ARCTIC CIRCLES: THE FRANKLIN FAMILY, NETWORKS OF KNOWLEDGE, AND EARLY NINETEENTH CENTURY ARCTIC EXPLORATION, 1818-1859

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DISSERTATION
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ABSTRACT

This dissertation examines how the women of the family of the Arctic explorer Sir John Franklin (1786-1847) engaged with imperial and geographical networks of knowledge from 1818 to 1859. It argues that over this forty year period, the Franklin women (and especially John Franklin’s second wife, Jane Franklin, and his niece, Sophia Cracroft) drew on their roles as wives, daughters, sisters and nieces to lay claim to their moral authority to receive, evaluate, interpret and circulate intelligence from the field, to act upon it, or to compel others to do so. They built this authority up haphazardly over time and space as they “careered” along with John Franklin from circles of polite science in London in the 1820s, to the penal colony of Van Diemen’s Land (Tasmania) where he was the lieutenant governor from 1837 to 1843, to Britain in the 1840s and 1850s where they organized expeditions to go in search of Franklin after he disappeared in an attempt to chart the Northwest Passage in 1845. At each stage, the Franklin women actively engaged with (and derived connections, strategies and information from) dynamic networks of imperial knowledge across a series of colonial, metropolitan and extra-imperial sites. These included, but were not limited to, the changing circuits of scientific sociability, and trans-imperial networks of imperial humanitarianism, settlers, colonial governance and science.

In the webs of imperial knowledge in which they were entangled and which they wove, the Franklin women’s authority was always gendered, precarious, and questioned, and this dissertation argues that they consistently shored it up by seeking to silence, calibrate, or otherwise reshape the characters and credibility of indigenous people from Inuit interpreters to Tasmanian orphans. In doing so, they consistently engaged with indigenous networks of knowledge, exchange, and resistance that were formed both within and outside imperial terrain.
from the Arctic to Van Diemen’s Land. The Franklin women also tried to either co-opt or to subvert the vernacular agents of imperial industry, commerce and expansion – whalers, fur traders, and settlers – who acted as intermediaries with indigenous people, and with whom the Franklin women both made and discarded alliances as it suited them.
For my parents and grandparents,
who loved me and told me stories,
and for my baby daughter Harriet,
who has so many stories yet to hear.
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INTRODUCTION

In 1845, two hulking ships departed from Greenhithe in Kent to chart the Northwest Passage. Steam-powered and ice-strengthened, HMS Erebus and Terror were polar veterans, having just returned from a multi-year voyage to Antarctica to find the South Magnetic Pole. For this new polar mission, they had been fitted out with the most modern of conveniences and equipment, from the very latest in lead-soldered tinned food to the most delicate of scientific instruments. In the captain’s cabin of the Erebus sat the expedition commander, an obese fifty-nine-year-old man suffering from a bad case of flu. Sir John Franklin was surrounded in his misery by mementos from his Arctic and colonial experiences of nearly thirty years. On the walls, there were landscapes of Fort Enterprise, where he had nearly starved to death in 1822, and Fort Franklin, his base of operations in 1825-27 on Great Bear Lake in northern Canada. They had been drawn by his niece Mary Anne Kendall and her recently deceased husband Edward, who had been Franklin’s lieutenant in 1825.¹ A portrait of Franklin’s second wife, Lady Jane Franklin also hung there. It may have been a duplicate of the pencil drawing made of her in Van Diemen’s Land by the convict artist Thomas Bock during John Franklin’s governorship of the penal colony from 1836-43, a position from which he had been ignominiously recalled, his reputation in tatters. His bookshelves were packed with a library of scientific and religious works selected by his wife, and his desk was filled with old letters they had chosen together from Arctic friends, colleagues and rivals.² A capuchin monkey named Prince Albert, a present from Jane, cavorted around.³

¹ NMM FRN 1/28, John Franklin to Mary Anne Kendall, Whale Fish Islands, 12 July, 1845
² RGS SJF/73, John Franklin to Jane Franklin, Holsteinborg, 1 July, 1845.
³ The monkey’s name prompted an awful joke by the officers of the Erebus, “Why is Prince Albert’s kiss like this ship? Because it’s a hairybuss!” Frances J. Woodward, Portrait of Jane: A Life of Lady Franklin (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1951), 253.
It was in this cabin, finally feeling better after a blast of Arctic air, that Franklin wrote his final letters home from Disco Bay off the Greenland coast. He wrote to his bereaved niece Mary Anne Kendall and his oldest and dearest friend Sir John Richardson, who had nearly starved with Franklin at Fort Enterprise and who had just lost his wife (Franklin’s niece Mary Booth Richardson) to peritonitis. He reminded them of his continuing faith in the wisdom of divine providence, which he hoped would comfort them in their sorrow and his absence. He asked them, as he asked his old Arctic colleagues Admiral William Edward Parry and Colonel Edward Sabine, to look after his wife and his daughter from his first marriage, Eleanor. He wrote to his daughter and to his wife, letters filled with both his plans for the future and relentless worrying about the past (particularly about Van Diemen’s Land), and he begged them to look after each other. Then he wrote a poem down from memory, one that his first wife Eleanor had written for him as a Valentine in 1823 in which she cast herself as a Dene Yellowknife woman named “Greenstockings” who insisted that her lover return to the Arctic. Like so much of what happened on the expedition, whatever Franklin might have meant by sending this poem from his first wife to his second, in the imagined voice of an indigenous woman speaking of the rival claims of the Arctic and his home on his heart, cannot be determined. A few days later, the ships headed towards Lancaster Sound. A passing whaler saw them, hailed them, but had no reply. Then they disappeared, never to be seen again.

When the Franklin expedition vanished, so did the journals, letters, drawings and photographs that would have testified to the fate of the men on the two ships. All that was left for

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4 DRO D3311/53/89, John Franklin to John Richardson, Whale Fish Islands, Disco Bay, 7 July, 1845; NMM FRN 1/28, John Franklin to Mary Anne Kendall, Whale Fish Islands, 12 July, 1845
5 NA BJ 3/18, John Franklin to Edward Sabine, Whale Fish Islands, 9 July, 1845.
6 DRO D3311/28/14, John Franklin to Eleanor Franklin, Whale Fish Island, near Disco, Sunday 6 July, 1845
7 This may or may not be trick of archival misfiling, but the letter is identified in the RGS archives as having been sent from the Erebus. It is in John Franklin’s hand and evidently written from memory, for several stanzas are switched around, and some words replaced. I discuss this Valentine at greater length in Chapter 1. RGS SJF/7/5, “Miss Greenstockings to her faithless admirer.”
their families, their colleagues, the Admiralty and the public (in Britain, Europe, America, Australia, and throughout the English-speaking world) to contemplate was a vast blank space on the map of North America, and an endless series of possibilities, surmises, wild speculation, and, very occasionally, the odd “relic” or scrap of native testimony. The silence surrounding the expedition’s fate had two very important consequences. Firstly, it elevated the archives that did exist, particularly the private papers of the Franklin family, which were carefully preserved in British, Canadian, and Australian archives, all places that were attached in some way to the Franklin family. The second consequence is what that vast archive allows us to see – how the women of the Franklin family struggled to shape the meaning of the ships’ disappearance and to determine what – and who – counted as credible sources of information about the missing expedition, by drawing on connections, experiences, and tactics built up over the course of their imperial lives.

This dissertation is not, then, about two missing ships in the Canadian archipelago, but rather who and what they left in their wake. It examines how the women of the Franklin family engaged with imperial and geographical networks of knowledge from 1818 to 1859. It argues that over this forty year period, the Franklin women (and especially John Franklin’s second wife, Jane Franklin, and his niece, Sophia Cracroft) drew on their roles as wives, daughters, sisters and nieces to lay claim to their moral authority to receive, evaluate, interpret and circulate intelligence, to act upon it, or to compel others to do so. They acted as gatekeepers of information while Franklin was in the field, and as guardians of reputation (both his and their own) whether he was at home or abroad. The Franklin women built this authority up haphazardly over time and space as they “careered” along with John Franklin, from their homes where they defined themselves and their conjugal roles relative to the lasting trauma and companionships
that followed men home from the Arctic, from the London circles of scientific sociability in the 1820s in which Franklin was a “lion,” to the penal colony of Van Diemen’s Land (Tasmania) where he was the lieutenant governor from 1837 to 1843, to Britain in the 1840s and 1850s where they organized expeditions to go in search of him after he disappeared in 1845. At each stage, the Franklin women actively engaged with (and derived connections, strategies and information from) dynamic networks of imperial knowledge across a series of colonial, metropolitan and extra-imperial sites. These included but were not limited to trans-imperial networks of imperial humanitarianism, settlers, colonial governance and science.

In the webs of imperial knowledge in which they were entangled and which they wove, the Franklin women’s authority was always gendered, precarious, and questioned, and this dissertation argues that they consistently shored it up by seeking to silence, calibrate, or otherwise reshape the characters and credibility of indigenous people from Inuit interpreters to Tasmanian orphans. In doing so, they consistently engaged with indigenous networks of knowledge, exchange, and resistance that were formed both within and outside imperial terrain from the Arctic to Van Diemen’s Land. The Franklin women also tried to either co-opt or to subvert the vernacular agents of imperial industry, commerce and expansion – whalers, fur traders, and settlers – with whom they both made and discarded alliances as it suited them, particularly as they found during the searches for John Franklin in the 1840s and 1850s that they could not always rely on the fraternity of John Franklin’s fellow explorers or colleagues at the Admiralty, who did not wish to be accused (as John Franklin had in Van Diemen’s Land) of “petticoat influence.”

In the course of their “imperial lives,” from the 1820s to the 1840s, the Franklin women became acquainted with the changing methodologies of the humanitarian movement, imperial
cultures of information, systems of patronage, circuits of correspondence, and the power of the 
press – all of which the women tried to tap into in their own quest for authority. While the trade, 
trading and tempo of imperial information accelerated in the age of steam in the 1840s and 1850s, 
as knowledge became increasingly institutionalized and state bureaucracies came to rely on 
oficial and statistical information, the Franklin women continued to pursue personal and 
intimate connections with trusted men and women across a broad social spectrum, while 
adopting to new technologies and methods of communication. Jane Franklin and Sophia Cracroft 
used these connections and methods during the Franklin searches of the 1840s and 1850s to 
manipulate public opinion through the press, and to pressure the Admiralty through unofficial 
channels, well-placed envoys and petition campaigns. Above all, they sought to assert their own 
moral authority by contesting the credibility of those whom they saw as their enemies, a list that 
variously included fur traders, whalers, naval officers, indigenous informants and interpreters, 
and members of their own family. As they did so, they reserved for themselves the authority to 
determine where the search should concentrate, who was worthy to undertake it, and what – and 
who – counted as credible sources.

The story of the Franklin women’s struggle for authority in the very masculine worlds of 
nineteenth century Arctic exploration, colonial governance and imperial knowledge speaks to 
key questions in cultural and imperial history, the history of science, and historical geography. 
As Tony Ballantyne has recently argued, we have yet to assemble a full and rich understanding 
of the colonial information order “by identifying the place of knowledge production, the role of 
‘knowledgeable groups,’ changing shapes of communication networks and technologies, and 
debates over status of particular forms of knowledge.”8 This dissertation demonstrates how the

8 Tony Ballantyne, Webs of Empire: Locating New Zealand's Colonial Past (Wellington: Bridget Williams Books, 
2012), 187.
Franklin women consistently engaged with issues at the heart of contemporary historiography. By whom was imperial knowledge made – or, rather, who claimed authority over knowledge, who was granted credibility, where, when, and under what conditions? How were these claims conditioned by the mobility of people and ideas? How by the spaces in which people and knowledge reside, and through which they move? And, importantly, how was such authority challenged and undermined, and with what consequences?

The simple premise that knowledge was key to imperial power has reconfigured how historians understand the structures, processes, strengths and weaknesses of the British Empire. In one view, the state and its agents were the principal producers of colonial knowledge. Controlling territory meant conquering it conceptually, inscribing peoples, spaces, artifacts and species on texts and in maps, trapping them in collections and so rationalizing and categorizing them. The net effect was not only to make distant geographies and subject peoples legible in the metropole (and therefore controllable on the imperial periphery), but also to fundamentally change colonized peoples, who increasingly saw themselves and their communities through the distorted lenses of their rulers’ representations. In this view, scientific exploration and explorers were complicit actors and necessary tools of the imperial state, gathering intelligence, charting new territories and opening up new markets as they extended the state’s authority by means of both their scientific instruments and their rational, disciplined selves, and, importantly, writing travel narratives that became their own wildly popular genre in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

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An alternate view concentrated on the process by which colonial knowledge was made, and saw both colonized peoples and vernacular agents as vital actors who contested, wielded, and appropriated knowledge. Such an approach revealed a far more anxious colonial state, one that was constantly reacting to challenges on the ground posed by both indigenous insurgents and what John Darwin has called the “chaotic plurality of private and sub-imperial interests” or the settlers, traders, missionaries and humanitarians who extended the borders of the “informal” empire and then necessitated the extension of the imperial state.\footnote{John Darwin, “Imperialism and the Victorians: The Dynamics of Territorial Expansion,” \textit{The English Historical Review} 112, no. 447 (June 1997): 614-642.} There were parallel and linked developments in the “new imperial history” which recognized that there was never a single colonial project or discourse, but rather a plethora of agendas which were historically contingent, and were shaped by agents’ identities (their gender, race, class, nationality and religion), by political discourses of reform, citizenship and belonging in Britain and in the colonies, by contested and shifting notions of racial difference and “otherness,” by the politics of location, and by other competing colonial interests, whether they were British, indigenous, or from other empires.\footnote{Antoinette Burton, \textit{Burdens of History: British Feminists, Indian Women, and Imperial Culture, 1865-1915} (Durham and London, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1994); Frederick Cooper and Anna Laura Stoler, eds. \textit{Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World.} (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997); Catherine Hall, \textit{Civilising Subjects: Metropole and Colony in the English Imagination.} (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2002); Kathleen Wilson, ed., \textit{A New Imperial History: Culture, Identity and Modernity in Britain and Empire, 1660-1840} (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004); Ann Laura Stoler, \textit{Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power: Race and the Intimate in Colonial Rule.} (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002).}

There are two key principles here that bear directly on this dissertation – the idea of the colonial information order, and a re-envisioned spatiality of the empire as a web of contingent, relational, spatial networks and sites rather than a series of simple binary relationships centered on London. Christopher Bayly argued that the “information order” in South Asia was key to
imperial rule, and that British control rested on the ability to tap into complex networks of indigenous knowledge and intelligence, as well as the “patrimonial knowledge” of Europeans long resident in the subcontinent and “affective knowledge” from go-betweens who by birth, conversion or acculturation occupied a middle ground between colonizer and colonized. Failure to fully apprehend and to manipulate this complex information order was a source of constant anxiety, occasionally giving rise to “information panics” as intelligence dried up or became unavailable.13 Tony Ballantyne not only examined the dialogic process behind the production of colonial knowledge but also re-envisioned the spatiality of the empire. He argued that the empire ought to be understood as a three-dimensional web, a series of spatial networks. This formulation emphasized the empire as both a structure and a process, a series of sites and of ideas that were relational to one another, in which circulating ideas, communities, and individuals were constantly being remade, and in which colonies, cities, and archives might occupy multiple positions. Ballantyne’s imagery of the “web” also gestured to the fragility of this system, for as he put it, “Empires, like webs, were both fragile, prone to crises where important threads are broken or structural nodes destroyed, yet also dynamic, being constantly remade and reconfigured through concerted thought and effort.” 14 The “new imperial history” also placed considerable emphasis on the intimacies produced by colonial encounters (as crucial to the formulation of colonial knowledge, the extension of capitalist markets, and as a source of tremendous, endemic anxiety for both colonial society and authorities.15

These developments opened the door to a plethora of new studies on the networks that cross-hatched the British Empire in the first half of the nineteenth century, that both worked in opposition to the state and were central to its operation. Both humanitarians and white settlers developed sophisticated transnational networks during the first half of the nineteenth century that utilized personal connections, print culture and strategies of mass mobilization (like petition campaigns) to simultaneously pressure government to accede to their various demands and to drum up support and shape public opinion (both in Britain and in the colonies). In the process, they not only widely disseminated information, but also formed collective identities as politically active imperial subjects, despite often being technically disenfranchised whether because of their class, gender, or location.17 For settlers in South Africa, Australia, and elsewhere, the ultimate goal was to secure authority over their own destinies, a degree of autonomy and self-rule (including the authority to dispossess, evict, and/or to eliminate indigenous people) and the elusive badge of respectability.18 For humanitarians, it was to make imperialism as much of a moral undertaking as a commercial, military or political one, while securing their own moral authority as agents of civilization, whether the object was former slaves, indigenous peoples,
settlers, convicts, or the poor.\textsuperscript{19} Their civilizing projects proceeded from the conviction that the path to both salvation and respectability lay in the adoption of Western middle-class values of domesticity, respectability and self-help.

These networks invariably worked at cross-purposes (not least because they were defined by their mutual opposition), and both experienced their ebbs and flows. Humanitarians who had cut their teeth on campaigns to abolish slavery found themselves at a high point in the 1830s, with slavery abolished, sympathetic humanitarians well-placed in the Colonial Office (like the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Lord Glenelg, and the Under-Secretary James Stephens) and in Parliament (especially Sir Thomas Fowell Buxton, who had inherited William Wilberforce’s mantle in the 1820s and was married into the Quaker family of the Frys and Gurneys, humanitarians at the center of the Clapham Sect). They turned their attention to the plight of indigenous peoples in the white settler colonies, culminating in the 1836 Select Committee on the Treatment of Aborigines, whose 1837 Report was largely written by Buxton’s niece Anna Gurney (who would later be one of Jane Franklin’s key supporters during the Franklin searches, see Chapter 5).\textsuperscript{20} This was a low ebb for settlers across the empire, who were accused of rapacity in South Africa because of their campaigns against the Xhosa and Khoi, and genocide in Van Diemen’s Land (see Chapter 3). In the process, both humanitarians and settlers unwittingly sowed the seeds of resistance amongst indigenous peoples and former slaves. From the 1830s, in Canada, Greenland, South Africa, the West Indies and the Antipodes, the children educated in


mission schools, abducted and raised in white families as servants and laborers, and former
slaves, acquired the tools of literacy and the language of Christian universalism, which some
deployed in an early wave of colonial resistance, articulating claims to traditional lands,
personhood and citizenship.21

As much as networks worked in opposition to the imperial state, they were also crucial to
its functioning. Zoe Laidlaw tried to re-center the colonial metropole in her landmark Colonial
Connections, in which she argued that personal networks and relationships connecting the colony
to the metropole were the mainstay of colonial governance until the 1830s; that these networks
were multiple, shifting, comprised of several different interests, of a variety of kinds of ties,
symmetrical and asymmetrical relationships; that they were centered on the metropole (resulting
in the suffusion of the Colonial Office with information), required constant maintenance (though
they were characterized by enormous distance, isolation, and confusion); and that they ultimately
gave way to the “statistical revolution” of the 1830s and the age of reform, in which there was a
gradual transition to statistics as an apparently disinterested source of information, enabling an
official vision of an empire as a whole, and effectively doing away with the primary importance
of informal connections within metropolitan colonial institutions.22

21 Hall, Civilising Subjects, 2002; Penny Van Toorn, Writing Never Arrives Naked: Early Aboriginal Cultures of
Writing in Australia (Canberra: Aboriginal Studies Press, 2006); Tony Ballantyne, “Paper, Pen and Print: the
Transformation of the Kai Tahu Knowledge Order,” Comparative Studies in Society and History 53, no. 2 (2011):
232-260; Tony Ballantyne, “Culture and Colonization: Revisiting the Place of Writing in Colonial New Zealand,”
Tracing Transoceanic Circuits of a Modern Discourse,” Aboriginal History 37 (2013): 1-28; Felicity Jensz,
“Imperial Critics: Moravian Missionaries in the British Colonial World,” in Evangelists of Empire? Missionaries in
(Melbourne: University of Melbourne eScholarship Research Centre, 2008), 187-197.
Ethnicity and National Self-Consciousness through Texts Produced by Greenlanders, 1860s-1920s,”
22 Zoe Laidlaw, Colonial Connections, 1815-1845: Patronage, the Information Revolution and Colonial
Simultaneously, historians of science were beginning to examine how networks of individuals, practices of sociability and patronage, changing technologies and speeds of communication, geographies, and matters of identity conditioned the development of scientific knowledge and disciplines. Since the early modern period, science had been an amateur pursuit and gentlemen were supposed to be its ideal, disinterested practitioners, beholden to no-one and possessed of a natural authority stemming from their personal honor, presumptively rational minds, and commitment to “improvement.”

The world of amateur science in the late Enlightenment was deeply embedded in practices of polite sociability and associational culture, as salons and conversationes became venues for the circulation of scientific knowledge and the seeking of patronage, along with more formal organizations like the Royal Society which, under the leadership of Sir Joseph Banks, provided key advice to the British State, sponsored expeditions, and effectively set the scientific agenda from the late eighteenth century through the 1820s.

This highly networked world depended upon circuits of correspondence in Europe and the colonies, on old friendships forged on voyages of discovery, and on specimen collectors in the field, who were themselves often vernacular agents - either white settlers, missionaries, or commercial agents. It was also one in which women were able to carve out spaces, whether as hosts of salons, as practitioners, or more often as the helpmeets of male relatives, acting as

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illustrators, editors, archivists and “popularizers” of science. These artisans or vernacular practitioners were also crucial as instrument-makers and data collectors, usually working at the behest of a gentlemanly patron.

Though highly stratified along lines of class, gender, and race, the world of the scientific amateur was nevertheless one in which authority was always nebulous. As James Secord has pointed out, the key measures of credibility – trust, testimony and objectivity – were fundamentally questions about “how knowledge travels, to whom it is available, and how agreement is achieved.” This was also the case with scientific exploration, for the status of explorers and the conduct of expeditions were central to these larger debates. There was considerable struggle for authority between the “cabinet” and the “field” in the early-mid nineteenth century. Amateur or “armchair” geographers insisted that they alone possessed the requisite experience and crucial distance from the disordered and chaotic “field” to interpret data. They were keenly aware of the considerable contingencies involved in traveling through strange new territory and gathering data for metropolitan consumption. These included, but were not limited to: the challenges posed by environments from dense jungles, frozen wastes, and trackless deserts; the disordered reality of the senses caused by illness, blindness, hunger and exhaustion; the troubled and troubling intimacies with native people and fellow travelers; the


personal transformations of travel and the inherent danger it seemed to pose to the rational, observing self; and everyday reliance on native and vernacular testimony (often translated and misunderstood) while crossing and mapping new territory.  

Explorers who experienced these often deeply traumatic events – and who survived – were expected to return home and tell their tales. Their published narratives were key to securing their credibility with the broader public and with potential patrons, as well as entrance into wider circuits of knowledge and sociability. These immensely popular volumes shaped both popular understanding and intellectual debates not only about the world beyond Europe’s shores, but also about the very nature of humanity. From the 1830s, as systems of patronage changed and institutions increasingly sponsored expeditions, explorers frequently found themselves defending the validity of their on-the-spot experiences against those who claimed that mere eyewitness testimony was not *ipso facto* trustworthy evidence. They found themselves increasingly subject to (often maddening) attempts to regulate and standardize their observations through specialized, fragile instruments and through publications intended to regulate their very gaze.

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explorer Richard Burton was by no means alone when he claimed bitterly that explorers’ role was “to see and not to think.”

The Franklin family were embedded in these webs of surveillance, correspondence, and contested authority as they “careered” along with Sir John Franklin through his fame as an Arctic explorer and infamy as a colonial governor from the 1820s to the 1850s. These experiences shaped their engagement with the cultures of Arctic exploration, imperial knowledge, and colonial governance, and also how they claimed and staged their own precarious authority within those primarily, though not exclusively, masculine worlds. By tracing how they did so, this dissertation follows on a body of work that understands life stories as a prism through which the complex, contingent and contested vision we now have of the web-like British empire may be viewed, in the process drawing attention to the contributions of women, indigenous people, and vernacular agents. It demonstrates how a focus on one (admittedly extraordinary) family over thirty-odd years can shed light on how women engaged with the complex webs of empire in which they were entangled, and staged their own authority vis-à-vis both the powerful (like naval officers and colonial officials) and the disenfranchised, especially indigenous go-betweens.

For the women of the Franklin family, like other imperial families, it was truly impossible to separate their loved ones’ professions from their family obligations and dynamics, because the two were so deeply intertwined. As David Lambert and Alan Lester have put it, “professional career, family obligations and love were intertwined, and a historiography that insists on separating them – especially on separating profession from emotion – is likely to be

The lives of the Franklin family were governed by what Elizabeth Buettner has called the “permanent impermanence” of imperial families, shaped by constant comings and goings, long painful separations, and considerable trauma that made idealized domestic households and nuclear families almost impossible to achieve. This also meant that those who remained at home had to not only struggle with the lasting trauma that followed men home from the Arctic, but also with the companionships formed in the field, and what those meant for their domestic lives (see Chapter 1). Often, relationships were only sustained through long-distance correspondence, which Charlotte MacDonald has called the “intimacy of the envelope.” That intimacy gave letters from the field a stamp of authenticity, making them useful social currency, which the Franklin relatives circulated amongst their learned and influential friends in the scientific, geographical and naval communities, in the process securing their own roles as “gatekeepers” of information (see Chapter 2).

As strained as these relationships could be, they were also productive. Over the forty years that this dissertation covers, the Franklin women drew on multiple models of moral authority that they encountered in the course of their imperial lives, which they deployed as they engaged with both the Arctic and the colonial information orders. First and foremost, they drew on their authority as maritime wives, a specific (but under-studied) role accorded to the partners of absent mariners on either side of the Atlantic which allowed them to function as ‘deputy husbands,’” who might not be subject to the rules of legal coverture, but rather could look after financial interests, hold powers of attorney, demand support from merchant ship owners or the

36 Elizabeth Buettner, Empire Families: Britons and Late Imperial India (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 1, 14.
Admiralty, circulate information contained in private letters, and generally serve as
“intermediaries between the fraternity at sea and the community on shore.”38 The Franklin
women drew heavily on this authority from as early as the 1820s during John Franklin’s first
Arctic travels (see Chapter 2) and Jane Franklin and John Franklin’s niece Sophia Cracroft
significantly expanded it during the Franklin searches of the 1850s, particularly when they tried
to drum up support from maritime communities (especially northern whaling ports, see Chapter
5).

Though they shared almost none of their philosophy, Jane Franklin and Sophia Cracroft
nevertheless drew considerably on the models of authority developed by women in philanthropic
and humanitarian circles over the course of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century.
These women legitimated their activities in the public sphere as an extension of their feminine
moral authority, using the “language of conscience” to argue that their morality and special
feminine sensibilities were necessary components of the “improvement” and ultimate salvation
of other women (whether they were slaves, ex-slaves, indigenous women, prostitutes, or the poor
in Britain), and that if they trespassed on the public sphere, it was as an expression of their duty
and honor as women, and not in defiance of it.39 This was essentially the argument that Jane
Franklin made during her entire marriage to John Franklin. From the moment they were married
in 1828, she consistently claimed that any behavior of hers that might seem outlandish,

interfering, or unseemly (like superintending her husband’s private correspondence, writing his private reports, or sending out expeditions after him) proceeded solely from her wifely devotion, and should be lauded rather than condemned. This argument did not necessarily find traction in every circle, but it was the core of “her fame during her lifetime and after (see below).

Key to the Franklin women’s engagement with both the Arctic and the colonial information orders was how they staged their authority against indigenous people, vernacular agents, and “go-betweens” of all stripes. Go-betweens, guides, mediators, collaborators, brokers, translators – regardless of what they were called, intermediaries were crucial to the functioning of expeditions and to early nineteenth century imperial and scientific information systems as a whole.40 They dwelt in a twilight of shifting, ambiguous cultural and social identifications. Sometimes they were elites, but much more often they were deracinated people struggling to find their place in a world that was constantly shifting beneath their feet and embedded in multiple, overlapping webs that were native, foreign and both.41 Relationships between intermediaries and explorers could take a variety of forms, from the purely exploitative to the deeply emotional, but they were always inflected by power dynamics, both with outsiders and within their own societies. As a result, go-betweens were highly mobile, invariably indispensible, and often suspect. As the editors of a recent collection have put it, “Go-betweens could make themselves indispensible precisely because of ingenious manipulation and fraught acts of balance and translation and were not, therefore, treated as entirely trustworthy or always reliable.”42

42 Schaffer et al, Brokered World, xvi.
As this dissertation makes clear, the Franklin women constantly engaged with the very contingent credibility of go-betweens by asserting their own authority as “civilized,” respectable and domestic Western women. In this sense, they shared terrain and strategies with imperial feminists and colonial philanthropists who also used colonial “others” (from prostitutes to Indian widows to former slaves) as leverage to secure their own authority. In the case of the Franklin family, they were usually asserting themselves against those whom they knew to be dislocated, deracinated and vulnerable, whether in the Arctic, in Van Diemen’s Land, or elsewhere. They did so not out of sheer malice (though they could certainly be malicious and capricious when they chose to be) but rather out of their own vulnerability. As precarious as these go-betweens were – from the Yellowknife woman “Greenstockings” to the Inuit interpreters Adam Beck and William Ouligbuck, to the orphaned children of Tasmanian chiefs Timemernedic and Mathinna (whom Jane Franklin effectively abducted and then discarded) all of them, in their own ways, were mobile, assertive, and insouciant as they tried to lay claim to their credibility. They seemed to the Franklin women to pose an imminent threat to their conjugal relationships, their civilizing projects, and to the reputation of Sir John Franklin, and the women accordingly sought to control, to shape, and to silence their voices. They used similar standards with vernacular agents – whalers, fur-traders, and settlers – whether they were their supporters or not. When vernacular agents seemed to be in their camp (like the whaling captain William Penny or the lay botanist Ronald Gunn in Van Diemen’s Land) they argued that they could forward their interests through their patronage. When they seemed opposed (as with Dr. John Rae, or the host of whaling captains discussed in Chapter 4), Jane Franklin, Sophia Cracroft, and their supporters resolutely undermined their credibility on the basis of class and crass commercial interest, and were quick

to make accusations of “ungentlemanly behavior” while knowing full well that success depended upon their efforts.

As it explores how the Franklin women engaged with colonial and Arctic information orders, superintended networks of information, and staged their own contests of authority, this dissertation implicitly offers two critiques of Zoe Laidlaw’s model of “colonial connections,” the shifting networks that were critical to colonial governance and which Laidlaw saw as centered on London (and specifically on the Colonial Office) and principally masculine. Laidlaw argued that among the strongest and most enduring connections were those of friendship, obligation, and kinship, in which men were tied to one another by the bonds of family or common experience. She organized them into four key groups: the Peninsular network of Army (and especially Horse Guards) veterans of the Peninsular Campaign, the humanitarian network, missionary societies, and scientific networks. But women, she argued, were principally connecting pieces in the puzzle – while marriage might enable “strong” linkages between men, the women in their lives were useful only insofar as they were married chattel.\(^4\) In contrast, this dissertation sees the women of the Franklin family as vital actors who not only dwelt in the shifting webs made by those four groups of networks (replacing the members of the Peninsular Campaign with naval Arctic veterans) but also monitored and manipulated the traffic of information in them. The second criticism is principally a chronological one. Laidlaw’s work served to bolster the existing understanding that there was an important shift around the 1830s (albeit a gradual and haphazard one), in which the value of statistical data came to eclipse that of vernacular and indigenous knowledge, a shift that corresponded firstly with the rise of institutions and state bureaucracies to archive and store information, secondly with the corresponding devaluation of informal networks.

of communication.\textsuperscript{45} The experience of the Franklin family, however, demonstrates that there were important and vital networks of interest and information, maintained by women and operating alongside and outside institutions well into the 1850s, and that they were vitally concerned, even obsessed with, indigenous and vernacular knowledge.

Much of this dissertation revolves around Sir John Franklin’s second wife, Jane Franklin, and for good reason. In her day, her fame was incomparable. Street ballads were written about her, ships and geographical features named after her, and ultimately, she secured the first Founders Medal ever awarded to a woman by the Royal Geographical Society in 1860, “in token of their admiration of her noble and self-sacrificing perseverance in sending out, at her own cost, several searching expeditions” after her husband.\textsuperscript{46} Biographers have struggled to reconcile her extraordinary life – from her travels on every continent except Antarctica and South America, to her phenomenal efforts during the Franklin searches, including equipping her own expeditions and exhorting the Admiralty, the Hudson’s Bay Company, the whaling fleet and international heads of state to send their own relief expeditions – with her very successful self-representation as an ideal Victorian wife. She consistently argued that she was driven to extraordinary lengths to rescue her missing husband by the sheer force of her devotion; in turn, she seemed to inspire slavish devotion from men who sought to be her chivalric champions.\textsuperscript{47}

Some biographers, like Ken McGoogan, have seen Jane Franklin as conniving and manipulative, a kind of Arctic Lady Macbeth.\textsuperscript{48} Others have seen her as an indefatigable woman

\textsuperscript{45} Bayly, Empire and Information, 1996, 365.
\textsuperscript{46} Sir Clements Markham, “The Fifty Years’ Work of the Royal Geographical Society,” Journal of the Royal Geographical Society of London 50 (1880): 89.
of extraordinary ambition and ability (though not necessarily a sympathetic one).\textsuperscript{49} Penny Russell has suggested that she be viewed on her own terms, that despite her other accomplishments, travels and ambitions, she always defined herself primarily as a wife, even as she “turned the language of devoted wifehood itself into a terrain of infinite and varied scope for her endeavours.”\textsuperscript{50} The struggle to comprehend her subjectivity is compounded by the dizzying, disordering experience of her archive, which is comprised of hundreds of volumes of journals and correspondence, all lashed with handwriting so tiny, cramped and tortured that it resembles nothing so much as the track of a drunken spider struggling out of an inkwell. Rather than try to come to grips with her peculiar and elusive subjectivity (made all the more difficult by her graphomania), this dissertation argues that Jane Franklin’s success was not \textit{sui generis} – rather, that it should properly be seen as only the tip of the iceberg, something made possible by the labors of a generation of women in the extended Franklin family, and by the many networks in which they were embedded. Put simply, it takes as its object not Jane Franklin’s biography, but rather how she laid claim to authority, particularly over information – and that in doing so, she was by no means alone.

Though this dissertation draws on a wealth of Arctic scholarship from history, ethnohistory, anthropology, and literary studies, this is nevertheless not an Arctic history. Rather, it attempts to provide deep historical, historiographical and geographical contexts for the imperial webs in which the Franklin family, and particularly its women, were entangled as they


formed their own networks of information and engaged with others across colonial and domestic sites. That is to say, that it does not purport to explain how the Franklin family acted on the Arctic, but rather how the Arctic (or rather, their idea of what “the Arctic” was) acted on them. The rhythms of their lives were determined by departures and arrivals of ships, letters, specimens, maps, and artifacts, as well as by the long silences in-between, and by the intense anxiety that attended them. The contours of their family came to include John Franklin’s Arctic colleagues, particularly John Richardson, who married Franklin’s niece Mary Booth, and Lt. Edward Kendall, who married another of Franklin’s nieces, Mary Anne Kay. The furnishings of their homes, the food on their tables, even, in one case, their wedding garments, bespoke Arctic connections, (see Chapters 1 and 2). Their reputations, and their quest for authority, were shaped by long silences and anxious imaginings about Arctic ice, Arctic peoples, and Arctic practices.

This is also not a history of the public culture of British Arctic exploration, nor of Arctic exploration _per se_. It does not give an exhaustive account of all the expeditions that took place between 1818 and 1859, nor indeed of all those during the Franklin searches between 1848 and 1859. For interested readers, timelines of these expeditions and maps of the Northwest Passage (including as it was known in 1845) are provided in Appendix A (Figures 1-5). Nor does it delve into the complex dynamics of the subculture of Arctic explorers during this period, riven as it was by admiration, jealousy, competition and collaboration. To do so within the space of this dissertation would be impossible. This is not to say that the Franklin family and its women in particular did not help to determine how the British public perceived the Arctic in the early-mid-nineteenth century: how profound isolation made men reckon with their own smallness and defend their own humanity against a pitiless, remorseless, yet harshly beautiful landscape; how the polar regions became not just a testing ground of one’s manhood, but also of one’s race,
nationality, civility, and ultimately humanity; how the poles became staging grounds for morality
tales of martyrdom and sacrifice that could be made relevant across gender, class, and race.51
Indeed, Chapters 4, 5, and the Conclusion examine how the Franklin women turned the missing
men of the Erebus and Terror into deserving subjects of philanthropy, how they tried to make
their chosen explorers into chivalric heroes, and how they tried to link questions of Arctic
geography and Inuit testimony to questions of national identity and civilization. But to examine
all the ways in which they shaped the British affinity for polar spaces would be impossible
within the scope of this dissertation. Rather, in the course of detailing how they engaged with the
Arctic information order, I have also tried to suggest along the way how they tried to manage
what Peter Mandler has called the “relative throw” of ideas, texts, questions and problems – to
determine their weight and significance among a broadly constituted British (and indeed trans-
Atlantic and trans-imperial) public.52 But the emphasis is always on their meticulous labors and
careful connections, work that was strategically managed from the shadows.

