. I was very close (to the line), when we saw cars coming through the American side. They arrived, there were four doctors that came and offered bandages and medicine because they felt sympathy.” The Mexican general refused to accept the aid of the “Yankees,” claiming that their medications would only end up killing his wounded soldiers. The refugee then watched as one man accompanying the doctors “cried and buried [one of the dead]. He put him in the ground crying a lot, very shaken, very unsettled.” The doctors left after claiming that they only came to help “because they felt sympathy for him, for the Villistas” and thought “that they could alleviate something, for the sake of humanity.”[104]

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[99] Report on Laredo, F.W. Berkshire to Commissioner-General of Immigration, April 12, 1911, Mexican Border Situation, Border Officers' Reports, Box 1110, Subject and Policy Files, 1893-1957, Records of the INS: RG 85, NARA-D.C.

[100] F.W. Berkshire to Commissioner-General of Immigration, May 3, 1911, Mexican Border Situation, Border Officers' Reports, Box 1110, Subject and Policy Files, 1893-1957, Records of the INS: RG 85, NARA-D.C.

[101] Charles Armijo, Interview by Leon C. Metz, 1973, Interview 106, transcript, Institute of Oral History, University of Texas at El Paso.

[102] Cecilio A. Arrendondo, Interview by David Salazar, 1973, Interview 59, transcript, Institute of Oral History, University of Texas at El Paso.

[103] Enrique Acevedo, Interview by Robert H. Novak, 1974, Interview 106, transcript, Institute of Oral History, University of Texas at El Paso. All of these migrants arrived during the height of the Mexican Revolution as immigration inspectors deliberately suspended admissions protocol. Yet their stories are often read as evidence of the general porosity of the border in the first decades of the twentieth century. See George J. Sánchez, *Becoming Mexican American: Ethnicity, Culture, and Identity in Chicano Los Angeles, 1900-1945* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993) 51; Yolanda Chávez Leyva, “Cruzanda la Linea: Engendering the History of Border Mexican Children during the Early Twentieth Century” in John R. Chávez and Vicki Ruiz, eds., *Memories and Migrations: Mapping Boricua and Chicano Histories* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2008) 71-92.

[104] Severo Márquez, Interview by Oscar J. Martínez, 1974, Interview 175, transcript, Institute of Oral History, University of Texas at El Paso, 23.

Some of the troops began speaking in defense of the doctors to their superior, but eventually the car retreated to the American line.

Contrary to widespread belief among the refugees, U.S. immigration inspectors were charged with regulating border crossing, but many refused for years to carry out their duties. It was true that gaining admission at the Mexican boundary was far simpler than it would be in the future, especially for low-income Mexican residents.[105] But Mexicans at that time were still subject to inspectors' judgments of their admissibility. To be admissible under the 1907 Immigration Act, none of the refugees could have appeared sick, infirm, friendless, or poor. Yet the refugees admitted, almost by definition, fell into one or more of these categories. They were admitted, in part, due to the expressed moral considerations of inspectors trying to avoid personal responsibility for the death or suffering of perceived innocents suffering from catastrophic conditions in Mexico.

Practice Makes Policy

By February of 1914, few of the immigration inspectors had consistently prevented "flagrant violations of U.S. immigration policy" as they were ordered.[106] Among the border inspectors, granting refuge became a widely-condoned practice. Human smugglers had nearly fallen into non-existence.[107] Officials in D.C. were regularly notified of such abnormalities. Some high-level officials including the Secretary of State or the Commissioner-General of Immigration eventually approved of the lowly inspectors' collective repudiation of standing policy after the fact despite the protests of border state governors.

Eventually inspectors pressed for new policies that reflected their practices. G.W. Harris demanded a change in policy as he saw the situation escalate from exceptional to absurd. After a full report on the decisions of a number of inspectors to oversee the illegal admission of over 500 Mexican refugees to the town of Presidio, Texas, Harris pronounced the standing admissions policies "ridiculous" in light of the situation. To attempt to corral, count, and callously turn away innocent men, women, and children "that would have been shot" was beyond the comprehension of his officers. "The only practical thing to do was admit those admissible"—which, in this instance, was every person who appeared at Presidio's boundary during the exodus.[108] Harris implored the Immigration Service to retroactively change the law so as to make them legal. "[I]n order to legalize the action already taken, it is recommended that Presidio be designated as a port of entry covering the period from January 1 to January 15, 1914." Lest the Bureau question the merit of his request, Harris underscored the inadequacy of existing policy to existing reality:

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[105] The 1907 act stipulated that those who had lived in Mexico for one year prior to entry and were deemed admissible were not levied the head tax put in place to bar or deter poorer immigrants from entering the U.S. "Rules Relating to Head Tax, Rule 2, item c, in Immigration Act of 1907, 34 Stat. 898 (1907) §2.

[106] Supervising Inspector, El Paso Immigration Station F.W. Berkshire to Commissioner-General of Immigration, December 23, 1910, Mexican Border Situation, Border Officers' Reports, Box 1110, Subject and Policy Files, 1893-1957, Records of the INS: RG 85, NARA-D.C.

[107] Several inspectors noted a decline in Chinese smuggling. Report to F.W. Berkshire on conditions in South Texas, March 14, 1911 (author unnamed), Mexican Border Situation, Border Officers' Reports, Box 1110, Subject and Policy Files, 1893-1957, Records of the INS: RG 85, NARA-D.C.

[108] George Harris, Supervising Inspector at El Paso, Report to Department of Labor, Immigration Service. February 24, 1914, Mexican Border Situation, Border Officers' Reports, Box 1111, Subject and Policy Files, 1893-1957, Records of the INS: RG 85, NARA-D.C.

> I wish to invite particular attention to the fact, and to emphasize the same if possible, that an unusual situation existed at Presidio. All the rules of the game were necessarily suspended. It was not a question of whether certain persons should or should not be admitted. They were in the United States in thousands. They were even here unlawfully, if you like. The laws did not provide for such a contingency, and quite naturally so. There was but one thing to do and that was make the best of a bad situation.[109]

Immigration inspectors actively sought to change how their responsibilities were defined. No one person wanted to be left with the "grave responsibility entailed by refusal of asylum or any discrimination."[110] The U.S. Commissioner-General of Immigration recognized the problem. From his distant perch in D.C., he expressed concern that too much attention was being "focused upon the individuals' sorrows and joys […and that…] lax enforcement [may mean] retrogression to many American communities, indeed to the Nation." He insisted that the "individual must often suffer that the community may benefit," particularly so that it might be effectively governed. He reiterated, "personal suffering [should] be prevented but only so far as is consistent with the public interest under the law."[111]

But locals working in the border cities during the Revolution encountered the limits of this logic, and sought to change the law in light of the catastrophic conditions at hand. In 1912, Berkshire admitted:

> No inconsiderable number of aliens, residents of Mexico, have sought refuge in this country, some of whom, practically destitute, have been, as a measure of humanity, given asylum. In the cases so acted upon it was felt that the unusual and oftentimes harrowing circumstances influencing their applications justified a more than ordinarily liberal interpretation of the law.[112]

That report marked one of the first instances in which the terms "refugee" and "asylum" entered into the published reports of U.S. federal immigration control. In this way, Mexicans fleeing the conflict of the Revolution—some poor, uneducated, and in poor health—made up the first group of migrants formally admitted to the country due to their status as refugees.

Border Humanitarianism: The Socialites' Story

A few months after Soult, Meng, and Berkshire crafted their grassroots refugee policy, a handful of San Diegan women rode to three sites between the city limits and the Mexican border. Upon arriving, they set up tents, emergency medical stations, and makeshift kitchens stocked with food provisions. Within two months, the refugee camps at Campo, Tecate, and Coronado, California sheltered and served 577 Mexican citizens fleeing from the battles at Tijuana. With each military conflict in Tijuana came an additional relief campaign run by the women of the San Diego Red Cross (SDRC). Chapter leader Mary Gale explained that in the wake of one of the first battles at Tijuana, on May 8, 1910, the chapter gathered local doctors and nurses, transported them to Tijuana to provide medical care, and then brought them back along with wounded refugees to the San Diego County hospital. As the efforts advanced, *The San Diego Sun* observed, "It is probable that the refugees will be brought here and permanent camps established in this city that they may be better cared for."[113]

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[109] Ibid.

[110] F.W. Berkshire to Department of Commerce and Labor. October 3, 1913, Mexican Border Situation, Border Officers' Reports, Box 1111, Subject and Policy Files, 1893-1957, Records of the INS: RG 85, NARA-D.C.

[111] Report of the Commissioner General of Immigration, July 1, 1911, in *Reports of the Department of Commerce and Labor, 1911* (Washington: GPO, 1912) 157-195, 157-158.

[112] Report of the Commissioner General of Immigration, July 1, 1912, in *Reports of the Department of Commerce and Labor, 1912* (Washington: GPO, 1913) 187-395, 225.

The dozen women of the Red Cross drew upon the city's social networks and resources to fund the refugee relief campaign. Local Red Cross leaders sourced tents, automobiles, and medical supplies from local donors like Louis Blochman's bank and the San Diego Chamber of Commerce. City Treasurer Don Stewart organized donation efforts; a majority of funds came from local individual subscriptions.[114] Meanwhile, Red Cross advertisements in the *San Diego Sun* and the *San Diego Union* implored local ministers to appeal to their congregations for funds. The homes of elite chapter leaders and elementary schools served as donation sites, railroad magnate J.D. Spreckels donated space in his theatre building to the SDRC refugee relief efforts. Vacation homes in Tent City, Coronado, a favorite affluent resort town for San Diegans, were converted healthcare stations and quarters for refugees.[115] And while the recently founded farmer's commune at San Ysidro never served as formal refugee camp, the residents welcomed Mexican families from across the border to temporarily reside in the town during the during of Tijuana-based warfare. By the end of the first year of the Mexican Revolution, the Red Cross's relief campaign had become embedded in San Diego's cityscape.

Plenty of locals resented the city's benevolent turn towards its southern neighbor and remained suspicious of what diseases or violence refugees might import to the town. A number of residents protested when the Red Cross women publicly suggested moving the camps from distant railroad depots to the city center, especially when rumors flew that the refugees were "reported diseased," a concern that did not dissipate. Even after a representative of the U.S. military publicly appealed for funds for the camps and support for their relocation to the city, promising that the refugees were not suffering from any contagious disease, local journalists continued to feverishly cover breakouts of smallpox in refugee camps in Mexico.[116]

But San Diego's more vocal, public minority embraced the Mexican refugees as a humanitarian cause clearly within the boundaries of their responsibility. The relief campaigns were decidedly urban affairs, organized by local elites, supplied by local residents, sited in local institutions, and sourced to local refugee camps. Intercity relationships and social networks proved fundamental to the workings and success of the campaign. Officials of the SDRC, YMCA, and Associated Charities reconvened after their initial collaboration in 1910 and 1911 to serve as part of the so-called Committee of Fifty, which was charged with coordinating the rescue and relief of American citizens in Mexico in response to President Wilson's 1915 request for refugee relief.[117] Members of the Committee, including the leading philanthropists in the city, "decided to invite the cooperation of all societies and organization in the city" in a single fundraising effort.[118] Even those not present offered substantial organizational and financial support. Mrs. Ban Buskrir sent philanthropist and planner George W. Marston a message to read on behalf of the San Diego County Federation of Women's Clubs stating the intention of 2000 local members to enter the campaign. Her explanation suggested the extent of sympathy felt among the Progressive women of San Diego, who were eager to serve "on behalf of the starving women and children of our sister republic."[119] Soon "Friends in San Diego were doing all in their power" to help those from across the line by subscribing to relief campaigns.[120] Meanwhile, A Salvation Army wagon regularly travelled through the city's streets collecting donations on behalf of those displaced by the Revolution.

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[113] "200 on Border Starve," *San Diego Sun*, March 25, 1911.

[114] Ibid.

[115] *1898-1952 Dedication Program,* San Diego County Chapter of American National Red Cross, 4, Red Cross Collection, MS 62, San Diego History Center; "San Ysidro News," *San Diego Sun,* March 3, 1911.

[116] "Suggest Camp Near City," *San Diego Sun,* March 25, 1911; "Smallpox and Rebels Worry All Ensenadans," *San Diego Sun*, April 17, 1911.

The Mexican relief fundraising effort proved successful with the help of support from prominent local women and glamorous campaigning.[121] In 1913, Ballou arranged the Red Cross War Refugee Benefit at San Diego's Grant Hotel, the proceeds of which were applied towards indigent American and Mexican refugees.[122] San Diegans flocked to performances put on for the benefit of the refugees at Spreckels Theatre in 1914.[123] Once Ballou, Gale, and other eminent figures in San Diego made philanthropy a celebrated local event, contributions skyrocketed. Indeed, the Mexican refugee relief campaign ultimately characterized as a "great drain on the resources of the San Diego Red Cross," when it came time to solicit funds for the First World War. But the local press and charitable organizations insisted that the American campaign for Mexican refugees was necessary, even obligatory. "Utter indifference on the part of the Mexican government for the welfare of its people has made it necessary for the United States government to take a hand" explained the *San Diego Union* in 1911 in a report on the aid provided by the SDRC for "sufferers" at Tecate and Tijuana.[124] Such logic subtly papered over the fact that aid funds themselves were derived solely from local, private donations at that time. To be sure, American military officers powerfully appealed in local newspapers on behalf of the displaced Mexican civilians. Echoing the appeals of the immigration inspectors of Texas, one locally stationed officer pleaded, "these poor, suffering creatures are not of our nationality, but they are human."[125] Still, the vast majority of financial and material resources driving the refugee relief campaigns came from civilians, not the federal government and not the military officers who so passionately spoke on the refugees' behalf.

Not all Mexican refugees who fled across the border were treated so kindly. Seven dead Mexican soldiers crossed the U.S.-Mexico border just north of the sparsely populated Tijuana in late May 1911. The soldiers had been killed in the battle of Tijuana, one of the first borderland conflicts of the Mexican Revolution. Transported by rebel troops across the border into San

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[117] "Red Cross Will Start Campaign," *San Diego Union,* July 17, 1915.

[118] "Red Cross of Splendid Record Needs Stronger Organization," *San Diego Union,* October 28, 1913.

[119] Ibid.

[120] Ibid.

[121] "Red Cross of Splendid Record Needs Stronger Organization," *San Diego Union,* October 28, 1913, and "Red Cross Society to Issue Call for War Relief Funds," *San Diego Union,* August 7 1914.

[122] "Ticket Rush for Refugee Benefit," *San Diego Sun,* September 9, 1913.

[123] Most likely, these funds went both toward the expenses of the SDRC camps and the expenses of the American refugees expected to arrive in San Diego within the next few weeks. "Ticket Rush for Refugee Benefit," *San Diego Sun,* September 9, 1913; "Red Cross Benefit Ball Lures Brilliant Throng," *San Diego Union,* August 13, 1914.

[124] "200 on Border Starve," *San Diego Sun,* March 24, 1911.

[125] "Refugees Suffering from Cold and Hunger," *San Diego Union,* March 25, 1911.

Diego County, the presence of the dead bodies provoked a public debate about whether locals should pay for the "Mexican Dead" or dying. San Diego District Attorney Utley had told local undertakers to bury the dead at county expense, but the county Board of Supervisors refused. Meanwhile, local papers harshly condemned Utley's actions, testifying to the pervasiveness of anti-refugee sentiment among many San Diegans. Soon after the Utley scandal, the *Sun* reported that the Board of Supervisors had rendered a decision to prohibit refugees and rebels from Mexico from receiving services at the San Diego County Hospital.[126] The request for services came not from the refugees themselves but from a representative of the Associated Charities, one of many local Progressive organizations that succored the first wave of refugees entering San Diego at the onset of the Mexican Revolution.

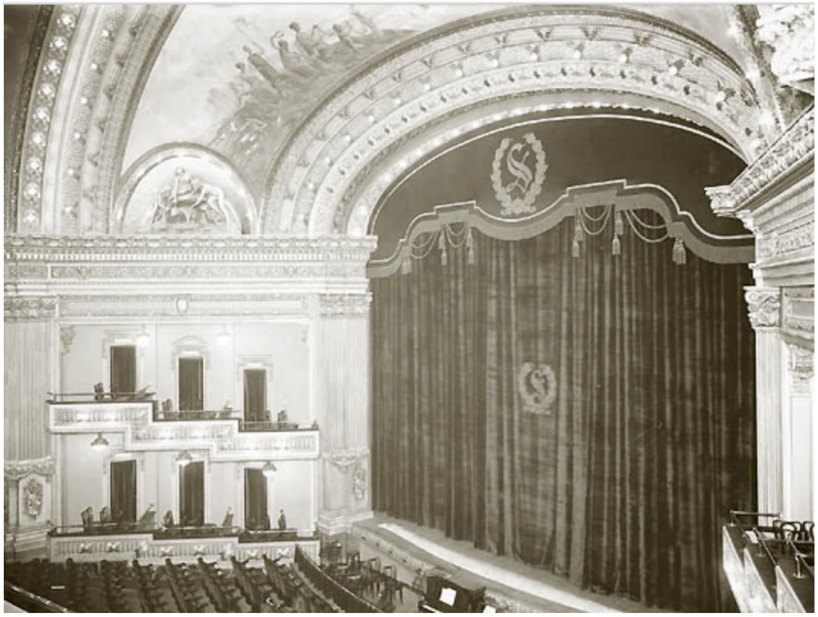

Figure 11: Photograph, Spreckels Theater, ca. 1913, Site of performances put on for the benefit of American and Mexican Refugees in San Diego. The ornate architecture reflected the wealth of Spreckels and other local philanthropists who sponsored the refugee relief campaigns. Photo courtesy of San Diego History Center.

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[126] "Bar Refugees at County Hospital," *San Diego Sun,* May 24, 1911.

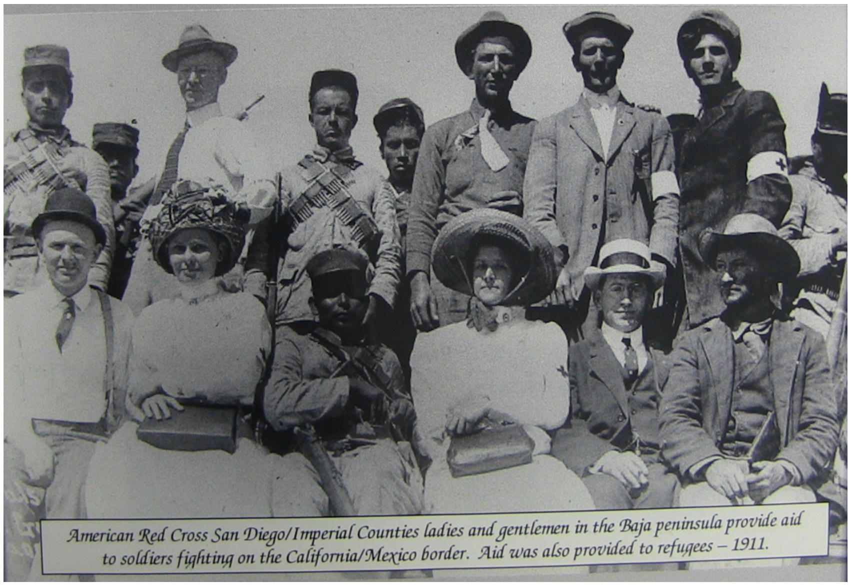
American Red Cross San Diego/Imperial Counties ladies and gentlemen in the Baja peninsula provide aid to soldiers fighting on the California/Mexico border. Aid was also provided to refugees – 1911.

Figure 12: Photograph, Women of the San Diego Red Cross with Mexican Soldiers, 1911, Courtesy of the San Diego Red Cross. Notice the Red Cross insignia and the reference to refugees.

Why did San Diegans provide medical care to Mexicans across the border in summer of 1911? Only months earlier, the Board of Supervisors, local newspapers, and the greater public spurned Mexican refugees. Despite this anti-refugee sentiment, the leaders of the SDRC voted in March 1911 to solicit financial contributions through the very same newspapers that had editorialized against aiding the refugees—the *San Diego Sun* and *San Diego Union*.[127] In June, only two months after the Board of Supervisor's decision to ban the refugees from county hospitals, the *Sun* pleaded, "Mothers, Listen! Two little Refugee Babies Need Clothes."[128] Similar articles appeared in the *Union* and the *Sun* in throughout the spring and summer stressing that the refugees were mostly women, children, or disabled, ill or wounded who had abandoned their work and homes due to breathtaking violence beyond their control. SDRC President Ballou beseeched readers to contribute provisions, funds, or clothing as generously as possible:

> the funds we will get from headquarters are emergency funds and will not be enough to take care of the refugees to the end…. We need money to carry on the work. We need clothing and blankets and food…The Red Cross will feel grateful for anything that may be donated. Flour, lard, beans, cornmeal, coffee, pilot bread, potatoes and onions, canned milk, olive oil, sugar, rice, molasses, salt and canned meat are especially necessary.[129]

San Diego elites running the city's Progressive organizations expected some residents to support their cause out of purely humanitarian sensibilities piqued by the opportunity to rescue vulnerable women and children from the barbarous hordes of Mexico. Ballou repeatedly insisted that the refugees were “mostly women and children, who have fled from their miserable hovels in Mexico to escape the ravages of marauding, warring bands and now lie shivering and starving, almost helpless, in rags and filth, about smoldering fires in a little canyon on this side of the border near Tecarte.” Descriptions like these established the scale of desperation as well as refugees’ innocence; they suffered not due to their own actions but those of Mexico’s vagabond combatants. Lest the imagery of starving, cold women and children failed to compel readers’ sympathy, Ballou also noted that “many of the refugees are sick,” and thus “required delicacies” that the healthy could forego. Ballou entreated the people of San Diego not simply to provide charity to Mexico’s sufferers, but to rescue them.

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[127] SDRC Meeting Minutes, March 24, 1911; *Membership List of SDRC Society, June 17, 1898 through 1917,* Preservation Box B, Imperial County/San Diego Red Cross Headquarters.

[128] "Mothers, Listen! Two Little Refugee Babies Need Clothes," *San Diego Sun,* June 17, 1911.

[129] "Refugees in Sorry Plight; Red Cross to Give Aid," March 26, 1911; "Urgent Appeal to Aid Refugees is Made By Red Cross," March 24, 1911; "Want Assistance for the Refugees" May 15, 1911, SDRC Clippings Book, Preservation Box B, Imperial County/San Diego Red Cross Headquarters, 143-145.

To appeal to others, the SDRC professed the message that individual parsimony would result in a great public burden. SDRC leader Mary Gale expected the “unanimous support of the citizens of San Diego,” for a simple reason: “If you let [the refugees] become county indigents funds for their support must come out of your pocket in taxes. Why not give them a little boost now? It will be cheaper in the long run.”[130] In both cases, though, the Red Cross invoked the tropes of disaster narratives and disaster victims: the Mexican refugees were seen as innocent victims of extraordinary circumstances and thus deserving of help.

San Diego’s benevolent societies continued to express a sense of responsibility towards those suffering across the border, even as years passed and Mexico’s Revolution appeared interminable. Judge A.A. Haines of Haines and Haines lawyers in San Diego offered a somewhat different explanation when he spoke before members of the Red Cross, the YMCA, and others in a citywide meeting called in July 1917 to discuss plans to aid Mexicans suffering from the outbreak of famine as a result of the war. He disagreed with the conventional wisdom that “Mexicans [were] in a large way responsible for their plight,” and instead claimed that the actions of the U.S. Secretary of State, William Jennings Bryan, his policies towards Mexico, and the resulting withdrawal of American capital from the country directly caused the famine. “I feel,” Haines said, “[the] U.S. is morally responsible for much of the suffering in Mexico today.”[131] The reason, Haines continued, was that American capitalists had suddenly withdrawn their investments on account of the misguided policies of Secretary of State William Jennings Bryan, paralyzing the economy in a country already plagued by war and infrastructure breakdowns. While Haines placed the blame upon the U.S., he urged San Diego’s benevolent societies to shoulder responsibility for alleviating the misery of Mexicans and called upon local elites to assist.

Charitable organizations across dozens of towns on either side of the border undertook sizeable relief campaigns even as cross-border violence plagued both cities. The Laredo, Texas chapter of the Red Cross prepared relief camps for any wounded Mexicans, “who, for humanitarian reasons, would have been brought across the international boundary” in the event of a conflict in Nuevo Laredo. Red Cross nurses from both the El Paso and San Antonio chapters volunteered their services at Laredo for this purpose.[132] Red Cross workers in Brownsville, Texas brought 220 wounded Mexicans across the border to be cared for in three makeshift emergency hospitals set up at the local skating rink, theater, and Charity Hospital; half a dozen nurses were sourced from central Texas towns. The national division gave special recognition to the Brownsville volunteers for their extensive efforts.[133] American businessman H.C. Harrison left his residence in Cerralio, Nuevo Leon to head to Brownsville to manage the relief funds, sourced by both local Brownsville residences and Pancho Villa, whose soldiers were among the wounded.[134]

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[130] “Red Cross Seeks Funds to Aid Refugees,” *San Diego Union*, June 12, 1914.
[131] “Red Cross Will Start Campaign,” *San Diego Sun,* July 7, 1917.
[132] S.P. Morris, “Recent Mexican Activities,” *The American Red Cross Magazine* 10:1 (January 1915) 222-223.

