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"THE MILIEU OF AN 1855 WHEELING ORDINANCE BOOK"

by

James R. Forrester

Introduction

This paper is an analysis of a rather obscure political document, formally entitled: "Ordinance of the City of Wheeling to Which are Prefixed the Acts of the Legislature of Virginia, Relating to the City, 1855." The narrative which follows is a shorter, more simplified version of a paper previously presented to the West Virginia Political Science Association. The organizing idea of the paper retained here is that such political documents reflect the social milieu when they were written. They were not written to facilitate the research of future historians, rather to serve the practical needs, interests and ambitions of local people in their day.


The Context of Local Government Power

David J. McCarthy's Local Government Power provides a convenient description of local government power:

"The formation of the local entity, alteration, boundary changes, internal operating problems, delegations of responsibility, elections and referenda; The police and zoning powers i.e., regulation of citizen conduct, business activity and land use, without compensation, to protect the public health, safety, morality and general welfare; The acquisition, use and disposition of goods, services and property; and The acquisition and expenditure of revenues derived from taxation, assessments, borrowing and investments."

These categories of power are seen as "express" grants of authority. A question frequently asked is, can a municipality (local government) act in such a manner? Is it empowered by its charter to act? During colonial times municipalities received their powers (charters) from the British Crown. In recent times, a charter refers to documents offered by state legislatures and selected by a given city, or a charter drafted locally and approved by the citizens as provided by a home rule jurisdiction. Or in the case of Wheeling, a "charter" is seen as a compendium of express powers given to the city by its incorporation in 1836 from the Virginia Assembly, and acts of amendment to the original act of incorporation. During the years 1837 to 1907, for example, more than fifty amending and supplementary acts were passed by the Virginia and West Virginia legislatures. Thus the powers of Wheeling city government were the result of piecemeal legislation.

But in 1907, the West Virginia legislature adopted an act to amend, revise and consolidate into one act, the Act of the General Assembly of Virginia and all the subsequent acts by the General Assembly of Virginia and the Legislature of West Virginia which formed part of the charter of the City of Wheeling. The city changed its charter to allow for a city manager-council form of government as provided by Senate Bill 204 (July 1, 1935). "Another "power" that helps to define local government is "plenary" power. It is frequently said that the state possesses plenary power over its municipal corporations and may create, dissolve and realign them, may deny them power and may direct them to accomplish governmental objectives."

Cities have generally been unsuccessful in attempts to protect themselves from this plenary power even when invoking the individual or contract-rights protections of the Federal Constitution. However, when the rights of city citizens and also their rights found under federal and state constitutions (e.g., voting rights) have been violated, municipalities have been more successful. With the advent of constitutional reform at least two kinds of provisions serve to protect local autonomy: amendments or laws that try to ban "local," "one-city," legislation and those provisions which provide for home rule.

The Acts of the Virginia General Assembly found in the 1855 Wheeling Ordinance book provide many examples of "one-city," legislation.

Legal Context of Wheeling in 1855 - Acts of the Virginia General Assembly

The first enactment concerning Wheeling in the 1855 ordinance book is the Act of the General Assembly "Incorporating the Town of Wheeling, in the County of Ohio" (passed January 16, 1806). Here the Town of Wheeling was officially established wherein residents (freeholders and housekeepers) would meet in March of that year and elect twelve officials (mayor, recorder, aldermen and councilmen - actually one mayor, one recorder, four aldermen and six common councilmen) for one year terms. This enactment "expressed" or granted to these officials "to purchase, receive and possess lands, etc. The enactment also provided for general corporate powers i.e., made the town into a "body politic" where the officers would be authorized to "prosecute and defend all causes, complaints, actions real, personal, or mixed, and to have one common seal and perpetual succession." (p.4).

Section 5 of the enactment is perhaps the most revealing of the town's "express powers:"

"That the Mayor and commonalty shall have power and authority to pass by-laws for establishing markets ... for laying out the streets, walks and alleys ... for preventing accidents by fire ... for licensing ordinaries and fixing their rates ... for erecting school houses and other public buildings ... for preventing and punishing the practices of firing guns, and running horses, mares, mules and geldings therein; and such other laws, rules and regulations, not inconsistent with the constitution and laws of this Commonwealth, or of the United States, as they shall deem necessary for the order of good government of the said town." (p.4).
The underlined phrases above were reminders of Virginia's plenary power over the Town of Wheeling.

Other sections provide for a taxing power, (Sec. 6)

"... not exceeding in any year the sum of fifty cents on every taxable, and fifty cents on every hundred dollars of taxable property therein...the Mayor, Recorder and Alderman...shall have the power to appoint a collector of such taxes..." (p.4), the powers of the Town Sergeant and his concurrent authority with the Sheriffs of Ohio County (sections 7 & 8) and various powers granted to the town to remove to the office (seven at least) of the town to remove the office and establish justices of the peace (which includes the mayor, Recorder and Alderman as temporary J.P.'s) for the town ..."(p.5).

Other enactments of the General Assembly provided for certain boundary changes, a survey of town lands, to prevent dogs from running at large in Wheeling, provisions for establishing a lien on the property of arrears taxpayers (pp. 5-6).

The General Assembly recognized the rapid economic growth of the Town of Wheeling in its Act of March 9, 1827:

"Whereas it is represented to the General Assembly, that the Town of Wheeling, in the County of Ohio, is rapidly increasing in population, wealth and trade: and that said town being situated on the bank of the Ohio River, at the point where the Cumberland River touches the same, the citizens of said town, and strangers trading thither, experience great and growing inconvenience, thence to public lands and other properties (pp. 8).

The General Assembly therefore authorized the establishment of public lands which were required to levy uniform fees which were under General Assembly's control.

Concerning the suffrage the General Assembly would allow "freeholders and housekeepers" who were residents for three months preceding an election to vote. An enactment of the General Assembly of February 24, 1831 restricted the suffrage of delinquent taxpayers (p. 11).

With the enactment of January 5, 1853 the General Assembly further extended the boundaries of the Town of Wheeling to enhance Zanes Island (Wheeling Island) and other subdivisions (pp. 13-14).

An act to incorporate the City of Wheeling was passed March 11, 1836 (pp. 15-30). The "Charter" of 1836 provided that the city government should be of not less than twelve or more than twenty-four members. A temporary board of commissioners was to be elected who would then divide the city into wards to determine the number of councilmen in turn divide the city into wards to determine the number of councilmen (section 12, p. 17). Extensions of the "express" powers granted to the town are found in sections 1-4 (p.16).

Section 5 provided that:

the following persons shall be entitled to vote, viz: first a very white male citizen of the state, of the age of twenty-one years or upwards, who, for at least one year preceding the election, shall have been a housewife or the head of a family ...; second every person qualified to vote for members of the General Assembly of the state ... a resident of the said city for one year preceding the election; and third, every white male citizen of the state, of the age of twenty-one years ... shall be the bona fide owner of any freehold estate ... of the value of at least five hundred dollars ... no person shall be entitled to vote ... if he shall have failed to pay any tax ... (pp. 16-17).

By the terms of this "original charter" the entire government of the City of Wheeling was entrusted to a city council. The council chose one of its members to act as mayor. It also chose from citizens outside the council, a body of "Aldermen," mentioned above who with the mayor sat as a court of justice for the city. The council also appointed a sergeant.

With the enactment of March 9, 1838 the office of mayor became an elected position. The duty of the mayor of said city to cause all the laws and ordinances thereof to be enforced ... (p. 33). The mayor was also empowered to preside at council meetings with the privilege of voting in case of a tie (p. 33).

The May 28, 1852 enactment of the Virginia General Assembly stipulated that all of the officers of Wheeling, in addition to the mayor and council, were to be elected annually. Moreover, council was given the power to remove any such officers by a two-thirds vote (p. 63).

In summary, the acts of the Virginia General Assembly as previously described reveal that the city was essentially governed from Richmond, Virginia especially in the contexts of its express powers. The suffrage restrictions remind the reader that Wheeling was governed by conservative elites and the public technique of viva voce voting allowed these elites to essentially have their way. The merchant class and railroad speculators provided the framework for western expansion through Wheeling of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad Company (Acts of the Virginia General Assembly, April 3, 1838, March 6, 1847, and March 21, 1850). Also the Virginia General Assembly cooperated with the State of Ohio and allowed the Central Ohio Railroad Company to acquire a depot in the City of Wheeling (Acts of April 8, 1853 and previously described) provided for the dominance of city affairs by economic elites, these same elites did allow for the gradual extension to Wheeling of "institutional democracy" - the popular election of most city officials.