Chapter One examines how John Franklin’s first wife, Eleanor Porden Franklin, tried to
demarcate her new role as a “polar wife” while reckoning with the lasting trauma and
companionships that spilled from Franklin’s disastrous First Arctic Land Expedition in 1819-22
and the tortured process of writing its narrative. Between Franklin’s return in 1823 and her death
in 1825, Eleanor tried simultaneously to work out her position relative to Franklin’s friend,

51 The literature here is considerable, but see especially Francis Spufford, I May Be Some Time: Ice and the English
Imagination (London: Faber and Faber, 1996); Chauncey Loomis, “The Arctic Sublime,” in Nature and the
Victorian Imagination, ed. U.C. Knoepflmacher and G. B. Tennyson, (Berkeley: University of California Press,
1977), 95-112; Robert G. David, The Arctic in the British Imagination, 1818-1914 (Manchester and New York:
Manchester University Press, 2000); Russell A. Potter, Arctic Spectacles: The Frozen North in Visual Culture, 1818-
1875 (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 2007); Jen Hill, White Horizon: The Arctic in the
Nineteenth Century British Imagination (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2008); Sarah Moss, The
Frozen Ship: Histories and Tales of Polar Exploration (Oxford: Signal Books Ltd., 2006); Michael F. Robinson,
The Coldest Crucible: Arctic Exploration and American Culture (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press,
2006); Max Jones, The Last Great Quest: Captain Scott’s Antarctic Sacrifice (Oxford and New York: Oxford
University Press, 2003); Janice Cavell, Tracing the Connected Narrative: Arctic Exploration in British Print
confidante, and fellow-survivor Dr. John Richardson, and to preserve her own autonomy as a published author, while she struggled to accommodate – and to assert herself against – a host of intense relationships with the living, dead, and missing, including indigenous people and fur traders. Chapter Two takes a broader view of the circles of Arctic society and sociability in which explorers and their families moved in 1818-1828, the high point of British naval Arctic exploration prior to the Franklin searches of the 1850s. Taking as its starting point that the gathering and circulating of information was inseparable from practices of sociability in the late Enlightenment, it demonstrates how the elite worlds of “polite science” in London were matched in importance by worlds of vernacular and indigenous knowledge, associations and patronage in the Canadian Arctic during the planning and execution of Franklin’s Second Land Arctic Expedition in 1825-27. Finally, it argues that women and families were crucial as “gatekeepers” of information, keepers of archives, and mediators between their men in the field and the “Arctic Circles” at home.

Chapter Three follows the Franklins to the penal colony of Van Diemen’s Land (now Tasmania) where John Franklin was the Lieutenant Governor from 1837-43 in the wake of the Tasmanian genocide and in the midst of profound shifts in the nature of colonial governance and transimperial networks of information. In response to the manifold challenges to Franklin’s governorship, Jane Franklin fought to control the flow of information to, from and about the colony, engaged with networks of humanitarian, scientific and colonial information, and used close family members as metropolitan envoys. As it examines how she engaged with penal reform, colonial science, and the future of the Tasmanian Aborigines, the chapter also shows how she developed the argument, derived in part from the humanitarians’ “language of conscience,” that her trespasses on male realms of politics and science were driven by wifely
devotion. The connections she made were matched in importance by those she broke or strained, as Franklin’s oldest friends (including Richardson) were persuaded that she contributed to his ignominious recall in 1843 on the grounds that Jane was the “petticoat governor” of the colony.

Chapters Four, Five, and the Conclusion are all concerned with the Franklin searches from 1848 to 1859. There are three important strands that run through this second half of the dissertation. Firstly, having seriously compromised her credibility with some of John Franklin’s friends (especially Dr. John Richardson) after the Tasmanian debacle, Jane Franklin was forced to improvise new networks of sympathetic allies during the searches for her husband, drawn from experienced humanitarian campaigners, scientific correspondents, well-placed officials, vernacular agents, and her wider family in order to make the case to the public and to the Admiralty that rescue expeditions were worthwhile and necessary. Secondly, this process contributed to her estrangement from other key members of the Franklin family, notably her stepdaughter Eleanor Franklin Gell, and drew her much closer to her niece Sophia Cracroft. Sophy was her closest partner in the labors detailed in the second half of this dissertation, and all of their work should properly be seen as a joint effort. Thirdly, and most importantly, Jane Franklin and Sophia Cracroft consistently asserted their authority against both indigenous intermediaries and vernacular agents as they claimed their moral right to receive, evaluate, and interpret intelligence during the Franklin searches and to arbitrate the trustworthiness and character of informants.

A caveat is in order, which is that Chapters Four, Five and the Conclusion do not cover the entirety of Jane and Sophy’s efforts during the Franklin searches. Rather, they are three case studies in which indigenous intelligence was filtered through vernacular agents and threatened to derail Jane and Sophy’s efforts. They shed light on how the women wrestled with the Arctic
information order; how, as they shifted their focus from finding survivors to finding an authoritative record of the disaster, they drew on the modes of authority, self-representation, organization and communication developed by the Franklin family over the previous two decades. As they did so, they engaged with core questions of credibility, trustworthiness, and truth that lay at the heart of the developing discipline of geography and imperial knowledge: What constituted an authoritative record? Did it have to be a journal, a map, or a ship? Or could it be an artifact or “relic,” a story, a promise, or a feeling? Did indigenous testimony “count,” and if so, did it always carry weight, or only under certain circumstances? Did it have to be vouched for, and if so, by whom? Could vernacular agents (in these cases, fur traders and whalers) be granted credibility on the basis of their experience? Did their observations, reports, opinions and surmises carry weight vis-à-vis both indigenous people and officers of the Royal Navy? Could their characters trump the circumstances of their birth and livelihoods, or did their financial interests in the North’s natural resources and their cross-cultural contacts and liaisons debase them? Could naval officers of varied polar experience, scientists, geographers and Admiralty officials adjudicate disputed evidence, or did old rivalries and new ambitions make them too “interested” to be trustworthy? The second half of this dissertation argues that Jane Franklin and Sophia Cracroft claimed the authority to arbitrate all of these questions, and that they were able to do so precisely because of the silence that surrounded the missing expedition, and the blank spaces on the map of the Canadian Archipelago into which it had disappeared.

Chapter Four examines an episode of “information panic” in the autumn of 1849, after the first Franklin rescue expeditions had been dispatched, when a whaler returned to Britain with an Inuit report (accompanied by a hand drawn map) that two ships had been seen. Amidst an arrhythmic pulse of information, characterized by long silences as they waited for more news
and anxious speculation about what that news might be, Jane Franklin, Sophia Cracroft and their supporters reframed the Inuit evidence into a powerful case for hope, claiming that further rescue missions were the duty of a philanthropic nation towards deserving subjects. Their efforts ultimately resulted in the dispatch of the “Arctic Squadron,” the largest fleet of ships (both public and private) sent to the Arctic in the course of the Franklin searches.

Chapter Five examines what happened when those ships came home in the autumn of 1851, and the complex clash of archives, authority and credibility that came to be known as the “Wellington Channel Controversy.” Presented with the tantalizing evidence of Franklin’s winter camp on Beechey Island at the base of Wellington Channel in Lancaster Sound (filled with “relics” but with no documents to accompany them), and the disturbing depositions of the Kalalliiit interpreter Adam Beck that the ships had actually been burned and their crews murdered several hundred miles to the east on the Greenland coast, Jane, Sophy, and their supporters (including humanitarian veterans, former fur traders and newspaper editors) set about making what they called the “argument from negative evidence,” e.g., that the expedition had ascended Wellington Channel and was stuck somewhere in a (wholly fictitious) open polar sea. In their overriding need to establish control over an archive defined by silence and absence, the women consistently attacked the authority of others to speak and on the credibility of what they said, whether they were naval officers, whalers, indigenous people, or indeed their own friends and relatives. Ultimately, the drama played out before the demi-official “Arctic Committee” of John Franklin’s old colleagues, which sat in judgment on the entire future of the search. In the Conclusion, I re-examine the most famous episode of the Franklin searches, the return of Dr. John Rae in the autumn of 1854 with “relics” obtained from the Netsilingmiut, along with the shocking story that the expedition survivors had resorted to cannibalism. I use this episode as a
prism to look back on the Franklin women’s much longer struggle to manipulate the Arctic information order, as they drew on their (by then well-honed) skills and contacts to discredit the most disturbing portions of the Inuit testimony, while elevating others to argue that John Franklin had ultimately discovered the Northwest Passage.

Finally, a note on terminology as it pertains to indigenous groups in this study. I use “Inuit” (sing. “Inuk”) to denote the Inuktut-speaking people of the Canadian Arctic generally. Technically this term can be used to refer to all the related circumpolar groups from Siberia to Greenland who are descendants of the Thule people, as they share a common language, customs, and, in the 21st century, a corporate identity. I use “Inupiaq” (sing. “Inupiat”) to denote both the people living on the northern and northwestern coasts of Alaska and their language. This is partly because this is their preferred name, and also to denote the considerable differences between material culture, economy, and social structure between the bowhead whale hunters of Alaska (with semi-permanent settlements, highly ranked societies, and organized warfare) and the more highly nomadic Inuit to the east. When speaking of the people of Greenland, the preferred term is Kalalliit (sing. Kalaaleq), while the term for language is Kalaallisut. When possible, I use band names (for example, Netsilingmiut) for greater precision, but if I cannot make a precise identification, I will use the general term “Inuit.” The terminology for Tasmanian Aborigines is considerably more difficult, not least because there are so few records of their language and names that survive. I therefore follow Lyndall Ryan in terming them “Tasmanian Aborigines,” though I note that the terminology remains contentious.53

In 1818, the British poet Eleanor Porden wrote a tribute to a new British naval expedition headed for the North Pole. *The Arctic Expedition* saluted scientific exploration as a patriotic undertaking, but at the same time, Porden (like her contemporary Mary Shelley) warned the polar explorers against hubris, conjuring a nightmarish vision of, “Your prows drawn downward and your sterns in air,/ To waste with cold, and grief, and famine, there…”54 Five years later, Porden would marry the Spitzbergen expedition’s second-in-command, John Franklin, but not before a protracted, painful battle with the wages of the cold, grief, and famine that she had anticipated long before they met. After returning from Spitzbergen, Franklin would set out on a new overland expedition across Canada’s Barren Grounds in 1819-1822, in an attempt on the Northwest Passage. In the course of the journey, nineteen of his men starved to death, two were murdered, and there was at least one episode of cannibalism. It was on his return from this expedition that he and Porden courted and married, and he published the book that would make his name as an explorer, *Journey to the Shores of the Polar Sea.*

This chapter argues that Eleanor tried to demarcate her new role as a polar wife while reckoning with the lasting trauma and companionships of the First Land Arctic Expedition, and the tortured process of writing its narrative. Indeed, John Franklin and Eleanor Porden’s courtship and brief marriage (before she died from tuberculosis in 1825) could never be separated from either the traumas of the First Arctic Land Expedition nor the relationships forged during it: between Franklin and his close friend the surgeon-naturalist Dr. John Richardson, between the expedition officers, between the expedition members and indigenous people in the far north, and between naval officers, Admiralty officials, and vernacular agents. Eleanor

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struggled to accommodate and to assert herself against this host of relationships as she, John Franklin, and John Richardson all struggled with the potentially explosive narrative of the expedition. In particular, she had to reconcile her conjugal relationship with John Franklin with his close relationship with Richardson. When they returned from Canada in 1823, the two men sought solace and support from each other as they recuperated from their experiences, reintegrated into society, wrote the narrative of their journey, and sought patronage and connections for themselves and their companions. Eleanor struggled to find her place in that process, first as a fiancée and then as a wife, a struggle made all the more frustrating because of her skills as a writer and experience as a published author, both of which John Franklin alternately sought to co-opt and to subvert. This chapter demonstrates that contests over knowledge, authority and credibility did not end in the field, but rather took on new dimensions as partners tried to find a place for explorers at home.

It is perhaps surprising that we still think of the drama of exploration as something that only happens at the ends of the earth, particularly in an era when we are so keenly aware of the wages of post-traumatic stress. The transformations wrought by travel and exploration have tended to be seen as the product of a man’s individual struggle with the environment, equipment, companions, and/or himself in the field.55 This is particularly the case when it comes to the polar regions - perhaps the most isolated places on earth – and our understanding that those who trespass upon them and battle against them may find themselves within them. In the high, cold latitudes, the explorer is repeatedly forced to defend his humanity against both pitiless nature and unrelenting loneliness, even as he may find his soul enriched by the harsh beauty of his frozen

surroundings. But there has been little attention to the historical importance of the real and lasting trauma of exploration, to its impact on domestic lives, and the relevance that these traumatized homes might have for cultures of exploration. While the tension between the cabinet, the field and the public sphere is central to the literature on eighteenth and nineteenth century cultures of natural history and of exploration, these have yet to incorporate the additional tension with the home. But as feminist historians, biographers, and increasingly historians of science have asserted, the home and the family are important spaces, places, actors and archives that make and record historical events. The extensive archives of the extended Franklin family allow us to do exactly this: to explore how the harrowing experiences of the Land Arctic Expedition followed the expedition’s officers home, and how these experiences infused their later relationships and shaped their professional lives.

**Beginnings: The Renewed British Search for the Northwest Passage**

The discovery of a Northwest Passage from Europe to Asia had been an English dream since the sixteenth century. The notion of a northern sea route to Asia, and particularly the

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57 The two key works here are N. Jardine, J.A. Secord and E. Spary, eds., Cultures of Natural History (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996); Driver, Geography Militant, 2001.


59 Ann Savours, The Search for the North West Passage (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999), 1-18
notion of an open polar sea ringed by impenetrable ice, fired the imaginations of armchair geographers well into the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Several of the great voyages of the eighteenth century (including James Cook’s third and final voyage in 1776-1780) had attempted a Passage via Bering Strait, but all had failed to get further than the northwest coast of Alaska. Russian circumnavigators bound for their Alaskan colony routinely included Bering Strait in their larger Pacific itineraries, and occasionally tried the passage as well. In the wake of the Napoleonic wars, British attention refocused on the Arctic, and specifically on locating the North Pole and a navigable Northwest Passage as a suitable use for a bloated navy with thousands of officers on half pay, and to forestall Russian commercial and imperial expansion in the far north.

In 1817, a young whaling captain from Whitby named William Scoresby reported that the ice in Davis Straits off the west coast of Greenland was largely free of ice, and that Lancaster Sound, a possible gateway to the Northwest Passage, might be clear too. Sir Joseph Banks advocated for a new expedition, which Scoresby offered to lead. He was, however, refused by Sir John Barrow, the influential Second Secretary of the Admiralty, who was British naval exploration’s greatest promoter in the early nineteenth century, whether in the halls of the Admiralty, the circles of the Royal Society, or the pages of the Tory Quarterly Review. Barrow

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61 Michael Bravo, “Geographies of Exploration and Improvement: William Scoresby and Arctic Whaling, 1782-1822,” Journal of Historical Geography 32 (2006): 512-538; Tom and Cordelia Stamp, William Scoresby: Arctic Scientist (Whitby: Caedmon of Whitby Press, 1976), 64-72. In retrospect, we can see that Scoresby’s observations were part of a broader pattern of climactic variability that was part of the end of the “Little Ice Age” at the beginning of the nineteenth century, patterns which Julie Cruikshank has argued set the environmental context for exploration and cross-cultural encounters in the far north. Julie Cruikshank, Do Glaciers Listen? Local Knowledge, Colonial Encounters, and Social Imagination (Vancouver and Toronto: University of British Columbia Press, 2005).

62 Bravo, “Geographies of Exploration and Improvement,” 512-538; Savours, Search for the Northwest Passage, 39-55; Pratt, Imperial Eyes; James M. R. Cameron, “Agents and Agencies in Geography and Empire: The Case of George Grey,” in Geography and Imperialism, ed. Morag Bell, Robin Butlin and Michael Heffernan (Manchester
took over the aggressive promotion of the Arctic (having offered the position of ice master to Scoresby, who refused) and his efforts ultimately produced two expeditions in 1818, the North Polar Expedition in HMS *Dorothea* and *Trent* (commanded by Captain David Buchan and Lt. John Franklin) and the Northwest Passage Expedition in HMS *Isabella* and *Alexander* (commanded by Captain John Ross and Lt. William Edward Parry). These were followed by John Franklin’s overland expedition in 1819, Parry’s attempt in HMS *Hecla* and *Griper* in 1819, and a slew of maritime and overland expeditions in the 1820s out of which a distinctive culture of Arctic sociability developed (see Chapter 2).

All these expeditions were marked by tension between commercial, official, and scientific interests. The main attraction of the Arctic for the British state was, as it is for modern powers, its vast natural resources. Both the Russians in Alaska and the British in Canada left the exploitation of these up to chartered companies (the Russian American Company and the Hudson’s Bay Company), and limited private enterprise (the North West Company in Canada and the Davis Strait whale fleet) - in short, the “private and sub-imperial interests” that John Darwin has identified as the principal agents of Victorian territorial expansion. The British government was well aware that these vernacular agents – fur traders and whalers – were highly skilled, knowledgeable, and well-connected in the Far North, not least with indigenous leaders. Yet so far as Admiralty officials and naval officers were concerned (and particularly Barrow),

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vernacular agents’ commercial interests precluded them from taking leading roles in scientific exploration except in the (admittedly indispensible) supporting roles of ice masters, guides, and interpreters.\textsuperscript{64} But expedition science was far from “disinterested” so far as the state was concerned. The magnetic experiments, tidal observations, and astronomical observations (among many others) that explorers undertook were part of a broader project to better understand, manage, and navigate the oceans and littorals upon which British power depended and commerce flowed.\textsuperscript{65} Barrow used these material benefits to persuade his Admiralty and Colonial Office colleagues to support and to finance Arctic exploration; nevertheless, in doing so they left themselves open to utilitarian critique (often in the editorials of the \textit{Times}) of the expeditions as stupendous wastes of public money in endeavors that could be better and more efficiently performed by private enterprise.\textsuperscript{66} This debate over government’s proper role vis-à-vis private enterprise would be one of the signature features of polar exploration in the nineteenth century.

For ambitious young officers like Franklin and his colleagues, the Arctic was something new and utterly confounding. It was a place where seas froze and became indistinguishable from coasts. Ice flowed along unknown currents and through shallow and rocky channels. Stars failed to appear in the long days of summer, and tender flesh was exposed to take observations in the

\textsuperscript{64} Bravo, “Geographies of Exploration and Improvement,” 512-538; Levere, \textit{Science and the Canadian Arctic}, 42.

\textsuperscript{65} Reidy, \textit{Tides of History}, 1-10; T. H. Levere, “Chronometers on the Arctic Expeditions of John Ross and William Edward Parry: With Notes on a Letter from Messrs. William Parkinson and William James Frodsham,” \textit{Annals of Science} 51 (1994): 165-175; Levere, \textit{Science and the Canadian Arctic}, 33-34; Michael Dettelbach, “Humboldtean Science,” in Jardine, Secord and Spary, \textit{Cultures of Natural History}, 287-304. As John Gascoigne has demonstrated, Banks and the Royal Society were unrivalled in their influence on scientific matters linked to imperial expansion in the age of revolution, demonstrating the fundamental limitations of the state’s ability to fulfill its own significant aspirations. By the 1820s, however, the so-called “Banksian empire” was beginning to fragment, especially in the aftermath of Banks’s death amidst political struggles within the Royal Society, the proliferation of other specialist societies, and the partial “colonization” of Banks’s purview by government departments (especially Hydrography). Gascoigne, \textit{Science in the Service}; Driver, \textit{Geography Militant}, 32-34; A. Lambert, \textit{Gates of Hell}, 12-15.

\textsuperscript{66} While I deal with this to a certain extent in the second half of this dissertation with respect to how Jane Franklin and her supporters encountered and managed this narrative, Janice Cavell’s superb study of the print culture of Arctic exploration is far more thorough in its treatment of utilitarian critiques of Arctic exploration. See Cavell, \textit{Tracing the Connected Narrative}. 
deep cold of winter. Compasses did not work. The extreme conditions, like other environments alien to European explorers, could force reasoned scientific inquiry to give way to illness, starvation, madness, and death. In the best-case scenario, the otherworldly landscapes, isolation, vulnerability, confinement, and real existential danger of Arctic exploration led to transformative experiences and deep religious reflection. Many found that being isolated and lost strengthened their conviction of being under divine protection. These experiences could also force them to rely upon indigenous agents, guides, technology and subsistence in ways that they might never have imagined. The next section of this chapter surveys the events of the First Land Arctic Expedition and how it gave rise to these profound bodily, mental and spiritual vulnerabilities that explorers’ families later struggled to fathom.

“Endeared to me by Affliction”: The First Land Arctic Expedition, 1819-1822

When Capt. William Edward Parry landed at Shetland in the fall of 1823 at the end of his third Arctic expedition in HMS Fury and Hecla, a review of John Franklin’s Journey to the Shores of the Polar Sea was placed in his hands. He immediately wrote to Franklin, “I need not be ashamed to say that I cried over it like a child.” Franklin’s narrative one of the most wildly popular narratives of its day, and was read by far more than those who could afford John Murray’s expensive leather-bound quartos; as Janice Cavell has demonstrated, extracts and reviews were published in a huge variety of periodicals targeted at a wide swath of the reading

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68 Some, like Scoresby and Parry (who went on five Arctic voyages between 1818 and 1827), developed sermons specifically for Arctic service which adapted seamen’s prayers for the Arctic conditions – indeed, these experiences ultimately caused Scoresby to leave the sea and to preach in seamen’s bethels in his new vocation as a minister. Stamp and Stamp, William Scoresby, 62-85; William Scoresby, Memorials of the Sea: Sermons in the Arctic Regions (London: James Nisbet and Co, 1835); Parry frequently mentioned adapting sailors’ sermons for Arctic service, see SPRI MS 1199/1/1 MF, William Edward Parry, Private Journal HMS Alexander, 17 October 1818. 69 SPRI MS 248/452/10, W. E. Parry to John Franklin, Stamford Hill, 23 October, 1823.
public. In 1822, Franklin and his party, made up mainly of Canadian voyageurs with four British officers, one sailor, and two Inuit interpreters had marched over hundreds of miles along the Coppermine River of the Canadian Shield to the “Polar Sea,” traced the Canadian coast westward to Point Turnagain on the north coast of Alaska in birchbark canoes before the approach of winter forced them to turn back (see Figure 4). The expedition disintegrated into chaos on the march home to Fort Enterprise, as most of the Canadians and one British officer, Robert Hood, died from starvation, exhaustion, or at each other’s hands. Only Franklin, Richardson, the midshipman George Back, the sailor John Hepburn, the Inuk translator Tattanoeuk/Augustus and the Yellowknife translator Adam had survived. In addition to the gripping story, one of the narrative’s greatest attractions, especially to Evangelical readers, was Franklin’s insistence that their survival was by God’s grace alone; as Cavell has noted, “in no other narrative was religious feeling so closely woven into the very texture of the book.”

The First Land Arctic Expedition of 1819-22 has gone from being seen as an episode of unmatched polar heroism under extreme conditions, to being understood as a case study in ethnocentrism and hubris. In Franklin, Canadian historians have seen an unimaginative man whose dogged adherence to duty and unyielding sense of cultural superiority blinded him to the skills and knowledge of Natives and traders alike, with fatal consequences. Others, (especially

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70 Cavell, Tracing the Connected Narrative, 7-13.
71 Ibid., 103.
Franklin’s sympathetic biographers) have seen him as a kind and honorable man eager for
distinction who was, along with his men, merely a victim of circumstance.74 I am more
concerned with how the experiences of the First Land Arctic Expedition created a core set of
relationships that would be central to the “Arctic Circles” well into the 1850s. On one level,
these involved the relationships between the surviving British members: Franklin, Richardson,
Back, and Hepburn, which came to incorporate both ties of obligation and affection as well as
suspicion and distrust. On another, these involved the relationships of the expedition officers
with Native people – whether they were middlemen, sexual partners, laborers or intermediaries –
which in turn raised broader questions of power and authority. In the Arctic (as elsewhere) the
expert knowledge of indigenous peoples and vernacular agents was both indispensible and
unsettling to explorers in inhospitable environments, resulting in contests over knowledge,
authority, possession and dispossession.75 As this chapter demonstrates, those contests over
knowledge and authority did not end in the field; rather, they took on new dimensions as
explorers wrote their narratives and tried to reconcile their experiences with their domestic lives
and attachments.

The Land Arctic Expedition of 1819 was made possible by the failures of their
predecessors in 1818, especially the Northwest Passage expedition of John Ross and William
Edward Parry in HMS Isabella and Alexander. Captain Ross famously ordered his ships to return
to Britain after he sighted a mirage in Lancaster Sound that he interpreted to be a mountain chain

74A. Lambert, Gates of Hell, 31-35; Cavell, Tracing the Connected Narrative, 92-96; Martyn Beardsley, Deadly
Winter: The Life of Sir John Franklin (London: Chatham Publishing, 2002); Roderic Owen, The Fate of Franklin:
The Life and Mysterious Death of the Most Heroic of Arctic Explorers (London: Hutchinson, 1978).
Knowledge on the Move: Itineraries, Amerindian Narratives, and Deep Histories of Science,” ISIS 101 (2010): 133-
145; Barbara Belyea, “Amerindian Maps: The Explorer as Translator,” Journal of Historical Geography 18, no. 3
cutting off the passage to the west. He named the mirage the “Croker Mountains” after the Secretary of the Admiralty, then returned to London, declaring that the Passage was a fiction. His ambitious subordinate Parry wrote in his journal of his and the astronomer Edward Sabine’s “mortification and disappointment” at having, “our increasing hopes annihilated in a moment, without the shadow of a reason appearing.”  

Barrow was furious, and savaged Ross in the Quarterly Review as an incompetent whose retreat marked him as “impenetrably dull or intentionally perverse.” Ross and his men were ridiculed in a George Cruikshank cartoon, in which they parade towards the British Museum, having lost their noses to Inuit greetings and bearing treasures of a dead polar bear, a barrel of “red snow” (a reference to snow tinged with a red marine plankton) and Jack Frost, carrying the “North Pole.” The Arctic Expeditions of 1819 were effectively a response to Ross’s failure, and were given to Franklin and to Ross’s subordinate Parry. While Parry sought a Northwest Passage westward from Lancaster Sound in HMS Hecla and Fury (which he did, famously “sailing over” the Croker Mountains, overwintering at Melville Island, and ultimately securing a portion of the £20,000 Longitude Prize for himself and his crew), Franklin’s party was to go overland to chart the northern coast of Canada between the Coppermine and Mackenzie Rivers.

The planners of Franklin’s overland expedition displayed an abysmal understanding of the political and environmental conditions of the Canadian Shield. The expedition (which was jointly overseen by the Admiralty and the Colonial Office) was supposed to draw on the personnel and resources of both the HBC and the NWC, neither of which had established forts

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76 Quoted in M. J. Ross, Polar Pioneers: John Ross and James Clark Ross (Montreal and London: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1994), 48. Sabine was also furious that Ross had published uncorrected proofs of his magnetic and astronomical observations, and published his own pamphlet in response to Ross’s narrative, which Barrow and Parry promoted heavily in their social circles. Edward Sabine, Remarks on the Account of the Late Voyage of Discovery to Baffin’s Bay. (London: John Booth, 1819). See also SPRI MS 438/26/36-42, William Edward Parry correspondence.


78 Spufford, I May Be Some Time, 80.
on the territory that Franklin proposed to cross, which was known colloquially as “the Barren Grounds.” The two companies were embroiled in conflict with each other, while also being at the mercy of indigenous geopolitics and the extreme environment. There were ongoing hostilities between the Dene and Inuit that were generations old, and had been exacerbated by earlier British expeditions. 79 There was also endemic conflict between Gwich’in, Dogrib, Yellowknife, Slave and Hare peoples that hinged on access to the British and the Russian fur trades. 80 Since 1812, this conflict had been characterized by the Yellowknife leader Akaitcho’s concentration of regional power and control over the region of Great Slave and Great Bear Lakes, and control over both foreign goods and firearms, enabling him and the Yellowknives to harass their rivals the Dog Ribs and drive them from their territories. 81 Akaitcho would provide crucial support to the expedition, but was also among its most vocal critics (see below). Finally, with long winters and temperatures regularly plunging below -50° F, starvation was a real threat for fur traders and Native peoples alike. 82 “Old Winterers” in each company would have survived several episodes of severe deprivation, and seen comrades and family members die from starvation. 83

79 They stemmed in part from a massacre of Inuit families at Bloody Falls on the Coppermine River during Samuel Hearne’s expedition in 1771, by Yellowknife members of his expedition. In Lord Bathurst’s official instructions to Franklin, he urged him to acquire an Inuit interpreter at all costs, including delaying the expedition if necessary, “as a person of this description would be most important in your communications with the Natives who are spread along the Northern Coast, and be a means of preventing those disgraceful scenes described by Hearne to have occurred on the Coppermine River.” NA CO 6/15 Sketch of Official Instructions from Lord Bathurst, 29 April 1819. For additional discussion of the Hearne expedition and the massacre, see I.S. MacLaren, “Exploration/Travel Literature and the Evolution of the Author,” International Journal of Canadian Studies 5 (1992): 39-68 and also Janice Cavell, “The Hidden Crime of Dr. Richardson,” Polar Record 43, no. 2 (April 2007): 155-164.
80 June Helm and Beryl C. Gillespie, “Dogrib Oral Tradition as History: War and Peace in the 1820s,” Journal of Anthropological Research 37, no. 1 (Spring 1981): 14; for the broader picture of British and Russian competition in Alaska and Canada, see Bockstoce, Furs and Frontiers, 115-224; Vinkovetsky, Russian America, 52-72.
Franklin’s land expedition was led by naval officers but comprised mainly of French Canadian voyageurs, backed up by Yellowknife hunters, guides, and their families, Inuit interpreters, and the “Old Winterer” from the Northwest Company, the Norwegian Willard Ferdinand Wentzel. The vast majority of the expedition personnel (sixteen men) were voyageurs, French Canadian peasants who had joined up with the NWC as indentured laborers, and who were then initiated into a distinctive backwoods culture marked by constant labor, cross-cultural exchanges with native people and a chase of elusive freedom that Carolyn Podruchny has argued was core to their identity. They were also accompanied by an Iroquois voyageur, Michel Terohaute, and three interpreters (one of whom was Chipewyan) in addition to the Inuk interpreter from Churchill, Tattanoeuk/ “Augustus” and his companion “Junius.” We will encounter Tattanoeuk again (and in much greater detail) in Chapter 2. He and “Junius” arrived at the expedition’s headquarters at Fort Enterprise in the winter of 1821, and both Franklin and Akaitcho considered him as a kind of human passport into Inuit territory, a man who could smooth relations and pave the way for future travel and trade.

The British members of the expedition were Franklin (Figure 6), Dr. John Richardson (Figure 7), Midshipmen George Back and Robert Hood, and the able bodied seaman John Hepburn. Richardson was thirty-one and had been at sea almost constantly since he was twenty,

84 Franklin frequently consulted Wentzel about how to behave appropriately towards the Yellowknife chief Akaitcho as well as local environmental conditions and conflicts. He also prompted Wentzel to write a detailed report about the state of the Athabasca region. SPRI MS 802/1-2;D, Willard Wentzel Account, 26 February 1821, MacKenzie River Winter Lake, Fort Enterprise. Original in Royal Commonwealth Society.
86 Shortly after Tattanoeuk arrived at Fort Enterprise in the winter of 1821, Akaitcho told Franklin that, “he is very desirous to take advantage of the Interpreter’s being present, and our intercession, in order to make an Amicable arrangement with [the Coppermine Inuit].” John Franklin, Sir John Franklin’s Journals and Correspondence, 1995, 142. Franklin cautioned Tattanoeuk/Augustus, however, to keep apart from the Yellowknives and to “avoid speaking Cree which both he and they spoke imperfectly, least mistakes should arise and quarrels be produced by some expressions which neither party intended.” Ibid., 142. For Tattanoeuk/Augustus’s background, see NA CO 6/15, “Queries answered by Mr Snodie, Chief of Churchill Fort” and also HBCA B.42/a/140, Churchill Post Journal, 1813-1814; HBCA B.42/a/141, Churchill Factory Post Journal, 1814-1815.
before returning home to Edinburgh in 1815, marrying Mary Stiven, setting up shop as a surgeon and attending lectures by his patron, Dr. Robert Jameson. Back was the twenty-two year old son of a Stockport brewer who had been captured by the French soon after he went to sea at eleven. He spent most of his adolescence as a prisoner of war and saw Arctic service as the best way to establish the crucial connections he had missed out on during his captivity. He had been with Franklin as a midshipman on the *Trent* in 1818, and Franklin’s expedition in 1819 gave him an opportunity to display his considerable talent as an artist. He did not, however, make for an easy companion. Thirty years later, Hepburn would characterize him as “a very agreeable man… with those from whom he expects to get anything.” Midshipman Robert Hood was also twenty-two and the son of an Anglo-Irish doctor, and had also spent his life at sea from the age of 11 and seen considerable action during the wars, and was, like Back, a highly gifted artist. Hepburn was twenty-four, originally a cowherd from East Lothian who had been impressed around 1810, taken prisoner by an American privateer and transferred to the French, and ultimately ended up under Franklin on the *Trent* in 1818 as an able bodied seaman. All of them were ambitious young men of modest (in Hepburn’s case quite humble) backgrounds, eager to make a name for themselves in the hardscrabble environment of the post-Napoleonic navy.

Trade was what made the world go round in northern Canada and Alaska: trade, control of trade routes, and provisions, and these were effectively controlled by the Yellowknives. While the Yellowknives’ enemies, the Dog Ribs, saw Akaitcho as the very embodiment of terror;
Franklin and the fur traders saw him as indispensable to their interests.93 Wentzel wrote that Akaitcho “will prove himself a steady trusty man, and a most powerful support to the Expedition,” and that he “would be considered amongst civilized nations as a polished orator and a respectable chief.”94 The tense relationship that developed between the Yellowknife leader and the expedition leader is too complex to do justice to here, but suffice to say that they were characterized by a struggle for authority between Franklin and Akaitcho. More often than not, Franklin found his instructions and desires were thwarted by Akaitcho, while Akaitcho felt that Franklin’s behavior was impractical at best and insane at worst. He constantly objected to Franklin’s plans, or refused point-blank to carry them through. When, for example, Franklin tried to ascend the Coppermine River in his first season in August of 1820, Akaitcho told him that “the very attempt would be an act of Madness,” and threatened to abandon the expedition. In this and in other incidents, Franklin carefully recorded Akaitcho’s arguments in a letter to the Under Secretary of State, Henry Gaulthorn, representing the Yellowknife leader as alternately fickle and reasonable, as he and Franklin engaged in point and counterpoint, each marshaling compelling evidence to bolster his own rational argument.95

Trade and survival also depended upon the support of native women, who were indispensable to the fur trade as sexual partners, skilled labor, guides, translators, and intermediaries. For bourgeois and voyageurs alike, an alliance with a Native woman meant

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93 Helm and Gillespie, “Dogrib Oral Tradition,” 14-18. Not all historians agree that Franklin saw Akaitcho as indispensable. Franklin’s relationship with Akaitcho has been seen as evidence of his pervasive and self-destructive ethnocentrism on the one hand, and of his willingness to engage in cross-cultural exchanges, even friendships, on the other. See Davis, “Introduction,” 1995, xcvi-xcix; Janice Cavell, “Representing Akaitcho: European Vision and Revision in the Writing of John Franklin’s Narrative of a Journey to the Shores of the Polar Sea...”, Polar Record 44, no. 228 (2008): 25-34. I consider that the best evidence for his centrality to the expedition comes in Franklin’s copious correspondence with the Colonial Office, which can be found in NA CO 6/15, Documents relative to the Land Arctic Expedition, 1819-1822, and also in his subsequent assessments of Akaitcho in print and in private correspondence with Richardson and others, see chapter 2.


95 NA CO 6/15, John Franklin to Henry Gaulthorn, Under Secretary of State, Fort Enterprise, Winter Lake, 18 October, 1820.
linking into her kinship networks while availing oneself of her considerable specialized skills. Several women accompanied the expedition, but the most visible was the teenage “Greenstockings” who travelled with her father Keskarrah (the expedition guide and brother of Akaitcho) and her mother. As Richard Davis has observed, in both contemporary accounts and later historical and literary assessments, Greenstockings appears only as, “an object to be celebrated solely for her physical characteristics, dismissed for the trouble she stirred up among men, or held out as a prize to be awarded to the winner of the seduction.” She was still in her teens in 1819 and had been twice married, but had no children. At some point during the journey or the residence at Fort Enterprise in the autumn of 1820, both Back and Hood became interested in Greenstockings, and according to John Hepburn many years later, arranged to fight a duel over her, but Hepburn removed the charges from their pistols. Leslie Neatby has suggested that it was because of this altercation that Franklin sent Back away on a five month journey to the HBC headquarters in the Athabasca district from October 1820 until February 1821, though Davis has pointed out that bringing up trade goods and supplies was likely more important to Franklin than defusing conflicts between midshipmen over an indigenous woman. At any rate,


during Back’s absence, Franklin informed him of a “change that has taken place in Family affairs. Perhaps you were prepared to expect the pleasure of a Female Companion in your room. Hood says he shall inform you of the circumstance. I need not therefore enlarge upon the subject.”

Some time later, Greenstockings gave birth to Hood’s daughter. Writers and historians (most notably the Canadian novelist Rudy Wiebe) would continue to be drawn to Greenstockings’ beauty, sexuality, and indigeneity. As we shall see, the women of the Franklin family (most notably Eleanor Porden) would also use Greenstockings as a means to address their own concerns about their relationships with Franklin and his companions in the aftermath of the expedition (see below).

In the spring of 1821, the party set out from Fort Enterprise on the shores of Great Slave Lake for the Coppermine River and the Arctic Coast (having left Greenstockings and her family behind). When they reached Bloody Falls in the middle of July, they encountered a small party of Inuit and opened conversation through Tattanoeuk, but Akaitcho and his hunters were concerned about the changing season and Inuit hostilities, and insisted on turning back, promising to re-provision Fort Enterprise for the winter. Wentzel accompanied the expedition to the coast, where he too left before the season got too late. Franklin then took two heavily laden birchbark canoes and managed to navigate more than 500 miles west to Point Turnagain, where the increasingly severe weather, declining provisions, and fears of an early winter forced them to turn back. They soon exhausted their provisions, missed the caribou migration, and were forced

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100 SPRI MS 395/70/2 BL, John Franklin to George Back, Fort Enterprise, 21 November, 1820.
101 Greenstockings held a particular fascination for Rudy Wiebe, whose novel *A Discovery of Strangers* turned on the relationships between Greenstockings, Hood, Back, and Michel Terohaute within a broader condemnation of British foolishness and hubris embodied by Franklin (who appears only as the character “Thick English” in the novel). Wiebe, *Discovery of Strangers*. The novel is hailed by many as a Canadian classic, but has been criticized for Wiebe’s presumption that white writers, if endowed with imagination, empathy and skill, can speak for and about First Peoples with authority. See Laura Smyth Groening, *Listening to Old Woman Speak: Natives and AlterNatives in Canadian Literature* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queens University Press, 2004), 105-119.
to begin eating *tripe de roche*, a barely edible lichen which voyageurs relied on to stave off starvation. Several of the men, including Hood, could not digest it and suffered from painful diarrhea. Soon they supplemented *tripe de roche* with pieces of singed hide – later, with a gruel made of pounded bones and their own shoes.

