

SETTLING WITH FAITH: RELIGION, WOMEN, AND COMMUNITY BUILDING
IN THE TEXAS PANHANDLE

By

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ABSTRACT

Histories concerning women in the west do not adequately show how women used religion to shape their lives and communities. While some do present women as crusaders and critics, they do not reveal the extent to which women of faith used their ideals to shape the physical and moral aspects of their communities. What follows is an examination of how women justified their efforts in community building through the prism of religious values, how they applied these values to their efforts, and how, over time, they expanded their roles to include political activity. Finally, histories concerning women's efforts to change their societies often fail to fully consider the roles men played in carrying out these goals. As in older histories wherein men appear to be the only actors in great events, the contributions of men are often missing from these narratives. What is often absent is recognition that men and women cooperated in establishing communities, and in this case, actively applied religious belief to their construct. Here, their efforts are addressed as they relate to the actions and goals of women, goals which were, more often than not, joined in purpose.

Examining this topic is particularly promising with regard to pioneer settlement in the Texas Panhandle between 1875 and 1920, since many studies concerning social expectations and developments for women in the United States help illuminate their experience and primary source materials for the region and time period are more readily

available. Additionally, scholarly studies concerning religious life, cultural expectations, reform movements, and life in the west form an additional basis for understanding the society in which women functioned during this period. County, church, and personal histories have helped in understanding how societal expectations in these growing communities differed from those in older, more established cities and towns. Finally, letters, journals, organizational records, memoirs, newspapers, and other primary sources have been used to discover the values of individuals and groups during this period. Such records were often preserved by middle and upper-class women and donated to archives and libraries throughout the panhandle.

The years between 1875 and 1920 confine this study to the period of early, mostly Anglo, settlement in the region. By 1875, White and Latino settlers were making permanent or semi-permanent settlements in the region. This was made possible by the removal of Native American populations defeated in the Red River War. By 1920, the period of early settlement had ended. At this time the economic, cultural, and political nature of life in the panhandle was beginning a new period of substantial change. Women had won universal recognition of their right to vote, the United States had just emerged from a world war and was only beginning to grapple with its consequences, and the oil and gas industry was about to become a major force in the region and state. For these reasons, 1920 is a logical endpoint for this study. As with any research, there are limitations that must be addressed.

This study focuses primarily on White Protestant women who were literate and who left personal records detailing their experiences. These include Baptists, Methodists, Presbyterians, Lutherans, The Christian Church Disciples of Christ, and Church of Christ,

principally. Christian Scientists, though present in the panhandle during this period, are not specifically addressed due to lack of data regarding women's efforts in their congregations. Some Catholics are also included. The cooperative efforts to build churches and assist one another in providing support for religious observance were common during this period, a reality that early settlers mentioned often in their recollections.

Because of the nature of these records, minority groups, the very poor, and other marginalized groups are not included in any significant way. Women who participated in extralegal activities to support themselves are part of this group. In some cases, women who did not leave written records were written of by others who valued their contributions and recognized that, though their efforts were humble, they participated in important ways. Indeed, records detailing these efforts illuminate the experience of women who focused mainly on life in the home but also supported the causes other women publicly championed.

For religious women who settled the Texas Panhandle between the 1870s and 1920, their efforts to build moral communities reveal that, though the circumstances they encountered were new to them, their actions were guided by a continuation of older values, not a reinvention of those values. The experiences of the frontier certainly offered greater freedom in expressing those values and accepted a broader scope of acceptable behavior, a characteristic of frontier life shared in varying degrees with earlier generations of pioneer women, but their core beliefs continued to inform their actions through the process. Women used their understanding of their roles as moral guardians of civil society to justify their actions during this period of settlement, both in building

physical and societal structures, and in extending the influence of Christianity. Later political efforts were likewise connected to these values, which they utilized in seeking and acquiring greater political power. Finally, men and women cooperated in advancing the moral and religious goals apparent in women's activities through this period. Women in this region and at this time were in a remarkable position to shape their communities, a position they used to the fullest.

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CHAPTER I

WOMEN OF FAITH AS COMMUNITY BUILDERS: EXAMINING THE HISTORICAL RECORD

Throughout the Euro American experience of colonization and community building, women of religious conviction influenced community development. Often, especially in the earliest years of settlement, women exercised indirect influence. As colonial affiliations to England and other Europeans nations dissolved and the United States of America was born, women found themselves newly valued as champions of civic virtue and nurturers of future American citizens. With the emergence of the Great Awakening and its accompanying call for the application of Christian ideals to civic life, women reached out to expanding roles of womanhood and societal improvement.

Through the turmoil of civil war and its devastating aftermath, women sought greater opportunities to fight societal ills they felt disrupted and corrupted family life. Becoming more active both in favor of and against social reform movements, women demonstrated their capabilities as activists and organizers who could directly influence society.

Simultaneously, religious ideals concerning women's roles showed both stagnation and increased openness. By the end of the 19th century, women of faith were involved directly in deciding social questions of the time: moral behavior, temperance, education, political

inclusion, and other questions were opened to female scrutiny and reform efforts. Some of these were expressly religious in nature.

This was also a period of rapid change in other ways. Industrialization, further expansion westward, and continuing wars in North America and adventurism abroad brought new challenges and opportunities for women. As the last of the frontier expanses opened up for Euro American and African American settlement, women exchanged comfort for uncertainty and arduous conditions in the American West. For religious women who left their homes to begin new lives in the Texas Panhandle, this was both a challenge and an opportunity to build communities literally from the ground up. Armed with moral authority borne of generations of experience and trial, such women had little opportunity to participate in religious observance within traditional public settings. They reacted to these realities with temerity, involving themselves in many aspects of community building. For many of these women, faith formed the basis of survival and success. Their experience in terms of how they applied Christianity to their new situation is an infrequent subject for historians of this era and region.

Histories of the Texas Panhandle are replete with the exploits of men who braved the dangers of an inhospitable land in search of new opportunities, wealth, and position. Women occupy a much smaller portion of attention in these histories, perhaps because there were so few of them in the early years following the conclusion of the Red River War and because they have so rarely been the focus of research concerning the development of the region. As has been the case in history generally, the stories of women were simply overlooked unless they were tales of conspicuous heroism or infamy. During the past several decades, this imbalance has begun to be addressed,

especially following the women's rights movement of the 1970s, and as a result, the experiences of women are more evident in recent publications. While their experiences have received much attention in these histories, their many contributions to the religious and community life in the Texas Panhandle has not received a great deal of attention. Since there is so little scholarship specifically addressing this topic, it is necessary to investigate research that addresses female experience during other eras in American history concerning women's political, religious, and family life. These, in concert with histories that explore the role of women in settling the frontiers of United States and those that explore the development of the Texas Panhandle, provide a more robust background in examining the women's values and contributions to the region. They also provide a context for understanding women's experience in the United States over time, a process that must be understood in order to fully appreciate their efforts and the context of their actions.

Women's religious history was, in its infancy, a simple narrative. Subsequent historians focused on causation and change over time. Most recently, they have focused on the meaning and impact of language in a gendered historical context. This final approach is especially true for gender studies in which historians wrestle with the nature and meaning of historically assigned characteristics related to sex. Elizabeth A. Clark, in her 2001 article "Women, Gender, and the Study of Christian History," discussed these issues and described the increasingly spirited exchange between those who preferred the "analytical model" versus the "literary model" of examining female experience in religious history. She argued that both approaches may be used to conceive a more holistic and effective method of study, since both ways of examining the historical record

had advantages the other lacked. Clark was thorough in her study of influential feminist studies and, though her field is late ancient Christianity, she did make a meaningful effort to include other periods. Because of this and the focus on universal issues in women's, gender and feminist studies, her article is applicable to the study of later time periods.¹

Specifically, Clark's inclusion of such variables as class and race in women's history is instructive for preparing a meaningful analysis of women's experience. She shows that many studies have relied heavily upon the experiences of one particular race or class, and that this is problematic for an even treatment of the subject. While this difficulty has been an issue for historians of all fields, it can be particularly vexing in the study of women's history since one of the foundational principles of such study is to correct preceding inequities in historical thought. This issue is especially applicable to a study of the Texas Panhandle, since there are few sources that reveal the direct experiences of minority groups and the very poor, and the discovery of such sources seems unlikely. In her article, Clark evaluates many works which are broadly recognized as pioneering efforts in women's history. Of these, Barbara Welter's "The Cult of True Womanhood, 1820-1860" is still influential today in its examination of American culture, revealing much about societal expectations by and for women, and, as Clark notes, has been referred to in numerous studies that followed.²

Welter approached what was called "true womanhood" with alacrity, humor, and wit in her 1966 article. She divided this idea into four distinct attributes: piety, submissiveness, purity, and domesticity. In evaluating these qualities, Welter turned to the many women's magazines published during the period and gleaned from their pages the essential elements required of women who aspired to achieve ideal womanhood. This

examination of popular literature and her accompanying evaluation of religious texts of the period are valuable in that they reveal the expectations women faced and the religious environment in which they lived. The author expressed the view that, while the expectations were impossible to fulfill without psychological injury, they also contained the means by which they would eventually be destroyed.³

Couched within these expectations for women's behavior was the assumption that women enjoyed an intrinsic power in society that, coupled with superior moral purity, uniquely equipped women to look at the world around them and find opportunities to utilize these attributes. Armed with such an understanding of self, women eventually questioned the validity of these expectations and proscriptions. While the article was groundbreaking for women's studies, the author neglected to treat different classes and races of American women. Also absent was discussion concerning women who were compelled to work outside the home, and the extent to which articles and sermons applied to them. It would be beneficial to learn what such women experienced as a consequence of this exclusion from "true" womanhood, especially since so many women shared similar experiences. Of course, the absence of discussion concerning their experience is illuminating in itself; perhaps such women were deemed unworthy of mention, both in past publications and in contemporary studies of societal expectations. More likely, such women left few records behind for researchers to explore, a reality shared by historians today.

Also problematic is the author's assumption that such expectations are largely absent from contemporary American life. It might also have been illuminating to compare what women were actually doing in comparison to the ideals offered in the

magazines. An examination of census and other data might have answered some of these questions. Also missing is any meaningful exploration of another outcome of the expectations popular literature espoused: that through such expectations, women were implicitly endowed with authority to act to improve society, and that they did so in myriad ways. As it applies to a study of women and religion in the Texas Panhandle between 1875 and 1920, Welter's work reveals popular expectations for American womanhood that would have reached well into this period. Certainly, such ideals can be seen in today's society.⁴

Other studies have focused on the changing roles of women in public and private spaces, including Mary Beth Norton's research concerning the exclusion of women in the public sphere in her book *Separated by their Sex: Women in Public and Private in the Colonial Atlantic World*. Norton's research on the subject reaches back to 17th century England, to a time when English women and their colonial counterparts enjoyed some opportunities to wield political and financial power. Class, Norton argued, was more important to these functions than gender. With improved printing technology combined with the changes that accompanied the Glorious Revolution, women, even those of high status, began to see an erosion of their rights in the public sphere. Norton drew particular attention to the widely circulated *Athenian Mercury*, wherein ideas concerning the proper roles of women in society were discussed. Other written material also addressed the subject and because of wider availability of these printed materials, such ideas coalesced and became the popular view. That these ideas were held by many before printed material existed in abundance is not at issue, but the sweeping changes that women experienced, including their relegation to a more domestic life regardless of class after these ideas

were so authoritatively advanced, shows that they did have an impact on societal roles. Norton did not argue that these publications were solely responsible for the changes, only that they had a significant impact in unifying opinion in opposition to women as public actors. This is especially significant to a study of the United States since the repercussions of such events can be seen in societal structures throughout American history. Nancy F. Cott and David Weir have provided studies focusing on society in New England; both are helpful to understanding women in terms of Christian ideals of colonial New England and the early republic.⁵

In his robust study of covenant society during the colonial period, *Early New England: a Covenanted Society*, David Weir delved into the organization of and expectations in this culture. While female roles were not the focus of the study, the expectations for women in the role of goodwives were included. Important to the proper function of New England towns, women were expected to fill supportive roles in Puritan society. Males were dominant, but women increasingly filled positions as charter members of congregations as populations grew and outside forces intruded on Puritan communities. As society changed, so did opportunities for women.⁶

Nancy F. Cott's classic study of New England women in the early Republic dealt with the difficulties women faced as a result of societal expectations that domesticity was the ideal position for women. *The Bonds of Womanhood: "Woman's Sphere" in New England, 1780-1835*, relied largely upon the writing of women during that period. Cott examined their journals and letters, a process that revealed women's mixed feelings concerning these expectations. Some yearned for more independence and hoped to earn money of their own, while others desired education. Many women and girls viewed their

experience through religious ideals, an important point in understanding women's motivations. Especially important here was the author's coverage of how women were viewed as naturally compassionate and giving, while also revealing the growing discontent concerning abuses they suffered at the hands of men. If women were more able to feel compassion and act upon it, then was it not requisite that they act more openly against moral injustices committed against them? A similarly important work, published only three years following Cott's study, focused on the political and intellectual identities of American women during the revolutionary period.⁷

Women of the Republic: Intellect & Ideology in Revolutionary America, by Linda K. Kerber, is a groundbreaking exploration of women's intellectual and political views during this period. The author recognized that women's letters, diaries, and other papers had not been studied seriously by previous historians. In examining these, Kerber discovered a wealth of correspondence that revealed the keen interest women had in the political events of the time. She revealed them, through their own words, as women who grappled with their own place in society. They hoped for a more equitable situation as a result of the Revolution, but recognized that such an outcome was not likely and freely exchanged views on the subject. Women also expressed their hopes that better education would become available, as they were keenly aware that their intellectual talents were not fully appreciated by men in society and were unlikely to become more developed without significant changes in academic offerings for women. The author also emphasized that women were often unsure of how to navigate the revolutionary times with regard to their political views, and downplayed their own understanding of such matters when communicating with men. Ideas of Republican Motherhood emerged, though inherent

conflict was couched within this idea. Women would be political actors in the sense that they must be educated in civic virtue and political understanding to a high enough degree that would enable them to teach their offspring to be good citizens, but would be restrained from publicly acting upon the very virtues they taught. In this way, Republican Motherhood was an important step for women, though it was an incomplete and, in many ways, a hollow victory for those who had sacrificed so much for independence. It would leave unresolved questions for future generations to answer. Other studies show how women responded to encouragement and criticism for their efforts to follow their consciences with regard to faith.⁸

Designed as a survey text, but also valuable to any student of women's experience in America, Susan Hill Lindley's *"You have Stept out of your Place:" A History of Women and Religion in America* is an excellent, broad treatment of the subject. Covering the time period extending from the American colonial period through the 1900s, the author drew heavily on earlier published work, but also researched materials written by and about early female preachers, evangelists, and missionaries. Especially helpful to this study are chapters dealing with women who preached, conducted missionary work, or who strove to improve social conditions through religious means. These chapters revealed many avenues of women's involvement in community building, though they did not show how integral women's efforts were to the success of frontier communities. One especially important aspect of the work is that it places women's religious experience in context, such as the author's coverage of women in the early Methodist church, an addition that explains the greater religious freedom women in that denomination enjoyed. The work is a narrative, but is also a precise analysis of women's activities within their

historical context. She thoughtfully and fairly examined multiple viewpoints in each chapter, especially with regard to women's choices to press the boundaries of societal expectation or to stay within them. Such treatment shows respect for individuality and differing values that is sometimes lacking in women's histories, wherein historians have sometimes attributed current social mores to women who lived in much different circumstances. Other historians have contributed to ongoing research in this field and have worked to answer questions involving female absence from the historical record, even when ample evidence exists that women were actively and visibly involved in both of the "Great Awakenings" that swept North America.⁹

Catherine Brekus added two essential works to the growing catalog of the study of women and religion in North America. The first, *Strangers and Pilgrims: Female Preaching in America, 1740-1845*, is a thoughtful and revealing study. While much of the text was written as a narrative, Brekus also sought to explain why these women who exercised considerable influence as preachers "disappeared" from the historical record. She posited that such women were actively 'written out' of history because, while they challenged norms, they did not challenge the sociopolitical structure enough to enact change. This, she argued, meant that those who might preserve their histories were simply not disposed to do so. Conservative male churchmen wanted to forget, while feminists found little usable experience in what these women had done; both groups ignored their existence in their narratives of past events. The author astutely observed that these female preachers were probably more representative of women of their time rather than deviants who trampled unfeelingly on the mores of their day. Because of this, their experience is a powerful tool in understanding the women who left no record. In her

study of these women, the author carefully reconstructed the environment in which they were preaching. She revealed their motivations and the resistance they faced. One important theme running throughout was resistance to female assertiveness in religious matters. What was of singular importance here was that many female preachers were quite successful in gathering followers and spreading the gospel among both male and female individuals. In this way, such women exerted tremendous influence and were integral to the success of religious revivals; here this meant primarily the First and Second Great Awakenings.¹⁰

In the second of Brekus's studies, *The Religious History of American Women: Reimagining the Past*, she offered a sharply critical analysis of women's historical studies and their inclusion (or not) in the "mainstream" historical narrative. By this she meant that women's history has been marginalized to the point that, even in groundbreaking and brilliant studies concerning American religious history, women are not integral to these narratives. The book consists of several articles that, Brekus argued, show the necessity of integrating women's narratives into the broader historical context. Each article reveals women's experience as fundamental to understanding the past. Such an approach, while seeming to be self-evident, is apparently not understood as such since few histories offer narratives that blend male and female experience into a cohesive whole. Brekus argued that this occurs because of five elementary challenges. First, that historians have been unable to overcome viewing history as a male narrative; second, that they fail to recognize the female experience as important (though she characterized this failing as an inherited viewpoint); third, that inclusion will lead to a less cohesive narrative; and fourth, that it has proven difficult to convey such an inclusive story that reflects both

women's individual choices and limitations within contemporary societies. Her final point is a criticism of women's historians specifically; such historians have failed to link their studies and conclusions to the main themes in American history. Without this link, women's history is easily marginalized. Understanding each of these challenges alone make this book valuable to any study of women's history. Each article deftly illustrates Brekus' points by examining women's religious experience in a uniquely intimate way. Instead of showing action only, each article presents women in a holistic way by examining at length personal beliefs that underlay those actions. Each article is also carefully placed within the context of the time. The result is a book that yields greater depth of understanding to women's roles in American religious history, and that provides needed reflection on the meaning and uses of women's experience in historical context.¹¹

In his 1955 book *The Frontier Camp Meeting: Religion's Harvest Time*, historian Charles A. Johnson explored the early camp meetings that originated in Kentucky during the "Second Great Awakening." Johnson's careful use of diaries, camp meeting manuals, denominational newspapers, and other sources yielded a robust picture of what early camp meetings were like, and what they were ultimately supposed to achieve. The difficult conditions of frontier life yielded rough character and, some worried, a return to "barbarism." Itinerant preachers hoped to minimize this effect of the frontier as they worked to save souls. The author also showed the early cooperation that existed among ministers of differing faiths in organizing and carrying out revival and camp meetings. This cooperation soon faded due to jealousies between religions regarding the quest for converts. These attributes of early meetings are especially interesting when compared to later camp meetings held on the plains which were also cooperative in nature and which

reflected the more liberal attitude shared by settlers who were willing to overlook religious differences so that they could hold services in their communities. Such a comparison between early and late 1800s camp meetings reveals the fleeting nature of liberality in American religious experience. More specific church histories, as well as histories focusing on women and religion specifically, yield a more dynamic picture of religious experience during this period.¹²

In his impressive though brief early study of women and the challenges they faced on the frontier, William Forrest Sprague outlined the difficulties most frontier women faced including physical demands and work associated with the frontier environment, social ills including those associated with male drunkenness, disease, and loneliness, in *Women and the West: A Short Social History*. Covering the various stages of frontier expansion from colonial times through settlement of “the last west,” he often focused on the most negative aspects of frontier life, though he also explored the roles of women and their behavior as religious actors. He focused primarily on their experiences with revival meetings where they were relatively free to express themselves. Also important to his discussion of women and their involvement in religious activities was Sprague’s assessment that these women were considered by their contemporaries to be the true instruments of civilizing the frontier, an argument that echoed earlier statements implying female moral superiority.¹³

James Talmadge Moore’s *Acts of Faith: the Catholic Church in Texas, 1900-1950*, contains a brief chapter concerning the Church in the Texas Panhandle, though it contains little concerning women (the organization of the church and the challenges faced by these organizers are the primary concerns of this book) with the exception of the nuns

who lived and served in Texas. Moore also deals with issues of bigotry and resistance to Catholics and the Catholic Church in Texas, including discrimination by the Ku Klux Klan. This is especially important to understanding the religious and social climate that existed in Texas during the early 1900s.¹⁴

Jewish Women Pioneering the Frontier Trail: a History in the American West, written by Jeanne E. Abrams and published in 2006, focuses on a previously neglected group in western scholarship. The author argued that Jewish women, though excluded from involvement as leaders in the private workings of their religion, were nonetheless very active in forming public, sometimes philanthropic organizations. In this way, Jewish women were able to make valuable contributions to the communities in which they lived. With this book, Abrams has offered a fresh look at western history and has exposed a new facet of women's history as well. One of the most interesting points in the book is the focus on philanthropy, since this was the "face" that others in the community saw; it was the most public aspect of Judaism in western communities. This is especially important to women's history, since it implies that women were probably the most important influence in how communities viewed their Jewish neighbors. The author suggested that these humanitarian organizations and efforts were similar to the idea of the social gospel, a Protestant view that Christianity could be applied in such a way as to solve social ills. That Jewish women worked to better societies they lived in is well proven throughout the book, as is the fact that they were vital factors in maintaining Jewish culture even when cut off from cultural support systems. The book is carefully researched and supported by a variety of published primary sources, including journals, university records, newspapers, personal recollections, and land records.¹⁵

A similarly important religious study is Christine Heyrman's book *Southern Cross: the Beginnings of the Bible Belt*. Heyrman argued that the spread of evangelical Christianity, specifically the Methodist and Baptist faiths, and the emergence of a southern "Bible Belt" was the outgrowth of deliberate efforts within these churches to change public perceptions concerning religion. Drawing from letters and diaries, including those of itinerant ministers, the author discussed the cultural difficulties organized religion faced in the south, including the challenges Methodism presented to notions of masculinity. Perhaps the most important elements in this study are those related to gender roles. Heyrman showed that women were initially encouraged in their independence as they sought the gospel. The church was a family in itself, and a woman could be a part of that separate from her husband. This approach was threatening to the social order that existed and that included a specific hierarchical structure. In order to gain more support, and with it more converts, church leaders changed the guidelines for female behavior; they were required to follow the husband's lead on religious matters, even if it meant they must wait for their husbands to be baptized first, or that they must leave their own church to join his. Other changes included a shift from sending out young single men as missionaries; to lessen the threat perceived by southern families, married men were sent out to spread the word. Leaders thought these men would be more stable, and would also be less likely targets of unsought female affection, or seekers of such attentions. Other significant changes were adopted, Heyrman argued, that made evangelical Christianity not only less threatening, but much more attractive to a greater population which she characterized as largely irreligious.¹⁶

In a collection of essays entitled *American Christianities: a History of Dominance and Diversity*, editors Catherine Brekus and W. Clark Gilpin attempted to reveal the impact of religion on American life and culture. The book includes a variety of essays that show the extraordinary diversity of American faith, including African American religious experience. In Curtis J. Evans' contribution, "African American Christianity and the Burden of Race," Evans not only revealed the motivations for African American believers during several formative experiences (among them the years preceding the Civil War and the civil rights era) but also carefully addressed the issues of women in African American churches during these periods. Such a study is vital to understanding the uniquely difficult position these women occupied in society. Black women were denied full enfranchisement as participants in both religion and politics, and therefore, Evans argued, separated from Black males in the churches, but aligned politically with White women who were also denied the vote. They were united with Black men in their search for equality, but they were also associated with White women in their search for more specific elements of that equality. They faced discrimination in both communities, but shared common interests with both. This difficult position was a defining one for African American women who sought to both better and balance their lives. Several articles specifically address the development of Evangelical Christianity in American life and culture, a topic very helpful to understanding religious life in the Texas Panhandle. Historians specifically interested in the paucity of scholarship dealing with women's experience in Texas have worked to correct this omission.¹⁷

Judith McArthur and Harold Smith's *Texas through Women's Eyes: the Twentieth Century Experience* was written in response to insufficient coverage of women in Texas

history books for survey courses. To correct these inequities, the authors evaluated existing secondary sources but also conducted original research of many topics in Texas women's history for the time period between 1900 and 2000. Most of the sources they utilized were oral histories, journals, letters, and diaries that most clearly expressed not only the events of the times they revealed, but also the emotional responses of the women who lived during this period. For the purposes of this study, the first portion of the book is most helpful, as it illustrates the changing attitudes of women during the early 1900s. The authors highlighted many activities women engaged in during the Progressive Era including their efforts to secure suffrage, laws that recognized women's civil liberties, and efforts to expand opportunities in the workplace. Though Smith and McArthur acknowledged that much of the book focused on the lives of white middle class women, the study does address minority women's lives as well. In light of the neglect minority women suffered at the hands of historians in previous decades, this study deserves high praise for its relatively broad treatment of female experience. Other studies also illuminate this period in Texas history, though with a less even treatment of women in differing social, ethnic, and racial groups.¹⁸

A collection of women's letters to the newspaper of the Farmers' State Alliance of Texas, later the known as the Texas Populist party, *Women in the Texas Populist Movement: Letters to the Southern Mercury* is comprised almost entirely of letters though the editor of the book, Marion Barthelme, included significant analysis concerning these. While the book does not focus directly on Texas Panhandle women, it does show the changing attitudes and everyday concerns of women and acknowledges the relatively egalitarian lives Texas women led in comparison to their counterparts in other regions.

