

Troublesome Women: Gender, Crime, and Punishment in Antebellum Pennsylvania

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On March 5, 1851, Elizabeth Wagstaff, an inmate in the female ward of Moyamensing Prison, Philadelphia County's jail, was put in a dark cell for being insolent to the keepers. The staff deemed Wagstaff "a great annoyance [*sic*] to the Prison." In August of that year, the visiting inspectors were called to observe Wagstaff, as "her conduct is so bad, she keeps the place in Continual Excitement." In early February 1852, the inspectors were called again to visit Wagstaff because "her conduct is so outrageous that the Keepers cannot do anything with her she [*sic*] has destroyed the discipline of the prison." One month later, Wagstaff spent several days in the dark cell for being unruly and refusing to eat. Throughout 1852, Wagstaff plagued the employees with her behavior and thwarted prison order. She was strapped several times for abusing the matron and for noise infractions. Prison officials realized that "good treatment makes her worse" and that "she is so outrageous that she keeps the place in a continual uproar from Morning until night." In April 1853, she was strapped again for "breaking her door by hamering [*sic*]."¹ After such a record of resistance to prison discipline, it is doubtful that prison officials were upset at the expiration of her sentence on August 9, 1853.

Elizabeth Wagstaff was just one of thousands of troublesome women who entered into the criminal justice and prison systems in Pennsylvania during the decades leading up to the Civil War. She is fairly representative of these women: sentenced to a few years for larceny (property crimes being very common) and a nuisance in one way or another. She was not about to be a silent victim of the prison, to waste away in the cells. She resisted and certainly made herself known to the prison officials. My book, *Troublesome Women*, examines the lived experiences of women criminals in Pennsylvania from 1820 to 1860, mostly as they interacted with the nineteenth-century criminal justice system and prison systems. While women constituted a small percentage of those who faced courtrooms or prison sentences, their experiences remain an important aspect of understanding the struggles faced by all of those involved in the nineteenth-century criminal justice system: defendants, inmates, employees, reformers, and the

viewing public. Their individual struggles illuminate larger issues that troubled society at the time, including race, class, criminal punishment, reform, and gender roles.

Instead of simply letting the legal process happen to them and allowing authorities to use preconceived notions of nineteenth-century womanhood and female criminals to dictate their circumstances, these women actively shaped and influenced their situations—in the commission of crimes, in court, and in prison. In this capacity, women demonstrated that they were aware of their place in society, understanding nuances of society's values, particularly in the way society viewed women. This view was often defined around the middle-class white woman and the ideas of the cult of domesticity and separate spheres. Therefore, many of these female criminals who did not fall into that category had to negotiate a societal standard that was, realistically, not achievable for them. Issues of class, race, and ethnicity added layers and complications to the ways in which these female criminals interacted with legal systems within their communities. And yet, this cognizance of place in society did not limit these women from taking control of their circumstances; rather, it empowered some of the women caught in the legal system. Many of them either used these societal expectations of women in their favor—to mask their crimes or receive lenient sentences—or rejected these norms and challenged the limited role of women in antebellum society by their actions. I want to highlight the agency and empowerment that women exhibited in their committal of crimes and resistance to punishment, powerful statements in an era when institutions such as the penitentiary, and society as a whole, attempted to control and limit the influence of women, particularly African American, immigrant, and poor women.² Women convicted of crimes and sent to prison—both state and county prisons—continued to demonstrate their awareness of their rights as inmates and women to challenge through interactions with employees and reformers the expectation that female inmates were beyond redemption. Elizabeth Wagstaff is just one example of many.

The antebellum era stands as an essential period to explore female criminality for several reasons. In addition to the important role of women at the time, Pennsylvania had strong ties to the establishment of the penitentiary systems for the United States. Walnut Street Jail was opened as the state's first penitentiary in 1790, and Eastern and Western State Penitentiaries opened in the 1820s. These decades also witnessed profoundly shifting expectations for women in society. Furthermore, the antebellum years were a time of increasing political tension regarding race and ethnic relations, particularly in the 1840s and 1850s. The riots that wreaked havoc on Philadelphia and other locales in Pennsylvania provide a gateway to exploring crimes that embodied political overtones and the roles women played in these politically charged events—a different angle on the idea of women's criminal activity.

I looked at over 6000 court cases and hundreds of pages of prison records while conducting this research. For many of these women, this is their only entry into the historical record, but in some cases,

they make quite a splash. I hope that, in the discussion of their stories and what their cases reveal to us about the plight of women caught up in Pennsylvania's legal and prison systems in the antebellum decades, we can see the wide ranging "careers" of these troublesome women.

Many of the women embroiled in the legal system had committed petty crimes or property crimes. These crimes give you a general sense of the disorder, particularly in urban public settings, and also the mundane nature of what was stolen, suggesting in many cases that these crimes tended to be committed out of necessity. There tended not to be much of a paper trail with these cases, however. The cases that led to more coverage, just like today, are more high-profile crimes, and these cases tell us a great deal about women's experiences in these communities and in the legal system.

VIOLENT CRIME: FEMALE MURDERERS

Female murderers directly challenged not only how women were expected to behave but also the legal system that limited the options for women, particularly married ones. These women provided themselves with the potential opportunity to start new stages of their lives or begin new relationships that otherwise seemed out of reach through legal methods.³

In May 1847, Mary Myers and John Parker faced trial together for the murder of Mary's husband, John, in Venango County, Pennsylvania. According to several testifying doctors, John Myers had died of arsenic poisoning in January 1847. Dr. George Meeker testified that Mary said she "would willingly buy a barrel of liquor if he would drink it up and kill himself."⁴

Mary made it clear she was unhappy in the marriage and wanted out. Mary's sister-in-law, Nancy Myers, testified that Mary desperately wanted a divorce but was told it would be difficult to procure one if John treated her well and wanted to stay married to her. Mary was undeterred, declaring that "she would have a divorce at the risk of her life." The issue of divorce came up in other testimony as did the fact that Mary Myers asked around town for someone who could write a will for her husband, even though her husband was, at the time, in perfect health.⁵ Mary Myers was transparent that she wanted her husband to grant her a divorce. The lengths she went to in order to inquire about a divorce and, ultimately, to poison her husband to get out of the marriage can be seen as acts of last resort, defiance against her husband and against a legal system that limited her options.