"Wheeling Ordinance Book (1855)"

It is fair to say, on the one hand, that most of the ordinances reflect the General Assembly's legislative enactments (express powers) but on the other, it is easy to see a principle largely unspoken: "the inherent right to self-government."

Examples of the city's "express powers" are seen in ordinances pertaining to business and the functions of the municipal government. Some of the business regulations are: establishing a city weigher, an inspector of flour,
a gauger of wines and liquors, regulations requiring sellers of hay to have their hay weighed, vendors of wines and liquors need licenses, regulations that require the proper admeasurement of stove coal, regulation of auctioneers, "inspection and proper admeasurement of lumber and wood, etc."

(pp. 99-143).

Some municipal government ordinances relate to: the duties and compensation of the mayor and alderman and the election of alderman (for example, the mayor and aldermen were empowered to hear suits, following procedures and law; keep records, collect fees); elections, duties and compensation of the treasurer, clerk and a committee of accounts; election, duties and compensation of the Sergeant, Surveyor, Street Commissioner, Assessor, etc.

Ordinances that exemplify the so-called inherent right to self-government are the "housekeeping regulations": "to prescribe the mode in which journals of council and the ordinances of the city shall be attested and kept" (p. 71). Another "housekeeping" ordinance prescribed "standing rules for the government of the council of the city of Wheeling." (pp. 74-77). This ordinance in particular established standing committees of the council: on ordinances, on accounts, on water works, etc. Each committee was to have at least three members and all committee reports were required in writing. The last ordinance that is classified as "housekeeping" is really an extension of the police powers of the municipality (to protect the public health, safety, morality and general welfare). Obviously these powers, although generally provided for by the Virginia General Assembly, are open to local government interpretation and are based on local-regional folkways and mores. The ordinance is entitled "To Prevent Certain Improper Practices Therein Specified." It has twenty-eight sections which includes such things as bathing in the Ohio River (prohibited within the boundaries of the city from sun-rise until one hour after sun-set), public lewdness or indecency prohibited, no rioting or false alarms, no fighting, no flying of kites, rolling bobs, bullys, or playing football on any street, loading, alley or public square which may endanger the life or property of any person, cellar doors not to be left open at night, no throwing of slop upon streets or alleys, no fast locking or rough locking the wheels of any hack, etc. (p. 151).

Persons found guilty before the mayor, any alderman, or J.P. in and for the county of Ohio of violating sections # 2 or 17 (public lewdness or indecency, molesting or insulting any person going to or returning from a religious meeting) shall be sentenced to labor (chain gang) not to exceed thirty days (p. 155).

In sum, the ordinances discussed in this section generally reflect the notion mentioned earlier of "one-city" legislation, wherein the Virginia General Assembly largely provided the statutory rules for Wheeling's municipal government. Yet a careful reading of the ordinances and a comparison with the provisions in the Act of Incorporation and Amendments show little deviation from the prescriptions of the General Assembly. Yet, some minor deviations were noted in the "housekeeping" ordinances. The question still remains to be answered: Do the ordinances in the 1855 ordinance book reflect the milieu of nineteenth century Virginia?

The Milieu - 1806 to 1855

A reasonable case can be made that Virginia from its early history to the Civil War, was divided politically between the large land owners who formed a conservative aristocracy and the small farmers and "dissenters" a democratic element. The issue that primarily divided these factions was whether the government should favor the wealthy or the poor. During the period of the Virginia Constitutional Convention (May, 1776) the leader of the conservative aristocracy was Edmund Pendleton, and Patrick Henry was the friend of the generally powerless masses. George Mason was the "great mediator" or moderate leader, who drafted the Virginia Bill of Rights. This document "spoke" of "inherent rights" the compact theory of government, trial by jury, restricted excessive bail fines, and cruel and unusual punishments. Bills of attainder, ex post facto laws, perpetuities. Monopolies, special privileges, suspension of habeas corpus were also forbidden. Freedom of speech, press, religion, petition, and the right to bear arms and vote were also proclaimed.

In theory the Virginia Constitution was characterized by separation of powers and checks and balances. But in practice the political reality was legislative sovereignty. In theory "free elections" (as noted) were proclaimed, in practice Virginia granted suffrage to freemen, twenty-one years of age, who possessed a freehold of at least one hundred acres with at least one house on it.

During the interval from 1806 to 1836, the time that Wheeling had grown from an incorporated town to municipality, a "suffrage controversy" developed between the people of western Virginia and the ruling aristocratic class in eastern Virginia. The people of western Virginia claimed that the restricted suffrage that the east forced on them violated the principles of the "American Revolution." Fletcher Green quotes the Wheeling Times:

"Western Virginia has a population of 271,000 and a representation of 56 in the Assembly, while Eastern Virginia has 269,000 and 78 delegates. Western Virginia has in the Senate 13, Eastern 19. The consequence is, Eastern Virginia caring nothing about roads, we have none; nothing for common schools, we have none ... Western Virginia is represented in Congress by seven members, Eastern Virginia by fourteen members. No senator has ever been elected west of the Blue Ridge; all public offices are appointed from the east; the governor is an eastern man, and all the state expenditures are made in the east. It strikes us these amount to something to quarrel for." 19

The population change between the two sections of Virginia during 1830 and 1840 revealed that western Virginia had 378,425 people and in 1840 432,845 (+ 54,420). Eastern Virginia went from 832,581 to 608,942 (-26,039) during the same period. 20 By 1850, the western section of Virginia had grown dramatically to 90,392 more whites than the east. 21
There were a number of reasons for the population growth in western Virginia. As noted previously, the legislative enactments of the General Assembly encouraged the building of railroads into Wheeling. Land speculators began to buy up cheap lands and at the same time encouraged immigration. Manufacturing and commerce that developed along the Ohio River, especially in Wheeling, also encouraged settlement.

During the years of 1830 to 1850, Virginia had two constitutional conventions. The convention which assembled at Richmond in October 1829 to January 1830 was a notable body. It was called for the express purpose of extending the suffrage and reforming representation. It included among its delegates two ex-presidents of the U.S., and unanimously elected James Monroe President. The delegates organized themselves into two factions, the "reformers" (westerners) and the "conservatives" (easterners).

Long and angry debates ensued over the meaning of the Bill of Rights and conflicting views of the natural rights philosophy were expressed. The reformers argued for majority rule democracy whereas the conservatives supported the idea of concurrent interests, i.e., the rule of a majority alone was characterized as the rule of "King Numbers," i.e., the tyranny of the majority over the minority. Hence any majority must represent combined interests of the many and the few - political power and property rights were bound up together, and if property lost its rights, then property would be destroyed.

The show-down votes of the 1830 constitutional convention reveal that the two factions representing the east and west were very nearly equal in strength. The end result was a compromise constitution. The lower house was left as before as the dominant chamber in the legislature (the senate was denied the power to initiate bills). The executive council and the unpopular county court system were kept. The changes then were in suffrage and representation. The west gained more seats in the lower house of the Assembly (57 representatives to the east's 78 representatives).

The constitution of 1830 was a disappointment to most of the delegates from the west and the people from the western counties mostly voted against its ratification. However, the constitution of 1830 passed 28,055 to 15,563.

The second constitutional convention of 1850-1851, sometimes called the "Reform Convention," was divided into three factions: east versus west, Whigs versus Democrats, and the "mixed" basis versus the "white" basis. The west favored the white basis of representation, whereas the east wanted property (slaves) to count (mixed basis). Neither side could get what they wanted and so, once again, compromise was necessary. The 1851 constitution passed the convention and this time the east was opposed to it - it went too far toward democracy. It was ratified by a vote of 75,784 to 11,063.

The constitution of 1851 extended the suffrage: the freehold, tax paying and lease restrictions were eliminated. All that remained was white male citizenship, age and residency requirements. All voting as in 1830 was still viva voce. The legislature was re-organized. The house was to be chosen biennially and to consist of 152 delegates. Apportionment was according to counties with some concern to population differences. The legislature was restricted to equal taxation and a capitation tax was pledged to free schools.

What was Wheeling like during the 1850s? The poet, Nathaniel P. Willis (who visited Wheeling in 1859) remarked:

"Wheeling as a town confesses to the one little drawback of too cold an atmosphere for the lovers of clean linen-the idiest inhabitant being under the necessity of two clean shirts a day (too much coke upon little town)."

During the late 1850s the Republican Party had become a factor in local politics. The Intelligencer espoused the principles of this "new" party. The Intelligencer was the only conspicuous Republican "journal" in the state of Virginia and it helped to stir public opinion concerning Union causes. Wheeling had its "wide awake" clubs of Republican adherents. Support for the "wide awake" orientation of Republican politics was also found among the German inhabitants, especially with the Staats Zeitung (a local publication).

