“Worthy of a More Lasting Place”: Emigrant Women and Moral Order in Colonial Australia, 1849-1855

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Introduction

In 1851, Australia's first gold rush initiated an era of rapid immigration from Europe, North America, and Asia. This migratory moment illuminated particular confrontations in a longer history of societal regulation across geographical and temporal contexts. Transnational media fascination with the Australian gold fields drew mid-century commentators into the larger political project of rehabilitating British imaginings of Australia from an ignominious and desolate penal colony to a well-regulated and fruitful settler colony. Earlier in the century, government initiatives emphasized Australia's potential for enabling social mobility and addressing subsistence crises. The Colonial Office offered loans for assisted passage from 1832 and offered fully sponsored passage by the end of the decade. Yet wealthier colonists resented the intrusion of government-assisted emigrants, and elite and middle-class engagement with metropolitan British social visions continued to structure a deeply hierarchical settler colonial society. Represented to the larger empire through circulating networks of print media that entangled economies of extraction with visions of colonial settlement, Australian settlers defined and violently enforced hierarchies of race, ethnicity, class, and gender. Continuing through the Immigration Restriction Act 1901 that passed in the first year of Australia's federation, colonial reforms structured racialized, gendered, and ideological hierarchies of possession and violent dispossession. Meanwhile, the popular settler discourses of regulation and exclusion developed in dialogue with ideas of social control in the metropole.

Selecting a narrative figure that intersected strikingly with the migratory and reform period of the 1850s, this thesis traces regulation of the moral character of women emigrants from outcries in edited narrative testimonies and travel literature through to the selection and surveillance of actual emigration candidates by assisted emigration organizations. As examined

in the first chapter, Samuel Mossman's annotated volume of emigrant letters and Ellen Clacy's travel memoir, both published in 1853, simultaneously promoted the profitability of Australian mining and sought to discriminate among the types of emigrants who would settle more permanently in Australian society. Mossman and Clacy's hopes for model settler societies depended greatly on the identities and character of emigrant women, as the moral anxieties raised by such scandals as Charles Beilby's explosive 1836 account of *Female Emigration* continued to haunt emigration advocacy.

As explored in the second chapter of this essay, older moral anxieties about emigrant character paired with 1850s urban reform projects to inspire reinvigorated processes of selection and surveillance. Exemplifying this transition, in 1849, the British immigration administrator and philanthropist Caroline Chisholm and the British statesman Sidney Herbert established two of the better-known funds for financially assisting women and families emigrating from Britain to Australia. Connecting to and confronting themes considered in the emigration narratives analyzed in the previous chapter of this thesis, Chisholm, Herbert, and other reformers of their generation aligned their bureaucratic efforts with literary and journalistic representations of metropolitan working women. In their selection and documentation of applicants, Chisholm's Family Colonisation Loan Society and Herbert's Fund for Promoting Female Emigration sought to transform the demographics and morality of Australian colonial society.

Despite the transformative ambitions of emigration reformers, the rhetoric and documentation produced by these specific funds for assisting women's emigration aligned more closely with older perspectives on morality and social rank than with the modernizing technologies of imperial bureaucracy to which they were attached. These bureaucratic and

literary retrospectives necessitate nuance in the analysis of 1850s emigration with relation to crucial topics in settler colonialism.

To identify and frame significant features of female emigration to Australia during this time period, this thesis consults longer historiographical narratives extending through the twentieth century. First, as observed in current scholarship and in the research inspiring this essay, many nineteenth-century sources emphasize the white woman emigrant as a focal point for shaping settler colonial society in opposition to the societies and peoples who settler colonialism dispossesses and excludes. Working across rich fields of scholarship, Marilyn Lake and Henry Reynolds, *Drawing the Global Colour Line* (2008) and Duncan Bell, *Dreamworlds of Race* (2020) articulate particularly effective arguments about settler colonialism as shaped by and shaping racial hierarchies. Other themes to which this thesis offers earlier points of comparison include the maternal colonialism that is better known through the shapes it took in the later nineteenth and early twentieth century. Together with other influential studies of gender and empire by Ann Laura Stoler, Nancy Rose Hunt, Julia Bush, and Marie Ruiz, Margaret D. Jacobs' comparative analysis of maternal colonialism in Australia and the American West is situated in the later nineteenth and early twentieth century. Ruiz's book on British Female Emigration Societies addresses the years from 1860 to 1914, beginning a decade after the time period that is the focus of this essay. One reviewer interpreted Jan Gothard's book *Blue China: Single Female Migration to Colonial Australia* (2001) as spanning the years from 1850-1900, yet from the introduction Gothard provides figures emphasizing her focus on telling "ninety thousand stories of the single women who migrated to colonial Australia between 1860 and

1900."[1] Seen particularly in the half-century frames chosen by Ruiz, Gothard, and Jacobs, scholars of Australian emigrant women have tended to select post-1860 time periods in which they can effectively depict an increasing intensification and sophistication of colonial and imperial instrumentalization of settler women. This temporal weighting is not so much a gap in the literature on emigrant women as it is an indicator that the themes used by scholars of later periods should be applied differently to the 1850s. This essay asks how these lenses can be applied to the transitional period of the 1850s, and to the documentary evidence of lingering language of character and social role more often associated with previous decades.

In order to contribute to this scholarship, this thesis first traces ideas of moral character and the ideal settler in the primary materials portraying emigration for broad audiences. The first chapter emphasizes objects that were altered by nineteenth-century techniques to enable broad distribution, such as reproducible images and correspondence collected and edited for publication. These technologies consolidated the interplay between discourse and mediation in various primary sources, from printed news media to letters, literature, diaries, and photographs. Numerous groups in the British Empire participated in the creation, publication, and consumption of these forms of emigration media, collectively engaging with ideas of emigrant identity and character. Today, in addition to being more reliably accessible during the pandemic than sources with smaller original readerships, these sources encapsulate the efforts of

[1] Angela Woollacott, "The Meanings of Protection (Book Review)," *Journal of Women's History* 14, no. 4, 1 Jan. 2003, pp. 213 - 221.

Jan Gothard, *Blue China: Single Female Migration to Colonial Australia* (Carlton South, Vic: Melbourne University Press, 2001), 2.

administrative and literary figures to intervene in the representation of female emigrant experiences.

Well-publicized discussions of female emigrant character became critical to the reputations, objectives, and documentary practices of organizations that financially assisted the emigration of women and families. Provided by the Wiltshire & Swindon History Centre for use in this thesis, archival materials from the Sidney Herbert Papers illustrate the relevance of identity and character to mid-nineteenth century emigration assistance societies. Sidney Herbert's notes describing the women emigrants assisted by his Fund for Promoting Female Emigration between 1850 and 1853 are the main archival source for the idea of moral character in the documentation of emigrant identities. In the emigration assistance documents, the anxieties about character so evident in contemporaneous media are shown to have material effects on the mobility and financial support of individual candidates for Australian emigration.

Two contrasting threads of secondary scholarship guide this essay's focus on documentation and character. Scholars of media and technology have tended to depict increasing bureaucratization and systemization of imperial control over identity and mobility over the course of the nineteenth century, as seen in the arguments of Duncan Bell and in the passport histories of John Torpey and Gérard Noirel. A chapter on "Documents, Empire, and Capitalism in the Nineteenth Century" in the multi-authored work *Information: A Historical Companion* (2021) explores international debates about governments and organizations collecting information to identify travelers, as through passports, and the racialized implications of this shift in visual culture. These arguments present compelling reasons for further research into the connections between information, bureaucracy, and nineteenth-century empires.

However, this thesis reads the modernizing impulse of passport technology and visual identity as contrasting with a widespread cultural emphasis on holistic ideas of "character." Stefan Collini's classic article "The Idea of 'Character' in Victorian Political Thought" (1985) argues for the central role of character in Victorian political culture, which he presents as more complex and influential than the idea of one-sided class control. Consequently, focusing on the documentation of female emigrant character offers crucial insights into discourses of social reform across the empire. The descriptions of emigrant character collected in the Herbert papers maintained some continuity with the early nineteenth-century signifiers of moral worth identified by Boyd Hilton in his religious history and by several literary and art scholars whose work considers physiognomy and phrenology among other physical manifestations of character. Contemplating Sally Shuttleworth's striking assertion that Charlotte Brontë treated phrenology as a liberalizing opportunity to practice "self-help" and "self-control," in contrast with the more descriptive physiognomy, this thesis searches for other ambiguities in the bureaucratic practices documenting identity and character.[2] In particular, the degree to which certain social critics and immigration administrators of the early 1850s prolonged the language of character even within documentary technologies can be read as resistance or counterbalance to larger changes in mobility and identity documentation.

Settler colonial hierarchies in the nineteenth century informed both the emergence of early welfare states and the continuing criminalization of poverty. In the documentary practices of assisted emigration, the idea of "character" projected a moral framework across model societies in colony and metropole. Documentation of the aspects of identity considered useful for

[2] Sally Shuttleworth, *Charlotte Brontë and Victorian Psychology* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 58, 70.

migration participated in the obfuscation of identities considered detrimental to migration. For an individual applicant, this obfuscation could involve self-presentation as a domestic servant rather than a needlewoman, or claiming relatives already settled in Australia without mentioning their estrangement. On the scale of communities and societies, obfuscation of migration and labor patterns excluded various migrant groups from association with emigrant, settler, and investor identities. The institutional documentation of emigrant identity transformed fictions and discourses about model societies into organizational and ultimately, governmental policies affecting the material realities of mobility and settlement in the British Empire.

The established body of work briefly mentioned above ties Australia's earlier practices of assisted migration to the racial exclusion policies that marked the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, However, depicting the private women's emigration societies of the 1850s solely as participants in the shift to systematization and modern governmental practices of exclusion would be to miss the extent to which certain associations, such as Chisholm's and Herbert's, perpetuated the forms of social organization associated with earlier eras. Shaped by earlier experiences in public service and organization, Chisholm and Herbert emphasized certain traditional hierarchies, such as women's moral character and the employer-servant relationship, even while Chisholm advocated for familial reunion for all classes and Herbert rewrote stigmatized needlewomen as respectable servants. Certain independent women of the 1850s, from working-class assisted emigrants to the matrons and administrators facilitating their transport, invested their identities and reputations in these specific societies. The Female Emigration Fund records and their literary contemporaries offer glimpses of a particular generation of emigrant women marked by the traumas of the 1840s and earlier, and enclosed by the social pressures of class and gender. Beyond the possible preferences of assisted emigrants

and their documenters for emphases on character versus visual characteristics, skill as domestic servants versus suitability for marriage, or other such ambiguities of the Australian emigration narrative, the texts and documents of this period in assisted emigration wove individual identities into broader narratives of women's roles throughout the British empire.

Examining this unusual transitional period in the textual reimagining of nineteenth-century women's migration has profound implications for considering the roots and consequences of more recent forces in migration, mobility, colonialism, and social hierarchy. Flourishing with the Australian gold rushes of the early 1850s, the forms of emigration literature and emigration assistance documentation analyzed in this thesis intensively mediated the testimonies of emigrant women and women aspiring to emigrate. Anticipating more modern bureaucratic supervision of identity and mobility while prolonging more traditional emphases on women's moral character and socioeconomic relationships to domestic centers, these materials demonstrate complications and ambiguities in the accommodation of the British public to the idea of enforcing moral order across the empire. By depicting female emigration in the 1850s as a question of public interest, imperial networks of literature and documentation demanded that the British and colonial Australian public enforce moral order across the empire.