Testimony about Mary Myers's demeanor during her husband's sickness and subsequent death raised red flags for the jury. When Mary Myers tried to laugh off the suggestion that her husband had been poisoned and said he was a drunkard, Dr. C. Klotz testified that he had told Myers that "he was poisoned with arsenic; I told her this repeatedly." Another physician, Dr. W. E. Bishop, told the court:

“She said if John Myers got well and heard the story [that he was poisoned], she had better be dead; she had lived in hell all her life-time,” and it would be worse if her husband survived.⁶

Witnesses outside the medical field also mentioned Mary’s attempts at playing the sickness off as a drunken frolic. Henrietta Mays said that Mary confided that her husband “had been in the habit of spreeing [*sic*] ... and he had taken his last spree now.” According to Mays, Mary “appeared very anxious that the thing should be over” and kept blaming the sickness on alcohol. Mays stated that “she shed tears on one occasion, when talking about the property being taken away from her, but at no other time.”⁷ There was apparently no love lost between husband and wife, as Mary seemed to be little grieved and more annoyed at her husband’s illness.

What was the role played by Mary’s co-defendant, John Parker? Although he was married, Parker boarded at the Myers residence sometimes. All signs and testimony at the trial pointed to an affair and potential murder plot. To make matters worse, only a few weeks before Myers’s death, Dr. Meeker testified that Mary came to him and asked for an abortion, which he refused to do, leaving Mary supposedly pregnant while on trial. With all of this testimony, it is little wonder that the community thought an affair was going on between Parker and Mary Myers. Finally, evidence came to light that John Parker purchased arsenic in the community, ultimately sealing the fate for himself and Mary Myers.⁸

On May 31, 1847, the jury found both John Parker and Mary Myers guilty of first-degree murder and were sentenced to hang for the crime. In his sentencing speech, the judge told the defendants and the courtroom that the crime was committed by “hearts desperately wicked” and is “an instance of such a cold-blooded, deliberate, and wilful [*sic*] murder as the annals of human depravity seldom furnish.”⁹ The judge stated that although the pair of murderers used “secrecy, caution and ingenuity” in the perpetration of the crime, they could no longer hide from God, and they would have to deal with His punishment for their crimes.¹⁰

While some women might have used murder as a means to end a marriage when a divorce was not easily accessible, the case of Lena Miller reflects an example of using murder as a means of preemptory self-preservation. In July 1866, Miller, a German immigrant living in Clearfield County, confessed to poisoning her husband. She tried a variety of natural poisons such as laurel leaves, filings of a brass buckle, quicksilver from a mirror, laudanum, and even the secretions from a boiled green grass snake. When none of those attempts worked, Miller said that she was consumed with the thought of killing her husband and went to a store to procure rat poison. Having been told by the shopkeeper that rat poison would not kill a human, she purchased arsenic instead. On the evening of June 30, 1866, Lena Miller began administering the poison in her husband’s food and drink, dosing him two or three times a day until she ran out on July 10. She purchased more, as well as ingredients for a mustard plaster to help

her now sick husband, as a doctor had instructed. He died on July 12, without having any more of the arsenic. Lena Miller stated that “he treated me badly and abused me so.” She continued: “He made me work hard outdoors on the farm. He would sometimes get mad and knock me down, and the marks of abuse could often be seen on my body.” Lena Miller argued that she was motivated to kill because she had been physically abused by her husband but could not bear to leave her children behind. In fact, this was her second abusive marriage; she deserted her first husband.¹¹ She was executed on November 13, 1867, stating that she was ready to die because she trusted in the mercy of God.¹² The evidence against Lena Miller was beyond reproach, in the eyes of the jury, and the letter of the law was carried out; yet in her testimony for why she committed the crime, her motivation portrays a desperate, dangerous situation, one that may have pulled at the heartstrings of some contemporary observers of the trial.

Poisoning was central to many of the cases of female murderers in this period and was a weapon of choice of many of the murders committed by women in Pennsylvania.¹³ These were not crimes of passion but were calculated, reasoned actions, ones that required patience from the women committing the deeds. The victims first become sick, making the deaths look accidental, diverting attention away from the perpetrator—at least at first. Poison offered a way for women to overpower their victims, particularly men who were most likely physically larger, stronger, and, perhaps in some cases, violent towards their wives. The use of poison is a seemingly passive, non-aggressive way to kill, allowing the women murderers to use some feminine characteristics or behaviors in the commission of the crime—they were the food preparers and caregivers of the sick—giving them ample opportunity to commit these offenses.¹⁴ While using female responsibilities to cover up a crime is used by women who shoplifted and swindled, in these extreme cases of murder, there is a more drastic motivation at play, for women had little legal recourse to end undesirable or abusive marriages. Furthermore, some of these women even acted as caregivers to their victims! To the casual observer, these acts may have looked on the surface like compassion, but, for the women themselves, caregiving offered a way to keep an eye on the progress of the murder and gave them the opportunity to adjust course if necessary. Yet to others, this false compassion was viewed as disturbing and manipulative after the victims had died and evidence of crimes emerged.

POLITICAL CRIMES: WOMEN AND RIOTS

In addition to these more traditional types of crimes that women committed, I examined women’s roles in what I term “political crime.” Women could not vote during this era and thus had little access to the traditional political voice. The women who rioted tended to be from the lower classes or demographic groups with less social and political leverage, such as immigrants, free blacks, runaway slaves, and

factory workers. Rioting may have been one of the few ways to obtain a form of power, to have their voices and concerns heard by the larger public. The groups that these rioters opposed constituted those who often had more economic and political leverage, were of higher social standing, or were considered to be members of more mainstream demographic groups.