A comparison of Presidential election returns in Ohio County between the years of 1856 and 1860 (Table 1) shows the growth of Republican Party support and pro-Union sentiment:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Buchanan (Democratic)</th>
<th>Fillmore (American)</th>
<th>Fremont (Republican)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1856</td>
<td>1,632</td>
<td>1,465</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1860</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3,205</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1860 Returns:

- Breckenridge (Southern Dem.) 914
- Douglas (Northern Dem.) 815
- Bell (Constitutional Union) 1,199
- Lincoln (Republican) 769
- 3,597


"The American Party was built on the "Know-nothings" Society's ideas. It also included a remnant of Whigs.

Concerning the elections of 1856 and 1860 Wingert writes: (p. 196) "There is unmistakable evidence that the majority of people in Wheeling and vicinity were opposed to the dissolution of the Union and the natural sympathies of some were with the South... Another issue, that involving the Union, was modified in this vicinity because of the long-standing antagonism between the NW counties and the older parts of the state, so that when Virginia seceded, its action was not regarded as binding upon the people of this section."

And R.H. Davis, in his "Bits of Gossip" relates: "Abolitionism was never a burning question in our part of Virginia. Nothing
lay between any slave there and freedom but the Ohio River which could be crossed in a skiff in half an hour. The green hills of Ohio on the other side too, were peopled by Quakers. All agents for the underground railway to Canada. Hence the only slaves we had were those who were too comfortable and satisfied to run away...\(^{32}\)

**Conclusion**

The historical record that emerges from the milieu of the 1850s stands in considerable contrast to that revealed in the "Wheeling Ordinance Book." This is not surprising as local concerns frequently do not mirror national issues. In the 1850s slavery was a big national and highly passionate issue. It was fought politically in the Congress over the admission of new territories into the Union - should they be free or slave? Yet the moral outrage of slavery as dramatized by the abolitionists was not seen as such a vital concern for Wheeling residents who mostly did not own slaves and had no economic reason to do so.

The residents of Wheeling as reflected by the "Ordinance Book" were primarily concerned with existential tasks - finding jobs and working in a rapidly growing commercial and manufacturing center. And the city fathers, with their ordinances which reflect the omnipresent plenary power of the General Assembly, were primarily interested in maintaining order - economically and socially. The "Ordinance Book" reflects then, the law and order function that most governments first must deal with.

However, all is not mundane, the "Ordinance Book" provides a hint of democratic reform. For example, with the expansion of institutional democracy, more governmental positions were made elective. Serious municipal reform did not occur until after the Civil War and the municipal reform movement in the twentieth century.

The "Ordinance Book" is silent on the antagonisms between the eastern and western parts of Virginia, the constitutional conventions and the biggest issue of the day - succession. Through it all Wheeling has survived, and its ordinances continue to primarily reflect the local milieu which, after all, is the slowest to change.

**Notes**

1A West Liberty student, Ron Blake of West Alexander, Pennsylvania, graciously loaned me his copy of the "Ordinance Book."

2That paper was entitled "The Political Theory of an 1855 Wheeling Ordinance Book: Some Preliminary Observations." It was presented to the WVPSA at the annual meeting, Holiday Inn, Huntington, WV, October 11-12, 1985.


8The name "Wheeling" is thought to be derived from the Indian word, "Wheelin", which was used prior to the Zane settlement to indicate the creek which splits the community. The existence of Wheeling as a town became evident in 1793 when Zane divided the settlement into lots. Not long after the territorial organization of the town, Zane and his people built Fort Henry which historians say was where the last battle of the American Revolution was fought. Todd C. Wilki (ed.) *West Virginia Blue Book*, 1984 (Charleston, WV: Jarrett Printing Company, 1984), p. 855.

9In this sense the term probably means a tavern, or eating house. Other meanings are officers who have original jurisdiction in their own right, and in England a clergyman appointed to prepare criminals for the death penalty. See *Black's Law Dictionary*, 5th Edition. (St. Paul: West Publishing Company, 1983).

10This plenary power arrangement has been specified in "modern times" with the U.S. Supreme Court decision of *Trantan v. New Jersey*, 262 U.S. 182 (1923) where the court stated:

> "The city is a political subdivision of the state, created as a convenient agency for the exercise of such governmental powers of the state as may be entrusted to it ... the state may withhold, grant, or withdraw power and privileges as it sees fit ... in the absence of state constitutional provisions safeguarding it to them, municipalities have no inherent right of self-government which is beyond the legislative control of the state."


12It is interesting to note that the WV legislative enactments of 1907 and 1908 finally dropped the term "white" from the expression "every white male citizen" in the suffrage regulations for the city. Also, during the transition period under the "Restored Government of Virginia" by legislative enactment (January 15, 1863) Wheeling was empowered to create a two chambered council. The "second branch" actually was created from the original or former council. The "first branch" consisted of two members from each ward, chosen
for terms of two years. All ordinances had to originate in the second branch. The mayor did not have a veto power. Finally, voting in the city was changed from _viva voce_ under Virginia law to secret ballot under West Virginia law. *Ibid.*

13 Normally this might be seen as enactments in state constitutions or codes which retain local political accountability. Examples are: laws which prohibit the state legislature from imposing taxes for local units' corporate purposes; laws that prevent the delegation to special commissions the power to perform or interfere with municipal or corporate functions; laws that prevent the interference with local selections of local officers, and local approval of changes in county seats, etc. (McCarthy, 1983: 28-29).

14 Section 22 of the duties of mayor and aldermen ordinance specifies how the ordinance will be applied to minors or slaves: "If any minor or apprentice, person bound to service for a number of years or slave, shall be convicted of any offense against any ordinance of this city, it shall be lawful to issue execution against the parent, master, guardian or person having the legal charge and control of the person so convicted for any fine. Forfeiture or pecuniary penalty...if at the said time and place so assigned the said person to be charged shall appear and refuse to pay or satisfy said judgement, then the...minor, apprentice...or slave may be sentenced for a term of not less than one not more than thirty days..." (p. 83).


19 See "U.S. Census Reports, 1790-1850."


21 An Act to Authorize a Further Subscription on Behalf of the State to the Stock of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad Company," April 3, 1838. "1855 Wheeling Ordinance Book," p. 50. Authorized via a Board of Public Works the subscription for Wheeling and Ohio County to the capital stock to the tune of one million dollars.

22 Green, _op. cit._, p. 211.


24 Green, _op. cit._, pp. 214-215.


29 Wingerter, _op. cit._, p. 191.

30 *Ibid.*, p. 188.

31 The 1860 Census listed 22,595 (free population) for Wheeling and vicinity; whereas 100 slaves were noted.

32 As quoted in Wingerter, _op. cit._, p. 196.
“Home Work” and Nineteenth-Century West Virginia Women
by Barbara J. Howe, (Paper originally presented to Appalachian Studies Conference, Morgantown, WV, March 1989)  

Richard Scarry’s popular children’s book asks What Do People Do All Day? The goal of this paper is to ask a related question: what did women do all day in two West Virginia cities, Wheeling and Morgantown, in the mid-nineteenth century? To be even more narrow in focus, the task at hand is to examine who were the women who were heads of households, at least as identified in the U.S. census from 1840 to 1880. Most of those women, it appears, worked at home or in nearby stores, the better to able to care for their families.

First, it is important to set some of the parameters of the study and the limitations of sources encountered. In order to avoid drowning in numbers, the paper will center on methodology and preliminary findings. In West Virginia, including the section of Virginia that became West Virginia in 1863, women had limited opportunities for paid employment in the nineteenth century; so did all women in the United States.

Studies that look at the employment options for women who chose to work at home in the nineteenth century are rare, and that is the gap this paper seeks to fill. In addition, we are only now beginning to study systematically West Virginia women’s history. Fortunately, Suzanne Lebsco’s Free Women of Peters burg provides an excellent reference for context and methodology to start studying the lives of ordinary women in West Virginia.

If the gap is so large, why start in Wheeling and Morgantown? The vastly different economies and populations of the two cities make them logical to compare and contrast. Wheeling was a major industrial city in the nineteenth century, but an urban center that was male-oriented in its employment opportunities because work in the coal mines, rail facilities, glass factories, and iron foundries usually required brute strength as well as skills, strength that proper nineteenth-century women did not have or did not show. Wheeling was the largest of the Virginia cities west of the mountains in the mid-nineteenth century. With a population of 8,793 in 1840 and 14,083 twenty years later, it was at the time only Richmond and Norfolk on the eve of the Civil War. Wheeling was also a major transportation center at the junction of the National Road, Baltimore & Ohio Railroad, and Ohio River, making it easy for goods and people to move through the city. When Wheeling’s population in 1860 was almost 99% native born, Ohio’s County’s, where Wheeling is the county seat, was only about 75% native born.