Chapter 1: Commodified Testimony and the Rehabilitation of the "Female Emigrant"

Circa 1860, the young photographer Frank Mason Good captured a domestic scene of a rural working-class family in England solemnly reading a letter sent from Australia (Figure 1).[3] The family of four huddles in the far corner of a clay-floored rustic interior, dwarfed by the dilapidated household furnishings and holding the implements of rural domestic chores. The youngest woman props her chin on her hand as she reads the titular "Australian Letter." The figures' somber expressions and material signifiers of poverty express their suffering of distance, loss, and hardships. In the historic moment represented by this stereograph, the family does not have access to the communication technologies that Duncan Bell describes as permitting post-1870 commentators to imagine "the end of distance as a problem in the creation of cohesive political communities."[4] Yet the print communities connecting the British Empire had been expanding for several decades. Kathrin Levitan writes that postal reformers of the 1830s advocated affordable, reliable communication in order to "unite the Empire by maintaining sympathy and sentiment between family members" and quiet class conflicts by "[helping] bring the poor into the larger society.[5] Postal reformers thus interpreted communication as a tool for

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[3] Frank Mason Good, "The Australian Letter, England, ca. 1860," photograph: stereograph, albumen, 7.9 x 15.5 cm, on mount 8.2 x 17 cm, PIC Box PIC/14608 #PIC/14608, National Library of Australia, https://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-138065251.

Frank Mason Good (1839-1928) would become better known for his stereographic photographs of urban and archeological sites in the Middle East in the 1860s and 1870s, which H.B. Tristram paired with scriptural texts to create *Pathways of Palestine: A Descriptive Tour Through the Holy Land* (London: Sampson Low, Marston, Searle, and Rivington, 1882).

"Good, Frank M.," WorldCat Identities (OCLC), accessed April 27, 2021, https://worldcat.org/identities/lccn-no2016053467/.

[4] Duncan S. A. Bell, "Dissolving Distance: Technology, Space, and Empire in British Political Thought, 1770–1900," *The Journal of Modern History* 77, no. 3 (2005): 560, https://doi.org/10.1086/497716.

[5] Kathrin Levitan, "Migration, Empire, and the Penny Post," in *British Female Emigration Societies and the New World, 1860-1914*, edited by Marie Ruiz (Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 194, 211.

unification, with the distances and uncertainties of empire heightening the value of letters to the dispersed poor. Like the edited letter collection and travel memoir explored in this chapter, Good's photograph uses the older technology of the letter and the broad familiarity of grief to weave the ambiguous fate of Australian colonists into the English domestic space.

By turning the photographic gaze on the personal significance of an individual letter to a close-knit English family, "The Australian Letter" is an apt analogue for how nineteenth-century letter-writing and other personal narrative forms transcended distinctions between public and private communication. Its title and subject resembles a genre of narrative paintings depicting emigration in the wake of the 1850s gold rush, several of which Fariha Shaikh analyzes as depicting "how the relationship between parted friends and family is sustained after emigration."[6] The broad area between public and private is complemented by nineteenth-century media's ambiguous relationship with authenticity, seen here in the absence of evidence regarding the identity of the sitters and the contents of the letter, and thereby the degree to which Good staged the photograph. The sources explored in this chapter drew material and techniques from anecdotal, testimonial, epistolary, memoir, and other narrative traditions that emphasize the authenticity and representativeness of individual experience. When nineteenth-century Australian settlers discussed their experiences, they participated in communities that often circulated and reprinted materials transmitted across great distances. In further alignment with broader traditions in the arts, sources were framed by the didactic voices and self-conscious communication of editors, authors, and photographers. These recontextualized sources were consumed to form collective experiences of migration, colonization, and societal regulation.

[6] Fariha Shaikh, *Nineteenth-century Settler Emigration In British Literature and Art* (Oxford University Press, 2020), 140.

Current scholarship on settler colonialism has emphasized relationships between the social and legal construction of the settler colonist subject and the oppression of the colonized subject. Another significant debate addresses the impact of empire on the metropole. To connect these areas of scholarship, this chapter emphasizes the discourses of commodified testimony and identity documentation produced through settler colonial systems, considered in relation to societal transformations in colony and metropole. "Commodified testimony" is this essay's term for the transformation of depictions of individual experiences into broadly-consumed and recontextualized media objects. The associations of "testimony" with testimonial literature necessitate the prioritization of traditions that depict and denounce oppressive systems.

The selection, appropriation, and presentation of purportedly-authentic experiences participated in regulating relationships and coordinating societal changes between colony and metropole. Relevant to the impact-of-empire debate, this chapter examines emigration media that imagined model societies and criticized existing spaces in ways that sought to influence colonial and metropolitan values. Because of the breadth and complexity of this topic, the thesis focuses further on the representation of women with relation to emigrant experiences. Good's stereograph provides a thematic representation of the problems and possibilities of searching for women across the boundaries of emigrant experiences during this period. If the young woman holding the letter were to read it aloud, as would have been typical, she would have been at the same time a conduit for the words of the emigrant writer, a mediator and controller of how the emigrant experience was communicated to readers in the metropole, and a participant in the affective web of migration.

This chapter begins with analysis of the representation of emigrant women in two works on Australian emigration in the early 1850s, one an edited collection of emigrant letters and the

other a travel memoir emphasizing interactions with prospectors and settlers. The chapter then considers the extent to which a pamphlet from 1836 denouncing the management of ships of female emigrants differs from the 1850s works of manipulated testimony, and which cultural values carried over. The narratives contained within each work were heavily mediated by figures who claimed to portray and interpret authentic emigrant experiences. Treating emigrant women's identities as predictors of their social value, each work used aspects of testimony and character to defend its ambitions for Australia's future settlement.

Amid the political upheavals and class conflicts of the mid-nineteenth century, British middle-class social critics seized on the flourishing genre of edited volumes of emigrant correspondence as a venue for shaping social order. James Belich describes "booster literature" as a settlerist discourse "produced by the upper and middle classes for themselves and for the lower classes" and collections of emigrant letters as "partially" preserving a discourse "produced by the lower classes for themselves alone."[7] While Belich is right to appreciate how the collected volumes "partially preserved" lower-class testimonies, it should be emphasized that middle-class editorial interventions treated emigrant letters as the raw material of booster literature. Writing the preface to *Emigrants' Letters from Australia* (1853) at the height of a gold rush to the colony of Victoria, the Australian colonist and professional travel writer Samuel Mossman promised to elevate emigrant accounts to a more literary form by providing critical commentary on select letters "worthy of a more lasting place in the library of the intending

[7] James Belich, *Replenishing the Earth: the Settler Revolution and the Rise of the Anglo-World, 1783-1939* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 153.

emigrant than the columns of a newspaper."[8] In this statement, which invoked cultural signifiers of taste and reputation, Mossman claimed to expertly guide prospective emigrants through the testimonial correspondence for which they had previously scoured periodicals. Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall argue that English middle-class "belief in their capacity to control and improve the working class…was articulated within a gendered concept of class."[9] Mossman enforced gendered and classed ideologies with multiple editorial strategies, beginning from his decision to add titles integrating values of gendered roles in society, industriousness, and social order to each letter.[10] As this section argues, Mossman's textual remediation endorsed and dignified the self-interested and emulative reading of emigrant letters by fitting them to a moral framework that idealized middle-class Englishwomen as shapers of settler society.

Considering the more economic markers of social class, Mossman and his publishers appeared to direct *Emigrants' Letters* at a middle-class readership that could afford to purchase informative and pleasure literature but that sought further social mobility through emigration. The front matter priced *Emigrants' Letters* at 1 shilling and further advertised the 1*s* emigrant guide *Gleanings from the Gold-Fields,* a 4-6*s* children's picture book, and a 5*s* bound collection of a children's illustrated periodical. This pricing enlisted the middle class of the metropole in defending the settler class hierarchies sought by colonists like Mossman. More explicitly, Mossman's conclusion entreated "the middle class in particular, to weigh well their motives for

[8] Samuel Mossman, ed., *Emigrants' Letters from Australia: Selected, with Critical, and Explanatory Remarks* (London: Addey and Co, 1853), iii.

[9] Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class, 1780-1850,* 3rd ed. (London ; New York : Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2019), 30.

[10] Mossman's use of titles weakened the organizational unity for which he arranged the letters by month from September 1852 to January 1853. The costs of this thematic approach underscore Mossman's determination to emphasize social values from letter to letter.

emigrating, and not to abandon a certainty for an uncertainty without due consideration."[11] James Belich argues that British and American "boosters" preferentially sought "moneyed migrants," non-emigrating "investors," and a morally-upright selection of "common folk."[12]Accordingly, Mossman imagined his middle-class readers as occupying a stable economic niche that permitted them to thoughtfully consider the consequences of emigration rather than be driven to it as a last resort. In addition to advocating the settler class hierarchies Belich describes, Mossman's substitution of consideration and certainty for speculation bridges a transition in economic thought. Until developments in the mid-nineteenth century such as the 1855-56 establishment of limited liability corporations, Boyd Hilton argues, investor class status was constantly imperiled by the fluctuations of the laissez-faire marketplace.[13] In order to entice the investor classes to speculate in colonial profits, Mossman reinforced the pecuniary markers of class identity with reference to additional hierarchies of gender, behavior, and nationality.

Epistle by epistle, Mossman sorted women emigrants of the Australian gold rush into rightful stewards of colonial resources and dissipated accessories to societal degradation. To Mossman, the genteel Englishwoman prospector was too fantastical an idea to threaten social order, however the newspapers romanticized her fictional exploits in such "spurious nuggets of pretended literature" as that of the "Heroine at the Diggings" who disguised herself as a man in

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[11] Mossman, ed. *Emigrants' Letters from Australia*, vi.

[12] Belich, *Replenishing the Earth*, 155.

[13] Boyd Hilton, *The Age of Atonement: The Influence of Evangelicalism On Social and Economic Thought, 1795-1865* (Oxford [Oxfordshire]: Clarendon Press, 1988), 297.

The term "speculation" has fascinating connotations related to profiting from control of colonial investment information, especially by promoting fraudulent information.

Marcelo Somarriva Q., "A Matter of Speculation: British Representations of Argentina, Chile and Perú During the Wars of Independence," *Bulletin of Latin American Research* 36, no. 2 (1 Apr. 2017): 223 - 236.

order to accompany her brother to Victoria.[14] Instead, Mossman reserved his disgust for the more credibly-provenanced letter about the minutely-calculated extravagance and debauchery of "poor Irish emigrant girls" marrying successful prospectors.[15] Mossman's critiques of emigrant women at the diggings connected to his broader desires to witness the colonies' transformation into virtuous white settler societies. Dismissing emigrant men's complaints that conditions were too harsh for their families, Mossman insisted that men should emigrate with their families to Victoria and "that the single man should get married to a thrifty woman before his departure."[16] Even when widowed, such a woman reproduced her "thrift" through the household, peopling the colony as an ordered and productive economic unit. "An Industrious Family" calculated weekly earnings and expenditures of a household supported by the waged labor of a widowed mother and six children, whose domestic industriousness heralded an end to Australia's "reckless dissipation."[17] Nancy Rose Hunt and Ann Laura Stoler's significant studies of colonial motherhood and settler population ideologies have tended to reveal imperial anxieties regarding control of sexuality and intimacy in racialized colonial spaces. In contrast, Mossman's industrious family expanded its productivity even after the death of its patriarch, without having encountered the classed and racialized others whom Mossman wished to exclude. The

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[14] Mossman, ed. *Emigrants' Letters from Australia*, 1, 4.