I looked at three types of riots: the 1844 ethnic riots in Philadelphia between Irish and nativists, labor riots at rolling mills and cotton mills in Pittsburgh in the 1850s, and fugitive slave riots along the southern border of the state. Here I will focus on an 1847 fugitive slave riot in Carlisle, known as the McClintock riot. It is important to set the stage for these politically motivated events. Pennsylvania, bordering the slave states of the Upper South, was an important place for slaves attempting to reach freedom, so free black communities developed in southern areas of the state.¹⁵ When slave catchers and owners became more aggressive in their pursuit of runaways into free territory as the decades progressed, these black communities rallied around their friends and neighbors in order to protect them from being captured. Communities in south central Pennsylvania witnessed the fight over slavery and freedom fought out in civic and personal arenas.¹⁶

Due to its early efforts to end slavery with the 1780 gradual emancipation policy and its critical geographic location between slave territory and free, Pennsylvania was constantly in tension with laws trying to limit freedom from slavery. Pennsylvania made several attempts to circumvent the federal Fugitive Slave Act of 1793 by passing state legislation to regulate the process of reclaiming runaway slaves. In 1826, the state's Personal Liberty law required documentation that proved the slave status of slavecatchers' claims as well as having a judge, not lower court officials, hear the cases. The 1826 law was not enough to stop slave catchers, and the 1842 *Prigg v. Pennsylvania* case was deemed to have "unconstitutionally interfered" with the federal 1793 law.¹⁷ This did not stop Pennsylvania legislators, who enacted another law on March 3, 1847. This statute prohibited officials' assistance in upholding the Fugitive Slave Law of 1793, and they could be held liable for returning fugitives back to their owners. The act was to help prevent fraudulent kidnapping, to keep the public peace, and to limit the powers of the local judiciary.¹⁸ This 1847 law would prove important, considering the pro-slavery sentiment that was sometimes popular in southern Pennsylvania, and demonstrates how volatile the situation could be in this region.

On June 2, 1847, a case in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, put the new law to the test. Three fugitive slaves—Lloyd Brown, his ten-year-old daughter Ann, and Hester, a woman known to be married to a free black man in Carlisle—escaped from Hagerstown, Maryland. All three slaves were captured near Shippensburg, Pennsylvania, and transported with their captors to Carlisle where the owners showed proof to the Justice of the Peace that the slaves belonged to them. The owners were issued a certificate

giving them legal custody of the fugitives. Furthermore, Carlisle law enforcement allowed the owners to keep the slaves in the local jail until they could be returned to Maryland.¹⁹

Local free blacks were angered at this event. George Norman, Hester's husband, "tried to snatch her away" as the sheriff was taking the three slaves to jail. Norman failed, leaving "a group of blacks, mostly women" who "milled around the jail in an angry mood while the prisoners were taken inside."²⁰

As the afternoon wore on, more trouble brewed. The crowd shifted from the jail to the courthouse awaiting a *habeas corpus* hearing at 4 pm. At the trial, "a large crowd of infuriated negro men and women gathered in and about the Court House, who evinced, by their violent conduct, a disposition to rescue the fugitives by force."²¹ Judge Samuel Hepburn ruled that the slaves should not have been under the custody of the sheriff after the slave catchers had been arrested for forcibly entering the house where the slaves were found, but he also ruled that the owners still had rights to the slaves. Seeing an opportunity, members of the free black community became "increasingly agitated and incensed" and tried to rescue Hester from the prisoners' box. The sheriff and his assistant threatened to shoot anyone who attempted to help the slaves escape, quieting the courtroom chaos.²²

Dickinson College professor John McClintock, who was present at the trial, realized that the judge and lawyers were unaware of the new 1847 law, and the judge and local constabulary had just broken it. Even after McClintock gave the judge a copy of the law, peace was not to be, as local free blacks attempted to rescue the hostages, resulting in a riot. In the riot trial testimony, one witness stated that "Norman & some women grabbed hold" of Hester in an attempt to free her. McClintock warned a law enforcement official that he would be held accountable if he arrested Ann Garver, who had attacked one of the slaveowners. One regional newspaper article noted: "A general rush was made on the slave owners and the constables by the negro men and women, and a frightful melee ensued in the street, in which for some minutes paving stones were hurled in showers and clubs and canes used with terrible energy."²³ Hester and the little girl Ann escaped, but Brown was taken back to Maryland. As a result of the melee, John McClintock, along with twenty-eight other men and women, were charged with causing a riot. The historical record is a little unclear as to the actual number of people arrested, indicted, or actually tried, among whom were nine women.²⁴

The trial testimony recounted the alleged action of McClintock in urging on the riot as well as the active role played by women. Much of the testimony pointed to the women's direct action. Willis Foulke, a young doctor in the town, stated that he saw "4 or 5 colored women and several young colored men coming up the steps, one after another, in Indian file" coming towards the courthouse with "a firm step & an apparently determined countenance." Foulke continued that he knew Hannah Decker, one of the rioters, well and testified that "she had a stick in her right hand, two or 2 ½ feet long" which she held "in

such a position as to hide it.” Another witness, Samuel Smith, stated that outside the courthouse, “there was a woman near [the] carriage with a club,” whom he identified as Elizabeth Boon. Susan Hunter held a door closed, “doing all she could” to protect the fugitives. Hunter was seen “with stones in her hands” and was heard to say that she would “fight in blood up to her knees for her color.” Other women were also vehement about their cause. Sophia Johnson was heard to have said that she would knock down the first man who came into the alley. Witnesses had no doubt that those women who were in the thick of the fighting played a critical role in the escape of Hester and Ann.²⁵

Deputy Sheriff Robert McCartney also testified that the women were considerably troublesome, even going so far as to threaten him. There was, he recalled, “a great deal of warmth used by the colored women towards myself” while Susan Hunter and Elizabeth Cribbs were seen to be “busy with their tongues.”²⁶

Interestingly, several African American women took the stand in this trial, providing their direct voices and perspectives on the event. Most women who testified downplayed the roles of other women in the riot, perhaps as a way to limit the legal consequences for their actions. For instance, Violet Johnson, Jane Jefferson, and Elizabeth Warfield recalled that Mrs. Garver was frightened of going into the crowd and was simply in the area looking for her husband. They argued that Ann Garver had done nothing and had no weapons on her person. In fact, they claimed that the “negroes did nothing” at all and that the “negroes did not strike, throw stones or do anything else.” These women claimed that the escapes were of the fugitives’ own doing. Other women said that Susan Hunter was with them, inside the Snodgrass house close to the courthouse, when the riot occurred and was not an active participant.²⁷ It is possible that, with their testimony, these women may have been trying to protect their neighbors and friends, particularly the females on trial, from conviction. Protection of their community would be of the utmost importance, considering the fragile freedom of free blacks in areas near the Mason-Dixon line in the 1840s and 1850s. Unfortunately, there is no way to determine exactly why the women said what they did or what exactly occurred at the Carlisle courthouse. The discrepancies in the testimony prove only that there was much chaos at the scene, that some violence occurred, and that Hester and Ann made their escape.