As residents of San Diego and other border cities reported on one another's humanitarian efforts, they consolidated dispersed activities into an urban humanitarian network. While the SDRC's efforts waned in 1914, the *Sun* and *Union* continued to cover the efforts of businessmen engaged in fundraising and philanthropy for "penniless and hungry" Mexican refugees reportedly expelled by Pancho Villa to El Paso, "where they [were] cared for" both by the Spanish community and a group of El Paso businessmen.[135] The *El Paso Herald* reported on the transport of both American and Mexican refugees to San Diego from Ensenada as well as the immigration of Mexicans seeking refuge from Nogales, Sonora to Nogales, Arizona.[136] El Paso's *Missionary Survey* boasted, "one advantage of this great influx from Mexico to the United States… is the removal in general of the friction and ill-feeling between Mexican and American. A year ago this was felt: now we see nothing of it."[137] Charitable efforts undertaken on behalf of Mexican sufferers cropped up as far away as New York City, whose local Red Cross partnered with border chapters to dispatch four hospital units to border conflict areas as late as 1917.[138] Of course, anti-refugee sentiment persisted in each border city throughout the Revolution. But a growing number of benevolent societies, missionary groups, civilians, businessmen, and immigration agents put forth a very different public message, one that espoused amity and hospitality towards Mexico's fleeing sufferers for the sake of humanity.

The Matrix of Foreign Aid

The American Red Cross is ready to undertake relief work for the benefit of the Mexican people. I appeal most earnestly to our people therefore, to contribute both money and supplies of food to mitigate the suffering and misery so close at hand.

—President Woodrow Wilson in an Address to the American public, May 28, 1915[139]

From the beginning of their relief efforts, the women of the SDRC were encouraged by the U.S. Customs service and military. Captain Evans of the U.S. Army telegraphed the local chapter to request that it organize and transport nurses, medical supplies, and relief provisions to approximately 200 Mexican refugees located on the American side of the border near Tecate.[140] General Bliss of the U.S. Army thanked the Red Cross chapter for their prompt and efficient assistance, an effort "highly creditable to the community." While a private organization with only a handful of active members, the SDRC became the face of the city's efforts to secure the welfare of its growing population of Mexican refugees. Within weeks, the women of the SDRC laid the groundwork for a humanitarian campaign that would soon command the attention of the President and Secretary of State of the United States.

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[133] Ibid.
[134] Ibid.
[135] "US is Defied; Spanish Refugees Die During Hard Journey to Border, Where They Are Cared For," *San Diego Sun,* April 8, 1914.
[136] "Many Move Over to American Side," *El Paso Herald,* May 15, 1911.
[137] Reverend C.R. Womeldorf, "The Influence of the Mexican Revolution on the Work in El Paso," *Presbyterian Survey* 3:3 (1914) 183.
[138] "Send Red Cross Units to Border," *San Diego Union,* June 21, 1917, *1898-1952 Dedication Program,* San Diego County Chapter of American National Red Cross, 4, Red Cross Collection, MS 62, San Diego History Center. As late as 1952, even after dispatching many locals to relief campaigns during the first and second World Wars, the SDRC still celebrated the Mexican Revolution relief effort as integral to the branch becoming a "full fledged chapter" that is today one of the four largest branches in the United States.
[139] "President Wilson Appeals," *American Red Cross Magazine* 10:7 (July 1915) 234.

The U.S. government soon joined the effort, chartering army transports flying the Red Cross flag to recover American expatriates.[141] American refugees displaced by the conflict were welcomed with open arms by San Diegans, hosted in private homes rather than refugee camps, and lauded for their sturdiness.[142] The *Union* trumpeted that the 539 Americans who arrived to the city on July 4, 1916, were hardy enough to take care of themselves, minimizing the work that fell on the Red Cross.[143] Members of the local Red Cross and the American refugees both became local celebrities—the former for their generosity, the latter for their self-reliance. Yet the American refugees did not wholly embrace their status as local dependents or as bound to the orders and requests of the U.S. Government.[144] Two hundred and fifty-nine irate American refugees arrived in San Diego from Guadalajara denouncing the Wilson administration for its ill-conceived policies towards a war-torn Mexico and unwarranted pressure put upon American citizens to evacuate the country.[145] Refugees placed blame for their losses squarely upon Wilson's shoulders, publicly lamenting that they were "financially ruined."[146] The hostility flowed both ways; the U.S. refused to pay to evacuate Americans a second time after some returned to Mexico against the warnings of the State Department.[147] The SDRC thus found itself in the difficult position of providing unwelcome aid in partnership with a government resented by its own citizens.

Like their American counterparts, some Mexican refugees refused to willingly play the role of the victim in need of American aid.[148] After a 1911 battle at Tijuana, an unidentified Mexican rebel soldier reported on their own efforts to care for the wounded, insisting that his force had their "own Red Cross, commanded by a surgeon major, and had no occasion to accept the offers of the American Red Cross Society."[149] Over the next two years, multiple rival humanitarian groups worked alongside each other in the Texas border region, all under the name of the Red Cross. One Cruz Roja organized under Díaz remained loyal to him even after his overthrow. Another Cruz Roja organized under Madero operated until his assassination in 1913. Finally, dispersed local chapters of the American Red Cross worked throughout the war, always claiming neutrality. Before long, rumors that the ARC was favoring Madero supporters prompted Madero loyalists to reorganize as the White Cross and disassociate from any perceived American intervention. Bicknell condemned the reincorporation and beseeched all humanitarian workers, no matter their allegiance or nationality, to remember that "whatever may have been the causes which led to a division of the humane people of Mexico into the camps of the Red Cross and the White Cross, it is not forgotten that their objects were humanitarian and at bottom identical….there is every reason to hope that rivalries may be forgotten."[150] Such calls hardly alleviated the hostilities directed at aid workers. Both the American Red Cross and the Mexican White Cross deployed relief workers to care for those wounded by the violence in Mexico City during the uprising against Madero in 1913; both were also accused of smuggling ammunition to the opposing forces.[151] Americans also leveled accusations at their Mexican counterparts, charging the women of the Mexican Red Cross with attacking the American consulate of Manzanillo in 1914.[152] Thus the military ties of Red Cross organizations, as much as their humanitarian ideals, shaped the course of the refugee surge.

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[140] SDRC Meeting Minutes, March 24, 1911. Evans's first name is not mentioned in the correspondence.

[141] "Bryan Asks Red Cross Aid," *San Diego Union,* August 24, 1913.

[142] On May 16, 1914, 293 Americans arrived from Tampico. On April 30, 15 American arrived from Mazatlán, Mexico. The *Buffalo* arrived in the San Diego port on July 4, 1916 carrying 539 American refugees followed by 32 Americans on the warship *Cheyenne*. "Refugees Driven from Mexico Arrive on steamer Mazatlán," *San Diego Union,* May 7, 1914; "Bring 539 Refugees into Port," *San Diego Union,* July 5, 1916.

[143] Ibid. The article built upon longer tendency to praise the sturdiness of American refugees. See "Refugees Prefer Work to Charity," *San Diego Union,* September 1, 1913.

[144] "Refugees Blame Wilson for Present Conditions in Mexico," *San Diego Union,* July 6, 1915.

[145] Ibid.

[146] "Refugees Fear Mexicans Shot All Americans," *San Diego Union,* May 2, 1914.

[147] Twenty-three Americans in this position were aided only with the cost of transport from Tampico to Galveston and a small donation from single local rabbi. "Refugees at Galveston," *American Red Cross Magazine* 10 (January 1915) 223.

[148] "Rebel Prisoners Await their Fate at Fort While Mexican Flag is Flying Over Tijuana: Thirty-Four Reported Killed in Battle," *San Diego Sun,* June 23, 1911.

[149] Ibid.

To further complicate matters, relations among Americans, Mexicans, and refugees of both nationalities in the border towns grew decidedly hostile during the spring and summer of 1915, in anticipation of American federal intervention in Mexico. Local newspapers reported on scores of Mexican residents abandoning the city and crossing the border during the night to join forces with both federals and rebels.[153] Anti-Mexican sentiments even helped to criminalize refugees. Fifty-seven of the 500 residents of the Fort Rosencrans camp in April 1914 reportedly tunneled out of the camp to return to Mexico; 15 were captured by U.S. troops despite the fact that all were reported to be "penniless and without arms."[154] These refugees appeared to be "making a wild rush for the border to take up arms with their countrymen against the United States." [155] By mid-decade hostility between border communities and the two nation-states had increased considerably. But as tension between the U.S. Government and the Mexican revolutionary leaders peaked, so, too did the humanitarian campaigns of the Red Cross in Mexico. President Wilson coordinated with the State Department and the American Red Cross (ARC) to launch a national relief campaign for Mexicans suffering from famine as a direct result of continuous conflict—and turned to the border as a model.

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[150] Ernest P. Bicknell, "Red Cross and White Cross in Mexico," *American Red Cross Bulletin* 8:9 (1913) 30.

[151] Lyman Abbot, Hamilton W. Mabie, and Theodore Roosevelt, eds., "Fighting in Mexico's Capital" and "Who is Responsible?" *The Outlook* 103:8 (1913) 373-374.

[152] "Drive Americans out of Mexico," *San Diego Union,* May 1, 1914.

[153] "Mexicans Leave City in Scores," *San Diego Sun,* April 21, 1914.

[154] "Mexican Refugees Tunnel with Old Tins; Pack Dirt in Pockets; Escape by Score," *San Diego Sun,* April 29, 1914.

[155] "Naval Reserves Capture Mexicans," *San Diego Sun,* April 30, 1914.

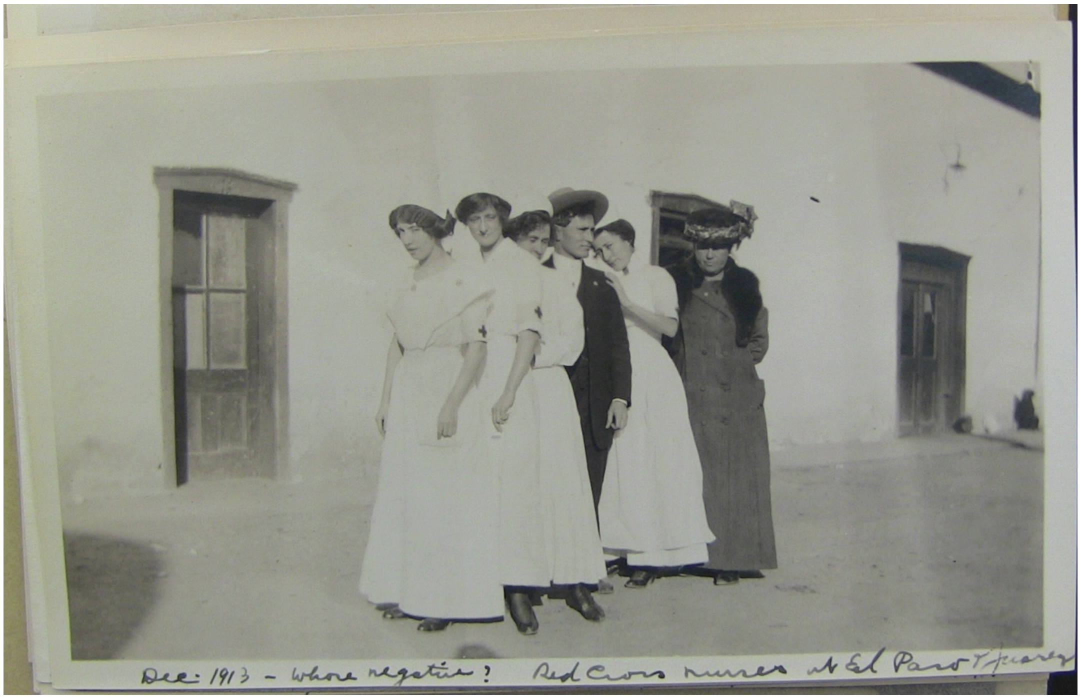
Dec: 1913 – whose negative? Red Cross nurses at El Paso & Juarez

Figure 13: Photograph of El Paso Red Cross Nurses in Ciudad Juárez, Dec 1913, Papers of Charles J. O'Connor, Bancroft Library.

The ARC built its national campaign upon already established local relief efforts. After the Executive Committee of the Red Cross approved plans to provide relief in Mexico and at the border on June 4, 1915, state department officials coordinated a tour of refugee camps already installed by local chapters along the border by Carroll A. Devol, General Manager of the Red Cross.[156] What had been largely an effort of local municipal charities undertaken to aid border cities in managing large refugee populations became a nationally funded and federally endorsed humanitarian campaign serving American and Mexican troops and Mexican nationals suffering from conflict-induced famine on the interior of the country in addition to the border refugees. Yet even with the introduction of nationally coordinated humanitarian relief, local chapters persevered in their own efforts and maintained partial autonomy from the national campaign.

Wilson brought the power of the U.S. military and the philanthropy of the American public to bear on diplomatic relations with Mexico following his informal recognition of the Carranza government in 1915.[157] In May of that year, Wilson appealed to the American public on behalf of Mexican citizens suffering from famine from the ambiguous position of both the President of the United States and the first honorary President of the American Red Cross.[158]

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[156] "Prostrate Mexico," *The American Red Cross Magazine* 10:7 (July 1915) 233-238.

[157] George Paulsen's article on the 1915 coordinated relief campaign gives an excellent overview of the diplomatic politics involved. See Paulsen, George E. "Helping Hand or Intervention? Red Cross Relief in Mexico, 1915," *Pacific Historical Review* 57:3 (1988) 305–325.

[158] William Howard Taft became the President of the American Red Cross in 1905, and continued to serve in that position when he assumed the presidency in 1909. Since then, the U.S. President has become the president of the ARC; the current President Trump is honorary Chairman of the ARC. "Red Cross Welcomes President Donald Trump as Chairman," January 19, 2017, www.redcross.org, accessed July 26, 2017.

Wilson's entreaty coincided with reports of imminent American military intervention. And as one ARC official insisted "when our Army or Navy moves—moves for purposes obviously more serious than maneuvers—thereupon and at once our Red Cross moves, too."[159] The ARC and the U.S. military thus mobilized as one during the Mexican Revolution.

As Wilson prepared the national army for conflict, ARC director Bicknell encouraged his troops to see relief in Mexico as no different from that within American borders. He underscored the importance of coordination and efficiency among all involved chapters, "whether it be in war time or peace time, in the regions of deadly epidemics or at the smoking maw of an exploded mine, in the boggy stretches of a flood valley or a fire-swept and blackened village, in distributing corn and beans among famine-wasted Mexican non-combatants or in preparing for the Watch on the Rio Grande."[160] The logic of disaster relief was never far from the federal justification of aid for Mexican sufferers. By treating Mexican sufferers and refugees as "famine-wasted non-combatants," the American Red Cross built upon a long tradition of disaster relief without publicly embroiling themselves in an increasingly factious civil war.

Representatives of the U.S. government used the seemingly non-governmental Red Cross to carry out foreign aid, alleviating popular resentment towards the provision of national aid for the relief of Mexican nationals. Soon after Wilson recognized Carranza, Bicknell communicated instructions to local chapters on a coordinated relief effort for victims of the ongoing famine in Mexico. The U.S. government selected San Diego to serve a particularly important role in the national aid campaign. On August 22, 1913, Secretary of State William Jennings Bryan sent a personal telegram to Harriet Ballou of the SDRC confirming her willingness to assist in aiding indigent American refugees out of Mexico with transportation, housing, food, and possibly employment upon their arrival in the city.[161] He further asked the SDRC to "enlist the aid of the residents of the city" before turning to the federal government for reimbursements.[162] San Diego's newspapers used the occasion to celebrate the national importance of their local charities. The *Union* insisted that "Directors of the local Red Cross chapter have been in constant communication with the national officers at Washington and the sudden request of the secretary of state came as no surprise to them."[163]

Local humanitarianism and federal military aid thus became intertwined, but remained distinctive on one notable issue—whether the refugee camps on the American side of the border could become permanent. In June 1915, Laredo citizens appealed to the ARC for contributions towards a locally organized relief campaign for up to 6,000 Mexican refugees living outside the city. The ARC refused assistance in accordance with officials within the Laredo municipal government and the concern that such relief would "make Laredo a Mecca for refugees."[164] Director Ernest Bicknell expressed similar concerns in a private telegraph to Ballou of SDRC while seeking information on local relief efforts: "You will probably find firm measures necessary [to limit] the number of dependents as rapidly as possible and prevent them from settling down indefinitely on your bounty." Indeed, the national division repeatedly proved unwilling to sponsor or even support ongoing relief efforts within American borders. As Bicknell insisted, "We must be human but not support people able to support themselves."[165] To those in Washington, D.C., the Mexican refugees flooding the SDRC and partner organizations required a demonstration of humanity, not sustained relief and certainly not integration.

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[159] "Preparing for the Border," *The American Red Cross Magazine* 11:8 (August, 1916) 261.

[160] Ibid., 268.

[161] "Bryan Asks Red Cross Aid," *San Diego Union,* August 24, 1913.

[162] The details of this correspondence were held in the SDRC meeting minutes of August 22, 1913, collected in *Minutes of the Meetings of the Board of Directors of the San Diego Chapter, American Red Cross March 24, 1911 - October, 1915*. Regrettably, this book has likely been lost since it was reviewed and recorded by two SDRC workers in 1981. See Ralph E. Hughes and Laurel Davis Scott, "The Founding of San Diego's Red Cross," *Journal of San Diego History,* 27:2 (Spring 1981) at http://www.sandiegohistory.org/journal/81spring/reD.C.ross.htm.

[163] "Bryan Asks Red Cross Aid," *San Diego Union,* August 24, 1913.

[164] "Death Reported from Starvation," *San Diego Union,* June 23, 1915.

Local perspectives on the issue of permanent settlement proved more complex. Most of the border cities embraced the settlement of refugees "of the better class" regardless of nationality, many of whom permanently settled on the northern side of the line. Refugees who had been without means before the Revolution were more typically confined to the region immediately around the boundary and prevented from moving into the interior unless dispatched to work on the region's railroads. The conditions provided for them varied significantly city-to-city and year-to-year. Some, like those who traveled from San Diego in the first years of Revolution, were put up in well-tended resorts and urban homes. Others, like those admitted by some of Texas's immigration inspectors, were housed in tents or camps before being returned to Mexico after the most imminent threats had subsided. The inspectors proved far more concerned about protecting the refugees from certain, preventable death than providing them with equal or even decent living conditions once they had been granted asylum. Even refugees deserving of asylum could remain "undesirable" when it came to permanent immigration.[166]

At the same time that the federal government began attending to the humanitarian crisis of the Mexican Revolution, border chapters of the Red Cross turned their attention to American refugees out of Mexico. The diverging efforts underscored the distinctions between the two organizations and their target populations. The SDRC never claimed to be an international relief organization, but rather tended to those seen as deserving of humanity within an often-shifting distance of San Diego. Moreover, its humanitarian function aimed as much at relieving the suffering of those Mexican refugees within San Diego as relieving the public resources of San Diego from the burden of caring for Mexican refugees. By contrast, as articulated by a frustrated Mary Gale, the federal government and its sponsored Mexican National Relief organization in the ARC "took no steps to assist those who tramped overland from Mexico to San Diego, and several such destitutes have been fed, clothed, and found positions by officers in the local chapter."[167]

The campaigns of the American Red Cross continued to rely on border towns for donations and material resources as they broadened their mission in Mexico. Fundraising was almost entirely concentrated in the chambers of commerce and boards of trade of the border, believed to be "glad to respond to these appeals and send forward carloads of supplies."[168] Indeed, the Red Cross commissioned some of its highest representatives to solicit aid from border town elites. The Chairman of the ARC Central Committee of the ARC wrote to the Acting National Director S.P. Morris while he was in Monterey, Mexico, and urged him to focus on bringing knowledge of the famine to " those states that have closet business relations with Mexico," including the chambers of commerce, trade associations, and commercial bodies of the

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[165] Ernest P. Bicknell, National Director of ARC to Harriet Ballou, Chairman of SDRC, June 7, 1911. SDRC Archives, Book 1906-1917, Held at the Imperial County/ San Diego Red Cross Headquarters.
[166] George Harris to F.W. Berkshire, February 24, 1914, Mexican Border Situation, Border Officers' Reports, Box 1111, Subject and Policy Files, 1893-1957, Records of the INS: RG 85, NARA-D.C.
[167] "Red Cross of Splendid Record Needs Stronger Organization," *San Diego Union,* October 28, 1913.
[168] "Mexico's Pitiable Plight," American National Red Cross, *The American Red Cross Magazine* 10:2 (1915) 100-103; 101.

American border towns.[169] Local interests thus manifested themselves in local Progressive organizations and the dollars channeled through national relief campaigns.

The American Red Cross publicized many of the donations received for the Mexican National Relief Committee, stressing the humble backgrounds of the donors, like the anonymous "poor, illiterate" workman who sent two cents to feed a family, as calculated in one of many ARC appeals: "I half red in the paper about Mexian[sic] suffers I only got 2 cents two give you witch I will give a man & his wife a three meals a day I hope you will get it all right cause I aint[sic] sure wether[sic] you will but I hop so."[170] Reports of children donating dollar-sized birthday gifts also littered many statements, all meant to celebrate American humanity and generosity. Notwithstanding the ARC's advertisements, national campaigns for Mexico garnered far less support than those conducted in the border region. Due to such abysmal donation records, the ARC moved money out of funds earmarked for the famine in China and domestic disaster relief efforts towards Mexican relief. Public appeals nonetheless persisted through 1916. Special representative O'Connor attempted to make the famine resonate with Americans by comparing it to domestic American disasters, noting that the crises was "greater than the sum of Chicago, San Francisco, Dayton, and all the rest of our disasters except our wars."[171] Others attempted to distinguish between Mexico's hostile forces and the innocent civilians crying out in hunger. "Mexico—non-combatant Mexico—is starving. It is not on the verge of starvation. *It is starving now."*[172] Yet O'Connor's attempts to mobilize American sympathy outside of Mexican investment circles proved largely futile, even as border cities expanded their own relief efforts.[173]

By contrast, aid workers living and operating in border towns registered the suffering of those displaced by the Revolution as a domestic problem, and were appalled by American indifference to the plight of their neighbors:

> The conditions in Europe which shock the civilized world have existed here against our border for four years, unconsidered…At first it reached us only as a rumor from remote places, but now it is present in our midst, on both sides of the Rio Grande. One sees it daily in emaciated forms, shrunken cheeks, tightly drawn skin and burning eyes; sees it in the faces of women, old men and little children. Many have died on American soil during the past year, ostensibly from obscure diseases, but actually from starvation, and there are hundreds of children who have never had sufficient food in their pitiful little lives.[174]

Widespread captivation with suffering in Europe only exacerbated these sentiments. Furthermore, as violence between the countries persisted, even those previously hesitant to accept nonlocal assistance began to seek more aid from the ARC and even the federal government. “Relief societies all along the border have done noble work,” they admitted, but “the burden has grown too great for one state, or two or three.” And as American state officials and troops continued discussion of intervention in Mexico, aid workers called into question how a strong military intervention could succeed without an equally strong humanitarian intervention. “The U.S. has claimed the exclusive right to intervene in Mexican Affairs. Will we demand the right and repudiate the obligation?”[175]

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[169] George W. Davis to S.P. Morris, Reprinted in Ibid.

[170] "Prostrate Mexico," Ibid., 236.

[171] Charles J. O'Connor, "Great Distress in Mexico," *The American Red Cross Magazine* 11:1 (1916) 22.

[172] "Mexico's Distress is Now Most Acute," *The American Red Cross Magazine* 10, no. 7 (1915) 264.

[173] Distance proved influential in Americans' donation patterns towards the Mexican relief effort, as has been documented by many historians of humanitarianism. But whereas many such studies equate proximity with shared nationality and distance with foreignness, the case of humanitarian campaigns in the Mexican Revolution disposed of such assumptions. American residents on both sides of the border contributed more to the relief of Mexican refugees nearby than Americans on the whole.

[174] Mrs. C.E. Hendrix of Matamoros, quoted. in "Misery Along Rio Grande," *The American Red Cross Magazine* 10:2 (National Headquarters, Washington, D.C., 1915) 101.

Conclusion

The actions taken on behalf of Mexico’s refugees were not free of the racism or violence so well documented in the history of the U.S.-Mexico border region. Mexicans, including the impoverished, friendless, and sick, were admitted to the United States using the rhetoric of humanitarian sentiment. But that does not mean they were consistently treated in humane ways. As Caroline Shaw has pointed out in her study of the nineteenth century origins of the idea of the refugee, what refuge and refugee meant changed dramatically over time and space.[176] Officials at the Mexican border dictated where some refugees lived, gathered intelligence on their activity, and deported the most politically radical or revolutionarily active. Many of the sympathetic refugees of 1911 and 1913 became the systemically exploited laborers of the decades afterward, and most were subject to accusations of laziness. Almost all of the refugee camps were dismantled or neglected within a few years, and some of the neighborhoods that emerged around them in California cemented into slum-like communities called *colonias*, which grew despite being deprived of the basic services and infrastructural networks that knit together the central urban fabric. The sympathy shown suffering, panic-stricken women, children, and unarmed men coming across the border was temporary and limited, just as it was for refugees of disaster in the earthquake and fire of San Francisco of 1906.

Still, many immigration inspectors and urbanites responded viscerally to the suffering and crisis that played out before their eyes at the Mexican border. For years, local civilians and state agents confronted wounded bodies and frantic crowds in their own city. Socialites like Mary Gale, inspectors like William Soult, and businessmen like James Douglas all took extraordinary actions on behalf of refugees coming across the U.S.-Mexican border to fulfill their social obligations and shore up an urban society in which their lives, work, and fortunes were embedded. Both these ethical constraints derived from longstanding national and international traditions of providing humanitarian aid to sufferers of unforeseen catastrophes, a tradition that flourished in the rapid urbanization of the revolutionary-era border region. The practices and ideas of disaster humanitarianism decisively changed regional migration patterns and would continue to shape the politics and culture of the border cities for decades.