Morgantown, on the other hand, was small and isolated in mid-century. It was a center of education, off the beaten path and therefore safe for students, with an economy based on commerce, government (as the county seat of Monongalia County), and a few small industries like grist mills. It would not be a major industrial city until after the railroad provided through service to the north in 1894. For proof of its insularity, only 100 of the county’s 12,947 residents (1.2%) were foreign-born in 1860, making it even more “native” than the state as a whole.

The town had an estimated population of 1,000 in 1853-4, doubling to 2,000 by 1860 if one included its “suburbs” of West Morgantown (now Westover) and Dunbar. The 1868 Directory of the Monongahela and Youghiogheny Valleys described it as follows:

Nor does the town on a longer acquaintance, lose its attractiveness, its social characteristics being that of a high-toned moral Virginia settlement of the older day, and the absence of drunkenness, and other small vices, is at once noticeable to the stranger.

Depending solely upon trading with the surrounding country for its business, the evils which attend manufacturing villages are unknown, and lying off the main lines of railroad travel, it escapes vices which creep into towns situated upon them, from the cities . . .

Thus, if the “male economy” influenced women’s opportunities, there should have been very different opportunities in cities as diverse as cosmopolitan Wheeling and isolated Morgantown.

The next problem, then, became how to discover these opportunities and understand the types of women who held whatever jobs were available. Since it is difficult to study these “anonymous” women, some comments on methodology used to date are important.

The census of the United States is a logical starting point for identifying householders who were women. The 1840 census clearly showed Wheeling as a separate city, but the census for Morgantown before 1860 is simply incorporated into the county census. One must hazard an educated guess that, when entries stop showing ”farmer” as the primary occupation, one has reached the Morgantown listings. When “farmer” reappears as the chief listing for men, it is fair to assume that the census citations for Morgantown have ended. J.D.B. DeBow, in his analysis of the 1850 census, noted that this was a common problem, particularly for “smaller towns at [sic] the South.”

The census for 1840 identifies the head of the household and males and females in the household by age categories. In some cases, for instance Hannah Acker, it is easy to assume that she is probably the female aged 30-40, while her children are likely to be the 3 younger males and the female aged 15-20. The census can also tell us that the family members were free whites and, in this case, that none of the males were employed in various job categories given. If the census taker was accurate, there were no pensioners, no one was disabled by being blind, deaf and dumb, or insane or idiots at either the public or private charge. Also, all the whites over age 20 could read and write in this household.

In the case of Mary Taylor’s family, the situation is a bit more complex. That household contained 1 male and 1 female aged 5-10, 2 males aged 10-15, 1 female aged 15-20, 1 female aged 30-40, and 1 female aged 70-80. The children presumably belong to the female aged 30-40, but is that Mary Taylor? Is the older woman her mother? Her mother-in-law?

When women lived in the household, they were listed as part of the household in the census. Christiana Beymer’s household, for example, included 14 males over the age of 20, 2 females aged 10-15, one female aged 70-80 (Beymer), 2 male slaves, and 5 female slaves.

But these three examples only raise questions that the census cannot answer unless we link this information to that contained in additional sources like city directories, local histories, and vital statistics, deeds, and tax records; only the city directories and some local histories have been tapped. The 1839 city directory for Wheeling, the earliest available, tells us that Hannah Acker was a widow and that she and her daughters were seamstresses. So, we know that the family had some income even though the males were not working. Mary Taylor was a widow who kept a grocery in South Wheeling; the grocery was probably in the same building as her home, but that cannot be ascertained from the directory. It is probably safe to assume that Mary was then the female aged 30-40. Christiana Beymer was an innkeeperess, by the way; hence the unusual household structure in the third example.

But how, we can at least learn the names of all the members of the household, their specific ages, and their birthplaces. The profession, occupation, or trade is given for each male over the age of 15. Maybe it is just as well that women were not included because DeBow noted that “the occupations [shown in the census] are not distinguished in a manner calculated to result in any correct conclusions.” Fortunately, there is an 1851 city directory for Wheeling to provide information on occupations for women.

While the directories usefully identify widows, the 1851 issue does not do so if there is an occupation listed. Hence, Joanna Adrian, whom we know from the census to be a 38-year-old woman born in England and the head of a
household of 8, is shown as a mantua maker in the directory. Since only one other person in the census household, 17-year-old Hannah E., had the last name of Adrian, we can only speculate about the rest of the individuals at this time. Finally, while the census tells us that Mrs. Adrian owned $1,000 in real estate, DeBow cautioned his readers that “the value of real estate is taken loosely, and induces no confidence.”

The story gets more intriguing when we get to the household headed by Ellenore Walsh, a 44-year-old white woman from Pennsylvania who owned $15,000 in real estate. Her household of 34, including herself, consisted of 33 women and 1 male, 25-year-old James Constantine, a servant born in Ireland. But who were the other women? None were identified in the city directory. They ranged in age from 10 to 45, with 4 born in Ireland, 3 in Germany, 1 in England, and the rest in Maryland, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Virginia (common birthplaces for Wheelingites); there was also a 10-year-old girl born in Georgia. Again, by the census return, no one was in school during the previous year, and all residents were able to read and write. None were deaf or dumb, insane, idiots, paupers, or convicts. Was this a convent? If so, shouldn’t at least the 11 girls 15 and under have been in school? Is this a house of prostitution? An explanatory note from Francis Walker’s compendium for the 1870 census adds possible further intrigue to the Walsh household. In that year, he commented that his tables embrace[d] gainful and reputable occupations only. The reason for excluding gamblers, prostitutes, keepers of brothels, and such persons from the Table of Occupations...[is] that, from the necessity of the case, the numbers thus reported must be far from adequate to the fact, and a seeming count of them in the census would have the effect to mislead rather than to instruct.

Some from these classes may have taken refuge through false statements, in one or another of the occupations of good repute (notably keepers of public houses, women in the “boarding-house keepers,” a euphemism familiar to the compilers of city directories,...)

Clearly, more work will need to be done to track down Walsh and her housemates.

By 1860, the census takers decided for the first time to note the profession, occupation, or trade of each person, male or female, over 15 years of age. The 1860 compendium of statistics for the census included a table listing all cities or towns with a population over 10,000 in that year. Wheeling was ranked 65th, with 14,083 people. Morgantown was not on the list. The interesting statistics here is that Wheeling had 2,142 men and 961 women employed in occupations figured in the table of manufactures that were shown in the city’s one cotton goods establishment, presumably the Wheeling Cotton Mills. As will be seen, however, these women were not heads of households identified in the census. Monongalia County, including Morgantown, showed only 65 men in manufacturing establishments and no women.

In his compendium for the 1870 census, Francis Walker divided occupations into agriculture, professional and personal services, trade and transportation, and a final one for manufacures and mechanical and mining industries. It is here where Walker put in his warning about disputable occupations. He also noted additional problems in tracking the occupations of women. While he could account for approximately 28.3 million persons as the population of the United States above the age of 10, only 12.5 were in the Table of Occupations. Most of these unaccounted for were women and children under the age of 16 because, he claimed, “the adult males of the country are as fully accounted for as could be expected.” Walker lamented the lack of precise definitions for occupations in the census because of “the utter want of apprenticeship in this country, the facility with which pursuits are taken up and abandoned, and the variety, and, indeed, seeming incongruity of the numerous industrial offices that are frequently in the hands of a person.” It was impossible, he felt, for census enumerators to list “more than the plain simple characterization of each man’s employment in the common phrase of the working people themselves.”

Still, Walker felt there should be more to be learned. After some fancy arithmetic, he estimated the number of women “keeping house” at 7.4 million and concluded that “an examination of the numbers reported under each specific occupation will lead to the conclusion that many employments, and these quite the most important, furnish practically no cases whatever of such union of family-housekeeping with paid service elsewhere.” Indeed, Walker figured that those women who could both keep house and have gainful employment probably totaled no more than about 180,000 across the country in 1870. The remaining 1.55 million females above the age of 16 included “grown daughters living at home, widowed mothers supported by their children, ladies living upon the income of accumulated property, as well as women of the pauper, vagrant, and criminal classes.” Note his use of the term “ladies” only for those with accumulated property.

Where did the millions of women that could be put into trades work? Walker listed a total of 338 occupations for males and females under his four categories. Of a total work force of about 115,000 men and women in West Virginia, 79% were women. Of those 8,153, 78% were domestic servants and about 7% teachers or laundresses; about 8% were laundresses, seamstresses, milliners, and dress and mantua makers. This, plus the 3% of women engaged in agriculture, left almost no room for anyone else, and as we will see, there were few others who cared to list themselves in this category.