[15] Mossman, ed. *Emigrants' Letters from Australia*, 5.

[16] Mossman cited Caroline Chisholm's statistics on emigrant men who "have left their wives and children behind" as evidence that many male emigrants shared this willingness to abandon their families. However, his cheerful insistence that men should simply bring their families diminished the vast reform work required from philanthropists to reunify families, such as Chisholm's Family Colonisation Loan Society and her advocacy for the families of convicts.

Mossman, ed. *Emigrants' Letters from Australia*, 62-3.

Joanna Bogle, "Chisholm [née Jones], Caroline (1808–1877), Immigration Administrator," in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University Press, 2004), https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-5321.

[17] Mossman, ed. *Emigrants' Letters from Australia*, 77, 79.

industrious domesticity into which Mossman's ideal emigrant families directed women's labor was a microcosm of the profitable, permanent, and self-replicating settler communities that he hoped to inspire throughout the colonies.

Marrying capitalist, racist, and gendered commentary, Mossman superimposed his vision of the ideal settler over what he presented as the authentic testimony of emigrant letters. While Mossman's anthology is a particularly direct example of a colonist selecting emigrant testimonies to support his narrative of a model society, further inequalities have been observed in the broader swathes of materials available for research today. The Australian Studies scholar Andrew Hassam describes a "class, gender, and ethnic bias" that had resulted in the archival preservation of a disproportionate number of diaries chronicling the shipboard experiences of middle-class Englishmen who traveled in first-class cabin accommodations.[18] Although Mossman was himself a settler, he sought authority in his editorial distance from the emigrant testimony he examined, defending his work's value through the journey of his source material from the British newspapers to the edited pages of *Emigrants' Letters*. Recognizing the instability of prospecting and other forms of colonial wealth, Mossman's critical reframing of supposed emigrant voices asserted the essential stability of gendered and classed social categories across colony and metropole. As the next section shows, Mossman's belief that even "booster literature" advertising colonial settlement should advocate conservatism and slowing of social mobility echoed across its counterpart in a more romanticized genre, the travel memoir.

[18] Andrew Hassam, *Sailing to Australia: Shipboard Diaries by Nineteenth-Century British Emigrants* (New York: Manchester University Press, 1994), 12.

In the early years of the Victorian gold rushes, an English clergyman's daughter traveled to Australia with her eldest brother with the hope of making their fortunes. The genteel but adventurous siblings superficially resembled the protagonists of Mossman's ridiculed "Heroine at the Diggings," but the resulting memoir aligned its author, Ellen Clacy, with Mossman's project of using literary reinterpretations of emigrant testimonies to constitute a moral settler society. First, Clacy asserted that *A Lady's Visit to the Gold Diggings* was a valid personal testimony containing anecdotes from the emigrants she encountered, rather than an "agreeable fiction."[19] Clacy's dramatic emigrant narratives strove to resolve through anecdote and commentary the paradoxes of identity involved in her ideals for Australian women settlers.

Clacy invested her narrative in evaluating the credibility and respectability of women in the masculinized environment of the gold diggings. Claiming for herself the status of the titular "lady at the diggings," Clacy condemned the unfeminine aggression and illicit liquor business of a woman who "kept a sort of sly grog-shop" and each night berated her husband "in a loud masculine voice" for his lack of success in prospecting.[20] By contrast, Clacy praised another young Englishwoman, Harriette Walters, for enduring feminine virtues of kindness, attractiveness, and spousal devotion that helped her leave behind her masculine prospector disguise to become the appropriately domestic wife of an agrarian settler.[21] Walters was a romantic characterization of Clacy's visions for Australian society, and her disguise echoed Clacy's own self-fashioning as a travel writer clothing herself in others' experiences of

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[19] Ellen Clacy, *A Lady's Visit to the Gold-Diggings of Australia in 1852-53* (London: Hurst and Blackett, 1853; Cambridge University Press, 2011), 3.

[20] Clacy, *A Lady's Visit to the Gold-Diggings*, 106-107.

[21] A chance meeting conveniently confirmed that Walters and her husband used their capital from the diggings to settle on a farm near Adelaide, serving Clacy's arguments about settler women and about the location of cheap land.

Clacy, *A Lady's Visit to the Gold-Diggings*, 130, 140, 259.

emigration and prospecting. Jude Piesse distinguishes literary "anxieties" associated with female emigration and its resemblance to "the transportation of prostitutes" from representations of women's role in "settlement" that accommodated a spectrum of gendered models ranging from conventional to "protefeminist."[22] Clacy responded to these colonial anxieties by identifying particular heroines among the emigrant and even more transient prospector population who could fulfil the conditions of settler respectability. At the diggings, Clacy aligned herself with a resilient emigrant femininity that endured early privations and anticipated a respectable settler domesticity.

To imagine the innocent perseverance of Australia's future generations of young women, Clacy wrote a child heroine, Jessie, who had worked to support herself since becoming orphaned by the accidents and hardships of the gold diggings.[23] Describing the ten-year old as a "'little woman'" too worn by work to be "beautiful" or possess "childish graces," Clacy eventually placed Jessie as a domestic servant in Melbourne, believing that she could spare her from the "badly paid labour…and often great misery – if not worse" encountered by working women in England.[24] Over the course of the nineteenth century, English middle-class childhood became idealized, but the associated domestic ideals continued to depend on the labor of young women and girls.[25] Many nineteenth-century women authors campaigned against child labor, and as explored in the section that follows, a great scandal of assisted emigration in the 1830s was the

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[22] Jude Piesse, *British Settler Emigration in Print, 1832–1877* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 111.

Clacy, *A Lady's Visit to the Gold-Diggings*, 276, 283.

[23] Clacy, *A Lady's Visit to the Gold-Diggings*, 153-4.

[24] Clacy, *A Lady's Visit to the Gold-Diggings*, 157, 158, 237.

[25] "By mid century, 82 per cent of servants in middle-class households in the local areas were female, and a third of these were under the age of 20."

Davidoff and Hall, *Family Fortunes*, 388.

arrival of girls who the colonial towns assessed as too young to work.[26] Yet by concluding her narrative of the child heroine with a sociological argument for domestic service, Clacy treated child labor as an unavoidable reality of English life that in Australia could, under the auspices of respectable families enriched by colonial opportunities, enable industrious young women's protection and social mobility.

For Clacy as for Mossman, respectable and well-resourced patriarchal settler families were required to organize women emigrating to Australia into a safe and profitable society. Gesturing to emigrant guide formulas that matched Jude Piesse's identification of "positive cultural associations between masculinity and mobility," Clacy lionized her ideal Australian colonist as arriving equipped with "a quantity of self-reliance, energy, and perseverance…the best capital a man can have," but also depositing investment capital upon arrival.[27] The exhortations to character and capital common across booster literature take on gendered significance with reference to Clacy's varying expectations for men and women. Clacy encouraged her fellow women to emigrate "under suitable protection," adding that virtuous single women were likely to find good husbands, but that ladies "unable to wait upon themselves" would struggle to keep good servants.[28] Here, a woman's reputation and domestic labor were treated as her "capital," with the ideal that she would work in her husband's household rather than in domestic service, but earlier in the narrative Clacy had encouraged domestic service for young women such as Jessie. Describing female imperialist organizations of the 1860s through the early 1900s, Julia

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[26] Charles Beilby, *A Few Copies of Letters: And Some Remarks upon Sundry Documents on the Subject of Female Emigration* (Sydney: William Jones, 1836), 17.

[27] Piesse, *British Settler Emigration in Print, 1832–1877*, 111.

From "Appendix: Who Should Emigrate?", Clacy's contribution to a common feature of the emigration and booster literature genre.

Clacy, *A Lady's Visit to the Gold-Diggings*, 276, 283.

[28] Clacy, *A Lady's Visit to the Gold-Diggings*, 284.

Bush contends that female emigration societies "[tried] to square the circle of genteel female employment although the settler colonies were crying out for straightforward domestic servants."[29] Bush's reading sets up the female emigration societies that were seeking colonial opportunities to employ genteel British women in opposition to settler colonies' demands for domestic servants. However, ten years earlier, and without demonstrating overt affiliation with female emigration societies, Clacy imagined a middle ground between these demands in which respectable middle-class women contributed to patriarchal households without adding extensively to the demands for paid domestic labor. Davidoff and Hall describe the number of servants employed by middle-class households in England as "[varying] over the lifecycle," so Clacy appears to hope to pattern labor in settler households after these temporary cycles rather than after the consistently expansive demands for the domestic labor of non-white servants shown in the South Asian and African colonies studied by Stoler and Hunt.[30] On an institutional scale, Clacy praised the Chisholm Society for improving the lives of young female emigrants and of the ship matrons who were employed to regulate the emigrants.[31] Clacy credited the Chisholm emigrants with the virtues of Scottish heritage and a reputation for shipboard morality that contrasted with "Sydney Herbert's needlewomen," a dichotomy that leads into the second chapter of this essay.[32] Clacy's hierarchy encouraged the emigration of English and Scottish

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[29] Julia Bush, *Edwardian Ladies and Imperial Power* (New York: Leicester University Press, 2000), 152.

[30] "By mid century, 82 per cent of servants in middle-class households in the local areas were female, and a third of these were under the age of 20."

Davidoff and Hall, *Family Fortunes,* 388.

[31] Clacy, *A Lady's Visit to the Gold-Diggings,* 254.

[32] As explored later in this essay, Herbert's Fund for Promoting Female Emigration had strict procedures documenting applicant identities and characters, but Clacy's attitude is crucial to understanding the significance of emigrant character for organizational reputation.

Clacy, *A Lady's Visit to the Gold-Diggings,* 255.

women of good reputation supported by family connections and private charitable societies, and contrasted their success with dramatizations of the tragedies befalling impoverished Irishwomen emigrating by government ship.[33] While Clacy permitted more romanticized narratives and displayed less vicious racism and sexism than Mossman, ultimately they shared similar preoccupations with regulating the families and profits of colonial Australia. These focuses on emigrant women's moral character built on earlier anxieties about the foundations of Australian settler societies.

The Australian female emigration scandals of the 1830s intensified and gendered British preoccupations with the moral character of emigrant society, contributing to a cultural trauma that placed reputational demands on emigration advocates well into Clacy and Mossman's era. Exemplifying one such scandal, in 1836, the disgraced superintendent of the notorious *Layton* emigrant ship published *A Few Copies of Letters: And Some Remarks upon Sundry Documents on the Subject of Female Emigration* at Sydney. The superintendent's statements to the Sydney *Colonist* identified him as Charles Beilby, a merchant who two years after the publication of *Letters* was convicted of conspiracy to defraud his creditors.[34] Beilby's thirty-two page pamphlet sought to use the "the bar of public opinion" to place female emigration, rather than himself, on trial.[35] Beilby's first and most dramatic letter, transmitted January 20, 1834 to the Chairman of

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[33] Clacy, *A Lady's Visit to the Gold-Diggings*, 66-7, 71. Clacy, *A Lady's Visit to the Gold-Diggings*, 208-16. Clacy, *A Lady's Visit to the Gold-Diggings*, 227.