This text highlights the concerns women had during the Progressive Era and shows a broad range of political and social attitudes. It reveals in some cases the challenges women faced as they explored new avenues of political and social expression and discovered new opportunities to affect change in their own lives. As in many other books available for this time period, the collection covers only white middle class women. In a study concerning women involved in Texas cattle ranching, upper-middle and higher class women are the focus.¹⁹

Women of the Range: Women's Roles in the Texas Beef Cattle Industry by Elizabeth Maret is largely a sociological effort, but clearly shows the involvement of women in one of Texas' most important industries. Using census records, surveys, and what the author termed "participant observation" or oral histories, she clarified the contributions, both paid and unpaid, of women in the Texas cattle industry. Maret's research also includes a variety of other government and industry records. Though much of the book deals with women who lived after 1920, Maret's coverage of women during the 1900s and 1910s presents a substantial enough contribution to understanding female roles in business that it must be included here. Such research provides context for any study of women settlers on the plains since it reveals aspects of women's history that had been neglected. This narrative also includes Hispanic women, though most of the women included here were women in the middle and upper classes. Studies concerning women's religious lives in the Texas Panhandle are rare; often their religious lives appear as a small portion of larger studies, or they appear briefly in church or other local histories. Studies that focus on women's experience in North America, however, have become

more common and serve to expand our understanding of female contribution to religious life.²⁰

Several of the texts that include references to women's religious beliefs and practices during the late 1800s and early 1900s are compilations of primary documents and oral histories. One such book is *Some of my Heroes are Ladies: Women, Ages 85 to 101, Tell about Life in the Texas Panhandle*, by Louise George. As editor, George carefully recounted the stories of several early settlers. It was written almost as a direct transcript of interviews with women who had worked hard to make a success of life on the plains, and who were also involved in many aspects of their communities including politics and religion. Several points covered in the book revealed the level of involvement both men and women had with religion. While it is not appropriate to declare that broader patterns existed based on anecdotal evidence, such evidence is valuable in exploring motivations and patterns of change in communities. It is also clear that many men were very involved in religious life both in their homes and communities, a fact that belies the popular description of frontier men as rough, lawless, and even godless.²¹

In her article "'This Work is God's Cause' Religion in the Southern Woman Suffrage Movement, 1880-1920," Evelyn A. Kirkley offered an excellent study of suffragist efforts in the southern states. Kirkley argued that the use of religion in arguing for or against suffrage was different depending on geography. For example, many northern suffragists rejected religion while southern suffragists embraced it and used Christian teachings to support their bid for the vote. The author explained that the Bible was not necessarily used as a common basis for claiming suffrage, but that religious conviction among suffragists served as an impetus for action, and that suffragists made

acquiring the vote “a religious crusade.” The author used religious pamphlets, suffragist literature, and other contemporary documents as foundational documents for her study. This work illuminates the thinking of Christian women with regard to faith and social problems they faced at the turn of the century. As women of faith, they regarded voting as a religious crusade, but also viewed other social problems in a similar light. Through understanding the role religion played in motivating women in their fight for suffrage, their use of faith in their efforts to combat other social ills and injustices becomes clearer. Other studies that address the specific activities and experiences of women in religion help in understanding not only their experiences, but also resistance to women as religious actors, acceptance of women in religious roles, and women’s efforts in expanding these roles.²²

Of particular interest concerning the intersection of religious belief and social causes is Peggy Pascoe’s *Relations of Rescue: The Search for Female Moral Authority in the American West, 1874-1939*. Her study focused on Protestant missionary women and their efforts to rescue and elevate ‘fallen’ women who, from reformers’ viewpoints, were victims of male licentiousness. The author called for caution in thinking of women as civilizers of the American West, decrying this view of women as “a staple of western lore.” This view, she argued, caused historians to neglect what she believed was the most compelling reason to study the American West: the relationships among the cultures that existed there. Pascoe acknowledged that reforming the towns and cities they lived in was an aim of many Victorian women of this period, but that the focus on White women obscured the fact that people of different cultures were also present. Finally, the author approached this study with three points in mind: how Victorian women’s efforts to

achieve moral authority affected relations between cultures, “social control” structures, and women’s empowerment. While the book is both an extraordinary and important contribution to understanding how women of varying cultures interacted as some sought moral authority, respect, or autonomy, the author disregards the merits of studying the impact of White women in building and reforming their communities. She also seems to imply that multicultural interaction was universal across the American West throughout the time period covered, an assumption that is not completely supportable given the fact that some regions were emptied of Native American inhabitants prior to significant Anglo settlement and that some communities were predominantly “White” for significant periods of time.²³

Multiple church histories aid in understanding the growth of religious congregations in the panhandle. The *History of the Northwest Texas Conference, the Methodist Church: First 50 Years, 1910-1960*, by Joseph O. Haymes, and the *Methodist Excitement in Texas* both reveal the great efforts that Methodists have made to record their histories. Both histories lack any comprehensive treatment of women’s efforts to help build their congregations, though Haymes’ work includes a specific section concerning women’s missionary work. This section lacks the detail one would hope for in a book of this kind, but it does show that women, even in the earliest years of Euro American settlement in the Texas Panhandle, were vigorous in their missionary efforts. Little mention is made of any of their efforts in raising funds for building projects or other local endeavors. One woman, Martha “Grandma” Rogers, was included in the biography section, and was mentioned as an influential woman because of her participation in conference as well as local church activities. The notation was justified,

according to the author, because Rogers' contributions were so unique. Such coverage was rare in the book; she was the only woman granted her own section in the biography chapter, though several women were mentioned in their husband's sections. Included in the section was the fact that Rogers had a motherly attitude with regard to the ministers in the Conference. This aspect of the section seems to lend weight to the idea that women in many religious situations had greater latitude because of their "womanly" roles such as "mother" or "moral helpmeet." Indeed, the section concerning women's contributions is titled "Women's Work," and appeared in the final chapter of the book. Lutherans, Baptists, Catholics, and other religious groups have also published histories, though these are much less comprehensive in character and do not include much, if anything at all, concerning women's experience.²⁴

A sociological study entitled *The Lonesome Plains: Death and Revival on an American Frontier*, by Louis Fairchild, is primarily focused on how settlers dealt with the loneliness and fatigue that accompanied their difficult way of life, and is supported by oral histories, personal correspondence, diaries, and other personal documents. Fairchild focused mainly on average settlers, cowboys, and other ranch workers in telling the story. Settlers were often cut off from family and friends for long periods of time, especially in the early years of community building in the Panhandle. Religion is a part of the narrative and Fairchild showed that, without the opportunity for more traditional worship services, families and sometimes neighbors and friends gathered for "church" and for social contact. He also discussed camp meetings where women had the freedom to express themselves openly concerning religion. They also worked with their spouses to make such events successful, as women prepared the food and other necessities for meetings

that might last for several days. An interesting note here is Fairchild's inclusion of the relationship between some of the more aggressively evangelical women who would prevail upon the young men to change their ways. These relationships show that women did have a great deal of freedom to act in a religious capacity at camp meetings and other longer term services, even though they were almost always denied official positions of authority. They may not have had official titles, but they did have real opportunities to act in religious capacities.²⁵

Studies that focus on Religion and its changing nature in the United States are especially important to this research because they reveal important changes that impacted how believers related to one another and how they viewed their own and religion's place in society. Included in these are George Marsden's *Fundamentalism and American Culture: the Shaping of Twentieth Century Evangelicalism, 1870-1925*, *Fundamentalism and the Frontier: Value Clusters in the Texas Panhandle*, by Benjamin L. Gorman, and John W. Storey's *Texas Baptist Leadership and Social Christianity, 1900-1980*. Marsden's thoughtful and painstaking research concerning Fundamentalism in America is particularly meaningful to this study, in that he addressed the way in which Fundamentalist Christians viewed themselves and society, and also how they related to society during periods of dramatic change. Especially interesting is his attention to liberalism in American religions and the resistance many evangelicals confronted it with. Marsden's treatment of the effect modernism, war, and technology, and many other changes had on American society illustrates the tremendous change the country underwent during this period. Missing from his discussion was specific coverage of the frontier in American thinking, and the liberalizing impact of religious cooperation in

sparsely populated regions. It does, however, give an important overview of the thinking of the time, and the difficult ideological ground that religious Americans traversed. Relying heavily on newspapers including those produced by religious groups, contemporary writings, and correspondence, Marsden's work is an excellent treatment of the development of Fundamentalism in the United States.²⁶

John W. Storey's *Texas Baptist Leadership and Social Christianity, 1900-1980* is an excellent study concerning "Social Christianity" and the Baptist Church in Texas. In it he attempted to show that southern Christians, specifically Baptists, were actively pursuing social reforms independent of their Northern counterparts. Earlier works, he argued, erroneously characterized southern Protestant efforts to reform society as specifically patterned after northern efforts, and that these efforts were unfairly portrayed as weak at best. The author ably presented his case for Texas Baptist involvement in reform efforts, and although he did not specifically focus on women in the study, he showed their influence on the Baptist leadership. In his chapter concerning the period between 1900 and 1920, Storey briefly covered some of the issues that so deeply concerned women of the time, specifically suffrage, economic opportunity, and religious contributions in the church. While broader coverage would have been welcomed, Storey did offer more insights than did earlier authors concerning these points.²⁷

Ann Blodgett's *Land of Bright Promise: Advertising the Texas Panhandle and the South Plains, 1870-1917*, is a valuable study that reveals the connection between land developing and religion. Through her research of numerous land records, correspondence, and land advertisements, Blodgett described the efforts of developers to attract stable settlers who would create lasting communities on the plains. Some

developers promised to construct churches, while others touted the stability of society in panhandle communities which included a strong Christian character. Still other developers acted in tandem with clergy to attract specific religious groups to the panhandle. Another aspect of land speculation and developing Blodgett addressed was the important role women played in marketing land to potential buyers. As companions to their husbands, some women worked to “stage” the land for viewing by preparing a more genteel atmosphere for prospective settlers. This was no small undertaking, and was important in showing the land as hospitable for women and children. An additional facet of the author’s narrative was the inclusion of women, especially the wives of early ranchers, who were evangelical Christians and who sought to positively influence those around them via religious means.²⁸

Other histories that show how society developed in the Texas Panhandle following the Red River War are Willie N. Lewis’s *Between Sun and Sod: an Informal History of the Texas Panhandle*, a history that is widely referred to in other studies concerning the region, Lester Fields Sheffy’s *The Experimental Stage of Settlement in the Panhandle of Texas*, Paul Carlson’s *Amarillo: the Story of a Western Town*, and Frederick Nolan’s *Tascosa: Its Life and Gaudy Times*. Lewis’s work is aptly named; it is a narrative and is replete with anecdotes concerning the region and its early Anglo settlers. Most helpful to this study is his treatment of Clarendon, Texas, which was settled as a predominantly Methodist community. It is valuable as a guide for further research, and serves to acquaint the reader with basic facts surrounding the resettlement of the panhandle and the impact of religious values on community building.²⁹

Carlson and Nolan's offerings are unprofitable for the specific study of religion in the Texas Panhandle though they are both good survey works for the subjects they consider. In *Amarillo*, Carlson referred to religious growth in the panhandle and included women's activities in the region, though he did not evaluate the importance of religion and its impact on events of the day. For example, the activities of the Ku Klux Klan were mentioned, but not connected to any significant religious or political developments, a connection freely examined in other histories concerning religion in Texas. Similarly, Carlson included some information concerning women's activities in the community, but did not provide insight as to the scope of these activities and their real impact on life in Amarillo. Nolan's work was similarly targeted to a popular audience and journalistic in style. He related the more colorful aspects of life in Old Tascosa, but did not offer a critical examination of the material. He described the religious and social activities of Tascosa settlers, and often included the attitudes and viewpoints early settlers expressed. Both authors relied on newspapers, settler's personal papers, and a variety of government documents to inform their research.³⁰

Historical study concerning women's history in the United States has been a rapidly growing field in the past several decades. New studies attempt to answer the questions of context, meaning, and value within the greater themes of history. These works are helpful in bringing women's history into a more integral position with "mainstream" history. Local and regional studies can serve valuable roles in helping to expand our understanding of women's motivations and actions, and their connection to how communities changed over time. As a foundation for understanding how women embraced and challenged expectations for womanhood and Christian character as they

settled the Texas Panhandle, each of these studies has helped illuminate the subject. In understanding why women acted as they did, we need to understand how they responded to and used the values with which they were endowed.

¹ Elizabeth A. Clark, "Women, Gender, and the Study of Christian History," *Church History* 70:3 (September 2001): 396-426. Another article that reveals the conflicts among students of religion and women's history is Merry Wiesner-Hanks, "Women, Gender, and Church History," *Church History* 71:3 (September 2002): 600-620.

² Clark; a related treatment of this subject and estimation of Barbara Welter's "The Cult of True Womanhood, 1820-1860" is provided in Tracy Fessenden, "Gendering Religion" *Church History* 14:1 (Spring): 163-169.

³ Barbara Welter, "The Cult of True Womanhood, 1820-1860," *American Quarterly* 18:2, part I (Summer 1966): 151-174.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Mary Beth Norton, *Separated by Their Sex: Women in Public and Private in the Colonial Atlantic World* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2011).

⁶ David A. Weir, *Early New England: a Covenanted Society* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2005).

⁷ Nancy F. Cott, *The Bonds of Womanhood: "Woman's Sphere" in New England, 1780-1835* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977).

⁸ Linda K. Kerber, *Women of the Republic: Intellect & Ideology in Revolutionary America* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1980).

⁹ Susan Hill Lindley, "You have Stept out of your Place:" *A History of Women and Religion in America* (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996). In the Chapter titled "The Great Awakening," the author recounts the experiences of John Wesley's parents, Susanna and Samuel Wesley. While Samuel was away, it became necessary for Susanna to lead the congregation in prayer and other observances. When complaints against her reached Samuel and he in turn rebuked her, she responded with such righteous indignation that he decided not to challenge her actions further. That episode served future Methodist women well as they asserted their own moral authority. The account of this event is found on pages 43-44.

¹⁰ Catherine A. Brekus, *Strangers & Pilgrims: Female Preaching in America, 1740-1845* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1998).

¹¹ Catherine Brekus, ed., *The Religious History of American Women: Reimagining the Past* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2007).

¹² Charles A. Johnson, *The Frontier Camp Meeting: Religion's Harvest Time* (Dallas: Southern Methodist University Press, 1955). Specific mention of the fear that life on the frontier led to a return to barbarism is found on page 13. Chapter 3 is particularly helpful in understanding the relationships between ministers of different faiths as camp meetings changed from "union" efforts to denominationally distinct affairs during this period.

¹³ William Forrest Sprague, *Women and the West: A Short Social History* (Boston: The Christopher Publishing House, 1940. Reprinted in 1972).

¹⁴ James Talmadge Moore, *Acts of Faith: the Catholic Church in Texas, 1900-1950* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2002).

¹⁵ Jeanne Abrams *Jewish Women Pioneering the Frontier Trail: a History in the American West* (New York: New York University Press, 2006).

¹⁶ Christine Heyrman, *Southern Cross: the Beginnings of the Bible Belt* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1997).

¹⁷ Catherine Brekus and W. Clark Gilpin, eds. *American Christianities: a History of Dominance and Diversity* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2011).

¹⁸ Judith M. McArthur and Harold L. Smith, eds., *Texas Through Women's Eyes: The Twentieth Century Experience* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2010).

¹⁹ Marion K. Barthelme, ed. *Women in the Texas Populist Movement: Letters to the Southern Mercury* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1997).

²⁰ Elizabeth Maret, *Women of the Range: Women's Roles in the Texas Beef Cattle Industry* (College Station: Texas A&M University, 1993). It should be noted that many of the women Maret includes in her study were of significant financial means. She includes women from several aspects of the industry, including "barn management" and veterinary care.

²¹ Louise Carroll George, *Some of My Heroes are Ladies: Women, Ages 85 to 101, Tell about Life in the Texas Panhandle* (Baltimore: Gateway Press, Inc., 2003). It is difficult to determine the level of religious conviction individuals have based on the oral histories presented here, though it may be noted that these mothers were painstaking in their efforts to take their children to church when possible and to provide them with appropriate clothing for such occasions.

²² Evelyn A. Kirkley, "'This Work is God's Cause' Religion in the Southern Woman Suffrage Movement, 1880-1920," *Church History* 59:4 (December 1990): 507-522.

²³ Peggy Pascoe, *Relations of Rescue: The Search for Female Moral Authority in the American West, 1874-1939* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990). In her introduction (xviii) Pascoe quotes Elizabeth Jameson when referring to this as a "staple of western lore."

²⁴ Joseph O. Haymes, *History of the Northwest Texas Conference, the Methodist Church: First 50 Years, 1910-1960* (Nashville: The Methodist Publishing House, 1962); Lynn and Duane Guy, *A Joyful Journey: First United Methodist Church, Canyon, Texas, 1889-1989* (Canyon, Texas: First United Methodist Church, 1989)

is also relatively inclusive of women's activities. The author included their efforts in a much more integrated fashion and in greater detail.

²⁵ Louis Fairchild, *The Lonesome Plains: Death and Revival on an American Frontier* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2002).

²⁶ George M. Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).

²⁷ John W. Storey, *Texas Baptist Leadership and Social Christianity, 1900-1980*. (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1986).

²⁸ Ann Blodgett, *Land of Bright Promise: Advertising the Texas Panhandle and the South Plains, 1870-1917* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1988).

²⁹ Willie N. Lewis, *Between Sun and Sod: an Informal History of the Texas Panhandle* (Clarendon, Texas: Clarendon Press, 1938).

³⁰ Paul Carlson, *Amarillo: the Story of a Western Town* (Lubbock: Texas Tech University Press 2006). Discussion concerning the connection between Texas churches, clergy, specifically the Methodist Church, and the Ku Klux Klan, can be found in Robert Vernon, Robert Sledge, et al., *The Methodist Excitement in Texas, a History*, (Dallas: The Texas United Methodist Society, 1984). It contains a frank though brief treatment of Methodist involvement in both supporting and rejecting the Ku Klux Klan and its ideals; Frederick Nolan, *Tascosa: its Life and Gaudy Times* (Lubbock: Texas Tech University Press, 2007).

CHAPTER II

MORAL AUTHORITY: A HERITAGE AND INVITATION

“[Mrs.] McCaleb run like a golden thread through the dark days of the early church. She was the first Sunbeam leader, Ladies Aid president, and when there were no men in the church who would lead in prayer, Mrs. McCaleb led.”¹

This statement suggests that men were the proper authorities to conduct general meetings and offer public prayers, at least in Baptist services, while women were to teach children and lead other women. Sects differed concerning the latitude women enjoyed with regard to public preaching and prayer though, for most who came to the panhandle, they were not expected or encouraged to take general leadership roles. This account also implies that in the Texas Panhandle, necessity opened the door to expanded opportunities for women to fulfill public roles often closed to them elsewhere; what might have been decried as deviance in the settled cities and towns of the east might be celebrated in the frontier towns of the west. It must not be assumed, however, that the frontier was the singular factor in determining freedom or proscriptions women experienced during this final period of American westward expansion. Scholarship concerning women's experiences during this era reveals a civilization characterized by rapidly changing societal expectations and behaviors as well as careful adherence to cherished conservative ideals. This duality can be seen in a variety of ways: a difference in

interpretation, a problem for academia in creating a cohesive, linear survey of American History, or a challenge to women in recovering a “useable” past. One way to view this period of rapid change and developing feminism is through the prism of religious experience. It was, after all, through such experience that American women gained some of their first opportunities to engage in public life. That women on the Texas Panhandle Plains felt they were endowed with certain moral authority is evident in the record they left behind: letters, church histories, stories shared with their children, and records they kept in their organizations reveal the fact that not only did they feel it a duty to lift the moral standards of their communities, it was their calling before God.²

How did women in these frontier communities arrive at such conclusions? From what did they derive this sense of purpose and destiny? Simply stated, they inherited a system of expectations nurtured through generations of religious and political struggle, a struggle carried out in homes, church houses, and revival meetings across the country. For women of the frontier Texas Panhandle, moral authority was derived both from this heritage and from the rapidly changing and sometimes clashing realities of frontier life and national industrial growth. This was not, however, a simple bequest, it was at once an invitation and challenge to meet in establishing communities they hoped would be blessed by God and providence. Through their embrace of such authority, they embarked on a variety of projects to uplift and reform society, but also worked to create new communities established on principles of Christian faith.