The expedition soon fragmented under these strains. On October 4th, Back left to look for Wentzel and the Yellowknives at Fort Enterprise. The next day, the first voyageurs began to collapse from cold, hunger and exhaustion and were left behind to freeze to death. Tattanouek’s Inuk companion Junius went off hunting and never returned. On October 7th, the party divided again. Hood (who could barely move), Richardson and Hepburn volunteered to set up camp with most of the equipment, while Franklin and the rest went ahead to Fort Enterprise, to return with provisions as soon as they could. Franklin was extremely reluctant to part with those “endeared to me by affliction,” but he felt he had no other choice if anyone was to survive. He moved on with the rest of the voyageurs, but within two days, the Iroquois guide Michel Terohaute and the voyageurs Bellanger and Perrault left to return to the camp. Franklin, Tattanouek, and four others went ahead to find Fort Enterprise cold and deserted. Unable to send any help back to the tent, they settled down to wait for relief, in the meantime pounding bones, singing hides, and boiling them with *tripe de roche* into a nasty broth. When a messenger from Back arrived on October 15th asking for further instructions, Franklin wrote a long letter of despair as he begged for relief, mourned the loss of his friends, excoriated the “miserable wretched treachery of the Indians” and the “indifference” of Wentzel, and repeatedly insisted that their only hope lay with God as “disaster [appears] to follow disaster in this melancholy journey.”

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103 SPRI MS 395/70/5, John Franklin to George Back, Fort Enterprise, 15 October, 1821.
104 Ibid.
What happened at Richardson, Hepburn and Hood’s camp was a matter of dispute, controversy and mystery, not least because the only account to survive was Richardson’s.\textsuperscript{105} According to Richardson, Michel arrived at the tent alone. The next day he took a hatchet and went into the woods, returning a day later with what he claimed was part of the carcass of a wolf. Richardson and Hepburn later came to believe that it was part of one of the voyageur’s bodies. Richardson claimed that Michel became increasingly argumentative and aggressive, and that he had tried to take advantage of the Britons’ weakness to invert the expedition’s racial hierarchy, treating the British as if they were “completely in his power,” and “[giving] vent to several expressions of hatred towards the white people, or as he termed us in the idiom of the voyageurs, the French, some of whom, he said, had killed and eaten his uncle and two of his relations.”\textsuperscript{106} In an explicit contrast with Michel’s threatened violence, Richardson wrote that he, Hepburn, and Hood comforted each other with constant prayer, the texts of which the survivors and their families would keep for years.\textsuperscript{107} After a few days, Richardson and Hepburn left Hood by the fire, arguing with Michel. Moments later, they heard a shot and returned to find Hood dead. They believed Michel had murdered him, and after the Iroquois voyageur made a series of threats against Hepburn, Richardson caught him by surprise and summarily executed him by shooting him in the head. He claimed he had done so to protect Hepburn who, he said, “by his humane attentions and devotedness, had so endeared himself to me, that I felt more anxiety for his safety

\textsuperscript{105} Hepburn later confirmed portions of Richardson’s account thirty years later in conversations with the French naval lieutenant Joseph Rene Bellot on another Arctic expedition in 1851, but only in a very vague way. It has been suggested that Richardson’s account was contrived not only to show him in the best possible light, but was also part of an elaborate cover-up. The principle evidence, which I deal with later in the chapter, comes from vernacular sources, which has led the Canadian historian Janice Cavell to argue that hard evidence of such concealment is lacking. Bellot, \textit{Memoirs}, 140, 263; MacLeod and Glover, “Franklin's First Expedition,” 669-682; Cavell, “Hidden Crime,” 155-164.

\textsuperscript{106} John Richardson, “Dr. Richardson’s Narrative,” in Franklin, \textit{Narrative}, 1824, 341-342.

\textsuperscript{107} The prayer that they returned to most often was kept in Hood’s family, and given to Richardson’s posthumous biographer in the 1860s by Hood’s sister. McIlraith, \textit{Life of Sir John Richardson}, 118-119.
Richardson and Hepburn then made their way to Fort Enterprise, where they found Franklin and his companions in a much worse state than themselves. Richardson wrote that, “the ghastly countenances, dilated eye-balls, and sepulchral voices of Captain Franklin and those with him were more than we could at first bear.” Hepburn would later recall that, “inarticulate sounds, issuing from the nose like grunts, were their only means of conversation.” They would remain at Fort Enterprise for another eight days, during which two more of the voyageurs died, leaving only Franklin, Richardson, Hepburn, Tattanoeuk, and the Indian interpreter Adam barely alive.

Franklin, Richardson, and Hepburn translated these traumas into a shared religious experience that formed the basis of their enduring relationship. At Fort Enterprise, their minds wandered, their fantasies of home became intense, and all of them felt their sanity slipping; at one point, Hepburn said, “Dear me, if we are spared to return to England, I wonder if we shall recover our understandings?” It was similar to the experiences of Pacific voyagers suffering from scurvy, which Jonathan Lamb has argued caused “despair and joy [to be] blended in a moment of suspense in which privation and pleasure were dilated to fantastic extremes.” They found comfort and pleasure in each other’s care and companionship, and structured their days around religious readings in pamphlets sent by Lady Lucy Barry, a committed Evangelical who had sent the works as part of a broader project to evangelize soldiers and sailors. This fellowship of suffering became the cornerstone of their Evangelicalism and their friendship. Later, Franklin wrote, “I can truly say I never experienced such positive happiness from the

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108 Richardson, “Dr. Richardson’s Narrative,” 343.
109 Ibid., 348.
110 Bellot, Memoirs, 263.
111 Franklin, Narrative, 1824, 355.
112 Lamb, Preserving the Self, 126.
comforts of religion as in the moments of greatest distress, when there scarcely appeared any reason to hope that my existence could be prolonged beyond a few days.” Richardson wrote to his wife Mary at the same time that his religious reflections, “produced a calmness of mind and resignation to His will under the prospect of approaching death that I could not have previously hoped to attain.” Years later, when Franklin had gone to sea in the Mediterranean, Hepburn would write to Richardson, “I trust that He who was his comforter and guide on trackless barren Lands Will be very mindfull (sic) of his servant while crossing the Mighty Deep.” On November 7th, three Yellowknife hunters arrived at Fort Enterprise, dispatched by Akaitcho. Franklin and Richardson saw them as superhuman; Franklin wrote, “contrasted with our emaciated figures and extreme debility, their frames appeared to us gigantic, and their strength supernatural,” while Richardson wrote to his wife, “these savages, as they have been termed, wept upon beholding the deplorable condition to which we were reduced.” After feeding, bathing, shaving, and nursing the emaciated men over several days (Franklin wrote that they “fed us as if we had been children; evincing humanity that would have done honour to the most civilized people”), they were taken to Akaitcho’s lodge, Back having moved on to the HBC traders at Fort Providence where he met up with Willard Wentzel again.

As the expedition members recovered at Akaitcho’s lodge and at Fort Providence, it became increasingly clear that both Akaitcho and the traders were thinking of how they might be portrayed to a distant audience in the survivors’ narrative. By December of 1822, it became clear that the expedition’s credit was exhausted, and that Franklin would not, after all, be able to pay Akaitcho and his hunters for their services. Earlier in the expedition, Akaitcho had told

114 SPRI MS 248/305 John Franklin to Willingham Franklin, Jr., 8 April, 1822.
115 SPRI MS 1503/4/3, John Richardson to Mary Richardson, April, 1822.
117 Franklin, Narrative, 1824, 359; SPRI MS 1503/4/3, John Richardson to Mary Richardson, April, 1822.
118 Franklin, Narrative, 1824, 359, 363.
Franklin, “I know you write down occurrences in your journals but probably you only take notice of the bad things we say or do and are silent as to the good,” and now, confronted with Franklin’s failure to pay up, he requested a favorable portrayal in the narrative, partly to facilitate future trade. Later correspondence indicates that the traders were also concerned about what might and might not be in Franklin’s narrative. A year later, as the narrative was published in London, Wentzel expressed his doubts to the senior HBC official Roderick McKenzie, “whether, from the distant scene of their [the expedition’s] transactions, an authentic account of their operations will ever meet the public eye in England.” He went further and said, “In fact one of the officers was candid enough to confess to me that there were circumstances which must not be known: however it is said that ‘stones sometimes speak,’” and pointed out that he had kept his own journal of the expedition. The officer he mentioned was Back, and it appears that while he was at Fort Providence, he suggested that there was a different story behind Richardson’s execution of Michel, as well as more extensive disagreement between the officers and possibly more extensive cannibalism. As we shall see below, these rumors were not limited to the backcountry of British North America, but made their way back to London to confront Franklin and Richardson.

As the British survivors of the Land Arctic Expedition set out for home in the summer of 1822, much weighed on them. Franklin was returning home alive, but bearing the heavy burden of having lost most of his men, having nearly died himself, and now needing to craft that experience into a narrative for the general public, upon which his career and those of the

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119 Ibid., 231. Cavell has argued that Franklin’s sense of obligation caused him to later edit out many of the accusations of “fickleness” and “vanity” that peppered his journal when he was preparing his narrative. Cavell, “Representing Akaich,“ 32.
121 I deduce this from the fact that McKenzie also wrote Wentzel a letter, which has unfortunately been lost, in April of 1823 apparently asking for clarification on these matters, unaware that Wentzel had already written to him. It took eleven months to make its way along the riverine networks of the Hudson’s Bay Territory, but Wentzel replied to it, point by point, in his March 1824 letter, in Les Bourgeois, 148-150.
survivors depended, and which he felt ill-equipped to write. But, as Akaitcho had made clear to him, still more depended on the narrative, not least Franklin’s lingering debts and obligations to those who had saved his life. Franklin and Richardson’s weakened bodies reminded them of that debt daily; as Richardson wrote to his wife Mary, “you must be prepared to behold traces of age upon my face that have been impressed since we parted – I feel at least ten years older than I did two years ago.” Richardson’s letter, written a month before their departure for England, hinted at two additional difficulties that would attend writing the narrative: reintegrating into British society and family life after their traumatic experiences, integrating the profound religious experience born of suffering into that daily life, and accommodating the intense relationships that were born from the expedition.

Marriages and Narratives: Writing Journey to the Polar Sea in Britain, 1822-1823

Like so many other explorers, the officers of the Land Arctic Expedition found on their return to Britain that their credibility both depended upon and was threatened by their vulnerability in the field. An explorer’s character was indispensable to his status as a reliable eyewitness, and crucial to the truth claims that he made about the places, peoples, and things he had observed. But the act of travelling itself called into question a man’s moral integrity and perceptual accuracy for, as Dorinda Outram has put it, “the dazzle and the glitter of the world really did pose a threat to a unitary personality capable of moral discipline, capable of being trusted.” But if a man’s character was central to his credibility as an explorer, it was still more so to his identity as a husband, and one of the essential foundations of the early nineteenth

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122 SPRI MS 1503/4/3, John to Mary Richardson, April 1822, Great Slave Lake.
century home and family. A generation after the first Land Arctic Expedition, the mid-Victorian public would demand a degree of domesticity and heteronormative morality from their heroes and explorers (a department in which David Livingstone and Henry Havelock excelled, but Richard Burton fell short), prior to the “flight from domesticity” in the late nineteenth century. For Franklin and Richardson, among their most important (and most demanding) audiences were their families. Both Mary Richardson and Eleanor Porden needed to be able to trust their profoundly changed partners while accommodating their new close friendships. Both women needed to chart the dimensions of the changes that the field had wrought, and map the ramifications for their own lives. While Eleanor’s struggles were preserved her letters, Mary’s have to be surmised from much scantier evidence. What is clear is that both women ultimately engaged with their husbands’ religious feeling and close friendship, absorbing those friendships, and that trauma, into their family circles.

These negotiations intertwined with Franklin and Richardson’s efforts to write the expedition narrative together over the autumn and winter of 1822-23. Writing the narrative was a critical step in the making of imperial and geographical knowledge, as well as explorers’ careers. These narratives were often produced not by one person, but rather by a constellation of interests that included (but were not limited to) patrons, collaborators, and fellow travelers, not to mention publishers and engravers. Travel writing was an important component of the communications networks of European scholars, and narratives travelled along the circuits of correspondence that connected intellectuals in Europe and abroad, as well as colonial agents in the distant outposts of

other empires. Expedition narratives were especially important within this system, both as a source of colonial knowledge and as a popular genre, often selling out first, second, and third editions. Because they were so expensive with their maps and engravings, they were excerpted, summarized and consumed in a variety of newspapers and cheaper periodicals before being produced later in cheap volumes. Engravings of scenes, individuals, and maps were duplicated and sold as collectables, perhaps forming parts of the scrapbooks of elite young women. Some explorers’ relatives (including, perhaps, Eleanor Porden’s niece Mary Anne Kay) saved these reprinted and extracted portraits and lithographs along with their relatives’ letters.

Both Franklin and Richardson sent their families early signals that there were difficult conversations to be had about their ordeal. After writing briefly to his brother Willingham in April 1822 to tell their relatives he was alive, Franklin wrote to his sisters and Eleanor from the HBC ship *Prince of Wales* in October of his safety and of his willingness to “communicate to you all the branches of my family every particular of which they may desire to be informed.” He reminded them of the Admiralty’s “injunction of silence,” meaning he could not divulge expedition details in a private letter. This was partly because, as I discuss in Chapter 2, he did not know how widely and with whom his letters would be shared, and whether or not they might make it into the newspapers. Despite his caution, the expedition’s letters arrived in London only a few days before them in October of 1822, coinciding with advance reports in the

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130 Cavell, *Tracing the Connected Narrative*, 7-12.
132 There are a considerable number of these images mixed in with correspondence of the Franklin family held at the National Maritime Museum, much of which comes from the Kay-Kendall family. See NMM FRN 1.
newspapers of starvation and cannibalism – reports that Eleanor Porden told Franklin were “enough to frighten all of your friends.”¹³⁴ Throughout the expedition, Richardson had painted a picture of a rough-and-ready frontier society in his letters to his wife Mary. In these, he teased her about how he had become “as Dark as any Indian in the country” and how he had “become rude from want of society,” and suggesting that “the affection of a wife alone can excuse the unpolished appearance I shall have on my return to the world.”¹³⁵ But in his letter of April 1822, which arrived only a few days before him in October, his flirtations with the “rude” trappings of mixed race frontier society vanished, replaced by a new solemnity and an intense gratitude both to God and to the Yellowknives. When he came to the journey across the Barren Grounds, Richardson stopped writing, refreshed his pen, and wrote, “I shall not attempt to describe the miseries we endured in this journey for no description can convey an adequate idea of them. And the bare detail would be too harmful-harrowing to the feelings of humanity.”¹³⁶ The corrections are notable. Richardson almost never corrected his letters, but in this case, the words are not only crossed out, but in such a way that they remained perfectly legible.¹³⁷

When Franklin, Richardson, and Hepburn returned to London, they, like other survivors of trauma and dislocation – émigrés, refugees, soldiers, sailors, and others – felt most comfortable in the company of those who had shared their experiences. Hepburn visited Franklin daily when they returned to London, and Richardson moved in with Franklin after a few

¹³⁴ Eleanor Porden to John Franklin, Berners Street, October 19, 1822, in Gell, John Franklin’s Bride, 71-72. The postmark on Richardson’s April 1822 letter to Mary, which I discuss below, indicates that it arrived only a few days ahead of him in October of 1822. SPRI MS 1503/4/3, John Richardson to Mary Richardson, April, 1822.
¹³⁵ SPRI MS 1503/2/8, John to Mary Richardson, 29 July 1820, Great Slave Lake. See also SPRI MS 1503/2, John Richardson Correspondence 1819-1820, MS 1503/3, John Richardson Correspondence 1820-21, and SPRI MS 1503/3, John Richardson Correspondence, 1821-22.
¹³⁶ The change in ink and perhaps in the nib of the pen is a marked feature of this letter. The preceding paragraphs are in a relatively light script, but at this dramatic moment, the handwriting changes slightly in order to accommodate the freshly dipped and re-cut nib and its thick flow of ink, as well as the increased pressure on the page. It was an operation that would have taken some moments, during which Richardson may have been collecting his thoughts. If this was the case, the corrections that follow are doubly notable.
¹³⁷ It is impossible to say whether or not this was intentional. SPRI MS 1503/4/3, John Richardson to Mary Richardson, April, 1822.
weeks in Scotland (see below). Franklin, Richardson, and Hepburn came together to comfort Robert Hood’s grief-stricken father, who had only learned of his son’s death a few days before Franklin and Richardson’s return through the newspapers. Dr. Hood also tried to give Hepburn a £10 reward for helping his son in his final hours. Hepburn tried to give it back, and, on Franklin and Richardson’s advice, reluctantly accepted an engraved silver watch instead. Back appeared occasionally, sometimes accompanying Richardson and Franklin to social functions, but more often to inspect the engravings for the narrative.

This had important implications for the writing of the narrative, which, while it only bore Franklin’s name, was actually written by him and Richardson together, for Franklin found he could not do it alone. Franklin had always known that he would have to put pen to paper at the end of the expedition, but he hated the idea. As he frequently complained in his correspondence with his family, Richardson, and Eleanor, he felt that a life spent at sea was a poor qualification for a writer. Quite apart from that general loathing of authorship and his own sense of inadequacy, he also was leery of putting his experiences and those of his comrades before the

138 DRO D3311/53/4, John Franklin to John Richardson, 24 October, 1822.
139 Dr. Hood wrote deeply emotional letters to both Franklin and Richardson, expressing his broken heart and his thanks for their care of his son, both physically and spiritually. Both Richardson’s and Franklin’s replies to Hood’s letter sought to comfort him with the companionship the men had shared. Richardson wrote that their physical sufferings and spiritual contemplation had put them in possession of each other’s minds (“we unbosomed ourselves to each other”) and he reassured Dr. Hood that his son had enjoyed a kind of serenity produced by starvation. Neither referred to Richard Hood’s daughter with Greenstockings. Nevertheless, according to Hepburn, Hood’s family did eventually find out about the girl, and sent for her when she was a grown woman. SPRJ MS 1503/4, Dr. Richard Hood to John Richardson, October 1822; Traill, Life of Sir John Franklin, 108-109; McIlraith, Life of Sir John Richardson, 117-118; Bellot, Memoirs, 263.
140 DRO D3311/53/4, John Franklin to John Richardson, 24 October, 1822. Hepburn’s watch is still in the collections of the National Maritime Museum in Greenwich. In a strange twist of fate, Richardson’s grandson, John Richardson Reynolds, began corresponding with Hepburn’s descendants in the 1930s, and persuaded them to part with the watch and Hepburn’s Arctic service medal (their only mementoes of their relative) in exchange for John Richardson’s personal copy of Journey to the Shores of the Polar Sea and £5. NMM REY/1, John Richardson Reynolds correspondence.
141 DRO D3311/53/4, John Franklin to John Richardson, 24 October, 1822; DRO D3311/53/5, John Franklin to John Richardson, 31 October, 1822. See Davis, “Which an Affectionate Heart,” 189-212; John Franklin to Eleanor Porden, Hudson’s Bay Ship Prince of Wales, Atlantic Ocean, 2 October, 1822, in Gell, John Franklin’s Bride, 66-71; DRO D3311/53/4, John Franklin to John Richardson, Osborn’s Hotel, Adelphi, 24 October, 1822.
public. Before he had even landed in Britain, he wrote to Eleanor (who had been publishing under her own name with John Murray for years) that he was dreading the “disagreeable task” of writing the book.\(^{143}\) He elaborated more to his sister Sarah Sellwood, writing that he loathed the idea of “being what is termed one of the Lions of the day.”\(^{144}\) But his career and those of his surviving officers depended on the narrative, and Barrow, Croker, and the publisher John Murray were, as Franklin put it to Richardson, “quite hot for an early publication of our journals,” which Barrow considered to be “the most painfully interesting [narrative] of any he had ever read.”\(^{145}\) Franklin and Richardson had evidently decided well in advance to write the narrative together, and while Richardson recuperated briefly with Mary in Edinburgh in October of 1822, Franklin found them lodgings at 60 Frith Street in Soho, where the Richardsons joined him at the end of the month.

Franklin seems to have been circumspect about incorporating Mary into his and Richardson’s household in London, writing to his friend, “I still fear she will be greatly disappointed in London, it certainly won’t do after a residence in Edinburgh.”\(^{146}\) The two men had, after all, been exclusively in each other’s company for four years – which was more than three times as long as Richardson had spent with his wife after their marriage. Mary moved in with Franklin and Richardson at 60 Frith Street and lived with them from October of 1822 until June of 1823 as the two men wrote the narrative in the cozy (not to say cramped) quarters of the seventeenth-century building.\(^{147}\) If Franklin had qualms about her, they seem to have been

\(^{143}\) John Franklin to Eleanor Porden, Hudson’s Bay Ship Prince of Wales, Atlantic Ocean, 2 October, 1822, in Gell, *John Franklin’s Bride*, 66-71.

\(^{144}\) John Franklin to Sarah Sellwood, Stromness, Orkney Isles, October 10, 1822, in Davis, “Which an Affectionate Heart,” 202-204.

\(^{145}\) DRO D3311/53/4, John Franklin to John Richardson, 24 October, 1822.

\(^{146}\) Ibid.

\(^{147}\) The building at 60 Frith Street was a late seventeenth century structure, one of increasingly few private houses on a street that was rapidly becoming a commercial district, with tailors, dressmakers, engravers, jewelers, and watchmakers (among others). These homes were often taken by artists and actors. In 1966, it was one of the few
dispelled by both her character and her companionship. While none of Mary Stiven Richardson’s correspondence survives, others’ observations indicate that she was an intelligent and well-read woman with a fine sense of humor who enjoyed the outdoors.\textsuperscript{148} She was also deeply religious. In her husband’s words, she was “an admirer of the works of God in the beauties of Nature,” placing her in company with a growing number of evangelicals and natural theologians.\textsuperscript{149} Franklin came to admire her “amiable simplicity of character, the purity of mind, the tender regard for others’ feelings and steadfast faith in Christ,” but most of all her quick sympathy. He would later write that that piety and sympathy, “endeared her to me as a sister” from the moment of their first meeting.\textsuperscript{150} But beyond that, all is circumspect. Did she sit by the fireside with them in the modest old rooms, encouraging quiet chats? Did their discussions range to topics like perceiving God in nature, or about experiencing divine judgment or salvation? Whatever her role was, it seems that Franklin ultimately found her presence comforting and, importantly, unthreatening to his relationship with her husband.

Eleanor Porden, on the other hand, left behind a voluminous archive testifying to how she wrestled with some of the same pressures that may have borne on Mary in a manner that was considerably more confrontational. Understanding why means understanding Eleanor’s immensely privileged position. At twenty-seven, she was independently wealthy and a published author with John Murray under her own name. Her father William Porden (a successful

\textsuperscript{148} McIlraith, \textit{Life of Sir John Richardson}, 73; Eleanor would later invite her (tongue in cheek) to a country holiday; while Richardson and Franklin went off to test their pedometers, she suggested, the ladies might “ramble with less fatigue in our poney (sic) chaise or sit with our books, in romantic idyll, weeping tears of sensibility (albeit sensibility hath become obsolete) under the grove.” DRO D3311/53/32, John and Eleanor Franklin to John and Mary Richardson, 24 August, 1824.

\textsuperscript{149} SPRI MS 1503/2/5, John Richardson to Mary Richardson, 6 March, 1820, Cumberland House; see also Sujit Sivasundarum, \textit{Nature and the Godly Empire: Science and Evangelical Mission in the Pacific, 1795-1850} (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

\textsuperscript{150} DRO D3311/53/60, John Franklin to John Richardson, Brendisi, 24 February, 1832.
architect) had nurtured her considerable talents from a young age; by seventeen, she was a member of the French Academy of Sciences and a frequent attendee of the Royal Society. Deeply interested in science (and particularly in magnetism) she had written a scientific epic, “The Veils” in 1816, which had been published by Murray to wide acclaim, as had her poem *The Arctic Expeditions* in 1818 (see above). During Franklin’s absence, Eleanor lost her parents, leaving her alone in the world apart from her friends and her married sister Sarah Kay, but also in the enviable position of being independent, wealthy, well-educated, and well-established as an author. Unlike most of her peers, she had no need to marry and give up her cherished independence. When Franklin and the Richardsons moved into their lodgings at Frith Street, Eleanor was living in her family home in Berner’s Street, a ten-minute walk away. It might have been a bit longer for Eleanor, who suffered from lingering tuberculosis, which would eventually kill her in 1825.

The nature of Franklin and Eleanor’s relationship with each other revolved, to a very great extent, around writing. Franklin had written to Eleanor before setting foot on British soil that he was dreading the “disagreeable task” of writing the book. He would later describe it as, “a sad plague,” “irksome,” and “a wearying task.” Eleanor assumed that this was the normal trepidation of a new author, exacerbated by the fact that Franklin was a man of action and not of words. Later, she would come to realize that it was, at least in part, because of the trauma he had experienced and was forced to revisit. But for the time being, she teased him, writing him a poem entitled “Lines written to John Franklin on hearing that he has been persuaded to write his

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152 John Franklin to Eleanor Porden, Hudson’s Bay Ship Prince of Wales, Atlantic Ocean, 2 October, 1822, in Gell, *John Franklin’s Bride*, 66-71
153 John Franklin to Eleanor Porden, 5 December, Midnight, 1822, in ibid., 77; John Franklin to Eleanor Porden, 60 Frith Street, 16 December, 1822, in ibid., 82.
Travels.” She teased him about how the hero of the Arctic could not bring himself to confront the task of writing:

A field of snow’s but one blank page
Bears, Icebergs, Buffaloes together
I’d rather all their might engage
Than touch that one poor Goose’s feather.

She implied that she knew the intimidation of the blank page, and the vulnerability one felt before it. Though this shared vulnerability might have been meant to provide comfort, it was also the basis of the joke. When arduous labors in the field and at home were juxtaposed, it became clear that Eleanor had all the talent, skill, experience (and indeed bravery) in the one where Franklin had so little. Franklin knew this, too, writing to her in December, “How often do I wish that I possessed your talent, very different then would be my labour.” She also, however, provided practical advice and encouragement, writing once, “You write well enough if you would but fancy so, and would write ten times better if you did but like it. You want nothing but what you don’t like – practice.”

The first several months of Franklin and Eleanor’s courtship established an enduring tension between their relationship, the narrative, and Franklin’s Arctic companionships. In addition to disliking the task of writing, both Franklin and Richardson disliked their new roles as “lions” in the circles of scientific sociability which characterized part of the London social scene, and which I explore in greater detail in Chapter 2. This was Eleanor’s milieu, in which she ran her own salon, held parties and discussions, and attended lectures and soirees. Eleanor sent Franklin invitations to her parties, but he seldom attended them, and when he did, seemed constrained and out of sorts. This was at least partly because he was forced to talk about the

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154 DRO D3311/24/3 “Lines written to John Franklin on hearing that he has been persuaded to write his Travels.”
155 John Franklin to Eleanor Porden, 60 Frith Street, 16 December, 1822, in Gell, John Franklin’s Bride, 82.
156 Eleanor Porden to John Franklin, Hastings, 18 December 1822, in ibid., 86.
expedition in a way he thought was frivolous, and amongst people whom he found flippant. He wrote to Eleanor that while he enjoyed small circles of friends and interesting and improving conversation, he objected to insincere “heterogeneous assemblages where forms and parade abound,” and that, “such attention may prompt me to assume individual merit for results which are entirely to be ascribed to the superintending blessing of a Divine Providence.”\textsuperscript{157} It seems from his letters that he much preferred to stay at home with the Richardsons. This was especially the case when Franklin and Richardson came to writing the part of the narrative dealing with the Barren Grounds early in 1823. Franklin would later write to his aunt, Ann Flinders that, “the recollection of scenes which had been soothed by time and reflection, so distressed me that I felt quite unequal to correspondence with any of my friends.”\textsuperscript{158} Eleanor later wrote to him, “You have been thinking a great deal too much all the winter, and I often saw its effects when I said nothing, and do not believe you were aware of it.”\textsuperscript{159}

Difficult as Franklin was, it was during this period that Eleanor accepted his proposal of marriage. This gave her new authority to confront the tensions she saw arising between Franklin’s profession, his friendships, and their future marriage. In her letters from this period, she used the polar regions, their natural resources and their peoples that commanded Franklin’s attention to criticize him for his neglect and abandonment of her while he was writing the narrative. On an unusually cold day in January, she teased that he must have forsaken her. “Think not that I expect to melt you,” she wrote, “for had you not been already hardened by three polar winters, you must be now like my tears, and like everything else in this great town, completely frozen.” Flippantly abandoning all hope of Franklin ever paying attention to her, she placed her fate at the pleasure of her “Most Faithless Saxon,” and asked how she ought to

\textsuperscript{157} John Franklin to Eleanor Porden, 60 Frith Street, 16 December, 1822, in ibid., 82.
\textsuperscript{158} quoted in Cavell, \textit{Tracing the Connected Narrative}, 101.
\textsuperscript{159} Eleanor Porden to John Franklin, 15 May, 1823, in Gell, \textit{John Franklin's Bride}, 122-123.
dispose of herself. “I would bury myself in the snow,” she added in a postscript, “but fear to be
turned into spermaceti before you would hear of my fate. What think you of swallowing fire? It
has but one prototype and would be a comfortable death this weather!”160 In addition to
criticizing Franklin and showing off her own cleverness, Eleanor was anticipating that state of
suspended animation that she knew would characterize her life as a naval, and indeed a polar,
wife. She did so in jest, casting herself as a forlorn woman consumed with longing, “building
castles in the air; and discovering them to be but frost work; drawing your portrait in the fire, and
demolishing it with the poker; or cutting it out in paper, and blowing it away with my sighs.”

During this period, Eleanor was also negotiating the legacy of Franklin’s and
Richardson’s indigenous attachments and with Franklin and Richardson’s relationship with each
other. She did so by turning the very terrain of mixed horror and pleasure that both Franklin and
Richardson were struggling with in their memories of the past and the narrative crucial to their
professional futures into her own romance. On Valentine’s Day, she sent both Franklin and
Richardson duplicate poems to their shared address.161 Written in disguised handwriting, the
poems, entitled “The Esquimaux Girl’s Lament,” were signed “Miss Greenstockings” and dated
February 14, Coppermine River. As she addressed her “faithless admirer” in the character of the
Yellowknife woman, she enticed him to return, promising to care for him in the Arctic winter, to
smooth his way and “blow the icebergs from thy path” and to keep him in perfect comfort.
However, she warned him against an ill-conceived marriage to an Englishwoman,

Nor think in thy Green Isle some Fair one to wed,
For in tempest and snow shall my vengeance pursue,
My bidding at noonday shall darken the air,
And the rage of my climate shall Follow thee there.

160 Eleanor Porden to John Franklin, London, January 1823, in ibid., 95-96.
161 DRO D3311/24/7 addressed to Captn Franklin R. N. 60 Frith Street Soho; SPRI MS 1503/5/3, addressed to Dr.
Richardson, 60 Frith Street Soho.
She ended the poem proclaiming her/Greenstocking’s constancy, with the lines “By the Lake, by
the Mountain, the Forest & River/ In the Wilds of the North I am Thine & Forever.”

Francis Spufford has suggested that the poem signaled Eleanor’s very real struggle with
the Arctic’s call on her prospective husband, in which she cast Greenstockings as a “purely
notional rival” for Franklin’s attention, and translated it into “harmless female frippery.”162 Jen
Hill has also suggested that this poem was part of a pattern in Eleanor’s poetry, in which, as she
had in “The Arctic Expedition,” cast women as mistresses of the Arctic that threatened to destroy
the men who sought to dominate it.163 But it is perhaps more reasonable to view the poem, which
was never intended to become public, as a commentary on emotional terrain that Eleanor,
Franklin, and the Richardsons all inhabited. Firstly, one has to take seriously the fact that the
“rival claims” of the poem were both posed and shared by Richardson too, which Eleanor
understood perfectly well, and signaled by sending him the duplicate poem. Secondly, there is
Greenstockings herself, who Eleanor cast as the indigenous mistress of the Arctic, inherently
linked to and in control of the savage environment that had killed Hood and so many others. The
“rage of [her] climate” could pursue men back to Britain and destroy domestic relationships
there, and it is not, perhaps, too much of a stretch to suggest that Eleanor was warning both men
of this. Greenstockings, as a stand-in for the Arctic more broadly, had a siren call for both men
that compelled their return to the wilds of the north, a return that had the very real possibility of
shattering their relationships, their bodies, their selves, and their marriages - a call, Eleanor
suggested, that only the men could hear and understand.

The Greenstockings poem resonated both with Franklin and with the women of the
Franklin family for three-quarters of a century. Franklin evidently memorized it, and more than

twenty years later wrote it down from memory (which would explain why some stanzas and phrases were flipped) and sent it to his second wife, Jane Franklin, along with his last letter from his final, fatal Arctic expedition in 1845.\textsuperscript{164} His daughter Eleanor kept the original in her own family archive, completely separate from the papers held by her estranged stepmother Jane and cousin Sophia Cracroft.\textsuperscript{165} Sophia, however, laid her hands on a copy (it may have been the one Franklin wrote down from memory) and after she had gone blind after years of curating her uncle’s and aunt’s papers, she provided an excerpt to Franklin’s biographer H. D. Traill in 1896.\textsuperscript{166} So four of the most important women in John Franklin’s life – both of his wives, his daughter, and his niece – kept this evocation of an abandoned Native woman who threatened from afar, with all the “rage of her climate,” the English women who sought to keep Franklin from her. It may have been simply as a curiosity or a remembrance. But it might also have been because the poem hinted at vulnerabilities laid bare by environment, by distance, and by unknown intimacies, which Eleanor was only the first of many women in Franklin’s life to be forced to negotiate.

Franklin’s anxiety over writing the narrative, twinned with painful recollections of the Barren Grounds, nearly ended his relationship with Eleanor in March of 1823. During an interview at Frith Street, Franklin, as he was discussing his loathing of writing the narrative, remarked to Eleanor’s sister Sarah Kay that he had “an objection almost amounting to horror to anything like publication in any one connected with [him],” implying that he expected Eleanor to abandon writing after their marriage. When Eleanor heard about it, she diagnosed the statement

\textsuperscript{164} RGS SJF/7/5, “Miss Greenstockings to her Faithless Admirer,” in John Franklin’s handwriting. It is identified in RGS catalog as having been sent by Franklin to Lady Jane Franklin from the Erebus in 1845. The subsequent letter in the file is John Franklin’s final letter to Jane Franklin.
\textsuperscript{165} DRO D3311/24/7, “Miss Greenstockings.”
\textsuperscript{166} Traill excerpted the poem and used it to suggest that Eleanor was actively pursuing Franklin to secure him as a husband, adding, “As will be perceived, it was eminently in the taste of the time – a time, it need hardly be added, in which English minor poetry was not at its best.” Traill, \textit{Life of Sir John Franklin}, 111-112.
as “merely the effect of a morbid state of feeling, arising from the manner in which your mind has been harassed and overwrought by application to your work.” Yet she refused to dismiss it, and argued that it was against both his character and his best interests to prevent her from writing. He had always led her to believe that “my studies would not only be encouraged but shared,” and she had expected that in their marriage, she would be able to do her own work both while he was at home and while he was gone, while also assisting with writing and publication – effectively supplanting Richardson’s current role. Indicating that she knew that there was another expedition on the horizon, she wrote, “When you return from the Pole you will have another book to write, and you will expect my assistance….Surely you would not selfishly take advantage of my facility in composition for our ease, and restrain me in its exercise for my own relaxation?” She referred again to the Arctic’s call on him, but this time she was far more explicit than she had been in her Valentine:

One word too on the subject of your Expedition. Whatever your objections may be, and I pretend not to guess them, you must feel that nothing which I might publish could possibly give you one tenth part of the uneasiness which that Expedition must necessarily cost me, but I know that you ought to undertake it, and therefore you should find me the last person in the world that would endeavour to detain you. It is indeed my most earnest hope that you would never suffer a consideration for me to influence your mind for a moment on any such occasion; but why should you wish to deprive me of the only employment that could really interest me in your absence?

Spufford argued that in this letter, Eleanor effectively refused the role of a “conventional polar wife,” which he understood to consist of patient waiting and resignation. But Eleanor’s letter, like her earlier Greenstockings poem, can best be understood as defining, rather than rejecting, what it meant to be a polar wife. She expected she would be involved in the production of new narratives, not for the sake of her own ego, but for the sake of her husband’s

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167 Eleanor Porden to John Franklin, Berner’s Street, 29 March, 1823, in Gell, John Franklin’s Bride, 109.
168 Eleanor Porden to John Franklin, Berner’s Street, 29 March, 1823, in ibid., 108-9.
169 Spufford, I May Be Some Time, 111.
career. This was an expectation defined by the social milieu of 1820s scientific sociability that I discuss in greater detail in Chapter 2, in which wives often assisted amateur naturalists, botanists, astronomers, geologists and other practitioners of gentlemanly science. She also expected, like other maritime wives, to be repeatedly abandoned and left in a state of uneasiness while she surrendered her husband to strange elements, peoples, and geographies for years at a time. Finally, she expected that the time spent on her own would, at the very least, not be idle. This too was not unusual. Eleanor might have been unique in expecting that she could continue her career as a published author under her own name, but as I discuss in Chapter 2, other maritime wives (the partners of whalers, deep-sea fishermen, sailors and naval officers) saw to their partners’ business interests and acted on their behalf, armed with powers of attorney in their absence. They became “gatekeepers” of information in their partners absence, facilitating and controlling flows of correspondence and specimens. Their relationship to that information was defined by their intimate relationships with absent men.