The rioters’ defense counsel alluded to this in his closing speech to the court. Ann Garver, he insisted, “was very much excited, & well she might be, believing as she did that the colored women about to be carried away, were free women.” With such contradictory evidence and testimony, he doubted the jury could rightfully convict Garver. On Monday morning, August 30, 1847, the jury returned with its verdicts: thirteen men were found guilty; McClintock and the rest of the defendants were freed.²⁸

It is significant that women played such a central role in this riot, even being taken to trial for their actions and testifying. It shows a strong community of free blacks in Carlisle. Although they could

not participate politically at the polls, this community, through rioting, demonstrated their beliefs and attempted to protect the fugitives from having to return to slavery. They laid bare the injustice of the system and tried to thwart the power of the southern slaveholders and the laws that allowed slave owners to retake their property. Their actions speak directly to their views on the American and Pennsylvanian justice system with regards to fugitive slaves.²⁹

What is more telling is the fact that no women were sent to prison for their actions even though trial testimony often demonstrated how involved numerous women were in the chaos. They were obviously part of the riot, yet none were convicted. The lack of convictions shows that juries generally found it difficult to convict women of crimes during this period—in this case even though the women were African American. It raises the question of whether the lack of convictions for women was based on evidence or motivated by wanting to keep further violence at a minimum. In the riot cases I studied, only a few women saw jail time for their participation in demonstrations, and these were mostly for labor riots, suggesting that female rioters may have stood a better chance of getting away with their actions in the eyes of the law, thus making them more valuable participants in trying to evoke social change. In the McClintock riot in particular, the women's involvement demonstrated broadly that the fight for freedom was a cause in which all could have an active role. Without other means of political voice, these women turned to the avenues available and demonstrated their political views through their actions.

CONSEQUENCES OF CRIME: THE PRISON EXPERIENCE

We have looked at a few cases of women who committed crimes, went to trial for their actions, and challenged the prevailing notions of womanhood through their crimes, but we have yet to explore what these troublesome women faced once in prison. As mentioned above, Pennsylvania had a long-standing relationship with early American prisons. Walnut Street Jail in central Philadelphia functioned as the state's first penitentiary as early as 1790, suggesting that inmates needed to be separated to avoid corruption and to start to facilitate rehabilitation. The state took this idea further by the 1820s when the two main state penitentiaries opened, one in Pittsburgh and one in Philadelphia. This is where the more serious convicts would be sent. Each county, then, had its own small jail to house criminals before trial or to deal with less serious offenses. At the large penitentiaries, the inmates were subjected to the Pennsylvania system of discipline, which was essentially continuous solitary confinement. Today, solitary confinement is seen as an additional punishment within the prison system, but in the early days of Pennsylvania's penitentiaries, this was the norm. It was promoted to be a "humane" way to punish, to give inmates time to reflect, work on artisanal crafts, and be exposed to reformation through spiritual guidance during sermons and visits from the moral instructor. In theory, men and women could be treated

in the same institution because each inmate had his or her own cell and exercise yard, was taken to the cells hooded, and left in isolation. Sermons were given from a central hub, the sound radiating down the corridors. Inmates received periodic visits from prison officials and visitors, but, otherwise, they were to be in silent reflection. Each cell also had a skylight, sometimes known as the “eye of God” or the “dead eye.” There were to be no physical punishments inflicted on the inmates, particularly no use of the lash. This differed from the New York system, or congregate system used at Auburn and Sing Sing, where inmates worked in large industrial settings during the day and were separated at night, all in silence. The lash was used on refractory inmates. But was this Pennsylvania system sustained? And could women be treated the same way? Would they be? In his introduction to Alexis de Tocqueville and Gustave de Beaumont’s *On the Penitentiary System in the United States*, published in 1833, political theorist and prison reformer Francis Lieber asked, “Are separate penitentiaries for females required?” He answered his own question, stating, “I believe they are, if the Pennsylvania penitentiary system is not adopted.”³⁰ In other words, if officials of the Pennsylvania system upheld its style of discipline with the rules of total isolation, silence, and anonymity, female inmates could be treated side by side with male inmates without special facilities. But what really happened behind those walls?

Quickly, women, although incarcerated in small numbers, became problematic. The prison officials were really only prepared to deal with male inmates, so these women prisoners were seen as troublesome, a nuisance to the system. Prison records indicate that efforts were made from the outset at Western State Penitentiary to provide cells for the female convicts, illustrating some level of awareness of the need to treat them differently. Yet problems prevailed. Less than a year after Western State opened, on April 2, 1827, convict Hiram Lindsay escaped. It was later discovered Lindsay was aided by a “colored woman” who, from “feelings of humanity, on the part of her Keepers [*sic*] was not confined to her cell.” Only one woman was in the prison at the time: Maria Penrose, twenty-one years of age, born in Huntingdon County, Pennsylvania. She arrived at the Penitentiary on September 6, 1826, to serve a sentence of two years for larceny committed in Bedford County. She served a little over one year and was discharged on December 1, 1827.³¹

Penrose was a typical female convict in Western State Penitentiary: she was young, African American, born in Pennsylvania, and convicted of larceny. Penrose’s action illustrated not only the early failings of the design of the penitentiary but the issues employees had dealing with female inmates. In this case, the woman appeared to evoke sympathy from the keepers or did not appear to be much of a violent threat to the keepers or the security of the prison and was allowed to be out of her cell. The special treatment demonstrates the struggles prison officials had enacting the harsh discipline of the Pennsylvania system on female inmates because they may have appeared to be non-threatening. Furthermore, since she

was the only female inmate at the time, the employees may not have felt that it was necessary to lock her up. In any case, it was an active choice of the prison employees to let her out of her cell. The fact that she was out of the cell at all presented a major problem to the institution when she facilitated Hiram Lindsay's escape and indicated a failure on the part of the keepers to help Penrose reform her behavior by keeping her in a cell for individual reflection.

In a place where anonymity and isolation were to be the norm, this escape can also be interpreted as Penrose showing pity and compassion towards a fellow inmate. Maybe she felt that her quasi-freedom in the prison enabled her to help Lindsay in his escape and provide him with his own freedom. Perhaps there were other reasons. Penrose manipulated her privilege from the keepers to help thwart the system. While we do not know whether she aided Lindsay out of compassion for him or whether she had intentions aimed at hindering penitentiary discipline further, such as letting more inmates free or escaping herself, her actions indicate that some prisoners had the opportunity and the capacity to work against their punishers. Penrose used her advantage of being the sole female inmate to act against the prison system.