From its colonial roots continuing through this period, the United States of America was home to energetic colonizers thirsty for new lands and opportunities. Its frontier rolled out before an ever-growing population, offering squalor to the unlucky or

unprepared and wealth to the fortunate and resourceful. For women, each new wave of expansion was indeed a chance for new freedoms, though it came at the cost of personal comforts and, for some, their health and even their lives. During the colonial period, women struggled against the dangers of living in a country wholly new to them while also striving to find their place in new political and religious structures. They brought basic European cultural mores with them, but for many early settlers, especially those arriving in the northern colonies, these were altered by expectations based on newly forged religious beliefs and practices resulting from the Protestant Reformation and its subsequent upheavals. Most conspicuous among these new expectations were those associated with the Puritans, “Quakers,” or Pilgrims; these were groups who came to the new world in hopes of forming a “city on a hill,” a sanctified community of believers who exemplified pure Christian society. These fled Europe in search of religious tolerance, but in struggling to maintain their ideal society did so at the expense of other’s religious freedoms. For women in these and other reformist or separatist traditions, female roles in church and other public spaces and at home were based in part on beliefs adopted by their respective religious societies, class, and changes in how women were perceived politically. There were exceptions to the rules, providing room to maneuver within these changing communities.³

Early English colonists understood female roles through the prism of class as well as religious expectations. In *Separated by their Sex: Women in Public and Private in the Colonial Atlantic World*, Mary Beth Norton argued that the English understanding of gender was not as influential as class status with regard to participation in public arenas of society. In essence, gender roles had not yet solidified into “spheres of influence”

wherein women and men occupied specific roles with women as keepers of the home and men as laborers outside the home. Men and women worked side by side to meet the needs of survival, though some women of higher class publicly participated in political and business affairs. This need-based structure began to change in the mid-1600s, and by the 1740s the idea that women belonged only in the home had solidified in colonial American thought and practice, though, as in any population, there were exceptions.⁴

The process of this change was manifest in and perhaps encouraged by the literature of the day, specifically in one of the first newspapers of this time, the *Athenian Mercury*, wherein ideas concerning the proper roles of women in society were discussed. Other written material also addressed the subject and because of wider availability of these printed materials, the ideas addressed in them became part of the social vernacular on both sides of the Atlantic. In this public venue, writers commented on expectations for women, declaring women's proper places as in the home and not the public world where their influence, they argued, could be corruptive. In addition to (and perhaps integral to) this form of public discourse, revolutionary ideas and movements brought permanent changes to England and the colonies. As the English Revolution and later the Glorious Revolution unfolded and concluded, thinkers such as John Locke characterized the "body politick" as male. Colonial males agreed with this interpretation, a fact that can also be seen in the commentary of the day. By the mid-1700s, women were considered a disruptive influence in the public sphere and therefore incapable of participating in it as partners with men, a claim challenged by few women directly. This development placed women squarely in domestic life and barred them from influencing society as public figures. Many women, especially those of meager means, lived their lives largely

unconcerned with such developments, but, as Norton pointed out, no woman could live unaffected by the changes taking place in society. Thus, women making the journey to the Americas were doing so in a shrinking arena in which they could operate as public catalysts for (or even commentators about) social or political change, though many women embraced the divisions of labor and public influence that accompanied their relegation to hearth and home. Religious life offered a rare opportunity for public expression of belief, especially with the advent of the Great Awakening in the early 1700s. Thus, while women were effectively silenced in the political world, they found voice in the religious one.⁵

Concurrent with these changing ideas concerning women in public arenas was also the general belief that women were more carnal, sensual, and simple-minded than men. These characterizations were not new, but were persistent views carried forward through time as evidenced in the witchcraft trials of Europe and in the colonies, where women were portrayed as less able to withstand their own sensual natures and, because of this and their inherent weak-mindedness, were more susceptible to wiles of the Devil and his promises of power and sexual pleasure. Some argued that women were soulless; thus they were simply incapable of rising to the same spiritual awakening as their male counterparts. Women, it was thought, must have the guiding hand of morally superior men to shepherd them through the vagaries of life. In a world swirling with changing ideologies and spiritual and political revolution, women would rise to actively oppose such characterizations, while the realities of life in the new world would lead religious leaders in the colonies to reexamine such views. For women who embraced the separatist

or reformist ideals that drove many of the New England colonies, these changes were manifest in their social and spiritual identities.⁶

During the early colonial years in New England, women's activities centered on the Puritan concept of the "good wife." As explained by Catherine Brekus in *Strangers and Pilgrims: Female Preaching in America, 1740-1845*, the concept and organization of the family was understood as a microcosm of the state. Within the state and home, women were generally considered to be lower than men in the general ordering of society. In this paradigm, women did not serve in official capacities as church or government leaders (positions often closely associated in varying degrees in each colony), but they were expected to share their religious feelings. Women discussed religion in the home and with neighbors, and even served to exhort others to higher spiritual conduct. If the "good wife's" actions served to support the husband's wishes and aid the family, her actions might even extend beyond that which was normally expected, though never into official leadership positions. They had some latitude with regard to rules of behavior, but proscription of female public behavior emanated from England and, supported by colonial men, held true for most denominations. Brekus' study concerning women's religious lives coincides with political and social developments discussed by Norton. This parallel development is not surprising, since in early colonial America, religion and politics were connected. Because of this, women who challenged church authority also threatened to upset political stability. For colonists, this was not simply an academic question. Wars had been fought, governments toppled, and religious faithful bloodied, imprisoned, and murdered over questions of belief. The specter of recent and

potent persecution and political instability loomed large in the memories of early colonists. Still, women played important roles within the religious community.⁷

Many early New England communities were formed as covenant societies in which church and state were intertwined. Thus political involvement hinged on or was intimately connected to (even reliant upon) church membership and was shaped by the values of the church. For Puritan women during the earliest days of colonial settlement, both men and women participated in “inaugurating” early congregations. Their involvement in helping to establish Congregationalist churches in New England was concentrated in portions of the early, mid, and late 1600s with many years of little or no female representation during the intervening years, implying that women’s influence or even willingness to undergo the rigors of obtaining full fellowship varied widely during this period. Establishing members were part of an elite group- these were considered the most elect of all church members. A rigorous profession of faith and confession of guilt was involved in the process of becoming a full member of the church, though some historians have argued that the rigor was somewhat less extreme for women than for men. Still, these women were the most staunchly committed to their faith in these communities, and as such, would be held up as examples of exceptional womanhood and influential characters within their communities. Other religious groups in the early colonial years showed varying degrees of female involvement in official church functions including leadership.⁸

The most liberal of these was the Society of Friends or, alternately (and initially derisively termed), the Quakers. In their doctrine and in their meetings, women and men were expected, as they were moved by the Spirit, to share their understanding of the

Gospel. According to their belief, every human being had a “divine spark,” endowed with the right to be influenced personally and individually by God. As the church became more organized under the guidance of George Fox, men and women divided into separate meetings to manage business and social affairs. When this became standard practice, men were tasked with handling business and financial responsibilities of the church, while women handled matters such as questioning couples who desired to marry. Even with this separation of duties within the church, the Society of Friends remained the most egalitarian church of the colonial period. The equanimity of the Society of Friends was seen as radical by other New England sects and was not welcome in Congregationalist communities because in challenging the expectations for proper female conduct and primacy of the individual as opposed to the group or concept of “brotherly love,” it also challenged governance of the colonies.⁹

Several examples illustrate this, such as the case of Anne Hutchinson. If she had simply been preaching the Word as commonly accepted, she may have escaped the wrath of community leaders, including John Winthrop. Instead, she caused great uneasiness among church leadership when she drew crowds to her home where she offered specific refutations of standard doctrines, specifically focused on faith and works, and the central concept of brotherly love. When pressed concerning her actions, she proved her radicalism when she cited direct divine guidance as her authority to speak, thus bypassing the authority of church elders. Ejection from the community was the swift result, a fate she shared with other women who would speak against practices they felt were not in keeping with Biblical standards. The distinction in such cases was not based solely on gender, but also on doctrinal interpretation. Other examples include Lady Deborah

Moody and Anne Eaton who were excommunicated because they doggedly and publicly opposed the practice of infant baptism, and, significantly, attracted many supporters to their views.¹⁰

Most of these women shared similar backgrounds as moneyed women with political connections. Their class status did not protect them from the restrictions of gender, though it is important to acknowledge that women's contributions were highly valued. This was especially true for women who embodied the ideal of the "good wife," though women who worked outside those limits might also gain the praise, or at least the tolerance, of the community. In challenging the limits of proper female conduct and doctrinal tenets, they directly challenged the hierarchical formation of society: women must be hearers, not preachers, husbands must rule over the home, and magistrates must rule over subjects. Upsetting this construct, in the view of male authority figures, was not only an act of heresy but also an intolerable challenge to the stability of the colony. If these women could pose a threat to the community, then Quaker women were certainly pushing well beyond the limits of proper female conduct in Puritan New England.¹¹

The Society of Friends was exceptionally egalitarian. This is not to say that they escaped Puritan limits to their behavior; Quaker women and men were both feared and reviled for their embrace of equality and belief in a "divine spark" enjoyed by all human beings. One particularly acrimonious case of both Quaker zeal and Puritan suppression of female public expression is that of Mary Dyer who was executed for her vocal, and often volatile, expression of faith. Not only did her views clash with Puritan interpretations of scripture, her outspoken and public actions repulsed and worried male Puritan leaders. These events were occurring even as gender roles were becoming more firmly

entrenched; they understood women and men as responsible for increasingly separate duties.¹²

As New England communities grew, they experienced significant setbacks and cultural changes. Indian wars left profound scars on the colonies. Also changing during this period was an increase in trade and a shift away from founding ideas of brotherly love and community above self. Commercial interests became a major factor in New England coastal communities, and male membership in churches began to decline. This decrease in membership was the result of a variety of factors, including increasing demands of business and, some argue, the challenge that Puritan worship and hierarchy posed to male roles of dominance and social supremacy. The expanding population of people who shared different religious values was also an important development during this period; the relatively homogenous religious communities were now giving way to a broader spectrum of citizens. The “city on a hill,” without the relative protection of shared values and strict commitment to Puritan ideals, became an unattainable.¹³

During this period, women proved to be more faithful in religious life and membership and gradually began to outnumber men in the congregations. This was painfully apparent to religious leaders who lamented declining male conviction while explaining female faithfulness as a natural result of their especially close relationship with mortality through the travails of childbirth. Accordingly, a new appreciation for female spirituality was developing. While not going so far as to say that women were inherently as or more spiritual than men, some argued that their unique experiences led them to lives of greater devotion in matters of faith. By the end of the 1600s and the beginning of the 1700s, church leadership recognized that they must do more to bring

people back to the fold. Earlier efforts to make covenants and membership more accessible had failed to stem the decreasing numbers of faithful, a phenomenon shared in much of the colonial new world across many denominations. During the early 1700s, church leaders focused their preaching in an effort to revive religious observance and Christian attitudes. This would bear significant fruit in the colonies and add to the distinctive character of colonial America and religious experience. Women would find this religious “awakening” substantively liberating.¹⁴

The First Great Awakening offered women important and expanded opportunities for public expression. While some women expressed themselves with extreme physical displays of spiritual feeling, a departure from traditional expressions of faith for most Protestants and usually in the context of revival meetings, others stepped forward as exhorters, missionaries, and preachers of the Gospel. Though their activities, specifically as preachers in such varied backgrounds as Dutch Reformed, Puritan, Baptist, and Shaker traditions, have largely gone unnoticed by past historians and were essentially ignored by feminists pressing for political change, they worked not only to preach, but also to record and publish accounts of their experiences. In this way they were their own historians, recording what was most important to them. Some men publicly praised such women, while others saw it as an abomination and such women as masculine. That women found praise for their endeavors is an important development in that it shows that female preachers were not necessarily seen as deviant during this period.¹⁵

During a period of necessity when all who could preach effectively were wanted in building up churches, women were often seen as an asset in achieving the goal at hand. Brekus’ study of female preaching extends well into the 1840s, when the popularity of

female preaching waned even as congregations grew in strength. Devout women who had labored to bring the gospel to thousands were later “written out” of church histories by their male counterparts who chose to see the revivals as a male achievement, and later feminist scholars ignored female preachers of the time possibly because these women had not challenged male dominance more directly. Ultimately, the experiences of these and many other women who expressed their faith publicly show that women did not simply bow to expectations of their society, but, because of their belief in spiritual equality, found ways to expand their public roles. They also worked to spread their vision of Christianity, and were able to do so effectively. Another way to think of female preaching during the Great Awakenings and at other times of extreme need is that this was welcomed by many, but when the need was over, many women either stepped back or were strongly encouraged to leave such work exclusively to men. This coincided with further developments with regard to women’s roles in society as a whole.¹⁶

During the years of strife leading up to the Revolutionary War and during it, women brought their influence to bear through revolutionary activities. Boycotts of British goods was meaningless without the cooperation of colonial women, who, as managers of their homes, made decisions concerning the purchase of necessary domestic goods. Their commitment to producing replacement goods and changing dietary habits (such as exchanging tea for coffee) applied pressure to the British economy and lent stability to the patriot cause. Further, women participated in the political discourse of the day, even though they were not “official” leaders of the revolution. Women who participated in such activities might be lampooned by men who thought they were overstepping themselves, as is evident in Philip Dawes’ 1775 cartoon, *A Society of*

Patriotic Ladies, which shows “manly” women disregarding their proper roles in favor of participation in the political arena. Once the war began, women were heavily involved in supporting the war efforts. This involvement in birthing the new nation may not have granted women freedom from odious legal constraints, but it did reveal a new role for women in American society. In the new republic, women were seen as uniquely qualified to instill virtue in their offspring because of their roles in their homes. It was thought that their fulfillment of this role would ensure the security of the new nation. Such a responsibility was powerful in its implications, and women took it seriously. The idea of “Republican Motherhood” facilitated greater educational opportunities, thus extending their view beyond the home, but it also further cemented the idea that the place for women was the home. Civic and religious virtues were intertwined; the devoutly Christian woman was also one who offered stability and education needed to nurture virtuous sons and daughters.¹⁷

Following the Revolutionary war, the rapidly expanding frontier and religious revivals in the new states offered women new opportunities for religious expression, even as the ideas of how religious feeling should be expressed began to change. In addition, new questions regarding religion in government emerged with the formation of the Constitution. The new nation would not sanction any one particular sect as a state church; this was part of the experiment with liberty and unprecedented self-rule that set the United States of America apart from other countries, but also presented new challenges to secular leaders and clergy alike. Historian Susan Lindley argued that “conventional wisdom” pointed to the importance of religion in establishing moral society. How would moral values be taught and societal standards kept? How could the young nation imbue

its youth with virtue in the absence of a particular, state sanctioned church? The fact that there would be no state church meant that clergy and society at large must depend on the efforts of women more than they had done before. Though some states continued to support churches and even continued to levy taxes specifically designed for that purpose on the grounds that religion helped form the basis of moral society, these practices were discontinued by the early 1800s. Along with elevated status and educational opportunities, Republican Motherhood may also have had the unintended consequence of further entrenching the idea that religion was more of a female pursuit.¹⁸

Already concerned with the overall decline in religious involvement of Americans, church leaders of many different sects were spurred to action and embarked on missionary efforts to reach the lost saints of the towns and backwoods. The sprawling young nation was a promising, though imposing, missionary field. From these efforts grew a vigorous, evangelistic culture that spread across the continent in influence and stature and, ultimately, led to further efforts across the southwest. As part of this new evangelism, men emerged as the primary expounders of the gospel in public, while women continued to be active in the home. Missionaries found ready converts in women who joined churches with enthusiasm and sincerity. Even so, the ultimate decisions regarding religion in the home were the man's to make: if the woman's religious preference or expression offended the husband, he was free to bar her from practicing it or expressing her religious views at home. In this way, men, especially southern men for whom honor and patriarchy were critical to their success and sense of self, might maintain their control and feel more comfortable with their own process of religious conversion. While religious efforts showed periods of decline and growth, the steady

advance of the frontier meant that some women of each generation of Americans through the early 1900s would face the challenges of establishing new communities and women would continue to be influential in the spread of religious ideals.¹⁹

As the Second Great Awakening continued, women remained potent supporters of the cause and continued to take active roles in preaching and testifying both in formal and casual settings. As before, there were many church officials who welcomed their involvement, some because they enjoyed success because of it, and others who genuinely held such women in high regard. Women so involved did not escape the criticism of detractors, however, and some could be scathing. They might be accused of being “masculine,” prostitutes, neglectful of home and family, or other criticisms almost exclusively based on sexuality and gender roles. Regardless of the fact that social ideals for womanhood at the time did not encourage public preaching, some women ignored this in favor of what they felt was a higher duty. Action was encouraged by changing views of womanhood and piety, which had for some come to include the view of women as naturally more pious than men beyond the earlier idea of female piety as a result of physical suffering. There were male preachers who came to rely heavily on women as part of the religious revival then sweeping the nation, and who accepted women’s efforts as integral to the success of religious growth. Eventually the excitement of the Second Great Awakening, or the period of “Revivalism,” decreased in intensity, though various religions did continue missionary work and revivals remained a fixture of American religious life. Soon the political difficulties and religious schisms that played such an important role in dividing the states would be central in public and religious life.²⁰

Women's "crusades" and "moral reforms" were a natural outgrowth of their religious efforts and revivals during the Second Great Awakening. Each of these reform efforts closely aligned with traditional female roles. Educational reform, temperance, and anti-slavery efforts all shared connections with motherhood, piety, and virtue. Education was driven by the need to obtain better education for children, a clear connection to women's roles in the home. Temperance was linked to both women's roles as moral teachers of children, but also came about because of issues of poverty due to excessive drinking, spousal battery, and abandonment. Women who fought for temperance also fought on religious grounds, connecting the Bible's admonitions of sobriety to a stronger society and righteous living. Women continued to intensify their work in these efforts, and though their push to abolish slavery was not widely and fully embraced until the Civil War began, their work was essential in bringing the "peculiar institution" to an end. The push for temperance continued through the end of the century and well into the next, resulting in the formation of the Women's Christian Temperance Union and other organizations designed to stop the sale and consumption of alcohol and educate youth about other "unhealthy" habits. Perhaps the most important consequence of this spirit of reform and the widespread revivalism and evangelism from which it sprang was the experience women gained in organizing for a cause. These initial struggles were an outlet for women who hoped to make an impact on political decisions, even though such participation was still oblique since women were not yet welcomed on the center stage of political life.²¹

The Civil War would offer still more opportunities, perhaps not for causes as much as for the monumental effort women of both sides would undertake to support their

troops and the war effort. These efforts included material as well as moral support, and women on both sides of the conflict saw their cause as divinely supported. In the closing years of the war, women volunteered as teachers to educate the southern poor, white and black, and the newly freed who were in such need of them.²²

During the final years of the Civil War, many southerners, and, to a lesser degree, northerners expressed the sentiment that they were reaping the penalties of having forgotten God, and that they must make restitution for this lack of religious commitment. Especially among Confederate troops late in the war, revivals were conducted with great frequency, and men who may not have been pious before the war found comfort and strength in Christianity. They communicated their faith and new devotions to family at home. Even Lincoln spoke in his Second Inaugural Address concerning his views that perhaps the country was paying a divinely exacted cost for the sin of slavery. In a period of tremendous suffering and loss, women who were left behind faced the disastrous consequences of the war firsthand.²³

It was during this time that women formed societies for the support of the armies, the education of freedmen, and other social causes including expanded rights for women. Some of their efforts met male resistance at first, especially those causes which would expose them to the cruelties of war or which directly threatened to upset gender norms, but women maneuvered around this resistance with claims that such service was entirely fitting the role of women as nurturers. Perhaps the shifting views from women as morally weak to that which defined women firmly as inherently pious creatures was due in part to their efforts both before and during the war; not only did they argue that Christian charity and freedom be extended to slaves, a view that gained acceptance in the north late in the

war, they also saw to the care of thousands of suffering and dying soldiers, sometimes on the grisly fields of battle. The ideals of womanhood and what role women played in society would be irrevocably altered.²⁴

This period saw a significant and continuing change from ideas of republican motherhood to another idealistic, yet potent image of woman. This ideal solidified by the late 1800s, as what some have called the “Cult of True Womanhood” wherein a “true” woman was one of moral and sexual purity who was not only responsible for her own chastity, but was also a “constant” for the morally weaker male sex; such women were domestic, submissive, virtuous (meaning sexually pure), and pious. These developments occurred at a time when the industrial capacity of the United States allowed it to burgeon into a truly global power, and the demands of the industrial machine met with the growing needs of women to join the public workforce combined with the need for cheap labor. In the “cult of true womanhood,” working women were sullied by the world of men, but in reality during this time, upstanding young women throughout the nation joined the workforce. Other women witnessed appalling conditions in tenement housing as they worked to aid the destitute and participated in other philanthropic endeavors.²⁵

The last major westward expansion was also taking place during this time; Indian wars were fought to their final ends and, scarred and bloodied, Native Americans were relegated to reservations. The opening of the last vast tracts of prairie land and semi-arid regions of the west to settlers proved a heady mix of opportunity, danger, risk, and reward. It was also an attractive object for evangelism as the west had earned a reputation for violence and debauchery, but also as a place where religious people were in need of ministers and open land might offer opportunities for land seekers to build new

communities. Such an opportunity for spiritual labor was not easily passed up by resolute men of the cloth.²⁶

Women arrived on this frontier only a few at a time initially; attached to military outposts as wives to officers, as the spouses of ranchers or, less common, as spouses of cowboys or other workers on early ranches. They brought with them a rich inheritance of expectations and the example of other women before them who had worked to share their values, and who also strove to enlarge opportunities for future generations of women. One might ask how much of these values they truly embraced, or if they fully accepted the standards of their time. The words they left behind help answer such this and their actions further reveal the extent to which they embraced or even shaped the expectations.

In the final decades of what many saw as the closing years of an American westward adventure, and at the height of tremendous industrial development, women like McCaleb were at once in two worlds. They suffered the strains of frontier life, yet within a few years they enjoyed the conveniences that growing industry and technology provided. This became a reality in a very short period of time, as track was laid that connected the dusty, raw plains of the Texas Panhandle to the cities of the east, Midwest, and far west. They also lived in a time of changing expectations for women and staunchly protected traditional views of what womanhood, in its purity, should be.

For women in the Texas Panhandle, they both adhered to and challenged these traditional roles. The juxtaposition between expectation and reality, restriction and freedom, tradition and innovation, can be seen in how women conducted their spiritual and religious lives. As with frontier life and social change during this period, women

negotiated these dichotomies with remarkable flexibility. Through study of women's religious lives during this period, the ways women affected change in their communities and in expectations for womanhood become clearer. Many historians argue, and primary documents such as the popular literature of this period confirm, that "true womanhood" was defined through women's influence and activities in the home and good works in the community. The home was the woman's "sphere" of influence, and a proper woman recognized that role and adhered to it. Their religious activities on the frontier reveal a shift in this understanding wherein women simultaneously showed a disregard and respect for this ideology. This pattern echoes the experience of previous generations of American women for whom necessity or a sense of spiritual "calling" trumped social expectations. Their actions, records, and impressions recorded by the men they influenced reveal this pattern as it unfolded in the Texas Panhandle.²⁷

Women worked to encourage others in observing higher moral standards, and supported informal religious gatherings during the early days of settlement in the Texas Panhandle. The earliest permanent communities developed in connection with ranching. Atascosa was the first of these, inhabited largely by Mexican and Spanish Catholics invested in the sheep ranching industry. Protestants came into the area soon after. Early church services and dances were held in the Romero home, the Romeros being the most influential of these early settlers. Records do not explicitly state that Casimero Romero's wife planned and carried out these church service and dances, though knowledge concerning Spanish culture does suggest that the matriarch of the home would be the primary planner and facilitator for such events. For the tiny village of Atascosa, later known as Tascosa, these early services served to bind the community together, and

settlers of all faiths were present at these occasions. Strict rules accompanied the events, including an expectation of soberness and rules against carrying guns into the dances. These rules elevated the expectations for all, and helped ensure that such events would continue to be attractive to upstanding citizens. Not all religious encouragement was as public, though many ranch women who made the panhandle their homes did make their influences felt with regard to it.²⁸

The most passive form of influence women exerted was as representatives of feminine behavior and expectation in American culture. As figures in society who were held up as the more virtuous sex, they influenced society through the very assumption that they were morally and spiritually more sensitive than men, but also through their fulfillment of those expectations. While not always taken seriously, many did stand firmly for religious ideals. Mrs. S. A. Bull recalled her respect for the Sabbath day as shown in her refusal to go fishing on Sunday. Though the men teased her about this, she persisted. She also remembered the efforts of a young Missouri schoolteacher who learned to ride a horse and rode, sometimes at night, the fifteen miles from Dalhart to church in Dumas. Apparently, her example was a positive one and the cowboys from the ranch made it a habit to go with her. It is certain that her religious scruples were not the only characteristic of this “awful fine girl” to encourage the young men to attend church, but her presence and actions led them to church with her. Similarly, before many women had settled in the panhandle, cowboys happily donated money to aid in building some of the first small church houses in the area. When female numbers were greater, cowboys would help pay itinerant preachers so that religious services would be possible. Young, single cowboys knew, perhaps, that few young women would feel inclined to settle or to

stay in a land lacking in the basic fundamentals of stable, upright living. Others exemplified their belief in and support of feminine piety in more active ways.²⁹

The first religious efforts of women in the panhandle included encouraging religious observance for those in their areas of influence. This included encouraging others to aspire to a high moral code of conduct. This encouragement came during the early years of settlement in the panhandle when cattle and other livestock vastly outnumbered human beings, when even men who had religious tendencies were compelled to spend long hours working, often being away from the ranch for weeks at a time. When Charles Goodnight and his wife lived in Colorado, he built a church for their community at her request. When they settled in the Panhandle and were living at the JA Ranch, she again asserted a strong moral presence. At the ranch, she encouraged the cowboys to take Sundays off and to attend church services at the home ranch headquarters. While cowboys were not able to take time off during the busiest seasons of the year, they did respect her wishes during less strenuous periods. Circuit riders who came to the area could expect a warm welcome and a comfortable stay at the ranch. For ranch women such as “Molly” Goodnight, such opportunities must have been a relief from the difficulties and loneliness of life on the plains- for example, one account of this early period revealed that Goodnight’s nearest “lady neighbor” lived eighty miles away. As families began to move into the region, they sometimes encountered unexpected difficulties.³⁰

At home, women saw to it that their children were taught Christian values and, when possible, went to church. Maude Smith Galloway told of her efforts as a young mother living in Llano, about 14 miles southwest of Claude. Her husband was often busy

with farm work on Sundays, but she and her child went to church regularly, and walked to services each week. One Sunday on their way home, she and her small child were overtaken by a violent hailstorm. As the egg- sized hailstones beat down upon them, she covered her child with her own body to protect her. Young Maude returned home badly bruised, but her child was safe. She remained undeterred from attending future services. Other women served as quiet examples of faith. Such mothers had a significant impact on their children. Hill wrote of the impact his mother had on his life with her quiet faith. These early impressions were part of what impelled him to offer counsel, often religious in nature, to the student body of West Texas State College. Other women spoke from the pulpit and testified of their own religious conversion.³¹

Women exerted moral authority in their homes and communities by encouraging virtuous and religious behaviors, a task which they fulfilled through direct and indirect missionary work, public exhortation, teaching children at home, and other actions that revolved around their work within their own denominations. Behavior that embodied the classic expectations for womanhood was imperative to their success: they were to gently invite, not demand, and were to stand as examples to others. Women also testified of their own conversions or implored others to seek greater spirituality in revival meetings. This mirrored the experience of women in previous generations, where women served to encourage others in a revival setting. Still others, though much rarer, spoke from the pulpit. One enduring example of such a woman is Martha “Grandma” Rogers, a Methodist who took her duties very seriously. Speaking forcefully about her early experiences as a pioneer woman, she did not apologize for preaching from the pulpit, an action, she argued, made necessary by the lack of a minister and, at times, stalwart male

leadership. When she saw that there was a need, she stepped in to fill it, and was revered by her congregation for her efforts. She is one of only a few women to have been given a write-up in the biography section of an official history of Methodism in the Texas Panhandle.³²

If the historical record is to be believed, doctrines and social constructs demanding womanly submission to male authority have never been fully embraced by either women or men, even when they were fully aware of the consequences that might follow. Just as some men deeply resented women in the public sphere whether representing religious piety or not, some women felt comfortable leaving the public sphere to men while they addressed the needs of the home and neighborhood. What is also clear from this analysis is that societal roles for women were more fluid than rigid. Women experienced the greatest freedoms, both physical and spiritual, when they were participants in frontier expansion. Historians have argued that life in the west offered unique opportunities and freedom for individual growth and expression. Indeed, frontier life offered both increased risk and increased freedoms. What made opportunities exceptionally open and unique in American history up to this point hinged on a variety of factors.