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[175] Ibid.

[176] Shaw, *Britannia’s Embrace,* chaps. 6-7. Shaw explains that the definition of the refugee solidified in nineteenth century Britain to refer to a foreigner who had been persecuted overseas and hence required special philanthropic attention.

Chapter Four

The Camps

Shelter, Healthcare, and Food for "Uncle Sam's Wards"

During the second week of January, 1914, the troops of the twentieth infantry division of the U.S. Army strung over eighty thousand feet of barbed wire atop five thousand feet of ten-foot fencing a few miles north of the U.S.-Mexico border, near El Paso. Troops then constructed eight elevated sentry towers at designated intervals along the fence perimeter. Once the footings were dug and the posts upright, the troops installed eighty electric lights along the fence to ensure that the barrier remained illuminated at all hours. The completed project enabled soldiers to monitor and shoot anyone attempting to cross the fence without authorization. But the targets would not be Mexican migrants trying to enter the United States. On the contrary, the fencing, barbed wire, and towers were there to ensure that no Mexican migrants in the area could escape to Mexico. The fence encircled a camp that would soon house over 5,000 refugees recently granted asylum in the United States. The U.S. Army designed the space to provide total care for a fraction of the tens of thousands of refugees allowed admission to the United States in accordance with circulating ideas of social obligation and recently adopted international treaties on the laws of war. The militarized camp was designed as a refuge.

The camps built to house Mexican refugees were among the first to be erected in an era soon to be marked by proliferating camps housing millions of Armenian, Assyrian, Turkish, Syrian, Greek, and Roma refugees fleeing war, famine, and genocide in the wake of the outbreak of World War I.[1] In this sense, parts of the southern border of the United States closely resembled the borders of the interwar Eastern Mediterranean. In both places, the apparently unambiguous good of political asylum for refugees contradicted the reality of forced internment and involuntary labor.[2] Commitment to humanitarian principles gave rise to a border regime that was at once sanctuary and concentration camp.

Humanitarian principles legitimated inhumane and uncharitable refugee camp systems created by the Army and the Red Cross in San Francisco and later at the Mexican border. In the post-catastrophic Bay Area, humanitarian tenets licensed unbridled militarism. Dramatic retellings of rescues and executions, tragedy and heroism conflated the saving and destroying of lives as equally important to the project of saving the city and protecting the well-being of its survivors. Narratives that circulated around the country celebrated news that U.S. troops enacted the "sternest" martial law to manage San Francisco's refugee crisis: "They have no records existing of the number of executions which had been meted out to offenders…[looters] discovered that they could not disobey a man who wears Uncle

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[1] The sources consulted in the immense literature on the refugee crisis in Europe and the Middle East during and after the First World War include Laura Robson, *States of Separation: Transfer, Partition, and the Making of the Modern Middle East* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2017) esp. chap. 2, "The Refugee Regime," on the defense of Christian refugees' national identities in French, American, and British relief regimes in the Middle East; Peter Gatrell, *A Whole Empire Walking: Refugees in Russia During World War I* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005); *The Making of the Modern Refugee* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

[2] Victoria Redclift discusses the ambiguous value of legal status and formal asylum for the stateless, especially in her conclusion in *Statelessness and Citizenship: Camps and the Creation of Political Space*. (New York: Routledge, 2013).

Sam's uniform without imminent risk of being counted in that abstract mortuary list usually designated as "unknown dead."[3] While official reports counted only a handful of executions, refugees and civilians reading about the crisis largely accepted and even applauded the liberal use of force to secure the post-catastrophic city.[4] San Francisco's "Relief Force" very aptly described life under a regime that was equal parts humanitarian and brutal. That relief force was easily transferred to the southern border once the Mexican Revolution sparked another humanitarian crisis. Violent revulsion and compassion similarly inflected civilian and military responses to the refugee crisis that erupted in cosmopolitan urban centers like San Diego and sleep frontier outposts like Presidio, Texas.

Refugees in both cases qualified for aid because they were homeless, injured or sick, and hungry—criteria that could transcend their identities as peons, combatants, or vermin-infested undesirables. A *Collier's* journalist captured the sentiment when he wrote of the tens of thousands of Mexicans who crossed the Texan border in the early years of the Revolution: "the refugees were ill, wounded, naked, and starving…It was in fact a national calamity."[5] Red Cross volunteers tending to the refugee camps circulated stories in Progressive publications with large readerships in New York, Chicago, and San Francisco. These volunteers served "refugees who fled across to the US…with absolutely nothing," some of whom were "peaceful," some of whose "husbands and fathers of many were among the killed and wounded." Irrespective of their relationship to recent conflict, the "terrified women and children had crept through the border fence and were hiding in the chaparral in the little hollows, with no food and no protection, and presented a pitiful sight to the searching parties." Refugees may have had fervent political beliefs and violent pasts before they crossed the border. But in the eyes of the American benevolent workers who received them, they appeared as little more than desperate hordes of humanity deserving of shelter, healthcare, and food.[6]

This chapter traces how what is now understood as the competing ideals of humanitarianism and federal border law enforcement were born of the same events, ideas, institutions, and actions. By closely examining the evolution of the refugee camps under U.S. supervision, I show how camp guards and their partners in the Red Cross utilized aid as both salve and punishment. I isolate three primary forms of aid —shelter, health, and food— that constituted the material basis of the refugee relief regimes at San Francisco and the Mexican border. Humanitarians and federal agents alike extended shelter to the homeless, food to the hungry, and medical care to the sick, weak, and wounded. But these same actors also imprisoned the defiant, rationed or starved the disobedient, and forcibly sanitized, vaccinated, and quarantined the sick and wounded. Such acts diminished the humanitarian ideals that distinguished these refugee camps from other brutal periods of internment and accelerated the creation of a more militarized Mexican border regime.

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[3] Trumbull White, Richard Linthicum, and Hubert D. Russell, *The Complete Story of the San Francisco Horror: Scenes of Death and Terror* (Chicago: H.D. Russell, 1906) 108.

[4] Charles J. O'Connor placed the number at nine deaths by violence, six at the hands of law enforcement, and three at the hands of "over-zealous patrols." O'Connor, "Organizing the Force and Emergency Methods" in *San Francisco Relief Survey* (New York: Survey Associates, 1913) 3-96; 5. U.S. Army General Frederick Funston publicly stated that two deaths were attributed to shooting by National Guardsmen. Funston, "How the Army Worked to Save San Francisco" *Cosmopolitan Magazine* 41:3 (July 1906).

[5] Peter B. Kyne, "With the Border Patrol," *Collier's* (May 9, 1914) 9-22; 20.

[6] Ernest A. Sweet, "Interstate Migration of Tuberculous Persons: Its Bearing on the Public Health, with Special Reference to the States of Texas and New Mexico," *Public Health Reports* 3:17 (1915) 1225-1255.

Shelter

San Francisco

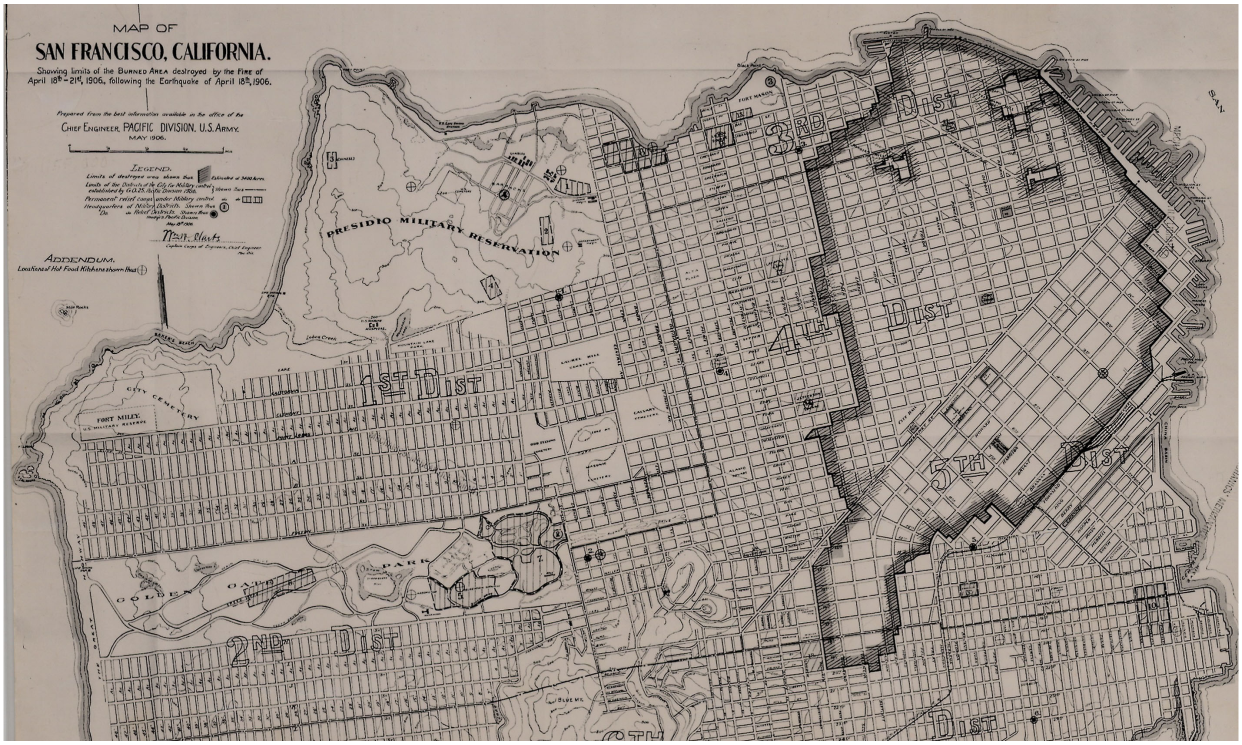
MAP OF
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA.
Showing limits of the BURNED AREA destroyed by the FIRE of April 18th – 21st, 1906., following the Earthquake of April 18th, 1906.
Prepared from the best information available in the office of the
CHIEF ENGINEER, PACIFIC DIVISION. U.S. ARMY.
MAY 1906.
LEGEND.
Limits of destroyed area shown thus
Estimated at 3400 Acres
Limits of the Districts of the City for Military control established by G.O. 25. Pacific Division 1906.
shown thus
Permanent relief camps under Military control.
Headquarters of Military Districts. Shown thus
Do. do Relief Districts. Shown thus
Headq'rs Pacific Division
May 13th 1906
Captain Corps of Engineers, Chief Engineer Pac. Div.
ADDENDUM.
Locations of Hot Food Kitchens shown thus
Mile Rocks
BAKER'S BEACH
PRESIDIO MILITARY RESERVATION
FORT MASON
CITY CEMETERY
FORT MILEY
GOLDEN GATE PARK
1ST DIST
2ND DIST
3RD DIST
4TH DIST
5TH DIST
6TH DIST

Figure 14: U.S. Army Corps, Map of Relief Districts, May 13, 1906, Courtesy Bancroft Library and Archives.

A mere twenty-four hours after the city's streets had cracked open and burning skyscrapers melted into steel skeletons, San Francisco became a city of borders. A simple geographic logic organized the work of emergency responders and law enforcement in the absence of reliable communications technology. Organizers dispatched engines to specific neighborhoods, stationed firefighters around cisterns and hydrants, and ordered both into circular movements around the only infrastructure governing their work—the dwindling water supply.[7] An ad-hoc geography of safety and neglect grew all the more chaotic as thousands of volunteer, local, federal, and state law enforcement officers took up arms to ensure the safety of survivors and the security of remaining property. "At present no man can even enter a house or tent which is not his own without a strong chance of getting a dose of lead without any question asked," one civilian wrote shortly before enlisting as a member of the secret police so that he could "go where [he] liked."[8]

Territories marked out by search-and-rescue teams soon gave way to a system of strictly policed military districts. On April 24, six days after the earthquake, a delegation of members from hastily organized citizen relief groups, multiple branches of the Red Cross, the U.S. Army, the local government, and select esteemed citizens gathered to coordinate their disparate relief efforts at the U.S. Army base on the northern edge of the peninsula, Fort Mason.[9] Philippine-American war hero General Frederick Funston represented the army, former Mayor Phelan represented the City, newspaper mogul M.H. de Young and railroad executive E.H. Harriman represented local affluent citizens and their relief organizations, Edward Devine represented the American Red Cross, and erstwhile U.S. Representative W.W. Morrow represented its California chapter. Out of their efforts came the strict division of the city into three zones of authority and responsibility. The U.S. Army took charge of the northern part of the city; the National Guard, the central section; and local police, the South. Civilian, local, federal, and state troops patrolled the districts under their assigned jurisdictions to punish residents found cooking, lighting fires, looting, or violating the eight o'clock curfew.[10] This tripartite structure lasted only ten days. On May 2, the U.S. military took control of the entire city as survivors seethed over accusations of wanton looting on the part of the National Guard and the inefficacy of local law enforcement.[11] Funston reorganized the city into six military districts.[12] A partitioned city alleviated the confusion resulting from police authorities and thereby "wrought order from chaos" according to one popular account.[13]

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[7] Experiences of Captain C. J. Cullen, Reports of Fire Officers of the San Francisco Fire Department on the Fire of 1906: BANC MSS C-R 68: Vol. 7, The Bancroft Library and Archives.

[8] The full quote from volunteer medical officer and San Francisco resident Arthur Dangerfield reads: "At present no man can even enter a house or tent which is not his own without a strong chance of getting a dose of lead without any question asked. I can go where I like however as I am wearing one of Uncle Sam's khaki uniforms as medical officer." Journal entry, April 24, 1906, Arthur Dangerfield Collection, ca. 1906 – 1961: BANC MSS 9/24 c 1:3, The Bancroft Library and Archives.

Survivors fleeing the city and attempting to find loved ones encountered other borders, beyond the ruins. After initial days of chaos and disrupted rail transit, city officials encouraged refugees to evacuate to camps in Berkeley, Oakland, Sacramento, or Los Angeles, or to find shelter with friends.[14] But an indefinite prohibition on returning to the city discouraged many refugees who had yet to locate their families or secure their homes. “Unless you had an official capacity, or could wangle a pass, nobody was allowed to go to San Francisco,” a young stenographer turned corps volunteer noted by way of explaining his successful visit to the Ferry Building on April 21.[15] Even troops and medical officials reported “great difficulty in getting back to the City, as General Funston had given orders that no one was to be admitted.”[16] Soon local mayors and commanding officers began to issue passes that enabled a privileged few to move freely throughout the city, while obstructing the movement of the ordinary refugees who remained.[17]

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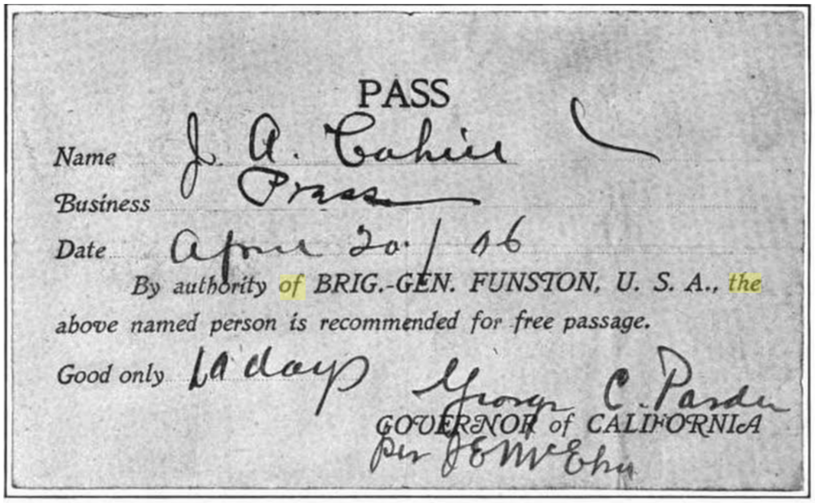
[9] O'Connor, "Organizing the Force and Emergency Methods," 11.

[10] Experiences of Captain John Fay #22, and His Men, Reports of Fire Officers of the San Francisco Fire Department on the Fire of 1906: BANC MSS C-R 68: Vol. 7, The Bancroft Library and Archives. For the perspective of a proud vigilante that was one of 1,000 to be sworn in to a special post-fire Special Police force, see Charles Ross to A.M. Von Metzke, April 26, 1906, California miscellany: additions, bulk 1829-1981: BANC MSS 73/122 c: 193: letter 1, The Bancroft Library and Archives.

[11] Conflicts over the National Guard persisted throughout its deployment in San Francisco. Governor Pardee, himself a veteran guardsman, grew "testy and profane," according to former Mayor Phelan, when confronted with the numerous accusations of wanton violence and looting on the part of the Guard, particularly against Chinese refugees and stores. Philip Fradkin, *The Great Earthquake and Firestorms of 1906: How San Francisco Nearly Destroyed Itself* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005) 205-206; "Friction between Militia and Mayor," *San Francisco Chronicle,* April 24, 1906; "Militia Center of Hot Conflict," *San Francisco Chronicle,* April 26, 1906.

[12] Funston, "How the Army," 246. Governor Pardee did not formally approve the deployment of U.S. troops to California until April 28, but by that time thousands of federal troops were already working to police the city and served as the lone supervisors of the refugee camps and military hospitals; the approval was ceremonial. "State Employs Troops," *Los Angeles Times,* April 29, 1906, 2. A full accounting of the federal troops by commanding General Funston on July 2 included: two General officers, two Cavalries, 15 companies of the Coast Artilleries, four batteries of Field Artilleries, five infantry, two companies of the Corps of Engineers, two companies of the Hospital Corps, three companies of the signal corps, 132 staff and officers of the Army, one blue jacket command, one Maine battalion, and one Naval Apprentice force. W. G. Haan, and S.W. Dunning, "General Orders: No. 42" July 2, 1906, in General Adolphus W. Greely, *Earthquake in California, April 18, 1906, Special Report of Maj. Gen Adolphus W. Greely, U.S.A., Commanding the Pacific Division on the Relief Operations Conducted by the Military Authorities of the United States at San Francisco and Other Points with Accompanying Documents* (Washington: GPO, 1906). The Bancroft Library and Archives. Popular dollar books of the accounts sold door-to-door around the country underscored the ubiquity of armed professional and volunteer troops and the blurred lines of authority. One account by publisher Trumbull White explained that "the authorities considered conditions so grave that it was decided to swear in immediately 1,000 special policemen armed with rifles furnished by the federal government." White et. al., *Complete Story,* 61.

[13] White et. al, *Complete Story,* 172.



PASS

Name J. A. Cahill

Business Press

Date April 20 / 06

By authority of BRIG.-GEN. FUNSTON, U. S. A., the above named person is recommended for free passage.

Good only 10 days

George C. Pardee

GOVERNOR of CALIFORNIA

per J E McEhu

Figure 15: Official Pass through Military Districts, April 20, 1906, Courtesy Bancroft Library and Archives.

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[14] “Army of Homeless Fleeing from Devastated City,” *New York Times,* April 20, 1906, 1; “Fight to Escape Horrors in City,” *Chicago Tribune* April 23, 1906, 4; “Refugees go to Oakland,” *San Francisco Chronicle,* April 19, 1906, 4; “San Francisco’s New Peril: Threatens Egress,” *New York Times,* April 21, 1906, 1; “Into Fair Heaven Stream Refugees,” *Los Angeles Times,* April 23, 1906, 1; “Simplification of Transportation to the Waterfront,” *San Francisco Chronicle,* April 22, 1906, 4.

[15] Ivan S. Rankin, “Recollections of the Earthquake and Fire in San Francisco April 18, 19, 20, and 21, 1906,” April 25, 1906, MS 3497, California Historical Society.

[16] Dangerfield, April 24 1906, 7. He continued: “I had great difficulty in getting back to the City, as General Funston had given orders that no one was to be admitted. However, a pass from the Mayor of Berkeley and the friendly services of some police officials landed me once more in this delightful place.”

[17] “General Orders, No. 18” April 29, 1906, in Greely, *Earthquake in California, April 18, 1906, Special Report*, 129-140. The organization of the city was reconceived several times as the limits of local and state enforcement became more apparent. Initially, the city was divided between local, National Guard, and army officers. By May 2, the entire city was placed under military control and the districts reorganized into eight zones, then reorganized again into six zones. These reorganizations only required “slight changes” in boundaries, however. O’Connor, “Organizing the Force and Emergency Methods,” 11-12. Trumbull White’s sensationalist account of the barrier system captured a sense of occupation seen throughout many survivor narratives. The full quote: “The troops shut down with iron hands on the city, for where one man was homeless the first night five were homeless the second night. With the fire running all along the water front, few managed to make their way over to Oakland. The people for the most part were prisoners on the peninsula. The soldiers enforced the rule against moving about except to escape the flames, and absolutely no one could enter the city who once had left. The seat of city government and of military authority shifted with every shift of the flames.” White et. al., *Complete Story,* 55.

Neighboring cities also established boundaries in anticipation of a deluge of refugees escaping aftershocks, flames, and food scarcity. California journalists trumpeted refugee resettlement efforts that arose in response to Governor Pardee's official request for assistance. Cleveland, Denver, and Portland each took in several hundred refugees in the seven days after the catastrophe.[18] Sacramento and other Northern California towns likewise expressed hospitality towards sufferers, but undertook substantial military preparations in anticipation of their arrival. The adjacent town of Sausalito appointed new police deputies and gathered arms in anticipation of "drunken, hungry and famine stricken crowds from San Francisco."[19] The President of Sacramento's Board of Health insisted that arriving refugees live outside of the city limits, if not "in their own city," at least not with friends in Sacramento due to "the danger of violent epidemics."[20] Oakland, Fresno, Napa, Selma, Vallejo, Stockton, and Dixon agreed to accept strictly-defined numbers of refugees whose evacuation had been coordinated by the Southern Pacific railway company. Vallejo immediately put to work its 300 refugees to offset the costs of their care.[21] Smaller towns including Healdsburg, Los Gatos, Calistoga, and Martinez offered to host no more than 100 refugees apiece, often significantly fewer.[22]

The more populous cities of California took advantage of their distance from the chaos to implement strict refugee screening procedures meant to ensure arrivals were healthy and, whenever possible, of means. Los Angeles hosted a sophisticated resettlement effort to coordinate offers by private citizens, fraternal societies, and industrial associations offering food or beds to friends.[23] Local residents fearing for "the health of citizens" applauded the city's rejection of hundreds of "fleeing people…in such bad condition."[24] The city swore in forty additional deputies to serve as guards at two detention camps in Agriculture Park and Sepulveda. These camps were organized in accordance with military rule; their custodians had instruction "to shoot anyone who attempts to pass either in or out of the camp without the proper authority."[25] Walter L. Vaill, chair of the local citizens' relief committee, explained the city's policy:

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[18] "600 Destitute Taken Care of At Portland," "Refugees Pour into Denver," *Sacramento Union,* April 25, 1906, 2-4.

[19] "Sheriff Takes Precautions," *Marin Journal,* April 18, 1906. Quoted in Andrea Davies Henderson, "Reconstructing Home: Gender, Disaster Relief, and Social Life after the San Francisco Earthquake and Fire, 1906-1915" (Ph.D. Diss., Stanford University, 2005) 150.

[20] Sacramento prepared heavily but only hosted between forty and one-hundred refugees who were not among those that found housing with residents. "Capital City Now a Big Relief Camp," *Sacramento Union,* April 22, 1906, 1; "Sacramento Will Concentrate All Refugees at Sutter's Fort," *Sacramento Union,* April 29, 1906, 10.

[21] Oakland City Clerk Frank R. Thompson to Governor George Pardee, April 20, 1906, George Cooper Pardee papers: BANC MSS C-B 400, Ctn. 01:13; "Refugees in Vallejo," "Outside Towns Offer to Give Relief to Unfortunates," *San Francisco Call,* April 22, 1906.

[22] Two account books of offers to provide funds, food, troops, prison space, or accommodate refugees in the first weeks after the disaster show that the mayors and benevolent society chairs of neighboring cities entertained very different ideas about how to discharge their social obligations. See Oakland Relief Fund Administration, Offers of Accommodation. April 23-May 6, 1906, April 25-May 9, 1906, George Cooper Pardee papers: BANC MSS C-B 400, Ctn. 02:15. The Bancroft Library and Archives.

[23] "Welcome Refugees in the Chamber Reading Room," April 21, 1906, 3. "Another Train of Refugees Comes to Los Angeles," April 24, 1906.

[24] Richard Culver, "Health Officers Inspect Strictly Refugee Train," *Los Angeles Herald,* April 24, 1906, 5; "Los Angeles Guards against Epidemics," *Sacramento Union,* April 25, 1906.

[25] The article further noted that the officer in charge William A. Hammel had to hire interpreter Alfred Trident due to the numbers of immigrants unable to speak English. "Detention camp to be opened today," *Los Angeles Times,* April 26, 1906, 8; "Will Establish Detention Camp," *Los Angeles Times,* April 25, 1906.

> The entire Los Angeles police force has been placed at my disposal by the chamber of commerce so that no undesirable refugees may be allowed to get into this city, or if they do gain entrance that they may be sent out again as quickly as possible. We do not purpose to have Los Angeles become the stomping grounds of all the thugs who were driven out of San Francisco by the earthquake. We are willing and anxious to care for every deserving person who has fled from the north to Los Angeles, but we must protect the city against an influx of thieves and criminals.[26]

In some cases, officials claimed refugees had requested amplified policing around the camps. In Sacramento, a women's relief committee ventriloquized the fears of its women refugees, who insisted visitors were not wanted. Reverend H.K. Booth expressed "outrage" that the camps had attracted exploitative sightseers hoping to catch a glimpse of the internationally famous refugee hordes.[27] It was out of deference to the refugees' dignity that the city drew up plans to regulate passage across camp boundaries. Only refugees and visitors with endorsed passes from General J.G. Martine were able to enter and leave the fort in Sacramento. Towns throughout California embraced the role of hosts to desperate refugees. But local fraternal societies and officials also saw themselves as wardens, turning camps into prison-like spaces where freedom of mobility was suspended indefinitely.