By 1880, the census listings had become far more detailed. One major addition was the exact addresses, useful for Wheeling but not for Morgantown, as that city was still too small to use street addresses. In addition, we can now learn the relation of those listed to the head of the household, each person’s civil condition (single, married, widowed, divorced), specific mathematical problems, and information about unemployment and illnesses or disabilities.

In addition to using city directories for supplemental information, local histories are useful sources for snippets of information about specific women. Newton, Nichols, and Sprinkle’s 1879 History of the Pan-Handle included an article that appeared in the Wheeling Intelligencer in 1815, in describing Wheeling at that date, it noted “a log house in which was a bakery kept by an old woman. Black Rachel had a millinery shop with a small house and a large lot with an abundance of fruit.... Then came a bakery and cake store kept by Granny Robinson,” with whom the boys were fast friends. As they were in the household where they lived. For the purpose of this paper, I have excluded washerwomen and laundresses; while one can safely assume that they were present in every census and city directory, they are not being considered here because they were at the bottom of the occupational ladder, doing...
back-breaking work that people hired done as soon as they could; in Wheeling, African-Americans and Irish were disproportionately represented in these occupations. I have also tried to compare the occupations held by the heads of households to the broader picture of all working women identified in the directories.

It should not be surprising that, from at least 1800 to 1860, making clothing provided women with large numbers of jobs requiring varying levels of skill. Ava Baron and Susan Klepp have noted that very wealthy women had all their clothing custom-made, while middle-class women used first mantua makers and then dressmakers for special occasions like weddings and funerals. "Mantua" refers to the loose gowns that women wore in the colonial period, so, by mid-nineteenth century, the term was no longer in general use and "dressmaker" became the term of preference. Dressmakers were expected to know the latest fashions and the proper clothing etiquette and often seemed to have come from middle or even upper-class families.

Tailoresses were the female equivalent of tailors, not necessarily those who made clothes only for women. Milliners provided bonnets and other headgear.

These were a minority of the women involved in the needle trades, however, for the vast majority were the seamstresses who did plain sewing; this work included basting, lining, sewing, trimming, making buttonholes, sewing on buttons, and, often, laundering the clothing when finished. 242 Sewing women, according to Baron and Klepp, were "more exploited than an other wage laborers in America." 243 Certainly there was no problem with a supply of workers, for seamstresses, unlike the young single women who formed most of the labor force in the nineteenth century, were more likely to be widows, women abandoned by their husbands, or women with disabled husbands. This was a job that could be done at home with a flexible schedule to accommodate child care. They had no capital to invest as would be needed for a trade in bonnet making, and they traded up to start a boarding house or shop. And, we cannot forget that sewing was work women's work in the nineteenth century when few other options were available.

The 1840 census for Wheeling identified 63 women, all white, who were also listed in the 1839 directory with an occupation. According to the directory, 76% were widows, but two were listed with the designation of "female married woman living apart from her husband."

Food-related occupations were always prominent among nineteenth-century Wheeling women. These women ran boarding houses, Beymer had her inn, and Annette McGearry, although not listed in the directory, headed a household of 84, including herself, consisting of 60 whites and 4 slaves. The 1840 group also included bakers, fruit and confectionary shop owners, grocers, bakers, and university cafeteria workers. Only one woman ran a variety store, one was a shoe maker, and one a school mistress. Only one had a factory job, and she worked in a paper mill. Women who were not listed as heads of households included two women who manufactured saddle pads and were clothiers, three school mistresses, and six tailoresses.

Ten years later, Wheeling's immigrant population was beginning to be evident in the census, but that will not be a major factor of analysis. Using the 1851 city directory as a reference, opportunities for women had not changed much. Joanna Adair was still a mantua maker. The 11 seamstresses and 12 possible boarding house keepers were the only large concentrations of women workers. Chairmaker Marie (Maria) Cunningham, nurse Levina (Levinia) Morgan, and a handful of confectioners, grocers, and tailoresses, plus a spinner and a carpet weaver, complete the range of options in the census. 246

Just before the Civil War, it is easier to learn more about Wheeling women. 247 In that year, there were 131 women who could be identified as heads of households with an occupation, more than double the number in 1840. The slightly larger number of free white and free African-American women than men in the city at the time might account for the larger number of women heads of households who were working. Dressmakers showed up in the census and 1859 directory for the first time. Joanna Adair, however, was still working away as a mantua maker and had accumulated $3,000 worth of real estate, trippling her holdings from a decade earlier. The milliners and tailoresses were listed, this time, by an embroiderer and two weavers.

In addition, Wheeling women were more widely distributed in occupations related to providing food and drink. In addition to the usual boarding house keeping, confectioners, and grocers, Julia Garforth worked in the business of bottling ales, while Susan Snyder manufactured mineral water, and 61-year-old Mary L. Cating ran a saloon.

Group living for women must also be considered. This census marks the first identifiable convent, the Sisters of Charity, a community of 5 Sisters, 16 other young women aged 17 and under, and 1 male servant. Wheeling's large Irish and German populations made it a city with a significant Roman Catholic population. There were also 5 households headed by female teachers and Mary McCan's household of 5 courtesans and 3 young girls aged 1, 3, and 9. The widow Elizabeth Carr, also a courtesan, lived alone. A wet nurse and gardiner [sic], furniture maker Maria (Maria) Cunningham, and a milliner and mill proprietress Elizabeth Bradley, a widow, completed the listings for the census households.

The 1859 city directory added spinsters (those who spun for a living); straw and fancy milliners; owners of a bonnet store, children's furnishing store, and millinery shop and milliners; and the postmistress of Martinsville; the principal of the Wheeling Female Seminary; and the Mother Superior of the Sisters of Visitation.

The 1860 census, coming a year after the publication of the first city directory to include Morgantown, provides the first opportunity to examine women's work in that city. We find that Mary Beals was a seamstress, Sally Tucker a tailor, and Rebecca Snider the owner of a beer and cake shop. The 1859 directory added a dressmaker, milliner, 4 seamstresses, and a spinster to the total. Mrs. Elizabeth Moore was the principal of the Noburn Female Seminary, but she seems to have been the only woman teacher there. Teaching in Morgantown was apparently not open to women, as it was in Wheeling.

The 1864 Wheeling city directory gives an opportunity to examine whether employment for women in locations known for women's occupations expanded during the Civil War. 248 Barbara Wertheimer has noted that war-time inflation forced more unmarried girls and young women into the labor market. "They headed first for those trades considered most proper" but also became clerks as manufacturers and newspapers urged stores to hire more women, freeing the men to move west and create a market for more goods. Wherever women moved into the job force, however, wages fell. 249 In that year, there were for the first time as many milliners as there had been in 1859 (19 versus 6) and 6 times as many seamstresses (29 versus 5). Where there had been 1 tailoress listed in 1859, there were 40 in 1864. Nine vest-makers were a new addition to the sewing trades. The term "vest" at that time probably referred to a knitted or woven undergarment worn next to the skin. The number of confectioners rose to 7, 3 of the 4 cooks and both the bakery cooks worked at Wheeling hotels.
Mrs. Catherine Snider ran the Virginia House hotel, and 6 women ran saloons. Wheeling was the center of government for the Restored Government of Virginia and later the capital for West Virginia during the war, so the city was full of temporary visitors needing food and drink in addition to the soldiers passing through the B&O.

The range of opportunities for women increased, also. Mrs. Therese Aubert moved into the boots & shoes business, while Hannah Cartwright sold “guns, pistols, etc.” In addition to 3 nurses and a woman working in the paper mill, there were 2 women employed as passenger car cleaners for the B&O, 2 printers, a physician, 4 women who ran select schools, and 28 teachers, at least 10 of whom were in the city’s public schools. While directories are unfortunately not consistent with listings from year to year, these increases seem too great over a short period of time to be accidental.

The fact that the war may have provided short-term opportunities seems emphasized by the fact that the 1867-68 and 1869-69 directories show a more “normal” pattern. There were no more mantua makers, but there were 8 dressmakers, including Mrs. Kyle & Mrs. Watkins, who had a business listed under their combined names; Mrs. Watkins lived over the shop. While the sewing machine was leading to major changes in the needle trades from its introduction in the mid-1850s on, the 1870 census for West Virginia included no sewing machine operators and no sewing machine factory operatives.