The scarcity of women, especially initially, increasing options in the workforce as towns grew and as societal trends looked more favorably upon women who worked outside the home, necessities of frontier life and the demand for women to engage in tasks otherwise expected of men, all combined with the cultural heritage women enjoyed from preceding generations of American women. The frontier certainly offered the most freedom, but it was as part of a larger, national trend. True women were described in tight

parameters, but their actual experience was much broader. For women in the Panhandle of Texas, women used the expectations for their gender to shape the communities in which they lived, but also used such expectations, combined with the influence of a changing national society, to move beyond what had been deemed acceptable behavior. Additionally, life on the frontier offered women opportunities that frontier women in previous generations had enjoyed in some measure: because of the rigorous nature of frontier life, women could engage in traditionally male work, they could step in to fulfill male religious roles, and they could exert more authority as moral guardians precisely because of the harsh conditions. They could do these things and still be considered feminine because the extremity of life demanded it.³³

The rough environment was part of what shaped expectations for the upcoming generations, as well. One example of the acceptance, even praise, which girls garnered for more traditionally masculine endeavors, can be found in the story of Mrs. S. A. Bull's daughter. Growing up watching the boys rope and skin Lobo wolves on the Figure 2 Ranch in Moore County, she ran down and killed her own Lobo wolf when she was about eighteen. She had been on her way to a friend's house to sew, but used the sewing scissors for the unlikely task of skinning and cutting the ears off the wolf. She then turned in the skin and ears for the bounty offered. Her story was published in the Dallas papers, if not for the fact that she chased down and killed the wolf, then for the fact that she dispatched it with an unscrewed saddle horn and skinned it with her sewing scissors. Stories such as this suggest that frontier young women were celebrated for their toughness and ingenuity, but also revered for their ability to maintain a certain amount of gentility. She could dispatch a wolf but also master the art of sewing. In this way, she

both exceeded the boundaries of expectation and stayed within them, and was praised for both.³⁴

In many ways, the experience of Texas Panhandle pioneer women was a culmination of the experiences and efforts of generations of women who extended themselves well beyond the limits of societal expectation, as well as helped shape and conform to them. By examining the actual behavior of women and not simply the proscriptions themselves, it becomes apparent that women never fully accepted restrictions that accompanied roles they fulfilled in society. They were positive actors in developing expectations for their gender, and were diverse enough that universal expectations could never adequately or successfully define the character and behavior of all. It is clear that portrayals of an anomalous few breaking free from societal expectations is not substantiated by the evidence; the continued reiteration of female limits as evidenced in the historical record suggests that such proscriptions were never rigidly followed, and were consistently challenged. A more accurate description of societal expectation might be as a fluid barrier, ever-changing and being shaped by the women it was meant to contain.

Ultimately, women of the Texas Panhandle frontier inherited a national tradition of feminine stewardship of moral values; that this was seen up to this time as an effort carried out mostly within the walls of the home is a matter of record. By the late 1800s, women were stepping more forcefully out of the home and into the community, shepherding wayward souls to spiritual and physical salvation. On the frontier, this mission expanded because of necessity, and women were emboldened both because of this fact but also because of perceptions of spiritual peril and a growing acceptance of

female presence in the public sphere. That is not to say all female public presence was welcomed or even tolerated, but expectations were changing, and on the frontier, what might be seen as deviance in eastern cities was embraced as commendable confrontation of behaviors that might tear down young communities, or snuff them out at the very start.

Like so many pioneer women during this period, McCaleb worked to establish a strong church and reach out to those in need. As a woman, she took seriously the moral imperative understood as the special responsibility of women at that time: a responsibility to teach, nurture, guide, and protect those in her charge, especially with regard to spiritual matters. As a woman on the frontier, she also had an opportunity to do what many women in more settled areas of the country were discouraged or even prohibited from doing: offer public prayers and speak from the pulpit. During the period of frontier life and early community development in the Texas Panhandle, women utilized their social roles to encourage religious observance in others, establish more morally upright communities, and extend the reach of Christian institutions and belief. In doing this, they answered a moral imperative thought to be the especial province of women and expanded acceptable roles for women. First, they used their moral and religious identities to help shape the goals and attitudes of their communities. This held true in their homes and in the wider community. As figures in society who were held up as the more virtuous sex, they influenced society through the very assumption that they were morally and spiritually more sensitive than men (and they took advantage of this cultural fact). Next, they exerted moral authority in their homes and communities by encouraging virtuous behaviors and religious observance, a task which they fulfilled through public exhortation and other actions that revolved around work within their own denominations. Finally,

women expanded their spheres of influence and challenged the limits of their moral authority as they became involved in local and national efforts, such as their work with the Women's Christian Temperance Union and missionary work. As they worked in these efforts, they shaped, extended, and accepted culturally dominant limits to their activities.³⁵

Women did more than encourage, preach, testify, and educate. As the fledgling communities of the panhandle grew, and as new communities were planned, women took active roles in building up these communities. They worked to bring in new settlers who might share their values and bring greater social stability and economic prosperity to the region, and they also worked to build the physical structures needed to continue their mission of faith.

¹Unknown author, "History of First Baptist Church, Claude, Texas." Manuscript, filed under Armstrong County, located in the PPHMRC. These and other brief histories were often written by early church members. Unfortunately, many of these early chroniclers failed to credit the author, or, in some cases, date the manuscript. This particular manuscript was probably written by a member of the congregation in the 1930s or 1940s, judging from dates and other references included in the body of the text.

²Susan Hill Lindley, *"You Have Stept out of your Place": A History of Women and Religion in America* (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996) 1-29; Catherine Brekus, ed., *The Religious History of American Women: Reimagining the Past* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2007).

³Often misunderstood as a single group, Pilgrims and Puritans were different in their beliefs. While Pilgrims (who were also known as Separatists) broke from the Church of England and were more austere in their worship, Puritans were concerned with further reform of the Church, reducing sacraments and other traditions that they felt interfered with purposeful worship. There were several other differences in addition to these, not mentioned here. All three groups faced persecution due to their beliefs, though Puritans were able, initially, to more fully realize a society based on religious belief and practice, a society they hoped would be a "city on a hill."

⁴ Mary Beth Norton, *Separated by Their Sex: Women in Public and Private in the Colonial Atlantic World* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2011).

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Lindley, "You Have Stept out of Your Place,"; Carol F. Karlsen, *The Devil in the Shape of a Woman: Witchcraft in Colonial New England* (New York, London: W.W. Norton & Company) 154-179. Karlsen discusses the changes in how women were viewed in society in England and in the colonies, emphasizing that, although the Puritans saw women as potentially good and necessary to the righteous upbringing of a family, they also maintained beliefs I have described here. She argues that these would have been seen as "self-evident" truths that underlay the fabric of society, and would not have been wholly abandoned even by Puritans of this era.

⁷ Catherine A. Brekus, *Strangers and Pilgrims: Female Preaching in America, 1740-1845* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998) 23-33. Though this work focuses primarily on the late colonial/early republic period, Brekus does develop a brief explanation of early colonial religious experience. Additionally, other religious traditions practiced in the colonies are covered.

⁸David A. Weir, *Early New England: A Covenanted Society* (Grand Rapids, Michigan and Cambridge, United Kingdom: William B. Erdmans Publishing Company, 2005) p. 176-178, 215-219, 231-235, 373.

⁹ Ibid; Brekus, *Strangers*, 29-33; Lindley, "You Have Stept out of your Place," 1-29.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Brekus, *Strangers*, 29-30.

¹² Ibid. The idea of female and male "spheres of influence" was not verbalized as such until later; the idea was certainly part of societal understanding of gender roles well before that.

¹³ Weir, 112, 125. Weir mentions in passing the impact of King Philip's War, and discusses the efforts churches expended in bringing more people to the church or in maintaining their numbers by way of a "Halfway Covenant." He also covered the changing values of Puritan society with regard to law and the influx of settlers who did not share Puritan standards, practices, and beliefs. He emphasizes these points throughout the book.

¹⁴ Lindley; Some women became so ecstatic in their physical movements that there were actually a few fatalities recorded of women who suffered broken necks or other injuries - see Charles A. Johnson, *The Frontier Camp Meeting: Religion's Harvest Time* (Dallas: Southern Methodist University Press, 1955); perhaps further research could be done with regard to the idea posited here that women were more faithful because of physical hardships they endured. One might ask if the same level of adherence to religious life was exhibited by women who were childless, or by men who experienced especially harrowing physical challenges in comparison to their fellows; see Richard D. Shiels, "The Feminization of American Congregationalism: 1730-1835," *American Quarterly* 33 (Spring, 1981): 46-62, for further discussion of this topic.

¹⁵ Brekus, *Strangers*, 33-67. Brekus includes many religious traditions in her research and shows the range of acceptance and rejection of women as preachers; Lindley, 39-45; By this time, the Separate Baptists had overtaken the Quakers as the sect that offered the most opportunities for women to publicly preach. A few other sects also offered increased opportunities for women, including Methodists.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Brekus, *Strangers*, 68-80. Dawes' cartoon is on p. 69.

¹⁸ Lindley, 48-52; for a complete discussion concerning state-supported religion, including taxation, and the continuing debate concerning this topic after the states adopted the Constitution, see The Library of Congress, "Religion and the Founding of the American Republic: Religion and the State Governments," Exhibitions <http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/religion/rel05.html> accessed 4 May, 2015.

¹⁹ Christine Heyrman, *Southern Cross: the Beginnings of the Bible Belt* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997) 165-205. Heyrman argued that church leaders deliberately altered their presentation of religion in an effort to remove the threat of women as authoritative religious figures or to patriarchy in society in order to woo men to the Christian cause; Charles A. Johnson, *The Frontier Camp Meeting*. In this older text, the author specifically discussed the experience of women during the period of religious excitement of the 1830s frontier. Examining both how women expressed themselves and how others (specifically male church leaders) perceived their behavior, Johnson's work is important to revisit here. Also included are primary documents that further illustrate women's frames of mind concerning religion during this period.

²⁰ Brekus, *Strangers*, 120-161, 167. Page 167 contains examples of accusations and criticisms that female preachers might endure, as conveyed by the experiences of Eleanor Knight, a preacher who taught throughout New England. The idea of piety as an innate characteristic of womanhood should not be overstated here; it was still a developing idea during this period.

²¹ Lindley, 90-116. Lindley is careful to point out that not all reform efforts sprang from religious belief, though many were clearly connected, such as anti-slavery efforts.

²² Ibid.

²³ James M. McPherson, *For Cause and Comrades: Why Men Fought in the Civil War* (New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997) 62-76, 117-130, 169; Reverend T.J. Stokes to his brother, 1864. Abraham Lincoln, "Second Inaugural Address," 1865. Captain Samuel T. Foster, diary entries, April 1865. These are printed in William E. Gienapp, ed., *The Civil War and Reconstruction: a Documentary Collection* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2001) 240-241, 299-300, 308-309; Harriet Beecher Stowe declared that both sections were "guilty before God" because of their complicity in slavery and that they would likely face His "wrath" because of it. Quoted in Lindley, 112.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Barbara Welter, "The Cult of True Womanhood, 1820-1860," *American Quarterly* 18:2, part I (Summer 1966): 151-174.

²⁶ James Bruton Gambrell, *Ten Years in Texas* (Dallas: Baptist Standard, 1910).

²⁷ Welter, "Cult," 151-174.

²⁸ John L. McCarty, *Maverick Town: the Story of Old Tascosa*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1988; Frederick Nolan, *Tascosa: Its Life and Gaudy Times* (Lubbock: Texas Tech University Press, 2007); Jose Ynocencio Romero and Ernest R. Archambeau "Spanish Sheep men on the Canadian at Old Tascosa" *The Panhandle Plains Historical Review*. Vol. XIX (1946) 45-72.

²⁹ Angie Debo, Mrs. S. A. Bull to Angie Debo, Dalhart, Texas, 28 November 1933; Mrs. Dan Cole, No title, July, 1927. Manuscript located in the Panhandle Plains Historical Museum Research Center in Canyon, Texas. This manuscript is Mrs. Dan Cole's memoir concerning pioneer life in Channing, Texas. Panhandle Plains Historical Museum Research Center will hereafter be abbreviated to PPHMRC.

³⁰ Bull to Debo; Catherine Andrew, "Frontier Women of the Texas Panhandle" Master's Thesis, West Texas State University, 1973, 48.

³¹ Maude Smith Galloway, "Fifty Years in the Texas Panhandle," memoir, 1960. Located in PPHMRC; Bull to Debo.

³² Joseph O. Haymes, *History of the Northwest Texas Conference, the Methodist Church: First 50 Years, 1910-1960* (Nashville: The Methodist Publishing House, 1962); Martha "Grandma" Rogers, "Talk Made at Church," Canyon, Texas, 1932. Transcript located in the PPHMRC.

³³ See letters to and from C. W. Post concerning the Double U Company, letters located in the Southwest Collection, Texas Tech University, Lubbock, Texas. The Southwest Collection will hereafter be referred to as TTSWC. Company from prospective settlers show the interest women of varying walks of life had in settling in Texas. Some wrote in hopes of showing spouses and other male relatives the merits of relocating.

³⁴ Bull to Debo.

³⁵ Unknown author, "History of First Baptist Church, Claude, Texas."

CHAPTER III

THE KINGDOM OF GOD AND COMMUNITY TOO: BUILDING COMMUNITIES OF FAITH

Henry Shaller and his wife, Ida, were among the early Anglo-American settlers in the Texas Panhandle. Choosing Canadian as their new home, Henry built a general merchandise store and the family settled in living quarters he had constructed above it. Henry had become a devout Presbyterian after a conversion experience at a revival meeting before coming to the panhandle. At that time, there was no Presbyterian church building in Canadian, so Ida and others from the church advocated that one be built. They were not idle in their request, and Ida and two other women from the fledgling congregation embarked on an effort to solicit funds from the community for the undertaking. After one particularly successful day of fund-raising, Ida, arriving triumphantly home, shared her story of success with her husband. A man of strict principle concerning the evils of alcohol and saloons, he declared “I hope you did not go into the saloons.” Ida admitted that saloons and the patrons therein had supplied most of the money they had gathered that day. No mention is made in the historical record of what his reaction was.¹

Settlers came to build and to wrest opportunity from the land itself. Armed with this sense of purpose, women practiced an active, “muscular” Christianity, showing their faith through word and deed, using it to build, encourage, and shape the land and lives around them. With it they ameliorated the loneliness of frontier life, taught and encouraged others, facilitated and supported early worship services, helped construct church houses, provided relief for the needy, and spread the influence of Christianity through missionary work. Through their religious activities, women helped shape the history, culture, and physical geography of the Texas Panhandle; its physical structures and moral framework stood as testaments to their efforts. They began humbly.

Ida and her friend were alone neither in their efforts to build the first church houses on the Texas Panhandle Plains nor in their willingness to step over the lines of social mores to achieve goals they felt were worthy. Moral authority to act and to work for the good of community and for the uplift of society was theirs, an inheritance from preceding generations of women- mothers, preachers, and those who testified in public or shared their faith in the quiet of their homes. Their willingness to overstep the bounds of proper feminine behavior was both part of that heritage and a product of the realities of frontier life. Women were not going to wait for others to do what they thought was necessary but would proceed as they saw unmet needs. Such was the urgency and energy that characterized many western frontier pioneers and towns in this region during this period, a character reflected in the way settlers found their way to this newest frontier.

Western towns have often been portrayed as dens of wild behavior, and in fact many were at one point in their development. Just as the “wild west” was and continues to be an exciting draw for both casual and serious students of history, so is the image of

desperate women, torn from hearth and comfortable home by ambitious husbands to settle the wild, unbridled west. While there can be no doubt that some women went west as a result of coercion, many women in the final decades of the 1800s and earliest 1900s did so with enthusiasm. Women, like men, saw opportunities for social and economic growth and were encouraged by favorable reports concerning westward lands. Their interest in new opportunities in the west is clear in letters they wrote to developers who advertised in newspapers throughout the country. Portraying the Texas Panhandle as the picture of health, prosperity, and opportunity, their advertisements drew interest from men and women alike. C. W. Post was one such developer who sought to build a model community wherein he would actually provide buildings (he even planned for a small church to be built) and small farms in exchange for rent. Several women wrote on behalf of male relatives or spouses, though some single women also showed interest in Post's enterprise.

One woman, a Mrs. L. A. Mason, wrote to C. W. Post on behalf of her husband. She could not bear another long Ohio winter, she explained, and her high school aged daughters yearned to live in the West. She and her husband would come to see the land, and she would leave him there to settle the household. Worried that he might return before she and the daughters could rejoin him, she inquired after possible employment to keep him occupied and thus circumvent such a calamity. Sara A. Park wondered if young women could obtain "house steads," but also wanted to know if there was work available for those (young women) who were "desirous to earn their own living." Nora Laiston wrote from Cushing, Oklahoma, to inquire about land conditions, and intimated that others would come with her if the land and terms were favorable. These are hardly the

letters of women who were forced into the demanding lives of pioneer women; they are the words of women who were positive actors in their own lives. While each of these women wrote in 1908, their courage was similar to that of earlier Texas Panhandle pioneer women. The earliest pioneers knew they could not rely on railroads or even the barest of comforts when they arrived. There would be plenty of employment and all in the form of building the region and making it a healthy home in which to raise their families.²

What they encountered once they arrived in the Texas Panhandle was probably more difficult than they could have imagined. It was a region only recently taken from Native Americans who had fought desperately to keep it. It was home to soldiers, ranchmen, and the few who provided services to them. In the harsh, lonely conditions in a plains region dominated by sheep and then cattle ranching, most of the influence they had was in their own homes as nurturers to family, workmen, and occasional visitors. The loneliness and solitude ran as a common theme through their lives. For days or weeks at a time, women braved solitude and felt the emptiness that came from having few others nearby who could understand the consuming nature of frontier life for a woman. Louis Fairchild reveals the scope of this reality in his book *The Lonesome Plains: Death and Revival on an American Frontier*. In it, he writes that in 1880 there were only 400 females in the entire Texas Panhandle. It was a new world for women, an opening range where cattle certainly outnumbered men and young single men outnumbered young single women 14 to 1. Census records show counties where there were only a few adult women; daughters in their earliest years of childhood are recorded with their families, years away from marriageable age and too young to offer the conversation and social

outlet so lacking in the sparse country. Even as the panhandle filled with settlers, women continued to experience the bitter loneliness of the plains. Those who had come with the early waves of settlers and those who came at the turn of the century often shared similar conditions of solitude, and some found comfort in prayer.³

Alice Ward was one such pioneer who, as a young married woman, sought refuge in faith to help her through the early days of settlement in Dumas. “It took lots of praying to get adjusted to the hardships and the lonesome days,” she wrote, and was overjoyed to see an occasional cowboy come along who might enjoy a visit with the fledgling family. Minnie Hobart wrote to her mother in 1902 about the long stretches of time she spent separated from her husband while he was away on business. “One of the worst things,” she confided, “is the distance from Church.” Raised in a religious home, she was a faithful Christian. The separation from church caused worry for the little family as they struggled to build a life for themselves. While they could not always go to church, Minnie provided religious education in the form of Bible reading with her children and encouraged them to read on their own. This sense of duty to encourage and instruct reached beyond responsibility to family for these early women.⁴

Wives of early ranchers faced similar conditions on the plains. Taking on the role of comforter, moral advisor, and sometimes spiritual leader, many of these women sought opportunities to help guide cowboys on the ranch. One of these women, Luann “Annie” McAllister, wife of the LS Ranch General Manager, J. E. McAllister, was active in this regard. She culled books and periodicals for suitable reading material the men would enjoy but that also had an uplifting message for them. Often, these would include such works as the *Christian Herald*. She placed this reading material in the bunkhouse for the

men to read, but above this gentle persuasion, she also provided for other needs. When three cowboys from the LS were in a saloon fight in Tascosa and were killed, she saw to it that they had suitable burial services, sent each man's property home to his family, and wrote letters of condolence. Molly Goodnight offered similar encouragement, asking that cowboys on the JA Ranch quit working on Sundays so they could attend church services held in her home. As a devout woman, she clearly saw it as her duty to oversee religious instruction where she could. She and other ranch women knew how cowboys behaved, but they strove to influence them to live more correctly. At times, the impetus to help in the spiritual education of cowboys was based upon more than a desire to uplift, but upon the desire to protect their children from some of the rougher habits of the cowboys.⁵

Matthew "Bones" Hooks was a pioneer, cowboy, and one of only a few Black men who lived in the Texas Panhandle during this period. He remembered fondly the women who came to his defense when the White cowboys teased and mistreated him. They kindly helped all whom they could, and Hooks recalled the ministrations of one pioneer mother who taught him not to swear. He had picked up quite a lot of rough talk from other cowboys, apparently, including the phrase "by God" which he uttered as "I God." One of the little boys on the ranch had heard him say this and had begun a habit of "cussing." His mother was unable to break the boy of it, and approached Hooks. "Bones," she said, "young Bob is taking up your speech and I don't want him to say "I' God." She admitted that she could not change the boy's behavior as long as Hooks kept saying it, and promised him a new Sunday suit if he would break himself of the habit. He strove to mend his ways and explained to "young Bob" that, as a Black man, this was the only way he would ever own a new suit. Women had to be resourceful in the religious education of

their families, and in this and many other quiet yet persistent ways they worked to influence the wider community as well. While these and other women longed for the stability, education, and society that came with church, not all settlers hungered for the presence of one or even felt that it was necessary.⁶

Tom O'Loughlin and his wife, Ellen, were among the first settlers in Wheeler County, arriving in the mid-1870s. Their son, Miles, recalled watching as Fort Elliot was built. Life near the fort was largely centered on the lives and needs of the soldiers there, but it also sprang from the hunts that had emptied the region of its great Bison herds. Tom O'Loughlin ran a respectable café, but there was also "feather-bed hill" where prostitutes and other less upstanding citizens resided. The café, of course, served all who came through its doors. Miles remembered that there was simply no need for a church in such a place. "We did not need churches," he explained, because "people were honest and trusted one another." Further, there was a priest who would come to town once a year, and an occasional traveling minister to offer services. The fort apparently boasted plenty of piety, since it housed a chaplain. Besides, O'Loughlin observed, "About the only people living around town were gamblers, soldiers and the bad women so a preacher would have done very little good." According to this assessment, those who were honest were already faithful. A church was not really necessary and for the lonely soldier, the unsavory gambler, and the fallen woman, it would have been rejected useless to such debauched persons. This view was, of course, not shared by all early settlers. Before structures were built and preachers came to stay, religious women found ways to conduct worship services.⁷

Often these early services were held in homes that were simple dugouts, and at times it was challenging to make room for all who wanted to attend. Numerous accounts of such meetings pepper county histories and early settlers' recollections. In Hereford, for example, nearly all congregations met in private homes in the early years, specifically prior to 1899 when more permanent arrangements were made. Often such services included a meal afterward, and if a travelling minister was staying with the family, they would provide for his needs. Some families purchased refined sugar, a luxury for most families, so they could bake special desserts for the occasion. Extra duties fell to the women who took up the task with enthusiasm. Some of the early services were one or two family affairs. This was especially true in the very early years of settlement, such as in Childress County in the mid-1880s. Regardless of the number of families who attended, the special effort required to hold services at regular intervals must be appreciated in light of what was already a very difficult life on the frontier. Women who made sure that itinerant preachers were fed and homes prepared for church services were also responsible for making clothing for themselves and their families, assisting with farming duties, and cooking and cleaning without modern conveniences. Meetings might also be held outside the home in much larger gatherings. Revival meetings were popular among settlers as both religious and social outlets, but they were also an opportunity for women to express themselves publicly.⁸