Some refugees did indeed seem to welcome boundaries and district lines. Anna Blake wrote to her mother about the security she felt within the Presidio's camps and also the fear she felt for family living outside when a fire broke out:

> Soldiers and nurses came through and told us to be quiet. The sky showed blood red through the transoms. An officer outside called "Shoot anyone caught looting." There was a soldier ready to take every patient, and the boats were lined up waiting. We had fire engines from the city and used up our water…Every man on the reservation called out and fought with buckets and hose and wet blankets. It was controled just as we were ready to be moved. This frightened me worse than the big fire. It was so red and hot and near, and the running and firing and shouting was dreadful. But it's all right now.… I thought the rest of the city was burning and was frightened for you. Of course the soldiers would take care of us.[28]

It was Blake's confidence that "the soldiers would take care of us" that made the district and camp boundaries so real: the distinction between "you" and "us" became, however temporarily, the distinction between those that could or could not find security under the care of the U.S. Army against fires, looters, and vagabonds alike. Dozens of San Francisco residents identified themselves as those camp inhabitants "patrolled by the University of California Cadets" to thank them for their "protection [and]…. innumerable acts of kindness." These residents seemed unaware that the cadets were mobilized without legal authorization by a Berkeley professor of military tactics.[29] In his personal recollections of the weeks after the fire, physician Arthur Dangerfield took comfort in his authorization to impress any able-bodied man into work at gunpoint to tend to his hospital camp. "This all sounds very bloodthirsty but it is the only thing that saved the place from murder and robbery which are rife at any time in San Francisco, and would have been a thousand times worse just now without the strictest Martial law."[30] Military boundaries changed regularly in relief maps and in physical space, but in the minds of many inhabitants they firmly demarcated the line between danger and security.

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[26] "All Relief Work Now Organized by Committee," *Los Angeles Herald,* April 28, 1906.

[27] "Intruders on Privacy of Refugees are Halted," *Sacramento Union,* May 1, 1906, 7.

[28] Anna Blake to Mother, April 25, 1906, The Anna Blake Mezquida Papers, 1788-1975: BANC MSS 73/188 c: Box 4:26. Letter 1. The Bancroft Library and Archives.

Still, some women and immigrant refugees perceived camp boundaries as threatening—as spaces in which military authority exposed them to greater danger than the city at large. Katharine Hooker, whose rich family had interests in oil, utilities, and manufacturing, wrote of the volunteer troops' "unreasonable cruelty" towards Russian Hill residents hoping to recover belongings from the fire's path. Once within the camps outside of Fort Mason she felt "much distress" upon hearing late-night screams of fellow women campers when a "drunken soldier pushed his way into a tent full of sleeping women and threatened to shoot them. Hardly a day passed that all camping there were not roughly ordered to leave the ground by some uniformed person who strode shouting over the sands."[31]

The widespread presumption that the city was under martial law reinforced the power of the armed troops policing the edges of each military district and refugee camp.[32] In their diaries and letters, survivors explained that the proclamation of martial law had transferred police authority to federal military officials, prohibited fires, encouraged execution of looters or sex offenders on sight, prohibited evacuation from some neighborhoods, compelled evacuation from others, prevented any civilian from moving beyond his immediate location, and enabled state officials to impress civilians into relief work.[33] Survivors expressed surprise and respect as they observed that martial law was so strict that it applied to all, regardless of status. “Jimmy Brett, the great prize-fighter, refused to go to work when ordered to do so and was shot. [Claus] Spreckels, a millionaire, was discovered offering any sum of money for a man to take his place but was put to digging graves— a nice little job for him and very good for him, too.”[34] Of the surviving letters and diary entries held in the Bancroft Library, only a handful criticized the supposed declaration of martial law. And only one of the survivors appeared to question whether or not they were living under martial law, though neither federal nor local authorities ever officially deployed the terms to describe the rule of law in the post-catastrophic city.[35]

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[29] Three hundred San Francisco Residents to President Ide Wheeler, May 4, 1906. W.G. Haan, Military Secretary to Captain Nance, Professor of Military Tactics, University of California, April 27, 1906. From the Berkeley Relief Committee Records. Quoted in John Dundas Fletcher, "An Account of the Work of relief organized in Berkeley in April and May, 1906 for the refugees from San Francisco" (Master's thesis, UC Berkeley, 1900).

[30] Dangerfield, April 24, 1906, 6.

[31] Hooker family papers, Letter, [circa late April, 1906] 59, 1783-1951: BANC MSS 77/1 c anon 01-68, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.

[32] Whether martial law had been declared in San Francisco and what exactly such a declaration authorized confused residents and officials; the topic has since attracted historical debate. Mayor E.E. Schmitz authored a proclamation on the day of the earthquake that 'the federal Troops, the members of the regular Police Force and all Special Police Officers have been authorized by me to KILL any and all person found engaged in Looting or in the Commission of Any Other Crime," amid other prohibitions against using gas, electricity, or violating curfew. Despite this proclamation, both Schmitz and General Funston agreed not to declare martial law and that it had not ever been entailed. Secretary of War William Howard Taft and Funston further fought at length over the use and legitimacy of federal force deployed in the peacetime city. "Rumors of Military Executions," *Sacramento Union,* April 25, 1906. The ambiguity of San Francisco's martial law and its associated executions prompted review of the concept in academic legal journals and court opinions, where it was treated as much as a matter of hierarchy (whether an officer that follows illegal orders is legally justified to kill as the order authorizes) as judgment (whether the authorization of executions for looting was warranted) or military rule (whether the military exclusively ruled the city and suspended municipal law). The contradictory 1906 public statements and orders ultimately provoked vigilantism and confusion more than they established the U.S. military as the exclusive authority in the wake of the emergency. Henry Winthrop Ballantine, "Martial Law," *Columbia Law Review,* 12:6 (June 1912) 529-538; W.A. Graham, "Martial Law in California," *California Law Review* 31:1 (1942) 6-15; and "Military Dictatorship in California and West Virginia," *California Law Review* 1:5 (July 1913) 413-426.

[33] On transfer of control: "We have just heard that the U.S. troops have taken charge down town. We have not yet learned where but think from appearances the fire is raging from all directions." Letter from W.H. Hawgood to Mary

The fact that so many believed martial law had been enacted held legal significance. Survivors’ private letters and journalists’ public accounts celebrated the bravery and good character of eager post-fire volunteers that democratized the work of saving the city by taking up arms and patrolling private residences or relief districts. But voluntarism also blurred distinctions between armed law enforcement and suffering civilians who felt licensed to shoot presumed looters, or expressed comfort as they witnessed such shootings. No case illustrated this phenomenon quite as clearly that of the killing of Red Cross volunteer and businessman Heber Tilden. Three San Franciscans had shot Tilden when he failed to stop at a roadblock set up by volunteer guards to demarcate the boundaries of a district. The men, all part of “citizen’s patrol” organized by Colonel Walter N. Kelly, were acquitted. Presiding Superior Court Judge Carroll Cook instructed the jury that the defendants lacked criminal intent if, as they argued, they “believed at the time the city was under martial law and that practically it was a time of insurrection and war.”[36] While martial law may not have existed it fact, Cook explained, “the entire community believed” it to exist, and “if the defendants honestly believed it” as well, they could not reasonably possess criminal intent and thus must be found innocent.[37] Cases like that for Tilden’s killing were closely followed in the months after the earthquake, and plenty of outrage was expressed over the idea that a (mistaken) belief could justify the killing of innocent civilians. But the outrage over Tilden’s death likely stemmed from his prominence and his

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Frances Burgess. Letters written to her from San Francisco at the time of the 1906 earthquake and fire: BANC MSS 72/88 C. On fires: “The city is under marshal law (sic) so that no fires are allowed to be built…we are praying that God will protect us.” Matilda B. Conway Murphy to Frank Fahey, April 19, 1906. California miscellany: additions, bulk 1829-1981: BANC MSS 73/122 c:66. On executions: “Many men have been shot in the last few days for stealing from the vacated houses and for attacking women. A large military and naval force has been landed and now patrol the city. We as special police act in conjunction with them.” Letter to A.M. Von Metzke from Charles Ross, April 26, 1906, California miscellany: additions, bulk 1829-1981: BANC MSS 73/122 c: 193: letter 1. All included in San Francisco Earthquake and Fire Digital Collection, The Bancroft Library and Archives. On forced labor: “The city is under martial law and we are living on the government, or at least many are…. every man caught in town is placed at work clearing the streets and they are kept at work until they drop.” Ernest H. Adams, April 23, 1906, available at the Virtual Museum of the City of San Francisco.

[34] Dangerfield, April 24, 1906, 7.

[35] “Letters from San Francisco to the eastern papers announced many things, such as that martial law was declared early in the morning of Wednesday, and that looting was "sternly repressed," two statements about equally untrue, the facts being that martial law was never declared at all, and that looting, though sometimes punished, was practiced widely and shamelessly.” Hooker Family, Letter [circa late April, 1906], 58.

[36] “Hears Testimony as to Duty of Citizens’ Patrol,” *San Francisco Call,* May 24, 1906.

[37] “Jury Frees Vance and Simmons,” *San Francisco Call,* September 29, 1906. Jury instructions quoted in Philip Fradkin, *The Great Earthquake and Firestorms of 1906,* 141. For further details about the killing and the role that the belief—rather than the existence—of martial law played in the judgment of innocence or guilt in an unauthorized killing, see “Holds Killing of Tilden Was a Murder,” *San Francisco Call,* July 6, 1906. “Fish of Denicke; Flesh of Boynton” *San Francisco Call*. July 11, 1906. “Two Decisions in One,” *San Francisco Call,* July 7, 1906. “Killing Justified by a ‘Belief,’” *San Francisco Call,* November 23, 1906.

envied position on the esteemed philanthropic organization, the Committee of Fifty. Other unauthorized killings—particularly of Chinese refugees—rarely resulted in an arrest, let alone public outrage, even when witnesses had been present.[38] Because survivors were quick to yield to soldiers believed to be empowered by martial law, the hastily declared military district and camp boundaries hardened rapidly.

Refugees' outrage over ruthless volunteer, state, and local police ultimately worked to legitimate and sustain the authority of federal troops over the city and the refugee camps. Diarists and epistlers celebrated federal law enforcement as the most professional of the many troops to patrol post-earthquake San Francisco. Katharine Hooker extolled "The Federal Dynamiters, able, experienced people,[who struck] a striking contrast to Schmitz' municipal gang of coarse, inferior looking men…."[39] In the first days, volunteers, police, and hastily summoned National Guard troops were lumped together with "hundreds of plug-uglies, touts and thieves appeared on the streets wearing police badges, looting and robbing of all kinds was started…until some districts were terror-stricken by other causes than earthquake or fire." Survivors wrote of a two-fold crisis of nature and corruption ameliorated by the arrival of the U.S. "But the bugle sounded and the boys in blue, led by General Funston, came trooping in, seemingly by thousands…The people of San Francisco owe a deep debt of gratitude to Uncle Sam and his boys in blue and I for one will never again kick against the expense of a large standing army."[40] Whereas survivors understandably bristled at the troops who forcibly evacuated them from houses in the fire's path or those who eagerly embraced the supposed declaration of law, they were quick to celebrate the arrival of U.S. forces and the reorganization of the city into military zones.[41]

That the U.S. Army actively collaborated with the humanitarians of the Red Cross furthered their popular appeal and convinced soldiers of their philanthropic mission. Federal troops narrated their work as one of humanity rather than simple professional duty. Lieutenant Frederick Freeman of the Mare Island U.S. Navy Yard mobilized every spare soldier, surgeon, and nurse to sail "to the assistance of the sufferers in the city" and lent the soldiers to a battalion chief of the fire department located in the Howard Street docks. But he applauded the work of the soldiers in concert with the firefighters as it seemingly transcended human capacity, working from the morning of the 18 "without rest until the fire was under control on April 21…without exaggeration." Indeed, Freeman observed that his troops demonstrated a commitment that exceeded that of firemen who had to abandon service to care for their own families, whereas "the force under my command, who had no kin to look out for, stuck to their posts until they collapsed."[42] One extraordinary member of the Navy turned volunteered as soon as his patrol ended. He seized control of a church on Market Street, impressing drivers into service as ambulances, and organizing physicians and nurses into volunteers to set up a "first class relief hospital."[43] Any previous division between charitable disaster relief and military force succumbed to the moment, and to the individual officers' convictions that they were humanitarian workers.

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[38] A number of survivors witnessed the killing of Chinese and Japanese refugees singled out for either their ethnicity or their inability to obey orders delivered in English. Critically, these witness accounts did not betray the regret towards refugee shootings that accompanied other stories of wanton violence. See, for example, Charles E. Leithead Account of the 1906 San Francisco Earthquake and Fire, May 2, 1906. MS 3487, p 10. The San Francisco Earthquake and Fire Collection. George Bernard Musson letter to mother, April 21, 1906, MS 3494, The California Historical Society, The San Francisco Earthquake and Fire Collection. Gladys C. Hansen and Emmet Condon give the most thorough account of the miscounting of Chinese deaths and the brutal treatment of Chinese refugees in *Denial of Disaster* (San Francisco: Cameron and Co., 1989).

[39] Hooker Family, Letter [circa late April, 1906], 31.

[40] W.E. Alexander, Account of the 1906, ca. 1906, MS 3456, California Historical Society, Part of the San Francisco Earthquake and Fire Digital Collection.

[41] For an opposing perspective "of the heroism of the plain citizens of our city…[and] the criminal idiocy of the military," see Henry Anderson Lafler, *How the Army Worked to Save San Francisco: An Attack on General Funston* (San Francisco: Calkins Newspaper Syndicate, 1906).

Affluent San Franciscans often found shelter with friends in Berkeley, Oakland, and beyond the Bay Area. The Berkeley Relief Committee coordinated three hundred households that had offered to shelter refugees, more often reserved for friends than strangers. Maria Lenskin exemplified the course of the more fortunate refugees: she fled by ship to Oakland and was escorted by Red Cross refugees to her brother's home on Oxford Street in Berkeley. Within months, she had purchased her own home on La Loma Avenue.[44] Red Cross relief stations around the city hung signs in which refugees listed their names and with whom they would be housed, so as to expedite transportation.

The authority of the Army and the American Red Cross over the remaining homeless residents grew as tens of thousands of residents took shelter in a network of military-controlled refugee camps. On May 4, the Army led an effort to transfer over 250,000 survivors from a patchwork housing system of barracks, ruins, self-built structures, and tents scattered throughout the city's open areas to a strictly regulated system of tent communities located in the city's plazas and parks.[45] The army had control of some of these camps from the beginning, and gradually subsumed all twenty-one under "military discipline" that was explicitly undertaken to ensure all refugees were safe, housed, and warm.[46] According to General Funston, further reorganization of the districts into camps would "insure an economical, efficient and prompt service for the distressed and destitute."[47] Within a day of the quake, Secretary of War Howard Taft had ordered 3,500 standardized conical structures known as Sibley tents sent to San Francisco from U.S. military forts throughout North America.[48] Soon an estimated 20,000 San Franciscans were living in over almost 110,000 tents, quarters previously familiar only to soldiers.[49] Benevolent workers chronicling the relief efforts for Progressive circulars gleaned details about the character of inhabitants according to their interiors. "The indolent were content to live under the most primitive conditions, while the ingenious and energetic had extemporized tables and chairs, elaborate cooking arrangements, and many other little conveniences."[50] Camp inhabitants gained shelter but lost privacy and control over the time and space in which they conducted their domestic life.

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[42] Lieutenant Frederick N. Freeman, "Report on His Unit's Activities during the earthquake and fire in San Francisco April 18-23, 1906," April 30, 1906, 280-6: Navy Participation in San Francisco Disaster 1906, General Correspondence, 1919-1956. National Archives at San Francisco, RG 181: Records of Naval Districts and Shore Establishments, 1784 – 2000.

[43] Ibid. & Dr. D. Ragan, Health Officer to C.F. Goodrick U.S. Navy Commander in Chief, Pacific Squadron, May 6, 1906, Virtual Museum of San Francisco; Gaines Foster includes an excellent account of this episode as well as an overview of the Army's role in the San Francisco relief efforts and disaster relief into the twentieth century in *The Demands of Humanity: Army Medical Disaster Relief* (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1983) 52-66.

[44] Hal Johnson, "Earthquake Aftermath," *Berkeley Gazette,* April 23, 1951.

[45] "San Francisco Totally Destroyed," *Healdsburg Enterprise,* April 21, 1906, 1; "Relief Forces Do Much Good," *Red Bluff Daily News,* May 5, 1906; "Looters Given Hard Labor," *Sacramento Union,* May 13, 1906.

[46] O'Connor, "Organizing the Force and Emergency Methods," 78.

[47] General Orders, No. 18, April 29, 1906, in Greely, *Earthquake in California, April 18, 1906, Special Report*, 129-140.

[48] "Quartermaster Forwards 3500 Tents to Coast," *Los Angeles Herald,* April 20, 1906, 4; "Gives General Greely Fund for Supplies," *Sacramento Union,* May 7, 1907, 2.

[49] These conical canvas structures were typically reserved for families; whereas "little dog-tents" were doled out to single men. "Relief Fund Shrinks," *San Francisco Call,* April 29, 1906, 1.

The city's authorized refugee camps came under U.S. Army control, and the very public nature of relief provisions diluted refugees' rights of citizenship. On May 24, the San Francisco Board of Election Commissioners determined that "persons occupying places in the public parks are not residents," and that any person living in camps, tents, or other dwellings in public spaces was thereby ineligible to vote.[51] The relief committee estimated that even after months of refugee relocation, over 12,000 remained housed in public spaces, disenfranchising an estimated 2,455 previously registered adult male voters.[52] By the end of the summer, control of the camps had transferred from the hands of the military to the San Francisco Relief and Red Cross Funds (SFRRCF), a corporation staffed by representatives of the national and regional Red Cross, local philanthropists, and former mayor James D. Phelan.[53] The SFRRCF's replacement of tents with "substantial refugee houses" in September of 1906 ultimately reinstated voting rights of inhabitants, who were thereafter found entitled to register on the basis of their new address.[54] Nevertheless, turnout at the subsequent election decreased dramatically, a phenomenon difficult to separate entirely from the temporary disenfranchisement of so many. Poorer refugees might have gained shelter and care, but in doing so temporarily lost the most basic political rights as citizens of San Francisco. The policy, however temporary, erected a new political boundary across the city's residents that divided full, enfranchised citizens from refugees.[55]

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[50] "San Francisco: Prostrate but Courageous," *The Outlook* 83, May 5, 1906, 157-171; 170.

[51] The policy took care to except those individuals residing in tents, cabins, or ruins on private lots, recognizing "the right of an elector to abide in any habitation he chooses." The policy furthermore protected the voting rights of legal residents who had fled the city altogether as long as they retained possession of private property within the city, a policy that favored those with the means and relations that enabled a quick escape to the residences of family and friends. "Rules Adopted by the Board of Election Commissioners May 24, 1906, in Relation to Determination as to the Legal Residence of Voters," *San Francisco Municipal Reports, San Francisco Municipal reports Fiscal Year 1905-1906 ending June 30, 1906 and fiscal year 1906-7, ending June 30, 1907* (San Francisco: Neal Pub. Co., 1908) 413-414.

[52] George P. Adams, Registrar of Voters to the Jefferson Democratic League, San Francisco, July 23, 1906. Reprinted in *San Francisco Municipal Reports…ending June 30, 1907,* 92-93.

[53] The politics and organization of the relief efforts that followed the earthquake and fire were complicated due to a number of factors, including rivalry among the current and former mayor's office, local resentment towards federal intrusion, the disorganization and incapacity of existing local philanthropic associations, ambivalence towards foreign contributions, and popular resentment towards local police and the National Guard. Meetings held among prominent local citizens and philanthropists, law enforcement, the U.S. military, representatives of the national Red Cross, and existing local relief societies in the eight weeks after the disaster resulted in the formation of a number of proposals and plans to organize authority and supervision of relief funds. Through June, many of those proposals stalled due to the inefficacy of locally-led efforts, which led to de-facto control by the military and the American Red Cross, as well as their superiors, President Roosevelt, and acting director of the American Red Cross and Secretary of War William Howard Taft. Funston, Greely and the other present military commanders pressed to leave the city as early as possible, but were compelled to stay due to the lack of viable alternative authority. The organization that emerged from the conglomeration of stakeholders was called the San Francisco Relief and Red Cross Funds (heretofore referred to as SFRRCF), which oversaw the disbursement of over $9 million in private funds, a third of which was donated to the American Red Cross. The SFRRCF collaborated with the U.S. Army, which oversaw the distribution of the $2.5 million appropriated by Congress, particularly for initial food and shelter appropriations. The military was slated to transfer control fully to the SFRRCF as early as the end of June, but was repeatedly postponed due to the incapacity of the new organization. Supervision over food and medical relief was indeed transferred by mid-summer, 1906, but oversight of the camps remained under military control through the summer. When the SFRRCF took over all relief efforts in late 1906, the camp organization they inherited was largely of military design.

[54] Department of Elections' Report, in *San Francisco Municipal Reports…ending June 30, 1907*, 406-433; 408.

Popular sympathy for the occupants of the Army's tent cities waned as spring turned to summer. The plight of homeless millionaires that prefaced so many early tales of San Francisco's catastrophe compelled extraordinary generosity on the part of civilians near and far. Readers could find a legitimate cause in cases like that of millionaire John Singleton, who was reported to have divided egg and slices of bread among his family after they were left sleeping in the streets. The Singletons found relief in the local food dispensaries supported by charitable contributions, as John "had difficulty in securing cash until he met some who knew him."[56] Homeless millionaires offered donors discrete causes to support that promised to resolve themselves quickly. As the better-off found homes among friends and family, popular imagination conceived of the refugee camps less as sites of suffering and more as sites for the most helpless.

> The relief fund was not provided to give extended vacations to the lazy and the shiftless, but to tide the victims of the first over the great crisis. Thousands went into the camps with but one thought in mind—to get out of them with speed.... [But] they soon found themselves carried along by the easy, time-consuming routine of the camps. Incentive for work was gone by this time; pauperism had taken a strong hold upon them…Those who could become self-supporting are no longer properly to be classed as refugees. There is no reason they should remain objects of charity.[57]

According to coverage in the *San Francisco Call,* refugees still in need of help after three months were not those who had suffered an unforeseeable catastrophe beyond their control, but those who lacked ambition to rise from the ashes. Indeed, they were not refugees at all; to be a refugee was a temporary condition available only in the immediate aftermath of the disaster.

Official camp policy also reflected the idea that refugees had exhausted the eligibility period for public aid. Major James Erwin noted in early June that one camp was down to "the absolutely helpless, old men, old women and children, and people whom we have got to provide for in the future. There is no question about it."[58] In July, the SFRRCF suspended grants to "able-bodied" individuals and family heads believed capable of self-sufficiency.[59] At the same time, the impending winter encouraged the SFRRCF to replace the temporary structures with the more permanent cottages. The cottages "presented a wonderful and probably unparalleled opportunity for wise constructive philanthropy," wherein the spending and housing practices of the poorest were closely monitored and those who could present "tangible proof [of] previous thrift and enterprise" were provided relatively liberal oversight over housing funds and domestic lives.[60] By the end of the summer, relief administrators frequently wrote of camp inhabitants as either nascent homeowners or hopeless paupers.[61]

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[55] Industrialization reshaped the use of technology and the nature of work, creating waves of migration from the rural U.S. and abroad into America's industrial cities. These demographic changes provoked hostility and skepticism among the native-born so great as to eliminate decades of support for expanding the franchise beyond residency, property and tax requirements for free men. Alexander Keyssar, *The Right to Vote: The Contested History of Democracy in the United States* (New York: Basic Books, 2000) 32-42, 83-93, 121-138. Andreas Davies Henderson brilliantly contrasts the legal limbo of refugees with their physical occupation of the city's voting machines for shelter in the months after the disaster. Henderson, "Reconstructing Home," 191-192.

[56] "Governor Calls on People to Help Sufferers," *Chicago Tribune,* April 21, 1906, 4.

[57] "The Problem of the Camps," *San Francisco Call,* July 16, 1906.

[58] Meeting of the Finance Committee of the San Francisco Relief and Red Cross Funds, Friday June 8, 1906, 3, James D. Phelan papers, Committees, Clubs and Organizations May 3, 1906 - July 16, 1906, San Francisco Relief & Red Cross Funds, Finance Committee, BANC MSS C-B 800, Carton 13:08, The Bancroft Library and Archives.

[59] Helen Swett, "Business Rehabilitation," *San Francisco Relief Survey*, 171-196; 128.