As she worked to define her role as a future polar wife, Eleanor Porden was beginning a struggle that her successors (including her daughter, her niece, and Franklin’s second wife Jane) would be engaged in for nearly half a century. It was effectively over her right to access expeditionary knowledge – not necessarily geographical knowledge or scientific discoveries, though she was interested in these too, but rather the details and nature of the relationships that her prospective husband had formed in the field (particularly with respect to the indigenous peoples upon whom he had depended, like Greenstockings), the trauma he had experienced, and how those were likely to impact their shared life and her role as Franklin’s wife. Her attempts to

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171 Norling, Captain Ahab Had a Wife; Margaret Hunt, “Women and the Fiscal Imperial State,” 29-47.
define her role and assert her rights to information necessarily intertwined with the writing of the narrative, not least because as Franklin and Richardson wrote it, they were forced to confront their traumatic journey again within a domestic sphere in Frith Street where their Arctic companionship existed alongside the Richardsons’ marriage. In this environment, the questions of credibility and trustworthiness that attended exploration also bore upon domestic relationships. Eleanor Porden’s correspondence with Franklin during this period reveals how much her negotiation of her role as his prospective wife depended upon understanding and accommodating that past trauma. This negotiation did not end with the publication of the narrative, nor with the Richardsons’ departure from London and the approach of the Franklins’ marriage in the summer of 1823. If anything, those questions of credibility and of trustworthiness were enhanced, both as Eleanor tried to step into Richardson’s role as Franklin’s emotional confidante, and as the accuracy and credibility of Franklin’s and Richardson’s account of the expedition was questioned by vernacular agents in British North America.

**Companionship: Seeking an Arctic Domesticity, 1823-1824**

The brotherly relationship between Franklin and Richardson was by no means unusual in early nineteenth century Britain and its empire. Intense friendships like theirs were very important in the spectrum of early nineteenth century relationships and imperial mobility, whether on the frontier, aboard ship, on the battlefield, in the club or in the mission field. Sharing a “language of fraternal love” with evangelicals and abolitionists, the bonds between “brother officers” could be lifelong; those formed among veterans of the Peninsular Wars, for example, constituted an important informal network of knowledge and patronage that came to span the
Empire in the first half of the century.\textsuperscript{172} Much recent work on military masculinity has focused on the permeable boundary between the battlefield and the home front, especially with respect to the wars of the twentieth century, but also, as Mary Favret has argued, during the Napoleonic period.\textsuperscript{173} Others have theorized how military men developed multiple, fluid modes of masculine behavior contingent upon both time and place, arguing that masculinity is geographically, as well as a culturally and historically specific.\textsuperscript{174} The challenge for Franklin and Richardson (as it may have been for many men returning from war, from sea, or from the edges of empire), was to somehow either switch between or to combine the masculinity of the frontier – with all its attendant freedoms and vulnerabilities – with the historically and geographically specific mode of early nineteenth century British masculinity, in which domesticity and the moral values of the home enabled (and were enabled by) an entrepreneurial work ethic.\textsuperscript{175} Doing so would have fulfilled the expectation that intense fraternal relationships like theirs would support, rather than to supplant, conjugal and familial bonds.\textsuperscript{176} Neither would have found any common cause with the “flight from domesticity” that became a central feature of both the figure of the explorer, and of British masculinity in general, later in the century.\textsuperscript{177}

Franklin and Richardson’s shared trauma on the Land Arctic Expedition made these ambitions exceedingly difficult, especially when it came to the religious transformations of the

\textsuperscript{177} Tosh, \textit{A Man’s Place}, 170-194; Beau Riffenburgh, \textit{The Myth of the Explorer: The Press, Sensationalism, and Geographical Discovery} (London: Belhaven, 1993).
expedition. Franklin certainly wanted to ensure that the religious beliefs and practices that he had developed in the Arctic with Richardson would stand at the very center of his married life with Eleanor. It was his own interpretation of the early nineteenth century expectation that the family home, especially an Evangelical one, would rest on sound, shared, religious principles. As their premarital correspondence and negotiations indicate, Eleanor struggled not only to understand Franklin’s religious transformations and beliefs, but also to challenge and to limit what she saw as an unnecessary severity that had developed from his experiences at Fort Enterprise. Doing so meant confronting the tension between the fraternal bond Franklin had made with Richardson and the conjugal bond he and Eleanor meant to make together, and ultimately, to accommodate both within the shared terrain of their married lives and Franklin’s professional career.

When the narrative was published in April of 1823, the household at Frith Street broke up and the Richardsons returned to Edinburgh. When they departed in June of 1823, Franklin went with them as far as Lincolnshire, where they met his family (something Eleanor had not yet done). Franklin wrote to Eleanor how forcibly the treeless landscape reminded him and Richardson of the Barren Grounds (which they had mentioned to Mary during a walk) adding that they wished “that the line of our march had been as level as this and that we could have enjoyed the hospitality of a human friend and comfortable house as we are now doing.”\footnote{John Franklin to Eleanor Porden, Ingoldmells, 17 May, 1823, in Gell, \textit{John Franklin’s Bride}, 132-134.} But their parting loomed, and Franklin wrote to Eleanor, “the day of separation from such a friend with whom I have lived for four years will be a sore one for me.”\footnote{John Franklin to Eleanor Porden, Bolingbroke, 26 May, 1823, in ibid., 138-141.} Eleanor was sympathetic, writing to Franklin that she thought the separation must be “the most trying you ever encountered. You have been together so long and in such situations that he must be more than a
brother to you.” The Richardsons left on June 6, and Franklin later wrote to his friend that he was “much distressed with the idea of our separation when at Lincoln and felt very uneasy after the circumstance had taken place.”

With the Richardsons’ departure, Eleanor tried to take her place as Franklin’s emotional and spiritual confidante. A core part of that was asserting her conjugal right to share and to alleviate her husband’s sorrows. One of his close relatives died shortly after the Richardsons returned to Scotland, causing Eleanor to write to him, “Your gayer hours are mine only in common with the rest of your friends, but your sorrows it is my peculiar privilege to share, and I feel almost defrauded of my right if you are in scenes of affliction without me.” Nevertheless, Franklin sought support at this difficult time from Richardson as well as from Eleanor. He wrote them both letters that were almost exact duplicates, and in each, he expressed a desire to enjoy the “meditation and reflection” of Fort Enterprise, and regretting that, as he wrote to Eleanor, “The parties and cares of mixed society and an active life tend to dissipate such emotions. I experienced this with regret during my residence in London.” To Richardson, he lamented that, “I can scarcely hope for a return of such pleasurable sensations, as the parties and cares of a mixed Society and an active life tend so completely to dissipate them.” The narrative had just been published and to wide acclaim, but Franklin was again rejecting that his “lionhood” in the active intellectual and social sphere in which Eleanor dwelt, and longing for a return to the harsh Arctic, to the stark environment where he felt he could best know himself and therefore know God.

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180 Eleanor Porden to John Franklin, 10 June 1823, in ibid., 170-173.
181 DRO D3311/53/6, John Franklin to John Richardson, Castle Gate Nottingham, 13 June, 1823.
182 Eleanor Porden to John Franklin, 17 June, 1823, in Gell, John Franklin’s Bride, 187-192
183 John Franklin to Eleanor Porden, Nottingham, 19 June, 1823, in ibid., 192-95.
184 DRO D3311/53/7, John Franklin to John Richardson, Nottingham, 19 June, 1823.
Eleanor does not seem to have been fully aware of the depth of Franklin’s feelings, nor of his Arctic conversion experience until about a month before their marriage.\(^{185}\) But after the Richardsons departed, and as their marriage drew closer, Franklin became more insistent on sharing those sentiments with her. In early July, he sent her copies of the pamphlets that he and Richardson had pored over at Fort Enterprise, as well as some subsequent correspondence with Lady Lucy Barry, the woman who had sent them. Eleanor was horrified by the pamphlets and correspondence, and especially their emphasis on bodily suffering as a route to salvation, which Franklin and Richardson had found so very relevant during their harrowing time at Fort Enterprise.\(^{186}\) She not only refused to associate with Lady Barry, but also threatened to break off the engagement if Franklin was “really tainted with that species of fanaticism” which cast doubt on whether “we are calculated to live together in the closest domestic union.” She wrote:

> That you should be strongly and deeply impressed with a sense of gratitude for deliverance from sufferings and difficulties almost unparalleled is but just and natural; you would not deserve the name of Christian if you were not. Do not however I beseech you turn the Mercies of Heaven into a curse, by letting the present state of your mind induce you to adopt that dark and unsocial view of human nature… to which I feel you are somewhat inclined. You must have had such strong emotions that all now appears tame; but remember that there is no nourishment in pepper.\(^{187}\)

Franklin partially capitulated, assuring Eleanor that while he admired Lady Barry’s zeal, he could not assent to her doctrines. But he still maintained that his Arctic religious experiences were permanent and as relevant to their married lives as they had been to his survival in the field, writing that his faith “has been my support in the most trying occasions and I fervently pray it may continue to sustain me and you until our eyes are closed on this world.” Finishing his letter

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\(^{185}\) Earlier, when she had encountered behavior or beliefs that she considered to be excessively zealous, she had rapidly and decisively dismissed them. When, for example, Franklin said that he intended to observe an austere Sabbath at home and would refuse visitors on Sundays, Eleanor wrote to him that she considered such seclusion to be an “aberration of religious zeal,” adding, “Did you pick it up in North America?” Eleanor Porden to John Franklin, Portland Place, 28 May, 1823, in Gell, *John Franklin’s Bride*, 146-147.

\(^{186}\) For a more detailed discussion of the pamphlets themselves and the theological issues they posed, see Cavell, “Lady Lucy Barry,” 1-10.

\(^{187}\) Eleanor Porden to John Franklin, 6 Upper Portland Place, 9 July, 1823, in Gell, *John Franklin’s Bride*, 205-206.
well past midnight, he added, “The emotions I have had were indeed strong, they afforded me
the greatest consolation at the time, and thanks be to God continue to do so.” 188

In a reply demonstrating remarkable understanding, Eleanor described how she had
struggled to sympathize with Franklin on his return by drawing on her feelings on the deaths of
her parents. She wrote:

…when you returned to the sober routine of common life, you missed the excitement to
which you had become habituated and seemed to fall, literally like Icarus when his wings
were thawed by the Sun. I could not hear you complaining that you had no longer an
interest in what surrounded you – in anything you saw or heard, and even in the society
of your own friends, without recalling a similar period in my own feelings [the deaths of
her parents]…. I cared not whether it were joy or sorrow, but I would have given
anything to be able to feel again.

Referring to the most traumatic event in her own life, she suggested that as she had come to
terms with her own absorbing grief, his too would fade in time. “I therefore say to you,” she
wrote, “do not regret that your present life offers to you no sensation equally absorbing with
those that are past. They were like the excitement of opium and must be followed by a

188 John Franklin to Eleanor Porden, 11 July, 1823, in ibid., 216-217.
189 Eleanor Porden to John Franklin, 12 July, 1823, in ibid., 226-227.
190 Eleanor Porden to Mr. Elliott, 21 July, 1823, in ibid., 228.
Willard Wentzel had written to the senior HBC official Roderick McKenzie that rumors about
the expedition were circulating in the HBC posts, originating with the midshipman George Back
and suggesting that Richardson’s account of his killing of Michel might not have been justified
(see above). By August, these rumors had made their way to London and to Barrow, who in
turn told Franklin. Practically on the eve of his wedding to Eleanor, Franklin wrote to
Richardson in Scotland to tell him “that a few persons are of opinion that you have not made out
sufficiently clear that Michel actually murdered poor Hood - and that the fact that you have not
expressed yourself sufficiently on the dreadful necessity to which you were reduced taking away
the life of Michel,” and that Barrow had suggested keeping the last section of the second edition
of the narrative back from the second edition until Richardson could clear it up. He assured
Richardson that neither Barrow, nor most people he had spoken to, had any doubts about the
justness of Richardson’s execution of Michel, but that Barrow feared that “if these men are ever
disposed they may chatter on these points with other persons who will receive it on their
authority without even reading the account in the Narrative,” implying that they were HBC
officials. Franklin was sufficiently worried about it that he paid a visit to a lawyer friend of his
brother’s, W. H. Tinney, and wrote Richardson a long letter reassuring him that Tinney and his
colleagues were certain of Richardson’s justification, and that “He indeed who knows more of
the circumstances than any other man except for you, Hepburn and myself, is decidedly of the
opinion that your having failed in courage to take the step would have proved fatal to the all
party (sic).” He made a few grammatical suggestions to make the case against Michel stronger,
but advised Richardson not to change the argument as a whole. Franklin, for his part, encouraged

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192 DRO D3311/53/9, John Franklin to John Richardson, 1 August, 1823.
his friend to continue to “enjoy the peace of mind and happiness, which religion alone can afford.”

When John Franklin and Eleanor Porden were married on August 9, 1823, Eleanor signaled her entrance into Franklin’s community of trauma by causing her wedding dress to be embroidered with intertwined flowers taken from his narrative and named after himself, Richardson, and the murdered Robert Hood: the *Eutoca franklinii*, *Heuchera richardsonii*, and *Phlox hoodii*. The flowers formed an intricate pattern all over the dress, with Franklin’s at the center of each cluster (see Figure 8). In decorating her wedding dress, Eleanor was ostensibly paying tribute to the dead, to the friendships the expedition had fostered, and to its scientific achievements. But at the same time, it was also a tribute to her own struggle with entering into a community defined by a geography she had never seen, experiences she could not understand, and relationships she could not access, but which had shaped her husband and would define her married life. In doing so, she telegraphed that she understood their marriage to be relative to his othercompanionships, though she had to explicitly point it out to Franklin later. He later wrote to Richardson, “I did not discover the compliment paid to us on the first day, nor indeed until it was pointed out to me, though I could sufficiently appreciate it when my attention was directed towards it.”

When the Franklins embarked on their honeymoon in 1823, John Franklin and John Richardson were already planning a return to the Arctic on another official expedition, and as they did so, their two families intertwined. Eleanor had become fond of Richardsons and they of her, and she contributed to rounds of chatty correspondence on subjects ranging from architecture to natural history throughout 1823 and 1824. Franklin envisioned a greater role for

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193 SPRI MS 1503/5/4, John Franklin to John Richardson, 11 August, 1823.
194 Franklin, *Narrative*, 1824, 733, 767, and plate 27.
195 SPRI MS 1503/5/5, John Franklin to John Richardson, 19 September 1823.
her in the writing of the second narrative, one that would to a certain extent supplant Richardson’s. He wrote to his friend that he would not require so much of his assistance a second time because “I may also calculate on some assistance from a near and dear friend of whom you know is not a little experienced both in composition and the detail of publishing.” The friendships between the two families intensified after the Richardsons moved to Chatham in the spring of 1824, and the Franklins stayed with them both for company and for medical oversight after their daughter Eleanor was born in June. Eleanor’s difficult pregnancy, motherhood, and her declining health from her lingering tuberculosis kept her housebound for most of 1824, however, meaning that she was unable to participate in the wider and highly important scene of Arctic socializing, but nevertheless kept abreast of expedition developments and helped correct the third edition of Journey to the Shores of the Polar Sea (see Chapter 2).

The birth of the Franklins’ daughter, little Eleanor, in June of 1824, exacerbated her mother’s tuberculosis, and her failing health intertwined with the final stages of expedition planning. For the first six months of little Eleanor’s life, her parents’ letters to Richardson, to each other, and to the wider family circle combined delighted accounts of new parenthood, expedition planning, and Eleanor’s worsening cough. Eleanor took a dramatic turn for the worse in January of 1825. Franklin tried to postpone the journey, but Eleanor refused to let him.

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196 DRO D3311/53 /15, John Franklin to John Richardson, 55 Devonshire Street Portland Place, 14 January, 1824. Richardson was well aware of Eleanor’s experience – he would ask for her advice and patronage for a female relative of his who was an aspiring author. DRO D3311/55/7, John Richardson to John Franklin, 10 March 1824.
197 DRO D3311/55/8, John Richardson to John Franklin, 29 June, 1824; Eleanor Franklin to Sarah Kay, “At Dr. Richardson’s, Royal Marine Barracks, Chatham” 14 August, 1824, in Gell, John Franklin’s Bride, 280-282.
198 SPRI MS 248/388/2, Eleanor Anne Franklin to Isabella Cracroft, 17 March 1824, 55 Devonshire Street, Portland Place; Eleanor Franklin to Sarah Kay, 28 October, 1824, in Gell, John Franklin’s Bride, 284-5; John Franklin to Eleanor Franklin, 16 December 1824, in ibid., 293.
199 Captain George Lyon, Parry’s second in command on his 1821-23 Arctic voyage, said that looking at little Eleanor was like looking at Franklin through the wrong end of a telescope. Beardsley, 116; Eleanor Franklin to Sarah Kay, “At Dr. Richardson’s” 14 August, 1824, in Gell, 280-282; DRO D3311/53/34, John Franklin to John Richardson, Vale Cottage, Tunbridge Wells, 26 September, 1824; SPRI MS 248/389/2, Eleanor Franklin to Elizabeth Franklin, Vale Cottage, Tunbridge Wells, 10 September, 1824; RGS/SJF/1, John Franklin to Henry Sellwood, Vale Cottage, Tunbridge Wells, 9 September, 1824.
Franklin wrote to her sister Sarah Kay, “my occupations necessarily keep me from her the whole day – and by the Evening she is fatigued and agitated by having to be left to reflect on my going,”\textsuperscript{200} He began to take his work into her sickroom, finalizing the expedition as he started to provide for the baby in case she should lose both parents. He wrote to his brother-in-law Henry Sellwood, “[I seize] an interval of her repose to commence this letter to you in her room, where I have been watching all the night. You, my dearest friend, have experienced the awful trial I have yet to witness, and can fully enter into my feelings and truly condole with my afflictions.”\textsuperscript{201} Eleanor only survived for three days after he left in February of 1825. In a ceremony that recalled the imagery of her wedding dress and the tough negotiations that had preceded it, Franklin’s brother Arctic officers (Captains Buchan, Beaufort, Lyon and Beechey) served as her pallbearers.\textsuperscript{202} Little Eleanor was left in the care of Franklin’s sister, Isabella Cracroft, and her daughter Sophia, with whom she would end up spending most of her young life.

Conclusion

Franklin’s narrative of his first expedition, \textit{Journey to the Shores of the Polar Sea}, could be read as the very conventional beliefs of a middle class Evangelical man – indeed, they often were by Franklin’s contemporaries, offered up as proof of his humility and indeed, even of his unchanging Englishness in the face of danger and isolation – an image that would be resurrected by Charles Dickens in Franklin’s defense nearly thirty years later when Inuit reports of cannibalism on his last expedition were brought to London in 1854 by the HBC explorer Dr. John Rae (see Conclusion). It was part of what made Franklin, and his narrative of the expedition, so sympathetic to the public. But what others saw as evidence of a stable Christian

\textsuperscript{200} DRO D3311/50/4, John Franklin to Mrs. Kay, 26 January 1825.
\textsuperscript{201} RGS/SJF/1, John Franklin to Henry Sellwood, 55 Devonshire Street, Portland Place, 11 February, 1825.
\textsuperscript{202} Beardsley, \textit{Deadly Winter}, 124.
identity was in fact the product of the transformations of the expedition, and especially the trauma of Fort Enterprise. This trauma and transformation was not Franklin’s alone. He shared it on a deep level with both Richardson and Hepburn. It would bind them together for the rest of their lives, but outsiders had to reckon with it. These outsiders included both their fellow explorer George Back, and their wives, Eleanor Porden Franklin and Mary Stiven Richardson. In this sense, the ghosts of Fort Enterprise haunted not only Franklin’s narrative of the events, but also the Arctic circles that spun out from them.

The extraordinary archival record makes it possible to trace exactly how the transformations of exploration and the companionships it gave rise to could both intertwine with, and rub up against, conjugal and domestic relationships. The story of John and Eleanor Franklin’s courtship enables us to see how these frictions could influence the construction of narratives, even as they gave birth to the relationships (friendly and acrimonious) that lay at the heart of the Arctic Circles in the early-mid nineteenth century. The friendships between Franklin, Richardson and Hepburn, and the developing antipathy with Back, would continue for more than thirty years, well after Franklin’s death and throughout the searches orchestrated to find him in the 1850s. So too would the memory of Eleanor Porden Franklin, whose presence shadows this dissertation not only in her letters, but also in her daughter and in her niece Mary Anne Kay, both of whom came to play critical roles in the networks of polar women. As Eleanor Porden and Mary Richardson had, both these women and Franklin and Richardson’s later wives would struggle to figure out their places relative to both men’s lasting friendship and to the pull of the Arctic on them. The imitated “Miss Greenstockings” of Eleanor’s poem would not go away – neither her enticement to return to the Arctic, nor the problematic indigenous knowledge and
authority she represented, nor the poem itself, which both the Franklin and Richardson women would curate.

Arctic historians and literary scholars have long suggested that Eleanor Porden declined the role of a “conventional” polar wife (though there was no such thing in 1823), arguing that her disposition, talents, and personality meant that she was constitutionally incapable of inhabiting the supporting role of a meek wife who willing to let her husband abandon her for his own fame.203 This is to misunderstand both Eleanor and the larger community of polar women that followed in her wake (as well, perhaps, as the maritime and military wives who preceded her). She truly and deeply wrestled with her husband’s attachments and transformations, struggled to understand them on her own terms, and what they would mean for her domestic life. Insofar as she was able, she tried to be Franklin’s helpmeet in every respect, and one of the most important ways in which she did so was to take his other companionships seriously, even when they threatened to exclude her. Though she could not share his religious sentiments, she made herself sympathize with them. In the process, she not only carved out a space for herself that spanned the Arctic and Britain, she also created a space within Franklin’s set of intimate friends that could not be filled. Her successor, Jane Franklin, would try, but would never be able to so deeply insinuate herself into her husband’s other closest companionships, and it would force her to build her own rival networks of knowledge and intimacy during the search for Franklin in the 1850s, a process which I chart in the second half of this dissertation.

CHAPTER 2: ARCTIC CIRCLES: CIRCUITS OF SOCIABILITY AND KNOWLEDGE, 1818-1832

In 1827, Jane Griffin’s brother-in-law Mr. Simpkinson pulled her aside, and as she noted in her diary, “asked if I had succeeded in meeting Captain F. [Franklin] in arctic circles, that being the report, & whether some cape or bay was not christened in our name.”\(^{204}\) It was an open secret that the widower Franklin was on the lookout for a new wife and mother for his baby daughter Eleanor – and indeed, had christened a “Point Griffin” in Jane’s honor, and also stopped by her house “begging acceptance of reindeer tongues and 3prs shoes made by native Ind. [Indian] women.”\(^{205}\) It was a courtship ritual that would be familiar to Isabella Stanley Parry, who had just married Edward Parry under a silken flag she sewed for his upcoming North Pole expedition, spent her honeymoon aboard HMS *Hecla* at Deptford, and received a wedding present from Franklin of a raccoon skin.\(^{206}\) Simpkinson’s teasing of his sister-in-law was pithy on several levels which may or may not have been apparent to Jane, but which, according to her habit, she faithfully recorded in her diary.

As Simpkinson, Jane Griffin, and Isabella Parry all knew well, the geographical circle at 66° 33’ N was echoed in several very different social circles in metropolitan London and in the Arctic, into which explorers and their families were pulled in the 1820s. One was the elite world of scientific sociability, linked into the rhythms of the London Season, the marriage market, the publishing market, and systems of patronage and government authority. Another was an equally important world of vernacular knowledge, associations, and patronage – the sailors, fur traders, whalers, and carpenters upon whose experience and connections (including mixed race families)

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\(^{204}\) Quoted in F. Woodward, *Portrait of Jane*, 157-158.

\(^{205}\) Ibid., 158.

\(^{206}\) This raccoon skin rug did not fare well in the Parry household. Isabella recorded in her diary that when her sister and brother-in-law (also Edward) came to visit them in London, “Poor Ed., all the time she was making her lamentations, he stood with his back to the fire, poking the racoon (sic) skin with his stick, answering her occasional appeals to him with a grunt.” Ann Parry, *Parry of the Arctic: The Life Story of Admiral Sir Edward Parry, 1790-1855* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1963), 128; Spufford, *I May Be Some Time*, 96-97.
naval explorers depended for survival. A third, related world was that of indigenous peoples who were being drawn into the orbit of the fur trade and global capitalism, and whose assistance or hostility could make or break an expedition. Explorers inhabited all three of these worlds, and to varying degrees their families did too. Men and women navigated these expanded circles as they reckoned with the transformations wrought by polar travels, and like Eleanor Porden, tried to reconcile them with their domestic households and lives.

This chapter sets the Franklin family into the broader contexts of elite sociability in the late Enlightenment (and the subculture of Arctic sociability in the 1820s), which were key to the circulation of scientific and geographical information and the seeking of patronage. When explorers were at home, their experiences gave them entry into these rarified realms of polite society, which they and their families navigated as “lions.” I argue that within these “Arctic Circles,” explorers’ wives and families became important “gatekeepers” of information from the field, in the process entering into wider, developing networks of imperial knowledge. This was partly because the Franklin family encountered an extended group of knowledgeable, educated women who successfully negotiated the public sphere, and whom they could (and would) emulate. It was also partly because it gave the Franklin women experience in filtering, editing, and selectively sharing information from and about the vernacular agents and indigenous peoples who were critical to explorers’ success. When explorers were in the field, their private correspondence to and from the Arctic mixed up geographic, ethnographic, scientific, and professional information with gossip, family news, and sentimental messages. Vernacular and indigenous knowledge and skill filtered through explorers’ correspondence from the field and gifts of “curiosities” to their families – like those slippers made by Indian women which Franklin

used to court his second wife. Those letters and ethnographic objects were selectively circulated by family members in order to forward their absent relatives’ interests and bolster their reputations. In the process, both explorers and their families minimized the importance of the other Arctic circles in which explorers moved and which were crucial to their success, those of indigenous and mixed-race societies and vernacular agents in the field. This period established the women of the Franklin family as keepers of archives and information, of expedition correspondence, specimens, curiosities, and ephemera, in domestic and gendered counterparts of the naturalist’s cabinet, a reputation and set of experiences that they would later draw on as they struggled to find their places in colonial society.

**On Being a “Lion”: Polite Science and Arctic Sociability, c. 1818-1828**

The 1820s were a heyday for Arctic exploration. The climate, so to speak, was favorable, given both Barrow’s relentless promotion of Arctic expeditions and the proliferating demands of the scientific and geographical communities (see Chapter 1). Between 1818 and 1828 ten British naval expeditions were sent to the Arctic. They came relentlessly, one on the heels of another, all of them inconclusive and incomplete. In 1818, Buchan and Franklin tried and failed to reach the Pole via Spitzbergen. The same year, Ross and Parry tried the Passage, but turned around in Lancaster Sound when Ross sighted a mirage that he named the Croker Mountains. In 1819, Parry sailed over the “mountains” and made it as far west as Melville Island where he was stopped by ice. 1819 to 1822 were the terrifying years of the first Land Arctic Expedition under Franklin, detailed in Chapter 1. Parry went out again in 1821-23 with George Lyon in the *Fury* and *Hecla* to try a new eastern route via Hudson Strait. They did not quite make it to the Gulf of Boothia, but the ethnographic descriptions they brought back of the Iglulingmiut after two
winters fascinated the public (see below). In 1824, Lyon went out again in the Griper (which Parry described as “a vessel of … lubberly, shameful construction”) but nearly broke her to pieces in the ice and came home the same year; Parry meanwhile took the Hecla and Fury to try to descend Prince Regent’s Inlet from Lancaster Sound, but wrecked the Fury and returned in 1825. By the time Parry came back, Franklin and Richardson had already left on the Second Land Expedition (see below), with Franklin hoping to meet up with Frederick W. Beechey, who was trying the Passage via the Pacific in HMS Blossom. Finally, Parry made another stab at the North Pole via Spitzbergen in 1827, but failed again, marking an end to official expeditions until 1836 amidst a new climate of reform and financial scrutiny.

The social world of polite science in Regency London thrived on these voyages and on the “curiosities” and “lions” they produced. This was a social scene that was the inheritor of the “conversable” world of eighteenth century salons, offering a smorgasbord of information to be pleasurable shared and consumed as a part of the Season’s activities. It was an elite world of scientific sociability, a crucial sphere that historians of science now see as the genesis of the institutions, networks, and infrastructures of “professional” science later in the century, even as it coexisted with the proliferation of specialist scientific societies that would open up a gap between “amateur” and “professional.” The newly discovered elements of the natural world (from the minisculae under a microscope, to the powers of terrestrial magnetism, to the

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208 Quoted in A. Parry, Parry of the Arctic, 95.
209 For more thorough synopses of all of these expeditions, see Savours, Search for the North West Passage, 39-123; M.J. Ross, Polar Pioneers, 23-108. For a detailed analysis of the expeditions and the print culture they generated, see Cavell, Tracing the Connected Narrative, 53-156.
curiosities of the empire, to the wonders of the heavens) were opened to discussion and
examination in soirees, dinner parties, and salons.212 It was as true in the 1820s as it was in the
1770s that it was only by “circulating, talking about, and looking at” curiosities of voyages that
the information produced by expeditions “could be properly assimilated and activated.”213
Travelers were also curiosities to be displayed, paraded, and interrogated by self-consciously
refined fellow-guests. They were “lions,” in company with other writers, musicians and travelers,
lending the aristocrats who invited them the ability to claim “intellectual leadership for the
nation, while remaining distinct from the ordinary public.”214 This was an exclusive sphere
marked by hierarchical rank and gentility. Access might be provided on the basis of talent, but it
was a struggle, and this struggle was as marked for Arctic explorers and their families as it was
for others who exploited their talents to gain entrance to Society, secure patronage, and establish
their genteel footing (especially if they came from humble backgrounds).215

For freshly-returned explorers, making these connections was essential, but it was not
necessarily pleasant. It meant consistently seeking patronage, currying favor, and being the
center of attention as one’s person and experiences were put on display like other tastes, crazes
and fads.216 John Franklin dreaded “being what is termed one of the Lions of the day,” as he
wrote to his sister Sarah Sellwood on his return in 1822.217 That discomfort, as demonstrated in
Chapter 1, only increased as he and Richardson worked on the narrative that would increase their
fame. Neither, for that matter, did all the young women of their acquaintance enjoy the
experience; Jane Griffin recorded in her diary in 1824 that Mrs. Bowring, the wife of a

214 James A. Secord, Victorian Sensation: The Extraordinary Publication, Reception, and Secret Authorship of
215 Ibid., 410. This was, for example, certainly the case with Michael Faraday who came from very humble origins.
217 John Franklin to Sarah Sellwood, Stromness, Orkney Isles, 10 October, 1822, in Davis, “Which an Affectionate
Heart,” 202-204.
“celebrated radical author and merchant” thought that girls “ought to talk & say whatever they liked. There was no use in mere listening & asking questions, they should have exercise in the Art of Conversation – an art by the way which I have a particular dislike to.”

Parry, however positively reveled in the experience, rapturously writing to his parents almost daily from London in 1820 (after returning from his first Arctic command) about the acquaintances he made and the scores of parties and clubs he attended. A typical example from 1820 went, “I have loads to say, but have no time to write more. I dine at the “Alfred” to day, at the Royal Society with Sir B. H. tomorrow, at the “Travellers” the next day. The first and last of these Clubs are composed of the first society in London – mostly literary, and have done me and [Lt. Col. Edward] Sabine the honor to elect us honorary members, which many Noblemen would be glad to accept, if they could get it.”

It was easy, however, to put a foot wrong in the search for connections. One way of securing patronage was, of course, by naming geographical features after notable men. Doing so never failed to cause pleasure and amusement; Peter Richardson (John Richardson’s brother) noted on one occasion in 1828 that “Capt Franklin has named two mountains, one after Professor Buckland a stout short man & the other after Copplestone a tall thin man – Copplestone on being told this said they ought to have been called Copplestone Crag & Bucklands Bluff.”

It could, however, expose explorers to a degree of social censure: Mary Russell Mitford privately condemned John Ross in a letter to one of her friends after his failed 1818 expedition, writing, “He a discoverer, forsooth! All that he did was to go about christening rocks, capes, bays, and mountains after all the great men, dead and living, whom he thought to gain by, and then to come

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219 Sabine was the naturalist on the Ross expedition and on Parry’s second expedition. SPRI MS 438/26/54, William Edward Parry to Caleb and Sarah Parry, 6 December 1820.
220 SPRI MS 1503/8/2, Peter Richardson Journal, 11 January 1828.
home and write a huge quarto about nothing.” Naming geographical features for persons (especially women) who were neither scientific luminaries nor potential patrons also inevitably gave rise to speculation. Franklin wrote to his sister Elizabeth after his first expedition, “You and I are the only two of the family who have not had their names placed on the map…. I could not call any place Franklin or I should have been charged with vanity or Elizabeth for fear of the big wigs should imagine it was the name of my fair friend, and conclude me to be desperately in love.” He had, however, named several islands after the Pordens; after Eleanor’s death in 1824, he went on to name several more islands and geographical features “Griffin” after Jane Griffin and her father, which meant, as described above, that Jane experienced significant teasing.

Geographical missteps were not the only cause of anxiety in this elite social world. Arctic officers had spent their adolescence aboard naval ships in wartime – experiences that had shown them the world, taught them how to take a correct observation, calculate longitude, chart a coastline and tack a sail, but had not prepared them for either the world of polite science or the broad scientific remit demanded in their official instructions. As Parry wrote to his parents in 1820, after he returned from his farthest West at Melville Island, “though I can write a tolerable Manuscript Journal, I begin to feel that a life spent at sea since 12 years of age does not qualify one altogether to write such an account as the public expect in print.” Socializing could, to a certain extent, remedy this (as could Barrow’s intervention as an assiduous editor). Before his second expedition in 1819, Parry attended a course of lectures on mineralogy given by Rebecca

221 Mary Russell Mitford to Barbara Hofland, 17 April, 1819, quoted in Mary Russell Mitford, The Life of Mary Russell Mitford, as Related in a Selection from her Letters to her Friends, ed. Alfred Guy L'estrange, Vol. 2 (London: Richard Bentley, 1870), 68.
222 DRO D3311/28/10, John Franklin to Elizabeth Franklin, Stromness, 10 October 1822.
223 Gell, John Franklin’s Bride, 68; F. Woodward, Portrait of Jane, 157-159.
224 This was less the case for Richardson (who after starting out as a ship’s surgeon, obtained a medical degree from Edinburgh) than for Franklin and Parry.
225 SPRI MS 438/26/53, William Edward Parry to Caleb and Sarah Parry, 2 December, 1820.
Lowry, the wife of a famous engraver. He wrote to his parents that Sabine was also attending, and that Mrs. Lowry had been recommended to them by the mathematicians Captain and Mrs. Kater; later, he asked his parents to send her one of the mineral specimens he had collected on Hare Island on the last expedition, as “I am deriving very great advantage from her lectures which I attend regularly three times a week.”

By 1830, the acquaintances of Arctic explorers and their families included: the mathematician Charles Babbage, the geologists William and Mary Buckland, Captain (later Sir Francis) Beaufort, the geologist Adam Sedgwick, the tidologist William Whewell, the astronomer John Herschel and his sister Caroline, the naturalist Robert Brown, the geologists Roderick and Charlotte Murchison, the scientists Mary and William Somerville, the mathematicians Henry and Mary Frances Kater, the geologist Charles Lyell, the Quaker penal reformer Elizabeth Fry, the Anglo-Irish writer Maria Edgeworth, and the traveller, author and geologist Maria Graham, among many others. Whether at intimate dinner parties, evening soirees and lectures, or private conversations, these were opportunities to fill in the blanks on the “lion’s” education, an opportunity provided by his own efforts to fill in blanks on maps.

This was also the principal social scene in which the women of polar exploration circulated in the 1820s and 1830s, and Jane Franklin would draw on its vestiges and its connections in the 1850s during the Franklin searches. Like her friend Eleanor Porden, Jane regularly attended Royal Institution lectures, including Millington’s on mechanics, Michael Faraday’s on electricity and magnetism, and Peter Mark Roget’s on optics.

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227 Richardson had sailed under Beaufort in HMS Blossom to the coast of Africa in 1809 and then to Quebec. Beaufort had replaced a particularly tyrannical captain who had court-martialed most of his officers, including Richardson. McIlraith, Life of Sir John Richardson, 23-33. In 1825, the Blossom was re-equipped and sent out under F. W. Beechey to Bering Strait, where it was intended to meet up with Franklin.

228 F. Woodward, Portrait of Jane, 134.
phrenology, she had her cranium “read” after she spoke to Charles Babbage about it, and when the opportunity afforded itself, she took flight in a hot air balloon.\textsuperscript{229} The first record of Jane meeting Franklin was when she recorded seeing him at a dinner at the Millingtons’ in 1824.\textsuperscript{230} She also frequently attended dinners at the D’Israelis’ (she would later count Benjamin Disraeli among her supporters during the Franklin searches in the 1850s).\textsuperscript{231} When she was introduced to Captain John Ross at a dinner in 1819, it was as a “fellow traveler,” for she had already traveled extensively on the continent with her father. She leapt at Ross’s joking suggestion that she accompany him on a voyage to Bering Strait. Ross reportedly replied that “I came 6\textsuperscript{th} upon his list, for that he meant to take 12 young ladies with him.”\textsuperscript{232} It was also the social scene in which John and Eleanor Franklin’s favorite niece Mary Anne Kay “came out,” circulating simultaneously through the marriage market, naval circles, and polite scientific society – an experience she would document for her uncle while he was away (see below).

Many of the connections that Jane, Mary Anne, and other members of polar families (male and female) made in this world were with learned women. This was an environment in which women could enjoy a degree of scientific and/or literary distinction – so long as they positioned themselves strategically, obtained the sponsorship of a male mentor (often their husbands or other close relatives), published (often anonymously) for children and/or the general public, and constantly, as Mary Orr has put it, “dressed [their] learning in the modesty of potential female error.”\textsuperscript{233} Sarah Fitton, the sister of the geologist Dr. William Fitton (who was a witness at the Franklin’s marriage in 1828) wrote a series of anonymous educational works on

\begin{footnotes}
\item[229] Ibid., 135-136.
\item[230] Ibid., 154.
\item[231] Ibid., 154-157.
\item[232] Quoted in ibid., 98.
\end{footnotes}
botany for women, children, and working-class men between 1817 and 1865. Charlotte Murchison was a geologist who accompanied her husband Roderick on several of his expeditions (and was better known in some circles as a conchologist than Roderick was a geologist), while Mary Buckland, the wife of William Buckland also an accomplished geologist who met Buckland in a carriage when they both were reading Baron Cuvier’s most recent volume (Mary’s was a present from the naturalist himself). The Franklins, Richardsons, and Griffins regularly associated with both families. Caroline Herschel, the sister of William Herschel, was a very highly respected astronomer, who later in life received a £50 per annum royal pension on account of her work; both sister and brother were friends of the Franklins and Richardsons. Mary Frances Kater shared her husband’s scientific pursuits and also published *A History of England* in her own name. Then there was Sarah Bowdich Lee, the young widow of the explorer T. E. Bowdich, who had accompanied her husband to Africa with their three children, where he had died. Bankrupt, she completed his work and then drew on her connections (including her friends Cuvier and Dr. Thomas Hodgkin) to shepherd her edited volume of her husband’s travels and her own subsequent work through the press, including a number of children’s books based on her African experiences. She might have gotten inspiration, or perhaps advice, from the author of a lavishly illustrated children’s book in 1825 entitled *A Peep at the Esquimaux*, in which Inuit children set moral examples for spoiled English children, as they cheerfully embraced the
pittances of their meagre life in the ice. The polar historian Ann Savours suspected that the anonymous author was Lucy Lyon, whose husband Captain George Lyon had won fame (and some infamy) from the publication of his private journal and stunning drawings from his two winters with the Iglulingmiut on Parry’s 1821-23 expedition (see below).