It was in these settings that women were more able to freely express their religious convictions and take active roles in the conversion process. Gatherings often lasted several days. Often older women took the lead in both testifying of their experiences and in urging sinners to repent and be saved. Some engaged in these efforts

with such intensity and persistence that their pleas were occasionally met with hostility, particularly from young men who were happy to continue in their rowdy ways or who might have felt coerced to join a church. Others were successfully entreated and appreciated the guiding hand offered to them. Meetings such as these continued to be a remarkable setting for religious autonomy for women, though most did not hold official church leadership positions. Exhortation was one of many ways in which women influenced the character of revival and camp meetings, but they also worked to support them in other ways.⁹

Ministers' wives might be called upon to make special efforts for such occasions, such as in the case of Ruth Cochran of Memphis, Texas. She and her husband, Frank, were asked to make the long journey to a tiny neighboring town and hold a revival meeting. Their new baby was only a few months old, but Ruth consented to go on the two-day long journey by wagon to the neighboring town. Ruth took special care to arrange for the care of her little family as they set out on their trip. When they arrived in Lefors, there were no enthusiastic crowds to greet them, a possibility they had been warned about. They understood it was a "hard place." Still, they continued in their work. While the success of their revival meeting was mixed, Ruth's willingness to sacrifice for the sake of sharing her faith and supporting her husband's ministry mirror the sacrifices of many other women in making revival and camp meetings successful. Their experience also reveals the sometimes tepid response travelling preachers endured, though most revivals were well-attended and heartily welcomed. Throughout the panhandle, communities saw a continued population growth that would make construction of churches possible.¹⁰

For land developers and community boosters who sought to create stable communities where people would pay the highest prices for and have the greatest positive impact on the community, the construction of churches was important to achieving their goals. The presence of churches implied permanence and decency, qualities which could increase the asking price for land, and, with the influx of stable settlers, ensure the continued success of the community. Parents who hoped for both financial and familial success did not want to live in a wild town. With these related goals in mind, community organizers and land developers reached out to women of faith to “boost” their growing towns, and women were happy to comply. One developer was C. O. Keiser. In his efforts to establish Canyon City, he asked settlers to write favorable letters describing the positive attributes of the new town, chiefly its religious qualities. It was generally women who undertook this task, writing positive letters that reflected the pride and hope that they felt concerning their town and the possibilities they envisioned for it. They reassured prospective settlers that theirs was a community built upon Christian values. At the same time, they were working hard to build and keep their communities as clean as what they described.¹¹

Women were active in building the physical aspects of religion; they encouraged the men to build churches, but they also worked to procure funding for their construction. At times women did not wait for the men to discuss the possibilities; they went out and began the process immediately. Women held dinners, bake sales, ice cream socials, oyster suppers, and solicited donations from local businesses and citizens. Such efforts were cooperative in nature; women of all faiths helped raise funds for many different churches to be built. In addition to raising money, they would craft items for use in the

completed church house. These efforts helped in knitting the community together as people from different faiths worked to help one another. The enjoyable atmosphere of fundraising events also provided needed rest for settlers. Mrs. S. R. Lowrie told of her mother's fundraising work with Methodist and Baptist women who took advantage of court sessions to raise funds for church building, and sold meals to the men who attended the sessions. These efforts continued until both the Methodist and Baptist churches were completed. In Canadian, the women of the Presbyterian Church not only worked to procure funds for building the church, but also planned and paid for the construction of the Manse that accompanied it. These were significant efforts resulting in the accumulation of substantial capital, though many early efforts were carried out as they were needed. More organization was necessary, and for many churches, this need was met through the organization of Ladies Aid Societies.¹²

Establishment of these societies rapidly followed the formation of congregations. In Claude, the women of the First Baptist Church established a Ladies Aid society in 1895, only five years after the church was organized. Generally, they carried out fundraising efforts and worked to provide for the social aspects of church membership and community involvement. They were vigorous and creative in their efforts. Women of the First Christian Church of Amarillo raised enough funds to completely pay for the lot for their first church building. As the head of the Ladies Aid Society for the Church, Bessie Wolflin held the original deed to the land. Presbyterian women in Canyon worked to provide building funds, but also raised enough money to purchase a piano and pews for the new sanctuary. While fundraising and social events were vital to their efforts in

developing the strong communities they envisioned, there were other, more basic needs that women fulfilled.¹³

Disease could be a compelling reason for resettling in the panhandle. In addition to touting the moral virtues of new settlements, land developers also publicized the health benefits of living in the semi-arid west. As a result, tuberculosis sufferers found their way to the dry, fledgling towns of the Texas Panhandle. Built in 1901, the Catholic hospital St. Anthony's Sanitarium, staffed initially by nuns from San Antonio, was the final stop for those arrived too late to reap the benefits of the drier air and warm climate. Caregivers worked heroically to save sufferers of lung diseases, but also saw to the needs of patients suffering other ailments and injuries. For these women, such work was a part of a faith and service-centered life that would occupy them for the remainder of their lives. Even while these women worked to establish medical care in the region, towns were growing throughout the panhandle and churches were still being built in most of them. While churches were being built, settlers needed places to meet that could accommodate their growing numbers.¹⁴

Most early congregations met in whatever buildings they could find to suit their purposes during this time of community building. Congregations often met in union services where Christians in a community shared common worship services. In Canadian, Catholic churchgoers attended union services alongside Protestants. Where there were larger populations, sects met separately. They used schoolhouses, courthouses, and other community buildings for their purposes. For example, following their 1888 organization as the First Baptist Church in Childress, members met for services in the local courthouse. Southern Presbyterian Addie Whitcomb remembered meeting for Sunday

services in a local grocery store. One Amarillo congregation, the First Christian Church, met for a short time in the Old Red Front saloon. As Ida Shaller had been, so were other pioneer Christians; practicality sometimes trumped propriety. As church houses were completed and often preceding their completion, women turned their attention to other needs of the church and its members, even those in other frontiers throughout the world.¹⁵

As Ladies Aid Societies met the needs of their own congregations, they turned their attention outward. This was not a local trend, as many sects throughout the country had been developing missionary societies that were connected to other “women’s work.” As they had done for local congregations, women worked to raise funds for missionary efforts. Their societies were able to send money to help fund frontier mission work and congregations in need. One example of this is the First Baptist Church of Claude which sent donations to struggling congregations and missions abroad even though they were experiencing financial challenges of their own. Some missionary societies, such as one affiliated with the Presbyterian Church in Canyon, were created as additional women’s organizations alongside existing women’s groups. Over time, some churches chose to merge these women’s organizations, thus maximizing the efforts of those involved. Women involved in mission society work performed a variety of functions, including sending aid packages to struggling frontier churches and ministers. Even churches who were also struggling to build congregations and pay their own bills reached out to help with what money or goods they could raise. In this way, they extended their influence beyond the borders of their own growing communities to other western towns and, finally, to other nations. Women’s efforts through the prism of religion were, in every

respect, implements that extended their influence and values to an ever broadening expanse.¹⁶

Women in the Texas Panhandle helped shape the moral and physical aspects of their communities as they applied their religious beliefs to settlement. When first arriving in the region, they encountered loneliness and, at times, isolation. Many women used their faith to help them overcome the challenges they faced, often drawing upon the faith they had been taught in childhood. They also brought with them a sense of purpose borne of religious conviction blended with the expectations of the time in which they lived. They embraced both the ideal and expectation, but retained an element of practicality that sometimes led them to unorthodox solutions. In embracing the ideal, they reached out to those who were not necessarily following a path of faith or who were far from the influence of virtuous parents, preachers, or churches. Ranch women in particular used this opportunity to become a source of stability for their “boys,” but also provided the means whereby the men around them could find their own way to lives of faith. Even as more was expected of them, they used societal expectation as a fulcrum to modify the behavior of others in society and to elevate the standards within their communities. With fulfillment of expectation, in other words, came respect. As part of their efforts to build strong communities, women accepted the challenge of encouraging prospective settlers to consider relocating to panhandle towns.

Land developers advertised the benefits of the plains and touted the advantages of the wide open spaces to landseekers, or, as some called them, “homeseekers.” During this period, land developers sought the help of women who might write to family members and friends in praise of the vitality and stability of the region. This included descriptions

of morally upright communities, and those who hoped to build a thriving center of business and culture on the plains understood that stable individuals and families would be needed to fulfill this dream. Women did indeed write home, but they were also materially involved in making their new home a place that reflected their hopes for their families and their aspirations for building a morally upright society. They did this by first instilling ideals of faith in their homes, and then by facilitating religious observance with others.

There were few families initially, but as often as possible they gathered in private homes for church services. Women supported and often planned such occasions. They also helped coordinate revival meetings, and supported the efforts of itinerant preachers whenever possible. At times, they participated in public prayer and exhorted others to repent of unsaintly habits and attitudes. They made sure that their children were reared in religious homes- a difficult task in a country beset by the difficulties accompanying new and rapid community building. In addition to tasks carried out in the home, they ventured out into their communities where they could be a part of constructing the churches they so longed to have.

The realities of frontier life afforded them greater freedom to act. Though evangelical Christians might have been expected to be more active in their religious efforts than the mainstream ideals imply, women on the frontier enjoyed an even greater opportunity for autonomy and action. Because of the demands of frontier life, they had to be self-sufficient. They also followed larger national trends in that, as they formed Ladies Aid Societies and built churches, they were taking part in an increasing cultural understanding that nurtured community involvement as it related to women's roles in the

home. Their energetic embrace of these roles and apparent sense of mission is impressive. They exhorted and expounded Christianity, aided in the success of revival and camp meetings, helped build and furnish churches, and helped draw settlers who would help shape the early communities of the Texas Panhandle. They supported the many varieties of Christians who came to the panhandle, often helping to raise funds for churches that were not their own. They did not shy away from the occasional unorthodox methods of creating communities of faith on the frontier, as in the case of Ida Shaller and her intrepid companions. As they worked to strengthen their homes and towns, they emerged as influential leaders and catalysts for positive change and stability in their communities. Beyond this, they also began the process of extending their influence to other communities.

Even while they worked to build their own congregations and influence moral development in their own towns, they also sought to aid other communities like their own. In forming missionary societies and raising funds and goods for the relief and growth of other congregations, they expanded the reach of their ideals and their support of Christian community building. This was especially evident in their support of foreign missions where monies collected in the panhandle might be used to meet the needs of the poor while inculcating Christian ideals in distant countries. Congregations began these efforts at different times, but the mission was the same: to spread the message of Christianity and alleviate suffering.

In these ways, early settlers were part of a process of building not only the physical structures of community, but moral ones as well. This process was repeated over and over again as new communities formed across the region, but the pattern is

consistent. Wielding religious conviction and moral authority provided by preceding generations of Americans and embraced and nurtured by the newest generations, women acted decisively in shaping their lives and societies. Their efforts also included direct political action based on the very principles they had used and were using to transform the region, and would lead to further expansion of female roles in society and politics.

¹ Unknown Author, "Charles Henry Shaller: A Hemphill County Pioneer" unknown date. Unpublished article located in PPHMRC. While the name of the author is unknown, the author does identify him/herself as the child of Evelyn (Shaller) Newton, Charles Henry Shaller's daughter. The article is a brief history concerning Henry Shaller and his wife's lives in Canadian, Texas, beginning with their settlement there in 1884. Another account given by Fleda Shaller Studer, daughter of Henry and Ida Shaller, states that Henry Shaller joined the Church in Canadian in 1895; Hillarie Easley-McPherson, Interview with Mrs. J.E. Haley, granddaughter of Henry and Ida Shaller, Midland, Texas, 2013; A portion of this chapter was presented as a research paper entitled "Building Communities of Faith: Women on the Texas Panhandle Frontier," at the West Texas Historical Association Conference, Spring 2013.

² Mrs. L. A. Mason to C. W. Post, Lisbon, Ohio, 16 March 1908. Double U Company files, TTSWC. Mrs. Mason sent a few more letters, one including a job application for Mr. Mason which she filled out in his absence. There were also two letters from Mr. Mason including one explaining his regret that he could not move his family to Texas but that he would be happy to work there if there was employment available; Sara A. Park to C. W. Post, Kewanee, Illinois, 14 February 1908. Double U Company files, TTSWC; Nora Laiston to C. W. Post, Cushing, Oklahoma, 11 January 1908. Double U Company files, TTSWC.

³ Louis Fairchild, *The Lonesome Plains: Death and Revival on an American Frontier* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2002) 28-30. This figure refers to men and women between the ages of 15 and 30; United States Census records for counties in the Texas Panhandle in 1880 reveal a sparsely settled region populated almost exclusively by men.

⁴ Mrs. J. F. (Alice) Ward, *Gardening for the Master, by a Pioneer Woman* (Louisville, Kentucky: Herald Press, 1960) 77-79; Priscilla H. Wilson, *A Pioneer Love Story: The Letters of Minnie Hobart* (Shawnee Mission, Kansas: Team Tech Press, 2008) 43-45.

⁵ Catherine Andrew, *Frontier Women of the Texas Panhandle*, Master's Thesis, West Texas State University, Canyon, Texas, 197324-25, 34-35, 48-49; Fairchild, 131-132; Unknown Author, "'LS' Men Traverse Memory's Range in Texas Cow Country" *Kerrville Mountain Sun*, Kerrville, Texas 3 October 1940 Thursday, 4.

⁶ Matthew "Bones" Hooks, WPA Interview with Bones Hooks, Library of Congress, U.S. Work Projects Administration, Federal Writers Project (Folklore Project, Life Histories, 1936-1939) Texas Biographies. 30 December 1940.

⁷ Sallie B. Harris, *Hide Town in the Texas Panhandle: 100 Years in Wheeler County and Panhandle of Texas* (Hereford, Texas: Pioneer Book Publishers, Inc., 1968) 54; United States Census, Wheeler County, 1880, shows Ellen O'Loughlin as Tom's wife.

⁸ Paul Ord, editor, *They Followed the Rails: in Retrospect, a History of Childress County* (Childress, Texas: Childress Reporter, 1970) 257; James D. Vardy, "Reminiscences of James D. Vardy of Esteville, Texas." No date. Transcript located in the PPHMRC; Una M. Brooks, "The Influence of the Pioneer Women Toward a Settled Social Life on the Llano Estacado," Master's Thesis, West Texas State Teachers College, 1942, 111-113; Maude Smith Galloway, "Fifty Years in the Texas Panhandle," memoir, 1960. Located in the PPHMRC.

⁹ R. L. and Pauline Durrett Robertson, *Panhandle Pilgrimage: Illustrated Tales Tracing History in the Texas Panhandle*, 202; Ruth Cochran, "Revival Via Covered Wagon" autobiographical article, 1974, located in the PPHMRC; Fairchild, 185-189; Pauline Durrett and R.L. Robertson, *Panhandle Pilgrimage: Illustrated Tales Tracing History in the Texas Panhandle* (Canyon, Texas: Staked Plains Press, 1976); Ord, 257; Martha "Grandma" Rogers, "Talk Made at Church" 24 April 1932. Manuscript located in the PPHMRC. Rogers was a respected member of the community and an influential member of the Methodist Church.

¹⁰ Ruth Cochran, "Revival Via Covered Wagon" autobiographical article, located in the PPHMRC.

¹¹ William Black, "C.O. Keiser's Economic Activities in Randall County, Texas" Master's Thesis West Texas State College 1960, 48-49; Jan Blodgett, *Land of Bright Promise: Advertising the Texas Panhandle and South Plains, 1870-1917* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1988) 88-91.

¹² "Charles Henry Shaller, Hemphill County Pioneer," 2; Fleda Shaller Studer, "The Presbyterian Church in Canadian," unknown date, located in the PPHMRC. Studer did not include the story of Ida Shaller and her foray into the saloon. Hers is a much more formal history than the interview previously cited; Unknown Author, "History of First Baptist Church of Claude" unknown date, filed under Armstrong County and located in the PPHMRC; Buster Parker with Mrs. S.R. Lowrie, 13 June 1940, "Sketches of My Father and Early Days," Located in the PPHMRC. Lowrie and her family lived about six miles south of Wellington, Texas, during this period; J. M. Russell, "History of the First Christian Church, Amarillo, Texas" 1 April 1935, Amarillo, Texas. Manuscript located in the PPHMRC.

¹³ "First Baptist Church of Claude"; J. Pat Stephens, *And Let Them Make Me a Sanctuary: a History of the Presbyterian Church of Canyon, Texas* (Canyon, Texas: Staked Plains Press, 1974) 25-26; Russell, "History of the First Christian Church, Amarillo."

¹⁴ Charles J. Bier, *The Diary of Father Charles J. Bier: Convalescing in Texas, 1905-1913: Amarillo was my Lot, Father Dunn My Consolation*. Amarillo, Texas: Catholic Historical Society, Diocese of Amarillo. 1949. This memoir is that of a young priest sent to Texas in part because he was afflicted with tuberculosis; Bier discussed this at length and also wrote concerning St. Anthony's Sanitarium; Twice-A-Week Herald and the Weekly Herald 1906-1912, multiple death notices citing St. Anthony's Sanitarium as place of death and tuberculosis as cause of death, along with brief biographical notes; Blodgett, 91-93.

¹⁵ Fleda Shaller Studer, "The Presbyterian Church in Canadian"; Paul Ord, editor, *They Followed the Rails*, 257; Mrs. L. E. Moyer, Interview with Ms. Addie Whitcomb, 19 May 1958. Transcript in PPHMRC. Whitcomb was referring to the Southern Presbyterian Church in Amarillo, Texas; B. Byron Price and Frederick W. Rathjen, *The Golden Spread: An Illustrated History of Amarillo and the Texas Panhandle* (Northridge California: Windsor Publications, 1986) 74; Mrs. Clyde W. Warwick, *The Randall County Story: from 1541 to 1910* (Hereford, Texas: Pioneer Book Publishers, Inc.) 284.

¹⁶ No Author, "History of the First Baptist Church of Claude, Texas," no date. Filed under Armstrong County in the PPHMRC; Stephens, *Sanctuary*, 26.

CHAPTER IV

RELIGION, REFORM, AND POLITICAL POWER: WOMEN OF THE WOMAN'S CHRISTIAN TEMPERANCE UNION IN CANADIAN, TEXAS

The question of woman's suffrage divided women in Texas through the 1910s and highlighted the fact that women did not speak with one voice regarding social and moral issues. Religious women came out in support of both pro and anti-suffrage causes; basing their support or resistance on questions of race, faith, morality, and social propriety. Women had, in increasing measure, become more engaged in political life during the second half of the 1800s and early 1900s. Crafting strategies in which they acted directly to solve social problems and raise awareness about moral issues, women established and joined an increasing number of organizations through which they could exchange and use what they had learned. Structure beyond what one woman or a small group of women could offer was necessary to bring about the change they sought. Organizations provided that structure. Some were built upon religious foundations that could be embraced by the widest possible group of women. Such women shared similar values and were often already familiar with how to work within organizations. Thus organizations such as The Woman's Christian Temperance Union, or WCTU, simultaneously benefitted from the experience women had gained working in reform and church organizations while they also helped shape future goals and growth. For women in Canadian, Texas, involvement

in the WCTU began specifically as a means to prohibit the sale and consumption of alcohol, but grew to encompass related causes including woman's suffrage. As *The Canadian Record* editor L. P. Loomis wrote in 1919, it was "like trying to transform the ideals of a lifetime" but women were no longer the "retiring, quiet creature[s] who took no part whatever in public life."¹

Women were instrumental in American reform efforts at their inception; with the religious awakenings that spread across the new Republic, many women saw religious revival as a companion to the female responsibility of nurturing the moral consciousness and civic virtue of family, but also of an expanding role in society. While American women had enjoyed the greatest freedom of self-expression through religion, reform efforts helped expand their opportunities further. The understanding that they were to raise virtuous children and gently encourage the men in their homes to live morally upright lives came to be, by the early to mid-1800s, the impetus for women to do more to change their communities. The move to become more actively involved in changing their communities can be seen in two reform movements: abolitionism and temperance.²

The anti-slavery movement gained considerable energy with the publication of Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, which highlighted the removal of slave children from their parents. Stowe focused on this cruelty specifically because it affected her most deeply, and its inclusion was a clear plea to women across the country to view slavery through the prism of motherhood. Another anti-slavery message of the time, also included in the book, was the condemnation of Christian churches whose active or tacit consent had allowed the cruelties of slavery to continue. For the religious it was a stinging accusation, and for women, both of these were subjects that lay at the heart of

what many women cherished; their view of themselves as persons of faith responsible for nurturing morality in others, and their unique calling as mothers. Both of these arguments found sympathetic listeners among women (almost exclusively northern) during this period who responded to both pleas of Christian duty and the sanctity of motherhood. These early reform movements would lead to the formation of tightly planned organizations, some of which were heavily influenced by religious ideals. The temperance movement in particular illustrates this, but also reveals another development for American women during this period.³

Reforms dealing with alcohol consumption did not begin with prohibition as a primary goal. Instead, those who recognized the problems drunkenness caused such as labor difficulties, familial problems, poverty, and criminal behavior, sought only to curb excessive drinking. Early reformers relied on persuasive speeches and arguments to encourage the public to avoid drunkenness. While much early temperance work was a result of Protestant prodding and reinforced by clergy from the pulpit, by the 1850s reformers moved to include political efforts; legislation governing the consumption of alcohol became the tool of choice in the fight against inebriation. Such a move was especially significant for women involved in temperance work since they were not only excluded from political activities such as voting, they also suffered intense social disapproval for speaking publicly about such matters. For women who felt that their sex bore the severest consequences when males drank to excess, this exclusion from what had become the main thrust in the fight for temperance was galling. Women who tried to circumvent social proprieties might suffer public humiliation such as that which occurred at the 1853 “World’s Temperance Convention,” where women who tried to speak from

the platform were physically barred from doing so. In this and other ways, they were shunned from publicly expressing themselves even in organizations where they were acknowledged as forces for good.⁴

This treatment caused early feminists such as Elizabeth Cady Stanton to argue that suffrage was imperative if women were to achieve their reform goals. Later, Frances Willard, who would become the second president of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union, also pressed for female suffrage based in part on this argument. Even as women were recognizing that they would need to modify their methods or their political standing if they were to remain fully involved in temperance work, the drive for temperance became more focused on prohibition as a solution to social woes attached to alcohol consumption. In addition, though temperance work was heavily influenced by Protestant ideals and the religious awakenings of earlier decades, some new organizations such as the WCTU, formed to fight for prohibition, would be expressly religious by definition and conduct. This religious connection was also vital in providing a foundation upon which women could build and act. In a society where "true women" were commonly expected to be demure, temperance and prohibition efforts would require behavior opposite of this expectation.⁵

It was through the "Woman's Crusade," beginning in the 1870s, that temperance work became even more clearly connected to women's social roles. Through it, many women also seemed to grasp the importance and power of direct action. While this had been a part of how women dealt with reform efforts during the 1860s, it had become more widespread by the mid-1870s as women targeted saloons and alcohol sellers. Marching into drinking establishments, publicly praying for those within, and decrying

the evils of liquor before startled customers occasionally yielded the closure of such establishments, and even brought lifelong change and commitment to sobriety or, at least, a commitment not to sell intoxicants to others. Such events certainly brought publicity to the cause. For years women had labored to encourage sobriety, but at this time they literally took up banners and led marching bands to make their point and saw their efforts rewarded. Their successes would remain potent examples for future reform women.⁶

While temperance efforts were an important aspect of reform, the Woman's Crusade was about more than temperance; women also did battle against other societal ills or practices they felt diminished the female role in a moral society. Problematic was the fact that expectations for feminine conduct among Protestant women throughout the nation were similar, but the United States was and remains vast in territory, and disparate in economic and social needs according to region, religion, and ethnicity, and encompasses innumerable cultures which might lengthen deviance from expected standards. In short, women sometimes became combatants against one another in their efforts to improve society and fulfill their roles as women. Women as reformers were not always fighters waving the same banner.⁷

As the Texas Panhandle was filling with settlers, reform efforts were already well underway throughout other western states. As part of these efforts, mission homes were created for a variety of these, many by and for women, across the west. They often focused their efforts on "fallen" women or those who might be at risk because of involvement in what Protestant women felt were unhealthy or immoral behaviors. There seemed to be no shortage of women in need of help. Chinese prostitutes in California, Navajo women trapped in un-Christian traditions, unwed mothers, and Mormon women

involved in polygamist marriages were all recipients of reform attentions. Especially in regard to the plight of unwed mothers or prostitutes, reformers coupled the decline of female virtue with male vice, including drunkenness. As historian Peggy Pascoe argued in her book *Relations of Rescue: the Search for Female Moral Authority in the American West, 1874-1939*, reformers failed to appreciate that some of the women they sought to reform were satisfied with their own conduct and situations. “Fallen” women might not see themselves as aberrant in their behavior at all, and some, as in the case of polygamist Mormon women who were the object of reform workers’ efforts in the Salt Lake Valley, saw themselves not only as chaste, but as upstanding examples of Christian morality. Indeed, they felt they embodied the ideal of American womanhood, and resented both the intrusions and accusations of mission women who criticized their beliefs.⁸

Still other women might not necessarily be the object of reform efforts, but might be actively or passively excluded from participating in such organizations. Active exclusion might be perpetuated based on race, class, moral reputation, or religious affiliation. Passive exclusion might occur because of financial condition; not all women had the means or time to devote to such causes. Even with these challenges and differences in viewpoint, some national and international women’s reform organizations would spring from these earlier women’s crusade efforts. The WCTU was one such organization, formed in 1874. By the mid 1890s, the organization had become a formidable advocate of prohibition.⁹

Women arriving in the panhandle with their families were likely well acquainted with the reform spirit sweeping the nation. If religiously inclined and well-off enough to participate, some of the new settlers may have taken part in such efforts before arriving in

Texas. Some, such as Mary Brainard Isaacs, an early settler in Canadian, Texas, had seen “the destruction that drinking had caused” in New York. This earlier exposure to such ill effects was part of what energized her in the work to bring temperance to Canadian. Actions and experiences of early temperance champions were objects of admiration; Mrs. John H. Jones, a founding member of the Canadian WCTU, wrote in glowing terms of these early efforts.¹⁰

In retelling the stories of women who stood up to reticent husbands and stubborn saloon keepers and managed to shut down the liquor trade in their communities, she implied that Canadian women might enjoy similar successes if their goals were pursued with the same conviction. This encouragement reveals another aspect of societal and religious expectations for female behavior during this period, and outlines both their limitations and empowering qualities. In a culture that held up “true womanhood” as the pinnacle of feminine propriety and desirability and was embodied, in part, by female acquiescence to male authority, female actions in temperance efforts were both at odds and in concert with the expectations of the day.¹¹

In practice, the cultural expectation that women be submissive was not necessarily compatible with other aspects of true womanhood: domesticity and chastity (implying both sexual purity and piety). Some historians have argued that the destruction of the ideal itself lay in the very expectations of the time; if women were to be defenders of domestic morality, they must guard against any enemy that might attack it. This invariably led to activities in defense of the home that needed to be executed outside of the home. This was significant for all women, though for women on the frontier, it might be more expansive in practice. Protestant women throughout the country, but especially

those living in less hospitable regions, might be expected to be less meek than their eastern counterparts.