Those moral judgments mattered greatly to refugees seeking housing assistance. Agents of the SFRRCF officially classified refugee claimants into four groups: property owners, "resourceful" non-property owners deserving of homeownership, former renters deemed ill-equipped for homeownership, and lastly, "chronic dependents."[62] In August 1906, the SFRRCF launched the Bonus Plan. Under this plan, property owners who had lost their dwellings in the disaster could receive substantial grants to restore or rebuild their homes—as long as they were not living in the refugee camps.[63] Eight hundred and eighty-five families with "definite and clear" housing rehabilitation plans received grants of two to twelve hundred dollars each for this purpose.[64] SFRRCF agents expressed few concerns about the use of the funds granted to property owners, later confessing that "no attempt was made to investigate the actual needs of the applicants."[65] In total, the SFRRCF allocated over $420,000 in bonuses. By the conclusion of the relief project, established and aspiring homeowners had received an additional $567,300 towards the purchase, construction, and rehabilitation of individual family homes.[66] The SFRRCF's economists rebuked criticism that funds may have been disproportionately distributed to more affluent, property-owning refugees. To own property was itself "tangible proof that the foundation of previous thrift and enterprise would serve as a guarantee of wise use of aid…."[67] Bonus recipients thus required very little supervision.

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[60] James Marvin Motley, "Housing Rehabilitation," in Ibid., 215-277; 237-238.

[61] Military intimidation, it seemed, was deployed solely to disrupt Chinese encampments: "[the soldier] added that these demonstrations were really intended to frighten the Chinese and Japanese into moving. . .. It is true that after each session of such vociferation a few more orientals [sic] abandoned their stopping places and crept away." Military conduct at Black Point marked the beginning of Chinatown refugees' battle for relief and space in San Francisco, as de-facto racism would formalize into the segregated policies of official disaster relief. Davies Henderson, "Reconstructing Home," 116.

[62] Motley, "Housing Rehabilitation," 219.

[63] Francis H. McLean, "Rehabilitation," in *San Francisco Relief Survey,* 107-151; 109-110.

[64] To put these values into context, consider the original housing assistance plans and caps. When the SFRRCF originally attempted to meet demands of the "workingmen" requesting assistance rebuilding in the destroyed areas, they planned to pay 1/3 of the cost of rebuilding up to $500—meaning no person with a home value over $1,500 was eligible to apply. This cap was thought to prohibit disbursement of home renovation funds to those "not in need," and particularly to screen affluent refugees who had already reconstructed their homes. Swett, "Business Rehabilitation," 158-166; Motley, "Housing Rehabilitation," 250-251.

[65] Homeowner's eligibility for bonus grants was entirely determined by documentation that the building to be improved or rebuilt was in the burned district and that it "represented a certain value." The generosity shown property owners only increased with time. Approximately 18 months after the earthquake, the SFRRCF's housing loans department surveyors concluded that most home loan recipients would soon default on payments, the loans were converted into grants. Additionally, the remaining funds reserved for housing rehabilitation (approximately $31,000) were released to homeowners seeking to complete their homes. Minutes of the Executive Committee of the San Francisco Relief and Red Cross Funds, November 13, 1907, James D. Phelan Papers: Committees, Clubs and Organizations, 1907, 1910-1914, San Francisco Relief & Red Cross Funds BANC MSS C-B 800, Carton 13:04. James Marvin Motley, "Housing Rehabilitation," 239.

[66] Motley, Table 64: "Expenditures for Housing Made by the Finance Committee of Relief and Red Cross Funds and by the United States Army from Congressional Appropriation, From April 1906 to June, 1909," 220.

[67] Ibid., 237-238. As further reflection of the reluctance to provide any refugee more aid than deserved, refugees were invited to apply for furniture grants only if they could demonstrate that they had "suffered material loss from the disaster" without incurring "burdensome debt." These grants were restricted to those who had never before

A far greater number of refugees found housing assistance in the camps designed and patrolled by the U.S. Army and managed by representatives of the Red Cross. Just under nine hundred thousand dollars went towards the construction of camp cottages and barracks to house over 17,000 residents at their peak. For over six months, SFRRCF worked steadily to build 5,610 cottages in official camps, including plumbing, sewers, indoor toilets, water and gas connections, and sidewalks—most of which began to open in early November, 1906.[68] Three or two-room cottages and two-story tenement houses were laid out in the city's parks only a few feet apart. Efficiency trumped privacy in the camps, where camp commanders obeyed orders to "segregate all moral degenerates" by ejecting dozens of tenants each month for not abiding by the essential tenets of decency, order, and cleanliness.[69] Refugees could run afoul of these principles in a variety of ways: nearly 300 were ejected for drunkenness and disorderly conduct; 74 for disturbing the peace, 14 for 'immorality,' 9 for vagrancy, and nearly one hundred for unreported reasons. Failing to work also qualified as an immoral offense within the camps. As early as mid-June, Lieutenant J.A. Moss of the Twenty-Second Infantry ordered all able-bodied male inhabitants to register for work. Moss ejected or denied rations to those "shirkers or sappers" who refused.[70] To be deserving was not a permanent status. Refugees were compelled to work and obey the strict military and moral order of the camps to remain deserving of assistance.

Refugees inhabiting the camps were not simply objects of charity; they were required to pay for their semi-permanent cottage homes so as to discourage "the idle [from] shirk[ing] all civic and social responsibility."[71] Heads of household were compelled purchase their cottage from the SFRRCF and pay for it in either four-dollar or six-dollar monthly payments according to the number of bedrooms in the unit.[72] Official reports on camp inhabitants regretted that "[a]pplicants who had owned no property, possessed no savings, and whose standard of living was low, could offer little, if any, guarantee of a wise use of funds."[73] For this reason, the SFRRCF designed a detailed registration system to track inhabitants' earnings, insurance, employment, and length of residency. Heads of household were required to provide details on their family, employment and earnings, physical condition, birth place, length of residency in San Francisco, savings and insurance. After relief recipients registered, the SFRRCF Rehabilitation Committee sent letters of inquiry to listed employments requesting corroboration of employment and earnings data, in addition to information about the applicant's temperance, honesty, and character.

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applied for relief grants—foreclosing applications from those who had applied for emergency relief, requests for tools for the construction of shelters, transportation, or the care of aged, infirm, or children.

[68] Motley, "Housing Rehabilitation," 221

[69] O'Connor, "Organizing the Force and Emergency Methods," 79, H.R. Richardson to Camp Commanders, Memorandum, circa July 1, 1906, Rene Bine Papers, California Historical Society, cited in Davies Henderson, "Reconstructing Home," 165-166. Henderson points out that commanders enforced these rules unevenly, given the paperwork and external police assistance required to evict tenants.

[70] *San Francisco Call*, June 13, 1906, 12.

[71] O'Connor, "Organizing the Force and Emergency Methods," 83.

[72] SFRRCF initially planned to make the City the official landlord for cottage inhabitants, but the mayor's office recoiled at the idea of leasing public lands for this purpose.

[73] McLean, "Rehabilitation," 223 and 241. While the ratio of native-born Americans to immigrants in each group does not differ substantially, the geography of each immigrant population does. Almost all of the immigrants that received bonuses were Irish and Italian, part of massive the New Immigrant wave from Southern and Eastern Europe from the 1890s to the beginning of WWI.

In the last and final phase of the relief efforts, the SFRRCF focused efforts on enabling those deemed self-sufficient to restore an independent domestic lifestyle. While the elderly, sick, and unable might have found a residence in the Ingleside Model Camp and status as a permanent public charge, the city and its benevolent societies worked steadily to remove all other sufferers from their charge.[74] Cottage inhabitants received fewer and more publicly distributed rations and stricter oversight on employment as their tenure in the camps wore on. Finally, on June 30, 1907 the Rehabilitation Committee initiated "withdrawal," whereby inhabitants could remove the cottages in which they lived to vacant lots outside of the city's public parks and plazas. Female heads of households and families including members with severe physical illness were eligible for moving assistance of one hundred dollars, and most inhabitants took advantage of the offer.[75] An additional year passed before the majority of cottages had been removed from the city's parks and plazas and resettled elsewhere in the city with little evidence of their previous lives as military quarters.

The Border

The lifecycle of San Francisco's refugee camps provided a working model for the Army officers and Red Cross agents deployed to manage the emerging Mexican refugee crisis in 1910 and 1911. Assistant Superintendent of the San Francisco Red Cross Rehabilitation Department Charles J. O'Connor left the bay when called upon by the ARC to tend to the burgeoning crisis at the southern border. He was on hand to help local chapters of the Red Cross in San Diego set up camps for Mexican refugees in the spring of 1911, and was then sent to southern Texas in the Fall of 1913 to again lend his expertise.[76] Immediately after crossing the border in the fall of 1913, civilian refugees from Nuevo Laredo, Piedras Negras, Ojinaga, and Ciudad Juárez were directed to set up camp beyond the outskirts of the American border cities to protect the health of the American communities nearby.[77] Immigration officers pleaded to their supervisors in D.C. to ship tents to the border, only to be tersely denied. For months, large portions of the populations of Mexico's border towns slept in makeshift shelters for one or two nights on the American side of the border to avoid the looming threat of armed conflict. Secretary of War Lindley Garrison finally intervened and ordered two hundred tents and five hundred blankets to be sent from the El Paso military depot to the increasingly permanent refugee camps at Presidio**,** with promises from the Mexican Consul that expenses would be reimbursed.[78]

The ad-hoc approach to the border's refugee crisis broke down in December 1913, in the face of the sudden arrival of over 3,300 federal Mexican soldiers and 1,600 women *soldaderas* and children seeking asylum.[79] Under the direction of the esteemed General Salvador Mercado, the forces planned to find temporary shelter in the United States, head northwest, and re-enter Mexico at a more favorable location. The United States granted asylum, and the Red Cross was on site to watch as the Mexican troops disarmed and crossed the Rio Grande along with over one thousand female *soldaderas* and children at their side. But the War Department refused to allow Mercado to lead the forces in U.S. territory, and instead ordered the asylees to be interned under the prescription of international humanitarian law.[80] After being cared for with the help of the American Red Cross and the Mexican Consul in Presidio for several weeks, the refugees marched sixty miles across the Texan desert, guided and guarded by U.S. Army troops and Red Cross Director Ernest Bicknell.[81] Some of the American cavalry escorts sympathized with the more vulnerable refugees, and "many carried on their saddles Mexican children who found the way too hard."[82] Cover stories in newspapers throughout the West romanticized the march's births, deaths, "hunger, and misery [of those] who…looked forward hopefully to a life in a new and strange land."[83] Mexican newspapers echoed the coverage of depleted federal troops whom rebels forced out of the country and into the embrace of the American army and its "abundance of resources" to care for the refugees.[84] The Red Cross, active in the region for years in response to the borderland violence, followed the refugee train of "spectacular misery" while military physicians tended to those who perished along the way due to injuries, hunger, and thirst.[85]

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[74] W. D. Sohier and Jacob Furth of the San Francisco Relief and Red Cross Funds. "Report to the Massachusetts Association for the Relief of California," September 27, 1906, The Bancroft Library and Archives.
[75] McLean, "Rehabilitation," 133.
[76] Ernest Bicknell, "Red Cross Work on the Mexican Border," *The American Red Cross Magazine* 9:2 (1914) 78-93.
[77] F.W. Berkshire, Supervising Immigration Inspector, El Paso to Commissioner-General of Immigration, October 7, and October 8, 1913; William Soult, Immigration Service Eagle Pass to W.B Wilson, Commissioner-General of Immigration, October 9, 1913, Records of the INS: RG 85, Subject and Policy Files, 1893-1957, Box 1111, NARA-D.C.
[78] Lindley Garrison to Williams Jennings Bryan, Jan 6, 1914, Records of the INS: RG 85, Subject and Policy Files, 1893-1957, NARA-D.C.
[79] These troops were formally under the command of the newly-established, dictatorial President Victoriana Huerta, who himself had betrayed and overthrown the Revolution's first leader, Francisco Madero, in an episode known as

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the ten tragic days. The Constitutionalists that forced Huerta's federalist troops into the United States (some of whom later joined their rivals in the camps) represented the northern agrarian rebels that followed the leadership of peasant hero Pancho Villa. In very simplified terms, the conflict pit soldiers of a military dictatorship against largely impoverished rebel peasants fighting for land reform. A detailed description of the Revolution's factions and course exceeds the scope of this study, but essential overviews abound. For an approach highlighting the agrarian, social origins, see Alan Knight, *The Mexican Revolution,* two volumes (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986). John Mason Hart offers political analyses that focus on the role of foreign commercial imperialism in Mexico, particularly the United States, as well as its urban accelerants in *Revolutionary Mexico: The Coming and Process of the Mexican Revolution* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987) and *Empire and Revolution: Americans in Mexico Since the Civil War* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002). Other recent, accessible takes include Alan Knight, *The Mexican Revolution: A Very Short Introduction* (New York: Oxford, 2016) and William Beezley and Colin M. MacLachlan, Eds., *Mexicans in Revolution, 1910-1946: An Introduction* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2009).

[80] Articles 11-15 of Chapter II of The Hague Convention of 1907 advised neutral countries to grant asylum to combatants in formally declared wars among recognized states. The terms of asylum were largely left to the host state, but the Convention advised that interned combatants be provided food and shelter distant enough from the theater of war to ensure their protection. Articles 11-14, Hague Convention (V) Respecting the Rights and Duties of Neutral Powers and Persons in Case of War on Land, art 11-14, 36 Stat 2415 (signed October 18, 1907; in force January 26, 1910).

[81] Bicknell, *Pioneering with the Red Cross: Recollections of an Old Red Crosser* (New York: Macmillan, 1935) 150.

[82] George H. Estes, "The Internment of Mexican Troops in 1914," Part I, *Infantry Journal* 11 (May-June 1915) 747-770; 757.

[83] "Stork and Death in Grand Parade: Mexican Refugees Hail Marfa as House of Refuge," *Daily Ardmoreite* (Ardmore, OK) January 20, 1914, 1; "Refugees Start Trek to Marfa," *El Paso Herald,* January 14, 1914, 1; "Vanquished Hordes," *The Missoulian* (Missoula, MT) January 19, 1;"Refugees Reach Fort Bliss: Many Picturesque Scenes," *The Bee* (Omaha) January 21, 1914, 2; "Refugees Reach Marfa," *Las Vegas Optic* and *Bryan Daily Eagle and Pilot,* January 20, 1914, 1; "Mexican Army at Fort Bliss," *Ogden Standard,* January (Ogden, UT) 20, 1914, 6; "Refugees Interned in Military Camp," *Evening Times-Republican* (Iowa) January 20, 1914, 1; "Barbed Wire to Serve as Bars," January 20, 1914, 1. The news also reached beyond the West, albeit to a lesser degree: "3,300 Mexican Refugees Now Held in Texas," *Pensacola Journal,* January 31, 1914, 1 and 3; "Ojinaga Refugees Limp into Marfa," *New York Sun,* January 20, 1914, 3.

[84] "Los refugiados a disposición del Gral. Bliss, *El Diario* (Mexico City) January 13, 1914, 2

[85] "Por qué fué evacuada la Plaza de Ojinaga," *El Pais,* January 13, 1914, 1.

The terms of confinement varied substantially for refugees of different genders, ages, and military ranks who arrived to the U.S. Army camps at Fort Bliss and Fort Wingate. Children, women, and other family members arriving with the troops were welcomed to the camps "if they so desire," but were "permitted to come and go as they please—not being prisoners."[86] Officers of lieutenant stature or above were also paroled for several hours each day; generals had even greater freedom of movement.[87] A nearly endless supply of barbed wire and fencing controlled access to the twenty-seven-acre campsite. But the construction of the residential infrastructure demanded far more coordination than the security apparatus. The camp was outfitted with basic urban amenities—water pipes, toilet and solid waste removal, and electric lighting.[88] These infrastructural improvements demonstrated that the officers at Fort Bliss complied with orders from the Acting Adjutant General that arrived just before the refugees:

> Impress upon all members of your command that these Mexicans are to be cared for as well as possible with the means provided by the War Department. They will be treated kindly and courteously, and subjected to no more inconveniences than necessary to accomplish the purpose for which they are kept here. Special effort will be made to make the officers as comfortable as possible.[89]

While laying the material foundation of the camp, the commanding officers drafted up a plan for the social organization of its inhabitants. Military hierarchy served as the inspiration. Camp streets partitioned the federal squads; squad commanders lived at the head of each block. Each region included campsites, latrines, and garbage cans for individual officers and their families or camp followers. As soon as the refugees disembarked from the trains from Marfa, they were provided tents in which they might erect "their future homes."[90] When the refugees were moved from El Paso to Fort Wingate, New Mexico in the last week of April, 1914 on account of fears that their proximity to the border might provoke military conflict, Fort Wingate camp supervisor Captain George Estes worried that the refugee tents could no longer sufficiently protect the refugees from the elements. Estes organized the American and Mexican troops to install adobe brick-making stations and build barracks so that the arriving refugees might have "quarters of convenient and ample size for comfortably housing families." The more ornate houses of generals were constructed around a plaza reserved for that purpose; soldiers remarked upon the "artistic ingenuity" displayed in their interior and exterior architecture. Admiration for the new design prompted supervising troops to adopt a modified version for all inhabitants. Each adobe barrack was designed to face south, include one door, one window, and one fireplace. Kitchens were placed in front of each unit, and the units were constructed so as to accommodate additional units as needed. Estes noted that the decision to construct the barracks six inches above ground level "reversed the Mexican custom of house building," that sunk housing below ground level, likely reflecting his conversations with the refugees' translators and those that helped to build the new camp. Most refugees were released before the completion of the new architectural scheme.[91] But the attention paid to making the refugees' quarters comfortable and reflective of Mexican building styles was captured in the photographs taken of the finished quarters.

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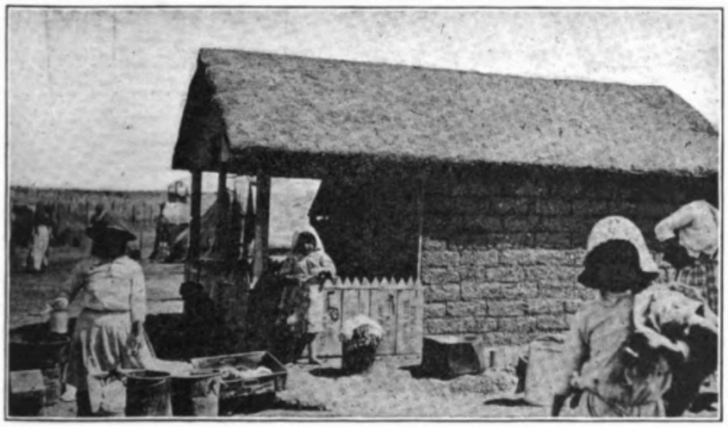
[86] F.W. Berkshire Supervising Inspector, Immigration Service to Hugh L. Scott, Commanding Brigadier General, Fort Bliss, January 17, 1914, 5012/336, Correspondence Register, Fort Wingate, January 1914 – November 1914, RG 393: Records of U.S. Army Continental Commands, 1817 – 1947, NARA-D.C.

[87] Ibid.

[88] Brown to Commanding General, Fort Bliss. January 22, 1914.

[89] Acting Brigade Adjutant P.D. Lockridge to Commanding Officer, Twentieth Infantry, Fort Bliss, January 16, 1914, Correspondence Register, Fort Wingate, January 1914 – November 1914, RG 393: Records of U.S. Army Continental Commands, 1817 – 1947, NARA-D.C.

[90] Estes, "The Internment of Mexican Troops," Part I, 761.



MEXICAN OFFICER'S ADOBE HOUSE.

Figure 16: Photograph of General's Quarters, Fort Wingate, 1914, in George Estes, "The Internment of Mexican Troops in 1914" Part II, 47.

If these thoughtful accommodations exemplified the humanity of the relief program, the punishment pen captured its brutality. Soldiers overseeing discipline conceded that the carceral quality of the camps narrowed disciplinary options; the inability to earn money at Fort Wingate foreclosed the possibility of fines, and the guards "had already taken away their liberty." The punishment offered a solution. Both supervising Mexican and U.S. officers could sentence refugees to time in the punishment pen, although American officers had to give final approval. *Soldaderas* found themselves relegated to the punishment pen, described only as a "dark cell," for any perceived infidelity or for inciting "domestic difficulties."[92] Refugees who attempted escape often spent time in the punishment pen without access to mail, regular rations, or privileges. Some were forced to complete additional labor. American officers even convinced themselves that the punitive quarters were humanitarian, reporting that "the Mexican Army never carried shelter of any kind with it in the field, and if shelter is provided for the Punishment Pen there will be many voluntary applicants for it—there are a few as it is."[93] Those U.S. officers guarding the camps also insisted that any punishment be "reasonable and humane." Under this dictum, sentences could last no longer than thirty days. Further, the Americans overseeing the camp prohibited the exercise of Mexican Army's disciplinary practices of flogging, hanging by the thumbs, and tying to a stake on the grounds that they were inhumane. Refugees sentenced to punishment of any type could appeal to executive officers, a right exercised regularly.[94]

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[91] George H. Estes, "The Internment of Mexican Troops in 1914" Part II, *Infantry Journal* 12 (July-August 1915) 38-57; 47-49.

[92] Estes, undated memo, Correspondence Register, Fort Wingate, January 1914 – November 1914, RG 393: Records of U.S. Army Continental Commands, 1817 – 1947, NARA-D.C. Instead, General Castro was directed to send allegedly deviant women to the supervising U.S. troops for a preliminary hearing to determine the terms of confinement or release. 393: Records of U.S. Army Continental Commands, 1817 - 1947. National Archives at Washington, D.C.

[93] Police Officer, Mexican Refugee Camp to Commanding Officer, Fort Wingate, August 10, 1914, Correspondence Register, Fort Wingate, January 1914 – November 1914, RG 393: Records of U.S. Army Continental Commands, 1817 – 1947, NARA-D.C.

The brutality of the camps also found expression in the informal relations between prisoners and their guards. The commanding officers at Fort Wingate investigated at least two cases of sexual assault of women refugees at the hands of American officers. One was dismissed as fraudulent; Estes explained to his superiors that the alleged victim in the case was a prostitute, and had been relegated to a separate stockade with "other prostitutes who caused trouble" as a "safeguard."[95] Nonetheless, the office of the commanding American General insisted that all communication between the female refugees and American officers be halted, that any woman "who has given the slightest reason to doubt her good character" be removed from the camp, and that reports be made to him on all accusations of officer misconduct of such a "scandalous nature."[96] Allegations that sentinels took bribes from refugees hoping to escape before confining them to punishment pens were confirmed, but explained away as an investigative technique that proved the refugees' guilt.[97]

American troops often painted the camps in a heroic light, as institutions defending the dictates of humanity, the prescriptions of international law, and the honor of the refugees. Estes, for example, explained that U.S. troops stationed at the border eagerly complied with orders from the Secretary of War in D.C. to soften border enforcement. Secretary Garrison later explained the decision. "We, without regard to the technical questions of law, and in the interests of humanity, took in as refugees all those who came unarmed…[who] are allowed to stay on our side of the line rather than be turned back to practically certain death."[98] Further, agents of both the U.S. Army and the Department of State regularly yielded to interned refugees' appeals for generosity, leniency, or additional provisions. On April 19, 1914, Constitutionalist combatant

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[94] Estes, "The Internment of Mexican Troops," Part II, 53 and Part I, 767.

[95] Estes to R.A. Brown, Chief of Staff to General Bliss. July 15, 1914 and Juan Roches (later identified as Amos Keysor) to the Secretary of War, July 6, 1914, Correspondence Register, Fort Wingate, January 1914 – November 1914, RG 393: Records of U.S. Army Continental Commands, 1817 – 1947, NARA-D.C.

[96] R.A. Brown to G.H. Estes, July 21, 1914. Correspondence Register, Fort Wingate, January 1914 – November 1914, RG 393: Records of U.S. Army Continental Commands, 1817 – 1947, NARA-D.C. The inclination to restrict the immigration of women deemed immoral and promiscuous motivated a number of early U.S. immigration policies. Well before national quotas or the creation of a robust border control regime, the United States authored its first national ban against immigrants targeting prostitutes and women in addition to Asian contract laborers. Subsequent immigration bans, including the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act, also targeted single women suspected of sexual deviance. Sucheng Chan argues that the policies reflected the belief that Chinese women and prostitutes threatened to debase white manhood, health, morality, and family life in mining towns, railway projects, and frontier life. "The Exclusion of Chinese Women, 1870-1943," in Sucheng Chan, *Entry Denied: Exclusion and the Chinese Community in America, 1882–1943* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1991) 94-147. Yu-Fang Cho argues that the intertwined policing of gender, race, and immigration around the turn of the twentieth century arose as Americans violently defended an idealized white, heterosexual, married citizen against the appearance of former slaves, European immigrants, nationals from new U.S. colonies, and Asian and Latin American laborers in American society. *Uncoupling American Empire: Cultural Politics of Deviance and Unequal Difference, 1890-1910* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2014). At the same time that American legislators and immigration agents restricted the migration of sexualized women and prostitutes, dozens of American women exploited their American citizenship to gain privileges and protection for their brothers in treaty port cities in late nineteenth and early twentieth-century China. Eileen P. Scully, "Taking the Low Road to Sino-American Relations: 'Open Door' Expansionists and the Two China Markets," *Journal of American History* 82:1 (June, 1995) 62-83.

[97] Brown to Estes, July 21, 1914.

[98] George H. Estes, 20th Infantry, quoting the Statement from the Secretary of War on January 2, 1914, "The Internment of Mexican Troops in 1914," *Infantry Journal* 11:6 (1915) 750.