Businesses generally appeared to be more structured after the war, so that these directories list Mrs. A. Graham’s Steam Dye House, Mrs. C. Zimmer’s Steam Bread, Cake and Cracker Bakery, the Beck & Ryman Brewery and Malt House (with Mrs. Elizabeth Beck as a partner), the Dunlevy & Co. (with Mrs. Paul Dunlevy as a partner), and Mrs. Bradley’s Woolen Mills. Perhaps some of these women lost their husbands during the war, leaving them in charge of the business. As hotels gained importance over boarding houses, 9 women worked as waiters at the Grant House hotel. For the first time, the directory included women as clerks and showed 5 women working at Central Glass Works and Malicky Glass Company. This is the first indication of women other than the paper mill worker, that Wheeling women had anything to do with the traditional smokestack industries in the town. A.M. Wilson was the manager of the Pacific and Atlantic Telegraph Co., another apparent first, one woman was an agent for a bedstead manufacturer, and Maria Cunningham was still in the cabinet business. Of the 24 teachers, only 5 were identified as being in the public schools, so one wonders if the men came back and took over those jobs after the war.

The Morgantown city directory for 1868 listed only 4 working women: dressmaker Luanda Evans, mantua maker Sarah Dorsey, seamstress Carrie Stewart, all single, and boarding house keeper Mrs. E.A. Dorsey, a widow. The 1870 census identified Prissie Clark, an African-American, and Elizabeth Moore as the only two women doing anything other than keeping house, but at least a few women in that census seem to have had college students from the fledgling West Virginia University boarding in their homes because the university provided minimal housing for its students.

Skipping ahead to 1880, we find in Wheeling the usual complement of dressmakers, milliners, seamstresses, and tailors. French titles must have been rare at the time because the census lists Madame Amanda J. Lagarde, a 44-year-old widow born, actually, in West Virginia, as the owner of a real hair & fancy goods store that also did stamping and dying. The city directory for that year identified Macrime L.M. Atkinson, who billed herself as a French modiste, or one who made and sold fashionable dresses and hats for women.

Women still ran boarding houses, confectioneries, and groceries. Ruth Schwartz Cowan has remarked on the development of boarding houses in the decades between 1870 and 1920 when “growing numbers of middle- and upper-class families either did not wish, or simply could not afford, to undertake the expense of running an independent household.” While Wheeling women had clearly been running boarding houses for many years, the fact that there were 20 women so identified in 1880 may be a reflection of the national trend Cowan has noticed. While little has been said about ethnicity here, it is interesting to note that, in 1880, baker Caroline Zimmer, the 2nd and 3rd most common, and 4 of the 5 confectioners, if owners were German. The 3 confectioners shown in the city directory lived and worked at the same address.

The 8 grocers, the 70-year-old herb seller, and the divorced saloon keeper continue the roster of women in food-related businesses.

The final group of women to be considered from the 1880 census are those who lived in some type of group housing. Julia Quill was the Mother Superior for a Community of Sisters that included a total of 45 women and 1 1-year-old boy. The women included 2 servants, 1 woman at school, and 42 teachers. Mary Woods, a 21-year-old single woman, listed her occupation as prostitute; she headed a household that included 4 other women between the ages of 20 and 24 who also were identified as prostitutes and 1 mulatto woman whose occupation was given as “domestic.” Finally, 32-year-old Melissa Robinson, a widow, was listed as a bagnio-keeper. The Oxford English Dictionary gives several meanings for bagnio, but the one most current to 1880 was brothel or house of prostitution. If that was the case, instead of the earlier meaning of penal establishment, why were the 2 19-year-old women listed as boarders there with an occupation of “innate”? The fourth resident was Robinson’s 10-year-old son.

The 1880 census for Morgantown presents final interesting challenges. The 48 women listed as heads of households included 33 who kept house. The easy occupations to explain are the dressmakers, the cook (an African-American), and teacher Elizabeth Moore, who was then head of her own Morgantown Female Seminary. The remaining group of 10 women, including 6 whites, 3 African-Americans, and 1 mulatto, ranged in age from 25 to 56. They were all listed as laborers in the census. This was the exact list of unskilled workers, but Morgantown was not then a town that provided many opportunities for anyone, male or female, to do unskilled work. Clearly, more work needs to be done to see if this was a catch-all category of some type.

What conclusions can be drawn from this work to date? Women such as these are anonymous to most researchers. It is difficult to track them in the census and city directories. They moved in and out of town and changed their names when they married. The vast majority followed occupations that capitalized on women’s traditional domestic and nurturing (i.e., teaching) skills. Even when they moved into retail shops, they usually did so in areas related to cooking and sewing, i.e., groceries and millinery shops. However, these types of shops were not owned exclusively by women, so they continued their husbands’ businesses. Those without the skill or funds to work in a factory or open a shop were relegated, one might even say condemned, to low paying jobs as seamstresses and washwomen. Or, if they wanted more money, they became prostitutes. In general, though, they worked in a pre-industrial economy, even when they lived in the midst of a city as heavily industrialized as Wheeling.

NOTES

1. Research for this paper was funded, in part, by a fellowship from the Humanities Foundation of West Virginia, a state program of the National Endowment for the Humanities.

2. Studies such as Faye Dudden’s Serving Women: Household Service in Nineteenth-Century America and David Katzman’s Seven Days a Week: Women and Domestic Service in Industrial America discuss one popular option, and the 1880 Wheeling city directory, in particular, included many women working as servants. Alice Kessier-Harris’ Out to Work and Women Have Always Worked document the general patterns of nineteenth-century...
women's employment but pay special attention to women in labor unions and factories. Neither servants nor factory workers, however, are the focus here.

3. A cursory examination of city directories from 1839 to 1869 identifies 24 breweries, 24 glass manufacturers, 84 businesses related to the production of metal goods, 16 companies specializing in steam engines, and 12 related to the textile industry. This information was compiled as an appendix for the industry guide to Wheeling entitled 'Wheeling Port of Entry' by Elizabeth Nolin for the 1988 Society for Industrial Archeology conference in Wheeling. The directory information is an appendix on pp. 48-57.

4. The exact figures for 1860 were 97.81% native born for West Virginia, 75.3% for Ohio County (5,511 of 22,322), and 86.85% for the United States as a whole. (Joseph D.G. Kennedy, Population of the United States in 1860, Compiled from the Original Returns of the Eighth Census, Under the direction of the Secretary of the Interior [Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1864], pp. xxxi, 521.

5. Ibid.


9. These were mining, agriculture, commerce, manufactures and trades, navigation of the ocean, navigation of the canals, lakes, and rivers, and learned professions and engineers.

10. This information was derived from listings in the United States, Bureau of the Census, Census for Ohio County, 1840.

11. The city directory information is from J.B. Bowen, The Wheeling Directory and Advertiser (Wheeling: John M. McCreary, Printer, 1839).


16. Boston was ranked 4th in size and had 427 women in manufacturing jobs; Cincinnati was 7th with 707 women, St. Louis 8th with 178 women, Chicago 9th with 346 women, Albany 13th with 348 women, Washington, D.C. 14th with 38 women, Detroit 19th with 76 women, and Milwaukee 20th with 276 women. Richmond was 25th in size with 158 women in manufacturing jobs, while Norwalk was 63rd in size with 39 women, and Alexandria was 81st with 148 women (Statistics of the United States ... In 1860: Compiled from the Original Returns and being the Final Exhibit of the Eighth Census, under the direction of the Secretary of the Interior [Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1865], pp. xvi-xix).

17. There were also 15 women and 26 men working in 2 paper printing establishments, 4 women and 24 men working in 2 paper wrapping establishments, 1 woman and 6 men working in 1 printing establishment (Data is from Manufactures of the United States in 1860: Compiled from the Original Returns under the Direction of the Secretary of the Interior [Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1865], p. 625.). The business directory section of the city directory for 1859-60 identifies the only cotton manufacturer as Robert Patterson's Wheeling Cotton Mills. The directory cites 1 paper dealer, 4 paper mills, and 4 paper manufacturers, with nothing listed under printing so it is unclear why there is so much discrepancy between the census listings and directory listings. The woolen manufacturer in the census is likely the only one in the directory, Elizabeth Bradley's Woolen Mills. For further information about Wheeling businesses in 1859-60, see George H. Thurston, comp., Directory of the City of Wheeling and Vicinity, Embracing the adjoining Towns of Benwood, Lograne, Bellaire, Kirkwood, Bridgeport, Martinsville, and Franklin, For 1859-60 (Wheeling: Daily Intelligencer Office, 1859).


20. Walker, Compendium of the Ninth Census, pp. 600-601. Subtracting the females who were attending school and those who were paupers, vagrants, and criminals left him with a figure of exactly 1,594,782 women between the ages of 16 and 59 appearing in the Table of Occupations, leaving him 8,150,000 to be accounted for between the ages of 16 and 59. Using his ratios described below, he found almost an additional 1 million for ages 60 and above. He found a "curious, though probably not significant, rate of progression" between the ratios of working men and women. "In the first period [ages 10-15], the females pursuing gainful occupations are to the males as one to three; in the second period [16-50] as one to six; in the third period [50-60] as one to ten; as one to 12 [50-60] as one to 14." (p. 597)."There were one in 586 households in the census," which number must be reduced, however, to the extent to which females, the heads of families, are also returned as of specific occupations.