Evangelical Protestant clergy in particular expected a more “muscular” Christianity from followers, and many members embraced this. In the Texas Panhandle, women who withstood the rigors of frontier life and were willing to stretch themselves beyond the expectations of more refined regions were both prized and rewarded. Texas had also long been a missionary field wherein Catholic, Baptist, Methodist, and missionaries of other sects had sought to convert the unbeliever, remind the lapsed religious, and administer to the faithful. The Texas Panhandle was the latest of these frontier mission fields in the late 1800s and early 1900s, and this unique situation of increased latitude in expectations for behavior yielded great opportunities for the women who settled there. When women entered the Texas Panhandle, the task before them in helping to form new communities was daunting. As these developed, so did establishments offering alcohol and other refreshments.¹²

Canadian was one of many cow towns dotting the panhandle during this period. As with most towns growing up along with the cattle industry, saloons were part of the developing town and most likely a popular spot for ranch hands working the nearby ranges. Drunkenness and rowdy behavior were an expected part of life in such towns, where residents often accepted such behavior as part of the youth and spirit of the men who might work for weeks at a time with little opportunity for rest or recreation. Canadian never qualified as a particularly rowdy town in comparison to such places as Old Tascosa or the less savory areas of Amarillo, and, according to George Tubb, one of the first settlers of the town who remembered driving “over this hill before there was a

townsite [sic.],” there were three saloons in Canadian: The Paul Hoefler Saloon and Restaurant, the Berry Saloon, and a saloon run by a man named McRay. Still, the influences of such establishments were not unknown in Canadian, and for families moving in increasing numbers to the panhandle, the realities were sometimes alarming.¹³

In Old Tascosa, for example, a few fun-loving cowboys met violent ends in liquor-fueled shootouts and shooting accidents. Amarillo’s many “houses of dissipation” were characterized by Mrs. R. T. Jones, Superintendent of the Mother’s Department of the WCTU in Amarillo, as “haunts of vice” that led many men into abandonment of their domestic responsibilities. Prostitution, gambling, and drunkenness were part of life in the rougher areas of Amarillo as they were in many larger cities in Texas. Many citizens felt that something must be done to eliminate these conditions. Even Canadian suffered the loss of its beloved sheriff in a scandalous swindle-turned-shootout that, according to witnesses, involved the criminals stopping for a drink at the Hoefler Saloon just prior to the fatal crime. In the wake of such activities and in keeping with the temper of the times, citizens sought solutions that promised to help alleviate the problems associated with drunkenness.¹⁴

In November of 1902 women of Canadian, Texas became part of a larger international, national, and state endeavor to combat the sale and consumption of alcohol. Initially, local prohibition was the primary and possibly only goal of the Canadian women who helped form the core of the local organization. As religious women, they were almost certainly aware of the moral issues surrounding the question, and if they needed proof to support their views, they needed look no further than Boot Hill in Old Tascosa or in the vice districts of cities such as Amarillo, Houston, or Dallas for evidence

of senseless death, crime, and destitution. Training and support necessary to carry out the functions and goals of the organization were immediately provided, as Mrs. Nannie Webb Curtis, an influential member and orator, later president of the Texas WCTU, arrived in Canadian to organize the twenty four founding members of the newest Texan WCTU chapter.¹⁵

This core group would be the backbone of the organization in the growing town for years to come, and would include members from both Protestant and Catholic backgrounds. Initial members were generally wives of local ranchers and businessmen; these could devote both time and social influence to a cause that would prove to be both socially demanding and time consuming. They were also women who were most likely to garner support from more affluent members of the community, and whose educational background and social status may have lent more weight to the causes they supported. Elizabeth Johnson (Mrs. J. F. Johnson) was installed as the first president with Mrs. J. T. Jackson, Mrs. Ed Corson, Mary Moody Young, Elizabeth Dougherty White (Mrs. I. N. White), Mrs. J. M. Shaw, and Ada Dawson as officers. Biographical information held in the River Valley Museum in Canadian, Texas, credits Elizabeth White as the founder of the local WCTU chapter. The next few years saw leaders changing positions, as Mary M. Young replaced Johnson as president in 1903, only to be replaced by Johnson again in 1904. Johnson then served as president until 1939. Other early leaders in these first few years who would be integral to the success and mission of the WCTU in Canadian were Mary Brainard Isaacs (Mrs. W. C. Isaacs) and Mrs. A. M. Newman.¹⁶

However small this group of women was, they enjoyed the support and membership of women who did not have the time or resources to regularly attend

meetings or donate money. For such women, providing goods for bazaars and offering moral support of the WCTU's efforts was all they were able to give. For some this changed as the demands on their time shifted from child rearing to other pursuits. Many men also supported these efforts. Such backing was imperative to the successes the WCTU would attain, especially as they worked to make prohibition a reality in their community. These early leaders and their supporters worked for passage of a local option that would make the sale of alcohol within the city limits illegal. Very little exists in the historical record concerning prohibition efforts leading up to December 1903. We might, however, fill in the gaps somewhat by comparing Canadian's experience to that of other communities undergoing the same process. In communities throughout the country, women marched on saloons, prayed, sang, and even invited liquor sellers to attend meetings where speeches were given concerning the evils of drink. These types of activities were widespread, and were probably part of WCTU efforts in Canadian. Of course it is possible that women of this branch avoided such actions, but this simply does not seem likely given their level of commitment and enthusiasm for the cause.¹⁷

Their efforts led to a local option election to be held on 30 December 1903. In support of this election, Helen Stoddard, president of the Texas WCTU, sent Mrs. A. C. Zehner from Dallas to help support the campaign. Zehner was responsible for helping galvanize local support for prohibition and support the needs of the local chapter. Staying through the entire process, she proved invaluable to efforts there and was reported to have been a "dynamic platform speaker and wonderful Christian woman." The night before the election, townspeople gathered to hear speakers, the primary of which was probably Zehner, speak concerning the necessity and likely benefits of prohibition in the

community. Such an affair would have been a social event of no small importance, and vital to reminding supporters to rally voters for the next day's election. Perhaps it might even change a few minds.¹⁸

An early morning prayer meeting at the Presbyterian Church kicked off the day's events. Women of the WCTU, along with local school children and perhaps other supporters, white banners held high, marched down Main Street singing "The Whisky Shops Must Go." The parade made clear their point: that to preserve the futures of their children and the sanctity of their homes, Canadian must go dry. Near the courthouse and beneath the shelter of two tents set up for the occasion, the women served pies, sandwiches, and coffee to voters and other community members throughout the day. As the final votes were counted, prohibitionists learned that they had gained the victory by a comfortable margin of sixty four to thirty four. The victory was not without some bitterness on the part of the "wets," who would quickly challenge the outcome in another local option election in 1905. Prohibition would not be maintained without continuing, serious commitment to the cause.¹⁹

Prohibitionists confronted the local option election in 1905 much as they had in 1903; Arthur Jones, also traveling from Dallas, played a supportive role in what proved to be a successful defense of Canadian prohibition. Wets challenged the law and failed a third time, this time coming up against a fully trained and independent Canadian branch. They were, as Mary B. Isaacs reported to the state organization, "aggressive and full of enthusiasm, ready to do everything worthwhile to keep the standards of our town." With this final local win, Canadian had moved firmly into the "dry" category though opponents

did continue to challenge the law. This is clear from reports WCTU officers sent to state headquarters, wherein they alluded to the continuing struggle.²⁰

Isaacs wrote again that “Everything we possibly can think of is done to create and keep the temperance sentiment in our midst” though, she admitted that “In spite of all our efforts, however, things will creep in now and then that tends to dishearten but never wholly discourages, and thus we keep pegging away in one way or another.” Perhaps her reports referred to the illicit production of moonshine or to the occasional violators of prohibitionist statutes who were caught and brought before the courts to face prosecution. Whatever the challenge, they continued to push for broader application of anti-drinking laws. When a drinking establishment opened in a neighboring town, the local Union pressed for county wide prohibition. Reporting on their activities in 1909, Mary Isaacs reported that they had taken up their “usual work” in the campaign and achieved a dry county by a “good majority” in 1908. By this time serious efforts were underway again (similar efforts had met with failure in 1887) to make Texas a dry state and Canadian prohibitionists again took the lead in making the drive for anti-liquor success.²¹

In the 1911 election, WCTU women spent Election Day much as they had in 1903; they met early in the morning, and marched with their white banners to the courthouse. Throughout the day they served lemonade to all voters regardless of viewpoint. In Hemphill County the measure passed easily, though it failed to garner statewide approval. The years between establishing the local Union and winning their first local option election and the failure of statewide prohibition were indeed filled with exuberant, careful activity to preserve and expand upon what they had won.²²

Speakers, socials, weekly meeting for women, monthly Mothers Meetings, Father's day observances, and other events were opportunities to socialize and educate. Those who attended might be recognized for their value and roles in the family and in the community and each event carried with it a purpose: to educate participants concerning temperance, religious values, family, the value of familial roles and influence, political issues and societal issues of the day. Each meeting was begun and ended with prayer and devotional services inclusive of all religious groups present. This inclusiveness mirrored the membership of the Union; representatives of each sect in the community were elected from the membership, an important element that fostered cooperation between the local congregations and the WCTU. Efforts also extended to the educational system in Canadian.²³

Schools were a natural target for WCTU efforts, where they would speak to local school children about the dangers of alcohol and tobacco use. They also held writing competitions for local youth in which winners took home prizes for compositions that reflected understanding of temperance issues. In 1909 a "Cradle Roll" was created wherein newborns whose parents hoped for the child to remain temperate and morally strong throughout their lives would be included on a special roll denoting that hope. Parents would participate in a special ceremony in which they committed to raising temperate children through their own examples and education. As part of their ongoing work in support of children, WCTU women worked with schools to provide lessons and reading materials on temperance topics and others based on morality and virtue, warning children and youth of the negative outcomes of reckless behavior. While each of these

efforts sought to strengthen both adults and children in the community, other efforts focused on compassionate service for those in need.²⁴

Members worked to maintain the cemetery and provide headstones for graves without markers. They raised money for this and for other charitable works including what was called the Flower Mission. Begun as a national campaign, this was an effort to bring relief and care to shut-ins and others who were suffering the loss of a family member or who were themselves ill. These efforts might be combined with elaborate programs. Tables would be decorated with flowers and speakers would comment on popular topics of the day. After the program was over, flowers that had been table decorations were given to those in need. Offering memorials and public remembrances were also of great importance to WCTU women, who prepared and approved messages of remembrance and condolence that would appear in the WCTU section of the local newspaper, *The Canadian Record*. Such expressions of sympathy were meant to offer recognition and support to bereaved families in the community and also to show the continuing commitment the WCTU had to the wellbeing of the community. In addition to their efforts to build the community, they also grew in membership to the point where they knew they would need a building where they could meet regularly.²⁵

Union meetings had been held in the courthouse, private homes, church buildings and other public and private buildings, an arrangement that became increasingly inconvenient as the needs of the organization grew. As early as 1904, Union women thought that they might require a building of their own. By 1905, they began to procure funds for this effort and to work for community support towards this goal. Building fund books dating from this period show the rigorous efforts these women undertook to raise

money, acquire land, and reach out to community leaders for support. The record reveals the broad support they received from local, state, and regional donors, some of who were spouses of WCTU members. A Bazaar held each December as a fundraiser was always a financial and social success, and it was during these times that women in the community who might not be heavily involved in other events would show their support for the mission of the WCTU by both providing and purchasing goods. The building was completed in 1911 with meetings held in the new building for the first time in September, though it was not fully furnished until 1917, the same year the mortgage was paid off. Subsequent Bazaars funded other projects, and the building became a center not only for WCTU events, but also for any undertaking considered morally uplifting in the community.²⁶

Such events provided impromptu opportunities for fundraising, as those who used the building also donated generously in exchange for the privilege. There is no record or intimation that such donations were solicited, though they may have been the result of polite persuasion. With its use for community events, the building quickly became a fixture of social life in the town. As part of their position as educated women and educators in their homes and community, early leaders also hoped that one day, part of the building might be used as a library. This hope was realized in 1923. The building was of both symbolic and material value to the community and to those who worked so hard to build it. As the only WCTU built and owned by a local chapter, it served as a special memorial to their efforts to uplift and improve their community. By the 1910s, the United States would face a crisis of tremendous magnitude and social import, and WCTU women would volunteer in ways that would thrust them once more into the public eye as

they supported a nation at war and pressed for their claim to the rights of full citizenship.²⁷

Most Americans saw the events in 1914 Europe as far removed from their own concerns. Images of the war filtered into American newspapers and picture shows, and Americans began to feel the pull towards involvement in the war as they too felt the sting of lost shipping and citizens to the violence of German U boats. Some young men grew impatient, concerned, perhaps, that they would miss out on a grand adventure, or convinced that they must do their part in the vast struggle. One such young man, Charles Mannon Dent, rushed to join the Army under Canada's flag and was sent to the front after only three months of training. He was wounded five times during his service and, when the United States entered the war, tried to transfer to the American service. This attempt failed, and on 21 March 1918 he was seriously wounded and taken captive by German forces, finally meeting his death in a German war hospital in Saarburg, Germany. WCTU women quickly took up work in support of the young men who were rushing to enlist.²⁸

They made comfort bags filled with all manner of goods their "boys" might need: sewing kits (one soldier joked about the copious amounts of thread included), toiletries, and other items that might be of use in the service. The moral needs of their young men were not neglected, and letters and comfort bags included pledge cards. Pledge cards were sent in hopes that soldiers would make a commitment to sobriety and virtue, a hope that was met at times with enthusiasm for the cause as in the case of Willie M. Crow. He signed his pledge card while training at Camp Travis in 1918. Some responded gently that they could not personally take such a pledge, but that they would encourage

temperance or abstinence in others. Arthur Walck was one of these, writing kindly to Mrs. A. A. Parsell in August of 1917. Needs beyond the distributing comfort and reminding soldiers to behave with virtue were also the focus of WCTU women.²⁹

The need for bandages was also a pressing concern for local women who spent nearly every Wednesday through the end of the war preparing comfort bags, bandages, and hospital shirts for the wounded. Initially working independently of the Red Cross, they joined efforts with the organization early in American involvement in the war. Support for the troops took many forms but always reflected the WCTU's basic motto "For God and Home and Native Land." They sent goods and letters to men from Canadian and to those who were also connected to families in town or in the area. Some were only tenuously connected, if at all, since Union women supported as many young men as they could. As part of their correspondence with the troops they often received letters of thanks in reply. As WCTU women carried on their letter writing campaigns throughout the war, young men wrote back describing some of what they encountered abroad. These letters might contain photos showing sights of world travel in the Naval Service or reports from the front lines of France.³⁰

Canadian women recognized the realities of war in the lives of those civilians who suffered its privations. For the duration of the war they supported a young French girl, orphaned during the conflict. Other realities of war included the death of young men who had left their homes to fight and who would never return. As news of sons who died of disease, were killed in action, missing, or taken prisoner reached home, members sent notes of sympathy and other forms of condolence and support. Some wrote to the grieving families not only in support but also as a means of gathering information for a

war memorial to be constructed at a future date. Soldiers were not the only ones to fall victim of disease during this period; the influenza epidemics that swept the United States did not spare Canadian, Texas.³¹

WCTU workers offered the basement of their building as a hospital devoted only to the care of influenza patients. They diligently nursed those overcome by the illness and under their ministrations only two patients were lost out of eighty who were treated there. The sacrifices of these women were very real, especially considering the fact that many nurses contracted the illness soon after exposure. This, combined with the work of thousands of women across the country who worked in factories, war industry, in agriculture, served in volunteer organizations in support of the war both at home and abroad, and those who served as nurses in the armed forces finally brought the question of suffrage to its logical conclusion. This battle had raged for decades, and was a source of contention and frustration for women and men across the country.³²

By 1919, women involved in the reform and relief work of the Canadian WCTU had worked with great success in bettering their communities. Prohibition had been the primary concern of their early efforts, and was the most obvious political achievement to date. Other work claimed much of their time, though they continued to remind citizens of all ages and both sexes of the importance of staying on what they felt was the moral high ground with regard to drink, tobacco, and other harmful substances and practices. It was through this work that many women came to feel that only through enfranchisement could they finally bring to pass the social changes they hoped to accomplish. Certainly women involved in all manner of reform work had realized that, though their efforts to bring about social changes had been effective, suffrage offered a means to enact change

that might lead to more immediate results. As the efforts of reformers increased, so did the understanding among them that they must have the vote.³³

Women in the Texas Panhandle recognized that legislation must be part of the solution to social woes, and made that understanding public even as they took direct action against the liquor trade. They had made progress, but it had been painfully slow. Full appreciation of the need for laws concerning vice was expressed by Mrs. R. T. Jones of Amarillo when she wrote in 1906 that “We appeal to those who have power to do away with such evils. We need a legislature made of men who represent the welfare of society and lend their influence to it. We need courts that stand for the peace and order of our country and not until we get them, can we expect crime to be suppressed and our children educated to a high standard of morality. Who will aid in this great reform? The voter has the power.” Here, she was speaking of male voters only, not necessarily agitating for female suffrage. Though women recognized that laws must change if they were to realize their reform goals, not all women saw suffrage as a needed or even desirable outcome for women.³⁴

For some women, suffrage was seen as threatening to traditional roles. It was simply improper, placing women in the male sphere where women ought not to be; they belonged in the home, not out crying for reform or pushing for a place in the man’s world. Organizations such as the Texas Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage were actually part of a multi-state coalition aimed at keeping suffrage a males-only proposition. Their views were similar in origin to that of organizations such as the WCTU. They believed that one of the most sacred responsibilities of womanhood was to protect the sanctity of the home from the effects of vice and other improprieties. Not

simply a negative mandate, women were also to instill in the next generation civic and moral virtues. Those in opposition to women suffrage thought that voting could be a dangerous distraction from that mission. Some arguments both for and against suffrage were based on questions of race and ethnicity.³⁵

Proponents argued that without the influx of “native-born voters” brought in to the voting fold, those of foreign birth, or aliens, could tip the balance away from traditional American influences in the ballot box. This argument played upon nativist fears that the violence and radical ideas plaguing some foreign countries during this period would be cut loose in the United States, thus endangering the safety and freedoms of the nation and polluting the laws of the land. Similarly, women of the Texas Association feared the impact of an onslaught of Black women voters and the subsequent shift in political power in favor of Blacks. Thus race and ethnicity played an important part in the contest. Pro-suffragists pointed to a series of examples showing that the vote had not, in fact, destroyed femininity or brought ruin to families.³⁶

Women in several states were free to vote with no apparent ill effects, and had also carried out government functions successfully throughout the country, including in Texas. Suffragists argued that in states such as Wyoming, Utah, Idaho, Washington, Kansas, Colorado, Arizona, and California, women voted and no ill effects whatever had followed. Women were already participating successfully in government, they argued, and with positive outcomes. They pointed to the experience of congresswomen from Montana, Arizona, Colorado, Washington, and Oregon as examples of women who were serving. As such they occupied a unique position as women who could finally take an active role within the halls of government to enact the kinds of laws reformers thought of

utmost importance. Many others served in other government positions, demonstrating that they were capable of handling such work. In Hemphill County alone, at least six women had served or were serving as postmasters during this period: Mary J. Alexander, Annie Riley, Malissa Morton, Belle Liston, Stella Davis, and Eva Ackley. In Canadian, the WCTU received regular communications regarding women's suffrage from a variety of sources including the national WCTU and the Texas Equal Suffrage Association (TESA). In truth, women's groups were already politically productive and influential in a variety of social matters, but suffrage could be the final link necessary to join their efforts with the changes they sought.³⁷

Communications from TESA to Mrs. J. F. Johnson in particular tutored women in how to carry out the drive for suffrage. Set up in remarkable similarity to earlier prohibition efforts, Canadian women would have been familiar with the strategies such leaflets described. Pamphlets, speeches, and even letters of support from American officers and soldiers just returning from the war in Europe were meant to encourage, educate, and inspire potential voters. In one of its weekly press releases, Major Richard Fenner Burges, a highly decorated officer returning from France who had been a distinguished lawyer and member of the Texas State House of Representatives before the war, shared his views. "While still in France, I read with deep satisfaction that the past session of our legislature had submitted this amendment. The splendid part played by so many American women in every branch of helpful service to the American soldiers in France, as well as the service rendered to the cause of freedom and democracy by the millions of American women who serve their country with equal fidelity at home, should remove the last doubt...that the extension of the right of equal suffrage is a long-deferred

act of simply [sic.] justice.” Women in Canadian appeared to receive such communication favorably, and included the question of suffrage in their regular meetings. Trusted allies in past fights for reform declared their unwavering support for suffrage, such as Mrs. Nannie Curtis who had been instrumental in their organization years before.³⁸

Writing in January of 1919 following Texas Legislature’s 1918 passage of a measure that would allow women to vote in the Texas primary, Curtis and Texas State Attorney General Calvin Maples Cureton wrote to the women of Canadian, urging them to pay the poll tax in preparation for the primary election. In nearby Amarillo, 2,112 women registered to vote in the Democratic primaries while 2,072 men registered, a fact that reveals the enthusiasm women in the region had for voting. 1919 was a full year with regard to the suffrage issue as it also saw the Texas legislature’s move to fully enfranchise women which was also the amendment Burges had mentioned. Such a measure had to be put to a statewide vote, and was defeated, though it had been popular in the Texas Panhandle, where Hemphill County’s returns showed that 206 had voted for it, and 61 against. National temperament was leaning in favor of suffrage by this time, however, and in June a federal amendment that would secure the vote for women was submitted to the states. By the end of June, Texas voted to accept the amendment. Editor of the *Canadian Record*, L. P. Loomis, commenting in June 1919 concerning the fight for suffrage, called anti-suffragists “Tallow-Dippers” who clung stubbornly to outmoded ways of thinking about women’s character and capabilities. On 18 August 1920, the Nineteenth Amendment became the law of the land.³⁹

The reform minded women of Canadian, Texas, who galvanized their efforts to achieve prohibition, utilized direct political action to affect change in their communities. As religious women, they had shared values in their understanding of morality and virtue and, for many who had a heritage of Evangelical Protestantism, and additional expectation that religious values might be actively pursued in overcoming the human condition. As American women on the frontier, they lived in a culture where practical concerns outweighed social propriety, and where the laws of conduct sometimes gave way to the needs of the moment. Frontier life also laid bare raw elements of human nature, as some communities bore witness to the boisterous exploits of enthusiastic, unbridled men. These properties combined to make for them a unique culture in which to take up the reform causes that were sweeping the nation. They did not act without guidance, nor did they act without memory, for they were tutored in the methods necessary to take action through their religious experience, religiously based reform organizations such as the WCTU, and by the experiences of those who had gone before.