Felix Barrenada requested that his family join him in the refugee camp at Fort Wingate on account of their poverty. His appeal was granted, and his family joined him on April 29.[99] Indeed, many of the women and children admitted to the camps were allowed in "solely as an act of charity," out of recognition of their relationships with combatants granted asylum.[100] Soldiers supported the appeal of Lt. Col. Alfonso Parra of the Mexican Federal Infantry, who requested leave to work in Albuquerque so as to send remittances to his destitute family in Mexico City.[101] Until the last month of their internment, generals, colonels, and other high-ranking Mexican officers were at liberty to leave and return to the camp, a privilege that several expressly "appreciate[d] in all its worth, dignity, and honor…."[102] As representatives of the United States, the Army officers may have believed that they were acting in accordance with the humane ideals that governed the refugees' admission to an honorable country and their individual sense of morality. As guards, they may have found it easier to manage refugees who retained some liberties and dignities.

The guards routinely coped with refugees attempting to escape. On August 13, 1914, Estes ordered several troops to stage a surveillance mission during the night after two refugees had confided to Sergeant Lowe that men of his company were at work on a tunnel from one of the tents to a location beyond the camp boundaries. The successful operation uncovered two tunnels of forty and eighty-seven feet, respectively. After the discovery, Estes commanded one company and an additional six officers to inspect the entire inner perimeter of the camp, during which two additional tunnels were uncovered.[103] The investigators cultivated, protected, and privately rewarded informers, some of whom were *soldaderas* reported to use information as a means of punishing infidelity or decrying their own imprisonment by enemy troops.[104] But the occasional success of surveillance notwithstanding, dozens of refugees escaped during the eight months of interment in Fort Wingate, Indeed, thirty-three escaped in a single week.[105] On July 20, Jose Saniso, Miguel Zapata, and Leocadio Melendez successfully escaped after cutting through the barbed wire fences in the middle of the night, only to be shot at by two sentinels. S.H Elliot wrote to the Commanding General of Fort Wingate to explain his position on the recent surge in escapes. In late July, the U.S. Congress had crafted plans to deport Fort Wingate's refugees. Upon learning of the plan, General Mercado appealed to Estes and the Department of State, noting that deportation carried out with less than the utmost care could result in death for most of the refugees. The appeals were met with silence. As a result, "[a] feeling of uncertainty and consequent uneasiness has developed among the refugees," Elliot explained. "In my opinion this reticence on the part of the Government is responsible for the breach of faith reported above…at present [the refugees] seem willing to risk life and limb to escape, not from their present status, with which they seem fairly contented, but for the uncertainty of their future."[106] Refugees attempted to escape out of fear at the impending loss of humanitarian aid, according to Elliot.

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[99] George H. Estes, Report on Felix Barrenada, August 8, 1914, Correspondence Register, Fort Wingate, January 1914– November 1914, RG 393: Records of U.S. Army Continental Commands, 1817 – 1947, NARA-D.C.

[100] Estes, "The Internment of Mexican Troops," Part I, 767.

[101] Department Adjutant Commander "expressed sympathy for the unfortunate situation" of Lt. Col. Alfonso Parra and sent the letter to the Secretary of State. J.W. Heard to George H. Estes, August 14, 1914, Correspondence Register, Fort Wingate, January 1914– November 1914, RG 393: Records of U.S. Army Continental Commands, 1817 – 1947, NARA-D.C.

[102] Manual Lopez Tañez to General Francisco Castro, August 6, 1914. Several refugees cited "the laws of honor" governing "gentlemen" as the reason that they should be trusted to move beyond camp grounds, and criticized the officer that had "defiled their honor by escaping." See Refugio Chavez, 2nd Captain to General Francisco Castro August 6, 1914; and Antonio Perez, 1st Captain to General Francisco Castro August 6, 1914. Another characterized the freedom to leave camp as a "right" that had been revoked. Lt. Francisco A. Gonzalez to General Francisco Castro August 6, 1914, Correspondence Register, Fort Wingate, January 1914– November 1914, RG 393: Records of U.S. Army Continental Commands, 1817 – 1947, NARA-D.C.

[103] A refugee's guilt or innocence in such cases was determined according to their spatial proximity to the crime. Those punished included refugees caught tunneling, the Mexican officers in charge of the streets above tunnels entrances, and refugees living in tents with tunnel entrances or in the two adjacent tents on either side. See Estes, Memorandum, Fort Wingate, New Mexico, August 16, 1914, Correspondence Register, Fort Wingate, January 1914 – November 1914, RG 393: Records of U.S. Army Continental Commands, 1817 – 1947, NARA-D.C.

[104] No details included on the nature of their reward. See Ibid., and *El Paso Morning Times,* April 19 and 28; George H. Estes, "The Internment of Mexican Troops in 1914" Part III, *Infantry Journal* 13 (September-October 1915) 243-264; 259; Mercado, *Revelaciones históricas por el General Efectivo de Brigada, Salvador R. Mercado, Jefe de la Division del Norte, en el Ejército Nacional Mexicano, 1913-1914,* (Las Cruces, N.M., 1916) 80, cited in Elizabeth Salas, *Soldaderas in the Mexican Military: Myth and History* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1990) 64.

Health

San Francisco

As early as April 20, 1906, as fires continued to burn in parts of San Francisco, Chief U.S. Sanitary Officer G.A. Torney stood in the Presidio Army Hospital and reported to D.C. that "the fire is evidently under control and the urgent problem is now one of sanitation."[107] Protecting the health of the public quickly became the central governing imperative. Survivors and law enforcement alike had good cause to worry. In the two weeks following the earthquake, 547 typhoid fever fatalities were reported to the San Francisco Department of Health.[108] Amid fear of epidemic, Commanding General Frederick Funston reinforced Torney's power over the city-wide relief program, stating that "all his orders must be strictly obeyed by all parties whomsoever (sic)."[109] It was Torney who initially divided the city into districts, each of which he entrusted to an Army "responsible for the sanitation of his camp, but not for territories beyond its boundaries."[110] Thereafter, relief efforts evolved into a "perfected and organized relief and sanitary force [of] constructed concentrated camps."[111]

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[105] Major W.H. Simons, "Proceedings of a Board of Officers Convened Pursuant to Special Order No. 53, August 26, 1914, Correspondence Register, Fort Wingate, January 1914 – November 1914, RG 393: Records of U.S. Army Continental Commands, 1817 – 1947, NARA-D.C. Stockade worker Emiliano Vazquez escaped during work only July 17th. After taking individual testimony, surveying the site, and collecting as evidence records kept by supervising Mexican Generals, the investigating Board of Officers (Captain Daniel Gienty, Captain William Grahams, and Lieutenant William Weaver) found that none of the supervising agents—Mexican or American—were guilty of negligence "of any person charged with their safe keeping." A different board of officers (Captain Charles W. Exton, Lieutenant Hugo D. Schultz, and Jubal A. Early) reached similar conclusions during the Board convened on August 9th, after investigating successful escapes on separate occasion by Simon Medina, Ynes Lopez Ochoa, Portillo Sonnento, Delgado Mirando, and one unnamed refugee. The board concluded that the latter two escaped after being sent to play music for enlisted men at the local recreation hall; no camp officers or refugees were found culpable of aiding the escapees. The Board of Officers reached similar conclusions when Felix Aguero, Francisco Esquivel, Jesus Laro, and Jose Chavez escaped two days later. One of the key pieces of evidence was the register of all refugees who escaped or died on the relevant camp "street," as recorded by the supervising Mexican officer, Enrique Palido. D.H. Gienty and W.B. Graham, "Proceedings of a Board of Officers Convened at Fort Wingate Pursuant to Special Order No. 46," Fort Wingate, N.M., July 28, 1914, Correspondence Register, Fort Wingate, January 1914 – November 1914, RG 393: Records of U.S. Army Continental Commands, 1817 – 1947, NARA-D.C.

[106] S.H. Elliot to G.H. Estes, August 4, 1914, Correspondence Register, Fort Wingate, January 1914 – November 1914, RG 393: Records of U.S. Army Continental Commands, 1817 – 1947, NARA-D.C.

[107] Chief Sanitary Officer George Torney to the Surgeon General of the U.S. Army Robert M. O'Reilly, Washington, D.C., April 20, 1906, Inspection Reports, Correspondence and Related Records Pertaining to the San Francisco Earthquake and Fire of 1906, Records of the Office of the Surgeon General (Army), 1775 - 1994, RG 112, NARA-San Francisco.

This sanitary force began with a thorough inspection of refugees' bodies and quarters.[112] The City Board of Health secured two hundred volunteer physicians to serve as sanitary inspectors, reserving four to investigate rumored cases of infectious disease.[113] Inhabitants of each district lived under rigorously enforced rules of sanitation. First, waste was to disposed of at designated sites and then removed from the city. Daily unannounced inspections were conducted by Army physicians and sanitary officers, and refugees would be cited for improper disposal of garbage, hoarding, or cooking violations. Camps cited for poor sanitation were to be inspected twice daily.[114] Drinking water was to be sterilized and was inspected for sufficiency and cleanliness by sanitary officers on a weekly basis. Similar inspections were conducted of latrines. The gravest responsibility fell on inspectors who encountered refugees suspected of contracting an infectious disease. They were obligated to report any suspected cases to the City Board of Health. Most cases were either quarantined in their quarters or quickly removed to isolation camps or the "Contagious Pavilion" in Golden Gate Park.[115]

For many refugees of the earthquake and fire, the camps offered amenities that they had not enjoyed in their pre-earthquake homes: private family quarters, indoor latrines, and bath and wash houses.[116] The final official survey of the entire relief regime commended inhabitants for "cheerfully" abiding by sanitary regulations, while noting that "the sanitary problem was to a small degree lessened by the fact that with the terror of the earthquake and fire in their eyes, the vicious and parasitic classes fled from the city; to a large degree by the fact that nature was kind in giving conditions that were peculiarly favorable to life in the open."[117] But complaints that the sanitary codes undermined a basic sense of domesticity and decency arose even among the white populations perceived by relief officials as industrious. The Red Cross decided to use general kitchens rather than individual kitchens whenever possible to streamline sanitary inspections. Hundreds of refugees decried the decision. One district's refugees simply refused to open a community kitchen, as "the Mission workers felt [it] would degrade the people and tend to destroy the privacy of family life."[118]

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[108] The figure, offered by UC Berkeley School of Public Health expert Dr. William Stiles, is disputed. See Dr. Willian Stiles, "The San Francisco Earthquake and Fire: Public Health Aspects," address given at California State Office of Civil Defense on April 18, 1956. The U.S. Army reported only 95 cases of typhoid in April and May, and the Warden of the City and County Hospital of San Francisco reported handling "over one hundred" cases, with a four percent mortality rate. Warden of the San Francisco City and County Hospital Dr. John V. Hughes, Report, August 11, 1907, *San Francisco Municipal Reports…ending June 30, 1907,* 558-559.

[109] Brigadier General Frederick Funston, Special Orders No. 37, April 20, 1906. Reprinted in U.S. Department of War, *Annual Report of the War Department for the Year Ended June 30, 1906* (Washington: GPO, 1906) II:141.

[110] Ibid., 90. Over time, the strength of sanitary corps diminished. The Health Board dismissed all but six of fifteen camp surgeons in October so as to reduce healthcare expenses. "To Dismiss Camp Surgeons," October 3, 1906, *San Francisco Call,* 13.

[111] Report from George Torney, Chief Sanitary Officer, U.S. Army Hospital, Presidio of San Francisco. April 20, 1906, Inspection Reports, Correspondence and Related Records Pertaining to the San Francisco Earthquake and Fire of 1906, RG 112: Records of the Office of the Surgeon General (Army), 1775 – 1994, NARA-San Francisco.

[112] "Fifty-One Refugees at Sutter's Fort, *Sacramento Union,* May 3, 1906, 6; "All Refugees to Be Examined," *Los Angeles Herald,* May 3, 1906.

[113] The City tried to recruit five hundred sanitary workers. "City Board of Health Needs Sanitary Corps," *San Francisco Call,* April 22, 1906, 2.

[114] Asst. Surgeon J. Richeman Jr., to Chief Surgeon General George Torney, April 22 1966, Inspection Reports, Correspondence and Related Records Pertaining to the San Francisco Earthquake and Fire of 1906, RG 112: Records of the Office of the Surgeon General (Army), 1775 – 1994, NARA-San Francisco.

[115] W.C. Hassler, Board of Health Report, August 14, 1906, In *San Francisco Municipal Reports…ending June 30, 1907,* 515–521; 518-519.

[116] "New Refugee Camps Taken Over By the Red Cross," *San Francisco Call,* July 4, 1906, 16.

Refugees deemed delinquent by sanitary inspectors experienced more frequent, invasive policing, and in extreme cases officers evicted or quarantined supposedly unhygienic residents.[119] Contempt for those who flaunted the military's sanitary rules echoed from the Army officers' quarters to the pages of local newspapers. G.H. Torney, the veteran colonel supervising the effort, explicitly resented his charges: "when it is considered that many of the so-called refugees were willfully violating sanitary laws at every opportunity before they became charges of the Government, the difficulty of compelling them to respect those laws at this time may be apparent." The *Call* echoed his contempt for "homeless folk [who] little cared for the common rules of health," while City Hospital Warden John Hughes derided the "class of misguided people who have no faith in the doctrine of Aesculapius," the Greek God of Medicine.[120] The consequences of such ignorance were explained in an anecdote of a refugee with smallpox who had been peddling donuts in the refugee camps. By the time he was quarantined, he had directly and indirectly infected sixty-five fellow refugees "of the same cult." Hughes rationalized that the forced isolation of such disobedient patients was necessary, if only to protect other refugees whose "thought of self were submerged," to the necessarily strict health precautions. Hughes and Torney assumed responsibility for all refugees. But they calculated that indignities suffered by the pestilent were worth the cost of protecting the healthy and sanitary.

Survivors reported that sanitary rules were strictly enforced, something that offended the well-off most of all. Among their letters and diary entries, the most strident complaints concerned compulsory smallpox vaccinations among all refugees and soldiers within the city's military zones.[121] Anna Blake, who earlier lauded federal troops for protecting her from fires and riots, bemoaned the ritual and perceived violations of the mass vaccinations in a letter to her mother from the Presidio Hospital. "Oh mama we must all be vaccinated…. In my weak condition I am afraid to be vaccinated after a crowd of Italian and Irish etc. here. Wish I could walk out…This vaccination business i[s] adding insult to injury. The city is under martial law so you have to be vaccinated also, so we're comrades in misery."[122] At least one family fled the refugee camps to avoid the vaccines.[123] Perhaps the only residents who did not resent the vaccination regime were those like Arthur Dangerfield who served as both patient and patrol and when "vaccinated two days ago [thought] it [was] going to take well."[124] Military officers meanwhile described the compulsory vaccination campaigns as simple and efficient affairs; one camp in the Presidio site had completed vaccination of half its 1400 inhabitants in only one day.[125] The practice subjected the white, native-born, and affluent among the refugees to ordeals most familiar to the city's Chinese and Japanese immigrants, who were confined to the city unless they could produce evidence of vaccination since the outbreak of plague in San Francisco in 1900.[126]

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[117] Perhaps reflecting that the report was the product of multiple authors, it also commented on the risks involved due to the continued presence of "vicious and parasitic classes." "Taking into account the character of the camp population, a considerable part of which was of the class that does not understand the need of sanitary precautions, the freedom from epidemic during the first few months is remarkable." Charles J. O'Connor, "Organizing the Force and Emergency Methods," 89, 91.

[118] Charles J. O'Connor, "Organizing the Force and Emergency Methods," 50.

[119] "Refugee Camp is Not Sanitary," *San Francisco Call,* November 18, 1906.

[120] "Presidio Refugee Camp is a Model of Its Kind," *San Francisco Call,* May 7, 1906, 2; Hassler, Board of Health Report, *San Francisco Municipal Reports…ending June 30, 1907,* 518; "Soup Houses Are Condemned As Nuisances," *San Francisco Call,* July 25, 1906, 4.

[121] General Adolphus Greely noted that all vaccination was voluntary, claiming that the Army would reserve compulsory vaccination in the case of smallpox threats. However, the frequent complaints of inhabitants and detailed journalistic accounts of forced vaccination indicate that compulsory vaccinations occurred on May 19 in the Presidio camp. Refugees could choose to leave, but given the lack of alternative accommodations in the city, the similar conditions in Oakland, Berkeley, and San Jose, and the inability of most to move beyond the immediate vicinity, for most this would have been a false choice. *Special Report of Maj. Gen Adolphus W. Greely,* 112.

Civilians and authorities alike weaponized public health concerns against non-white and migrant refugees. The widespread conviction that residents of Asian descent were "traditionally unsanitary" led the military to establish segregated camps early on, as far away from the nearest European-American camps as possible. Residents living adjacent to the camps reserved for Japanese and Chinese refugees stridently supported sanitary policing, and demanded investigations into camp sanitation.[127] One family of white, affluent refugees approved of authorities' attempts to forcibly evict Chinese and Japanese refugees when one soldier reported that their camp was "most unsanitary, and that there was much contagious disease, even small pox…."[128] Similarly, army inspectors claimed that "Mexicans and Italians…do not follow instructions given them." Still, several agents complimented sanitary standards at the segregated Chinese camps. Dr. Arthur Dangerfield wrote of the Chinese under his care: "They are docile and never hesitate to do what we want them to do in the way of health preservation," resulting in camps incomparable to the "filth and squalor" of Chinatown. But the inspectors' zealous policing of the camps likely encouraged the quick population declines observed in Mexican, Japanese, and especially Chinese camps.[129] So many Chinese and Japanese refugees fled to Oakland after the earthquake that the main San Francisco Chinese camp population hosted only two-hundred inhabited the camp at its peak in late April. The SFRRCF agents insisted that the extraordinarily low levels of funds disbursed to Chinese and Japanese refugees reflected their fear of authorities rather than overt discrimination.[130] Most Chinese and Japanese refugees turned to smaller, locally-formed relief societies within their ethnic communities or foreswore direct aid altogether in an attempt to avoid the punishing attention paid by their supposed guardians.[131]

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[122] Anna Mezquida to Mother, [circa late April 1906], The Anna Blake Mezquida Papers, 1788-1975: BANC MSS 73/188 c: Box 4:26, Letter 2, The Bancroft Library and Archives.

[123] "Vaccination is Compulsory," *San Francisco Call,* May 19, 1906.

[124] Dangerfield, April 24, 1906, 9.

[125] Captain Assistant Surgeon US Army Robert E. Noble, Special Sanitary Inspector to Chief Sanitary Officer G.H. Torney, May19, 1906, Inspection Reports, Correspondence and Related Records Pertaining to the San Francisco Earthquake and Fire of 1906, RG 112: Records of the Office of the Surgeon General (Army), 1775 – 1994, NARA-San Francisco.

[126] Fradkin, *The Great Earthquake and Firestorms of 1906,* 35.

[127] "Grand Jury After Health Board," *San Francisco Call,* August 4, 1906, 4.

[128] Hooker family, Letter [circa late April, 1906], 54-55.

[129] Special Sanitary Inspector HH Rutherford, Report to G.H. Torney, May 19, 1906, Inspection Reports, Correspondence and Related Records Pertaining to the San Francisco Earthquake and Fire of 1906, RG 112: Records of the Office of the Surgeon General (Army) 1775 – 1994, NARA-San Francisco.

[130] O'Connor, "Organizing the Force and Emergency Methods," 94-95. Ambassador Lee testified to the campers' contentment and praised the frequent communication established between the Chinese Consulate and General Funston. "Chinese Camp is Picturesque," *San Francisco Call* May 13, 1906, 8.

Concerns over public health could also be exploited by refugees to demand better conditions in the refugee camps. A number of Jefferson Square refugee camp inhabitants—among the most politically organized—registered complaints with the city Board of Health in early June that the camp's sanitation and food quality had deteriorated. The complaint compelled an investigation by a city health officer as well as the district sanitary inspector, whose report cast doubt on the complaints of homeless refugees who "expected too much."[132] But the report also called for replacement of all camp latrines and an investigation into spoiled meat distributed by the Red Cross. Lieutenant Price, responsible for sanitation in the camp, replaced the National Guardsmen under his supervision and brought in an infantry unit to oversee sanitation, acknowledging that conditions were "not the best."[133]

Only those willing to forgo the offers of food and clothing assistance were able to retain some privacy and avoid the military sanitary regime. In the weeks after the fire, a few hundred refugees who refused to submit to the military's sanitary rules established "outside camps" in the city and its suburbs. But the numbers grew over the summer and early fall. By the time the SFRRCF undertook the conversion of tents into cottages, independent campers numbered over ten thousand, approximately half of the total living in the official camps. Like their military counterparts, these camps made use of vacant lots throughout the city. But there the resemblance ended. Inhabitants frequently built their own makeshift quarters, "nondescript structures of wood, tin, canvas, carpet, or all combined" that contrasted markedly with the orderly, gridded and numbered streets of the military camps.[134] Outside camps did not contain soup kitchens or food distribution centers, being ineligible for relief from either the Army or the Red Cross.[135] Most glaringly to the press and to neighbors, outside "independent" camps were not required to abide by any sanitary provisions except those established by the Board of Health. According to the SFRRCF, the "moral and sanitary" condition of these comparatively unregulated spaces risked destabilizing the entire city's fragile order. After the military transferred control of the general population back to San Francisco, the SFRRCF appealed to city police to forcibly transfer all residents of the independent camps to official camps. "The importance of having all camp life under military discipline can be readily appreciated when one considers how difficult under any auspices it would be to give sanitary and moral protection to a large body of personals living under abnormal conditions," one Red Cross agent explained.[136] But the police demurred, likely due to the sheer scope of the independent camps. The persistence and growth of the unauthorized camps revealed the limits of the military's sanitary rule. Life under sanitary supervision was not a reality for most post-disaster San Franciscans. It was the price of dependence, paid only by those reliant upon the Red Cross and Army's rations, shelter, hospital treatment, or clothing to get by.

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[131] This trend continued to shape the distribution of relief among Japanese and Chinese immigrants in California for decades. Asian-Americans and Asian immigrants were formally excluded from U.S. citizenship and participation in property markets due to the 1913 and 1920 Alien Land Acts and the Immigration Act of 1917. As a result, Japanese and Chinese neighborhoods became even more segregated than they were previously in San Francisco and Los Angeles. This ghettoization empowered Chinese and Japanese elites in each city that established a segregated welfare regime for each community until diplomatic relations realigned among the U.S., China, and Japan during the interwar period. See Charlotte Brooks, *Alien Neighbors, Foreign Friends: Asian Americans, Housing, and the Transformation of Urban California,*

[132] "Allege Refugee Camp Is Dirty," *San Francisco Call,* June 2, 1906, 14.

[133] Ibid.

[134] "San Francisco: Prostrate but Courageous," *The Outlook* 83 (1906) 157-171; 166. Early outbreaks of typhoid in one of the camps provoked alarm over an imminent epidemic and intensified public resentment towards the occupants. Refugees in some of the independent camps gradually garnered a reputation as squatters, or simply the indolent poor, like the refugees of the uninhabited land north and west of Berkeley living in makeshift shelters; the area was soon known as Tin Can Town.

[135] Edward Devine, Chairman, American National Red Cross, "Supplementary Report to the Finance Committee," San Francisco Relief Corporation, June 26, 1906, Reprinted in *Red Cross Bulletin* no. 4, Issued by the Central Committee, October, 1906, 19-20.

The Border

The fraught relationship between those who gave and those who received aid reappeared in the refugee camps of Southern Texas and New Mexico. Physicians and benevolent workers expressed intermingled compassion and disgust towards the Mexican refugees under their care. It was federal agents' visceral reactions to the sight of the "sick and wounded" that prompted so many to "be brought to our side of the river" in the first place.[137] But revulsion towards the diseases festering in those wounds also prompted officials to treat the political border as a sanitary boundary beyond which no case of smallpox, yellow fever, or typhoid would pass.[138]

What began as a small-scale quarantine grew to encompass thousands of miles of the territorial border as well as the diplomatic borderlands of Mexican ports. By 1917, the Public Health Service had deployed sufficient numbers of servicemen the Mexico-Texas border to conduct 871,639 bodily inspections aimed at intercepting a growing number of health threats: typhus, yellow fever, smallpox, and the plague.[139] Agents of the United States renovated disinfecting plants, installing sophisticated disinfection equipment and boilers to delouse incoming refugees at the ports of entry at Nuevo Laredo, Piedras Negras, and Ciudad Juarez after three cases of typhus were reported to the Laredo Service in December 1915. Public Health Service laborers erected quarantine stations in El Paso, Rio Grande City, Eagle Pass, Brownsville, and Hidalgo, encircling Southern Texas with sterile spaces the size of airport hangers.[140] Refugees "suffering from extreme poverty and vermin-invested" were believed to pose great risk to American border towns and the broader United States.[141] Those fears only heightened popular revulsion towards Mexican immigrant populations settled in El Paso before the onset of the refugee crisis. Epidemiologist Ernest Sweet, who worked with the tubercular Mexican population, captured the ethical dilemma of the refugees' physicians:

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[136] O'Connor, "Organizing the Force and Emergency Methods," 79.

[137] Estes, "The Internment of Mexican Troops," Part I, 752.

[138] On the topic of the public health regimes erected at the boundary, see John McKiernan-Gonzalez, who argues that distinctions between health and pestilence helped to clarify the racial and cultural boundary between Mexicans and Americans in the hundred years after the U.S.-Mexico War, *Fevered Measures: Public Health and Race at the Texas-Mexico Border, 1848-1942* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2012). Alexandra Minna-Stern makes a similar argument, noting that the discourses that arose on Mexican blood distinguished the Mexican race both from whites and blacks. "Buildings, Boundaries, and Blood: Medicalization and Nation-Building at the U.S.-Mexico Border, 1910-1930," *Hispanic American Historical Review,* 79:1 (1999) 41-81. Amy Fairchild locates the Mexican border within the context of a national public health regime that disciplined immigrant laborers and excluded those unable to work. Those admitted were included within the industrial citizenry as scientifically managed workers. *Science at the Borders: Immigrant Medical Inspection and the Shaping of the Modern Industrial Labor Force* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004).