"No one familiar with factory-towns will doubt that this reduction should be considerable: yet we shall probably reach the truth of the case substantially if we cut down the number to be accounted for as "working house" to 7,400,000" (pp. 600-601). In a note on page 601, he gives a total of 1,645,188 women in the Table of Occupations: 323,791 women in agriculture, 17,582 in trade and transportation, 328,791 in manufacturing and mining, and 975,529 in personal and professional services.

21. Walker, A Compendium of the Ninth Census, p. 601. The exact figure he used was 179,363.

22. Ibid., p. 602. The remaining 150,000 were women whom he felt were part of the work force but were not reflected in the Table of Occupations.

23. The precise figures were 6,357 domestic servants; 459 tailoresses and seamstresses; 343 teachers of unspecified subjects and 12 of painting, dancing, and music; 246 laundresses; 228 milliners, 147 tailoresses and mantua makers; and 235 engaged in agriculture-related occupations, for a total of 96% (Walker, Ninth Census - Volume I, The Statistics of the Population of the United States, pp. 687-695).


26. Ibid., p. 23.

26. This information was compiled from United States, Bureau of the Census, Census for Ohio County, 1850; and Oliver I. Taylor, Directory of the City of Wheeling & Ohio County.
29. Information on this group of women comes from the United States, Bureau of the Census, Census for Ohio County, 1860; and Thurston, Directory of the City of Wheeling and Vicinity.
33. Thurston, Directory of the Monongahela and Youghiogheny Valleys; and United States, Bureau of the Census, Census for Monongalia County, 1880.
34. Information for the 1880 contingent of women is compiled from the United States, Bureau of the Census, Census for Ohio County, 1860; and W.L. Cal- lin’s Wheeling City Directory for 1880-81 (Wheeling: Lewis Baker & Co., 1880).
36. This information is drawn from United States, Bureau of the Census, Census for Monongalia County, 1880.

A CLERGYMAN-PHYSICIAN IN NINETEENTH CENTURY APPALACHIA
by Erving E. Beauregard

The Reverend Dr. John Walker shone in versatility. His multivaled involvements exhibited dedication to humanity. In a not overly long span of life, 1784-1845, he labored in significant guises: clergyman, educator, abolitionist, antismoker, prohibitionist, and physician. Yet, to a considerable degree, this exemplar of the Renaissance man has gone unnoticed.

Walker’s activities bore fruit in the religious sphere. A student at Jefferson College and Service Seminary, he entered the Associate Presbyterian ministry in 1811. He became his church’s pioneer clergyman in eastern Ohio, founding congregations and heading those at Cadiz, Mt. Pleasant, Pinney Fork, and Unity. At Mt. Pleasant he was one of two principals in one of the earliest theological debates in the United States. He was active in the Presbytery of Muskingum. Twice he headed the Associate Presbyterian Church.

Walker founded New Athens, Ohio in order to establish a college. This was Franklin College. Although small, this non-denominational but Christian-oriented institution proved notable in advocating progressive causes and in graduating persons who left impacts. Walker served as longtime chairman of the board of trustees, vice-president of the college, and professor of world history.

Walker worked incessantly for the immediate abolition of slavery. He made Franklin College a bastion in this cause. He was the “conductor” of the “Underground Railroad’s station” at New Athens. He held important posts in the Ohio Anti-Slavery Society.

The Reverend Dr. John Walker figured prominently in the Antimasonic Party. He was active at the national level. At the Ohio state level his participations burned brightly in the 1830s and lingered into the 1840s.

Campaigning against alcoholic consumption also absorbed Walker. Here again he worked on various fronts—national, state, and local. His activity especially achieved success in Franklin College’s student body. Abstinence came to characterize it.

The Reverend John Walker’s multiple activities—church, academe, anti-slavery, antimasonry, prohibition—connected inextricably with his medical practice. A pastor should remember the example of Jesus in healing the sick. An academician must have healthy students. A foe of slavery should look after the affictions of escaped slaves on the “Underground Railroad.” An antimason must be ready to succor those waylaid by Freemasons. A prohibitionist should aid the reprobates cursed by hard drink.

Walker, indeed, had thought of making medicine his sole vocation. This resulted from his teenage spiritual crisis. At that time, 1798, John had developed doubt about orthodox Christianity. While working on his parents’ farm, he lapsed into agnosticism. He dwelt on “hopes of ministering to the bodily ailments of humanity. This seemed to be the essence of the moral calling.” However, in 1801, he had returned “to the true faith of Christ.” The medical art became a secondary consideration.

Walker’s years at Jefferson College and Service Seminary profoundly influenced his turning to medicine as a handmaiden to his ministerial calling. The maladies of both professors and students convinced him that the physician, along with the clergyman, teacher, farmer, and mechanic, “bore membership in a most noble pursuit.” His humanity and Christian underpinning led him “to think of lessening the suffering of tortured human beings.”

Walker’s first pastorate, Mercer, Pennsylvania, reinforced his view that the healing art must be a decisive part of his life. His being called to the bedside of the young, the middle-aged, and the elderly caused tears to flow...
because of “the pains and ills of the unfortunate.” Further confirmation of the need to minister to the “bodily afflicted” arose from Walker’s officiating at the funerals of his parishioners. The pains of infants and the very young, the ravages of disease on the adults, the cavernous features of the aged—all contributed to the conviction to alleviate the plight of humanity.  

However, Providence did not easily provide for implementing “alleviating the sorrows of humanity.” Walker’s first parochial, Rev. 1811-14, was a Reverend, whose responsibilities included the limitless job of the ministry. Moreover, he served as a military chaplain 1813-14. Furthermore, his parental duty began with the birth of children in 1812 and 1813. Walker’s move to Ohio compounded the problem of becoming a physician. He pastored at Cadiz and Finey Fork, 1815-20, Mt. Pleasant, 1815-27, and Unity, 1815-45. Also, he became immersed in the Ohio Presbyterian and the Associate Synod. Indeed, in both 1829 and 1836, he bore the onerous headship of the Associate Presbyterian Church. Moreover, other endeavors impinged on attention to the medical profession. The founding of New Athens absorbed time and energy. Certainly devotion to Alma Academy and later Franklin College greatly involved the indefatigable Reverend John Walker. Then there were the endless crusades—antislavery, antismoking, and prohibition. 

Nevertheless, the ever energetic Walker found a niche for medicine. In 1825, as an apprentice, he began his study with Dr. John McBean. A native of Scotland, McBean graduated at Jefferson College, where he became devoted to Greek and Latin, and then studied medicine at Cadiz, Ohio. For three years in his residence at Freeport, five miles from Unity Congregation, McBean instructed the vivid student Walker. McBean exacted no compensation from his student. This traced to a number of reasons: McBean respecting Walker because of the two having studied at Jefferson College, Walker’s meager pastoral salary, and McBean’s esteem for Walker as a minister and public spirited citizen. 

During the first two years of instruction Walker spent a full day each week at McBean’s residence home. There he recited from such texts as Herman Boerhaave’s Materia Medica, Sir Astley Paston Cooper’s Surgical Dictionary, Gibson’s Surgery, Thomas F. Goode’s Practice of Medicine, Christopher Wilhelm Hufeland’s Treatise on the Scarceous Disease (French edition), John Hunter’s Treatise on the Blood, Inflammation and Gunshot Wounds, William Hunter’s The Anatomy of the Grand Ulcers, Exhibited in Figures, and René Laennec’s Traité de l’auscultation médiate. Walker found very difficult the absorption of this heavy material, but he persevered, believing that mastery of medicine meant “part of the Divine Plan for this poor soul.” Moreover, McBean, although a demanding instructor, showed patience with the diligent student. 

The relationship of student and instructor survived one seemingly unsurmountable barrier. This was the procurement of cadavers for study and dissection. Dr. McBean proposed what he deemed an easy solution—the obtaining of bodies from Unity Congregation’s graveyard. The Reverend John Walker stood appalled. “This view transfixed me! Could Satan do speaking?” Indeed, Walker thought of ceasing immediately his study. However, reason mastered his emotion and thereupon dialogue ensued between instructor and student. McBean said he would obtain human remains elsewhere and Walker replied he would not probe as to their origins. The latter considered McBean, as a gentleman and god-earning man, a person of his word. Nevertheless, Walker, occasionally as he preceded over a funeral, wondered whether the corpse might reappear on his dissecting table. 