In acting upon the training they received and learning firsthand how to successfully carry out reforms, they also went beyond what they had learned from the WCTU. They worked to fund and establish a unique building to suit their own needs, serve the community, and stand as a center of learning for future generations. They reached out to the community in ways that perhaps they had not thought of when they formed their union in 1902. Throughout the process of years and experience, they also felt the sting of disappointment as they continued to see the impact of those behaviors and products they found so repugnant. While they had initially formed for one purpose, prohibition, they came to understand that their larger goals might be unattainable without

the political power of the vote. They saw their callings as Christian women, mothers, reformers, and eventually, political actors, as intertwined. If they were to attain success as Christian women, they could not ignore the mandates of these roles. As they worked to fulfill these, they used what they knew and educated themselves in the new fight for suffrage.

The story of what transpired in Canadian as this metamorphosis from social gadflies to wielders of voting rights stands out in the papers and recollections they left behind; few of them paint a picture that stands out clearly. They hoped to attain that right, and they worked to make it happen. What is clear from their work and accomplishments is that they used their experiences to bring about political change, and though they worked for the benefit of their community, they earned one of the highest rewards for themselves: the right to vote their consciences in the ballot box. As with any accomplishment, they enjoyed the support of men who sympathized with their cause. Often they joined their efforts with men in their communities to achieve moral and political goals, much as they had done in earlier years of panhandle settlement.

¹ L.P. Loomis, *The Canadian Record*, 26:36, ed. 1 (Thursday, June 12, 1919) Canadian, Texas. Accessed via The Portal to Texas History, <http://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metapht125400/>. Accessed 25 October 2014; The state and national branches of the WCTU titled themselves the Woman's Christian Temperance Union while Canadian records show the Canadian unit as "Women's." The local preference will be used in referring to the local unit, the previous spelling will be used in reference to the former; Items Books cited throughout this chapter consist largely of newspaper clippings from both *The Texas White Ribbon* and *The Canadian Record*. Such clippings are arranged chronologically, but specific dates may not be recorded in the books. Personal notes are also included in these Items Books; Items Books relating the earliest activities for the Canadian WCTU contain clippings from *The Canadian Record* that I have not seen in other depositories; Portions of this chapter may also be found in Hillarie Easley-McPherson's article "The Politics of Reform: Women of the WCTU in Canadian, Texas, 1902-1920," *Panhandle Plains Historical Review*, vol. LXXXV (2014) 59-80.

² Susan Hill Lindley, *"You Have Stept out of your Place:" A History of Women and Religion in America* (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996) 48-89, 90-96 108-114. The question of slavery, while of importance to an understanding of the general history of this period, is not necessary to explore here. The two points covered here, however, do help to understand the shift in the way women behaved as reformers.

³ Ibid. Lindley specifically discusses Stowe's approach to the slavery question. In pages 90-96 Lindley addresses the connection between religion and reform efforts, but also the double standard of behavior for women and men.

⁴ Peggy Pascoe, *Relations of Rescue: the Search for Female Moral Authority in the American West, 1874-1939* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990) for examples of rescue work and changing ideas concerning the role of women and moral authority. Lindley, 98-106. Here Lindley quotes Horace Greely's account in his New York *Tribune* editorial of women being crowded off the stage and others who were "gagged" - "crowding off the platform." Changing tactics and their effect on women reformers discussed.

⁵ John J. Rumbarger, *Profits, Power, and Prohibition: Alcohol Reform and the Industrializing of America, 1800-1930* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1989) 4-41. Rumbarger discusses the involvement of religion in early temperance work and changing tactics; a biographical synopsis of Willard's life and contributions can be found at Woman's Christian Temperance Union, "Frances Willard" accessed at http://www.wctu.org/frances_willard.html. She was also referred to throughout the documents in the Canadian WCTU files in the Hemphill County Library Archive.

⁶ Mrs. John H. Jones "Pioneer Women in W.C.T.U. Activities," No date. Document located in the Hemphill County Library Archive, WCTU files, Canadian, Texas. The author, who was a founding member of the WCTU in Canadian, recounts the struggles of pioneer women to close the saloons and by so doing, save their husbands and families from ruin. She emphasizes the fact that such efforts could be replicated and that the results were achievable for all communities.

⁷ Lindley, 98-106, Lindley specifically mentions the debate among scholars concerning the severity of drinking problems during the ante and post bellum United States. Some argue that they were in decline while others claim that they were rising; Pascoe, 50-69, specifically discusses male vice as it relates to female moral decline, and stresses the argument that some reform women shared a general hostility toward males because of society's double-standard of behavior; Catherine Gilbert Murdock, *Domesticating Drink: Women, Men, and Alcohol in America, 1870-1940* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998) 9-32. Murdock discusses the impact of male drunkenness on women and the early connection between religion and temperance.

⁸ Pascoe, 37-38, 66-69. The author discusses impetus behind these reforms and opposition to the efforts of mission home workers.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Mrs. John H. Jones, *ibid*; Lori-Ann D'Antonio, "WCTU: From Temperance to Community Service," *Pampa News* 6 February 1983. D'Antonio discusses Mary Brainard Isaacs' early experience and reasons behind forming a WCTU in Canadian.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² James Bruton Gambrell, *Ten Years in Texas* (Dallas: Baptist Standard, 1909). Gambrell's book characterizes Texas as a mission field and illustrates the view that Christianity must be exercised more

actively; Ruth Cochran, "Revival via Covered Wagon" Manuscript located in the Panhandle Plains Historical Museum History Center, Canyon, Texas. 1974, Cochran recounts her contributions to revival meetings; Charles J. Bier, *The Diary of Father Charles J. Bier: Convalescing in Texas, 1905-1913: Amarillo was my Lot, Father Dunn My Consolation* (Amarillo, Texas: Catholic Historical Society, Diocese of Amarillo, 1949). Bier describes the frontier conditions and mission character of the Texas Panhandle during this period; Lindley, 50-62 for discussion of the changing understanding of women and women's roles in society, as well as clarification on their behavior in religious and domestic settings; Mrs. S. A. Bull, Mrs. S. A. Bull to Angie Debo, Dalhart, Texas, 28 November 1933. Interview located in the Panhandle Plains Historical Museum History Center, Canyon, Texas. One example of behavior that was viewed differently than it might have been elsewhere is Mrs. S. A. Bull's recollection of her daughter who killed a lobo wolf and skinned it with her sewing scissors while on her way to a sewing lesson. The daughter collected a bounty on the hide, and was regarded as courageous and enterprising for her actions; Barbara Welter, "The Cult of True Womanhood, 1820-1860," *American Quarterly* 18:2, part I (Summer 1966): 151-174. Welter discusses societal expectations for women during this period and the inherent justification for women's involvement in public actions based on fulfilling them; Mrs. R. T. Jones, "Society and its Influence," *Twice a Week Herald* Friday, 5 October 1903, Amarillo Texas. The author clearly expresses expectations of womanhood in agreement with "true womanhood" and Evangelical Protestant thinking of this time.

¹³ There is some disagreement in the records as to how many saloons were in Canadian. George Tubb wrote a heated letter to the editor of the Amarillo Daily News, Amarillo, Texas in 1970, declaring that there were never more than three, while others reported that there were thirteen. Since some recollections I have found of there being thirteen saloons were from those who either came to the area after prohibition was achieved or who were very young at the time, I defer to Mr. Tubb's memory of this detail; Tubb declared that Paul Hoeffle ran a saloon. The saloon was *Paul Hoeffle's* as discussed in Bill Neal's 2008 book *Getting Away With Murder on the Texas Frontier*, but in census records for 1900, Paul Hoeffle is declared as a saloon-keeper; Thomas Berry is confirmed through census records as being a saloon keeper in Canadian in 1900.

¹⁴ The unruly and sometimes deadly behavior associated with saloons and youthful recklessness are recounted in Frederick Nolan, *Tascosa: Its Life and Gaudy Times* (Lubbock: Texas Tech University Press, 2007); Ernest R., ed. Archambeau, *Old Tascosa: 1886-1888* (Canyon, Texas: Panhandle Plains Historical Society, 1966). This book contains the newspaper articles printed in Tascosa during the period and reveals some of the exuberance described here; Mrs. R. T. Jones, "Society."

¹⁵ D'Antonio, "WCTU"; The Texas Woman's Christian Temperance Union, *The Texas White Ribbon*, volume XXI issue number 3, March 1947, 1-2. Here WCTU members explained that stopping the liquor traffic in the community was the primary reason for forming a WCTU chapter in Canadian.

¹⁶ WCTU, Canadian Chapter, Memorial Book. Record located in Hemphill County Library Archive, WCTU files, Canadian, Texas. This book describes the personal lives of many early members of the Union, and offers insight into the contributions and social position of those members; Mrs. John H. Jones, "History of the Canadian W.C.T.U." Canadian, Texas, 1966. This document, written for the dedication of the historical marker, is located in the Hemphill County Archive, W.C.T.U. files, Canadian, Texas; Unknown author, "Women of Canadian." Manuscript located in the River Valley Pioneer Museum, Canadian, Texas.

¹⁷ WCTU, Canadian Chapter, Memorial Book; Unknown author, "History of the Canadian W.C.T.U." circa 1939-1941. Document located in Hemphill County Library Archives, WCTU files, Canadian, Texas. This history must not be confused with Mrs. John H. Jones 1966 article of the same name.; Mrs. John H. Jones, "Pioneer Women in W.C.T.U. Activities," document located in the Hemphill County Archive, W.C.T.U. files,

Canadian, Texas. This history is especially revealing concerning the level of commitment of women to the cause of prohibition and the lengths to which they would go in ridding their communities of saloons.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Unknown author, "History of the Canadian W.C.T.U." circa 1939-1941. Manuscript located in Hemphill County Library Archive, WCTU files, Canadian, Texas, 4-6; WCTU, Canadian Chapter. "Items Relating to the Canadian Union, from September 1904 to August 1905." Record located in Hemphill County Library Archive, WCTU files, Canadian, Texas. Mary B. Isaacs' letter to the Texas State WCTU which was published in the *Texas White Ribbon* also recounts the activities surrounding the first local option election and alluded to bitter feelings by some in the community wrote that such a reaction might be expected; The Texas Woman's Christian Temperance Union, *The Texas White Ribbon*, volume XXI issue number 3, March 1947, 1-2. An account of these early efforts to establish Canadian as a "dry" town may be found here. A copy of this is kept in the Hemphill County Library Archive, WCTU files, Canadian, Texas.

²⁰ Mrs. John H. Jones, "Pioneer Women in W.C.T.U. Activities," Jones acknowledges the continued struggle. Likewise, "Items Books" with dates between 1904 and 1912 relate these challenges in greater detail; The Texas Woman's Christian Temperance Union, *The Texas White Ribbon*, volume XXI issue number 3, March 1947, 1-2. A copy of this is kept in the Hemphill County Library Archive, WCTU files, Canadian, Texas; Mrs. W.C. Isaacs to the State WCTU, *The Texas White Ribbon*, March 1912, in WCTU, Canadian Chapter, "Items Relating to the Canadian Union, from 1911-1912." Record located in Hemphill County Library Archive, WCTU files, Canadian, Texas; "Pearl has seen changes in WCTU, Canadian," *The Pampa News*, 6 February 1983. Pearl Richardson, a WCTU member since 1912, mentioned moonshine manufacture in Canadian.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Mary B. Isaacs (Mrs. W. C. Isaacs) quoted in The Texas Woman's Christian Temperance Union, *The Texas White Ribbon*, volume XXI issue number 3, March 1947, 1; Mrs. W.C. Isaacs to *The Texas White Ribbon*, 1905. Included in "Items Relating to Canadian Union Book, 1905-1906", Hemphill County Library Archive, WCTU file, Canadian, Texas; Mrs. W.C. Isaacs to *The Texas White Ribbon*, 1912. Included in "Items Relating to Canadian Union Book, 1912-1913", Hemphill County Library Archive, WCTU file, Canadian, Texas. Isaacs mentions a sermon given by the Baptist Reverend Burnett at the request of WCTU women. This encouragement and resultant sermons helped keep the issue fresh in the minds of churchgoers.

²³ "Items Relating to Canadian Union Book, 1912-1913", Hemphill County Library Archive, WCTU file, Canadian, Texas; WCTU, Canadian Chapter, Meeting Minutes Book, 1908-1914. Record located in Hemphill County Library Archive, WCTU files, Canadian, Texas.

²⁴ Meeting Minutes Book, 1908-1914. References to the "Cradle Roll" also appear many times throughout this and other Meeting Minutes Books, for example, as in the 25 October 1912 entry describing the enrollment of two infants and the special prayer said for them. This tradition may have been a continuation of an older tradition within the WCTU of new members committing to not only abstain from alcohol themselves, but to ensure that their children did so. Discussion of this can be seen in Ruth Horner, "Woman's Crusade 1874 We Need a New Crusade," *The Texas White Ribbon*, May, 1974. Copy located in Hemphill County Library Archive, WCTU Files, Canadian, Texas; Unknown author, "History of the Canadian W.C.T.U."; notes concerning the Flower Mission proliferate these records, including Items/Clippings Books, Meeting Minutes Books, Letters to *The Texas White Ribbon*, etc.

²⁵ WCTU, Meeting Minutes Book, 1908-1914. Descriptions of such activities are recorded throughout Meetings and Items Books for this period.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ The Texas Woman's Christian Temperance Union, "The Future Belongs to Those Who Prepare for It," *The Texas White Ribbon*, August 1966; WCTU, Canadian Chapter, "Items Relating to the Canadian Union, from September 1904 to August 1905." Record located in Hemphill County Library Archive, WCTU files, Canadian, Texas. Item books from subsequent years through 1910 also used as sources here to show the variety of activities they undertook during this period; WCTU, Canadian Chapter, "WCTU Bazaar Record, 1906-1917" Record located in Hemphill County Library Archive, WCTU files, Canadian, Texas. The Bazaar Record contains financial and planning information, as well as briefs reports concerning both successes and failures of each bazaar. Also included is information concerning donations and donors.

²⁸ Mrs. L.L. Dent, Mrs. L.L. Dent to Mrs. W.C. Isaacs, 30 October 1919. Letter located in Hemphill County Library Archive, WCTU file, Canadian, Texas. The letter describes the life and wartime experiences of Charles Mannon Dent, seriously wounded and captured by the Germans on 21 March, 1918.

²⁹ WCTU, Canadian Chapter. Miscellaneous Items, World War Documents. Records located in Hemphill County Library Archive, WCTU files, Canadian, Texas. Included are miscellaneous items such as a letter from and pledge card signed by Willie M. Crow; Arthur Walck, Arthur Walck to Mrs. A.A. Parsell, Des Moines, Iowa, 16 August 1917. Letter located in Hemphill County Library Archive, WCTU files, Canadian, Texas.

³⁰ WCTU, Canadian Chapter, Meeting Minutes Book, 1918-1919, Record located in Hemphill County Library Archive, WCTU files, Canadian, Texas. This record is replete with descriptions of women who came each week to work in activities relating to the war effort. Attendance notes are also included and further reveal the realities of life at the time. For example, several meetings were lightly attended due to dust storms or illness. The WCTU motto appeared as part of the column heading for the WCTU reports included in *The Canadian Record* during this period, also in the WCTU handbook distributed to Unions throughout the country; WCTU, Canadian Chapter, Meeting Minutes Book, 1918-1919, Record located in Hemphill County Library Archive, WCTU files, Canadian, Texas. Meeting notes at this time include resolutions made in support of such families, though specific descriptions are rare concerning the exact nature of death or calamity; Frank M. Chambers, Frank M. Chambers to Mrs. McGee, France, 10 January 1919. Letter located in Hemphill County Library Archive, WCTU files, Canadian, Texas. Written by Chambers while stationed in France, he wrote to tell some news of his experiences but primarily to thank her for bringing a comfort bag to him when she traveled there. He was on leave so he had missed her visit; Robert Zelzman, Robert Zelzman to Mrs. W.C. Isaacs, Photograph collection, World War service, U.S. Navy. Located in Hemphill County Library Archive, WCTU files, Canadian, Texas. While the letter is missing from this exchange, Zelzman shared photographs of him and the sights he saw while in the Navy during the war; Mrs. John Clifford Russell, Mrs. John Clifford to Mrs. J. F. Johnson, Ochiltree, Texas. 5 March 1920. Letter located in Hemphill County Library Archive, WCTU files, Canadian, Texas.

³¹ WCTU, Canadian Chapter, "Marie Mingaud of La Celle, France, 1918," Photograph with brief biographical note, located in Hemphill County Library Archive, WCTU files, Canadian, Texas. This is a photograph of the child adopted by the Union and a brief note explaining that she was adopted by the Union. They supported her for three years.

³² Unknown Author, "History of the Canadian W.C.T.U." This record includes accounts of the Influenza epidemic, though it is also mentioned in several other sources, including newspapers and meeting notes.

³³ Mrs. R.T. Jones, "Society"; WCTU, Canadian Chapter, Meeting Minutes Book, 1918-1919; Ida A. Jordan, "Woman's Influence in Civic Betterment." National Woman's Christian Temperance Union. 1915.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Debbie Mauldin Cottrell, "Texas Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage," *Handbook of Texas Online* (<http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/vbvtvw>), Uploaded on June 15, 2010, accessed October 27, 2014. Published by the Texas State Historical Association. Accessed 26 October 2014; Alice Stone Blackwell, "Why Women Should Vote" circa 1919; Jordan, "Woman's Influence"; Humphrey, 119-139, details some of the points made by pro and anti-suffragists; Taylor, 119-123, 179-182.

³⁷ CensusFinder.com, "Postmaster and Post Offices of Hemphill County, Texas, 1878-1930" <http://www.censusfinder.com/texas-census-records-13.htm>. Accessed 24 October 2014. Lists all postmasters in Hemphill county during the period stated; Blackwell, "Why Women Should Vote"; Jordan, "Woman's Influence in Civic Betterment."

³⁸ Burges's letter of support is one of several included in Jane Y. McCallum, "Overseas Men and Votes for Women," Press release of the Texas Equal Suffrage Association, Austin, Texas. 17 May 1919. Letter located in the Hemphill County Library Archive, WCTU files, Canadian, Texas;

³⁹ Taylor, 188-192, 172-173; WCTU, Canadian Chapter, Meeting Minutes Book, 1918-1919. Specific entry discussing poll taxes dated 22 January 1919; Various instructional and informational pamphlets, among other documents, are located in the Hemphill County Library Archive, WCTU file, Canadian, Texas. Examples include Carrie Chapman Catt, *How to Work for Suffrage in an Election District or Voting Precinct* (New York: National Woman Suffrage Publishing Company, 1917), and Texas Equal Suffrage Association to Mrs. J. F. Johnson, May 1919, which includes specific instructions concerning how the campaign for suffrage should be carried out. These materials are included in the WCTU files in the Hemphill County Library Archive, Canadian, Texas; Loomis, June 1919.

CHAPTER V

PARTNERS IN PRAYER: MEN AND WOMEN AS COOPERATIVE CHRISTIANS

Though women are the main focus of this study, it would be incomplete without discussion concerning the partnership men and women shared throughout this period. Certainly, if the only experience examined here was the woman's, it would yield an incomplete, misleading picture. Male cooperation was an essential part of the success women earned, and women recognized and utilized the attributes and resources men had to offer. These included shared belief systems, support and leadership concerning religion in the home, support for women's roles as they extended into public endeavors, evangelistic efforts, and active, material efforts in community building and moral reform. Happily, there are many records that document men's experience during this period, though most concern life outside of church and home. Still, religious men did record their own experiences, and most records women kept concerning religious experience included references to men's contributions. Likewise, church histories reflect primarily on male contributions and leadership, a trend shared by men who recorded their own experiences. Combined, these records yield a more complete understanding of how men and women applied their religious views to building communities on the Panhandle Plains, while also providing a more robust interpretation of women's experience.

Ranchmen were the first settlers to come to the area during this period. Many of these men were single, and worked herding cattle and sheep. Catholic Church records show that as some of these men settled down and became family men (some came with their families; Casimero Romero is a notable example), they allowed their children to be baptized and participated in other sacraments of the Church. They also attended church services with their families, as did Protestant men who came to the panhandle. As mentioned before, the Romero home was used for early services before a church was built. Newspapers from Tascosa during these early years show a welcoming attitude toward these functions, though the more rowdy and decidedly less religious aspects of life are intertwined with these accounts. Mrs. Dan Cole, a Protestant who also lived in Tascosa, remembered that, while they never had a church built for Protestant services, the cowboys always donated generously to pay the itinerant preachers who came to town. As ranching became a more widespread concern in the region, ranchmen such as Charles Goodnight brought their wives with them and worked to establish more permanent homes on the plains.¹

Mary Ann “Molly” Goodnight cherished her faith, and her husband supported her attempts to encourage respect for the Sabbath among the cowboys. He did actively support her bid for time off for the men each Sunday, but only as it did not interfere with the busiest times of year on the range. Other ranches claimed interest in piety as well. Mrs. Charles A. Miller told of the cowboys and other workers in Texline who met faithfully each Sunday for a Sunday school. These men, along with the women of the community, also pitched in to purchase Christian literature for townspeople to share. Most cowboys were “always mighty upright people,” willing not only to defend others

but also to treat them with honor, one pioneer woman declared, and, as Miles O'Loughlin argued, being honest and upright was religion enough for some men. For others, faith was integral to life well-lived and the only proper way to raise a family.²

Husbands and fathers sometimes insisted that regular patterns of Christian worship be established in their homes. Women who felt cut off from the luxuries of consistent, comfortable church services found comfort in these practices. Mrs. J. F. Ward recalled that when she, her husband, and their young family moved to Dumas, she struggled to adjust to pioneer life. While she was a Christian woman, the hot prairie winds and the grimy quarters the family inhabited were almost more than she could stand. On the second night in their new home, she could think only of the discomfort of kneeling on the hard, dirty floor when her husband enthusiastically announced: "get your Bible, we must establish our family prayer." His leadership set the tone for their home from the very first and guided them through trying times. They both participated in various church sponsored organizations and missionary efforts for most of their lives.³

Reverend Robeson, an energetic minister who helped establish many churches throughout the panhandle, also saw to it that his family read scriptures and had family prayer together every night. When they lived in Hemphill County, it was nine miles to the nearest church. Undeterred, he placed a chair in the wagon for each of their children for the long ride to Sunday School. Men who held strong Christian beliefs might exercise their roles as heads of household quite strictly, especially concerning vice and other behavior they deemed inappropriate.⁴

Such men might be strict disciplinarians when it came to dancing, drinking, card playing, or other like pursuits. Mrs. Lenna Parker Foster remembered how both of her parents refused to let her go dancing on religious grounds, but seemed to remember her father's attitudes against dancing and playing cards most vividly. "The boys learned to dance," she recalled, "when they went away from home." Alcohol use was also a tender subject for many families of this period, as in the case of Henry and Ida Shaller who both objected to drinking. Ida, as a charter member of the local WCTU chapter in Canadian, Texas, was part of a successful bid to make Canadian a dry town, and then a further push to make Hemphill County dry, as well. The couple was unified in their opposition to alcohol, a unity that would have been an important element in parental solidarity. While shared values in the home were important in supporting women's goals for Christian family life, so was support for religious involvement beyond family Bible study and family prayer in creating the Christian societies religious women, and men, envisioned.⁵

The earliest church services in the area were held in homes or outdoors. Women worked diligently to ensure that services could be held in their homes. This support was necessarily a cooperative effort. W. C. Isaacs, for example, was supportive of his wife's efforts to have Catholic services in their home. The first Mass to be held in Canadian was observed in their home, and Mary Isaacs continued as a devoted member of the Catholic Church throughout her life. The Lair family in Randall County took part in the religious life of the county from the beginning. Lycurgus C. Lair and his wife were involved in organizing the first Sunday School held in Canyon City and were frequent hosts for church services. In Canyon City, Canadian, Mobeetie, and in each community or each homestead where families and neighbors gathered in homes for church services,

cooperation was an important part of their success. Another aspect of that success, of course, was the minister who travelled the miles between settlements and homes to administer to the needs of the people.⁶

Probably the most conspicuous figures of religious men are those who chose to become missionaries, ministers, or priests. Such men suffered difficult conditions of all kinds as they travelled throughout the panhandle and farther to offer religious services to those in need. In this capacity, they offered comfort to many. For women who missed the benefits of established churches and the regular presence of clergy, these men were valuable beyond measure. Their efforts were often nothing short of heroic as they traversed the dusty expanses between settlements, outposts, and homes. The first of these travelling ministers during this period were Catholic priests tasked with preparing sacraments for Catholics scattered across the region.