The experience for the first few women in Eastern State was little better. In fact, the first four women inmates there were embroiled in 1835 in a legislative investigation into the conduct of the institution, which had opened in 1829. Although women were supposed to be treated the same way as male inmates, it became apparent in the testimony that these four were often out of their cells doing work for the prison employees like laundry and cooking, were invited to gatherings with prison employees, were given more food and different clothing, and seemed to have more privileges than others. Now, there is certainly something to be said about making the best of a bad situation and trying to alleviate your incarceration through these advantages, but to what extent were these women willing participants or simply doing what they were told due to the power dynamic between guards and inmates, male and female? As they could, these women used their situation to their advantage in various ways, and other, later female inmates resisted in more traditional ways, such as vandalism, making noise, and being insolent to officials. Yet others, like Julia Wilt, refused to be silenced in the prison by embracing the rehabilitative program and representing the work done by female prison reformers who sought to help these female inmates and who shook up the institution by pushing for better treatment of these women.

I came across Julia Wilt through a pamphlet entitled *An Account of Julia Moore, A Penitent Female, who died in the Eastern Penitentiary of Philadelphia in the year 1843*, published by the Female Prison Association. By scouring through the pamphlet for clues about her identity, I then turned to the prison records and found Julia Wilt, inmate 1109, who fit the time, description, and crime of Julia Moore.³² From looking at the prison records, it can be estimated that she was born around 1802 and hailed from Easton, PA. She was listed as being a servant, suggesting her position in the working-class of

society. She entered the criminal record in 1839, at the age of 37, but this was likely not the first time she had broken the law. The May 14, 1839, issue of Philadelphia's *Public Ledger* reported Julia's case, further corroborating the pamphlet's description. Julia, identified as white, and two African American men, were charged with mutilating a man's arm "with a penknife to such a degree that it afterwards required amputation." The victim testified that he had asked Julia where he could buy oysters and that she had told him to follow her. They entered a house, where the two "men seized him, commenced robbing him, and with a knife nearly severed his wrist from his arm." He was then robbed of "\$35, a pair of woolen mittens and a handkerchief." Ultimately, "his arm was amputated at the Pennsylvania Hospital." Julia and one of her accomplices were sentenced to seven years at Eastern State Penitentiary for robbery. When she entered the prison, we learn even more about Julia: she had a light complexion with blue-gray eyes and black hair. She could read but not write, got intoxicated occasionally, and had left her husband.³³ We know little else about her life before her crime, but the registers imply a relatively tough existence, one most likely spent mainly in public spaces in the city.

Through the pamphlet published in 1844 by the Female Prison Association, we can follow Julia's story more fully.³⁴ Through its description of Julia's incarceration, we get a sense of not only her pitiable situation in prison but also the female visitors' goals in visiting these female inmates. The pamphlet chronicled her religious conversion in prison before her death. The case demonstrated the broad antebellum desire to reduce crime in cities and the belief in the inherent goodness and redeemable nature of criminals under the close watch and disciplinary regime of the penitentiary system. Yet most people saw female inmates as more problematic—in some cases, beyond hope of rehabilitation. Julia's experience challenges this notion and shows that female inmates were not incorrigible and had the potential to be reformed.

The pamphlet recounting her experience took an instructional tone. The anonymous author (likely one of the female prison reformers) wrote that, at a young age, Julia "forsook the paths of virtue, plunged into a vortex of iniquity, and involved herself in ignominious guilt." The language is dramatic and exaggerated, but it makes for a good story! After suggesting that Julia tried to reform her habits, the author noted her failure to leave the life of crime. Julia's case demonstrated the nineteenth-century fear that one crime or vice led inevitably to more heinous crimes. Julia was painted as a person of weak morals. She "joined hands with the workers of iniquity," and, as a result of her participation in the robbery, was sentenced to seven years' imprisonment. The author of the pamphlet deemed Julia "a wreck of human nature."³⁵ The description of Julia as a depraved creature demonstrated not only her lack of femininity and humanity but that she only had herself to blame for her actions.

The pamphlet discussed her experience in Eastern State Penitentiary, not from Julia's point of view but from those of the penitentiary officials and reformers who hoped she would reform. The reformers viewed her as an immoral inmate but one who needed to understand "the enormity of her sins, and her need of sincere repentance." The chaplain called Julia an "undone creature." Yet over time, there was a change: "For scarcely had a year registered her imprisonment, before the mists of doubt and darkness began to vanish from her benighted soul, and she seemed to enjoy a perpetual sunshine."³⁶ The emphasis on her religious conversion illustrated the great necessity for her to take God into her life to prepare her for eternity, as death was seemingly close, as she was very ill.

Julia was portrayed from that point on in the pamphlet as a model prisoner, penitent, quiet, thoughtful, and truly thankful for her incarceration. The author stated: "She spoke of herself with much humility, and great abhorrence of the wickedness of her former life; participating in almost every kind of sin, till in mercy she was arrested and thrown into prison." This type of portrayal of prison life was exactly what early reformers wanted outsiders to hear about their penitentiary: it promoted the superiority of the Pennsylvania penitentiary system of solitude, silence, and reflection. It recorded that, although Julia's illness sometimes occasioned the necessity of having another inmate in the cell to care for her, she "preferred being alone...that a companion diverted her mind from a train of useful meditation and communion."³⁷ Such statements promoted Eastern State's system of solitary confinement and meditation and was a challenge to the notion that women could not be reformed.

Although most of the pamphlet was written anonymously and extolled the values of the Pennsylvania system through the experience of Julia, it did claim to copy a letter "precisely in her own language," from Julia to a female visitor of the penitentiary.³⁸ This letter, dated April 27, 1843, is the closest we get to retrieving Julia's own voice:

I improve this opportunity to inform my sincere friend that I am very feeble at present. . . . I long to hear your instructions once more. I feel thankful that I have been spared to express the sense of gratitude I feel for those benefits you have all been pleased to confer upon me. I thank Almighty God for all his kind mercies to me. . . I have reason to bless the day I entered this Prison. I feel that I am a great sinner. Oh that I may feel more humble and lowly in heart. In the night when all is asleep, I think I sometimes hear a voice saying, "Be of good cheer; your sorrows shall be turned to joy." How sweet to my mind is this, "There is room for the chief of sinners." . . . Blessed be God! I hope what few days I have here below, that the Lord will give me courage, strength and faith, that my soul may be saved, and his name be glorified.
I sincerely thank you for the present you gave me, "The Sinner's friend."
I remain your truly afflicted scholar,