The price of these women engaging respectably in science and geography, whether as a travel writer or a “populariser” of science, was to undermine themselves, to profess modesty, ignorance, or inexperience, and then proceed to demonstrate the breadth of their scholarship, whether in conversation or in print. Even Mary Somerville did so; as James Secord has pointed out, she only discussed scientific matters with those whom she thought might have an interest in the subject, and “feared being seen as a bizarre specimen, a bluestocking.” For other women like Lady Maria Stanley (Parry’s future mother-in-law, the editor of Gibbon’s papers and possessor of a fine library) or for Eleanor Porden, this label was a distinction. Eleanor famously dressed down a man at the Royal Society who suggested that young women would be better to stay home and make puddings than to attend scientific lectures, replying flippantly, “oh, we did that before we came out.” For others, like the unmarried 30-year-old Jane Griffin, it was a label to be feared. Jane, for example, was horrified when, after one of John Millington’s lectures on mechanics, his wife came up to Jane and her sister Fanny to say that they were “very learned

238 In the introduction to A Peep at the Esquimaux two young girls stumble upon the book, which their mother tells them is about “the ESQUIMAUX; those harmless natives of the Frozen Seas, about whom the children had heard so much from their parents, and whom they had been taught to consider with feelings of pity, as the most desolate of human beings; often famishing, as they had been told, with hunger; perishing with cold, and destitute of all the comforts and conveniences of life; yet cheerful, and contented with their hard lot; thereby affording a lesson to the natives of a happier country, who, in the midst of abundance, are often miserable and discontented, even at the slightest privation.” “A Lady,” A Peep at the Esquimaux; Or, Scenes on the Ice, To Which is Annexed, A Polar Pastoral (London: H. R. Thomas, 1825), vii.
239 Savours, Search for the North West Passage, 123.
242 Quoted in Alexander, Ambitions of Jane Franklin, 18.
– people were frightened at us – we had quite the character of bluestockings.” A shocked Jane assured Mrs. Millington that she “had no accomplishments” to speak of.243

There were also more sober connections. Explorers and their extended families also socialized – though more distantly - with imperial humanitarians, and especially the extended clan of the Frys, Buxtons, and Gurneys. These families were deeply engaged in the imperial humanitarian concerns of the abolition campaign and penal reform – indeed, they constituted one of its centers. Thomas Fowell Buxton inherited the antislavery mantle from William Wilberforce in 1823 when he took over leadership of the Anti-Slavery Society, and also the London Missionary Society. His wife’s Quaker relatives, the Frys and Gurneys, were also deeply involved in domestic and trans-Atlantic anti-slavery and philanthropic networks, and his relatives (especially his sister Sarah Maria, daughter Priscilla Buxton and cousin by marriage Anna Gurney) followed in their footsteps in the 1820s and 1830s.244 They were vital participants in a political movement that depended upon women’s public participation as petitioners, subscribers, audiences, writers, and patrons, justified as a matter of womanly and maternal conscience.245 This was also Elizabeth Fry’s justification for her work with female prisoners at Newgate - that only women could effect moral reform with other women.246 Horrified by the conditions at the women’s prison, in 1817 she set up a school for the prisoners’ children, and later moved on to attempt to reform the prisoners themselves by means of religious readings and industrious labor.247 These families were one of the principal nerve centers of the imperial humanitarian movement, maintaining elaborate and far-flung correspondence networks throughout the empire.

243 F. Woodward, Portrait of Jane, 134.
245 Midgley, Women Against Slavery; Prochaska, Women and Philanthropy; Davidoff and Hall, Family Fortunes, 429-436.
246 Davidoff and Hall, Family Fortunes, 430.
that constituted a powerful parallel network to both that of the state and of white settlers. They were equally well-connected at “home,” linked into this wider world of scientific sociability in which Arctic explorers and their families circulated, and drawing from it, like explorers, the connections, patrons, and advocacy necessary for their causes.

For some members of the “Arctic Circles,” their relationships with the Buxtons, Gurneys, and Frys were connections of conscience, while for others, they merely satisfied curiosity. Parry was one of the former. After his 1821-23 expedition, he went to Norfolk and renewed his connections both with the elite Stanleys of Alderly and with the Gurney-Cresswells. He thought Mrs. Fry “[one of] the most delightful women I almost ever met with,” not least because he had been trying a similar program of “improvement” on his sailors through Bible readings and schools during the Arctic winter. But Parry’s fondness for Elizabeth Fry nearly wrecked the prospect of his marriage to Isabella Stanley, the daughter of the formidable Lady Maria Stanley, in 1827. Parry wrote to his sister that Lady Maria “has been trying to scold me out of my religious sentiment, and informing me of her utter abhorrence of ‘Mrs Fry and all saints.’” He swore, in a fit of almost adolescent pique, that he would not give up God, even for Isabella, but reassured his sister that the reason was most likely that Lady Maria was “a very worldly woman.” Jane Griffin’s engagement with the humanitarians was completely the opposite, one born of out curiosity and not conscience. She met Mrs Fry a little earlier than Parry, in the winter of 1822 when she actually visited her at the prison at Newgate. She was markedly less impressed than Parry, writing in her diary that, “the few words she uttered could not as it appeared to me have produced any kind of impression on them & I was convinced that she must have used at

250 Ibid., 88, 97.
251 SPRI MS 438/26/325, W. E. Parry to Gertrude Parry, [June 1826].
other times much more effectual methods … in order to have made them as decent & well-behaved as we saw them.”\textsuperscript{252} These connections, both intense and ephemeral, would prove to be enduring, and would crop up repeatedly over both Parry’s and Jane’s lives.

These circles - both of polite science and of the Season as a whole - acquired a distinctive Arctic flavor during the high point of the expeditions from 1818 to about 1828. The most overt was the major social event of visiting the Arctic ships (which, like so many others, coincided with the London Season). Franklin wrote to his sister Isabella Cracroft in 1818 that “Deptford has been covered with carriages and the ships with visitors every day since they were in a state to be seen,” and they actually had to move the \textit{Dorothea} and \textit{Trent} farther down river to finish equipping them in peace.\textsuperscript{253} Jane Griffin visited the ships, going down into the foc’sle to examine the crew’s sleeping quarters on the \textit{Isabella}. A young woman named Charlotte Grimstone also visited the \textit{Isabella}, and described in a letter to her friend Harriet how she managed to get on board by flirting with Parry, and was rewarded by watching the Inuit interpreter, Jack Saccheuse, paddling his \textit{qayaq} in the Thames.\textsuperscript{254} By 1824, the spectacle had increased as the Arctic discovery ships had become a highlight of the Season. Parry threw a ball aboard the departing HMS \textit{Hecla}. Franklin, Richardson, and their wives attended together with 320 others (they were the lucky ones – more than 6,000 people signed the \textit{Hecla’s} visitor book).\textsuperscript{255} The rigging was hung with lanterns and flags, and small parties (including Isabella Stanley, Parry’s future wife, and her parents) were taken down to the cramped confines of the captain’s cabin to take cake and wine.\textsuperscript{256} The Arctic dinner party became a seasonal highlight, characterized by Arctic delicacies like bison tongue, musk-ox steak, reindeer haunch and

\textsuperscript{252} F. Woodward, \textit{Portrait of Jane}, 144.
\textsuperscript{253} Traill, \textit{Life of Sir John Franklin}, 56.
\textsuperscript{254} SPRI MS 1145, Charlotte Grimston to Harriott Estcourt, 26 March 1818.
\textsuperscript{255} DRO D3311/53/22, John Franklin to John Richardson, 55 Devonshire Street, 24 April, 1824.
\textsuperscript{256} A. Parry, \textit{Parry of the Arctic}, 89.
pemmican, or lead-soldered tins of preserved meats opened decorously at the table.\textsuperscript{257} One imagines that they would have appealed to the taste of the famous zoophage Buckland (who in addition to being an eminent geologist and a close friend of the Franklins, was determined to eat every known animal).\textsuperscript{258}

Events like these certainly fed into a wider elite Regency culture of extravagant display of all that was marvelous curious, unique, and remarkable. But they were also information exchanges – sometimes constrained, polite, and formulaic, but also opportunities for the awkward and uncomfortable elements of an expedition to surface in a metropolitan vein. For example, in 1823, John and Eleanor Franklin held a dinner party for the recently returned William Edward Parry and George Lyon, which Jane Griffin and her sister Fanny attended. Fanny sat between Parry and Lyon at the table, and Parry asked Lyon to reach under the table and show Fanny his arm, which had been tattooed by Iglulingmiut women the previous year.\textsuperscript{259} Tattoos were the sailor’s badge of far distant journeys and cross-cultural liaisons. They mapped out on sailors’ bodies their residence in liminal zones, conjuring the moment of closeness, curiosity and (possibly sexual) intimacy in which they were made.\textsuperscript{260} Here Lyon’s tattoo, inscribed at Igloolik as Parry’s expedition drew heavily on Inuit resources (including geographical knowledge, see below) amidst mounting tensions, provided a new almost-illicit moment, as he pulled up his sleeve and showed the unmarried Fanny his arm under the table. At


\textsuperscript{258} Oxford Museum of the History of Science, \textit{Eccentric Eating}, 5 September 2011, http://www.mhs.ox.ac.uk/eccentric-eating/ (accessed April 25, 2013). Eleanor’s niece Mary Anne Kay, who seems to have attended plenty of these parties, was either very fond of pemmican or completely revolted by it; John Franklin wrote to her mother Sarah from Canada in June 1825, “We have just reached that part of the country where that delightful food Pemmican is in general use – and if Mary Anne could pop upon us in an hour’s time – she should have plenty.” DRO D3311/50/12, John Franklin to Sarah Kay, Lake Winnipeg, 3 June 1825.

\textsuperscript{259} A. Parry, \textit{Parry of the Arctic}, 88.

\textsuperscript{260} Dening, \textit{Mr Bligh’s Bad Language}, 34-36; Lamb, \textit{Preserving the Self}, 106-109.
another dinner party at John Franklin’s after his return from his second expedition on January 4, 1828, Franklin and his officers entertained the party (after, one imagines, a few bottles of wine), as “Back & Kendall sung a Canadian boat song in French & along with Capt F & Dr. R with poker tongs and shovels in their hands as oars kept pulling the whole time.” As Franklin and Richardson jokingly doled out pemmican to guests at Devonshire Street and seized pokers and tongs to paddle imaginary canoes, they were giving their guests a partial glimpse into their lives in the North, suitably watered down for polite company. Like other men on the “edge of empire,” they had lived together for years in an almost exclusively male environment, not only taking on new domestic duties like cooking, but also participating in the rhythms and rituals of the world of the mixed-race voyageurs with whom they had traveled – of which the travelling songs constituted an important and expressive literary genre that both accompanied and commemorated hard physical labor. In eating Arctic food and re-creating scenes of travel, they imported a distorted image of the mixed race and class homosocial domesticity of the frontier to the dining table in London.

Dinner parties and ship’s balls could provide social venues for light-hearted (if potentially charged) acknowledgement of the homosocial and interracial companionships of expeditions. But “society” – and by extension, the community of Arctic explorers - could be much less forgiving of transgressive behavior, as the case of Edward Parry’s courtship of Miss Browne, the niece of his astronomer Edward Sabine, demonstrated in 1823. Parry began courting Miss Browne in 1819, inviting her on board HMS *Hecla* for the ship’s ball and later taking her and her parents on a rowboat and a picnic at Greenwich and persuaded her to inflate his life-vest.

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261 MS 1503/8/2, Peter Richardson Journal, 4 January, 1828.
But during his 1821-23 expedition, Parry established an intimate relationship with an Iglulingmiut woman “Iligliuk” (Iligjaq). Parry described her as a woman with a “superiority of understanding,” a love of music, and a fine voice, and she was granted free access to the ship and most of the cabins. Iligjaq’s primary value to the expedition, however, came from her charts. In March of 1822, while he was frozen up in Fury and Hecla Strait with no idea of where to go, Parry asked Iligjaq and a few others to draw the coastline to the north and west. When Iligjaq drew the map over several sheets of paper, she noted where the coast was inhabited, where game could be procured, and the birthplaces of herself and her son. It was a paper record of the gendered geographical knowledge of a non-hunter, in which Iligjaq took a memorized and animate landscape, full of local histories and transformed humans and animals, and translated them into a cartographic projection. Her listeners, who only partially understood her, annotated the map, and inscribed it with an Inuktitut compass rose. As Michael Bravo has argued, Parry and his officers tried to make Iligjaq’s knowledge “commensurate” with their own, as they edited her map and focused on the extent of winter and shore fast ice, the directions of currents, the strength and heights of tides, and most important, a great expanse of open water to the west. Over the winter of 1822-23, relationships soured because of the expedition’s importunate requests, especially sexual demands on Iglulingmiut women. Parry and Lyon wrote

263 SPRI MS 438/26/39, W. E. Parry to his parents. London, 20 April, 1819.
264 A. Parry, Parry of the Arctic, 165. Iligjaq and her husband were also Parry’s primary trading partners. See RGS SSC/73-74, William Harvey Hooper, journal aboard HMS Fury, January 1821-June 1823.
265 For the nature of gendered Inuit geographical knowledge, see Beatrice Collignon, Knowing Places: The Inuinnaqt, Landscapes, and the Environment, trans. Linna Weber (Canadian Circumpolar Institute Press, 2006). See also Claudio Aporta, “The Sea, the Land, the Coast, and the Winds: Understanding Inuit Sea Ice Use in Context,” in SIKU: Knowing Our Ice: Documenting Inuit Sea Ice Knowledge and Use, ed. Igor Krupnik, Claudio Aporta, Lena Kielson Holm Geraheard and Michael Bravo, (Dordrecht: Springer Netherlands, 2010), 163-180.
266 So far as I can determine, the original map has not survived. The earliest version that I have been able to locate is a draft in the William Harvey Hooper Collection at the RGS, SSC/74.
that the Iglulingmiut became irritable, sullen, and prone to thieving as the winter progressed, culminating in a theft of a shovel from the *Hecla* and Parry’s flogging of the man he though responsible. Igluglingmiut oral histories indicate that the flogging incident occurred after Parry tried to force a woman to leave with him, and the *angekok* (shaman) dismissed “Paari” and forbade any future *qablunaat* from coming to Igloolik.268

When Parry returned to Britain in 1823, he discovered that Miss Browne had broken off their engagement during his absence, exposing her to ridicule within their shared social circles.269 A humiliating rhyme made the rounds in Bath and in London, which ran, “Parry, why that distracted air? Why for a jilt so cast down? None but the *Brave* deserve the *Fair*, but *Any One* may have the *Brown.*”270 The rhyme, of course, could cut both ways, alluding to Parry’s relationship with Iligjaq – which Miss Browne seized on, and spread rumors about Parry’s relationship with Iligjaq.271 Thomas Hood published an “Ode to Captain Parry” entreating him not to forsake English beauties for a “Polar Mrs. Parry,” and conjured developing stereotypes of Inuit as a filthy people who were inveterate thieves:

To dote on hair, an oily fleece!
As tho’ it hung from Helen o’ Greece -
They say that love prevails
Ev’n in the veriest polar land -
And surely she may steal thy hand
That used to steal thy nails!272

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268 For Iglulingmiut oral histories, see Dorothy Harley Eber, *Encounters on the Passage: Inuit Meet the Explorers.* (Toronto and London: University of Toronto Press, 2008), 12-36. For an unpublished manuscript that tends to support the Iglulingmiut histories, see RGS SSC/73/3-4, William H. Hooper, Journal aboard HMS *Fury*, January 1821-June 1823.

269 This breech was reported in the society sections of newspapers and ladies’ magazines across England, see for example “The Mirror of Fashion,” *Morning Chronicle*, October 24, 1823: 3; *The Mirror of Literature, Amusement and Instruction*, November 1, 1823: 384; “The North-Western Expedition.” *Leeds Mercury* October 25, 1823: 3.

270 *The Mirror of Literature, Amusement and Instruction*, November 1, 1823: 384.


Later, William Henry Glascock, in the anonymous publication *The Naval Sketchbook*, would mock Parry’s reliance on “Miss Ilugliuk’s hydrographical tact” in a broader condemnation of explorers relying on geographical intelligence from “the dullest and most stupid race… on the face of the globe.” 273 Lucy Lyon would privately describe the book as libelous, but nevertheless “cannot but say how excellent it is.”274 As a result of the debacle, Miss Browne’s uncle, Edward Sabine, refused to describe Parry’s zoological specimens and a significant chill developed between them.275 Franklin discovered it and took the opportunity to promote Richardson’s interests, who ended up doing the descriptions for Parry’s narrative.276

The men and women of polar families entered a vibrant scientific and social sphere in the 1820s on the basis of the men’s Arctic exploits. Though being a “lion” could be nerve-wracking for men who had spent virtually their whole lives at sea, it was equally intoxicating. Some of their new social contacts were the very people responsible for setting the scientific remits of their voyages. Others, like Barrow or John Murray, were crucial patrons, whose favor had to be constantly curried. For their wives and other female relatives, it was an equally intoxicating sphere, one utterly new to some (like the seventeen-year-old Mary Anne Kay) and completely familiar, if not entirely comfortable, for others like Eleanor Porden Franklin and Jane Griffin. Circulating through it introduced them to learned men and many learned, sometimes politically active women, people who cultivated and maintained webs of connections from Britain to the far reaches of the empire. The Arctic, with all its varied human and natural “wonders” was eagerly incorporated into this scene – but not always cleanly. The cross-cultural and homosocial

274 SPRI MS 248/432/1, William Porden Kay to John Franklin, 22 February 1826 (Franklin’s notes).
276 D3311/53/37, John Franklin to John Richardson, Nottingham, 4 November, [1824 penciled in, but should be 1823 by context]; SPRI MS 1503/5/6-10, correspondence between John Richardson and William Edward Parry over the specimen descriptions, 1823-24.
relationships formed in the ice were, as they had been for Cook’s officers a generation earlier, tantalizing topics of discussion, torn out of context as they were and made to play new, sometimes uncomfortable roles in an alien place.\textsuperscript{277} Yet relationships that would be markedly unsuitable in the hierarchical world of polite science – with vernacular agents like whalers and fur traders, and with indigenous peoples – also constituted their own, equally important circles in which explorers sought patronage, curried favor, and claimed intimacy, as I examine below.

Other Arctic Circles: Vernacular and Indigenous Knowledge and Relationships in the Planning of the Second Arctic Land Expedition, 1823-25

Vernacular and indigenous “Arctic Circles” were as important to explorers as elite circuits of scientific sociability. Courting the latter meant increasing one’s connections and interests; courting the former meant increasing one’s chances of survival. This paradox was part of a central tension at the heart of nineteenth century exploration.\textsuperscript{278} As recent scholarship has abundantly shown, though the explorer was meant to accumulate rational knowledge of places, peoples and phenomena through direct observation and precision instrumentation, his ability to do so was often predicated upon local, vernacular and indigenous knowledge and support.\textsuperscript{279} Emissaries of science and the state were fundamentally subject to the self-interest of natives and those who had “gone native” – people whose knowledge was deemed simultaneously inchoate.

\textsuperscript{278} Kennedy, Last Blank Spaces, 193-194.
and indispensable.\textsuperscript{280} One of the paradigms of histories of Arctic exploration has been the fundamental opposition between the cultures and practices of British naval officers and HBC traders. Naval officers (and Franklin especially) are conventionally seen as men whose ethnocentricity and Evangelical Christianity not only led them to eschew native technologies, but also made them willfully and dangerously ignorant of the cross cultural practices of fur traders.\textsuperscript{281} Conversely, HBC fur traders are often valorized as “unsung heroes” who recognized the utility of Native technologies and practices.\textsuperscript{282} But in the wake of the disaster of the First Land Arctic Expedition, naval explorers actively courted indigenous and vernacular individuals and networks from their homes in Britain, in the process weaving a complicated tapestry of relationships across boundaries of race, class, and gender. During the planning of the Second Land Arctic Expedition in 1823-25, Franklin and Richardson tried to draw on the fabric of existing indigenous and vernacular networks of kinship, correspondence, patronage and commerce in northern Canada in order to forward their own aims. These other Arctic Circles were not invisible to the wives and families of Arctic explorers. Rather, they intersected and overlapped – only partly and haphazardly, but importantly nevertheless.

Despite the Arctic’s wild popularity, the disaster of the first Land Expedition made it very unlikely that there would ever be another. Barrow told Franklin in August of 1823, “neither

\textsuperscript{280} I am conscious here of Vanessa Smith’s compelling argument that scholars may be too quick to infer venal self-interest in cross-cultural relationships which may in fact be evidence of culturally, historically and geographically specific modes of friendship and exchange. See Vanessa Smith, \textit{Intimate Strangers: Friendship, Exchange and Pacific Encounters} (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 17.


\textsuperscript{282} Wallace, \textit{The Navy}, 12-14; McGoogan, \textit{Fatal Passage}; Robert L. Richards, \textit{Dr. John Rae} (Whitby: Caedmon of Whitby, 1985); William Barr, \textit{From Barrow to Boothia: The Arctic Journal of Chief Factor Peter Warren Dease, 1836-1839} (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2002). This recalls the tendency to romanticize phases of “frontiersman” settlement as egalitarian antitheses to systemic colonization with its attendant disposessions, Christianization, and rule of colonial difference. For an excellent critique of this romanticized view with respect to whalers in New Zealand, see Ballantyne, \textit{Webs of Empire}, 124-136.
the Admiralty or Colonial Boards will send any Expedition to that quarter.” Nevertheless, both Franklin and Richardson kept up their contacts with the directors and agents of the HBC in London and in Canada and in the autumn of 1823, they came in handy. In October, John Barrow forwarded Parry a letter from his Russian counterpart Ivan Krusenstern, that suggested the Russians were about to make a new attempt on the Northwest Passage. This was especially alarming, given the state of Anglo-Russian relations in North America and competition for the fur trade. After its merger with the NWC in 1821, the HBC had been granted a new monopoly that extended to the drainages of the Mackenzie River and Pacific Ocean. However, parts of these territories were also claimed as Russian under Tsar Alexander’s *ukaz* of 1821, which claimed sovereignty of the west coast of North America to 51°N and interdicted foreign trade. Parry (newly appointed as Hydrographer and preparing for a fourth ship expedition) sent the letter along to Franklin to use as he saw fit.

Using the Russian threat as leverage, Franklin and Richardson formulated a detailed plan for a new, three-pronged attempt at the Passage. Franklin and Richardson would go overland, departing in 1825, ascending the Mackenzie River to the coast in the summer of 1826. They would split into two parties, with Franklin pushing west to Kotzebue Sound and Richardson

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283 DRO D3311/53/9, John Franklin to John Richardson, 1 August 1823.
284 DRO D3311/53/8-10, John Franklin and John Richardson correspondence; SPRI MS 1503/5/4-5, John Richardson correspondence, 1823.
286 It has proven impossible to find the original letter, but in Franklin’s plan that he submitted to Barrow, he wrote, “It is plain from the letters of Admiral Krusenstern addressed to you, which Captain Parry has shewn me, that the exertions of Russia are directed to the increase of her Fur Trade and the extension of her dominion in the northern part of America.” In exchange, Franklin seems to have given Parry his blessing to use his own plan for an expedition to the North Pole in sledges, which Parry utilized in 1827. Franklin did not, apparently, communicate this to his niece Mary Anne Kay, who wrote to him while he was in the field that Parry had plagiarized his idea (see below). NA CO 6/15, John Franklin to John Barrow, 26 November 1823; SPRI MS 248/313, John Franklin to Edward Parry, 24 November, 1823; SPRI MS 248/432/2 “Extracts” from Miss Kay afterwards the wife of Lieut. Kendall – to Captain Franklin” 25 May, 1826.
going east to return via the Coppermine River. Frederick W. Beechey would take HMS *Blossom* to the Pacific and through Bering Strait to rendezvous with Franklin and return via Canton, while Parry and Lyon would try from the eastern Canadian Archipelago, possibly meeting up with Richardson. They pitched it to the Admiralty, Colonial Office, and HBC as a means to extend British trade to the Arctic coast, stem Russian incursions, and identify new trading partners amongst the Canadian Inuit and Alaskan Inupiat. Essentially, they proposed to facilitate the Arctic’s entry into the global commodity market centered on the Canton trade in fur, tea, and opium.287 What they did not realize was that the Inuit, Chukchi, and Inupiat had beaten them to it. As the expedition would find in the summer of 1826, Russian goods were already making their way into the region via long-distance Inupiaq trading networks that stretched from Ostrovnoe in Siberia to the Mackenzie River delta, while British goods were making their way north and west via the newly established fair at Barter Island.288 At the same time, the endemic conflict between the Yellowknives and Dog Ribs in the area around Great Slave Lake (where the expedition would overwinter) was changing dramatically.289 In 1823, the Dog Ribs massacred a band of Yellowknives, reducing the entire tribe from 192 to 158.290 This development seriously threatened the security (and especially the food security) of the expedition, a fact that Franklin and Richardson were keenly aware of as they made their plans.

Amidst these unsettled geopolitical concerns, four key sets of relationships were crucial to the planning of the Second Land Arctic Expedition. The first were the relationships among the


288 Bockstoce, *Furs and Frontiers*, 141-143.


290 Ibid., 14.
survivors of the first expedition, those between Franklin, Richardson, Hepburn, Back, and Tattaneouk/Augustus. The second were the relationships that Franklin and Richardson had, or wished to cultivate, with the agents of the HBC. This was crucial, for (as discussed in Chapter 1) the first Land Expedition had been fatally marked by a lack of coordination between the explorers, the Colonial Office, and the competing companies, resulting in poor supply in the field and mutual suspicion and resentment between naval officers and fur traders. These would be supplemented by the third set of relationships, those of the domestic culture and mixed-race families of fur trade society, which were key to the expedition’s success and survival. Finally, Franklin and Richardson saw HBC agents, fur trade families, and the Inuk intermediary Tattaneouk/Augustus as necessary to secure indigenous support for the expedition, from the warring Dene tribes, to the Gwich’in of the Mackenzie river, to the Inuit of the northern coasts. Without these intersecting “Arctic Circles,” the second expedition might easily end as the first had – in misery, violence, starvation, and death.

Though he would not accompany the expedition, John Hepburn (the sole surviving sailor from the first expedition) was crucial in facilitating the second. Franklin and Richardson had made him into a “hero of the lower deck” in the narrative that they co-wrote, holding him up as the dutiful and religious antithesis to the Canadian voyageurs, whom they painted as fickle and despairing. Franklin privately described him as “a perfect good Seaman who possesses without exception the best regulated mind I ever witnessed.” This stood in marked contrast to the usual treatment of laboring men on expeditions, who were normally dismissed as lacking “the rationality, morality, autonomy, expertise and sense of duty” that was de facto granted to

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291 An excellent synopsis may be found in Cavell, “Hidden Crime,” 159-160.
292 Cavell, Tracing the Connected Narrative, 105-106. Franklin thought the portrait was “very like” Hepburn and apparently had it framed. DRO D3311/53/15, John Franklin to John Richardson, 14 January 1824.
officers. By 1823, Franklin and Richardson had gotten Hepburn a job as the Commander of the Leith Buoy Vessel. This meant that he was close to Richardson during the key period from May of 1823 until May of 1824, when Richardson took up an appointment at Chatham as the surgeon to the division of Marines. As Hepburn attended a night school to “laren Navigation and English Grammer – with an ayedey that it wold improve my spelling,” as well as facilitate his advancement in the Navy, he was also in constant communication with Richardson about the planning and outfitting of the expedition, though he could not go himself. He made suggestions about the Superintendent of Stores, vetted potential employees, and was a contact point in Leith for several of the Scottish employees of the expedition, at least one of whom (Neil MacDonald) Hepburn knew from Great Slave Lake. Hepburn was also evidently involved in the design of the special boats built for the expedition at Woolwich, which were double-ended, lightweight, and designed to be steered with either a rudder or an oar. Another took inspiration from the design of the Inuit umiaq (a light, transportable boat of seal or walrus hide stretched tightly over a driftwood frame), but with “Mr Mackintosh’s prepared canvas” taking the place of

294 Kennedy, Last Blank Spaces, 76-77.
295 Hepburn had initially had a difficult time after the trio returned from the Land Expedition in 1822. He visited Franklin almost daily while he was in London, and Franklin spoke to Lord Bathurst about getting him an appointment as a warrant officer. Barrow seems to have written personally to Bathurst to urge that Hepburn be given an additional reward for his services, to at least bring his pay up to the level of a boatman in the HBC. NA CO 6/15/32, Sir John Barrow to Lord Bathurst, draft letter, nd. DRO D3311/53/4, Franklin to Richardson, 24 October, 1822; NMM AGC 5/27, John Hepburn to John Richardson, 18 February 1823.
296 DRO D3311/53/4, John Franklin to John Richardson, 24 October, 1822; NMM AGC 5/27, John Hepburn to John Richardson, 18 February 1823; McIlraith, Life of Sir John Richardson, 124.
297 NMM AGC 5/27, John Hepburn to John Richardson, 18 February, 1823. Hepburn’s suggestions have to be inferred through Franklin and Richardson’s correspondence; he seems to have been anxious about his literacy and so seldom wrote to Franklin directly, and those letters do not survive. Franklin wrote to Richardson, for example, in January of 1824, “I fear Hepburn is neglecting his writing - his last performance to me is not by any means so well executed as his former letters. Could you advise his practicing more.” DRO D3311/53/15, John Franklin to John Richardson, 14 January, 1824.
298 DRO D331/53/13, John Franklin to John Richardson, 15 December, 1823; DRO D3311/55/2, John Richardson to John Franklin, 4 February 1824; John Franklin to Captain William Pryce-Cumby, 31 January 1824, in Davis, “Which an Affectionate Heart,” 206; DRO D3311/55/2, John Richardson to John Franklin, 4 February, 1824; SPRI MS 248/281/1 BJ, John Franklin Letter Book, 1823-1825, John Franklin to Neil MacDonald, Glasgow, nd [spring 1824 by context].
299 DRO D3311/53/15, John Franklin to John Richardson, 14 January, 1824.
ugruk (bearded seal) skins. These boats would turn out to be a key feature of the expedition, to which Franklin and Richardson would partly attribute their success.

A trustworthy interpreter was also key to the expedition’s success, and Franklin and Richardson were very anxious to rehire the Caribou Inuk Augustus/Tattanoeuk. The young man had proved himself on the first expedition to be the kind of intermediary Franklin’s colleagues would have dreamed of, one who apparently demonstrated “a selfless loyalty to their ‘masters’ under difficult and dangerous circumstances.” Like many cultural brokers upon whom the fabric of the commercial, scientific, and imperial world depended in the early nineteenth century, Tattanoeuk’s abilities stemmed from a life spent in-between. As a teenager in 1812, he began to work at Fort Churchill to save money to pay for a bride (an arrangement which fell through in 1815). After 1815, he periodically returned to the fort, sleeping in the kitchen with the cook and steward and working with Orkneymen and two Cree boys. He learned English and Cree,

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300 DRO D3311/53/13, John Franklin to John Richardson, 15 December, 1823; SPRI MS 1503/5/2, draft letter from John Richardson to John Franklin, 10 January [1824]. This was called the “Walnut Shell Boat” and was intended for crossing rivers. Savours, Search for the North West Passage, 82.

301 Kennedy, 2013, 163.

302 Schaffer et al., Brokered World, x-xxxvii; Kennedy, Last Blank Spaces, 163-194; Bayly, Empire and Information, 10-96.


304 Caribou Inuit men usually “purchased” a bride that they had long been betrothed to, in order to prove that they could support a family. See Boas, Central Eskimo. 579; Birkett-Smith, Caribou Eskimo, 292-294. The Churchill Factory Post Journal for 1813-1814 states that an “Esquimaux Lad” (identified in the subsequent year’s journal as “Augustine”) had been at the fort for two years, but left in July of 1815, and “would not be persuaded to remain in account of the promise he had made to a young Girl previous to his remaining with us, the Father of whom now came to solici[t] his return among his Friends.” The next year, the post journal records that in June of 1815, “Our Esquimaux Lad, Augustine who left us last Summer, this Evening brought his things to the Factory with the intention of leaving his Countrymen altogether, as the Old Man who had intici[ed] (sic) him away last Summer having rec’d the most of the little property the Lad possessed, refused, or was very unwilling to part with the Daughter, till a
as well as how to read and write, but does not seem to have been converted to Christianity. By the time he joined Franklin’s expedition in the winter of 1821, he had gained a reputation of being “devoted to the English and good natured.” But though he had tried to maintain his ties with his kin, he became the quintessential go-between, whose cross-cultural alliances proceeded from (or resulted in) deracination from home, leading to both fluid loyalties and identities. The missionary Benjamin West reported to Franklin in 1823 that as a result of his service on the first expedition, Tattanoeuk had been ostracized from his band, who considered him to be at least partially responsible for his companion Junius’s disappearance during the retreat across the Barren Grounds in 1822. This meant he was forced to live at Churchill, where he was made to, as Franklin wrote to Richardson, “work at drudgery about the Fort, and [sent] out daily to fish which seems to go much against the Grain and for which indeed he is not much fitted.” These were certainly compelling reasons for him to join the second expedition, even though there he would continue to be an outsider in every sense - both a trespasser on Inuit territory, and an exotic stranger to his British, Canadian and Dene companions.

Tattanoeuk’s negotiation of his in-betweenness would have considerable consequences for the next generation of Inuit interpreters. In order to entice Tattanoeuk, Franklin offered him the chance to bring along a companion, another Caribou Inuk named Ouligbuck (Ullebuck or Ouglibuck) who had never worked for Europeans before. Tattanoeuk trained him to be an

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305 Franklin wrote in his first narrative that he “has no other idea of a Deity than some confused notions which he has obtained at Churchill.” Franklin, Narrative, 1824, 41; George Back, Arctic Artist: The Journal and Paintings of George Back, Midshipman with Franklin, 1819-1822, ed. C. Stuart Houston (Kingston and Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1994), 119.
306 NA CO 6/15, “Queries answered by Mr Snodie, Chief of Churchill Fort.”
307 Kennedy, Last Blank Spaces, 164, 193.
308 DRO D3311/53/13, John Franklin to John Richardson, 15 December, 1823.
309 For Franklin’s offer, see SPR MS 248/281/1 BJ. John Franklin to George Simpson, 27 February, 1824. For Ouligbuck’s background, see HBCA B.42/a/151 Churchill Journal 1823/24, Ff 38, 7 July, 1824.
306 By
307 The
interpreter, and by the summer of 1826, Richardson took Ouligbuck with him when his arm of
the expedition detached from Franklin’s. After the expedition, Ouligbuck would go on to be
employed (often alongside Tattanoeuk) at Churchill and York Factory, helped to establish Fort
Chimo, and would serve as Peter Warren Dease and Thomas Simpson’s interpreter in their effort
to complete the Northwest Passage in 1839. Both he and his son, William Ouligbuck, would
also travel with Richardson and Dr. John Rae during their attempt to find Franklin in 1848-1849
(see Chapter 4). In 1854, the younger William Ouligbuck would rejoin Rae as his interpreter on
the journey that ultimately discovered the fate of the Franklin expedition – in the process,
exposing Ouligbuck to severe calumny and ridicule in Britain, not least at the hands of Lady Jane
Franklin and Charles Dickens (see Conclusion).

Of all their surviving former comrades, it was George Back whom Franklin and
Richardson actively sought to exclude from the second expedition. The reasons were rooted both
in the Arctic and in the social circles of London. Firstly, there was Back’s behavior— in the duel
that he had fought with Hood over “Greenstockings,” and in his subsequent spreading of rumors
over Richardson’s execution of the Iroquois Michel (see Chapter 1). Secondly, while pursuing
his own position as a London “lion,” Back had evidently started courting Franklin’s favorite
niece, Mary Anne Kay. Franklin wished to keep him off the expedition and away from Mary
Anne, writing to Richardson in December of 1823, “You know I have no desire for [Back’s]

310 HBCA B.42/a/155 Churchill Journal, 1827-28; B. 42/a/57, Churchill Journal, 1829-1830; B.38/a/7, Fort Chimo
Post Journal, 1836-9; B.157/a/1: Peel River Post Journal, 1840-1; B.200/b/13, McKenzie River Correspondence
Book, 1840-41; B.200/a/26: Fort Simpson Journal, 1841-2; B.200/b/16: MacKenzie River Correspondence Book,
1842-43; B.200/b/17, McKenzie River Correspondence Book, 1843-44.
311 HBCA B. 239/b/104b, York Factory Correspondence Book, 1852-56.
312 It appears that by November of 1823, Back and Mary Anne were already close – Franklin referred to him as
“your friend Mr. Back” in his correspondence with her. See NMM FRN1/2, John Franklin to Mary Anne Kay, 22
November, 1823. Subsequent correspondence between Franklin and Mary Anne and Franklin and Richardson deal
more extensively with Franklin’s fears over the developing relationship. See NMM FRN1 and DRO D3311/53.
company – but do not see how I can decline it if the Admiralty press the matter.”313 Franklin’s solution was to try to get Back promoted. If he spent more time at sea (in service in the West Indies) he might be promoted to commander. This would, as he wrote to Richardson, mean that he could not accompany the expedition, for “Mr Barrow wisely thinks that two Captains are not required on such a service…”314 It also neatly got him away from Mary Anne, and by the end of December, Franklin could write to Richardson that, “I am very happy to tell you that it is quite decided Back is not to be of the party,” and instead appointed one of Parry’s subordinates, Lieutenant John Bushnan. 315 By August, however, Bushnan was dead and Back was on his way home, and by November of 1824, he had been appointed to the expedition and was renewing his attentions to Mary Anne. Franklin wrote to Richardson, “I cannot say that I am glad of it, nor can I think he is from the tenor of his letter to Mr Barrow,” but the fact was there and had to be dealt with.316 Eleanor advised him (based on Mary Anne’s father’s ill-health and her mother’s bad temper), “should a desirable opportunity offer, I would advise the not obstructing it more than her youth requires.”317 Possibly to mitigate Back’s influence, Franklin took Lt. Edward Kendall as a second lieutenant (and who would eventually marry Mary Anne).