[139] L. E. Cofer, "The Quarantine Situation. A General Review of the Subject as Affected by the World Prevalence of Cholera, Yellow Fever, Plague, and Typhus Fever," *Public Health Reports*, 30:36 (Sep. 3, 1915) 2613-2618. Minna-Stern, 47.

[140] C. C. Pierce, "Combating Typhus Fever on the Mexican Border," *Public Health Reports*, 32:12 (Mar. 23, 1917) 426-429.

[141] Ibid.

> From a humanitarian or ethical standpoint…restriction [of immigrant mobility] is an impossible procedure. The sacrifice of lives of thousands--and those who are familiar with the situation are well aware that such a sacrifice would be inevitable--is not to be justified without good reasons… Can we by any right or reason deprive these invalids of the chance of recovery? Is not the value of their lives greater than the small expense which the presence of a few indigents has entailed?[142]

Sweet's sense of obligation was not universal among those that treated Mexico's refugees. Some Red Cross volunteers who escorted Mexican refugees to camps publicized the praise that they remembered receiving at the time: "[t]he Mexicans were deeply grateful for our care. When one of our workers was washing the blood and grime from the face of a man badly wounded in the abdomen, he said in English, "This is the first time any woman ever touched me with tenderness."[143] Meanwhile, U.S. military surgeon Louis C. Duncan expressed both disgust and sympathy as he treated dozens of the wounded Federalist refugees at Presidio in 1913. He wondered why "these ignorant, docile men, long schooled to doglike submission, had borne their suffering in silence, expecting no relief," and regretted that "[one man] was brought in dead with a wound of the knee. He might have been saved if aided promptly on the field…"[144] Duncan's resentment and compassion proved compatible.

In anticipation of the Mexican refugees' arrival to the camps at Fort Bliss, the Army sanitary officers issued a series of orders that extended "supreme and undivided control" over the most intimate aspects of refugees' lives. Immigration inspectors and Army troops alike believed sanitation to be "a wholly new and novel science" to Mexicans.[145] So each morning, sanitary officers arrived to inspect private tents, and each week they unfurled and exposed tent areas to open air without respect to the privacy of refugees' "homes."[146] Public Health Service practices and popular hysteria among border communities encouraged a mandatory smallpox and typhoid vaccination campaign "for every man, woman and child" refugee in late January 1914.[147] Like their predecessors in the San Francisco refugee camps, the refugees at Fort Bliss resented and sometimes resisted mandatory vaccinations. One January 24, 1914, as refugees were still arriving in ten packed train cars to Fort Bliss from Marfa, Major Clarence Manley of the Medical corps counted only 475 completed vaccinations of 1800 that were ordered. The deficit reflected the refusal of refugees to report to the makeshift hospital, prompting Manley to order "military force as may be necessary to secure their attendance" to avoid further delays.[148] Manley partitioned the remaining refugees into groups of two hundred and armed troops marched them to the hospital for the procedure.

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[142] Ernest A. Sweet, "Interstate Migration of Tuberculous Persons: Its Bearing on the Public Health, with Special Reference to the States of Texas and New Mexico," *Public Health Reports*, 30:17 (1915) 1225-1255.

[143] Mary Gale, "A Chapter That Has Served on the Field of Battle," *The Red Cross Courier,* August 15, 1928, 19-28.

[144] Louis Duncan, "The Wounded at Ojinaga," *The Military Surgeon* 34 (May 1914) 411-440; 419-420, 423.

[145] Estes, "The Internment of Mexican Troops" Part I, 762-763.

[146] Sanitary Officer Robert E.L. Michie, To Commanding Officer, Mexican Detention Camp, Fort Bliss, January 23, 1914; Brigadier General Scott, Memo, January 26, 1914, Fort Wingate Correspondence Register. Correspondence Register, Fort Wingate, January 1914 – November 1914, RG 393: Records of U.S. Army Continental Commands, 1817 – 1947, NARA-D.C.

[147] Estes, "The Internment of Mexican Troops," Part I, 764-765.

While residing within the camps, refugees who fell ill were kept in a tent for convalescents and treated with the resources at hand. The American medical corps kept detailed records of deaths within the camps, and transferred the bodies of those who died from injury or illness at Fort Bliss to the Mexican Consul. After the refugees were transferred to Fort Wingate in April 1914, the fallen were buried in marked graves in the Post Cemetery outside of the camp and accorded a small ceremony; high-ranking officers were accorded military honors as their rank and grade reflected.[149] The Fort Wingate camp maternity ward betrayed a similar sense of ceremony, without any suggestion of equality between the American troops and their charges. One Army physician scolded the newborn mothers for disregarding hospital procedures before "pick[ing] up a small piece of dark progeny with as much pride and affection as if it had been his own."[150] These demonstrations of compassion testified to the humanitarian quality of the camps in magazine and newspaper accounts preoccupied with the fate "ill, wounded, naked, and starving" refugees, while underscoring the fundamental disparity and racial difference between the "public charge[s]" and their American military guards. [151]

Food

San Francisco

On the third Sunday after San Francisco's earthquake, Archbishop George Montgomery of St. Mary's Cathedral presided over a makeshift altar erected within the refugee camp at Fort Mason. Remnants of San Francisco's skyscrapers loomed outside as he preached about the ephemerality of material pleasures and the necessity of building "something more lasting than what man can build."[152] Montgomery implored his congregants to embrace the earthquake's devastation of "carnal riches" like alcohol and capital and instead rejoice in the city's sudden wealth of virtue, brotherhood, courage, and generosity. "We are eating the bread of charity, which in their magnanimity those who contribute it do not wish to so name it—but call it by another term, "humanity." As the objects of such generosity, San Franciscans had "contracted a debt of gratitude which we can never repay—save in simple and grateful acknowledgement to our municipal government, to our State and Federal authorities, to the committee of citizens…[and] an army…as much beloved and honored in defeat as in victory by the country it defends."

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[148] Clarence Manley, Medical Corps to Commanding Officer, Fort Bliss, January 24, 1914, Fort Wingate Correspondence Register. Correspondence Register, Fort Wingate, January 1914 – November 1914, RG 393: Records of U.S. Army Continental Commands, 1817 – 1947, NARA-D.C.

[149] Estes, "The Internment of Mexican Troops," Part II, 52-54. The U.S. Infantry recorded the location of burials on refugee registration cards. See for example the registration cards of Placido Garcia and Pedro Gonzalez, who died of gunshot wounds and pulmonary tuberculosis, respectively. Both were noted to be interred at the Post Cemetery at Fort Wingate, Card Register of Mexican Prisoners Held at Fort Bliss and Fort Wingate, 1/1914 - 9/1914, Box 1/4. RG 393: Records of U.S. Army Continental Commands, 1817 – 1947, NARA-D.C.

[150] Kyne, "With the Border Patrol," 20.

[151] Ibid.

[152] "Sermons on Disaster," *The Washington Post,* April 23, 1906, 12; "Pastors Discuss Frisco Disaster," *Chicago Daily Tribune,* April 23, 1906, 7; "San Francisco the Text of Yesterday's Sermons," *New York Times,* April 23, 1906, 6.

Refugees could best express gratitude for the bread they received by "obeying to the letter the restrictions put upon [them]." After all, Montgomery stressed, the restrictions were "for the common good."[153]

It was not only religious leaders beseeching San Francisco's refugees to demonstrate their gratitude through obedience. The spirit of Montgomery's sermon animated the SFRRCF and state reports that equated the deserving with the dutiful. Army agents simultaneously trumpeted their efficient ration distribution and worried it risked transforming refugees into permanent public charges—particularly amid rumors of "great abuse of the free food and clothing privilege" that began circulating almost as food aid appeared at the Presidio camp.[154] The anxiety over the refugees' dependency echoed in the reports of SFRRC agents, the private writings of survivors, and journalistic accounts celebrating instances of self-sufficiency.

In private writings, elite refugees grappled with their newfound dependency by highlighting acts of brotherhood and ingenuity amid the food shortages. In the first days after the fire, the affluent Hooker family avoided the breadlines, as they "had taken the precaution to bring with us [what] lasted, and…paid little attention to eating in any case." But when they realized the nearness of a relief station, they "watched and, whenever we saw the line begin to form, ran over there to stand with the other paupers and receive our rations." But dependency did not threaten "inventive Mariana," who used the sleeve of her jacket to collect rice, or Clough, who collected his in his hat and returned "in triumph." Josephine Baxter, who previously lived in comfort in the Western Addition, took solace in the generosity of her neighbors, who cooked outside for themselves and the families around them. "We are a big family. McFarlanes eat with us, the Blairs also and Dr. Cree…we have a large crowd."[155] The city's social elites might have temporarily lost their self-sufficiency. But they retained discipline and industriousness, qualities that made them worthy of aid according to the standards

In the breadlines the post-fire mythos of social equality seemed most tangible and the heavy military presence most legitimate. "In line one heard the experiences of others, their terrors, their losses, their present poverty, all told in a matter-of-fact quiet way, as appreciating that the common lot had no great differences."[156] Appearing publicly in the breadlines lines infantilized citizens of otherwise diverse social classes and ethnicities, who physician Arthur Dangerfield believed "all felt rather like Sunday School treaters when lined up for grub with our 'tinnies.'" The fleeting appearance of social equality helped legitimate militarized rule. As beggars, the hundreds of thousands of refugees who remained in the city became legitimate subjects of militarized policing. Dangerfield acknowledged his place in line among the "rich and poor alike, or in reality, all poor, with an armed guard on either side." That position was celebrated, not resented, as "each man received a very thick dirty piece of bread and half a cup of coffee…. We appreciated it all the same."[157]

Hunger helped convert anonymous or despised troops into temporary heroes enforcing order and preventing famine where greed and selfishness would otherwise prevail. Many of wealthy refugees had been forcibly evicted from their homes at the end of a bayonet, or knew of those who had. But residual humiliation and anger faded once soldiers redirected their violence towards the bakers and merchants attempting to profit off of the food scarcity. Art student Myrtle Robertson's description of the food scarcity underscored clear lines of evil and good: "greedy merchants offering their goods, at exorbitant prices," on the one side, and the soldiers who confiscated food and "distributed it freely to…waiting customers." Refugees wept in gratitude for the private contributions sent from "some little town thousands of miles away that one had never heard of," but received those rations from soldiers. "It warmed the heart and made the eyes moist at the same moment - the pity and the desire to succor that moved all the world at this time." In the camps, the Army ensured that justice prevailed as scarcity tempted the hungry to loot and hoard. "People went round to any stores that were left and bought provisions but unless smuggled very carefully into the special camping ground, they were at once seized by the military authorities and put in with the rest of the rations." In the eyes of some grateful survivors, the military's control over rations promised that the humanitarian impulse behind food distribution would transcend individual greed and the city's disorder.

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[153] "Lesson Taught by Great Disaster," *San Francisco Chronicle,* May 7, 1906, 3.
[154] "Improvements in System," *Sacramento Union,* April 25, 1906, 4.
[155] Josephine Baxter letter to her parents, April 23, 1906, California miscellany: additions, bulk 1829-1981: BANC MSS 73/122 c:94, The Bancroft Library and Archives.
[156] Hooker Family, Letter [circa late April, 1906], 53.
[157] Dangerfield, April 24, 1906, 5-6.

The military authorities did not necessarily reciprocate the refugees' admiration. On occasion, they exploited survivors' hunger in order to extract labor—particularly from the reviled Chinese and Japanese populations. One officer confessed to stealing provisions from a group of Chinese refugees, only to dole it out in small portions as reward for their labor.[158] Fears quickly arose that the greedy and mercenary would abuse the ration system. Lt. Col. Lea Febiger, an infantryman overseeing the camps at the Presidio, reported in mid-July that his office had been "flooded with reports of persons who were taking advantage of present conditions to obtain large stores of food for future use," one of many behaviors demonstrating "unworthy manner in their attitude toward relief work."[159] But even before he reported these complaints, relief agents had taken steps to reduce the number of meals distributed to refugees still living in provisional housing. The number of food dispensaries opened by April 29 reached 177 as food relief arrived from U.S. and private sources. But as early as May 1, the total number of food rations issued began to decline from a high of 315,000 people served per day. By May 3, the Relief Committee began to close entire food stations, and by June 3—only forty-six days after the earthquake struck—the number of food stations had been reduced to 33.[160] Relief administrators noted that part of the decline could be credited to "industry and thrift" and the migration of refugees out of the city. Yet the same agents prided themselves in their "strenuous efforts to lessen the number" of those applying for help to serve their "creature needs."[161]

One of the most effective tools for this purpose was a registration system that connecting refugees to a single relief station. Each relief station printed its own ration cards to ensure that no recipient external to the district could apply. Recipients reported the head of household, the number of adults and children in each household, and the temporary or permanent address dictating their eligibility. Cards contained a list of dates and a serial number. Aid workers punched out each date as the listed recipient secured that day's rations. Relief Station superintendents signed each card to prevent counterfeits. The architect of the system, Carl C. Plehn, relied upon the model that he had designed for the Philippine census after the United

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[158] San Francisco Chronicle account by Frank McGouty, June 10, 1906. McGouty legitimated his actions with reference to his responsible oversight of the refugees' hunger: "when we thought they needed food again, we gave them plenty to eat. This pleased them very much and they were all right and appeared to be satisfied."

[159] Lieut. Col. Lea Febiger, Report, *July 19, 1906, in* Greely, *Earthquake in California, April 18, 1906, Special Report*, *Appendix A*. The Bancroft Library and Archives.

[160] O'Connor, "Organizing the Force and Emergency Methods," 42-43.

[161] Ibid., 44.

States annexed the islands following the Spanish-American War of 1898. Plehn organized a relief force of 200 volunteer teachers who canvased all residents requesting regular rations. By early May, 19,438 cards were registered to individual relief stations. The food card system inhered the same principles as the military district system: The Army and Red Cross believed it easier both to serve and manage the hungry when they were confined to specific territories. While some of the cards were filled out incompletely, the object was less to describe the population than to control waste and limit abuse. The cards both enabled and restricted the receipt of rations, ensuring that no single refugee took more than the dispensary deemed necessary.[162]

By mid-May, Febiger agreed that "something must be done" to reduce the refugee population that risked permanent dependency or hoarded "to further their own selfish ends."[163] Rations became the primary instrument to incentivize survivors to reclaim self-sufficiency. Febiger's subordinate Captain William Kelly reasoned that a new system of food distribution could feed the truly destitute while shaming the undeserving and dishonest. Rather than supplying families with daily, dry rations to prepare in district or individual kitchens, the Army could install a restaurant and mess-hall system that could efficiently pay food distributors, work the idle, and feed the hungry. Those without money would work for their food, and those with money would support the collective food supply.[164] Furthermore, the restaurant model offered a way to showcase the consumption of food that the dry ration system lacked. Febiger applauded successful restaurant models like those developed by the commanders at Lobos Square in May. The operation at Lobos Square promised to wean refugees off of the public dole, as it prevented hoarding of raw goods and compelled all recipients to eat their charitable rations before the public eye.[165] Military volunteers were recruited to undertake the construction of communal mess halls and kitchens throughout the city in June and July. Captain Killian and Major Krauthoff, who had been handling relief supplies for hospitals, responded to the issue by pointing to the imminence of a return to a "self-supporting" system and the "wind-up of free food." They did suggest that the final distribution would contain raw supplies, but used the issue to justify a simplified system of "fixed rations" regardless of the needs or size of a given household.[166] Ration distributors additionally devised "a system of questions put to each applicant" to distinguish the "wholly destitute" from "the untruthful" that only feigned hunger.[167] When food distribution was transferred from Army to full Red Cross supervision in mid-July, Febiger boasted that ration expenses had declined by eighty percent due to "many declining with indignation to accept assistance in the form offered, and by outcries, more or less pronounced, demonstrating beyond the possibility of a doubt the intense unpopularity of this [hot food] scheme."[168]

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[162] Ibid. The Army and the SFRRCF particularly loathed those who doubled up on rations, whether by revisiting the same station in a given day or utilizing multiple stations. The practice came to be known as "repeating" in the months after the earthquake. Febiger, Report, July 19, 1906, 231.

[163] Ibid.

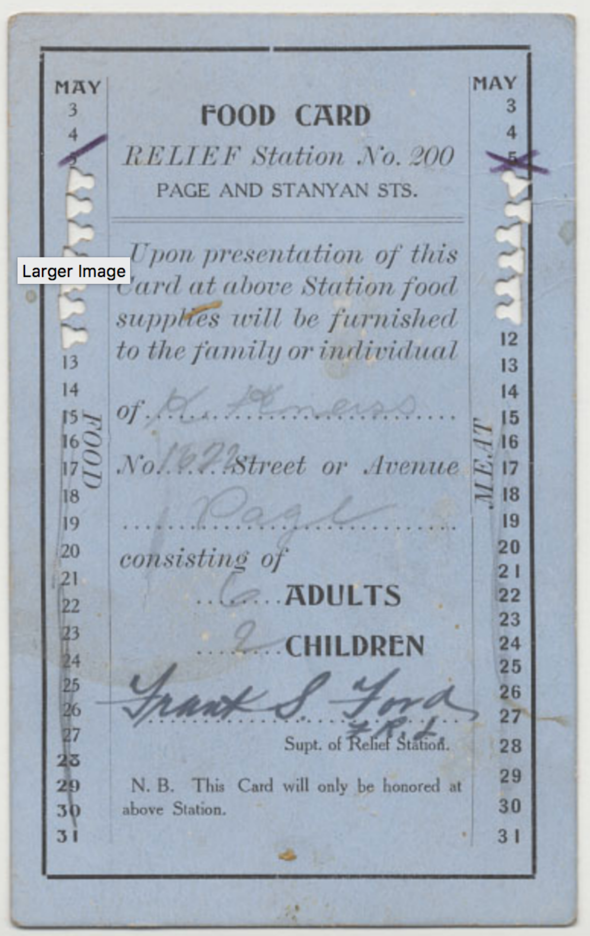
[164] Captain William Kelly to family, May 19, 1906, California miscellany: Additions, bulk 1829-1981: BANC MSS 73/122 c: 149, The Bancroft Library and Archives. Available through the San Francisco Earthquake and Fire Digital Collection.

[165] Febiger, Report, *July 19, 1906,* 235-236.

[166] "Religion Figures in Complaint," *San Francisco Call*, July 19, 1906, 12.

[167] Febiger, Report, *July 19, 1906,* 237.

[168] Ibid.


Larger Image
FOOD
MEAT

MAY 3 4 5 … 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31

FOOD CARD

RELIEF Station No. 200

PAGE AND STANYAN STS.

Upon presentation of this Card at above Station food supplies will be furnished to the family or individual

of H. Ameiss

No. 1622 *Street or Avenue*

Page

consisting of

6 **ADULTS**

2 **CHILDREN**

Frank S. Ford
F.R.L.
Supt. of Relief Station.

N. B. This Card will only be honored at above Station.

MAY 3 4 5 … 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31

Figure 17: Food card, Relief Station No. 200 (Page and Stanyan Streets). May, 1906. Courtesy of the Bancroft Library and Archives, UC Berkeley. Available through the San Francisco Earthquake and Fire Digital Collection.

Efforts to humble the refugees' provisions sparked hundreds to organize campaigns against the newly punitive distribution system. In late June 1906, over three hundred refugees worked together to petition the mayor to abolish the soup kitchens and revert to a raw ration system. They further demanded that oversight of food relief be transferred from the Red Cross and the Army back to the hands of Mayor Schmitz—a reversal of early pleas that relief remain free of the corrupt mayor's office. Refugees complained that "home life is being destroyed by requiring husband and wife to be separated during meals and that such a course is destroying the manhood of the citizens."[169] Women enraged over their diminished access to raw supplies mobilized in what came to be known as the "Flour Riot." Dozens of angry refugees crowded outside a raw food warehouse. When confronted by a local police officer, one defiant female refugee "informed him that he and everybody connected with the work of relief… [had acted] to defraud deserving refugees of the flour that was rightfully theirs." Eventually over twenty women from the Jefferson Square rushed the flour supplies, including several who "berated the guards and demanded their rights as American citizens."[170] Rather than humanitarian gifts for the suffering, these women saw rations as obligations of the state and the Red Cross to its citizenry.

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[169] "Soup Kitchens are Denounced," *San Francisco Call*, June 18, 1906; "Don't Like Soup Kitchen: Jefferson Square Refugees to Send Their Protest to the Mayor," *San Francisco Chronicle*, June 4, 1906.

Such protests ultimately buttressed the moral authority of the U.S. Army and its rule over San Francisco's humanitarian relief. Persistent complaints about the declining standard of living and availability of food in the camps mobilized journalists to conduct exposes of "rowdyish disrespect" and near-starved survivors. One father complained that he was given only three potatoes and a small piece of meat to feed himself, his wife and three children for a day. Blistering reports prompted Episcopalian Revered Rufus Nunn to personally conduct home visits to the refugees' quarters. Finding truth to the refugees' allegations, he called for the resignation of top relief administrators in the pages of the *San Francisco Call.* "It does seem to me that with a clerical force at their command and incidentally their $6000 salary that at least there might be a showing of humanity."[171] Within days, signs posted all over the camps condemned Red Cross Director Edward Devine and fellow relief administrators, accusing them of "banquet[ing] on the fat of the land with the relief funds. Let the whole world know that while we are starving they are feasting."[172] These appeals were addressed to Secretary of War Henry Taft and President Theodore Roosevelt, testified to the fact that at least some San Francisco's refugees saw the U.S. Army and the federal government as a benevolent force whose authorities superseded that of the SFRRCF and the city. The appeal also demonstrated how refugees had actively helped established the federal government as a humanitarian actor on which refugees could depend.

The Border

In 1909, Charles O'Connor concluded the prolonged dismantling of the refugee relief regime in San Francisco. For several months, he worked within the offices of the Red Cross in Berkeley, until he was dispatched to San Diego in 1911 to tend to a developing crisis at the southern border. In 1915, he was sent to Mexico City to take charge of the famine relief effort of the ARC. Five years of warfare had left fields lying fallow, disrupted supply lines, and motivated warring factions to seize upon dwindling food stores. While in Mexico, he wrote regularly in his journal about the haunting sight of Mexico's famine sufferers, dwelling on the "swollen bodies; shriveled babies; baby trying to get milk from dry breast of a starving mother."[173]

The threat of hunger captured in O'Connor's journals loomed over the border after the breakout of war in Mexico in 1910, galvanizing relief workers and convincing even stoic immigration agents to relax border admission protocols and "see to it that none of the refugees suffered from hunger."[174] That idea resonated at the highest levels of government. In the spring and summer of 1914, a Turkish ambassador contacted Secretary of State William Jennings Bryan to implore the U.S. to "rescue…horribly suffering" Turkish refugees in Mexico at risk of "dying from starvation" by "persuading the immigration authorities to provide for them."[175] Weeks later, a member of the Chinese legation requested that "the law related to the admission of Chinese into the US…be relaxed," so that Chinese could escape towns ridden by violence and food shortages in Northern Mexico. Bryan yielded to both requests, and carefully negotiated an "understanding" with the Commissioner-General of Immigration that the Chinese and Turkish refugees would be able to enter the United States and secure provisions from nearby benevolent societies and their consuls.[176]

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[170] "Killian Tells His Side of the Story," *San Francisco Chronicle,* July 12, 1906; "Women Besiege the Moulder School Warehouse," *San Francisco Chronicle,* July 8, 1906, 33; "Irate Women Mob the Keepers of Relief Stores: The Demand for Flour Results in a Riot and the Police are Called Out," *San Francisco Chronicle,* July 7, 1906, 8.

[171] "Predicts an Era of Disorder," *San Francisco Call*, July 2, 1906.

[172] Committee of Friends of Refugees, "Refugees Attention," July 31, 1906, Public Bulletin, The Bancroft Library and Archives. On the last night of July, organizers marched from Jefferson Square to Union square, where Devine and other relief committee members were dining within the St. Francis Hotel "in a spacious dining-room specifically arranged for the occasion." Protestors distributed bulletins calling for the resignations of "the Three Traitors" managing the SFRRCF: Devine, former Mayor Phelan, and Allan Pollock. "Concentrados Hold Mass Meeting in Protest Against Red Cross Man," *San Francisco Call,* August 1, 1906.

[173] Charles J. O'Connor, journal notes, [ca. 1915], Papers of Charles J. O'Connor: BANC MSS 79/132, The Bancroft Library and Archives.

By that time, U.S. Army Captain George Estes had showcased U.S. responsibility for the 3,350 Mexican military refugees and troop followers escorted from the border to the camps by alleviating their hunger. "In provisioning and otherwise caring for this motley aggregation of some 5,000 men, women, and children, wet, cold and half starved, together with one thousand and seven hundred and eighty odd animals on the verge of starvation…[the] burden was assumed by the U.S." Once the refugees arrived at Fort Wingate in Arizona, Army troops guarding the encampments continued to perceive rations as evidence of their humane stance towards the refugees. The troops attempted to "furnish as far as practicable, articles of subsistence to which Mexicans were accustomed."[177] The self-conscious attention to the desires of individual refugees demonstrated the extent to which Army officers in particular saw themselves as guardians, even caregivers, during the Mexican refugee crisis.