Julia Moore³⁹

Was this letter fully Julia's? The Eastern State records for Julia, noted above, reported that she could only read, so even if this letter is of Julia's creation, it clearly was dictated to a third party unless the prison records were inaccurate. Due to this possibility, it is difficult to know if these were truly Julia's words or if a scribe converted her sentiments. In addition, policies were in place since the penitentiary's opening that prohibited letter-writing, indicating that unless Julia received special treatment in her sickness, this letter above may have been fabricated to some extent. Around the time of Julia's demise, however, the rules at Eastern State regarding letter-writing relaxed somewhat, so there remains a possibility that this letter represents one of the earliest from an inmate. Other letters from inmates dating from around this time period corroborate the fact that communication was getting in and out of the prison.⁴⁰

The pamphlet closed with the death of Julia on May 10, 1843. When considering the overall motivations for the publication of the pamphlet, several goals become apparent. The goal of finding religious salvation is central to the document and to Julia's experience. It can also be viewed as a promotional piece for the penitentiary itself and for the work of the Female Prison Association. Julia was a model prisoner redeemed by the discipline of the Pennsylvania system and the efforts of female reformers. Julia, in this pamphlet, provided an important counterargument to the belief that women inmates could not be reformed. Had Julia survived her sentence, she may have turned from her life of crime, yet recidivism is always a possibility. Unfortunately, there is no way to know if she had truly repented, and it is difficult to know the extent to which this pamphlet exaggerated the claims of success. The reform group had an agenda to promote, and Julia suited their cause. Other evidence from the group's work suggests, however, they really did seek to provide long-lasting reform and improvement in the lives of these women, demonstrating a level of altruistic motivation that had its successes, Julia, perhaps being one of them.

In a set of personal papers from one of the reformers, I found evidence that the friend of Julia's referred to in the pamphlet was likely Mary Anna Longstreth, who wrote about Julia in a letter to her aunt, Rebecca Collins, a premier member of the Female Prison Association. Longstreth wrote:

On the 10th of this month, poor Julia (at the Eastern Penitentiary) was released from her complicated sufferings. . . . We have, however, good ground for believing that she is among that innumerable company whose robes have been washed & made white in the blood of the Lamb, whose sins have been blotted out.⁴¹

While one might think the association inflated its success to prove a point regarding the virtues of the penitentiary system in the pamphlet, Longstreth's letter and the moral instructor's report on Julia corroborated the pamphlet's claims. Thomas Larcombe, Eastern State's moral instructor, noted that Julia "hopes for happiness not here but in heaven because God is all sufficient." Before being sent to Eastern

State, she had “sunk into debased and brutal vice & hardness.” Larcombe described her long road to redemption and, after her death, Larcombe rounded out his entry, stating that she “presented entirely satisfactory evidence of preparation.”⁴² He doesn’t speak this way about everyone with whom he interacted. There were countless examples of Larcombe noting that inmates either would not receive religious instruction or feigned interest in order to perhaps get privileges or even a reduction of sentence. The fact that he seems confident in Julia’s genuine repentance when compared to statements he makes about others helps to confirm that the pamphlet is likely not exaggerating in that respect. Therefore, Julia Wilt became one of the female inmates that seemingly proved prison officials wrong—that women should not be ignored or neglected and that there was a possibility for rehabilitation. Through her experience, she unwittingly challenged the system that was bent on making her anonymous and proved that the work of the reformers was worthwhile.

In all of these cases of troublesome women, they challenged social expectations through their actions and experiences. In many ways, these women were aware, at varying levels, as to what was expected of them in terms of behavior but also what limitations they faced during the times in which they lived. We see their struggles to extricate themselves from marriages, taking extreme steps when no other options seemed available. Others used criminal activity to demonstrate their political voices in an era when women couldn’t vote and were not seen as important political players. And even in prison, these women troubled the system, challenging it through breaking protocol, taking advantage of their situation, or even proving officials and some male reformers wrong in the idea that women criminals were beyond redemption. In various ways, they advocated for social change, albeit through unconventional methods. In part, what I think is striking is that, in these examples, it didn’t matter if the woman was white or black, immigrant or native born, urban or rural. In many cases, they faced similar hardships and limitations. While they did not know each other, there is a shared experience amongst them, and we can learn a great deal about women’s lives during the decades leading up to the Civil War through their encounters in the legal and prison systems. They provide us with a different lens to view the era, a look at those on the fringes who did not fit mainstream expectations of proper women, those that society deemed less important, yet their stories reveal much about race, politics, class, community, and, of course, crime and gender. They challenge our notions on these topics in the nineteenth century and, at times, reveal troubling lessons about what we as a nation have not yet learned from the past regarding women, crime, and prisons.

NOTES

1. All quotations in this paragraph are from the “Prison Diary, Female Department, 1850-1860,” March 5, 1851. RG 38 Philadelphia Prisons System, Philadelphia City Archives. Hereafter “Prison Diary.” Wagstaff, a white woman, was imprisoned on June 13, 1850, for larceny. “Commitment Docket, Female Department, July 1849 to November 1851,” RG 38, Philadelphia Prisons System, Philadelphia City Archives. See also entries in the “Prison Diary” on these dates: August 29, 1851; February 3, 1852; March 13, 15, 16, 1852; April 10, 1852; August 26, 1852; November 19, 1852; December 4, 1852; and April 8, 1853. For further sources on punishment in the Pennsylvania system, see William C. Kashatus, “Punishment, Penitence and Reform: Eastern State Penitentiary and the Controversy over Solitary Confinement,” *Pennsylvania Heritage* 25, no. 1 (1999): pp. 30-39; Jacqueline Thibaut, “‘To Pave the Way to Penitence’: Prisoners and Discipline at the Eastern State Penitentiary, 1829-1835,” *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, April (1982): pp. 187-222.
2. For further discussions on this issue of societal and institutional control in the nineteenth century, see Jennifer Manion, *Liberty’s Prisoners: Carceral Culture in Early America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015), and Kali Gross, *Colored Amazons: Crime, Violence, and Black Women in the City of Brotherly Love, 1880-1910* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2006).
3. In the colonial and post-revolutionary period, women used self-divorce as a way to end marriages in Pennsylvania, yet the economic burden of supporting oneself and dependents could be problematic for these women. See Manion, *Liberty’s Prisoners*, p. 78, and Clare A. Lyons, *Sex Among the Rabble: An Intimate History of Gender and Power in the Age of Revolution, Philadelphia, 1730-1830* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), particularly Chapter 1.
4. *The Trial of Mary Myers and John Parker, in the Court of Oyer and Terminer of Venango County Of May Term, 1847*, courtesy of the Venango County Historical Society, pp. 5-15.
5. *Ibid.*, pp. 16-18.
6. *Ibid.*, pp. 7, 9.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 22.
8. *Ibid.*, pp. 9, 18-23, 31-35, 40, 48.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 50.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 54. There is no indication that these two were actually hanged. I have not been able to find anything about the aftermath of the trials or Myers’s baby.
11. M. L. McQuown, *History of Capital Crimes, Confessions and Death Penalties In Clearfield County From 1816 to July 1, 1914* (Raftsmen’s Journal Print, 1914) pp. 9, 11. Courtesy of the Clearfield County Historical Society.
12. McQuown, *History of Capital Crimes*, pp. 8-10. Census records indicate that in 1860, Lena was living with her husband, Peter, and three children, Mary, John, and Catharine, in Covington