This inner circle of relationships from the first expedition was also embedded in Franklin and Richardson’s broader engagement with the social and administrative fabric of the fur trade in North America. As important as the patronage and assistance of George Simpson (junior governor of the Northern Department), Simon McGillivray (a partner in the NWC who had helped effect the merger of the companies, now an HBC agent), Nicholas Garry (HBC deputy governor) and James H. Pelly (HBC Governor) were, so too was that of the traders and chief

313 DRO D3311/53/94, John Franklin to John Richardson, 20 December, 1823.
314 DRO D3311/53/14, John Franklin to John Richardson, 30 December, 1823.
315 Ibid.
316 DRO D3311/53/93, John Franklin to John Richardson, 23 November, 1824.
317 Eleanor Franklin to John Franklin, 18 December, 1824, in Gell, John Franklin’s Bride, 299-300.
factors at the HBC posts. These were men who might have seen a skit poking fun at the last bumbling expedition, who knew the voyageurs who had died, and who crucially held both stores of food and of local “patrimonial” knowledge upon which Franklin and Richardson depended.318 Franklin and Richardson actively sought their advice, judgment, and patronage as they prepared for the next expedition. They corresponded with Chief Factors Robert MacVicar, James and George Keith, Edward Smith, John George McTavish, as well as traders Peter Warren Dease and Willard Wentzel (among many others) about whom to engage, the state of war between the Yellowknives and Dogribs, the best places to base the expedition (Great Bear Lake), the operation of the fishery, and how to function as a trading post.319

Simon McGillivray wrote to Franklin in 1824, “Provisions constitute the sinews of war in the Indian country. The moment these fail, disorganization ensues – men change their nature and become unmanageable – of this you have had a terrible example.”320 The state of war between the Dog Ribs and the Yellowknives was a chief concern for Franklin and Richardson as they planned the second expedition, constantly appearing in their correspondence with each other and with HBC agents. Franklin was deeply alarmed when he received the reports from Canada about the initial Dog Rib raid that had decimated the Yellowknives, writing to Richardson, “You will deeply regret to hear that there has been a dreadful massacre perpetrated on the Copper Indians by the Dog Ribs – though we know that the latter have much oppression to plead in excuse.”321 Richardson was very frustrated, and hoped that friendly overtures from the MacKenzie Inuit,

318 For the satirical play, see MacLeod and Glover, “Franklin's First Expedition,” 669-682. For a rebuttal to MacLeod’s and Glover’s criticism of the officers of the expedition, and in particular their conclusion that the skit hinted at more extensive cannibalism on that expedition, see Cavell, “Hidden Crime,” 156-160.
320 SPRI MS 248/281/1 BJ, John Franklin Letter Book, 1823-25, Simon McGillivray to John Franklin, nd.
321 DRO D3311/53/36, John Franklin to John Richardson, 28 October, 1824.
“will help to compensate for the war betwixt the Dog Ribs and Copper Indians - I expected to have had some of the latter to hunt for us but that is now out of the question.”322 They were particularly concerned about what the war meant for Akaitcho. Their safety on the first expedition had depended in large part on the terror Akaitcho embodied; with that stripped away, and with the geopolitics of the region uncertain, their futures were uncertain, too.323

In order to better understand, and possibly mitigate the situation, Franklin sought the support of two HBC employees whom he had met in 1819-22. The first was Robert MacVicar, the Chief Factor from Fort Resolution and Great Slave Lake (who had supplied the first expedition and was friendly with both men). He was on leave in Britain in 1824, and planning to return to Great Slave Lake the following year.324 In Britain, Franklin and Richardson both corresponded with him and met with him in Edinburgh and London (with Franklin offering to show him “the lions of London”).325 From him, they learned the most recent information about the state of war between the Yellowknives and Dog Ribs, and also (to their relief) that Akaitcho had survived and that their debts to him from the first expedition had been paid.326 Peter Warren Dease was even more crucial. An experienced NWC man who had been living in the Athabasca and Mackenzie River districts for nearly twenty years, he became a chief trader during the merger of the companies. In early 1824, Franklin hired him to build the expedition’s forward

322 DRO D3311/55/11, John Richardson to John Franklin, 29 October 1824.
324 For MacVicar’s support of the first expedition, see HBC A.1818/a/3, Robert MacVicar, Journal Fort Resolution and Great Slave Lake, 27 May, 1820-24 March, 1821. Unfortunately the post journal for the following year could not be located at the HBCA. For MacVicar’s leave, see SPRI MS 961 MJ, Robert MacVicar Papers, 1815-44. This contains some of the Richardson correspondence. See also SPRI MS 248/281/1 BJ, John Franklin Letter Book, 1823-1825.
326 SPRI MS 961 MJ, John Richardson to Robert MacVicar, 2 January, 1824.
base on Great Slave Lake (which Dease named Fort Franklin). George Simpson highly approved of Dease (and may have suggested him) and entreated Franklin, “do not part with Mr. Dease under any circumstances,” not only because he was more than capable to help the expedition “in trying or distressing circumstances,” but also because “his presence would… give a confidence to the people which that of strangers to the country cannot inspire.” Dease did not disappoint, not least because, together with MacVicar, he conducted negotiations between the Dog Ribs and Yellowknives at Fort Franklin and temporarily secured a truce. This was especially important, because as late as March of 1824, the Yellowknives were refusing to hunt for the expedition because of the ongoing warfare; Dease’s negotiations were therefore crucial to the expedition’s success.

Franklin’s and Richardson’s friendships with MacVicar and Dease were also crucial to securing the support of lower-ranking HBC men along their route. Franklin (who addressed MacVicar as “My dear Friend” or “My dear MacVicar” in his correspondence) asked him to convey the expedition canoes to Fort Chipewyan in 1824, and also to take a bundle of letters addressed to the men in charge of the forts along their route. These letters all cast the expedition’s aims as primarily commercial, rather than geographical, and appealed to the traders’ best interests, always mentioning that, “in following the track I am about to do, it is expected the encroachment of the Russian Fur Traders towards your posts will be prevented.”

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327 SPRI MS 248/281/1 BJ, John Franklin Letter Book, John Franklin to Peter Warren Dease, 4 March, 1824.
328 Quoted in Barr, *From Barrow to Boothia*, 10.
330 Edward Smith wrote to Dease from MacKenzie’s River on March 7, 1824, that “From the late unfortunate Quarrel the Copper Indians decline accompanying the Expedition under the Command of Captain Franklin to Bear Lake either in the capacity of Hunters or otherwise.” HBCA B.39/b/2, Fort Chipewyan Correspondence Book, Copy letter from Edward Smith & A R MacLeod, Fork McKenzie’s River to Messrs Charles Dease & John Hutchinson, Fort Perseverance, 7 March, 1824.
331 SPRI MS 248/281/1 BJ, John Franklin Letter Book, John Franklin to James Keith, Chief Factor, H. B. Company, or Officer in charge at Fort Chipewyan, 9 March 1824; John Franklin to Edward Smith, Chief Factor, Athabasca
basis for Franklin’s request for pemmican and other stores. By having the messages personally delivered by MacVicar, Franklin may have hoped to secure the support of these men in a way that had been lacking on their first journey. He was effectively seeking MacVicar’s patronage, and his personal endorsement of the expedition as a prudent and profitable venture. He also relied heavily on Dease, putting him in charge of establishing a fishery on Great Bear Lake to support the expedition, augmenting their stores, and engaging and paying Indian hunters and an interpreter. Franklin made special note of his reliance on Dease in his correspondence with the other HBC officers. In their replies, they marked the “old winterer’s” involvement with approval. Edward Smith wrote to Franklin that Dease was “well acquainted with the nature of the Country and its natives,” while George McTavish was more fulsome, writing, “I cannot help congratulating you upon the judicious choice you made… his experience, local knowledge… the equanimity of his temper, added to gentell (sic) unassuming manners, point him out as by far the most suitable character for your purposes.”

Franklin’s efforts to draw on local experience and secure vernacular patronage seem to have paid off. In August of 1824, Simpson wrote to him from York Factory “There is but one feeling towards yourself… in this Country, that of the highest respect, regard, and esteem,” and that the expedition was considered “so important both in a political and Commercial point of view…. that we are all anxious to meet your views, and to render you our most cordial assistance

region, 7 March, 1824; John Franklin to John Halden, Chief Factor, HBC, or Officer in Charge at Fort William, 9 March, 1824. After his copy of the letter to Halden, Franklin noted in the letter book, “Letters were written to other gentlemen in charge of minor posts, which I did not consider necessary to be inserted here.”

332 SPRI MS 248/281/1 BJ, John Franklin Letter Book, John Franklin to Peter Warren Dease, 4 March, 1824.

333 SPRI MS 248/281/1 BJ, John Franklin Letter Book, John Franklin to James Keith, Chief Factor, H. B. Company, or Officer in charge at Fort Chipewyan, 9 March 1824; John Franklin to Edward Smith, Chief Factor, Athabasca region, 7 March, 1824; John Franklin to John Halden, Chief Factor, HBC, or Officer in Charge at Fort William, 9 March, 1824.

334 SPRI MS 248/281/1 BJ, John Franklin Letter Book, Edward Smith to John Franklin, 29 July, 1824; George McTavish to John Franklin, York Factory, 8 September, 1824. Chief Factors George Keith and John Robertson were also extremely pleased with Dease’s involvement, writing to Franklin in terms that echoed McTavish’s high praise. SPRI MS 248/281/1 BJ, John Robertson to John Franklin, 7 July, 1824; George Keith to John Franklin, 29 July, 1824.
and support.” In their communications with each other, HBC officers were less enthusiastic, but still clearly glad that Dease and MacVicar were responsible for Franklin, and not themselves. Keith, for example, pointed to Dease’s forethought in setting up the fall fishery at Great Bear Lake, and to MacVicar’s own endorsement of the expedition, as reasons why Franklin could not send men to overwinter at Fort Chipewyan in 1825-26. MacVicar ended up taking several of Franklin’s men for the winter instead. Indeed, the only people who were displeased at Dease’s involvement were the Gwich’in and the traders near his last post at Fort Good Hope, higher up on the MacKenzie River. An epidemic cut a swathe through the population over the winter of 1826-7, and Dease’s replacement wrote, “the removal of their Old Trader Chs Dease in this time of distress was another unexpected dissapointment (sic) to them, and required all the arguments of Messrs McPherson, Bell and Dease Himself to reconcile them to his departure.” The traders apparently expected that Franklin would reciprocate Dease’s patronage, and there was a widespread feeling that Franklin ought to take Dease to Britain at the end of the expedition at his own expense and there, as Franklin wrote to Back, “to have introduced him most particularly to the Committee and generally to the public – Then they thought his promotion would be ensured!” Franklin explained that he was seeking patronage in London too, and could scarcely be Dease’s patron, too, though he did promise to speak well of him in his official report and in his meetings with Simpson and the Council. Dease was effectively left to look after his own interests; nearly a decade later, he led his own expedition (together with George Simpson’s

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335 SPRI MS 248/281/1 BJ, John Franklin Letter Book, George Simpson to John Franklin, York Factory, 8 August, 1824.
336 HBCA B.39/b/4, Fort Chipewyan Correspondence Book, 1825-26, James Keith to Robert MacVicar, Fort Chipewyan, 10 September, 1825.
339 SPRI MS 395/74/15 BL, John Franklin to George Back, 9 March, 1827.
deranged nephew Thomas Simpson and Ouligbuck as translator) to the north and west in umiaqs, filling in the gaps left over by Franklin and Richardson.340

As they courted vernacular knowledge and support, Franklin and Richardson also drew on the mixed-race families that were the backbone of the fur trade’s domestic culture. All of their correspondents were married to (either legally or according to “the custom of the country”) Native or Métis women.341 Though the HBC had historically discouraged interracial marriages much more than its rival NWC, in practice these unions were ubiquitous, granting men access to widespread native kinship and trading networks, as well as to the (usually unpaid) skills and labor of their spouses, especially in dressing furs.342 These families were indispensible to the expedition. Franklin ensured that Dease and several other expedition members brought their families to Fort Franklin so that the women could make the shoes and clothing for the expedition.343 They were also responsible for gathering and preparing faunal specimens for Richardson, who was staking his professional future as a naturalist on the expedition. Franklin wrote to Dease, Simpson, and several of the chief factors to arrange for specimens to be gathered for Richardson at every point along the route, and specifically requested that “the Indian women [procure] these specimens,” because of their experience in dressing furs.344 Indeed, Franklin wrote to James Keith, “the women know how to stuff them too well to need description from me.”345 Indian women also made birch boxes to transport specimens.346 These specimens would

340 See Barr, From Barrow to Boothia.
341 Van Kirk, Many Tender Ties, 5.
342 Ibid., 61.
343 SPRI MS 248/281/1 BJ, John Franklin Letter Book, John Franklin to Peter Warren Dease, 4 March, 1824. A major part of his request for stores from the Colonial Office included “A bale of Handkercheifs (sic), gown pieces, flowered Blankets, and some trinkets” for the women “who will be employed in preparing the leather and making the shoes for the use of the party.”
344 SPRI MS 248/281/1 BJ, John Franklin Letter Book, John Franklin to George Simpson, 27 February, 1824; John Franklin to Peter Warren Dease, 4 March, 1824.
345 SPRI MS 248/281/1 BJ, John Franklin Letter Book, John Franklin to James Keith, 9 March, 1824.
eventually make their way through and to the other intersecting Arctic circles, handled by Mary Richardson as she assisted her husband with his publication, posted or carried to eminent naturalists in London and Edinburgh. This assistance was not limited to Canada. The Orkney Islands off the north coast of Scotland were primary recruiting grounds for the HBC. In Stromness, Kirkwall, and around the islands were men just returned from the fur trading countries, some of whom had left mixed families behind them, others who, beginning in 1821, began to bring their wives home with them, or send their children home for education. Explorers knew these women constituted a highly important resource, with some (like George Lyon) arranging to have snowshoes made in Orkney prior to the ship’s departure.

At the same time that Franklin and Richardson utilized the attachments of HBC men for their own ends, the fur trade culture of “country marriage” was in flux, as ambitious company men like Simpson, McTavish, and MacVicar were beginning to see “country wives” as professional impediments. Simpson was particularly notorious for viewing fur trade wives as useful for their practical value rather than as binding attachments, which he demonstrated by abandoning two Métis women (the mothers of his children) between 1821 and 1830 and marrying his eighteen-year old cousin Frances in 1830. Simpson’s behavior was contagious, especially amongst former NWC employees of humble backgrounds who were eager to expand their British kinship and friendship ties at the expense of their Métis ones. This too, however,

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346 HBCA E.15/1/70, Franklin Supplies, 1824-27, “supplies from the HBC Post Cumberland House 18th August 1825” signed for by Thomas Drummond.
348 Ibid., 156-59, 179-185; Van Kirk, Many Tender Ties, 96, 140-1. According to local lore in Orkney, some of these children attended Tomison’s Academy, an institution set up by Governor William Tomison. See OA D1/73/3, Short Biography of Governor William Tomison, 1739-1829. See also OA D 31/21/3/3, Ernest Marwick Collection.
349 NA CO 6/16, George Lyon to R. Wilmot Horton, 17 February 1824, in which he requested permission to have “24 pairs of snow shoes to be made at the Orkneys by Indian Women who are there – the Govr of Hudson’s Bay Comp will send the proper materials.”
351 Ibid., 132.
had its problems. Though European brides were prestigious, and emblematic of “civilization” and “improvement,” they were nevertheless widely viewed (not least by Simpson) as encumbrances, women of little practical use who inhibited their husbands’ mobility.\textsuperscript{352}

The Second Land Arctic Expedition was entangled in the fluctuating practice of fur country marriage, as the cases of MacVicar and Dease demonstrate. In 1824, MacVicar met the daughter of a Selkirk settler, Chrissy MacBeath at Norway House as he was en route with the Land Expedition’s canoes, where they exchanged vows and entered into a common-law marriage. He took her with him to Great Slave Lake, and they were legally married by Franklin in 1827 at Fort Chipewyan.\textsuperscript{353} Richardson and Franklin both liked Chrissy MacVicar, but nevertheless both men were, like MacVicar’s colleagues, dubious about whether she was ultimately a help or a hindrance to him.\textsuperscript{354} When he heard about the common-law marriage, Richardson wrote to Franklin, “I am afraid that the additional load of a wife of no light weight will not increase his speed” with their expedition canoes.\textsuperscript{355} Both were also concerned about how the teenager would adjust to life at Slave Lake, as Richardson alluded in a letter to his wife Mary when he pointed out that she was “the first white woman who has been so far north on this Continent.”\textsuperscript{356} Dease’s Métis wife Elizabeth was a rather different case. As mentioned above, she accompanied him to Great Bear Lake with their children, and actively helped in sewing boots


\textsuperscript{353} Van Kirk, \textit{Many Tender Ties}, 179-180. Franklin continued to have fond memories “of those whom I was instrumental in Marrying at Athabasca” well into the 1830s. MS 395/41/4 BL, John Franklin to George Back, 4 March, 1834.

\textsuperscript{354} SPRI MS 1503/6/6, John Richardson to Mary Richardson, 6 September, 1825; SPRI MS 1503/6/12, John Richardson to Mary Richardson, Great Slave Lake, 20 September, 1826; NMM FRN1/9, John Franklin to Mary Anne Kay, Fort Franklin, Great Bear Lake, 8 November, 1825.

\textsuperscript{355} DRO D3311/55/11, John Richardson to John Franklin, 29 October, 1824.

\textsuperscript{356} SPRI MS 1503/6/6, John Richardson to Mary Richardson, 6 September, 1825.
and clothing for the expedition, as well as preparing some of Richardson’s faunal specimens.

Their young family lived in the fort with the officers, occupying the room next door to Franklin’s and Richardson’s where, as Franklin would write to Mary Anne, “we are constantly reminded of the rising generation by the squalling of a young boy.” ³⁵⁷ They contributed to a domestic atmosphere at the fort over the winter, though (as I discuss below) Franklin and Richardson constantly pointed out that it could not hold a candle to their idealized hearths in Britain. Dease’s mixed-race family would later be a topic of discussion in other “Arctic Circles” in Britain, possibly as part of a larger discussion over the shift towards European brides among HBC officers. One Sunday evening not long after his return, John Richardson mentioned that Dease had been praising Englishwomen in front of his wife Elizabeth, “not aware she understood him she attacked him furiously and gave him a good cuffing for giving them the preference.” ³⁵⁸ The incident appears in Peter Richardson’s journal, but not as a private conversation, but evidently as a topic of conversation at a Sunday evening soiree at the Fittons’ home, to which Buckland, Sabine, Brown, Lyell, Murchison, and John Griffin were invited along with Franklin and the Richardson brothers. Peter Richardson only noted the “learned folks present” in his journal, but it is by no means unlikely that all these men were accompanied by their equally learned wives, or that Jane Griffin (then being courted by John Franklin) might have been there, too.

While I discuss below how fur trade society was depicted in explorers’ correspondence from the field, it is more difficult to document how much explorers’ families knew about the planning process while the expedition was still in Britain. Eleanor Franklin (and possibly Mary Richardson) seem to have been relatively well-informed about their husbands’ liaisons within the HBC, and to a certain extent about the indigenous geopolitics that were likely to structure the

³⁵⁷ NMM FRN/1/9, John Franklin to Mary Anne Kay, Fort Franklin, 8 November, 1825.
expedition. Both women were introduced to some of their husbands’ fur trade contacts, meeting
Robert MacVicar when he was in Britain on leave. 359 Both women’s homes were staging
grounds for the expedition. When the Franklins visited the Richardsons at Chatham in August of
1824, the visit was taken up with experiments in preparation for the expedition – trying out
pedometers (which Eleanor was skeptical of) and testing their instruments. 360 Eleanor wrote to
her sister Sarah Kay that when they were making meridian observations, they “had to dislodge
Miss Baby [little Eleanor] from her sky-parlour at rather a crucial juncture, because the sun
would not wait for them.” 361 Eleanor sewed a silken flag to be unfurled on the Polar Sea, and
she oversaw the books for the traveling library (denouncing some religious donations as “a mass
of Calvinistic verbiage which I should be sorry to prostitute my reason or taste in the perusal
of”). 362 Others she described to be “fitter to be under a glass case in a drawing room with pet
china and essences, than to toss about among the Esquimaux.” 363 When several officers came to
the house to try to get a place on the expedition, she wrote to Franklin, “I wish you would come
home and do your own business, for I feel it very ridiculous to have all these gentlemen coming
to me to try the effect of petticoat influence.” 364 She also examined the double-ended boats that
Hepburn had been instrumental in planning when they were being built at Woolwich, and may
have tested them. She described the “Lion” and the “Reliance” to Franklin’s sister Elizabeth as
being, “varnished and adorned with blue and gold, and painted with all sorts of mythological
devices” such as Juno, Romulus and Remus, and Pegasus and the Hydra, which she speculated

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359 As Richardson later reminded her. SPRI MS 1503/6/6, John Richardson to Mary Richardson, 6 September, 1825.
360 Eleanor wrote to her sister that when they were making meridian observations, they “had to dislodge Miss Baby
from her sky-parlour at rather a crucial juncture, because the sun would not wait for them.” Eleanor Franklin to
Sarah Kay, 14 August, 1824, in Gell, John Franklin’s Bride, 280-282.
361 Eleanor Franklin to Sarah Kay, 14 August, 1824, in ibid., 280-282.
362 Eleanor Franklin to John Franklin, 20 December, 1824, in ibid., 301.
363 Eleanor Franklin to John Franklin, 20 December, 1824, in ibid., 301.
364 Eleanor Franklin to John Franklin, 18 December, 1824, in ibid., 298-99.
would “make the Indians wonder at the strange beasts we have in our country.” Franklin later wrote in his Narrative, “So secure was this little vessel that several ladies… fearlessly embarked in it, and were paddled across the Thames in a fresh breeze.” These ladies were, apparently, Jane Griffin and her sisters, since Jane recorded in her diary that they “joyfully accepted” the offer of testing them.

Eleanor’s primary role (as her tuberculosis worsened) was as a gatekeeper of information, a role which, as I discuss below, her relatives and fellow “polar wives” took up after her death. Her letters indicate that she knew about the details of supplies, engagements of men, and the disposition of the HBC, which she forwarded as necessary, both to Franklin when he was away and to his wider family. Eleanor wrote to Franklin’s sister Isabella Cracroft and summarized the many preparations under way in February of 1824, in order to assure her, “there is no danger of his again encountering the sufferings of his last journey.” Never one to be less than precise, she went into significant detail for Isabella’s benefit– the boats were being built at Woolwich, Dease’s detachment had been sent ahead to build the forts and establish supplies, and most important of all, the fur companies were now united and “have their interest now so much involved in the success of the Expedition that there can be no doubt of their … complete support.” Eight months later, she wrote to her own sister Sarah Kay and gave her a digest of the information contained in letters that Franklin had received from the North, and optimistically concluded, “As far as human prudence can foresee or provide, all seems most auspicious.”

Some information, however, she kept to herself. She had long been keenly aware of expedition’s

365 SPRI MS 248/389/1, Eleanor Franklin to Elizabeth Franklin, 11 May, 1824.
366 Quoted in Savours, Search for the North West Passage, 82-83.
367 F. Woodward, Portrait of Jane, 155-156.
368 Eleanor Franklin to John Franklin, 10 April, 1824, in Gell, John Franklin’s Bride, 256-257.
369 SPRI MS 248/388/1, Eleanor Anne Franklin to Isabella Cracroft, 5 February, 1824.
370 Eleanor Franklin to Sarah Kay, 28 October, 1824, in Gell, John Franklin’s Bride, 284-285.
dependence upon Yellowknives and the vulnerability and potential for intimacy that it contained. She had alluded to it, after all, in her “Miss Greenstockings” Valentine’s Day poem sent to both Franklin and Richardson in 1823 (see Chapter 1). But after they were married, Franklin also seems to have confided in her about his anxieties about the war between the Dog Ribs and Yellowknives; he later wrote to Mary Anne “I knew of this warfare before my departure from England – but only mentioned it to your dear Aunt & Mr Barrow.” By then, Eleanor was dead, and Mary Anne was beginning to step into her shoes as one of Franklin’s confidantes.

In summary, Franklin and Richardson were keenly aware that their survival and success depended upon the willing participation – indeed, the active patronage – of vernacular and indigenous individuals and networks. Their lives and professional futures depended upon this knowledge and support, from the labor of fur trade wives, to the organization and diplomacy of traders (especially Dease), to the technical expertise of Hepburn, to the willingness of Tattanoeuk to again take up the dangerous and uncertain role of their go-between and interpreter. To a certain extent, their families – and especially Eleanor Franklin – either glimpsed or guessed this. Despite being both a new mother and fatally ill, Eleanor appears to have distilled the (limited) information she received from her husband about his plans, and selectively shared it through her wider familial and social circles, principally in order to reassure them about his safety. As I discuss in the next section, this role as a “gatekeeper” of information was by no means limited to Eleanor, but was generally extended to officers’ family members, who came to share and manage their correspondence from the field. In doing so, they may have also helped facilitate the process of erasing explorers’ dependence upon vernacular and indigenous networks – for in those private letters, Arctic explorers cast themselves as the heroes of their own

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371 NMM FRN1/10, John Franklin to Mary Anne Kay, William Porden Kay, Emily Kay, 6 February, 1826.
adventures for their families and friends at home, and made the traders, natives, women and go-
betweens upon whom they depended merely supporting actors, if they were visible at all.

Circuits of Correspondence: Arctic Families as Gatekeepers of Arctic Information

When their male relatives were in the field, families became important gatekeepers of
information, nodes in a broader web of scientific and imperial knowledge, and agents in
establishing explorers’ trustworthiness and credibility. In sharing correspondence, they conveyed
important data to their wider social circles that would not be revealed to the public until the
expedition narrative was published. Presents, souvenirs, and mementos sent home for their
enjoyment and education were also distributed through networks of sociability and patronage.
The traffic went both ways, as family members shared important news and gossip in their own
correspondence, and sending books and artifacts of domestic comfort (from knitted mittens to
jars of marmalade) to men in the field. When explorers came home, they participated in the
process of turning the expedition’s raw data into a polished narrative, complete with appendices
and illustrations. These practices ultimately produced the archives of polar exploration that form
the basis for this research, as families later donated their private troves of letters and specimens
to naval and polar institutions.

Correspondence networks constituted the capillary system of the early nineteenth century
information order, the primary means by which formal and informal knowledge spread,
relationships were developed and maintained, movements for social reform were sustained, and
comparisons between colonial sites were enabled.372 But these stories and these archives tend to
be centered on (and housed in) institutions, societies, and almost exclusively white male

372 Ballantyne, Orientalism and Race; Laidlaw, Colonial Connections; Lester, Imperial Networks; Endersby,
Imperial Nature, 84-111; A. Secord, “Corresponding Interests,” 383-408.
intellectual, professional and emotional relationships. Feminist scholars have illustrated the importance of women’s correspondence networks, practices of sociability, and organizational capacity to a broad range of domestic and imperial causes in the era of reform (including antislavery, the campaign against sati, protections for aboriginal peoples, support for missions, anti-Corn Laws, and the enfranchisement of dissenters, Jews, and Catholics - to name a few). Yet these insights have yet to register in what has always been seen as a male-dominated practice of expeditionary science. The net effect is to perpetuate the notion that the home was sealed off from itineraries of scientific, geographical, and colonial knowledge that began in the field and ended in the male purview of the cabinet or the institution. When explorers’ correspondence has been analyzed, it has principally been with the aim to either humanize them, or to examine how they negotiated their own identities in alien environments. The exception here is the work on Darwin’s women correspondents. This has done much to demonstrate how women (especially Emma and Henrietta Darwin) served as Charles’s amanuenses, editors, collectors, and moral and religious foils and critics, and particularly their efforts to maintain his correspondence during his many illnesses.

Looking at familial practices of correspondence and archiving helps us to understand how the traffic in imperial and scientific information was linked to the home. Exploration was not only a scientific project, but also part of empire’s compelled mobility, and it too demanded what

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Charlotte MacDonald has called the “intimacy of the envelope,” in order to sustain fragile relationships and fractured families. As explorers and their families attempted to bridge what Elizabeth Vibert has called the “inhospitable vastness” of the “cold space of empire,” they constructed a private family space that incorporated unfamiliar cultures and geographies. At the same time, explorers knew that their families would share their letters with friends and patrons – and indeed, they encouraged them to do so. With an eye on both audiences, they staged themselves as both rational and sentimental observers, eminently trustworthy domestic men who were fundamentally unchanged by their experiences. In the process, the people they depended upon in the field were cast as curiosities and caricatures, not the autonomous actors or vital support that they actually were. In this way, explorers’ familial correspondence effectively constituted the first phase of the process of reconciling what Dane Kennedy has called the “epistemological rupture” between exploration as epistemology and exploration as experience (in which they were usually vulnerable to and dependent upon indigenous peoples, cultural brokers, vernacular knowledge, and environmental conditions).

For women to be “gatekeepers” of information was nothing unusual, especially for maritime families. Since the dramatic expansion of the British navy and merchant fleet in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries (and the corresponding expansion of the British and American fishing and whaling fleets), maritime partners possessed significant power over their men’s legal and financial affairs, and could act as intermediaries between “the fraternity at sea” and industry on shore. This was at least partly because seafaring partners often had to deal with their husbands’ business matters in their absence (and in doing so, could circumvent or

378 Kennedy, Last Blank Spaces, 194.
379 Norling, “Ahab's Wife,” 85; Norling, Captain Ahab Had a Wife, 140-164.
They received privileged information from their husbands on long voyages (including their planned routes, the movements of the fleet, disagreements among the crew, and other matters), which they might (or might not) share with the ship’s owners, other officers, or the Admiralty. Moreover, in an era when the price of postage was prohibitive, naval officers’ wives might have access to franking privileges, enabling them to send messages for free or on the cheap. This was certainly the case with explorers’ families, who sent and received letters via the HBC, departing whalers, other expeditions, and the Colonial Office and Admiralty. The Second Arctic Land Expedition was particularly well connected (for an Arctic expedition), because it was embedded within the HBC’s communication system. This was a network developed over many years, in which both regular and “express” dispatches were carried by any means possible: in the summer via canoes carrying supplies or in the winter with parties trekking overland on snowshoes or running dogsleds. It was, as Carolyn Podruchny has pointed out, extremely precarious - letters and dispatches frequently went astray, and had to be supplemented by word of mouth – but nevertheless, it did connect the posts of the fur country to each other and to the outside world.

Correspondence from home kept explorers in the stream of information and gossip crucial to their professional interests. Relatives often summarized the news in their letters, intertwining it with the latest domestic gossip and supplementing it with packets of newspapers and magazines. Franklin wrote to Sarah Kay in February of 1826 that he and his companions had poured over every letter, newspaper and review she had sent (including the Literary Gazette,

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382 This was also the case with Arctic explorers’ families, who could also send letters via naval agents, the HBC’s London office, and the whaling fleet (as their relatives constantly reminded them).
383 Podruchny, Making the Voyageur World, 240-246.
Quarterly Review, the Mechanics Magazine and the Edinburgh Review) and that they “have put us in possession of every intelligence domestic and general which was stirring among you in May last – and you would be amused to hear the subjects rediscussed at Bear Lake…” 384 This information was not only entertaining, but could be highly valuable. In February of 1826, for example, Sarah Kay wrote to Franklin about what she had learned from Lady Beechey about her sons’ progress in the Blossom towards Bering Strait, while her daughter Mary Anne wrote, “I hear Capt Beechey is ordered to remain 2 years off Icy Cape, for chance of falling in with you,” – crucial information, if Franklin received it early enough, for his summers’ travels. 385

Most of the letters sent to explorers by their families do not survive, and their contents have to be inferred from explorers’ notes and replies. Extracts of some of Mary Anne Kay’s letters, however, give a tantalizing glimpse into how the seventeen year-old acted as a “gatekeeper” of information for her uncle. Scientists and naval officers visited her at her home in Greenwich, and asked her to include excerpts of reviews and accounts of their experiments in her letters, which she combined with summaries of her own reading and notes on public lectures that she attended. 386 She scrupulously reported on the latest news of the Herschells, the Astronomical Society, the Royal Observatory, the court martial of a fellow Arctic explorer, Parry’s debut as the Hydrographer of the Navy, and her own recent expedition prospecting for fossils at Folkstone. 387

At Greenwich, she inspected departing exploring ships (including Phillip Parker King’s to

384 DRO D3311/50/17, Franklin to Mrs (Sarah) Kay, 6 February, 1826. The Quarterly was a Tory paper and the Edinburgh a Whig, and so frequently gave wildly different reviews of books couched within bitterly opposed political platforms. See Cavell, Tracing the Connected Narrative, 54. John Barrow was a frequent contributor to the Quarterly Review (indeed, this is where he first set out his case for a renewed attempt at the Northwest Passage in 1817) and one wonders what he might have thought of his chosen men so avidly devouring the views of his bitter opponents.

385 SPRI MS 248/432/1, Sarah Kay to John Franklin, 7 February, 1826 (Franklin’s notes); DRO D3311/30/3, Partial letter from Mary Anne Kay to John Franklin, [17 February, 1826].

386 See, for example, SPRI MS 248/432/2 “Extracts” from Miss Kay afterwards the wife of Lieut. Kendall – to Captain Franklin”, 25 May, 1826.

387 DRO D3311/30/3, Partial letter from Mary Anne Kay to John Franklin, [17 February, 1826]; SPRI MS 248/432/2 “Extracts …” 25 May, 1826.
Australia) and passed judgment on them. She also passed on gossip, telling Franklin in one letter that Parry was trying to get up a new expedition to the North Pole (which she described as, “a six months trip founded in all essential points on a plan of yours laid down I believe in 1819,”) but the general opinion in Greenwich was that he was too sanguine, not least because “he is grown enormously fat (of which he had no need) and has suffered a good deal with his head….”

Her own social circulation facilitated the circulation of informal information, for as she built a reputation as a young woman of taste, accomplishments, and connections (due in no small part to her status as Franklin’s niece) she used this status and these connections to gather information for him in the field.

As families funneled information to the field, they also circulated news of the expedition at home, principally by sharing explorers’ letters. Private letters gave families privileged, early news of the expedition that only the Colonial Office or Admiralty might possess – and therefore constituted valuable capital in social circles that thrived on the curious and unique. Explorers were keenly aware of this practice, and cautiously encouraged it. Parry wrote to his parents in 1818 that “my letters to you I consider addressed to all” and urged them to circulate them to their friends and family. He later became more elaborate – in 1822-23, he constructed a letter to his parents so that certain pages could be removed and shared with a select circle (whom he named). On the Second Land Expedition, Richardson asked Mary to pass along extracts of his

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388 SPRI MS 248/432/2 “Extracts …” 25 May, 1826; SPRI MS 248/432/1, Mary Anne Kay to John Franklin, 17 February, 1826; DRO D3311/30/3, Partial letter from Mary Anne Kay to John Franklin, [17 February, 1826].
390 As this letter indicates, these letters home were also a valuable insurance policy, a way to ensure that some semi-authorized version of the expedition would circulate amongst friends and patrons. Parry was contemplating sending his co-captain Lyon home with his journals, letters, and dispatches while he continued to press the Passage. He wrote to his parents, “Should the dispatch above alluded to be given to the public, you must not be surprised to find,
letters to all of their family, to Franklin’s family, and to his professional contacts (of whom Robert Jameson, Dr. William Hooker and Mrs. Hooker were among the most important). As a junior officer on the Second Land Expedition, Edward Kendall habitually asked his mother and sisters to share his letters, in particular with anyone who might be instrumental in getting him promoted. One letter usually had to suffice for many – especially since, as Kendall reminded his mother, “Paper is too precious in this part of the world to be wasted.” This contributed to the intimate and privileged nature of the correspondence, reaffirming the importance of domestic ties stretched by time and distance.

Confidentiality, however, was as crucial to professional interests as circulation, because there was always the danger that a letter might fall into the wrong hands. The press actively sought explorers’ private letters, partly because they were thought to contain the most honest and truthful account of the events of the expedition, and partly because of the sense of intimacy they conveyed. Having a letter published could be fatal to one’s professional interests, proving that the officer in question had flaunted Admiralty orders to keep the expedition’s progress secret. When Richardson discovered that his wife had passed one of his letters to the press during his

perhaps, the same expressions occurring there, in some instance, as in the Abstract I have here endeavoured to give you, for it is not easy to tell the same story half a dozen different ways,” and he hoped that his “friends” would not compare the two accounts too closely. SPRI MS 438/26/63, W. E. Parry to his parents, H.M. Ship Fury, Island of Igloolik, North East Coast of America, 10 November, 1822 – 3 July, 1823.  
391 SPRI MS 1503/6/3, John Richardson to Mary Richardson, Bas de la Rivere, Winnipeg, 29 May, 1825.  
392 RGS SSC/88/2, E. N. Kendall to Mrs. Kendall, Columbia New York 15 March, 1825; E. N. Kendall to Mrs. M. C. Kendall, Fort Alexander, Bas de la Riviere, the Borders of Lake Winnipeg, 18 June, 1825; E. N. Kendall to Mrs. Kendall, Fort Franklin, Great Bear Lake, 18 January, 1827.  
393 RGS SSC/88/2, E. N. Kendall to Mrs Kendall, Fort Franklin, Great Bear Lake, January 18, 1827. Explorers frequently apologized for not writing to everyone – as Richardson wrote to his mother in 1825, “The messenger departs to-morrow, and as I have official letters to write, I have not time for many private communications, and must make one letter serve for several.” John Richardson to his mother, 6 September, 1825, in McIlraith, Life of Sir John Richardson, 144.  
394 As Tony Ballantyne has noted, the material conditions of correspondence, and in particular the value of paper, needs to be taken into account in the evaluation of paper-based information systems in the colonial world, and especially their usage by native peoples. Ballantyne, “Paper, Pen and Print,” 232-260. As Richardson wrote to Mary on his first expedition, “I have not written to any person but yourself, so... you must let our friends know that I am well.” SPRI MS 1503/2/7, John Richardson to Mary Richardson, 1 June, 1820, Cumberland House.  
395 Cavell, Tracing the Connected Narrative, 33.
first expedition, he wrote acerbically, “My letter appears to have found its way into the newspapers in a manner that could not be foreseen and I feel happy that it has afforded you any gratification – I may remark however that we are strictly forbidden to lay any partial accounts before the public.” Franklin ordered his officers in 1825 to “use the greatest caution in mentioning… proceedings in their correspondence, and strictly prohibit their friends from publishing their accounts.” Orders notwithstanding, explorers still compulsively wrote to their families by every available channel, but always with caveats. Parry wrote his parents on his expedition in 1820, “I beg and intreat (sic) you that this letter may only be shewn to your own circle of friends – but by no means published in any shape.” On the Second Land Expedition, Kendall cautioned his mother, “against letting anything I may tell you relative to the expedition find its way into the public prints – it would be immediately known that some of the officers attached to it had been too communicative of which our lords and masters are particularly jealous.”