[34] "The *Layton*," *The Colonist (Sydney, NSW : 1835 - 1840)* March 5, 1835: 2-3, accessed 20 Mar 2021, http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article31716271.

"R. v. Beilby [1838] NSWSupC 65," Macquarie Law School (Macquarie University), accessed April 28, 2021, http://www.law.mq.edu.au/research/colonial_case_law/nsw/cases/case_index/1838/r_v_beilby/.

[35] Beilby, *A Few Copies of Letters*, 3.

the Emigration Committee, began with pious gratitude for a safe voyage during which two women had died and "there [had] been four births, —three by *single* women...."[36] Clearly Beilby was more disappointed in children's births to single mothers than in women's deaths from illnesses that he could imply were preexisting.[37] Beilby then assumed more astonishing heights of outrage, accusing the ship's captain of failing to enforce Beilby's contractual entitlement to "moral care" of the female passengers, with the result that "The women (of whom there were not a few of the most depraved characters on board) broke out into open rebellion; the crew became mutinous; and ultimately the ship became little better than a complete brothel."[38] Beilby's shocking testimony interpreted the depravity of emigrant women as the inciting factor in shipboard disorder, rather than considering the conditions of exploitation that would be raised by later generations of emigration organizations. In a subsequent letter to the Colonial Secretary, Beilby wrote that on landing in Sydney he had prioritized attending to his "important commercial engagements," preparing "a character list for…the allocation of the females," and demanding an inquiry into "the gross irregularities which have existed on board" the *Layton*.[39] After Beilby, the "character list" as a document affecting emigration and work placement continued to be prioritized by emigration officials, as addressed in the second chapter of this essay.

For Beilby, public condemnation of the character defects of emigrant women were an avenue through which he could attack his enemies on the Emigration Committee. Writing to the

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[36] Beilby, *A Few Copies of Letters*, 4.

[37] Jan Gothard begins *Blue China* by reflecting on the incomplete narratives of two women who died in the process of immigrating to Australia. Her respect and sensitivity is an important reminder of how scholars can engage with the narratives of individuals who were mistreated and reduced to rhetorical points in their own lifetimes.

Jan Gothard, *Blue China: Single Female Migration to Colonial Australia* (Carlton South, Victoria: Melbourne University Press, 2001).

[38] Beilby, *A Few Copies of Letters*, 4.

[39] Beilby, *A Few Copies of Letters*, 10.

Sydney *Colonist* in January 1836, Beilby quoted local colonial papers that accused the Emigration Committee of sending women of disreputable character and girls too young to work. Counting the number of emigrant women from the *Boadicea* who were under sixteen years of age, including those so young they had to be sent to the Orphan School, the *Hobart Town True Colonist* accused the Emigration Committee of a "gross double fraud" upon both the emigrants and the colonists who would be responsible for "their maintenance."[40]

Enticed by the language of *gross double fraud* applied to his enemies on the Emigration Committee, not to mention the spectacle of an avaricious British company preying on the "taxes" of the colony, Beilby passed over the extent to which both Hobart Town papers' portrayals of female emigrants as helpless children departed from his own emphasis on the immorality of adult emigrants. Perhaps the absurdity of Sydney receiving quasi-criminal emigrant women and Hobart Town, Tasmania receiving children too young to work were equally suited to Beilby's overall purpose of indicating colonial disorder and mixing of categories. Throughout the pamphlet, Beilby pitted a moral "public mind" against the vices of "persons in authority," corrupt middlemen, and immoral women; and parodied the emigrant advice genre with his complaints of corrupt colonial courts.[41] In Beilby's understanding, government oversight of commerce should have rewarded his class rather than left it vulnerable to, as government oversight of emigrant women should have rewarded the superintendents who identified immorality rather than the emigration companies that profited from disguising it. For decades after Beilby, cultural panics over emigrant women's moral character remained embedded in British imperial documentation.

[40] Beilby, *A Few Copies of Letters*, 17.
[41] Beilby, *A Few Copies of Letters*, 29, 30-31.

Throughout these examples of literature presented as nonfictional representations of Australian emigration before the 1860s, evaluation of women's identities and characters structured social critiques and aspirations for social reform. The selection, appropriation, and editorialization of supposedly-authentic personal experiences exemplify broader trends in the use of mass-market writing to imagine stratified model societies across colony and metropole. Longer cultural and literary practices related to commerce and advertisement encouraged these arguments about settler society to take the form of anecdotal "testimonials" for or against emigration. From a humane perspective like that of Caroline Chisholm's reunification work, the emphasis on women and family acknowledged emigrants' desperation to live in contact with their families, freed from the carceral legacies of penal colonies and workhouses. Yet literary advocacy of family colonization idealized specific female identities. Clacy, Mossman, and Beilby drew on colonial anxieties and gendered anxieties about women's character in attempt to bring coherence and urgency to their other demands for Australian society. While these romanticized narratives and dramatized critiques strove to address tensions between the eligibility of female emigrants for marriage and for domestic service, they form a useful contrast to the limitations on even the women who attempted to conform to gendered expectations of marriage. Jan Gothard writes that after transportation ended in 1853, Tasmania continued to treat "immigrant women in a similar light to convict women, as requiring close control," including demanding that married immigrants complete their employment contracts, and other policies to maintain the population of female domestic servants as single men left for the Victorian goldfields.[42] Literary reformers worked within the hierarchies of settler colonial society,

[42] Gothard, *Blue China,* 193.

carefully allocating in racial and gendered terms the right to represent the Australian settler family.

Even while they marketed their writing with invocations of the lure of profit in Australian gold fields or in the business of facilitating emigration, these British nonfiction writers of the early nineteenth century insisted on defining the moral character of prospective emigrants. Emphasizing emigrant character treated every prospector as a potential settler. Common anxieties about the morality of wealth acquired in Australia illuminated cultural connections between colony and metropole. The chapter that follows examines ideas of "character" in archival sources on the regulation of emigrants who received charitable or governmental assistance for their travel to Australia. While prospective emigrant literature relied on persuasive techniques to disseminate authors' ideas of a model Australian society, the ideas about reputation and character documented in these sources directly affected which emigrants could receive assistance in funding their emigration. Writers of booster literature and related emigration critiques imagined their ideal emigrants and their antitheses, but the organizations analyzed here played a financial and bureaucratic role in deciding which of the applicants they depicted could become emigrants.

Chapter 2: "Appears Very Decent": Documenting Female Emigrant Character

Two stereotypes of female emigrants dominated the travel writer Ellen Clacy's opinions of assisted emigration societies in the 1850s: the virtuous and successful women assisted by the "Chisholm Society" and their less reputable counterparts among "Sydney Herbert's needlewomen."[43] Despite the popular perceptions inspiring Clacy's condemnation, Herbert's Fund for Promoting Female Emigration engaged with ideas of emigrant "character" as extensively as its contemporaries. While in 1833, the alienated ship's superintendent Charles Beilby had treated the "character list" as an onerous duty of his position, to be assembled and quickly handed off at port, by the 1850s Herbert compiled bound volumes of character documentation that today are preserved among his personal papers.[44]

Referring back to the character discourses raised in emigration media, this chapter shows that these anxieties proliferated in the bureaucratic documentation and information gathering that had a concrete effect on the mobility of prospective emigrants to Australia. The first section examines the promises Chisholm and Herbert's organizations made about the moral character of the emigrant women they assisted, which often came into conflict with public horror at Herbert's exposé of working women in London. The second section explores the extensive notes Herbert's Fund for Promoting Female Emigration kept on assisted emigrants, and specifically the strategies by which the organization used evidence of moral character to excuse other aspects of emigrant identities considered less desirable. Ultimately, the moral narratives about emigrant women created by assistance funds' character documentation enlisted public opinion in binding metropolitan urban reform to the project of Australia as a model settler colonial society.

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[43] Clacy, *A Lady's Visit to the Gold-Diggings*, 255.
[44] Beilby, *A Few Copies of Letters*, 10.

While Clacy emphasized vast differences between the emigrants settled by Caroline Chisholm and Sidney Herbert, Herbert's collected papers show that Chisholm and Herbert worked together as facilitators of female emigration. The Sidney Herbert Papers at the Wiltshire and Swindon History Centre in Chippenham, England hold documents concerning assisted emigration to Australia for women and families. The papers emphasize two assisted emigration organizations: the Family Colonisation Loan Society (FCLS), established in 1849 by the philanthropist and administrator Caroline Chisholm (1808-77), and the Fund for Promoting Female Emigration (FPFE), established in the same year by the then-Peelite Conservative politician Sidney Herbert (1810-1861) and his wife Mary Elizabeth (1822-1911).[45] In a letter from August 1850, Chisholm sought Herbert's influence in soliciting financial contributions to sending out the first FCLS ship, which she considered her chance to prove the merits of her less "sectarian" approach in "[selecting] the people according to our rules…common working people."[46] Chisholm argued that she had acted in good faith by pledging to "work for no sect, or party" and refusing a loan from the Catholic Society due to their "sectarian selection," but that she continued to experience anti-Catholic discrimination from potential Protestant donors.[47] As

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[45] Bogle, "Chisholm [née Jones], Caroline (1808–1877)," in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*.

H. C. G. Matthew, "Herbert, Sidney, First Baron Herbert of Lea (1810–1861), Politician," in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University Press, 2004), https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-13047.

[46] Letter from Mrs. Chisholm to Sidney Herbert asking for money towards ships, 20 August 1850, 2057/F8/VIII/27, Papers of Sidney Herbert, First Baron Herbert of Lea, Wiltshire and Swindon Archives, Chippenham, Wiltshire, England.

[47] Letter from Mrs. Chisholm to Sidney Herbert, 20 August 1850, 2057/F8/VIII/27.

Caroline Chisholm converted to Catholicism at the time of her marriage to Captain Archibald Chisholm, who was from a Scottish Catholic family.

Bogle, "Chisholm [née Jones], Caroline (1808–1877)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*.

Beilby had complained of limited ability to regulate emigrant women's conduct, Chisholm feared that criticism of her family's faith would prevent her from assisting the passage of deserving emigrants. Chisholm's adroit public relations meant that the most serious prejudices she faced were *sectarian*: anti-Catholicism against herself and the emigrants she might select rather than suspicion of emigrants' moral character.[48] Herbert's efforts to mitigate the effects of sectarian prejudice on Chisholm's organization were one facet of emigration assistance societies' attempts to regulate emigrant identities in order to shield the reputations of their organizers.[49]

Emigration assistance exerted a selective influence on which individuals could afford to emigrate, directly intervening in the demographic makeup of the colonies. Two bound volumes in the Sidney Herbert papers, 2057/F8/IX/1 and 2057/F8/IX/2 described prospective emigrants sponsored by the FPFE between December 1850 and May 1853. As noted in the catalog record, the descriptions include details of religious affiliation, occupation, education, family and national origin, ship sailed on, captain of ship, and date.[50] By the second volume, which covers January to

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[48] Letter from Mrs. Chisholm to Sidney Herbert, 20 August 1850, 2057/F8/VIII/27.