American civilians similarly saw the feeding of Mexican refugees as an act of charitable Christian virtue that transcended humanity's baser allegiances to kinfolk and nation. Reports of 2,000 Mexican refugees "including half-starved women and children" crossing the river into Texas inspired local benevolent societies to launch food donation campaigns.[178] The same reports accepted that "Uncle Sam's Wards" were expensive guests, consuming 33,000 pounds of beef, 20,000 pounds of beans, 135,000 loaves of bread and 5000 pounds of coffee a month.[179] Hundreds of combatants became refugees in the eyes of Mary Gale of the San Diego Red Cross when she saw that they "had not tasted food for 48 hours."[180] The sufferer who gained the most attention in Gale's writings on her work in the border camps was a "wounded halfbreed Blackfoot Indian," who crawled fourteen miles and across the border "through cactus and chaparral without food and not a drop of water to drink." Even explicitly racialized combatants could become deserving in the minds of white Americans if their experience surpassed a certain threshold of suffering or their suffering took a particular form.

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[174] F.W. Berkshire to Commissioner-General of Immigration F.H. Larned, September 18, 1912, RG 85: Records of the INS, Subject and Policy Files, 1893-1957, Box 1111, NARA-D.C.

[175] Secretary of State W.J. Bryan to Secretary of Labor W.B. Wilson, April 27, 1914. Records of the INS, Series A: Subject Correspondence Files, Part II: Mexican Immigration, 1906-1930, Rudolph Vecoli, Ed. (Frederick, Maryland: University Publications of America, 1992) reel 6, casefile 5012/92.

[176] Kaifu Shah, Chinese Legation, to Secretary of State W.J. Bryan, June 13, 1914, Records of the Immigration and Naturalization Service, Series A: Subject Correspondence Files, Part II: Mexican Immigration, 1906-1930, Rudolph Vecoli, Ed. (Frederick, Maryland: University Publications of America, 1992) reel 4, frame 954.

[177] Estes, "The Internment of Mexican Troops," Part II, 41.

[178] *El Paso Herald,* January 3, 1914.

[179] "Fugitive Army Marches on To Marfa," *San Francisco Chronicle,* January 19, 1914, 1.

[180] Mary Gale, "What the San Diego Chapter Did," *Red Cross Journal* 6:1 (1911) 34-37.

In practice, sustenance functioned as both a charitable gift and an instrument of punishment in the refugee camps at Fort Bliss and Fort Wingate. Guards wrote frankly about the way in which they used food to discipline refugees who attempted to escape, engaged in extramarital sex, or violated the behavioral rules around sanitation, curfew, or the exchange of goods. In the punishment pen at Fort Wingate, refugees received only "hard bread" to eat. A bread-and-water diet could also be used independently of isolation as a more moderate form of punishment for lesser offenses.[181] Food relief went to deserving sufferers, but whether refugees were deserving or not changed based upon on their day-to-day behavior in the camps.

The issue of food triggered one of the first major conflicts between U.S. army culture and that of the Mexican refugees. When the refugees first arrived to the camp at Fort Bliss in El Paso, the troops expected their charges to be fed as they themselves were, and accordingly erected forty army mess tents, each outfitted with an army cook. Days passed during which Mexican generals resisted this arrangement. Almost all of the refugees recoiled at their rations, and some starved in protest of the unrecognizable meals. According to journalists working with camp translators, the Federal refugees wished to adhere to their own tradition and gendered division of Mexican army labor, in which *soldaderas* secured, prepared, and served food to small family units within the army. After several days of conflict and negotiation, the guards yielded to the requests and arranged for a new ration system at the end of January. The supervising troops distributed raw daily rations to heads-of-household, who would then feed the children and women they claimed upon entry to the United States.[182]

The protest and its resolution reflected one of the enduring conflicts of the refugee camps. Coverage of the camps presented the troops as agents of a paternal United States. The idea that "Uncle Sam [was] Foster Father of 5,000" circulated in public accounts of the camps alongside reports of their expense as if to foreclose criticism of the public funds spent on foreigners.[183] Soldiers working within the camp meanwhile negotiated their responsibility to reward and punish, protect and police in the language of social obligation. With every gift they bestowed among infantilized refugees came resistance on the part of a well-organized, educated, sophisticated Mexican military battalion that imported its own strategies for sheltering, nursing, and feeding its members. The American troops sometimes elected to enforce their rules regardless—as with the issue of compulsory and unpaid labor extracted from able-bodied men. But when it came to features of the camp thought fundamental to its humanitarian function, both the ground-level U.S. officers and camp supervisors yielded consistently to the refugees' preferences. To do otherwise would ostensibly violate the humanitarian ideals that legitimated their imprisonment of five thousand individuals.

After the mess hall debacle was resolved, U.S. troops overseeing the camp at Fort Bliss relaxed their approach to feeding the refugees, turning rations into gifts. Initial orders of rations for the camp included basic meats, bread, vegetables, and whole corn. But as early as February, camp guards yielded to the women refugees who requested adjustments in weekly ration packages so as to satisfy the tastes of their units. "Variations in [the] allowance were necessary," Estes explained in his periodic public reports, and he approved substitutions "considered more desirable by the Mexicans" as long as they fell within the weekly camp budget. More detailed food orders reflecting the *soldaderas'* requests included beef, bacon, flour, potatoes, rice, beans, onions, coffee, sugar, green chili peppers, beets, carrots, parsnips, cucumbers, cabbage, tomatoes, watermelons, apples, pepper sauce, milk, turnips, dried chili peppers, pie fruit, and lime. The camp additionally secured large orders of lard substitute upon recognizing it as a favorite.[184] In response to the *soldaderas'* reported desires, Estes purchased thirty-six power corn-grinders "to make up…tortillas to which they are so attached." The equipment and the *soldadera* food preparation labor supplanted the need for flour altogether and thereby reduced food costs while "keep[ing] the machinery running."[185] The fact that *soldaderas* made such requests indicated some expectation of their guards' consideration. The guards' attention to and fulfillment of such desires might have demonstrated genuine care for their charges' comfort, their real belief in the basic decency of the camps, or a strategic deployment of compassion to effectively manage more than five thousand prisoners, or all three.

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[181] Estes, "The Internment of Mexican Troops" Part II, 45.

[182] Elizabeth Salas, *Soldaderas in the Mexican Military: Myth and History* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1990) 62-63.

[183] Kyne, "With the Border Patrol," 11.

The work of food preparation that women performed revealed their worth and intelligence in the eyes of their American guards. George Harris, one of the immigration officers who elected to admit Mexican refugees to the United States *en masse*, admired the refugee women who had the ingenuity to exploit "whatever chance, charity or mayhap their own enterprise threw in their way" to keep the camps inhabitable.[186] Army doctor Louis C. Duncan deemed the male refugee accompanied by a *soldadera* the luckiest of the all, for the women "looked out for his belonging, took care of him, procured his food and cooked it, washed his clothes and in fact did everything she could," for him.[187] After the Army guards decided to permit the *soldaderas* to prepare food for their households, the refugees were put to work constructing adobe brickmaking stations first to build kitchens for each individual tent and prospective cottage. "The greatest ingenuity was exhibited in the construction of stoves dug out in the ground, ovens built of adobe, and ranges fashioned out of oil cans, with serviceable stovepipe constructed of discarded tomato cans."[188]

What Americans perceived as the creativity of the refugees was likely a function of their resilience to hunger on the battlegrounds and in the camps. Adolescents and women sometimes joined rebel groups to in order to survive increasingly desperate conditions in war-torn Mexico. Fourteen-year old Pedro González and Jesús Perez both joined the federal troops after suffering from persistent hunger; U.S. Army troops at Fort Bliss registered them as unaccompanied refugee children.[189] That hunger likely persisted in the camps for many refugees. Refugees received regular meals, but they cost a fraction of what was given to American soldiers.[190] The disparity was accepted as the justifiable difference between Americans in service and foreign refugees. While corn and flour might have been extended as objects of charity, the Army's calculus revealed the worth of its beneficiaries never equaled that of its benefactors.

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[184] Special diets and cooking arrangements were made for sick and wounded refugees living in hospitals, away from the kitchens of the *soldaderas*. Each patient was provided with the tools typically supplied to field soldiers: utensils, meat cans, and tin cups.

[185] Estes, "The Internment of Mexican Troops" Part II, 45.

[186] George Harris to F.W. Berkshire, February 24, 1914, RG 85: Records of the INS, Subject and Policy Files, 1893-1957, Box 1111, NARA-D.C.

[187] Louis Duncan, "The Wounded at Ojinaga," *The Military Surgeon* 34 (May 1914) 411-440; 436.

[188] Estes, "The Internment of Mexican Troops" Part I, 762.

[189] Oscar Martínez, *Fragments of the Mexican Revolution*: Personal Accounts from the Border (Tucson: University of New Mexico Press, 1983) 21; Jesús Pérez, Interview by Magdaleno Cisneros, May 8, 1976, Interview 249, transcript. Institute of Oral History, University of Texas at El Paso; Yolanda Chávez Leyva, "'¿Que Son Los Niños?' Mexican Children Along the U.S.-Mexico Border, 1880-1930," (Ph.D. Diss., University of Arizona, 1999) 103.

[190] Estes, The Internment of Mexican Troops" Part II, 42. A more comprehensive cost analysis for food rations appears in an undated table in the Fort Wingate Correspondence Register. Correspondence Register, Fort Wingate, January 1914 – November 1914, RG 393: Records of U.S. Army Continental Commands, 1817 – 1947, NARA-D.C.

Hunger helped shaped the southern boundary of the United States during the Mexican refugee crisis. In the very first months of the Mexican Revolution, as wealthier refugees sympathetic to the leadership of Francisco Madero government poured into the United States, it was tales of their hunger that prompted sympathetic outcries and donations from borderlands Americans. During the final years of conflict before the signing of the 1917 Mexican Constitution, U.S. Army and U.S. immigration officials quarreled over whether to open smuggling-ridden ferry lines and admit dozens of refugees daily so as to "alleviate hardship and suffering" due to famine in Northern Mexico.[191] Humanitarian organizations could find themselves at odds law enforcement, as when city officials in Laredo asked the local chapter of the Red Cross to cease food distributions in 1915 to over 6,000 refugees seeking asylum across the border temporarily, lest the city become a "Mecca for refugees."[192] But that conflict was an outlier. There were many more instances of collaboration between border cities, humanitarians, and officers of the United States military. As famine roiled Mexico and uprooted hundreds of thousands, the work of feeding Mexico's refugees became critical to the work of controlling entry at the border.

Conclusion

The refugee camps in San Francisco and at the Mexican border delimited spaces in which benevolent workers and federal agents could shape the laws of humanity through both small acts of generosity and threats of punishment. That complex role garnered enough public interest to attract photographers from *Pathé's Weekly, Mutual Weekly,* and the *Hearst-Selig News Pictorial* to produce dozens of newsreels on U.S. military activity in the Mexican border region in 1914 and 1915. Scenes of American soldiers pursuing Mexican rebels and building fences to divide the two countries offered American viewers evidence that the U.S. would actively enforce national security as both Europe and Mexico descended into war. But some films included a more complex accounting of period that acknowledged the boundary as a place of suffering as well as violence, of innocent refugees as well as fugitives and rebels. Intercut in one of the *Pathé* newsreels were scenes from the Mexican refugee crisis. Mothers and children hurried towards an off-camera destination; one American soldier waved at two separate refugee women with signs of familiarity, even fondness.[193] A mother holding an infant caught sight of the cameraman in a refugee camp, and directed her child's gaze back toward the photographer with a smile.

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[191] Newton Baker, Secretary of War to Secretary of Treasury, May 6, 1916; El Paso Supervising Inspector F.W. Berkshire to Brownsville Supervising Inspector EP Reynolds, May 6, 1916; CEH Plummer, Colonel 28th Infantry to Commanding Officer EP Reynolds, May 22, 1916; Berkshire to Reynolds, May 19, 1916, All in Records of the Immigration and Naturalization Services, Series A: Subject Correspondence Files, Part II: Mexican Immigration, 1906-1930, Rudolph Vecoli, Ed. (Frederick, Maryland: University Publications of America, 1992) Casefile 5084/444. The Secretary of War, with the support of El Paso Supervising Immigration inspector F.W. Berkshire, pleaded with the inspector in charge of the Brownsville Station E.P Reynolds that a more porous boundary was the best solution from a humanitarian and tactical standpoint—it would both alleviate suffering, reduce unauthorized migration, improve communication around the war-torn border, and restore local confidence in the intentions of the U.S. government. Officers on the ground and in D.C. acknowledged that relations between nationals of the two countries had suffered as a result of U.S. punitive expeditions into Mexico following Mexican rebel leader Pancho Villa's raid of the town of Columbus, New Mexico. For a detailed account of the Columbus raid and the punitive expedition, see Friedrich Katz, "Pancho Villa and the Attack on Columbus, New Mexico," *American Historical Review* 83:1 (1978) 101-130 and Joseph A. Stout, Jr. *Border Conflict; Villistas, Carrancistas and the Punitive Expedition, 1915-1920* (Fort Worth: TCU Press, 1999). For an account of the American significance of the event, see Rachel St. John's broad history of the hardening of the border, *Line in the Sand,* 144-152. For an account of the significance of both events for the Mexican Revolution, see Friedrich Katz, *The Life and Times of Pancho Villa* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998) 545-614.

[192] *El Paso Herald,* June 23, 1915.

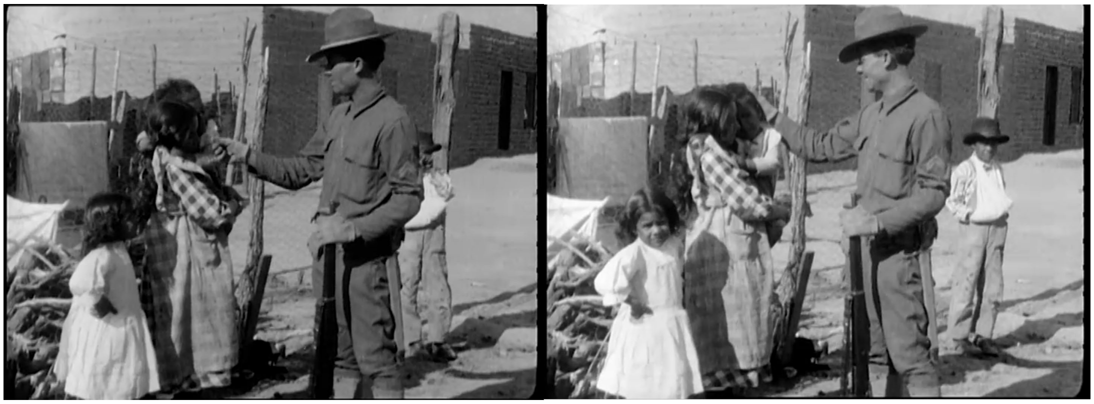

Figure 18: Stills, *America the Neutral: Yanks at Mex. Border,* Pathé newsreel, ca. 1914, Acc. No. NN-367-97, NARA – College Park.

The reel ended with a tight shot in front of one of the border forts transformed into a refugee camp. In the foreground stood a dark-skinned woman holding a toddler, with another young child standing beside her. One of the American army troops offers the youngest child a token, reaches out to affectionately pat his head, and exchanges smiles with the mother before becoming aware of the camera and departing. Scenes like these showcased how U.S. troops served as both caretakers and disciplinarians as they negotiated their responsibility to refugees and the presumed threat they posed to the broader public.

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[193] "Stock Newsreel Excerpts," Columbia Broadcasting System, Inc., Collection, 1953-1982, Motion Picture Newsreel Films Used for a Documentary Series on World War I, ca. 1908 - ca. 1930, CBS-CBS-WWI-74, NARA-College Park – Motion Pictures (RDSM), 10:45-11:03.

Conclusion

Welfare at the U.S. Periphery

Ernest Bicknell, the Director of the American Red Cross (ARC), left the border region in January 1914. Having overseen the transfer of over 5,000 Mexican soldiers and troop-followers into U.S. Army refugee camps, he returned to his duties overseeing flood and fire relief.[1] But Bicknell's respite from the man-made catastrophe of war proved temporary. By August, Europe's armies were on the march and, by Bicknell's reckoning, 150,000 Americans were still in Europe. "With the beginning of war, every country involved instantly locked up its gold, every bank refused to cash credits […,]" and everybody, it seemed, now demanded specie.[2] Americans abroad found themselves marooned, unable to buy passage home with mere paper currency. So on August 6 Bicknell joined Assistant Secretary of War Henry Breckinridge and other leaders from the Departments of State, Treasury, Army, and Navy on steamships bound for Europe. They brought $1,500,000 in gold coins to rescue and repatriate stranded Americans.[3]

Nearly two months later, after making his way through London, The Hague, and Berlin, Bicknell headed home. As he steamed westward, Bicknell reflected on the events of the previous weeks, no doubt with some degree of satisfaction. Thousands of "American refugees" had returned safely across the Atlantic. Thousands more would do so in the coming weeks. And he concluded his thoughts with a rhetorical question: "Prosperous, happy, peace-loving United States, with your protecting ocean barriers, your good will toward all the world! What greater good fortune can fall to the lot of man than to be numbered as an American citizen?"[4]

While Bicknell went on to help raise over $400 million for relief efforts related to war, famine, and suffering far across the Atlantic in Europe and the Middle East, Charles J. O'Connor found humanitarianism in retreat in the American West. In 1915, the ARC officer returned to the United States after spending five years tending to Mexico's revolutionary crisis to find the ongoing crisis much diminished in the minds of his countrymen. The Mexican famine had receded into the background of newspapers, Progressive circulars, and the agenda of the American Red Cross. O'Connor himself was transferred from his posting at the Mexican border to an office in San Francisco. In December of 1915, when Bicknell invited him to present at the annual conference of the American Red Cross, he told O'Connor to "keep [it] short – 20 minutes."[5]

Through the summer of 1916, O'Connor continued to receive letters from physicians, businessmen, and benevolent workers in Mexico City who held out hope that the ARC and United States would recommence its humanitarian campaign to relieve the country's famine sufferers. One correspondent from Mexico City, Richard J. Kerr wrote to O'Connor from Mexico City, assuring him that efforts on the ground continued: "The seed that you planted in Mexico will never be entirely lost. I think that will become important some day. It was a beginning." But Kerr also conceded that violence between the United States and Mexico was escalating, and that "events are apparently moving pretty fast at the border and they will not stop."[6] Mexican rebel troops led by Pancho Villa had crossed into the U.S. to raid the Mexican town of Columbus the previous March, and President Wilson had responded by deploying thousands of additional troops to the borderlands and calling up the National Guard. General John Pershing led American troops into Mexico and spent nearly a year pursuing Villa, infuriating Mexican authorities and leading many to fear war between the two countries was imminent.

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[1] Charles J. O'Connor, "Records of Experience of CJ O'Connor in Red Cross Work," July 8, 1919, Papers of Charles J. O'Connor: BANC MSS 79/132, folder eight, The Bancroft Library and Archives.

[2] Ernest Bicknell, *Pioneering with the Red Cross: Recollections of an Old Red Crosser* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1935) 236.

[3] Ibid., 238.

[4] Ibid., 227-274.

[5] Ernest Bicknell to Charles J. O'Connor, November 9, 1915, Papers of Charles J. O'Connor: BANC MSS 79/132, folder three: miscellaneous correspondence, The Bancroft Library and Archives.

The ARC, O'Connor, and Bicknell had left the region behind. And even local chapters of the Red Cross turned their purses, attention, and volunteers to the cause in Europe—redirecting their funds to the European cause and sewing Red Cross garments to send to hospitals across the Atlantic.[7] The humanitarians moved east. The Army stayed behind. Federal military forces proved to be a far more durable presence in the borderlands than the campaigns to protect, clothe, feed, and shelter Mexico's sufferers.

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Historians tend to narrate the history of American social welfare programs in institutional terms, with roots in the Eastern and Midwestern epicenters of the Progressive movement. They look to the last half of the nineteenth century, when figures like Jane Addams and Florence Kelley cared for immigrants and the poor in cities like New York and Chicago. The Progressive Era, they argue, ushered in new ideas that states and even the federal government should ensure the welfare of injured factory workers, provide light and sanitation in the homes of the poor, and deliver pensions and childrearing education for poor working mothers. New Dealer cabinet members like U.S. Secretary of Labor Frances Perkins worked her way up from the Committee on Safety of the City of New York, while WPA administrator Harry Hopkins forged his career in the New York Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor. President Roosevelt, they note, pulled key members of his New Deal "brain trust" from the faculty of Columbia University. Stories built around these actors and their institutions have bound the larger narrative American welfare to the metropoles of the Atlantic seaboard and the Great Lakes.[8]

But that narrative assumes a very different aspect when approached from the American periphery. Viewed from the West, the origins of American welfare are lashed together with the expansion, contraction, hardening, and policing of boundaries and people. Parts of this story have appeared in recent path-breaking work that locates federal social welfare programs in unexpected places, from North Texas to the Central Valley. Important work on the history of land grants and irrigation programs illuminates how the U.S. used the natural resources of the West as a means to provide housing, employment, and sustenance to the veterans, workers, immigrants, and the propertyless.[9] Elizabeth Sanders's research on the southern and western roots of Progressive Era legislation on workmen's compensation, banking and credit freeform, and the eight-hour workday directs historians' attention to the farmers and congressional representatives that helped build an early "public-private" regulatory state that supplanted a more robust welfare state.[10] The settlers, farmers, soldiers, and veterans who moved west extracted significant benefits from these precocious federal welfare programs that are often elided in more traditional stories of U.S. social policy. The analysis has been pushed to the imperial transpacific west. Anna Leah Fidelis T. Casteñeda has shown how the American colonial state in the Philippines grafted itself onto the remnants of its centralized Spanish predecessor to efficiently conserve natural resources, manage agricultural production, and oversee public health, sanitation, and education.[11] Expectations about the U.S. government's obligation towards ordinary people suffering from unemployment, drought, inadequate sanitary infrastructure, frontier raids, and war might well have moved from the western periphery to center, even as experts in the academy and government built up social welfare institutions and policies to export from the metropolitan east.

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[6] Robert J. Kerr to Charles J. O'Connor, May 12, 1916, Papers of Charles J. O'Connor: BANC MSS 79/132, folder three: miscellaneous correspondence, The Bancroft Library and Archives.

[7] "Society Bending its Efforts in Behalf of the Red Cross," *El Paso Herald,* May 1, 1917.

[8] See Daniel Rodgers, *Atlantic Crossings: Social Politics in a Progressive Age* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1998). Michael Katz's keystone work on the nineteenth-century social policy is rooted in the poorhouses of New York and Manhattan. *In the Shadow of the Poorhouse: A Social History of Welfare in America,* 1-37; and "Poorhouses and the Origins of the Public Old Age Home," *The Milbank Memorial Fund Quarterly Health and Society* 62:1 (1984) 110–40. On the intellectual innovations in New Deal policymaking, see the collection of essays, articles, and speeches in Howard Zinn, ed., *New Deal Thought* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1967). On Frances Perkins, see Kirstin Downey, *The Woman Behind the New Deal: The Life and Legacy of Frances Perkins, FDR's Secretary of Labor and his Moral Conscience* (New York: Doubleday, 2009) chap. 4. On Hopkins and the WPA, see Jason Scott Smith, *Building New Deal Liberalism: The Political Economy of Public Works, 1933-1956* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

If we shift our gaze away from Eastern cities to the frontier, from tenements to refugee camps, and from surplus food distribution to refugee rations, then the picture of American social welfare looks strikingly different from a story of Atlantic Progressives turned New Dealers. If Michele Landis Dauber is right, and the legal origins of the New Deal rests upon the rhetoric of disaster relief and narratives of catastrophe, then we need to look toward the American periphery.[12] The early cases documented in this dissertation show that federal welfare expenditures appeared far before the Progressive Era and far from the Eastern seaboard. Congress allocated funds to provide relief to sufferers in and from Venezuela, Saint-Domingue, the Missouri Territory, and Western Canada as the U.S. pursued means to expand its power in the Western Hemisphere, secure the settlement of Western territories, and establish order at the Union's borders. Most crucially, the San Francisco earthquake and fire and the Mexican Revolution were the twin crises that transformed Progressive-era welfare in the United States. It was in the Bay Area and along the Mexican border the U.S. Army partnered with the Red Cross, a partnership worked out long before the staggering American humanitarian campaigns in wartime Europe or the chartering of New Deal agencies. The history of American social policy has to make room for the people behind this formative collaboration, placing them alongside settlement house workers and progressive economists in Chicago and New York. These humanitarian warriors and coercive humanitarians turned American border security into a precocious form of national welfare, and helped summoned the American welfare state from the exigencies of the western periphery.

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[9] On the federal benefits provided to western farmers and settlers through water works projects, see Donald Pisani, *Water and American Government: The Reclamation Bureau, National Water Policy, and the West, 1902-1935* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), chap 1; Randal R. Rucker and Price V. Fishback, "The Federal Reclamation Program: An Analysis of Rent-Seeking Behavior," in T.L. Anderson, ed., *Water Rights: Scare Resource Allocation, Bureaucracy, and the Environment* (Cambridge, Mass.: Ballinger, 1983). On the use of land grants as a form of social policy, see Ariel Ron, "The Hidden Development State: The Public Domain and the Federal Government in the Nineteenth Century," Unpublished Manuscript, 2012.

[10] Elizabeth Sanders, *Roots of Reform: Farmers, Workers, and the American State, 1877-1917* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1999).

[11] Anna Leah Fidelis Castañeda, "Spanish Structure, American Theory: The Legal Foundations of a Tropical New Deal in the Philippine Islands, 1898-1935," in Alfred W. McCoy and Francisco A. Scarano, eds., *Colonial Crucible: Empire in the Making of the Modern American State* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2009).

[12] Michele Landis Dauber, *The Sympathetic State: Disaster Relief and the Origins of the American Welfare State* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013).

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