In his third year of study Walker frequently accompanied McBean in the latter’s visits to patients. These proved most instructive not only in observing McBean’s actions, but also in the student being called upon for a diagnosis and then hearing the instructor’s retort. After a thorough final examination stretching over two days in 1828, Mc-
have been available, Walker's wrath would fall on the patient and his or her family, yet his reprimand would come at a time not to disturb the patient's recovery.29

Dr. Walker’s practice comprised a radius of about twenty miles. Riding horseback, he never capitulated to the elements. The furnace heat of summer, the frigid blasts of winter, torrential rain, mountainous snow, glassy ice, swollen streams—nothing deterred his trips of mercy. Rising early, arriving late at home, called from 1- to 3 a.m., suffering from saddle sore—all inconveniences must be overcome. Moreover, rearranging his teaching schedule to accommodate a patient made for patience on Walker’s part and cooperation of Franklinites. During many weeks there occurred arduous travel on his ventures into antislavery, animosity and prohibition. Furthermore, there appeared his journeys on behalf of his Presbytery and Associate Synod. Also there arose some rides to recruit students for Franklin or to persuade parents or benefactors to keep a student at the college.30

Dr. Walker’s practice involved numerous cases. He took pride in child delivery for he believed that it related intimately to his ministerial calling; moreover, he looked askance at midwives because of “their ignorance, uncleanliness, and gossiping.” He never shirked from treating children because of Christ’s admonition: “Suffer little children, and forbid them not to come unto me, for of such is the kingdom of heaven.” The elderly ever received Walker’s best bedside attention.31

Respiratory diseases intrigued Walker. Pneumonia particularly interested him because it proved so widespread and usually fatal. He frequently lamented his failure to stem its onslaught.32

Overwork often engaged Walker's attention. Breakage of bones and wounds from various causes, including violence, tested his surgical skills. Here, notwithstanding his Calvinistic training, his fortitude underwent challenge. This proved particularly true in applying the scalpel without anesthetics. There his abhorrence of whiskey and other strong drink gave way to the merciful administering of such narcotic to the stricken.33 He stressed eclecticism. If one remedy failed, he tried another. For example, herbs might be prescribed at times. Even “old wives’ remedies” could be invoked. However, he looked askance at bloodletting. The stethoscope had a mighty attraction for him. Cleanliness stood ever close to Walker’s mind. Isolation for communicable diseases appealed to his common sense. At times, indeed, he thought of turning exclusively to science to devise remedies for alleviating sickness, but his belief in his ministerial calling brought him back to reality.34

Twice physician Walker almost suffered death because of an alleged mercy call. In the fall of 1835 at 5:00 a.m., two young men appeared at his New Athens parsonage to implore him to save their stricken father at a farmhouse near Deersville, some twelve miles away. Walker asked why they had not summoned Dr. James F. Barnes, then of Deersville. They replied that Barnes was visiting in Pittsburgh. Thereupon Walker rode with the men. Just outside of New Athens they severely assaulted Walker and stole his effects and horse. The sheriff and his posse failed to catch the culprits.35

In the summer of 1837 Walker received a call to an isolated, battered farmhouse in Belmont County, some ten miles from his home. He had been there several years before to treat the owner, victim of a gunshot wound. This time the patient was the owner’s teenage daughter, victim of a brutal beating by her father. After treating the girl, Walker strongly reprimanded the father. The latter then repeatedly pummeled Walker and would have killed him with an axe except for intervention by the victim’s brother and mother. Walker did not mention the matter to the sheriff because the mother begged him to refrain as her husband was the sole support of her large family.36

Physician-surgeon Walker’s errands of mercy gained applause from many of the lowly of Belmont, Harrison, and Jefferson Counties. Lacking money, a number offered him parts of their little produce, but he always refused any compensation. Some patients thought so highly of him that they joined his Unitarian congregation.37

In 1838, Madison College of Antrim, Ohio decided that at its first commencement it would be befitting to confer an honorary doctorate of medicine on the Reverend John Walker. However, he felt he should decline the distinction because he served humanity altruistically and such an occasion would smack of vanity. Fortunately, his wife Elizabeth, reinforced by the Reverend William Burnett, President of Franklin College, New Athens, persuaded John to accept the degree. A large number of persons from New Athens and vicinity, including Franklin faculty and students, went to Madison College to applaud the granting of the degree. Present also stood a number of Walker's patients who wholeheartedly hurried when the Reverend John Walker officially became Dr. John Walker.38

Dr. Walker enthusiastically and capably carried on his medical practice to his death in 1845.39

Notes

1. Thomas Campbell, ed., Infant Sprinkling Proved to be a Human Tradition; Being the Substance of a Debate on Christian Baptism between Mr. John Walker, a Minister of the Secession and Alexander Campbell, V.D.M., a Regular Baptist Minister; Held at Mt. Pleasant, Jefferson County, Ohio, on the 19th and 20th June 1820 (Steubenville, Ohio: James Wilson, 1820); John Walker, A Treatise on Baptism; Being a Reply to a Book Entitled A Debate on Christian Baptism, between Mr. John Walker and Alexander Campbell, Held at Mount Pleasant, on the 19th and 20th June, 1820 (Mount Pleasant, Ohio: B. Wright and B. Bates, 1824).

2. Among others Professor Walker profoundly affected John A. Bingham, author of the Fourteenth Amendment and longtime envoy to Japan. Bingham, letter to Rev. Titus Basfield, Yoddo, Japan, April 24, 1875, Lloyd E. Martin Collection, Portsmouth, Ohio. Bingham and Basfield were Franklin College (Ohio) classmate.


4. Proceedings of the Ohio Anti-Masonic State Convention Held at Canton, Ohio on the 21st and 22nd Days of July, 1830 (n.p. n.d.), pp. 11; St. Clairsville Gazette (St. Clairsville, Ohio), October 13, 27, November 3, 1832; Rev. John Walker, letter to Mr. Robert Hanna, New Athens, Ohio, May 16, 1836, Campbell Collection (Hanna of Cadiz, Ohio was a prominent antismason);

5. Harrison Telegraph (Caddiz, Ohio), November 8, 1832; Rev. Thomas Hanna, letter to Mr. Titus Basfield, Caddiz, Ohio, May 12, 1832. Martin Collection (Hanna was an Associate Presbyterian minister); John Trimble letter to John Wiley, New Athens, Ohio, October 19, 1835, Campbell Collection (Trimble was a trustee of Franklin College); Rev. Edwin H. Nevin, letter to Rev. Thomas F. McGill, New Athens, Ohio, October 19, 1840 (Nevin was president of Franklin College, 1840-45).


7. Ibid., p. 23.

8. Rev. John Walker, letter to Mr. James Stuart, New Athens, Ohio, April 26, 1819. Walker and Stuart were brothers-in-law.

9. Ibid.


12. Ibid., p. 152.


14. Rev. John Walker, letter to Mr. Robert Marshall, New Athens, Ohio, January 10, 1821, Campbell Collection. At this time the exhuming of a body by a physician could lead to prosecution. For instance, in 1825 at Caddiz, Ohio, Dr. Martin Wilson and his two students were prosecuted in the Harrison County Court of Common Pleas. Harrison County Historical Society Collection, Caddiz, Ohio.


17. Walker, Life and Writings, pp. 163-164.


19. Ibid., p. 169.

20. Ibid., p. 170.


22. Rev. John Walker, interview, in Rev. Dr. Ross Stevenson, Diary, March 11, 1840, p. [360], Martin Collection. Stevenson was a student of Walker at Franklin College.

23. Ibid., p. [361].

24. Ibid.

25. Rev. John Walker, letter to Mr. Titus Basfield, New Athens, Ohio, June 22, 1838, Martin Collection. Basfield, a student at Canonsburg Seminary, had been one of Walker's students at Franklin College.


27. Walker, Life and Writings, p. 172.


29. Walker, Life and Writings, p. 176.


31. Harrison Telegraph, November 14, 1835.


33. Alexander Hammond, letter to Rev. Thomas Hanna, Belmont County, Ohio, April 17, 1840, Campbell Collection. Hammond was a longtime Elder of Unity Congregation. Hanna pastored the Associate Presbyterian Church, Caddiz, Ohio, 1821-49.

34. Rev. Jacob Coon, letter to Mr. Robert Gray White, New Athens, Ohio, November 30, 1838, Campbell Collection. Coon served as president pro tempore of Franklin College, New Athens, Ohio, 1838-39 and 1840. Coon and White has been students at Jefferson College.

35. Rev. Edwin H. Nevin, letter to Rev. Alfred Nevin, New Athens, Ohio, March 12, 1845, Martin Collection. Edwin H. Nevin was president of Franklin College, 1840-45. The Nevins were brothers.
CONTRIBUTORS


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