Bogle, "Chisholm [née Jones], Caroline (1808–1877)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*.

[49] An early printed letter and subscription list for the Family Colonization [sic] Loan Society listed Herbert as a committee member, listed Captain Archibald Chisholm as the secretary and one of two members of the finance committee, listed the Chisholms' home address in relation to the organization, and excluded mention of founder Caroline Chisholm.

Fund for promoting female emigrants: Printed letters received by Stanley Herbert from the colonies on the instruction of the fund, 19 October 1850, 2057/F8/VIII/13a, Papers of Sidney Herbert, First Baron Herbert of Lea, Wiltshire and Swindon Archives, Chippenham, Wiltshire, England.

In her 2001 doctoral thesis, the Chisholm scholar Carole A. Walker notes that Herbert "often attended" Chisholm's evening meetings for emigrants.

Carole A. Walker, "Caroline Chisholm, 1808-1877: Ordinary Woman – Extraordinary Life, Impossible Category" [Doctoral dissertation], (Loughborough University, January 1, 2001), 87.

[50] Notes on prospective emigrants December 1850 to October 1852, 2057/F8/IX/1, Papers of Sidney Herbert, First Baron Herbert of Lea, Wiltshire and Swindon Archives, Chippenham, Wiltshire, England.

May of 1853, notes on physical appearance and character traits were added to these categories of description.[51] The entries in each book were alphabetized by emigrant surname and divided by lettered tabs, with no more than one blank leaf left after each section. This filing arrangement suggests that Herbert compiled the information from other sources, which is reasonable given that the first collection covered almost two years and that Herbert was occupied with serving as secretary at war between 1852 and 1854.[52] This documentation practice produced notes reflecting and institutionalizing the prejudices of Herbert's organization in relation to the prospective emigrants.

The scholarship on female emigration to Australia observes a divide between the first and second half of the nineteenth century with regard to the gendered hierarchies shaping women's experiences. Jan Gothard situates her analysis of single female migration between 1860 and 1900, when vast numbers of "single British women accepted an assisted passage to one of the six Australian Colonies," and when over time governments realized that controlling single women's migration could serve both the economic goals of colonial governments and the social goals of British female emigrationists.[53] Following Gothard's understanding of the political and social ambitions that intensified governmental control of female emigration, this chapter looks earlier to a period when assisted emigration was less numerous and centralized, and when female emigration societies were led by a far different generation from those late Victorian and

[51] Notes on prospective migrants January 1853 to May 1853, 2057/F8/IX/2, Papers of Sidney Herbert, First Baron Herbert of Lea, Wiltshire and Swindon Archives, Chippenham, Wiltshire, England.

[52] Herbert's position as *secretary at war,* in which he served from 1845-6 and 1852-4, was subordinate to the position of *secretary of state for war,* which he would hold from 1859 until his death in 1861.

Matthew, "Herbert, Sidney, (1810–1861)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*.

[53] Gothard, *Blue China,* 1, viii.

Edwardian reformers Julia Bush portrays as eventually conceding their "older style of socially hierarchical gender politics" to the government agencies that following the First World War assumed professionalized authority over population movement and labor in the empire.[54] In the 1850s, these narratives had yet to develop, and the stories and documents guiding female emigration came from figures shaped by earlier ideas about poverty, domestic service, and the relationships between servants and households. Claiming that past scholarship has overstated the significance of the "demographic imbalance of the sexes" to single female migration to colonial Australia, Gothard emphasizes themes of class, gender, and labor.[55] Accordingly, the qualitative discourses promoted by female emigration assistance organizations become a crucial source for interpreting the question of working women's labor and mobility. In the early 1850s, as colonial governments and settler households clamored for cheap and reliable domestic labor on a scale anticipating later eras of migration, for the private emigration societies and their allies in the British government the language of character still reigned.

Examination of Sidney Herbert's documentation of female emigrants, alongside the very public nature of his exposé of *Needlewomen and Slop-Workers*, shows that he shared many of the concerns with morality and respectability that Chisholm brought to her FCLS. Chisholm's focus on the character of women and families is a useful guide to emigration administrators' hopes for Australian settlement. For example, an 1853 letter from Chisholm to Herbert includes three pages of minutes from the "Report of the Executive Committee of the Family Colonization Loan Society" regarding their "authority" to use the £10,000 provided by the secretary of state

[54] Bush, *Edwardian Ladies and Imperial Power*, 200.
[55] Gothard, *Blue China*, 9.

for the Colonies, the selection of emigrants, the responsibility for transporting emigrants, and the mode of repayment of loans.[56] The report explained that the Loan Society would give preference to "young married couples with few or no children, or to single persons of both sexes between the ages of 18 and 30…males and females…as nearly as possible in equal proportions."[57] These demographic preferences show that Chisholm's organization envisioned settling Australia with young, respectable emigrant couples and future couples who would raise a new generation of settlers. The biopolitical implications of this goal of planting a respectable young working class in Australia are paired with financial claims in the insistence that private and state interests would be united in "the exercise of a sound discretion in the choice of Emigrant" and the likelihood of loan repayment.[58] The FCLS presented settler colonization as the combined investment of philanthropists, governmental bodies, and the emigrants themselves.

Stefan Collini's examination of the centrality of character in Victorian political thought has particular relevance to researching the evaluation of character by assisted emigration societies. An apparent conflict between Collini's thesis and the findings from the Herbert Papers is that emigration administrators' narrow focus on the moral qualities of prospective emigrants does give connotations of the "ideological device for imposing middle-class values upon a potentially disruptive working-class" against which Collini positions his argument on the use of

[56] Letter from the Family Colonisation Society, 1853, 2057/F8/VIII/1, Papers of Sidney Herbert, First Baron Herbert of Lea, Wiltshire and Swindon Archives, Chippenham, Wiltshire, England.

[57] Letter from the Family Colonisation Society, 1853, 2057/F8/VIII/1.

[58] Copy of report of the Executive Committee of the Family Colonisation Loan Society as to the best mode of employing the sum of £10,000 recently placed at their disposal by the Secretary of State for the Colonies, in accordance with a resolution of the Legislative Council of New South Wales, Undated [1851], 2057/F8/VIII/5, Papers of Sidney Herbert, First Baron Herbert of Lea, Wiltshire and Swindon Archives, Chippenham, Wiltshire, England.

the language of character across the ideological spectrum.[59] Interrogating the apparent conflict leads to a deeper understanding of the transformation of assisted emigrants to settlers and moral agents of empire. The emigrants financially assisted and morally surveilled by Chisholm and Herbert's organizations were selected for their ability to in turn be selective in their behaviors and, particularly in the case of women, their social and intimate alliances. Collini, paraphrasing Boyd Hilton's analysis of the 1820s, emphasizes Evangelical Christianity's portrayal of a financially uncertain "proving-ground of moral discipline" in which character served as "moral collateral."[60] Remaking this fraught portrayal for the changing age, the loan repayment model of the FCLS marshalled reputable emigrants' meager resources to guide them into an economic environment. Furthermore, in one sense Collini's portrayal of the cultural preparation for late nineteenth-century "colonial experience" treating the general framework of character as a means of accessing more specific "first-order virtues…in unknown circumstances" conjures images of the formal education of colonial officials.[61] However, the statement about character as an adaptive repository for Victorian virtues can be taken earlier in the century and to a different social class to show that assisted emigration societies imagined successful applicants as civilizing colonial environments from the urban to the mining and agrarian.

As the century progressed, emigrant literature accumulated that promoted the treatment of Australia, New Zealand, Canada, the United States, and other regions as part of a vast network of opportunities for the rational, self-interested emigrant.[62] However, the sense of possibility

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[59] Stefan Collini, "The Idea of 'Character' in Victorian Political Thought," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 35 (1985): 30, doi:10.2307/3679175.

[60] Collini, "The Idea of 'Character' in Victorian Political Thought," 36, 40.

[61] Collini, "The Idea of 'Character' in Victorian Political Thought," 47, 48.

[62] Examples of later literature promoting emigration include the following:

Tasmania Board of Immigration, ed., *Information for Intending Emigrants* (Hobart: James Barnard, Government Printer, Tasmania, 1875).

offered by treatises on "the best country to which to emigrate" rested upon a vast network of denials and erasures of emigrant identities that did not fit into the model colonial society. One clear example of this denial of emigrant identity is the engraving entitled "The Chinese Invasion, Northern Queensland," which was printed in Melbourne by the *Illustrated Australian News*, July 2, 1877 during a series of gold rushes.[63] The militaristic connotations of the term "invasion" were heightened by the visual emphasis on long processions of Chinese men moving between tents and across the hilly landscape. Depicting Chinese prospectors as militaristic invaders rather than industrious competitors or domestic family groups excluded them from the visual arenas of wealth production and more permanent settlement that British writers and administrators imagined for white British emigrants. Clearly, British private and public investment in shaping the identity of the emigrant settler was distinctly racialized decades prior to the Immigration Restriction Act 1901, known as the "White Australia" policy.

In popular writing dealing with emigration to Australia, works treating emigration as a question of limitless economic opportunity were sold alongside works that demanded the colonial government take steps to control emigration for the sake of its global standing. In *The Fatal Mistake* (1875), the Scottish-born Australian minister John Dunmore Lang treated the John Marshall and Charles Beilby female emigration scandals of the early 1830s as forerunners to the "importation" of laborers from India, China, the Pacific Islands, and the Tasmanian penal

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J. C. Brown, *Plain and Practical Letters to Working People Concerning Australia, New Zealand, and California, and Showing the Best Country to Which to Emigrate* (London: Digby & Long, 1889).

Robert S. Walpole, *Can Australia Compare with Canada and the United States of America as a Field for Immigration: If Not! Why Not* (Melbourne: Victorian Employers' Federation, 1908).

[63] "The Chinese Invasion, Northern Queensland," 1877, print: wood engraving, 21.7 x 35.2 cm, PIC Drawer 3827 #U5302 NK 11765/7, National Library of Australia, https://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-135884777.

colonies "at the expense of the colonists."[64] The idea of Australian settlers subsidizing labor imports from undesirable demographics helped Lang connect this introduction to his concluding complaints that over the previous ten years "Assisted Emigration" had given Australia "an Irish instead of a British, a Roman Catholic instead of a three-fourths Protestant, population."[65] Lang's perceptions of British governmental influence in assisted emigration from Ireland are supported by several generations of U.K. parliamentary debates. During the Famine of the 1840s, the idea of assisted emigration was offered as a humanitarian solution "for the relief of Ireland," while by 1883, several years after the famine of 1879, questions of national pride and identity were being attached to the treatment of Irish emigrants in New South Wales.[66] The assisted emigration discussions during the Great Famine geographically extended the U.K Parliament's determination to distance itself from culpability. The euphemistic treatment of the Irish famine refugees as receiving "relief" through emigration further entrenched colonial prejudices against Irish emigrants as exempt from the model of settler colonial social mobility.