In these technically interdict letters, explorers occupied center-stage, while fur traders and indigenous peoples became either shadowy figures or objects of observation, not the rational actors crucial to the expedition’s survival and progress (the mirror image of how they appeared in Franklin’s and Richardson’s correspondence with the HBC). Kendall hardly

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396 SPRI MS 1503/2/10, John Richardson to Mary Richardson, Fort Enterprise, Winter Lake, 1 December, 1820.
397 SPRI MS 248/281/1 BJ, John Franklin’s instructions to his Officers, 4 March, 1825, in John Franklin’s Letter Book, 26 November 1823 – 12 May 1825. During the Napoleonic Wars, the content of private letters had been (in theory at least) strictly controlled, not only to prevent information from falling into enemy hands, but also to maintain discipline within the officer ranks. See N.A.M. Rodger, *The Wooden World: An Anatomy of the Georgian Navy* (London: William Collins Sons & Co, Ltd, 1986). Nevertheless, some officers and/or their families made a little extra money by publishing their private journals or correspondence in a small, anonymous edition after the official narrative was out. See, for example, Anonymous, *Letters Written During the Late Voyage of Discovery in the Western Arctic Sea, by an Officer of the Expedition* (London: Sir Richard Phillips & Co, 1821); Alexander Fisher, *A Journal of Discovery to the Arctic Regions: In His Majesty's Ships Hecla and Griper, in the Years 1819-1820.* (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, and Brown, 1821). This narrative went through three editions.
398 SPRI MS 438/26/49, William Edward Parry to his parents, HM Ship Hecla, West Coast of Davis’ Strait, Lat 70° 41’N Long 69° 17’E, 5 September, 1820.
399 RGS SSC/88/2/6, E. N. Kendall to Mrs. M. C. Kendall, Fort Alexander, Bas de la Riviere, Lake Winnipeg, 18 June, 1825.
mentioned the voyageurs at all when he wrote to his mother and sisters that their progress up the Canadian river system in the spring of 1825 was comfortable, pleasant, and strengthening, and that “this hard marching agrees extremely well with me I assure you there is no extra fat on my bones nor any fear of appoplexy (sic).” Richardson wrote Mary a vivid description of their daily routine: rising at 2:30 am, paddling, napping, smoking, eating, and sleeping. The voyageurs were nameless men inured to the rigors of travel, contented with small luxuries like a morning dram, a two-minute smoke break every half hour, singing “cheerful songs” and sleeping on “the softest turf they can find” in the evening. Richardson and Franklin praised the support of the HBC and the Yellowknives, never failing to point out their ample provisions, domestic comforts, and good relationships. Richardson wrote to Mary that at every trading post they had been met “with the utmost civility and attention,” and that the abundance of provisions and little luxuries provided by the HBC meant that “compared with our last journey this promises to be a party of pleasure.” But it was the thoroughness of their own preparations, they wrote, rather than the self-interested coordination of the HBC officers or the Yellowknives, which made the journey so efficient.

As the expedition wore on during the winter of 1825-26, explorers invited their families to compare metropolitan society with the “conversation,” “balls” and “fashion” of the far North in letters that were designed to be amusing and diverting, and clearly meant to be shared. Franklin characterized “conversation” in North America to Sarah Kay as: “expiating on travelling either in Canoe or on snowshoes – the arrival, the sending for, or the want of Meat or

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401 SPRI MS 1503/6/3, John Richardson to Mary Richardson, Bas de la Riviere, Winnipeg, 29 May, 1825.
402 SPRI MS 1503/6/2, John Richardson to Mary Richardson, Fort William, Lake Superior, 12 May, 1825; DRO D3311/50/14, John Franklin to Sarah Kay, Fort Chipewyan, 23 July, 1825.
403 SPRI MS 1503/6/2, John Richardson to Mary Richardson, Fort William, Lake Superior, 12 May, 1825; MS 1503/6/4, John Richardson to Mary Richardson, Fort Chipewyan, 20 July, 1825.
404 DRO D3311/50/14, John Franklin to Sarah Kay, Fort Chipewyan, 23 July, 1825.
Fish – the driving of dogs – the appearance or going away of an Indian… and perhaps the thread of these is stopped by the [unreasonable] squalling of an unruly child – or the growling and fighting of some ungovernable dogs.” \(^{405}\) Richardson wrote that “all the rank and fashion of Bear Lake” had attended the Christmas ball at Fort Franklin in 1825, “their raven hair dripping with unguents prepared from the marrow of the rein-deer, and their expanded countenances ornamented with twin rows of ivory teeth gracefully contrasting with their lovely bronze features wheron streaks of lamp black and rudge (sic) were harmoniously blended.” \(^{406}\) Franklin and Richardson’s descriptions of their orderly, separate chambers stood in stark contrast to the chaotic portrait they painted of the rest of fort. This was where they arranged specimens, redrafted journals, read books and old newspapers – artifacts that Back described as “manna in the wilderness” when they were “at a weary distance from Society and civilization.” \(^{407}\) Their chambers, they told their families, were where they ate home-made pickles and marmalade, wore their home-knitted mittens, drank cherry brandy, swaddled themselves in woolen blankets, and played chess – all, Franklin wrote to Mary Anne, “so that we have daily mementos of you.” \(^{408}\) This was, they implied, the real site of frontier domesticity, one that was defined above all by homesickness.

When explorers described themselves to their relatives (and through them, their wider social circles) as rational men who were fundamentally unchanged by their experiences, as capable Arctic travellers engaged in detached observation, and as domestic men who mocked frontier pretensions to civility, they may well have been securing their wider credibility as they maintained intimate attachments. As many scholars have noted, the reason that formed the basis

\(^{405}\) DRO D3311/50/18, John Franklin to Sarah Kay, Fort Franklin, 12 June, 1826.
\(^{406}\) SPRI MS 1503/6/8, John to Mary Richardson, Fort Franklin, 6 February, 1826.
\(^{407}\) RGS SGB/1/4, George Back to John Back, Great Bear Lake, 19 February, 1827.
\(^{408}\) NMM FRN/1/9, John Franklin to Mary Anne Kay, Fort Franklin, Great Bear Lake, 8 November, 1825.
of the explorer’s authority was often disordered by disease, by hunger, and by distance, isolation, and dislocation. Yet this was paradoxical, for the explorer’s authority – and popularity – also partly derived from the fact that they placed themselves in peril for the sake of science. As Dorinda Outram has neatly put it, their bodily vulnerability was key to the moral economy of the knowledge they produced, as their physical suffering lent authenticity to their testimony about far-off places. Circulating explorers’ private letters helped them walk this line, even while they were in the field. Their correspondence could function as testimonials to their safety, competence, and detachment from the world they observed, while it served as valuable evidence of their authentic experiences. These letters were valuable precisely because they were personal, presumably confidential, and fundamentally domestic - for explorers’ many expressions of nostalgia for an idealized domestic sphere could also be advantageous. Amidst both the mixed-race society of the forts, and the homosocial society of their own chambers, explorers insisted that their compasses pointed resolutely “home,” with all of its grounding moral attachments. This was an especially potent sentiment in an era when bourgeois masculinity (and rationality) was closely tied to domesticity. When shared, these sentiments could demonstrate to metropolitan social circles that explorers’ honor and moral integrity were intact, and therefore that their perceptions and observations could be trusted.

Domestic calamities had as much potential to unhinge explorers and compromise their credibility as the “geographies of unreason” through which they travelled. The death of Eleanor Franklin is a case in point. The news of her death from tuberculosis reached the expedition in

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409 Fabian, Out of Our Minds, 180-208; Lamb, Preserving the Self, 114-131; Salmond, Trial of the Cannibal Dog, ixx-xxi.
411 As Gillian Beer has put it “the personal moment, the record of what is smelt, touched, tasted, seen and heard… provides convincing written evidence of the authenticity of what is told.” Gillian Beer, “Travelling the Other Way” in Cultures of Natural History, 323.
412 For the ties between bourgeois masculinity, domesticity, and rationality, see especially Tosh, A Man's Place, 1-8.
April of 1825 on Lake Pentenguishene, in a packet of newspapers carried by canoes. Both Franklin and Richardson were in the midst of writing to their wives when the post arrived – Franklin’s letter ended abruptly, “with what heartfelt pleasure shall I embrace you both on my return… Mr Back and the men have just arrived… 7 pm the distressing intelligence of my dearest wife’s death has just reached me.” As the months wore on, Franklin privately obsessed over Eleanor’s death, using a large sheet of expedition paper to record in a minuscule, nearly illegible hand, all the details he received from his family of her struggles to breathe, difficulties sitting or lying down, and the scriptures she had requested in her final moments. His sorrow would mark even the highest points of the expedition. When he reached the shores of the Arctic Ocean in the summer of 1825, Franklin shook out the Union Jack that Eleanor had sewn before he left. He wrote to Sarah, “you can imagine it was with heartfelt emotion I first saw it unfurled, but in a short time I derived great pleasure and relief in looking upon it.” When they raised the same flag again at Fort Franklin in September to christen the fort, it was saluted by two volleys, followed by an all-night ball to the sounds of Wilson’s pipes and with the assistance of copious grog. “I was much affected by these Ceremonies,” he told Mary Anne, “as they brought to my mind the liveliest recollection of my dearest Eleanor.”

Franklin’s grief was real, profound and shattering, and he truly struggled to find consolation in the hope of resurrection and reunion that comforted so many mourning Evangelicals. But to a certain extent, his expressions of grief could also work to his advantage, though he may not have known it. The gossip in London in 1825-26 was that he had

413 DRO D3311/50/8, John Franklin to Eleanor Franklin, 22 April 1825. Richardson also abruptly stopped his letter, explaining, “I intended to have written more fully, but the intelligence of Mrs Franklin’s death has rather unhinged me.” SPRI MS 1503/6/1, John Richardson to Mary Richardson, Lake Pentenguishene, 22 April, 1825.
414 SPRI MS 248/432/1, informal letter book of John Franklin, 1825-1826.
415 DRO D3311/50/2, John Franklin to Mrs Kay, Fort Franklin, Great Bear Lake, 7 September, 1825.
416 NMM FRN1/9, John Franklin to Mary Anne Kay, Fort Franklin, Great Bear Lake, 8 November, 1825.
left Eleanor on her deathbed to forward his own vain ambition. Jane Griffin recorded in her diary that at a meeting of the Book Society in 1825, the D’Israelis passed along this “idle & contradictory gossip” and that “my voice trembled with agitation not unmixed with anger while I replied to all this unfeeling nonsense.”\(^\text{418}\) Though it is purely speculative, one can easily imagine Mary Anne Kay being placed in a similar position. But in Franklin’s private letters, he examined how his mourning led him to revisit that deep spiritual communion that he and Richardson had found at Fort Enterprise, finding again a kind of pleasure in submission to divine will in the High Arctic. As he wrote to Sarah Kay, Mary Anne, Mary Booth, and many of his other relatives, his prayers together with the routines of the expedition led him to a calmer, more contemplative, and indeed more rational frame of mind.\(^\text{419}\) He would write to his sister Henrietta Wright and her husband, “were I to search for some of the happiest moments of my life I should undoubtedly look to those in which I was thus occupied,” recalling some of his earlier letters to both Eleanor and to Richardson (see Chapter 1).\(^\text{420}\) As models of pious resignation, it seems possible that even such deeply private sentiments would be shared by these women, both to re-establish Franklin’s credibility as an attached and domestic man, and also to demonstrate that he had not lost the piety that was the cornerstone of his reputation as an explorer.\(^\text{421}\)

Explorers were keenly aware, however, that their letters were not the only accounts of their voyage that their families received. They also saw snippets of intelligence from vernacular and indigenous sources that made its way to Britain along the same tenuous channels that bore explorers’ letters. News relative to the expeditions circulated through the HBC’s posts, was discussed and elaborated over long winters, and was eventually passed onto senior officers, and

\(^\text{419}\) SPRI MS 248/432/1, informal letter book of John Franklin, 1825-1826
\(^\text{420}\) RGS SJF 1/7, John Franklin to T.B. and Henrietta Wright, Fort Franklin, Great Bear Lake, 6 February, 1826
\(^\text{421}\) For the central importance of Franklin’s Evangelical faith to his reputation, see Chapter 1 and also Cavell, *Tracing the Connected Narrative*, 103.
through them, to the London office and perhaps to the press. It was this kind of vernacular information that had threatened the second edition of Franklin’s narrative, as gossip about Richardson’s execution of Michel made its way back to London (see Chapter 1). Similarly, when ships “spoke” or otherwise signaled one another in Davis Straits, officers and men swapped stories, letters, parcels, and artifacts to be taken back to Britain - and, if they had it, news or opinions about maritime Arctic expeditions.

Explorers often cautioned their families that such information, though it came from highly experienced men, was nevertheless inherently unreliable. Parry warned his parents in 1818 that the whalers carrying his letter “may like to tell wonderful stories about us,” and to be aware that “in an expedition which excited so lively & general an interest, every seaman’s account of us will be greedily devoured and quickly circulated.” In March of 1821, Richardson wrote to Mary not to believe any of the rumors she might hear from the HBC, since, “We have already been hemmed in by a nation which we have never seen and attacked by another which has not even heard of us, in short we have been disposed of a thousand different ways … you are to believe nothing except what you have under my own hand.” In 1825, Kendall cautioned his mother not to believe anything except information from him, the Colonial Office, or the Admiralty “for this is the very country of exaggeration, every little incident that may occur is magnified into a circumstance of vital importance and the most absurd falsehoods are circulated

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422 See HBCA B.38/1/2-4, Fort Chipewyan Correspondence Books, 1822-6; B181/a/3-4. Robert MacVicar, Journals, Great Slave Lake, 1820-21 and 1822-23; B.181/a/6-7, Post Journal, Great Slave Lake, 1825-27.
423 For a comprehensive description of the means of communication between whale ships in both the Greenland and Spitzbergen fisheries up to 1820, see William Scoresby, *An Account of the Arctic Regions, With a History and Description of the Northern Whale Fishery*, Vol. 2 (Edinburgh: Archibald Constable and Co, 1820), 521-525.
424 SPRI MS 438/26/22, W. E. Parry to his parents, H.M. Ship Alexander, 25 July, [1818], Davis’s Straits, Lat 75° 30’ north.
425 SPRI MS 1503/4/1, John Richardson to Mary Richardson, Fort Enterprise, 29 March, 1821.
and credited, losing in their passage from fort to fort about as much as a snowball does in running downhill.”

Despite their cautions to their families, the men’s own reliance on indigenous and vernacular intelligence occasionally crept into their letters. For example, in January of 1826, a party of Copper Indians arrived at Great Slave Lake after traveling up the (then-unmapped) Great Fish River to the coast, where they reported having seen “some certain indicators of White People”—footsteps, a cache of deer, and apparently, a sawpit. Eager to leave hostile Inuit territory, they returned to Great Slave Lake with a map of their route, which they gave to Robert MacVicar. The news arrived at Fort Franklin in March, where it was interpreted as evidence that Parry was wintering on the coast. Having no idea that James Keith had already concluded at Fort Chipewyan that the information was “too limited and of dubious authority,” the expedition officers excitedly discussed the possibility of Richardson’s detachment meeting up with Parry in the summer. Franklin sent off a special dispatch to MacVicar to investigate more thoroughly, and Richardson and Kendall both used the dispatch to send excited letters home. Richardson told Mary that the Indians had been “not far… from Bathurst’s Inlet” and elaborated the intelligence to include squared timber, saws and axes. He lamented that they had not been able to interview the Indians themselves, and also that they had not investigated further, “as a little courage on the part of the Indians might have obtained for us the very great gratification of hearing from Parry and for him the opportunity of writing to his friends.” It was not until June

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427 SPRI MS 248/280/2 BJ, John Franklin Journal, 22 March, 1826. See also Franklin, Narrative, 1828, 75-76.
428 HBCA B.39/b/4, Fort Chipewyan Correspondence Book, James Keith to Robert MacVicar at Great Slave Lake, 31 January 1826; Franklin, Narrative, 1828, 76.
429 Franklin, Narrative, 1828, 75; SPRI MS 248/280/2 BJ, John Franklin Journal, 22 March, 1826; John Franklin to Robert MacVicar, Fort Franklin, 23 March, 1826, in SPRI Pam (*3): 91(091) [pub 1915], “Some Unpublished Letters of Sir John Franklin, Sir John Richardson and others.” Kendall’s letter has not been preserved, but he referred to it in RGS SSC/88/2, Edward Kendall to Mrs. Kendall, Fort Franklin, Great Bear Lake, 18 January, 1826.
430 SPRI MS 1503/6/9, John to Mary Richardson, Fort Franklin, 23 March, 1826.
27, 1826, that they learned that the Indians had actually seen an Inuit camp, and that “the story had been wonderfully exaggerated in its passage to Fort Franklin.”431 In his private journal, Franklin wrote that the error had been principally their own – that both the expedition officers and the traders had excitedly read too much into “circumstantial evidence.”432 Richardson wrote to MacVicar that the story “came to us … tricked out with many adventitious (sic) circumstances, which we scarcely could suppose the Indians possessed ingenuity enough to invent.”433 By this time, however, all the expedition families already knew not only that the report had been debunked, but also that Parry had returned to England. Kendall’s mother had sent him the excerpt of an HBC report on the intelligence that appeared in the London papers that the story was, as Kendall later put it, “one of those fabrications in … which the Indians are too apt to place implicit confidence, and then to circulate until like the story of the three black crows, the whole is discovered to have its foundation in error.”434

Episodes like this one, in which scraps of indigenous or vernacular intelligence were torn out of context and interpreted through emotional lenses of hope and anxiety, would become a ubiquitous feature of Arctic exploration, especially during the searches for John Franklin’s lost final expedition in the 1840s and 1850s. As I examine in Chapters 4 and 5, Jane Franklin in particular drew on her moral authority as Franklin’s wife to claim a right to gather and to interpret this information, determine trustworthiness and demand governmental action. She could do so because of her access to a wider network of families and friends who also processed and analyzed indigenous and vernacular intelligence – a network that had its genesis in the correspondence and familial networks of the 1820s. Encouraged by their explorer relatives,

431 SPRI MS 248/280/2 BJ, John Franklin Journal, 28 June, 1826.  
432 Ibid.  
433 SPRI MS 961; MJ. John Richardson to Robert McVicar, Fort Norman, 27 June, 1826  
434 RGS SSC/88/2, Edward Kendall to Mrs. Kendall, Fort Franklin, 18 January, 1827.
families seem to have been evaluating the trustworthiness of information and sources amidst the long and anxious silences that characterized Arctic travel and correspondence. Yet their access to that information was crucially restricted by their gender, age, and relationships. Gatekeepers they may have been, but at the same time, what they knew was limited to what was deemed appropriate for them to know. Informing them about reported intelligence was one thing – but gesturing to the degree of the expedition’s reliance on interpreters and cultural brokers was quite another. The shadowy and uncertain world of the indigenous go-between only barely registered in explorers’ narratives – and in their correspondence, almost not at all.

Tattanouek (or “Augustus”), the Churchill Inuk interpreter on the First and Second Land Arctic Expeditions, barely appears in explorers’ letters home, despite – or because – his presence was crucial to their success. As on the first expedition, he was viewed on the second by officers, HBC men, and Indians alike as a kind of human passport, a guarantor of the expedition’s safety in unknown and dangerous Inuit territory. Kendall wrote to his mother and sisters in September of 1825 that he had encountered a group of Loucheaux (Gwich’in) not far from Fort Good Hope on the MacKenzie River who, “endeavoured to dissuade us from proceeding any further representing the Esquimaux as a very treacherous… people who would certainly kill us.” But, he reassured them, Tattanoeuk’s presence ensured his safety, for, “when [the Gwich’in] understood that we had an Esquimaux interpreter … they were rejoiced and changed their opinion immediately.”435 The most substantive description of Tattanoeuk comes in a letter Franklin wrote to Mary Anne and her siblings in February 1826, in which he describes him and Ouligbuck as:

…very lively and active, the former however considers himself a person of some consequence, and you would be amused with his vanity – when he goes from room to room to shew his specimen of copying writing - which by the way he does well – would you not like to have his Autograph? He is now looking over the Doctor & myself – watching our motions – I have just told him I had written his name, he smiles and says

435 RGS SSC/88/2, Edward N. Kendall to Mrs Kendall, Fort Franklin, Great Bear Lake, 6 September, 1825.
thank you and desires me to say to you “We very well!” and “Me very glad England me see.”

One can glimpse in the letter (though whether Mary Anne and her siblings did is another question altogether) Tattaneouk’s concern about his position on the expedition. He was determined to be set apart from the rest of the men, and insisted on being able to serve Franklin and Richardson in their own apartment at Fort Franklin, that separate and rarified realm that was otherwise theirs alone. He was proud of his literacy (as he had been on the first expedition), and was constantly trying to improve it. He was anxious to know how he was being portrayed in Franklin’s letter, how the English would see him. It is a snapshot of Tattaneouk’s continuing efforts to make himself both indispensible and irreplaceable, to bolster and to secure his vulnerable position as a man in-between.

That vulnerability was especially apparent when it came to encounters with hostile Inuit. Franklin’s expedition in the summer of 1826 from the Mackenzie Delta to Icy Cape was repeatedly treated by Inuit and Inupiat as potentially hostile, essentially vulnerable, and possibly lucrative, as they were travelling through a newly-established trade route while carrying attractive goods. That they survived several dangerous encounters was because of Tattaneouk’s intervention. When, for example, Franklin’s and Back’s boats ran aground on Tent Island on 7 July 1826 and were pillaged by 300 men, it was Tattaneouk who effected their escape, retrieving crucial instruments and forestalling violence.

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436 NMM FRN 1/10, John Franklin to Mary Anne Kay, William Porden Kay, and Emily Kay, Fort Franklin, 6 February, 1826.
437 In an earlier letter, Franklin had mentioned to Mary Anne that Tattaneouk had taken up his role, together with one of the Scotsmen, Wilson, as his and Richardson’s personal servant, and that he “is never happier than when he is officiating about the apartment.” NMM FRN 1/8, John Franklin to Mary Anne Kay, Fort Franklin, Great Bear Lake, 8 November, 1825.
his eye, “that brave little Man rushed in the midst of a ferocious mob and commanded them to leave off.”

When the boats grounded again a quarter of a mile away, Tattanoeuk leapt onto the beach to negotiate again. He gave a long speech to the assembled Inuvialuit men, pointing to his naval uniform as evidence of the advantages of peaceful trade, but also threatening that if any of the British were killed, he would personally exact revenge. Franklin later wrote in his journal, “A greater instance of courage has not been I think recorded.”

Tattaneouk was braver than Franklin imagined, for in trying to make the expedition conform to Inuit protocol for meetings between strangers, he placed himself in potentially mortal danger. That evening, Tattanoeuk returned to the Inuit camp, where he performed Caribou Inuit songs and dances that took place during friendly meetings with strangers. As the expedition later learned, the Inuvialuit had originally thought of pursuing the expedition and killing all its members except for Tattanoeuk, whom would be let go to try to entice more traders to come. This was in perfect accordance with the understood rules of war, that usually all the members of a village or kin group were killed to avoid later acts of revenge. After Tattaneuk’s performances in speech, dance, and song, however, and his statement that he would exact reciprocal violence on behalf of the English, the Inuvialuit men had concluded that he was, in

440 SPRI MS 395/6; BL, George Back Journal, 1824-1826, 7 July, 1826.
441 John Franklin, Sir John Franklin's Journals and Correspondence: The Second Arctic Land Expedition, 1825-1827, ed. Richard C. Davis (Toronto: The Champlain Society, 1998), 205.
442 Franklin, Narrative, 1828, 108.
443 Franklin, Sir John Franklin’s Journals, 1998, 205. Franklin slightly altered this passage in his Narrative to read: “The veracity of Augustus was beyond all question with us; such a speech delivered in a circle of forty armed men, was a remarkable instance of personal courage.” Franklin, Narrative, 1828, 107.
444 Franklin, Narrative, 1828, 110.
Franklin’s words, “so firmly attached to us that it was in vain to attempt to win him to their cause.”

Franklin and Back were both keenly aware after these and other encounters that they owed their lives to Tattanoeuk. Similarly, Richardson also understood that his eastern detachment’s safe passage had depended upon Ouligbuck’s frequent interventions, on one occasion carrying Richardson on his back as they fled from a hostile crowd. Publicly, Franklin and Richardson demonstrated their gratitude. They both praised Tattanoeuk and Ouligbuck in the narrative, and ensured that when they returned to Churchill, they were compensated. When they were finishing the narrative in London in 1828, Richardson told his brother that he had also given his extra uniform to Tattanoeuk in gratitude, not knowing that when he wore the uniform at Churchill, that it was interpreted as evidence of the “nonsencical (sic) pride taught him by the late Expedition Gentry.” But Franklin mentioned none of Tattanoeuk’s or Ouligbuck’s interventions to his correspondents, and Richardson never alluded to it to Mary. He only hinted at the danger he had been in to his mother when he wrote that, “the numerous hordes and turbulent disposition of the Esquimaux … rendered the voyage so hazardous that the breasts of every member of the expedition can be filled with but one sentiment of gratitude to the Supreme Disposer of events.”

Back was more fulsome in a letter to his brother John, writing, “We have been attacked by a large number of Natives – which cannot fail to cause a six Week Wonder to

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446 Franklin, *Narrative*, 1828, 112.
448 HBCA E.15/1, List of supplies provided by the HBC to the Second Land Arctic Expedition, especially Fos 90-135.
450 John Richardson to Mrs. Richardson, November, 1826, Great Slave Lake, in McIlraith, *Life of Sir John Richardson*, 159-160.
the World on our arrival.” Both men entirely wrote Ouligbuck and Tattanoeuk out of the events, while Back placed himself resolutely at their center.

These examples could be viewed as simply as cases of strategic representation and occlusion on the part of explorers, of men crafting the tales of their adventures to suit their audiences, molding them to fit what was suitable depending upon the gender, race, and class of the recipient, and of representing themselves as the undisputed heroes of their journeys. But these recipients were not some faceless public, but family members who were embedded in metropolitan cultures of exploration. They were widely read, possessed of significant Arctic libraries (that their relatives often referred to in their letters), and were aware, to some extent, of the expedition’s preparations for meeting, negotiating, and living with native peoples. Mary Anne had cheekily asked Franklin to give “Miss Greenstockings” a kiss for her, and evidently asked for a report on how the “mythological figures” that her aunt Eleanor had admired on the bows of the Lion and Reliance were being received by the Indians. Moreover, given their position as “gatekeepers” of information, these family members had reason to believe that they were well-informed about not only Arctic matters in general, but about the reliability and trustworthiness of indigenous and vernacular information in particular. Both despite and because of the limited portrait of Arctic life painted by their explorer-relatives, the women and families of Britain’s “Arctic Circles” could reasonably consider themselves to be a knowledgeable group.

By the time Arctic explorers returned home, their relatives were as experienced as women in

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451 RGS SGB/1/445, George Back to John Back, Fort Franklin, Great Bear Lake, 19 February, 1827.
452 Teltscher, “Sentimental Ambassador,” 82.
453 They sometimes, for example, invited their correspondents to find them on a map or to compare their progress with Samuel Hearne’s or Alexander MacKenzie’s narratives on the shelves at their home libraries. See for example DRO D3311/50/12, John Franklin to Sarah Kay, Lake Winnipeg, 3 June, 1825; John Richardson to unnamed correspondent, possibly his sister Margaret Carruthers, in McIlraith, Life of Sir John Richardson, 133.
454 DRO D3311/50/14, John Franklin to Mrs. Kay, Fort Chipewyan, 23 July, 1825; NMM FRN 1/10, John Franklin to Mary Anne Kay, William Porden Kay, and Emily Kay, Fort Franklin, 6 February, 1826.
their position could ever expect to be in terms of gathering, evaluating, and processing
information from the far north - without having been there themselves.

**Interlude: 1828-33**

In late 1820s and early 1830s, British Arctic exploration and its cultural substructure changed along with British institutions. In the Age of Reform, the official appetite for expensive expeditions of no practical utility declined and in 1828, the £20,000 Parliamentary Reward (or Longitude Prize) for the completion of the Northwest Passage was abolished. At the same time, there was widespread institutional fragmentation as the pre-eminence of the Royal Society declined and a number of specialist societies proliferated, including the Royal Geographical Society (founded 1830) and the British Association for the Advancement of Science (founded 1831). Arctic veterans were closely involved in the formation of these new societies, which were themselves deeply rooted in circuits of scientific sociability and patronage; the RGS, after all, had its origins in the Raleigh Dining Club (founded 1828) of which Franklin, Richardson, Beechey, Parry and Sabine were all key members, as well as Barrow, Beaufort, Robert Brown and Roderick Murchison. These men would all go on to be founding members of the RGS, which was effectively a “coalition of interests” between scientific men, antiquarians, diplomats, travelers, and others.

In a climate of austerity and reform, Arctic veterans looked to naval service, private expeditions, or government and colonial appointments for employment and fame. In 1828, the Australian Agricultural Company approached Franklin to superintend their massive sheep pastures in New South Wales. He refused and suggested Richardson, who also refused and

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455 Savours, *Search for the North West Passage*, 125.
suggested Parry, who accepted. Parry saw the Antipodes as an opportunity to get away from his Arctic past, for he was “rather sick of the emptiness of my fame.” He and his family would remain in Port Stephens for five years before returning to Norfolk, embittered by the “absolute moral wilderness” they encountered in the convict colony. Meanwhile, Richardson took a position as the chief medical officer at Melville Hospital in Chatham, where he became an important member of the wide and growing scientific community, building up his own network of correspondents and allies and laying plans for new Arctic expeditions. The young Joseph Dalton Hooker worshipped him as “something more than a man,” and would owe his own career in part to Richardson (see Chapter 3). Franklin and Richardson got Hepburn a position at Woolwich Dockyards where, they hoped, his rheumatism would be less troublesome. Back undertook a Grand Tour and went to Italy on half-pay from 1830-1832. John Ross, meanwhile, convinced the gin magnate Felix Booth to fund a private Northwest Passage expedition; in 1829, he took his nephew James Clark Ross and 28 other men in a small steamboat, the *Victory*, deep into Lancaster Sound, bearing the good wishes (and envy) of his fellow Arctic explorers. They vanished for four years, wrecked the *Victory* in Prince Regent

458 DRO D3311/53/47, John Franklin to John Richardson, 55 Devonshire Street 6 April, 1829; SPRI MS 438/26/491, William Edward Parry to Lady Maria Stanley, Admiralty, 11 April, 1829; SPRI MS 438/26/492, William Edward Parry to Lady Maria Stanley, Admiralty, 13 April, 1829; A. Parry, *Parry of the Arctic*, 136. After he left, Sir James Graham’s sweeping reforms transformed Parry’s sinecure as Hydrographer into something worthwhile under Francis Beaufort.
459 SPRI MS 438/26/341, W. E. Parry to Franklin, Port Stephens, 4 October, 1830.
461 Hooker would later write that when Richardson visited his father in Glasgow, “I used to follow him all over the house offering my services in opening his boxes and carrying his bundles of plants…. But he was naturally reserved, and the subject on which I longed to cross-question him, *Michel’s death*, had been interdicted to me by the strict injunctions of my parents.” Quoted in McIlraith, *Life of Sir John Richardson*, 166-167.
462 DRO D3311/53/50, John Franklin to John Richardson, Cheltenham, 9 February, 1830.
463 Steele, *Man Who Mapped the Arctic*, 201-207.
464 Booth initially refused to bankroll the expedition, fearing he would be thought to be after the £20,000 Prize, and didn’t agree until Parliament abolished it in 1828. John Ross had been experimenting with both steam navigation and phrenology on his estate at Ayr since his disgrace in 1818, and published a *Treatise on Steam Navigation* and a pamphlet suggesting how phrenology might be employed to determine the character and potential abilities of impressed sailors, both of which he tried to put into practice on the *Victory* expedition. Ross rejected applications from Back and William Scoresby (among many other Arctic veterans) in order to take his nephew with him, but
Inlet, and depended heavily upon the Aivilingmiut Inuit for food, clothing, and geographical information, without which none of them would have survived, nor would James Ross have located the North Magnetic Pole in 1831.465 Finally, in November 1830, Franklin was appointed to HMS Rainbow, which was to cruise the Mediterranean in the aftermath of Greek independence. His appointment prompted Hepburn (who badly wanted to go with him as a gunner) to write to Richardson, “I trust that He who was his comforter and guide on trackless barren Lands Will be very mindful (sic) of his servant while crossing the Mighty Deep.”466

Against this background of shifting institutional climates and changing professional fortunes, three important marriages took place within the extended Franklin family that changed the shape of the “Arctic Circles”: between John Richardson and Franklin’s niece Mary Booth (1832), between Edward Kendall and Franklin’s niece Mary Anne Kay (1832), and between John Franklin and Eleanor’s acquaintance Jane Griffin (1828). Mary Stiven Richardson died unexpectedly on Christmas Eve of 1831. Wracked by grief, Richardson started to plan to look for the missing Rosses in northern Canada (with Hepburn’s assistance and Franklin’s blessing) but the Admiralty refused to back the rescue.467 Richardson’s plans changed when he proposed to Franklin’s niece Mary Booth. When Franklin received the news of their marriage in September then the two of them fell out badly. Franklin, Parry, and Richardson were all envious as well - Franklin secured Ross letters of introduction to the HBC and Russian authorities, and even Ross’s old rival Parry called the expedition “a bold, and public-spirited undertaking.” See M. J. Ross, *Polar Pioneers*, 108-118, 124; SPRI MS 655/3 BJ and MS 1059; DRO D3311/53/23, John Franklin to John Richardson, 19 May, 1829.

466 SPRI MS 1503/8/11, John Hepburn to John Richardson, Woolwich Rope Yard, 20 December, 1830; DRO D3311/53/54, John Franklin to John Richardson, HMS Rainbow, Portsmouth, 15 September, 1830.
467 McIlraith, *Life of Sir John Richardson*, 169-171; DRO D3311/53/60, John Franklin to John Richardson, Brendisi, 24 February 1832. For Richardson’s plans, see RGS CB1/44, John Richardson to the Secretary of the RGS, April 1832; CO 6/18, John Richardson to Robert Hay, 15 May, 1832. Richardson gave Franklin a synopsis of these proceedings in his draft letter of August 1 – Franklin refers to the contents of a finished version of this letter in subsequent correspondence, so some version of it was sent. For the draft, see SPRI MS 1503/9/13, John Richardson to John Franklin, 1 August, 1832.
1832, he wrote that it brought “tears of delight” to his eyes. Richardson turned his plans for the land rescue expedition over to George Back, who had recently returned from Italy. Franklin wrote to Richardson “I rejoice that poor Ross is to be Sought for – but I wish the duty had fallen into abler and more faithful hands than our Companion.” His dislike of Back had increased considerably because of his continuing attentions to Mary Anne Kay. Franklin was a state of constant anxiety about the on-again, off-again romance between 1828 and 1832, writing about it constantly to Richardson and skirting it in his correspondence with Mary Anne. So he was delighted to discover in early 1832 that she had decided to marry Edward Kendall, his other lieutenant from the Land Expedition. “Very different in my opinion would have been her state if the first match had been made,” he wrote to Richardson, “and when I think of her escape from the heartlessness of the first proposer I thank God for his goodness in preventing their Union.”

The most crucial marriage was between Jane Griffin and John Franklin. Jane Griffin (see Figure 9) has both attracted and stymied many biographers since the 1920s. A prolific reader and a graphomaniac, she recorded in minute detail and in excruciating handwriting nearly everything that happened to her or caught her fancy over virtually her entire lifetime. Yet she practically never used her many journals as devices for self-reflection or introspection – they were merely recording devices. She was a lover of travel, ultimately visiting every continent except Antarctica, but she hated to be considered “independent” and refused to write an account

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469 DRO D3311/53/60, Franklin to Richardson, 24 February, 1832. For Richardson and Back’s correspondence about the rescue expedition, see SPRI MS 1503/9, John Richardson correspondence, 1832 and SPRI MS 395/60 BL, John Richardson and George Back correspondence, 1821-1838.
470 SPRI MS 1503/9/16, John Franklin to John Richardson, 6 October, 1832.
471 SPRI MS 1503/8/2, Peter Richardson Journal, 4 January, 1828; NMM FRN 11/23, Franklin to Mary Anne Kay, 21 Regent’s Place, Brighton, 26 October, 1828; DRO D3311/53/40, John Franklin to John Richardson, 19 May, [1829]; DRO D3311/53/50, John Franklin to John Richardson, 9 February, 1830.
472 DRO D3311/53/58, John Franklin to John Richardson, 17 June, 1832.
of her travels. She made acquaintances easily, but seldom formed close friendships; when she did they were usually with men and rarely with women. She was a woman of strong opinions and wide reading, yet by all reports was extremely shy. Those who knew her invariably described her as intent, agreeable, accomplished, and intelligent, but seldom “warm.” This was, perhaps, because she only truly trusted those who were bound to her by ties of intimacy and dependence, through family or through patronage, and she felt any betrayals very keenly. These traits – a love of detail to the point of pedantry, a mercurial mixture of boldness and shyness, a fear of betrayal and a thirst for experience and information – led to a degree of worldliness but not necessarily of wisdom. They equipped her to be an exceptional gatherer of information about all that caught her attention (and little escaped it), an able organizer and a prolific correspondent. And it is around Jane Franklin that the rest of this dissertation turns, for she would prove to be the most able gatekeeper of information, and the most assiduous and creative in her search for authority, of all the Franklin women.