- Township, Clearfield County, PA. See U.S. Federal Census, 1860, Clearfield County, PA, Covington Township.
13. Roger Lane argues that poisoning captured nineteenth-century society's imagination because of "the stealthiness of the method" and "its violation of the cozy sanctuary of the home and kitchen." See Roger Lane, *Murder in America: A History* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1997), 202. Another poisoning case from Pennsylvania that follows similar patterns to those discussed here should be noted. In Pittsburgh, 1866, Martha Grinder was hanged for murdering two women by poison. Although she was only convicted for these two murders, it was widely believed that she murdered many other people, earning her the moniker "the American Borgia." There seemed to be no apparent motive for the murders other than sheer opportunity and exhilaration as well as a penchant for enjoying the study of chemistry. See *The New York Times*, January 20, 1866; Kerry Segrave, *Women and Capital Punishment in America, 1840-1899: Death Sentences and Executions in the United States and Canada* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland and Co., 2008), pp. 49-56. See also Marlin Shipman, *'The Penalty is Death': U.S. Newspaper Coverage of Women's Executions* (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 2002) pp. 127-132 as well as *The Life and Confessions of Martha Grinder, the Poisoner: Embracing a Complete History of the Crimes Committed by Her up to the Time of Her Execution* (Pittsburgh, PA: John P. Hunt, and Co., 1866). The story of Pamela Lee Worms, a serial murderer convicted in Allegheny County in the early 1850s, while having the trappings of a real case, cannot be verified in court records or newspaper reports and could be a fictionalized morality tale. See Rev. Augustus Dimick, *Private History and Confession of Pamela Lee, Who was Convicted at Pittsburgh, PA., December 19th, 1851, for the Wilful Murder of her Husband and Sentenced to be Hanged on the 30th Day of January, A.D. 1852* (Pittsburgh: 1852).
 14. N.E.H. Hull, *Female Felons: Women and Serious Crime in Colonial Massachusetts* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1987), p. 47.
 15. Carlisle, Pennsylvania was only one such place. The community was described as "a quiet and orderly element of the population . . . neither beggars or vagabonds." George R. Crooks, *The Life and Letters of the Rev. John M'Clintock, D.D., LL.D., late President of Drew Theological Seminary* (New York: Nelson & Phillips, 1876), p. 144. Martha C. Slotten notes that the 1850 census for Cumberland County recorded 349 blacks in 4581 residents in Carlisle, and the borough's numbers accounted for many of Cumberland County's total black population. Furthermore, she suggests that many of these men and women probably arrived via the Underground Railroad, and then the black community helped others to set up lives in freedom. Martha C. Slotten, "The McClintock Slave Riot of 1847," *Cumberland County History* 17, no. 1 (2000): no page numbers. See also Carl Oblinger, "New Freedoms, Old Miseries: The Emergence and Disruption of Black Communities in Southeastern Pennsylvania, 1780-1860," Ph.D. dissertation, Lehigh University, 1988.
 16. Stanley Harrold, *Border War: Fighting over Slavery Before the Civil War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010), pp. 152-153. For other works on the border tensions during these decades, particularly on the ways in which black individuals sought freedom and resisted the encroaching southern slave catchers, see Keith P. Griffler, *Front Line of Freedom: African Americans and the Forging of the Underground Railroad in the Ohio Valley* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 2004); Jane H. Pease and William H. Pease, *They Who Would be Free: Blacks' Search for Freedom, 1830-1861* (New York: Atheneum, 1974); James Oliver Horton and Lois E. Horton, *In Hope of Liberty: Culture, Community and Protest Among*

Northern Free Blacks, 1700-1860 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997); David G. Smith, *On the Edge of Freedom: The Fugitive Slave Issue in South Central Pennsylvania, 1820-1870* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2013), p. 1.

17. Smith, *On the Edge of Freedom*, 95.
18. “Fugitive Slave Act of 1793,” <http://www.ushistory.org/presidentshouse/history/slaveact1793.htm> (accessed November 18, 2011); Pease and Pease, *They Who Would be Free*, pp. 212-213; Smith, *On the Edge of Freedom*, 92; Slotten, “The McClintock Slave Riot,” *Carlisle Herald and Expositor* (Carlisle, PA), June 16, 1847. This article states the 1847 law in full.
19. Slotten, “The McClintock Slave Riot.”
20. In 1840, Cumberland County had a population of 30,953. From that total, 996 were designated as ‘free colored,’ and 24 were still slaves. By 1850, the total population was 34,327, and 957 were designated as ‘free colored.’ *Historical Census Browser*. <http://fisher.lib.virginia.edu/collections/stats/histcensus/index.html> (site discontinued). Although specific numbers of those living in Carlisle are unclear, there most likely would have been a significant free black population in the town. See also Slotten, “The McClintock Slave Riot.”
21. *Philadelphia Public Ledger* (Philadelphia, PA), June 5, 1847.
22. Slotten, “The McClintock Slave Riot.”
23. Ibid. Papers re: Carlisle Riot Trial, John McClintock Papers, MSS33, Box 7, Folders 6-10. Hereafter (McClintock Papers, MARBL); *Philadelphia Ledger*, June 5, 1847. See also *Carlisle American Volunteer*, June 10, 1847. Reports of this riot reached beyond the borders of Pennsylvania, with articles printed throughout the northern part of the country. For an account of the incident focused on McClintock, see Smith, *On the Edge of Freedom*, pp. 107-110. For an account of anti-abolition violence, see Leonard L. Richards, *“Gentlemen of Property and Standing” : Anti-Abolition Mobs in Jacksonian America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970).
24. Crooks, *Life and Letters*, 159. Numbers of those arrested and on trial range from the high twenties to mid-thirties. Furthermore, the names in various sources sometimes differ. In the Docket Books for the Cumberland County Quarter Sessions, records show that Elizabeth Cribbs and Hannah Decker were not arraigned. Furthermore, Rachel Cox, Ann Garver, Susan Hunter, Sophia Johnson, Clara Jones, and an Elizabeth Procter (who was not mentioned by Slotten) were not guilty. The docket books do not mention Elizabeth Boon or Amelia Butler. See Quarter Sessions Docket Books, Cumberland County Archives, Carlisle, Pennsylvania. Slotten notes the names of the defendants in addition to McClintock: Anthony Bell, Anthony Boon, Elizabeth Boon, Robert Brisseton, Amelia Butler, Eli Butler, John Clellans, Augustus Coates, John Cox, Rachel Cox, Elizabeth Cribbs, Hannah Decker, George Fisher, William Fisher Jr., Ann Garver, Jacob Garver, John E. Grey, William Hanson, Hall Holmes, John Hunter, Susan Hunter, Richard Johnson, Sophia Johnston, Clara Jones, Moses Jones, James Jones, Charles Marshall, Henry Myers, Hiram Myers, George Norman, Valentine Thomas, Charles Turner, Achilles Vandegrift, and Nicholas Williams. Eli and Amelia Butler were also found in the docket book for assault and battery and not keeping the peace with each other at an earlier date. The riot was not their first brush with the law. Slotten, “The McClintock Slave Riot.”