Without collapsing the relevant forms of racism and oppression into too brief a discussion, it is important to acknowledge the rapidity with which nineteenth-century

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[64] John Dunmore Lang, *The Fatal Mistake, or, How New South Wales Has Lost Caste in the World through Misgovernment in the Matter of Immigration: And What Is the Present Duty of the Colony in the Case* (Sydney: William Maddock, 1875), 5, 11.

[65] Lang, *The Fatal Mistake,* 32.

[66] Select debates include:

"Colonisation - Tuesday 1 June 1847 - Hansard - UK Parliament,"accessed February 12, 2021, https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/1847-06-01/debates/ff3d982a-cdb8-4a88-a8e9-7ca1d1566f2e/Colonisation.

"Colonisation - Monday 10 July 1848 - Hansard - UK Parliament," accessed February 12, 2021, https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/1848-07-10/debates/7eddbc4e-dbe9-4bff-bafc-249e4874ef09/Colonisation.

"Emigration—State-Aided Emigration To Irishmen In New South Wales - Tuesday 7 August 1883 - Hansard - UK Parliament," accessed February 12, 2021, https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/1883-08-07/debates/198434f1-8606-476e-9ebb-4c263c967278/Emigration—State-AidedEmigrationToIrishmenInNewSouthWales

commentators themselves blended various demographic threats to a model Australian society. Multiple aspects of the emigrant selection processes publicized by Caroline Chisholm and Sidney Herbert suggested attempts to differentiate and distance their selected emigrants from other groups arriving or attempting to arrive in Australia. Janice Gothard's chapter "Pity the Poor Immigrant" argues that although government assistance was made more broadly available after the 1850s, "women assisted to emigrate in the 1850s, in schemes initiated in Britain, were poor. Their poverty was in fact a requirement for their entry to these earlier schemes."[67] Notably, by offering select emigrants two-year loans for half their passage, the FCLS promised assisted emigrants a transformation of identity from the objects of charity to colonial investors in their own right. Chisholm's loan system and blending of private with public funds and Herbert's emphasis on whether each emigrant woman arrived "with her outfit" and possessed domestic service in sought to obfuscate the very poverty that Gothard writes compelled emigration assistance. Gothard adds that many women assisted by Herbert's society described themselves as "domestic servants" because that occupation appeared more respectable than "needleworkers – servants out of place."[68] Ultimately, Chisholm and Herbert participated in institutional practices that sought to economically differentiate their selected emigrant women and families from emigrants who received more generalized forms of "Government assistance." Emphasizing non-elite investment in emigration rhetorically distanced Chisholm and Herbert's assisted emigrants from the social stigma of the "relief" that emigration societies sought to provide.

[67] Janice Gothard, "'Pity the Poor Immigrant: Assisted Single Female Migration to Colonial Australia," in Richards, Eric, (ed.) *Poor Australian Immigrants in the Nineteenth Century* (Australian National University, Canberra, A.C.T, 1991), 98.

[68] Gothard, "'Pity the Poor Immigrant," 105.

Crucially, access to the ability to be perceived as an economic agent rather than an economic burden in the settler colonial context was related to the other information that these emigration assistance societies collected and documented: in the case of "Sidney Herbert's needlewomen," categories could include religion, looks and character, education, occupation, and family. Thus public-private emigration assistance programs proposed to construct the demographic interventions that emigration literature was only positioned to advocate rhetorically, and cleared the way for discourses that emphasized the movement of the groups for whom migration within the British Empire and North America was open and available.

Responding to the labor demands of wealthier Australian colonists, Herbert's first volume, containing approximately 86 two-page spreads of emigrant descriptions, listed numerous women who identified themselves as domestic servants. The sixteen women whose surnames began with A included two general servants, two housemaids, a maid of all work (abbreviated as "all work"), a cook, a woman who "had been in service," a widowed mother who "has not been in service," a needlewoman, a Sunday school teacher, and an aspiring nurse.[69] This spread of occupations contrasts strikingly with Clacy's sneer at "Sidney Herbert's needlewomen," a misconception for which Herbert's own writings on *Needle-Women and Slop Workers* (1849) must bear some of the blame.

The Herbert Papers copy of *The Needle-Women & Slop Workers: Being Extracts Illustrative of Their Condition, from the Letters in "The Morning Chronicle," on Labour and the Poor* (1849) has been annotated on the front cover with "This was the origin of the society

[69] It is unlikely that the aspiring nurse had received professionalized training like that advanced by Herbert's close friend Florence Nightingale.

organized by Sidney for Female Emigration" and "by Sidney Herbert."[70] Herbert's book belongs to a genre of urban poverty studies most distinguished by the journalist and *Punch* cofounder Henry Mayhew's articles for the *Morning Chronicle* between 1849 and 1850, which Mayhew compiled as *London Labour and the London Poor* (1851, fourth volume 1861).[71] In contrast to Herbert, Chisholm had famous and palatably multi-genre literary support in Charles Dickens, who the literary scholar Terra Walston Joseph writes advertised the FCLS through articles in his magazine *Household Words* and concluding allusions in *David Copperfield* (1850).[72]

Searching for evidence of economic desperation, Herbert extracted candid interviews with working women in each category of "needlewoman" and "slop-worker," beginning with a widow who barely survived on her earnings from "making the habiliments of our better-fed convict population."[73] The interview subject described her own occupation as "convict work," underscoring the misery of her situation by identifying her labor with imprisonment.[74] Herbert's inclusion of this narrative argued that London treated working women as convicts, a chancy argument given the attempts of 1850s female emigration societies to dissociate Australia from

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[70] Sidney Herbert, *The Needle-women and Slop-workers: Being Extracts Illustrative of their condition from the Letters in the Morning Chronicle on Labour and the Poor* (London: Petter, Duff, and Co., 1849), 2, in 2057/F8/VIII/7, Papers of Sidney Herbert, First Baron Herbert of Lea, Wiltshire and Swindon Archives, Chippenham, Wiltshire, England.

[71] Henry Mayhew, *London Labour and the London Poor* (Penguin Books: London, 1985).

[72] Joseph adds that Dickens satirized Chisholm as "Mrs. Jellyby" in *Bleak House* (1853), a philanthropist who ignores poverty in her own family and community. Joseph argues that Dickens's ambivalence about Chisholm related to his racial anxieties about colonial settings.

Terra Walston Joseph, "'Saving British Natives': Family Emigration and the Logic of Settler Colonialism in Charles Dickens and Caroline Chisholm," *Victorian Literature and Culture* 2, no. 2 (January 1, 2015), 262.

[73] Herbert, *The Needle-women and Slop-Workers*, 1, 2057/F8/VIII/7.

Slops were cheap, ready-made, low-quality garments like those supplied to seamen.

"slop, n.1," in *OED Online* (Oxford University Press, March 2021), s. 5a, https://www.oed.com /view/Entry/182039?rskey=GgaIE3&result=1&isAdvanced=false..

[74] 2057/F8/VIII/7. Herbert, The needlewomen and shop-workers'. Page 2.

penal legacies. In a "dimly-lit" assembly with two reporters screened from view, Herbert and a more experienced social worker gathered twenty-five needlewomen "willing to state that they had been forced to take to the streets on account of the low prices for their work."[75] Herbert's accumulated testimonies sought to frame prostitution in London as a horrific consequence of the economic exploitation of garment workers. Sally Shuttleworth writes of Charlotte Brontë's response to the overstocked labor market of the 1840s that the "distressed needlewomen and governesses" about whom Brontë wrote seemed to be "figures of greater public sympathy than the potentially seditious male workers," and yet women working outside the home were treated as the source of "moral and physical corruption."[76] Considering the frequency with which Brontë was criticized for depicting immorality and corruption in the very narratives she intended to show moral women transcending these dangers, it is not surprising that Herbert should have become similarly trapped between arguments about the moral dangers faced by working women. Tragically, Clacy's repetition of Australian prejudices against "Sidney Herbert's needlewomen" demonstrates that the accounts that Herbert had intended to use to create shock at the plight of working women contributed to elite colonists' revulsion to working women themselves.

Sidney Herbert's volumes of documentation on female emigrants show a search for data that would defend the character of the emigrants selected for assistance. Each of the sixteen emigrants with "A" surnames in the 1850-52 volume was identified with a Christian religious denomination: twelve were members of the Church of England, three were Wesleyans, and Sarah Alston was a Roman Catholic. Family ties were mentioned to imply respectable upbringings and

[75] Herbert, *The Needle-women and Slop-Workers*, 12, 13, 2057/F8/VIII/7.

[76] Sally Shuttleworth, *Charlotte Brontë and Victorian Psychology* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 191-192.

to imply that the women would not arrive "friendless" to the colonies: three women planned to meet immediate family members in Port Phillip and Sydney, the Sunday-school teacher named her schoolmaster uncle and was recorded as having "protected passage" and to be "willing to be useful [teaching] on board ship," and the three Anderson sisters traveled to Sydney together "in the hope that their parents and four sisters would follow them." By describing applicants' religious affiliations and familial ties to Australia, Herbert's FPFE emphasized information that could imply the emigrant women's religious and familial protection from urban vice.

The general definitions of "character" that Collini introduces take on particular significance in the context of the moral reputations of impoverished emigrant women. Introducing Victorian understandings of the term "character," Collini describes "a descriptive and an evaluative element" of the term, the "very large causal role the Victorians assigned to character," and the "habit of restraining one's impulses."[77] Here, notes on female emigrants that emulate the data-driven style of neutral descriptions have an evaluative and even argumentative purpose more consistent with Sidney Herbert's *Needlewomen and Slop-Workers* interviews. The "causal role" of character is implicit in the understanding that the FPFE, the colonial government, and perhaps the emigrant women themselves needed these character records to be made. Echoes of Beilby's insistence that making a "character list" was his most immediate recourse for salvaging his duty to discipline the female emigrants, not to mention Chisholm's solicitation of Herbert's influence on the grounds that her society was performing vital emigrant selection work, are relevant here. Finally, character as the "habit of restraining one's impulses" refers simply to thrift and perhaps temperance for the industrious men and dutiful wives of Mossman and Clacy's emigrant narratives. For documentation of the unmarried female emigrant,

[77] Collini, "The Idea of 'Character' in Victorian Political Thought," 33, 34, 35.

the idea of moral restraint takes on an additional reputational significance somewhere between Beilby's disgust at the women on board the *Layton* and Herbert's moral outrage at the economic and sexual exploitation of London's needlewomen and slop-workers. In the language of emigrant character, all forms of reputation, restraint, and discernment mingled.

The FPFE often inserted positive character descriptions to mitigate negative impressions given by other aspects of emigrant identities. The poorest emigrants who lacked "their outfit" generally had skills such as "cooking" and experience in domestic service attached to their description: Mary Ann Allen, a general servant who "understands cooking," had "most other things…in pledge" when she drowned. The token Roman Catholic under "A" was described as wishing to be a cook, having her "outfit," and "very nice," implying that she would easily find domestic work serving elite colonists. Women who had been married received additional character scrutiny: the widowed mother Lucy Andrews paid five pounds toward her passage and was "very respectable," while the housemaid Anne A. with two brothers in Port Phillip received an investigation regarding: "A doubt whether she was married but she was allowed to go, her husband not having been heard of four years." The youngest emigrants, whose age made them seem more vulnerable to moral dangers, were also likely to receive character descriptions: "Eliza Allen…[was] a nice little girl of 15," the Anderson sisters were "very nice girls," and eighteen-year-old Rosetta Arden was "hardworking and industrious." In calling many of these women "nice girls," the administrator specifically meant to emphasize their precision of conduct, scrupulousness, and respectability rather than their pleasant nature.[78] These "nice" emigrant

[78] "nice, adj. and adv.," in *OED Online* (Oxford University Press, March 2021), s. 3a, 3f, 14c https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/126732?rskey=hcfh6S&result=3&isAdvanced=false.

women, emigration societies hoped, would not only separate themselves from immorality but would one day exert a selective moral influence on settler communities.