Charles Bier was a young priest who had fallen ill with tuberculosis while studying for the priesthood. After his ordination, he was assigned to Texas in hopes that he might fulfill his calling as priest and regain his health. What followed was years of travel and work as he journeyed, often by wagon or buggy, to each community that had or might have Catholic residents. He spent many uncomfortable nights on the road, and had to improvise in his duties as there were few Catholic churches in those early days. He found comfort in the energy others in the priesthood showed for their work, and thought highly of the relief provided in St. Anthony's Sanitarium. Priests who had come before him had even fewer comforts and travelled greater distances in fulfilling their commissions. These earlier priests who sometimes came only once or twice a year led Mass, conducted marriages, and saw that children were baptized. Such priests were

creative in making travel as comfortable as possible, as in the case of one priest who built a small kitchen into the back of a buggy. Protestant preachers faced similar difficulties and performed like duties as they, too, confronted the challenges of serving the needs of members and prospective members throughout the plains.⁷

Clergy who were assigned to the Texas Panhandle faced a daunting task. The great distances between settlements, coupled with the lack of roads and challenging weather conditions made such work suitable only for the most energetic preachers. The Methodist Reverend B. F. Jackson was one of these, assigned to the area in 1890. Included in his area were Canyon City, Panhandle, and Washburn, among others. He organized new congregations, served individual members and families, and preached at regular services and revival meetings. He was apparently a good humored man, and knew not to press his point too severely. One night soon after his assignment to the area, he stopped at a White Deer ranch for the night and was welcomed by a Mr. Lippold, the ranch manager. Once settled in the bunkhouse where the cowboys were playing poker, he was offered a place in the game, but declined. The next morning, he declared "I watched your game last night. Now I want you to watch mine. I am the new Methodist preacher at Panhandle and will preach there tomorrow." The next day, all of the cowboys and Mr. and Mrs. Lippold were at the service. His successor, Reverend T. F. Robeson, also energetically took on the work, overseeing the construction of a church in Canyon City. His efforts were welcomed by settlers who hoped to build stable communities where families could thrive. Many of these small towns hosted a less sober element, however, and traveling ministers often commented on how many saloons they found in towns that seemed to house more drinking establishments than might be expected.⁸

Reverend T. F. Robeson declared that, though there were probably fewer than a dozen families living in Canyon when he arrived, there were three saloons. This he dealt with swiftly, inviting John G. Adams, a speaker from Dallas, to convince citizens to vote the county dry. His efforts were successful within only a few years of his arrival. Fannie Hedgecoke remembered the efforts of an early Baptist minister who would, each Sunday, pay a friendly visit to the saloons and say “Well, boys, I’m going to preach today,” at which point the keepers closed the bar and the “boys” went to church. The blend of humor and no-nonsense practicality enabled preachers to reach a wide variety of settlers, while determination and creativity helped them reach their goals. While ministers worked hard to bring positive changes to communities and bring new members into the fold, earthly remuneration was not always forthcoming.⁹

Ministers and their families sometimes suffered privations because of lack of pay, high workloads, and other unfavorable conditions. Sometimes these were chronic, as in the case of one situation that came to the attention of G. S. Hardy, the Presiding Elder of his church in Wheeler County (it is unclear which denomination he was affiliated with). One year the funding for mission preachers was cut off, though his mission check of \$425.00 arrived as usual. The mission preachers and their families suffered terribly, with money so tight that their little children went without shoes in winter. Hardy divided the mission check among the families and wrote the mission board concerning the realities of the situation. The board then rectified the situation. In these cases the commitment of wives and husbands was evident as they continued in the work, even though conditions were difficult. The ministry was certainly not a place to make a decent wage during this period, and some ministers took up other kinds of work to supplement their pay.¹⁰

One endeavor that nearly always received broad support was the revival or camp meeting. Men and women cooperated heartily on such enterprises which were considered great social occasions as well as an opportunity to hear good preaching. It took substantial contributions in time, effort, and goods to make these meetings successful. Men worked to construct arbors and put up tents and benches. While women provided cakes, pies, and other goods, men would contribute meat and serve as barbeque cooks at the meetings. One who stood out in B. F. Jackson's memory was John Hudron who was "most prominent among the ranchmen who supported the meeting by contributing beeves." Here he was referring to one of the earliest camp meetings held in the Palo Duro Canyon. Such contributions helped make the meetings a satisfying and worthwhile experience, and were accompanied by spirited preaching, sometimes from preachers of several different denominations. The spiritual harvest could bring significant results, as when Wheeler County Methodist Abe Mulkey brought 153 "conversions and reclamations" back into the fold. Support for building local churches was also robust, and often became a community effort.¹¹

Building a church was no small undertaking, and early church buildings might be shared among several denominations until there were enough members and money to build more. Women's efforts to start and complete construction were heavily connected with fundraising, which supported the entire process, and beautifying the finished structure. Men often provided labor, lumber, and funds to the effort. More prominent men might provide land as well, especially early land developers who hoped to make the towns more attractive to potential settlers. John Hutson was prolific in his support for local churches, donating land for an Episcopal church in Canyon and a Catholic Church

in Umbarger. Another early stockman to devote large sums to church building was Sam Isaacs, who was also a substantial contributor to the construction of the WCTU building in Canadian.¹²

When the women of the WCTU needed funds to construct a new building to meet in, they collected contributions from their own membership first, and then from their spouses and other men in the community. The greatest contributions, unsurprisingly, were given by the husbands. The lot of land needed for the venture was then purchased, but needed to be fenced. With some of the funds they had secured for the project, they bought fencing materials which were delivered by Mr. Corson, who did not charge them for the work. In one day, Mr. Todd, Hood, W. C. Isaacs, Wykoff, McQuiddy, Luther, Roscoe, and “little Charley Teague” worked to complete the project, and were rewarded with dinner that evening. The commitment to this project was ongoing; the building was built and paid for over time, and the WCTU’s efforts to reform the community required the participation and cooperation of men and women in Canadian for many years to come. The nature of life on the frontier or in newly developing towns sometimes made commitments like this difficult to fulfill. Many men found themselves unable to commit to regular church attendance, while others were unwilling to do so, thus leaving their wives to see to the religious education of their children.¹³

One of the more difficult aspects of life on the frontier was the necessity of work far from home, or that required work on Sundays, a reality that many couples faced. At times men might be away for days, even weeks at a time, making regular attendance at church as families impossible. Dwight Hobart was a land manager and away from home frequently on business. He also had a wife and young children at home. They lived far

from a church, which was a concern for him and his wife. That he also showed concern about the spiritual growth of their children during this period of sporadic separation may have been a comfort for her because, though they were compelled to spend time apart, they still shared similar hopes for their family life. For Fleda Studer's husband, Carl, work on Sundays was a necessary part of his work. It wasn't until later in life that he and his wife were able to attend church together. Though many couples were able to find common ground, others struggled with differences in values that led the believing spouse to forgo regular church attendance.¹⁴

Such was the case with a cowboy who lived with his wife near the Washita River (most likely in Hemphill County). She was an invalid, and had not been able to leave their home for fifteen years. Though "she longed to hear preaching...she was not able to go away from home." Her husband was not a religious man, so had not invited clergy to the home. On his way home one night, he found it too cold to travel the remaining eighteen miles to his dugout and stopped at a neighbor's home for the night. The neighbor was Reverend T. F. Robeson, who invited him to read scriptures with his family. Clearly moved, the cowboy told the Reverend of his ailing wife and, soon after (and with encouragement from Robeson), made arrangements for the Reverend to make regular preaching visits to their home. For men who hoped their children would be raised with strong ties to organized religion, but could not necessarily provide them, they had to rely on their spouses to continue in faithfulness regardless of the difficulties. Even while the panhandle was growing in population and reputation for commercial reasons, it grew also as communities were planned as religious enclaves.¹⁵

One of the first towns established in the panhandle was Clarendon. It was the dream of Lewis Henry Carhart to establish a Methodist colony, complete with “temperance and churches and schools;” it would be a place to model the benefits of Christian faith and a means to spread its influence. The venture attracted like-minded settlers who also craved such a community, and for a time the town was kept remarkably free of the vices so popularly recounted in tales of western life. This is not to say that attempts were not made to tap the unplumbed market of “Saints Roost,” as it came to be called, but the citizens and local leaders preserved its integrity for a time. Changes came when the positioning of the railroad necessitated the moving of the town, a move which, combined with the influx of “strangers,” changed the atmosphere of the town. Other settlements were planned in hopes that specific religious groups would build, stay, and enrich the panhandle. A combination of land speculation and religious interest lay at the heart of such plans which included the Quaker settlement, Estacado, and the Norwegian Lutheran settlement of Oslo. Several others came about in this fashion, with land developers hoping for both stability and a steady stream of chain migration to aid in the sale of lands. Settlements such as these enjoyed varying degrees of success.¹⁶

Women made a remarkable impact on panhandle settlement, specifically as it connected to their religious beliefs. Sacrifice, inventiveness, and tenacity in shaping the region were all characteristics they utilized in achieving that success, but a final one, cooperation, must not be overlooked. Women were recognized as particularly mindful of religious observance, and for many women, their actions bore out the veracity of that distinction. Religious values were also cherished by men who came to the panhandle, especially settled, family men, and they worked alongside women to achieve religious

and community building aims. That there were a variety of settlers who were not religious is clear as well, and a fact that made the area attractive to missionaries, though, in focusing on this element, religious men have sometimes been overlooked. The efforts men and women expended showcased the talents, experience, and expectations of both sexes and took full advantage of each.

Many men shared sensitivity to Christian ideals with their lives, and when it was possible, such men were conscientious in supporting these ideals. Some men probably chose such a course to ensure the happiest outcome for family life, while for others, the commitment lay deeper in religious belief. Men chose to serve as leaders, builders, missionaries, and preachers throughout this time, and some did so at great personal cost. Ultimately, the cooperative efforts of men and women magnified their impact on communities throughout the region, and certainly made life richer for the many settlers who called the Panhandle Plains home.

¹ Unknown author, "First Families Settle in Tascosa," *West Texas Register: Official Newspaper of the Diocese of Amarillo*. Vol. XIX no. 3. 5 July 1974. Page 61; Ernest R. Archambeau, ed. *Old Tascosa: 1886-1888* (Canyon, Texas: Panhandle Plains Historical Society, 1966); Sister Nellie Rooney, Baptismal Records kept by New Mexico Priests, Transcript located in Nellie Rooney's research files housed in the Amarillo Diocese archives. This record covers several years; Diocese of Amarillo, "Baptismorum Registrum: Ad Mentem Patrum Concilii Provincialis Baltimorensis X Concinnatum." Copy located in Sister Nellie Rooney's research files housed in the Amarillo Diocese archives, Amarillo, Texas. This record shows the baptism of children in and around Tascosa, as well as the legitimacy of infants born and baptized in the area; Mrs. Dan Cole, No Title, Channing, Texas, 7 July 1927. Manuscript located in Panhandle Plains Historical Museum Research Center, Canyon, Texas.

² Mrs. Charles A. Miller with Winnie Faye Baer, 30 December 1940, Texline, Texas. Transcript located in PPHMRC; Mrs. Hext, "Interview with Mrs. Hext, of Canadian, Texas" 15 May 1932. Transcript located in the PPHMRC; Harris, *Hidetown*, 54.

³ Mrs. J. F. Ward, *Gardening for the Master, by a Pioneer Woman* (Louisville, Kentucky: Herald Press) 77-79.

⁴ L. S. Baker, Interview with Rev. Robeson, 1 August 1924. Transcript located in J. Evetts Haley Historical Library Archive, Midland, Texas.

⁵ Lenna Foster Parker, "Reminiscences of Mrs. Lenna Foster Parker, as Recorded by Patty Laramore" 3 July 1973. Transcript located in the PPHMRC.

⁶ Unknown Author, "Women of Canadian," Transcript located at River Valley Pioneer Museum, Canadian, Texas; Mrs. John M. Davis, "A Biographical Sketch of Lycurgus C. Lair" 20 August 1935. Manuscript located in the PPHMRC.

⁷ Charles J. Bier, *The Diary of Father Charles J. Bier: Convalescing in Texas, 1905-1913: Amarillo was my Lot, Father Dunn My Consolation* (Amarillo, Texas: Catholic Historical Society, Diocese of Amarillo, 1949); Diocese of Amarillo, "Baptismorum Registrum"; "Transcript of Annual Report," Located in Nellie Rooney's research files housed in the Amarillo Diocese archives, 1912-1916; Sister Nellie Rooney, Baptismal Records kept by New Mexico Priests. Transcript located in Nellie Rooney's research files housed in the Amarillo Diocese archives.

⁸ Herbert Timmons, "Rev. B.F. Jackson, Methodist," Manuscript located in Timmons Collection, folder 49, in the PPHMRC; Rev. Robeson, Interview of Rev. Robeson with L. S. Baker, 1 August, 1924. Transcript located in J. Evetts Haley Library Archive, Midland, Texas.

⁹ Robeson, "Interview"; Fannie Hedgecock, Eugene Elo interview of Fannie Hedgecock, 1933. Transcript located in PPHMRC. In her history of Randall County, Mrs. Clyde Warwick asserted that when Robeson actually moved to Canyon, there were seven saloons in the town. This from Mrs. Clyde W. Warwick, *The Randall County Story, from 1541 to 1910* (Hereford, Texas: Pioneer Book Publishers, Inc., 1969) 82-84.

¹⁰ Harris, *Hidetown*, 316.

¹¹ Ibid., 120; B.F. Jackson to Mrs. Herbert Timmons, Amarillo, Texas, 3 March 1930. Located in the Timmons Papers, PPHMRC. Reverend Jackson may have been referring to John Hutson of the T-Anchor Ranch.

¹² Mrs. Clyde Warwick, "Lee John Hutson," No date. Manuscript located in the PPHMRC; Mrs. S. R. Lowrie, "Sketches of My Father in the Early Days, Mrs. S. R. Lowrie to Buster Barker," 13 June 1940. Manuscript/Transcript located in the PPHMRC; Olive K. Dixon, "Packhorses Carried Sam Isaac's Possessions when He Came to the Plains: Now Owns Ranch," Prepared for the Work Projects Administration, No Date.

¹³ WCTU, Canadian Chapter, Building Fund Book, 1905. Record located in Hemphill County Library Archive, WCTU files, Canadian, Texas.

¹⁴ Fleda Shaller Studer, "The Presbyterian Church in Canadian," ca. 1987. Manuscript located in the PPHMRC.

¹⁵ Rev. Robeson, Interview of Rev. Robeson with L. S. Baker, 1 August, 1924. Transcript located in J. Evetts Haley Library Archive, Midland, Texas.

¹⁶ Willie Newbury Willis, *Between Sun and Sod: an Informal History of the Texas Panhandle* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1976) 65-73; Lorena Gattis, "Doctor Jerome Daniel Stocking," Manuscript located in the PPHMRC; Frederick W. Rathjen, *The Texas Panhandle Frontier*. Revised edition. (Lubbock: Texas Tech University Press, 1998) 245-246; Jan Blodgett, *Land of Bright Promise: Advertising the Texas Panhandle and South Plains, 1870-1917* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1988) 51-53, 86-98. Originally written as a Master's Thesis at West Texas State University in Canyon, Texas, the original form

contains more information concerning the cooperation between land developers and religious groups than does the book form of Blodgett's study. See specifically pages 181-190 in the thesis form of *Land of Bright Promise*.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

Pioneer settlement in the Texas Panhandle between 1875 and 1920 included women who regarded religion as central to their identities. These women arranged their lives according to this assessment, and also by the values they inherited from societal expectations for womanhood. Such standards and expectations were crafted through the struggles of generations, and women sought permanence and security through their application while also exploring new ways to apply and expand them, often experiencing duality of purpose and expectation in the process. Throughout the course of panhandle settlement, they used their religious values to help them through isolation and loneliness, to influence others in changing their behaviors, to build communities and churches, to justify and enact political and social change, and to extend the influence of Christianity.

Though the experiences related in this research deal almost exclusively with the experiences of Protestant, Euro American women, these experiences are important in understanding how women used their faith to build communities, reform society, and challenge societal constraints. More than “western lore,” these were real persons who made a lasting impact on the western frontier. As a regional study, it adds to scholarship

that has already been done in that it explores specifically the impact women, acting through a paradigm of Christian values, had on the region.

In exploring the questions of moral authority, community building, political action and reform, and finally cooperation between men and women, a variety of resources were available. For all subjects, personal letters, memoirs, interviews, church and county histories, sermons, and newspaper articles were instrumental in revealing how women thought about what they were doing. These records revealed their actions and the motivations behind them, sometimes with unexpected humor and no small amount of wit. Interviews were often sharply frank, and sometimes critical of modern life. For understanding how women came to embrace moral authority and wield it in community building and in their assertions of Christianity as indispensable to civilized society, there are many scholarly studies that touch on different aspects of this. In addition to Christianity as a paradigm for behavior, societal structures relating to gender roles were often heavily influenced by religious conviction and are also the subjects of various recent studies. Questions concerning moral authority and the manner in which women wielded it become clearer through study of these sources, though much remains to be done with regard to this topic.

The physical aspects of community building are represented broadly through both primary and secondary materials, and clarify the relationship between men and women as they contributed to these efforts. The character of cooperation between men and women through shared religious ideals is revealed through the many personal histories and recollections, mostly those of women, concerning life in the panhandle during this period.

Especially rewarding were opportunities to explore the records of the Canadian WCTU, a collection that reveals panhandle connections to prohibition, international conflict, national and state reform movements, and the successful drive toward women's suffrage. Records also reveal the bonds shared by early community members. The collection contains records that go well beyond the scope of this research and present an excellent opportunity for further research concerning women's history in the panhandle. Holdings that deal with the Catholic community, though not covered in depth in this research, are likewise rewarding. Accessible through the Roman Catholic Diocese of Amarillo, these records are broad in scope and revealing for a variety of cultural and ethnic groups in the panhandle. While many records are private due to their personal nature, many are available to the public. For scholars hoping to explore early Catholic efforts in settling the panhandle, this is a vital and exciting source.

Through this study, several points became clear. First, especially in older histories, women have been portrayed as the objects of male dominance. Gender roles of this period are even now portrayed as the unhappy result of masculine control of women. To some degree, this view is supportable. Women were ostracized when they did not conform, they were mocked when they took part in behaviors that were viewed as unfeminine, they were separated from their natural rights through male manipulation of law, and they did suffer humiliation at the hands of men. What was revealing about this study was that women also suffered similar torments at the hands of women. Equally interesting is that women were also consistently exceeding the boundaries of proper behavior. Further, what was revealing about exploring this question in light of pioneer life and settlement in the panhandle was that women consistently violated the norm, and

were rewarded and encouraged in their actions by both men and women. It appears that, at least by the late 1800s and early 1900s, gender norms were fluid, though proper feminine conduct during this period did not include “debauched” behaviors.

Second, women felt justified and comfortable in applying their moral and cultural values to influencing the culture of their communities. Their actions showed a continuance of belief and purpose, though a changing one, with regard to popular views of womanhood. They continued the trends set by earlier generations of women while adding their own interpretations to those trends. Such an understanding shows in their focus and self-reliance in designing and building religious structures, in fundraising efforts, and in their willingness to publicly and aggressively resist social conditions they thought were improper. The rapidity with which they acted is also remarkable, both in constructing buildings and in forming societies that would fund them while also providing for missionary work that would extend Christianity to foreign countries.

These and other community building projects were often cooperative, with men providing goods and money produced through their own businesses and women providing funds they had raised and goods they had made. The exploration of women’s efforts in community building and their cooperation with men in doing so belies the concern of some historians that women’s history is not integrated with “mainstream” history because it would disrupt the narrative. Cooperative efforts between the two sexes in this case show that contributions and experiences of both can be told concomitantly. The linear nature of the historical narrative, in this case, easily lends itself to telling both stories.

Finally, women utilized the religious beliefs and their understanding of their roles as women to press for political change. A primary vehicle for this change was the Woman's Christian Temperance Union, and specifically covered in this study, the WCTU of Canadian. The work of the Union shows at once elements of all other chapters, while also illuminating how women used their moral authority to press for and achieve political change. Protestant and Catholic women of the Union embraced and continued to shape expectations for women. They also pushed beyond social norms by emphatically and unapologetically entering the public sphere. They used their roles and their religious convictions, in fact, to expand the acceptable limits of both. Men cooperated with women in these efforts; it was men who helped build the WCTU building, some at the behest of their wives, and it was men who went to the ballot box to repeatedly support prohibition and women suffrage.

It is true that not all women supported these changes, and not all men supported either the objectives stated by the WCTU or the changes wrought by its members. There was always resistance, and always a variety of viewpoints and behaviors. The women of the WCTU did not run away with a perfect prize, but their efforts show the impact of women acting through the prism of religious conviction in this region, at this time. There are also limitations to this study that may, in the future, be answered by other scholars. For example, diversity in race and class are not central to this study.

Future explorations might delve deeper into such diversity by covering the time period preceding or following what has been covered here, or by searching records that might reveal more about women who suffered poverty or exclusion. Such records might include legal documents and church records specifically devoted to relief work. Nuns, for

example, were actively recruited by the Catholic Church to undertake relief work for Mexican and Mexican American families in the Texas Panhandle during the late 1910s and early 1920s. Research concerning these efforts might yield an expanded understanding of race and class relationships in the region.

This study largely concerns the experiences middle and upper class Protestant white women. Some historians suggest that studies centering primarily on the experiences of white women ignore more stimulating explorations based on intercultural contact in the American west. Others charge that research concerning white Christian women as “civilizers” is an exercise in racism, as it implies that societies proceeding white settlement were uncivilized. While such explorations are admittedly rewarding and vital to understanding the development of the United States, it is also apparent that in some towns, counties, and, occasionally, regions, such cultural exchange was limited for a variety of reasons. In Canadian during this period, for example, most inhabitants were Euro Americans. It is also true that, where differing cultures clearly intersected, historians have ignored or devalued the importance of these relationships. For this study, researching the experiences of early Anglo settlers in the region provided a unique opportunity to explore the convergence of cultural expectations, religious ideologies, frontier experiences, and political change in a period of rapid expansion into a diminishing frontier.

In these ways, the Texas Panhandle was a place that was unique. It went through the process of Anglo settlement much faster than had taken place in earlier American frontiers. This was encouraged by foreign investments in ranching, rapid industrialization and modern forms of transportation, a continuing thirst for economic opportunities, and

finally, the lure of new land and the dream of owning a part of it. Families from the South, North, and Midwest converged on the region, and negotiated relationships successfully in spite of past conflicts. Immigrants also came, while most African Americans were actively discouraged from settling. Similarities did exist with other frontier regions, and because of this, the experiences of some early settlers in this region share some of the same characteristics. The many distinct properties of panhandle life during this period reveal a community unique in character rather than a model of western pioneer settlement.

This study fills a gap in understanding women's history. It reveals the impact of women's religious beliefs in settling a part of the American west, and shows how these women brought with them the attitudes of preceding generations while also pressing their limits and achieving political and social change. Also important is the cooperative nature of this endeavor, an effort that involved both men and women. Through the paradigm of Christian belief they sought to build stable communities in which they could raise their families, and in doing so, left an unmistakable imprint on the societies and communities they built.

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