25. All quotations in this paragraph are from the following sources: Riot Trial 1847 I, Box 7 Folders 6, 8, and 9, McClintock Papers, MARBL; Papers re: Carlisle Riot Trial, Box 7, Folder 6, McClintock Papers, MARBL.
26. Riot Trial 1847 I, Box 7, Folder 9, McClintock Papers, MARBL. Seeley Lawson does not appear in the indictment in the Docket Book, the newspaper reports, or other trial notes as being arrested or a defendant.
27. Papers re: Carlisle Riot Trial, Box 7, Folder 6; Riot Trial 1847 III, Box 7, Folder 10; Riot Trial 1847 VI, Box 7, Folder 13, McClintock Papers, MARBL.
28. Riot Trial 1847 V, Box 7, Folder 12, McClintock Papers, MARBL. Emphasis in original. John Clellan, Jacob Garver, Moses Jones, Augustus Coates, Anthony Boon, John E. Gray, Achilles Vandegrift, Valentine Thomas, George Norman, Henry Myers, and Chris Turner were sentenced to three years each to Eastern State Penitentiary. James Jones was sentenced to six months in the county jail, and Eli Butler had a sentence of ten days in the county jail. *Carlisle Herald & Expositor* September 8, 1847. Those sentenced to the state penitentiary were released almost a year later, after it was found that the sentence was unusually harsh since the crime of rioting was a misdemeanor. Slotten, “The McClintock Slave Riot.”
29. Gayle T. Tate, *Unknown Tongues: Black Women’s Political Activism in the Antebellum Era, 1830-1860* (East Lansing, MI: Michigan State University Press, 2003), p. 206.
30. Alexis De Tocqueville and Gustave de Beaumont, *On the Penitentiary System in the United States and Its Application in France* Trans. Francis Lieber, (Philadelphia: Carey, Lea & Blanchard, 1833), p. xvii. For further reading on the Pennsylvania prison system, see Thomas B. McElwee, *A Concise History of the Eastern Penitentiary of Pennsylvania, Together with a Detailed Statement of the Proceedings of the Committee, Appointed by the Legislature, December 6th, 1834, for the Purpose of Examining into the Economy and Management of that Institution, Embracing the Testimony Taken on that Occasion, and Legislative Proceedings Connected Therewith* (Philadelphia: Neall & Massey, 1835); Jennifer Janofsky, “‘There is no hope for the likes of me’: Eastern State Penitentiary, 1829-1856,” Ph.D. dissertation, Temple University, 2004; Paul Kahan, *Eastern State Penitentiary: A History* (Charleston, SC: The History Press, 2008); Michael Meranze, *Laboratories of Virtue: Punishment, Revolution, and Authority in Philadelphia, 1760-1835* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996).
31. Eugene E. Doll, “Trial and Error at Allegheny: The Western State Penitentiary, 1818-1838,” *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 81, no. 1 (1957): 14; “Convict Docket, 1826-1859,” Record Group 15, Department of Justice, Bureau of Corrections, Western State Penitentiary. Pennsylvania State Archives, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania; and “Descriptive Register,” Record Group 15, Department of Justice, Bureau of Corrections, Western State Penitentiary. Pennsylvania State Archives, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. Hereafter “Convict Docket” and “Descriptive Register, WSP.”
32. *An Account of Julia Moore, A Penitent Female, who died in the Eastern Penitentiary of Philadelphia, in the year 1843*, 2nd ed. (Philadelphia: Joseph and William Kite, 1844), p. 11.
33. Descriptive Registers, 1829-1903.” Record Group 15, Department of Justice, Bureau of Corrections, Eastern State Penitentiary. Pennsylvania State Archives, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. Hereafter “Descriptive Registers, ESP.” Quotations about her crime can be found in the

Philadelphia Public Ledger, May 14, 27, 1839; “Miscellaneous Descriptive Books, 1829-1842.” Record Group 15, Pennsylvania State Archives. Hereafter “Miscellaneous Descriptive Books.”

34. *An Account of Julia Moore.*
35. *Ibid.*, pp. 3-4.
36. *Ibid.*, pp. 5, 6, 8.
37. *Ibid.*, pp. 11, 14-15.
38. *Ibid.*, p. 18.
39. *Ibid.*, pp. 18-19.
40. Richard Vaux, *Brief Sketch of the Origin and History of the State Penitentiary for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania, at Philadelphia* (Philadelphia: McLaughlin Brothers, 1872), pp. 36, 50.
41. Mary Anna Longstreth to Rebecca Collins, May 28, 1843, Rebecca Collins Papers. Collection 1196. Quaker Collection. Haverford College.
42. All quotations from this paragraph are found in *Volume A, 1830-1839 (# 20-1124)*, Eastern State Penitentiary Records, Series I. American Philosophical Society. *The Seventeenth Annual Report of the Inspectors* for Eastern State Penitentiary noted that Julia, inmate 1109, entered with syphilitic disease and eventually died of syphilis and erysipelas.