The FPFE's documentation of character and identity spanned a crucial divide between surveillance and protection. "Documents, Empire, and Capitalism," the eighth chapter of *Information: A Historical Companion*, begins with the 1859 controversy of the U.S. passport of the antislavery lecturer Sarah Remond, who as a "freed person of color" was ineligible for U.S. citizenship but, as the *New York Times* argued, could be understood as a woman using the passport "in its traditional role as a letter requesting protection" during her studies in London rather than as an identification document.[79] The *NYT* hoped that Remond's need for protection as a woman traveling alone would be treated as more sympathetic than the documentation of identity that would have made visible her racial exclusion from citizenship, and that British state practices guiding travel and identity documentation had understood Redmond as an individual to be protected rather than policed. Certainly the nineteenth-century organizations managing the emigration of single women to Australia mixed ideas of protection and policing. Beilby's idea of "moral care" seemed oddly skewed to protecting sailors from women passengers rather than the common inverse, and his "character list" would presumably have included attacks on women's characters rather than the positive references they needed to secure employment. Chisholm and Herbert's better-finessed mid-century humanitarian commitment to safeguarding deserving emigrants was rhetorically more aligned with the idea of protection than of punishment, but the threat of discipline and criminalization remained in their shipboard regulations and in the silences surrounding the applicants who the FCLS and the FPFE declined to assist.

[79] Ann Blair, Paul Duguid, Anja-Silvia Goeing, and Anthony Grafton, eds., *Information: A Historical Companion* (Princeton University Press, 2021), 152-3.

A further layer of ambiguity can be found in whether nineteenth-century British society regarded travel documents that described physical appearance as demeaning, and how subjective or character-based these descriptors had to be to balance emigrant women's associations with protection and with identity surveillance. "Documents, Empire, and Capitalism" outlines elite resistance to passports' physical descriptions, giving the example of an English novelist who "ignored the list of descriptors and completed his passport application describing himself as 'of melancholy appearance.'"[80] The English novelist wished his appearance to be associated with particular cast of character, likely aligned with the contemplative values of his profession, rather than with the pedestrian details of facial features. Later, when photographs were added to passports, leisure travelers were aghast at becoming "an object of inquiry," reading demeaning criminal associations into their subjection to the bureaucratic standards "that officials used to identify migrants."[81] The applicants in Herbert's notes were impoverished migrants rather than leisure travelers, and thereby less likely to resist official categorizations, but as will be seen, their appearance descriptors were generally almost as heavily inflected with character as the novelist's and only rarely crossed the line into blatantly physical details. The difference remained that rather than indulging the romantic characterization of "melancholy appearance," Herbert's notes represented emigrant women's appearances as showing respectable, work-ready, or gently feminine characters, thereby targeting the descriptors of successful applicants toward their potential roles in Australian settler society.

By Herbert's second volume of notes, kept from January to May of 1853, the descriptions begin to include references to emigrants' appearances, demeanors, and characters as a default

[80] Blair et als., eds., *Information: A Historical Companion*, 158.
[81] Blair et als., eds., *Information: A Historical Companion*, 159.

rather than a supplement to less flattering information. The entries begin with reference to religious denomination, with some absences: combining listings for the seventeen emigrants under "A" and "B" gives six Church of England emigrants, three Wesleyans, and seven emigrants whose religious denomination is not stated. Rather than indicating a softening of religious requirements, it seems more likely that other denominations were omitted by the emigrants or the administrators in attempt to evade associations with sectarian concerns.

Enhancing the FPFE's confidence in its surveillance of assisted emigrants, the emigrants of early 1853 traveled together in a limited number of ships and often shared evidence of sibling relationships. All but two of the emigrants under "A" and "B" traveled to Port Philip in one of three non-Government ships: the *Kent*, which arrived on January 25th; the *Madagascar*, which arrived March 2nd; and the *Walmer Castle*, which arrived May 17th. Hannah Bedingham and Mary Jane Blow, the exceptions to this rule, arrived in Port Phillip in April by the Government ship *Moulton*. Hannah Bedingham's entry mentioned that her sister Mary Anne had gone out in the *Kent*, and the entry for the "shy and quiet-looking" "Maria [sic] Anne Bedingham mentions that she had been a "Bedfellow with M.A. Marshall," meaning that both Mary Annes had been able to look after one another during the journey.[82] For comparison, the "very respectable" Anne Butterworth came with her outfit, paid her passage on the *Walmer Castle*, and had "a brother at Melbourne," her financial resources and familial relationships mitigating the dangers of her

[82] Mary Anne Marshall, listed under M., "has been in hospital with bronchitis. Improved before ailing but looks very delicate. Tidy + quick, outfit supplied…" M. A. Bedingham's proximity to Marshall may have been mentioned as a record of potential illness. Hannah Bedingham is described with qualities more related to work: "Can do any kind of household work…Respectable in appearance and intelligent in manner." The government ship *Moulton* may have been more interested in work-readiness than the character-focused officials supplying the *Kent*. It is also possible that the Fund for Promoting Female Emigration or Hannah herself may have wanted to emphasize the qualities that could help her care for her "quiet-looking" sister.

solitary travel to a different location from that in which her brother had settled. Sisterhood was likewise used to convey social stability in the combined entry for the "very respectable + willing" Birkhead sisters (Rosa Matilda, 20; Fanny, 18, Susan Emma, 16), who were daughters of a surgeon and had "never left home before." Portraying emigrants' family bonds resolved the problem that Herbert had left himself with in *Needlewomen and Slop-Workers* (1849): the FPFE had learned it needed to portray itself as rescuing young women from the looming prospect of moral danger, not as selecting women whom Australian society would interpret as already fallen.

Elite Australians were more enthusiastic about receiving experienced domestic servants than workers in the urban needle trades, considering the servants more respectable and useful.[83] Four of the seventeen emigrants in this selection had experience as general servants, and the three of these received the additional descriptors "industrious and hardworking," "nice girl," and "very respectable nice looking girl." Hannah Bedingham's ability to "do any kind of household work," the Birkhead sisters' never having "left home," and the motherhood and widowhood of Annie Brown would also have associated them with domestic rather than garment-making contexts in the imaginations of immigration administrators.

Appearance and character received particular emphasis for the emigrants whose descriptions required further explanations to connect them to domestic service. Seventeen-year-old Elizabeth Anne Brooks's youth and "respectable connexions" required her to demonstrate no household experience, but the entry detailed that she was a "fine fresh looking girl" who "appears very well disposed." Annie Brown received the descriptions "Well recommended" and "Very good looking." The first description enforced themes of respectability, and the positive

[83] Gothard, "'Pity the Poor Immigrant,'" 105.

description of Brown's appearance suggested that her virtuous lifestyle had preserved her beauty through the hardships of motherhood and bereavement.

Emigrants who worked more closely to the urban needle trades received more explicit invocations of the trope of an appearance untouched by hardship, with perhaps less emphasis on attractiveness and more on neatness and order. Mary Anne Brooks, no relation to Elizabeth, was described as a "shirt collar maker" who "appears very decent but has gone through great hardships earning only 3d a day." By "appears very decent" the administrator likely meant that Brooks dressed carefully and neatly. The inclusion of M. A Brooks, most archetypal of "Sidney Herbert's needlewomen," among women with greater financial resources, familial connections, and experience in domestic service reflected a growing awareness of the numbers of respectable domestic workers required to defend the respectability of urban needlewomen. Personal characteristics were also mentioned with regard to the "nursemaid and needlewoman" Anne Allen and the "nurse" Dinah Alford, each of whom disembarked from the *Madagascar* with full outfits. Alford was described glowingly as a "very nice little girl quiet + industrious" who could "read and write." Alford's skills and her quiet and youthful qualities exempted her from further description of her appearance. In contrast, Allen was criticized as "rough girl to look at." The administrator insisted that Allen was "very good and quiet" despite her appearance, choosing adjectives that emphasized docility and femininity. In the 1830s, Beilby had luridly described himself and a few virtuous emigrants as surrounded by "depraved characters."[84] Twenty years later, Herbert's organization was still dealing with the consequences of discussions of sexual immorality and urban poverty. Selective invocations of emigrant women's capacities for hard

[84] Beilby, *A Few Copies of Letters*, 4.

work and survival of hardships were balanced by insistence on qualities such as quietness, youthfulness and girlishness, physical attractiveness, and above all respectability.

Physical attractiveness, youthfulness, and moral character had a longer history in philanthropic and emigration media of the British Empire. Among the media responses to earlier waves of female emigration to Australia were three contrasting prints by three separate artists in 1832, 1833, and 1834. Ducote and McLean depicted women emigrants with beautiful butterfly wings flying toward the nets of prospective husbands on the Australian shore, Kendrick caricatured a woman advised to go to Sydney for a "cheap husband" who would not require as much financial support as "the brutes in England," and Newman and Treagar produced a comic strip detailing the miseries that prompted women migrants to return to England to die.[85] Each image's focus on the figure of the woman emigrant among male sailors and settlers ignored the roles that women played in the facilitation and management of emigration in order to emphasize the spectacle of single English women attempting to settle in Australia.

In contrast to the imaginative spectacle of unfettered female emigration, an "immigration matron" in the 1870s depicted in George Gordon McCrae's pen and ink drawing that emphasizes the matron's severe but rounded profile, large badge, conservative dress, and determined stance against the backdrop of a harbor.[86] Such a matron seems committed to her role in managing the

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[85] Alfred Ducote, and Thomas McLean, *E-Migration, or, A Flight of Fair Game*, 1832, print : lithograph, hand col. ; 23.7 x 38.3 cm, PIC Drawer 3832 #U7183 NK1615, National Library of Australia, https://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-135585009/view.

John Kendrick, *Emigration in Search of a Husband*, 1833, print : etching, hand col. ; sheet 28.9 x 25.5 cm, PIC Drawer 3832 #U7182 NK1616, National Library of Australia, https://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-135583825/view.

W. Newman, and G. S. Tregear, *Female Emigration*, 1834, National Library of Australia, print : lithograph, hand-colour ; 36 x 22.7 cm, PIC Drawer 3832 #U2599 NK4184, National Library of Australia, https://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-135583987/view.

[86] George Gordon McCrae, "The Staff of Life on the Point of Death;

arrival of immigrants. She may have read with attention the old complaints of Beilby and the new regulations of governmental and private emigration societies, and she may have had opinions on the effectiveness of religious tracts such as *Hints to Matrons of Emigrant Ships* (1850) and *Parting Words to a Young Female Emigrant* (1852).[87] Andrew Hassam describes the conditions of women passengers as "incarceration."[88] Certainly Beilby's lurid recollections of the *Layton's* captain having to "put thirteen [women] in prison and irons" would have contributed to the regulations and practices producing such shipboard "incarceration."[89] As established in Jeremy Bentham's *Panopticon* (1791) and in critical scholarship of panopticism following from Foucault's *Discipline and Punish*, external and internal moral surveillance, discipline, and categorization have shaped the development of significant modern institutions.

In other institutional practices encouraging women's internal identification with externally-presented reputations, Caroline Chisholm's first major project, the Female School of Industry for the Daughters of European Soldiers in Madras, 1834, used strict institutional principles to instill "basic education," "domestic accomplishments," and "religious instruction and moral conduct."[90] Beginning her philanthropic career as a young military wife guiding the neglected daughters of a far-flung army, Chisholm honed her abilities to portray the cross-class moral uplift and education of young women in imperial institutions. Throughout their

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Immigration Matron," 4 drawings mounted together: pen and ink ; irreg. 27.5 c 25 cm., *Album of Drawings*, 187-?, National Library of Australia, https://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-139395363/view.

[87] K. E. F., *Hints to Matrons of Emigrant Ships*. London: Printed for the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1850.

Religious Tract Society (Great Britain), ed. *Parting Words to a Young Female Emigrant*. Emigration Series, no. 6. London: Religious Tract Society, 1852.

[88] Hassam, *Sailing to Australia*, 68-73.

[89] Beilby, *A Few Copies of Letters*, 6.

[90] Walker, "Caroline Chisholm, 1808-1877" [Doctoral dissertation], 61.

Bogle, "Chisholm [née Jones], Caroline (1808–1877)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*.

philanthropic work, Herbert and Chisholm knew that their endeavors depended on how they communicated their own characters, as well as the characters of those they assisted. The moral collateral of assisted emigration was a hierarchical network of reputation and double-edged discernment. In Herbert's notes, as in Chisholm's experiences designing institutional regulation, the institutional documentation of assisted emigrants' identities allowed fictions and discourses about the ideal emigrant to affect material realities of mobility and migration.

Among the impulses toward the modern showed by the increasing systematization of identity documentation, evidence of negotiations with past ideologies about women in colonial society continued. To colonial governments, Chisholm and Herbert's systems may have begun to seem inefficient and beholden to specific ideas about surplus labor; to established colonial settlers, early emigration assistance societies' preoccupation with character both responded to and perpetuated anxieties about the identity of female labor. In another way, traditional assessments of character may have been more responsive to working women's professional needs than the scientific and racialized technologies of passport photography and even physiognomy. Although this chapter has emphasized emigration administrators' power to make discourses about the applicants they described into determinations of whether they would become emigrants, the application process involved interview and exchange by which each applicant represented herself within the constraints of the system. However, the manifestations of character that emigration administrators were encouraged to seek were more connected to traditional relationships of servitude and protection than to the nascent promises of national motherhood, social mobility, and maternal colonialism that marked later propagandistic forms of emigration advocacy. In the mid-nineteenth century, the idea of demographic transformation through migration was subordinate to larger questions about patterns of labor and cultural roles.

Conclusion: "Who Should Emigrate?" Believing in Settler Identity

Stoler writes that in Dutch, French, and British imperial cultures, European women experienced racial and social categories "as both subordinates in colonial hierarchies and as agents of empire in their own right."[91] This comparative understanding takes on particular significance with regard to the numerous and paradoxical roles imagined for the ideal female emigrant to the Australian colonies. British media about the early Australian gold rushes reveals a widespread fear that the influx of wealth and migrants would transform the fabric of Australian settler society, unsettling plans for agrarian households guided by the more established colonists. Travel writers and newspaper publishers, philanthropists and social critics from London to Sydney assembled testimonies to the character of the ideal emigrant. When she boarded for Australia in the 1850s, the right sort of emigrant woman was prepared to be loyal to her British birthplace, to her new colonial homeland, and to the ties of culture and commerce that connected both. She was loyal to the imperial hierarchies that had rewarded her identity and character with benefits ranging from assisted emigration and a stable career in domestic service to an elite marriage and reliable domestic servants. However humble her work, she would still choose her company carefully to preserve her character and reputation. If she dreamed of social mobility, it was as wife, mother, or matron; a woman who would bend her efforts to civilizing the households, cities, farmlands, gold fields, or even emigrant ships in which she was planted.

Emigration writers and early emigration assistance organizations created their ideal emigrants on the pages of publications and bureaucratic documents, selectively transforming applicants into emigrants and emigrants into settlers. These middle and upper-class facilitators

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[91] Ann Laura Stoler, *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power: Race and the Intimate In Colonial Rule* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 41.

and critics interpreted the lives of working women as the raw material of reform projects. They reduced, categorized, and organized the remnants of testimony into rhetorical points about the true causes and balms for social misery.

The ideal emigrant of the 1850s might have remained living in Australia at the time that the Commonwealth of Australia's new parliament expelled Pacific Islander laborers and passed the Immigration Restriction Act 1901, known as the "White Australia" policy for its racial restrictions.[92] In the following year, Marilyn Lake and Henry Reynolds explain, white Australian women won the right to vote and stand for national election; ten years later, Labor passed a Maternity Allowance Act offering a cash payment to "all white mothers, including unmarried ones."[93] Even if the white woman settler of 1912 had not conformed to the marriage standards that had won her predecessors assisted passage half a century before, in the maternalist politics of the new century her whiteness proved her suitability as a mother of future Australians.

The "matron" role that had regulated white immigrants in the eras of Chisholm and McCrae was inherited and transformed by the policies of the settler state. Margaret Jacobs explains that colonial maternalist politics directly shaped indigenous child removal as Australian administrators and educators forcibly removed the "Stolen Generations" of Aboriginal children from their communities.[94] The "matrons" of the new century were white Australian women who campaigned in the 1920s and 30s to designate "female protectors of Aboriginal women and

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[92] Marilyn Lake and Henry Reynolds, *Drawing the Global Colour Line: White Men's Countries and the International Challenge of Racial Equality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 137.

[93] Lake and Reynolds, *Drawing the Global Colour Line*, 157-8.

[94] Margaret D. Jacobs, "Maternal Colonialism: White Women and Indigenous Child Removal in the American West and Australia, 1880-1940," *The Western Historical Quarterly* 36, no. 4 (2005): 464, 476, https://doi.org/10.2307/25443236.

children."[95] This matron identity was supposed to protect Aboriginal women and children from Aboriginal society and from white men. Perceiving colonial maternalism as a strategy for resisting predators within their own society, the new Australian matrons reinterpreted the principles that in the previous century had guided Chisholm to reunite European emigrant families on Australian soil, separating Aboriginal families in the name of protection.

The ideals of moral discernment, economic productivity, and above all character in which nineteenth-century commentators sought to clothe a new Australian settler society certainly aligned with projects of social order in Victorian Britain and across its empire. Yet the extension of moral order should not be understood as a detached and elite political project, but rather a dynamic grouping of interactions and relationships across all levels of society. However an emigrant testimony was edited, however an applicant for emigration assistance was described, the resulting documentation attested to the unique existences of emigrants whose experiences had been unevenly fit into illustrative types. The deliberate and formalized Victorian language of compassion was used to frame real experiences of suffering. In their efforts to assist emigration, Caroline Chisholm and Sidney Herbert fought against categories of criminality and criminalized poverty. Yet in order to extend familial protections, economic possibility, and documented respectability to the objects of their compassion, assisted emigration societies formalized the moral hierarchies such as deserving and undeserving. Here Mossman and to a lesser degree Clacy joined the emigration advice genre in consoling themselves and readers that colonial failures happened to the wrong type of emigrant, the emigrant who arrived lacking sufficient preparation, resources, or intrinsic qualities.

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[95] Jacobs, "Maternal Colonialism," 468, 466.
McCrae, "Immigration Matron," drawing.

To some extent, the historical narrative of broken promises and illusory opportunities is relevant to this period of emigration, but the institutions and literatures analyzed here invoked as this narrative as a fear defining their social missions. The primary sources defended their credibility in terms of authentic testimonies and educated depictions of risk, producing a simultaneously cynical and romanticized type of "booster literature" for a generation still defined by the high-risk laissez-faire environment of Hilton's *Age of Atonement*. The corporate economic protections that Hilton describes as ending this period were historically classed and gendered. In this context the protections applied largely to investors in the larger-scale forms of colonial projects such as gold mining, agriculture, and commerce that emigration writers like Mossman, Clacy, and Beilby chose to personify as the work of individual male settlers.

The language of character crossed class divides in the emotional work it performed beneath a didactic or self-interested surface. The applicant who successfully represented herself to an official of the Family Colonisation Loan Society or the Fund for Promoting Female Emigration had even more reason than her evaluators to wish that good character could assure her survival in the colonies. A family who solemnly read "The Australian Letter" may have witnessed such a letter pass through imperial print networks to families like or unlike their own, and in turn scoured papers for the testimonies of other emigrants like or unlike their loved one. The representation of character, like religious allusions, provided a common language for nineteenth-century print communities to imagine human perseverance through the uncertainty and loss accompanying migration. Yet as quickly as empathetic connections were threaded between individuals and communities, other subaltern categories were severed from the common fabric of testimony. As the politics of character faded from Australian settler society with nationhood and the new century, the politics of exclusion remained.

For those prospective emigrant women with limited investment capital for whom the greater part of their investment was their labor, a particularly common situation for the unmarried working and lower middle-class British women who applied for early forms of emigration assistance on those principles, the gendered risks associated with character and reputation structured their experiences past this period. It is tempting to see a gendered counterpart to gold-fever in the idea that booster literature and colonial propaganda promised single middle-class women emigrants temporary professional careers before marriage but then required them to work as domestic servants, but ultimately this specific form of disappointment is part of a richer story about the negotiation of labor and identity in colony and metropole.[96]

In the first half of the nineteenth century, tensions in the identities of early women migrants were related to labor in the idealized settler household, which at the midcentury emigration professionals sought to supply with domestic servants through what Gothard describes with an example from 1850 as a "constant renegotiation" of "broadening the pool of applicants while keeping out the women the colonists did not want."[97] This thesis suggests as a concluding extension that character and other cultural conceptualizations of identity acted sometimes in partnership, sometimes in competition in shaping the nature and mobility of domestic labor. In the particular examples studied here, women from every level of colonial and metropolitan society could become involved in the process of maintaining the ties between reputation and labor, some as providers of and some as evaluators of testimonies. The intensively mediated testimonies of emigration produced during this transitional period propagated gendered and classed expectations of domestic labor. Rather than treating colonial domesticity as obscured

[96] Julia Bush, *Edwardian Ladies and Imperial Power* (New York: Leicester University Press, 2000), 152.

[97] Gothard, *Blue China*, 41.

from metropolitan critics by private spheres and physical distance, these materials imagined familiar virtues and vices for the emigrant women who managed and staffed early settler households. Responding to early rivalries between colony and metropole, such as elite colonists' recurring demands for domestic servants and complaints about emigrant women, the emigration literature and documented emigration selection of the 1850s accustomed broad sectors of the British and colonial Australian public to ideas of enforcing moral order. In this transitional moment, the complexities and ambiguities surrounding the characteristics of reform and social order were insulated by the familiarity of hierarchy, character, and exclusion.

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