**Conclusion**

The activities of women and families in the 1820s as “gatekeepers” of information and as participants in a broader social scene of polite science set a certain precedent. It set in place an expectation of what the role of a polar relative, and particularly of a polar wife was, and how it was both expanded and limited by her gender and social status. She could be expected to know almost as much as the Admiralty or the Colonial Office about her husband’s whereabouts, activities, and associations in the field. She most likely had knowledge of his plans and accomplishments. She could be expected to share these, to a limited extent, with a select social circle, derived from her own position in the elite London society to which she was granted access.
by her husband’s status as a “lion.” In her capacity as a gatekeeper of information, she could also forward details of metropolitan activities through her own connections in both official and vernacular channels. If she did share information, however, it had to be discreetly, circumspectly, and always with an eye towards her husband’s professional prospects. She could claim, in short (as Jane Franklin would many years later) to be “in possession of her husband’s mind,” a claim that was backed up by her archives, her collections, and her connections.

What she could not do, with propriety, was to presume upon those connections and that knowledge, to place herself at center-stage as her husband did in his letters from the field. His associations, his friendships, and his liaisons, both in the field and at home, were his own, and her purview did not extend to them. In this sense, the polar wife or family member had many models upon which she could model her behavior. In addition to other maritime wives and family members, she also had the women of her wider social circle – those learned women who populated her social sphere, and who were central to the cultures of polite science in Regency London. But though she was an active participant in these “Arctic Circles,” Jane Franklin would nevertheless fail to understand these key features until at least 1849, and perhaps not even then. She would struggle for twenty years against these expectations, and it was according to these benchmarks that she would, with the help of Franklin’s extended family and connections, turn herself into the epitome of a polar, a maritime, and a Victorian wife for the general public, but never within any of the intersecting “Arctic Circles.”
In 1833, John Franklin began to seek employment abroad in Britain’s “garrison empire.” Franklin entered this world as a committed Evangelical who viewed the colonies as venues for moral improvement. As he wrote to Parry on the latter’s departure for New South Wales in 1829, if Arctic journeys could reform both officers and men, then a long colonial residence might produce even more profound change among one’s subjects. It was in this spirit that he looked for an appointment in 1836, and when Lord Glenelg, the Secretary of State for the Colonies, offered him a position as the Lieutenant-Governor of Antigua, Franklin thought that his and his wife’s deep interest in “the moral improvement of the Blacks” would lead to an era of “benevolent government.” Jane Franklin was not tempted by Antigua, arguing that it was beneath Franklin’s dignity to accept it. Glenelg then offered Franklin the Lieutenant Governorship of the penal colony of Van Diemen’s Land, at double the salary, which he accepted to Jane’s delight.

The Franklins were posted to Van Diemen's Land as the fabric of the British Empire and its networks of information were changing. As Zoe Laidlaw has shown, the systems of informal correspondence, personal connections and systems of patronage that had characterized the "garrison empire" of the period between 1780 and 1830 were giving way in the 1830s to an increased reliance at the Colonial Office on official communications and depersonalized

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474 SPRI MS 438/18/3, John Franklin to William Edward Parry, Gedling Hall, Nottinghamshire, 9 July, 1829. 475 SPRI MS 248/303/67, John Franklin to Jane Franklin, Admiralty, 25 March, 1836. 476 She wrote as much in a letter to Franklin that he showed to Beaufort (which does not survive). Beaufort was impressed with her reasoning and pronounced her “a woman of most excellent sense, judgment, and feeling.” TAHO MM4/1/3, John Franklin to Hannah Booth, 26 March, 1836. See also F. Woodward, Portrait of Jane, 196. 477 SPRI MS 248/303/68, John Franklin to Jane Franklin, Admiralty, 7 April, 1836; F. Woodward, Portrait of Jane, 196; John Franklin wrote to Richardson about Jane’s “lurking desire” to go to New South Wales as early as 1829, when Franklin was trying to convince Richardson to take the appointment with the Australian Agricultural Company which Parry ultimately took, see Chapter 2. See DRO D3311/53/47, John Franklin to John Richardson, 55 Devonshire St, 6 April, [1829].
statistical data, in an attempt to assert metropolitan control over governors and colonies, to root out corruption, and to enable an official vision of the empire as a whole.\textsuperscript{478} At the same time, as Alan Lester and others have shown, the transnational networks of philanthropists, missionaries and white settlers expanded their fields of operation, both on the grounds of white settler colonies and across oceans, as they forged links with fellow travelers and continued to formulate their identities in opposition to one another.\textsuperscript{479} Meanwhile, as Tracey Banivanua Mar has suggested, there was an emerging (and potentially linked) series of attempts by indigenous leaders, elites, and literate intermediaries around the Pacific to articulate and claim rights to protection, sovereignty and land.\textsuperscript{480} The penal colony of Van Diemen's Land was one of many nodal points across the empire where these strands came together; though it was supposed to be a prison at the end of the world, in fact it functioned as a hub of information for and about convicts, settlers, indigenous people, and scientists.

This chapter argues that during the Van Diemen's Land posting, the members of the Franklin family, and especially Jane Franklin, wove elaborate and expanding webs of their own in an attempt to shore up their reputations as they struggled to adapt to these shifting networks of information and to challenges to Franklin’s governorship. To forward her husband’s interests both in the often hostile environment of colonial Van Diemen’s Land and in London, Jane Franklin developed metropolitan and antipodean connections, strategies, and tactics that she would later deploy during the searches for Franklin’s missing Arctic expedition in 1848-1859. She constantly fought to control the flow of information to, from, and about the colony, both in

\textsuperscript{478} Laidlaw, \textit{Colonial Connections}.
\textsuperscript{480} Mar, “Imperial Literacy,” 1-28.
her own correspondence and in that of others (including her husband). Using tactics that mirrored those of colonial officials, she used her close family members (especially her sister Mary Simpkinson) as metropolitan envoys to press on influential connections on her husband’s behalf, including those at the Colonial Office, hoping that they would provide valuable context for her husband’s (and her own) colonial difficulties. She nurtured scientific connections, using her antipodean location to secure British correspondents and to patronize colonial science. She also abducted orphaned Aboriginal children from the mission station on Flinders Island, whom she treated as specimens of savagery and failed experiments in “civilization,” and whom she used as lures to attract the interest of nascent ethnologists in her husband’s colony. But at the same time, she was often trapped in webs of her own devising. Her many projects of colonial improvement and often undisguised influence over her husband provided her enemies with ample fuel to seek Franklin’s recall on the grounds of “petticoat government.” Ultimately she found that despite her efforts, when she returned to England she was in some ways even more distant from her husband’s influential friends in the Arctic Circles than when she had left, with significant consequences for their family’s reputation and Jane’s authority.

Since the 1820s, Van Diemen’s Land had been promoted to free settlers in Britain as a little England, a place with a mild, salubrious climate and both sublime and pastoral vistas – the very opposite of the harsh Arctic environments in which Franklin’s reputation had been made. As a result of both successful marketing and increased transportation, by 1836 the colony had more than one-third the total population of all the Australian colonies.481 But the tempting pastoral scenery depended, firstly, upon 8,000 years of Aboriginal land management and firestick farming; secondly on the nearly unlimited access free settlers had to unfree convict

labor; and thirdly on the white settlers’ violent dispossession of the Tasmanian Aborigines. The question of whether or not the endemic violence of the 1820s and 1830s constituted genocide lay at the center of Australia’s “History Wars” in the early 2000s, ultimately giving rise to a rich scholarship on archival integrity, the validity of oral and “traditional” sources, and the definitions of “massacre,” among other considerable contributions that bore directly on Aboriginal sovereignty and land claims in Australia and in other former white settler colonies.482 Neither Tasmanian history nor the history of the Franklin family can be told apart from this background of settler colonialism, violent dispossession and near-extinction, and the terror and discipline of a penal colony. Neither, for that matter, can those stories be told apart from the many, varied, and enduring forms of Tasmanian Aboriginal resistance that continued long after their removal.

It is impossible, within the scope of this chapter, to deal comprehensively with the Franklins’ many programs of “improvement” in Van Diemen’s Land, or the myriad ways in which these activities extended their inter-imperial web of connections.483 Instead, this chapter looks at three case studies to demonstrate how Jane Franklin used her time in Van Diemen’s Land to modify her role as a gatekeeper of information and to cultivate her connections and envoys in Britain. The first examines the affair of Alexander Maconochie and the Molesworth Committee on Transportation in 1838, which transformed convict administration in Van Diemen’s Land and damaged some of both John and Jane Franklin’s most important relationships within the “Arctic Circles” in Britain. The second looks at the Franklins’

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483 The best survey of these projects, which included education reform, agricultural improvement, and the promotion of Jane’s own settler colony on the Wakefield scheme in the Huon valley south of Hobart (now the town of Franklin near Huonville) – among many others - is in Alexander, Ambitions of Jane Franklin, 105-124.
sponsorship of the scientific societies, activities, and expeditions in Van Diemen’s Land in an attempt to both improve the colony and repair their own stretched and damaged connections amongst their influential scientific friends at “home.” The third looks at Jane’s taking of two Tasmanian Aboriginal children from the settlement at Wybalenna on Flinders Island in 1839 and 1841. It contextualizes her efforts to “civilize” Timemernedic and Mathinna against both the broader context of the developing extinction paradigm and the changing nature of Tasmanian Aboriginal resistance on Flinders. This case study also suggests that these experiences influenced how Jane, Eleanor, and Sophia later approached indigenous information during the Arctic searches for John Franklin in 1848-1859, especially that provided by literate middlemen and cultural go-betweens.

Van Diemen’s Land, 1802-1836

By the time of the Franklins’ arrival, Van Diemen’s Land (Figure 10) was already paradigmatic of both the British system of penal servitude and the developing transnational phenomenon of settler colonialism. From the time it came under British control in 1803, it was supposed to be the ultimate prison, an antipodean island on which Britain’s undesirables could be forever contained. Its status as an imperial prison was inseparable from its status as a white settler colony. Both were predicated upon the violent dispossession of native peoples, indiscriminate killing, the abduction of children and reliance upon unfree labor.484 The endemic violence against native people was the essential corollary of settlers’ ideology of ‘improvement,’

for their core argument was that native land had been insufficiently utilized by its traditional owners, and that therefore they possessed no legal right to it.485 “Improvement” in Van Diemen’s Land depended upon unfree labor – in this case of convicts, but elsewhere of slaves, convicts, or indentured servants.486 Indigenous resistance to settlers across the empire varied from guerilla warfare, to the signing of treaties (if offered) to accommodation, strategies which were continually adapted and which became a permanent feature of indigenous life.487 Alan Lester has argued that in South Africa, a feeling of deep vulnerability – both to resistance from indigenous people and unfree laborers and, from the 1830s, criticism from imperial humanitarians – was core to free settler identity, driving both retribution and the development of sophisticated transnational information networks to compete with humanitarian critics.488 Settlers were also keenly aware of the vulnerability of their reputations – and as Elizabeth Elbourne has argued, were pathologically concerned with demonstrating their virtue to the wider world.489

At the turn of the nineteenth century, Tasmania’s Aboriginal population (of about 7000 people) was divided into nine nations who intermarried, traded, and traveled through each other’s territories.490 Each nation was further subdivided into territory-owning clans, who visited each other for seasonal activities like mining ochre, sealing, and mutton-bird hunting, as well as

to fulfill ceremonial obligations. Clan leaders (“chiefs”) were usually male and had considerable reputations as hunters and warriors. Women could also hold leadership roles, perhaps most often in a diplomatic capacity. Economies varied depending on whether people lived inland or on the coast, but everyone depended to some extent on kangaroo, wombats and emus. Hunting grounds were maintained through regular seasonal burning (“fire-stick farming”). As in New Zealand and elsewhere in the Pacific, organized white settlement in Van Diemen’s Land was preceded by whaling and sealing communities, which sprang up in Bass Strait and on Bruny Island at the turn of the century to fuel the Canton-based fur trade, and depended heavily on the labor of abducted Aboriginal women. In 1802, the British seized Van Diemen’s Land, both to forestall a French invasion and to turn it into a penal colony. Violence characterized the settlement from the beginning, starting with the massacre at Risdon Cove in May of 1804, when soldiers of the New South Wales Corps fired on a large group of Aboriginal men, women, and children. Over the next twenty years, convicts, ex-convicts, and free settlers moved onto the grassy midlands that they viewed as an open commons, supplementing their food

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491 Ryan, *Tasmanian Aborigines*, 12-17.
492 Ibid., 11-12; for a comparison between Tasmanian leadership customs and those on the mainland, see Jones, 1974.
496 Debates over the Risdon Cove Massacre were central to the “History Wars” and the larger question of what “counted” as evidence of massacre throughout the so-called “Black War”. See Curthoys, “History of Killing,” 360-363; for a recent interpretation of the conduct and significance of the massacre, see Boyce, *Van Diemen’s Land*, 36-41. This was the moment to which many Tasmanian Aborigines dated the end of any possibility of peaceful coexistence. Ryan, *Tasmanian Aborigines*, 125.
with the kangaroos and emus upon which both Aborigines and settlers depended. Convicts were used for unfree labor in the service of both the state and free settlers on an assignment system until they had served their sentences and were eligible for their own land grants. Sporadic contact between settlers and Aborigines was marked by violence and by the abduction of children, several of whom would later be both resistance leaders and intermediaries during the so-called “Black War.”

When Franklin became Lieutenant Governor in 1837, he replaced Col. George Arthur, a powerful politician and able administrator who combined his formal authority with extensive patronage, personal relationships, and adept navigation of the Colonial Office’s system of informal communications and influence. He had wide humanitarian credentials stemming from his time in British Honduras from 1814 to 22, and was a friend of Sir Thomas Fowell Buxton. Notwithstanding his humanitarian credentials, Arthur’s administration was predicated on terror. He presided over a massive expansion of white settlement between 1824 and 1836 (tripling the population to 24,000), a much more severe penal code, and the “Black War.” To impose greater discipline on the convict work force, Arthur increased the use of chain gangs, public labor, and public floggings for infractions like general disobedience or breaking curfew. For those who re-offended during their sentences, Arthur built a system of new prisons, barracks and female factories. Its signature feature was the prison complex at Port Arthur on the Tasman peninsula, which embodied the miseries of transportation; as Robert Hughes argued, it was “a

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497 This is one of the principal arguments made in Boyce, _Van Diemen’s Land_.
498 Boyce, _Van Diemen’s Land_, 164; Laidlaw, _Colonial Connections_, 42, 64.
500 Benjamin Madley has argued that these events were sequential, that the penal colony’s “culture of terror” inured white settlers to violence, and that consequently they were more disposed to mass murder. See Madley, “From Terror to Genocide.” This interpretation tends to downplay the settler land hunger while ignoring the simultaneity of the “Black War” and the influx of settlers. See Reynolds, _History of Tasmania_, 50-53.
501 Boyce, _Van Diemen’s Land_, 170.
purgatorial grinding-mill rather than a torture chamber... to which vindictiveness and pity were equally alien.”

Executions rose as the gallows and gibbet came into frequent use. The climate of terror also exacerbated the social gap between convicts, ex-convicts, and free settlers. A pervasive, pathological social snobbery emerged amongst free settlers. The naturalist Louisa Meredith would later complain, “[they] might really well dispense with the feverish terror of being said or thought to do anything ‘ungenteel’ or ‘unfashionable.’”

As settlers jealously guarded their presumptive gentility, they also violently retaliated against Aboriginal resistance. In response to expanding settlements, about 100 Aboriginal warriors from across Tasmania (including several child abductees) waged a sophisticated guerilla campaign against the settlers between 1824 and 1831. They killed 170 settlers, wounded 200 more, and burned 347 houses. In contrast, settlers killed at least 800 of the 1200 Aborigines in the Settled Districts between December 1826 and 1834. “Roving” gangs of bushmen, settler parties and military patrols engaged in mass murder, hunting families in the bush and killing them while they slept. Genocidal rhetoric was spread by the colonial press. An 1826 Colonial Times editorial is representative in its assertion that, “We make no pompous display of

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504 Ryan, *Tasmanian Aborigines*, 6-7, 83; Reynolds, *History of Tasmania*, 50-53; Some nineteenth century settlers and anthropologists argued that the Tasmanian Aborigines were incapable of mounting effective resistance without outside assistance, pointing particularly to the role of “Musquito,” an Aborigine from the Sydney area who had been incarcerated first at Norfolk Island and then taken to Van Diemen’s Land, where he was refused passage home, ultimately joined the resistance, and was hung in 1826. See Naomi Parry, “‘Hanging No Good for Blackfellow': Looking into the Life of Musquito,” in *Transgressions: Critical Australian Indigenous Histories*, ed. Ingereth Macfarlane and Mark Hannah, (Canberra: The Australian National University EPress and Aboriginal History, Inc, 2007), 153-176; Boyce, *Van Diemen’s Land*, 190-91.
505 The question of statistics, accountability for deaths, and the reportage of massacres was central to the “History Wars.” Lyndall Ryan has recently and very carefully tallied up the numbers again in consultation with the two principal historians of the period, Henry Reynolds and James Boyce, and presented the figures I cite above. See Ryan, *Tasmanian Aborigines*, 142-147. As Boyce has pointed out, it was not until the declaration of martial law in 1828, which effectively sanctioned white murder of Aborigines, that most of the killings began to be officially reported. Boyce, *Van Diemen’s Land*, 196.
philanthropy – we say unequivocally, SELF DEFENSE IS THE FIRST LAW OF NATURE, THE GOVERNMENT MUST REMOVE THE NATIVES. IF NOT THEY WILL BE HUNTED DOWN LIKE WILD BEASTS AND DESTROYED.”  

By 1830, there were no Aboriginal groups (apart from those on the rugged west coast) that still had a full demographic of women, men, children, and the elderly. Settlers argued that any violence was the fault of the Aborigines’ “wanton and savage spirit,” but nevertheless, the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Sir George Murray warned Arthur that “the adoption of any line of conduct having for its avowed or for its secret object, the extinction of the Native-race, could not fail to leave an indelible stain upon the Character of the British Government.”

Arthur constantly walked a fine line between accommodating settlers’ demands and placating the Colonial Office. In 1830, he called up every able-bodied white male colonist (bond and free) to form a human chain (the “Black Line”) across the Settled Districts to the East Coast in an attempt to drive all the surviving Aborigines south towards the Tasman Peninsula. Aborigines crossed the “Line” with relative ease, and in late November it was abandoned as a failure, having killed two people and captured none. Nevertheless, the “Line” broke up large groups into smaller, more vulnerable ones, ultimately contributing to the death toll.

Simultaneously, in an effort to save his reputation and maybe his soul, Arthur adopted a policy of

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507 Madley, “From Terror to Genocide,” 98; Boyce, Van Diemen’s Land, 180.
508 Boyce, Van Diemen’s Land, 202.
509 PP 1831 (259) George Murray to George Arthur, 5 November, 1830, 56.
510 Arthur’s position was especially difficult because of contradictory instructions from the Colonial Office over the first five years of his administration. On the one hand, he had instructions from Lord Bathurst in 1825 stating that conflict with Aborigines was to be regarded not as a riot or rebellion, but as warfare; on the other he knew that humanitarian feeling in the Colonial Office would not sanction extermination. Reynolds, History of Tasmania, 29; Lester, Imperial Networks, 106-109; PP 1831 (259), Van Diemen’s Land. Copies of All Correspondence Between Lieutenant-Governor Arthur and His Majesty’s Secretary of State for the Colonies, on the Subject of the Military Operations Lately Carried on Against the Aboriginal Inhabitants of Van Diemen’s Land.
511 The similarity to a Highland shooting party is noted in Ryan, Tasmanian Aborigines, 132-33; Reynolds, Fate of a Free People, 117.
‘conciliation,’ to persuade Aborigines to move permanently away from areas of white settlement and into model villages.\(^{513}\) Though the idea was originally proposed by the mixed-race Chief Constable of Richmond, Gilbert Robertson, Arthur turned to George Augustus Robinson, a Hobart bricklayer who had educated himself through missionary tracts, and who would link his own upward mobility to the fate of the Aborigines.\(^{514}\) He first tested “conciliation” on the surviving Nuenonne people of Bruny Island in 1829, where he made important liaisons including with Truganini, the seventeen-year old daughter of the chief of the Lyluequonny clan from Recherche Bay in far southern Tasmania.\(^{515}\) But the Nuennone began to die in horrific numbers, and a year later there were only a few left, prompting Robinson to abandon Bruny and take his “mission” elsewhere.

From 1830 to 1834 Robinson pursued his “Friendly Mission,” traveling across Van Diemen’s Land with more than a dozen “mission” Aborigines (including Truganini and former

\(^{513}\) Lester and Dussart have argued that Arthur was translating the Caribbean practice of ‘amelioration’ to a Tasmanian context. Lester and Dussart, “Trajectories of Protection,” 208-210.

\(^{514}\) Gilbert Robertson was the son of a Scottish clan chief and a slave, who Cassandra Pybus points out occupied a tenuous position in Van Diemonian society, for “in a place beset with racial anxiety, he was seen as suspect, harbouring the savage Other beneath his skin.” She also quotes a local powerful landholder and ex-slave trader, William Kermode, who once remarked that he “had bought better men than Robertson for a barrel of gunpowder.” Cassandra Pybus, “A Self Made Man” in Reading Robinson, 101; It is impossible to do justice here to Robinson’s place in Tasmanian history. Insofar as the “Black War” registers in Tasmanian popular culture (which is to say, very little), Robinson is seen as a hero, and some academics like Lyndall Ryan are inclined to agree. Others, like Pybus, Reynolds, Boyce, Lester, and the editor of Robinson’s copious papers N. J. B. Plomley, tend to see a more complex figure who was motivated both by his own interests and by his ideological commitments (the former usually winning out over the latter). Reactionary historians like Vivian Rae-Ellis and Keith Windschuttle (who drew heavily on Rae-Ellis’s deeply flawed work) seized on personal criticisms of Robinson to claim that both he and his enormously detailed journals were fundamentally unreliable as historical documents, either of Tasmanian Aboriginal culture or of the horrors of the “Black War.” The best surveys of the extant historiography are in Johnston and Rolls, Reading Robinson, and in Manne, Whitewash; for the reactionary case, see Vivienne Rae-Ellis, Black Robinson: Protector of the Aborigines (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1988) and Windschuttle, Fabrication.

\(^{515}\) Truganini would become one of the most famous (and again contentious) figures in Tasmanian history, placed as she was in the extremely perilous position of the female indigenous go-between (with which both “Greenstockings” and Iligijaq would have been familiar), a woman whose motives and abilities would be open to dissection and calumny by both her contemporaries and by historians. For an excellent survey see Lyndall Ryan, “Historians, Friendly Mission and the Contest for Robinson and Trukanini” in Reading Robinson, 147-160; for a vituperative view of Truganini as both duplicitous and licentious, see Vivian Rae-Ellis, Trucanini: Queen or Traitor? (Canberra: Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies, 1981).
child abductees). The Aborigines conducted crucial negotiations, making the case to kin and to strangers that it was no longer possible to remain in their ancestral lands and to survive. Over the four years of the “mission,” both Robinson and Arthur implicitly and explicitly promised treaties, leading those who surrendered to believe that they would retain their freedom on new land with enduring political rights. As a result, by 1834, almost every Aborigine – numbering only 148 souls out of a pre-war population of over 1,500 and a pre-contact population of 7,000 – had moved to Wybalenna on Flinders Island off the northwest coast (an island named for Franklin’s uncle, Matthew Flinders). As on Bruny Island, the conditions of exile and Robinson’s program of acculturation meant that these survivors died at an alarming rate. By the time the Franklins visited in January of 1838, there were only 60 people left (see below).

The Franklins were to live in the shadows of these events during their time in Van Diemen’s Land. When they arrived in Hobart in January of 1837, it was a place where horror was mundane. The corpses of the hanged were gibbeted along roads through a stunningly beautiful landscape, green pastures were well-known massacre sites, public works were built by chain gangs, and Aboriginal skulls and other body parts were exchanged as gifts. Two years after the official end of the ”Black War,” the free settlers and ex-convicts who had perpetrated the violence ferociously defended their reputations. They believed that their ideology of ”improvement” legitimated their seizure of Aboriginal land, use of unfree convict labor, and their own upward social mobility. However, six-month-old news from England increasingly reminded

517 This was especially difficult considering that several of the “mission Aborigines” and the chiefs with whom they were negotiating maintained that the British were unlawfully occupying their country. For the best analysis, see Reynolds, Fate of a Free People, especially 121-157.
518 Madley, “From Terror to Genocide,” 100-101.
519 Franklin’s recent biographer Andrew Lambert dismisses the fate of the Tasmanian Aborigines as utterly irrelevant to his administration in Van Diemen’s Land. See A. Lambert, Gates of Hell, 99-100.
them that Parliament, the humanitarian lobby, and the British public were not necessarily convinced of their virtue. Settlers therefore seized on any evidence of their own cosmopolitanism and refinement, and initially welcomed their new Lieutenant Governor and his wife as liberal patrons of the sciences and arts. For settlers, the Franklins’ arrival represented an opportunity for a clean slate, a chance to conveniently forget the past and demonstrate their virtue as a means towards future self-government.

Both John and Jane Franklin were dedicated to making their time in the Antipodes one of “improvement”—of themselves, their family, and the colony. Dr. Thomas Arnold, the Headmaster of Rugby School, wrote to Franklin that he believed his moral and Christian leadership could divert the convict colony from its otherwise inevitable path towards perpetual moral turpitude and damnation. “You will be I know,” he wrote, “not in name nor in form, but in deed and in spirit, the best and chief missionary.” Yet it was Jane Franklin’s efforts that have drawn the most attention from historians. She started a dizzying number of projects during her six years in the colony, from establishing her own settlement in the Huon Valley, to founding new scientific societies and museums, to the reform of convict women, to her attempts to "civilize" two orphaned Aboriginal children. She also traveled extensively throughout the island, on the Australian mainland, and to New Zealand, using her copious notes on her travels to inform her husband’s administration. Her sympathies, as this chapter will demonstrate, naturally lay with white settler ideology, though not necessarily with settlers themselves, whom she described once as “petulant, excitable, passionate, malicious, revengeful, like a set of wicked

521 A. Lambert, Gates of Hell, 95.
children, who have never yet had their natural & inherited corruptions whipped out of them.”

The Franklins’ ambitions, however, were hampered by the linked politics of the colony and of their home. Two of John Franklin’s advisors, the Colonial Secretary John Montagu and the Chief Police Magistrate, Matthew Forster, were key members of Arthur’s labyrinthine web of connections in the colony, on the mainland, and in London. Both were ambitious men, married to Arthur’s nieces, and both perceived that their new governor was no administrator. As Franklin wrote to Richardson at the beginning of his administration, “I can lay no claim to brilliancy of mind or genius but I do think my mind fitted for patient enquiry and calm investigation of matters.”

He had always depended on his closest associates to organize and manage both his expeditions and narratives, of whom Richardson and his first wife Eleanor had been the most important. He approached his governorship the same way, which allowed Jane, Montagu, Forster, and others to vie for influence over him. Montagu and Forster were both enraged by Jane’s involvement in colonial politics, as she commented on the minutes of the Executive Council, wrote dispatches and reports, and conducted interviews in her rooms at Government House. Montagu wrote to Arthur in 1838 that it was “Petticoat influence which Rules” and that Franklin was “the tool of every rogue who will flatter his wife for she in fact governs. Her influence on him is wonderful and he never does a single thing without consulting her… he is the weakest minded man I ever had to do business with.”

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523 Quoted in Alexander, *Ambitions of Jane Franklin*, 93.
524 As Laidlaw has pointed out, this was especially important for a man like Arthur, who came from a relatively humble background. Laidlaw, *Colonial Connections*, 42.
525 For excellent character sketches, see Fitzpatrick, *Franklin in Tasmania*, 106-112.
526 DRO D3311/53/71, John Franklin to John Richardson, Government House, Hobart Town, 18 August, 1837.
London in 1839-41, Montagu would spread these rumors within the Colonial Office, and his accusations of “petticoat government” led directly to Franklin’s recall in 1843 (see below).528

The politics of the Franklin home were also crucial. For the first time, the family lived together under one roof, but their household also incorporated advisors, visitors, and a variety of friends and protégés. It included John Franklin’s nieces Mary Franklin and Sophia Cracroft, and later his nephews Tom Cracroft and Henry and William Porden Kay.529 John Hepburn, whose rheumatism prevented him from continuing to work at Woolwich Dockyards, was brought as John Franklin’s companion. Though Jane was at a loss to find a place for him, John placed him in charge of the convicts who worked on the grounds of Government House before employing him at Point Puer, the boys’ prison at Port Arthur.530 The household also initially included Franklin’s personal secretary Alexander Maconochie, together with his wife Mary and their six children. At the core of the Franklin household was a tense triangle between Jane Franklin, Eleanor Franklin, and Sophia Cracroft, which would govern the Franklin family from that point forward. The teenage and ‘willful’ Eleanor tried to secure the approbation of a demanding stepmother and an emotionally distant father, Jane tried to consolidate her authority by binding others to her by ties of affection, and the unmarried Sophia tried to secure a future apart from the

528 Laidlaw used this as an example of the dangers of colonial governors employing metropolitan envoys, but does not mention the substance of Montagu’s complaints against Jane Franklin. Laidlaw, *Colonial Connections*, 70. Jane, for her part, came to detest Montagu and Forster as much as they did her, writing once to her sister that they were, “dishonest, base minded, selfish, and unfeeling men, without principle without scruple, and almost without shame, where their personal passions and interests are concerned.” SPRI MS 248/174 Jane Franklin to Mary Simpkinson, 1 January, 1842.
529 All found that being the relative of a “lion” in London society was no preparation for the experience of living in Government House, as Mary wrote to her sister Catherine, “I really believe there are some people who know how many morsels of meat we put into our mouths.” RGS SJF/1/2, Mary Franklin to Catherine Franklin, Hobart Town, 3 August, 1837.
530 SPRI MS 395/41/6 BL, John Franklin to George Back, Hedingham Castle, Essex, 14 February 1835; SPRI MS 1503/14/11, Jane Franklin to John Richardson, 11 June 1836; DRO D3311/53/71, John Franklin to John Richardson, Government House, Hobart Town, 18 August, 1837; DRO D3311/53/74, John Franklin to John Richardson, Government House, 23 May 1839; Traill, *Life of Sir John Franklin*, 278-279.
genteel poverty she had always known, either by advantageous marriage or by vying with Eleanor for filial devotion to Jane.

Familial politics were not bounded by the domestic and political spaces of Government House. Familial and Arctic circles in Britain were also crucial, as the Franklins used them to funnel volumes of colonial information to metropolitan decision makers. Both John Richardson and Jane’s sister Mary Simpkinson became key envoys in London, acting as gatekeepers of information and discreetly providing influential men like Beaufort, Sabine, Parry, and Barrow with the broader context for the Franklins’ considerable colonial difficulties. Their activities were especially valuable in the aftermath of James Stephen’s reforms at the Colonial Office, especially his banning of unofficial correspondence in 1835. Laidlaw has argued that this meant that older systems of patronage and a priori relationships between colonial officials and their metropolitan contacts rose in importance. In her interpretation, however, those lobbying relationships were mainly the purview of men - the practical influence of women was principally confined to humanitarian networks, philanthropic campaigns and the abolition movement. The Franklin case, however, demonstrates that this was not necessarily the case, that women could and did work outside (and sometimes in opposition to) humanitarian and philanthropic networks to leverage their own familial and friendly connections within the halls of power.

**Penal Reform and the Arctic Circles: the Case of Alexander Maconochie**

Before he went to Van Diemen’s Land in 1836 as Franklin’s private secretary, Alexander Maconochie had had a distinguished career as a captain in the Royal Navy, the first professor of

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531 For a discussion of Government House as a domestic and political space from the perspective of the history of the family, see P. Russell, “Unhomely Moments,” 329-331.
533 Ibid., 121.
Geography at University College London from 1833, and the Secretary of the RGS. In this latter role, one of his main functions was to facilitate connections amongst a diverse group of influential men in Britain and abroad. As a result, he made powerful friends and acquaintances, including Franklin, Barrow, Murchison, Beaufort, and the naturalist Robert Brown. He and his wife Mary (an amateur naturalist) were both also close friends of George Back. When the Maconochies and their six children set out with the Franklins on HMS *Fairlie* in 1836, it was on terms of intimacy, and with the intention that the Maconochies would live with them in Government House. But like others who came to Van Diemen’s Land under Franklin’s patronage, Maconochie chafed under Arthur’s legacy, detesting the former governor’s advisors and their continuing influence. He became convinced that Franklin was too easily seduced by the flattery of the “Arthur faction” to be an effective governor, leaving Maconochie working as a “Household drudge,” as he wrote to Back. This was not without justification, for Montagu detested Maconochie and felt that he diminished Montagu’s own influence over Franklin. Franklin meanwhile, perceived Maconochie’s unhappiness, but wrote to Richardson that it was because, “he was not to originate and carry into effect any theoretic view which he might form of Government and the General Management of affairs.”

By Maconochie’s “theoretic view,” Franklin was referring to his plans to reform convict management. He had been asked by the Society for the Improvement of Prison Discipline to

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535 Markham, “Fifty Years’ Work,” 2-24; see also RGS AP/CB, Additional Papers, Committee Minute Book, 1830-1841.
537 Alexander, *Ambitions of Jane Franklin*, 175-76.
538 These included Peter Barrow, the son of Sir John Barrow, and H. W. Bradbury, another member of the RGS. I deal with Barrow’s grievances further below, and Bradbury’s letters complaining to Captain John Washington (the new secretary of the RGS) of the state of affairs in Van Diemen’s Land are in RGS CB2/86, Letters of H. W. Bradbury from Van Diemen’s Land.
540 Ibid., 176.
541 DRO D3311/53/71, John Franklin to John Richardson, Hobart, 18 August, 1837.
report on convict management of the colony, and almost from the time he landed, he became convinced that the assignment system was merely slavery by another name. This belief developed during many discussions with the Quaker “travelers under concern,” James Backhouse and George Washington Walker, who were themselves preparing a report for Elizabeth Fry. Maconochie came to believe the assignment system, the brutal penal code and its principle of terror and coercion degraded both settlers and convicts, destroyed self-restraint, and fundamentally prevented any hope of an individual’s reform or reintegration into society.

Furthermore, he felt that Franklin and his advisors from the “Arthur faction” were utterly unsympathetic to his views, and wrote to Back, “I was a solitary Abolitionist amid a host of slave-owners and drivers.”

Maconochie proposed to replace assignment with parole, in which the length of sentences was determined by “marks” earned by convicts for their labor. After an initial period of imprisonment, labor for the state, and religious instruction, convicts were set free to seek employment as “passholders” and were entitled to wages. He wrote his report for the Society and discussed it at length with Backhouse and Walker, both of whom considered it to be “consistent with Christian Principle, and consequently with enlightened policy.” But when Maconochie presented his plan to Franklin, the latter cautioned patience and asked him to wait, writing to Richardson that, “though [the plan] contains some points deserving consideration it yet

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543 For accounts of Maconochie’s conversations with Backhouse and Walker, see James Backhouse, *Extracts from the Letters of James Backhouse, Now Engaged in a Religious Visit to Van Diemen’s Land, and New South Wales, Accompanied by George Washington Walker* (London: Harvey and Darton, 1838), 43-80; for the importance of Backhouse and Walker to transimperial humanitarian networks, and particularly their role as “institutional opponents” who tried to broker humanitarian reforms with state officials, see Penelope Edmonds, “Travelling ‘Under Concern’: Quakers James Backhouse and George Washington Walker Tour the Antipodean Colonies, 1832-41,” *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 40, no. 5 (December 2012): 769-788.
544 Reid, *Gender, Crime and Empire,* 168-170.
545 Quoted in Fitzpatrick, *Franklin in Tasmania,* 164-5.
546 Barry, “Pioneers in Criminology,” 151; Reid, *Gender, Crime and Empire,* 174.
547 Backhouse, *Extracts from the Letters,* 43.
is full of Theories which in my opinion cannot with safety be introduced into a Community constituted as this is.”  

Indeed, Maconochie’s plan struck at the heart of the Van Diemonian economy, which was built on captured land and unfree labor. Its proposal to mix the convict and free population was still less acceptable to some settlers, though some among the anti-Arthur faction (notably Gilbert Robertson, who was by this time the editor of the *True Colonist* newspaper) were quite favorable to it. 

The nature of Jane Franklin’s involvement with Maconochie’s scheme reflected her awkward negotiation of her own status. As the wife of a governor, many in England and Van Diemen’s Land assumed that she would turn her attention to the condition of convict women. Under Arthur’s system, convict women were assigned to settlers on arrival in the colonies, and if they reoffended or had a child out of wedlock, were sent to one of the “female factories” for further sentences of hard labor or solitary confinement while the child was sent to the Orphan School in New Town (north of Hobart). The Orphan School had been set up in 1828 as part of Arthur’s reforms, ostensibly to house the destitute, but in practice to institutionalize convicts’ children, with the object of ultimately transforming them into respectable, industrious adults under a regime of discipline, regimentation, and control. From its inception, it had also been the de facto destination for captured and orphaned Aboriginal children. Reforming such a system was a perfectly suitable interest for a woman of Jane’s station, and one that Elizabeth Fry (whom Jane had known casually since 1823) had asked her to look into. But Jane was neither interested in amelioration nor charity towards convict women. If Fry believed women could be reformed through prayer and industry, Jane believed in unremitting punishment: women’s heads

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548 DRO D3311/53/71, John Franklin to John Richardson, Hobart, 18 August, 1837.
549 See for example *Colonial Times*, 8 August, 1837: 4; 29 January, 1839: 7; 12 February, 1839: 5.
551 TAHO NS 279/1/10, Jane Franklin Diary, 4 November, 1839.
should be shaved, floggings resumed, solitary confinement should be widespread, and mothers should be permanently separated from their children.\footnote{See Jane Franklin to Elizabeth Fry, 3 August, 1841 in George Mackanness, \textit{Some Private Correspondence of Sir John and Lady Jane Franklin (Tasmania, 1837-1845)} (Sydney: Review Publications Pty, Ltd, 1977), 22-29.} As she wrote to Robert Gunn, one of her Van Diemen’s Land protégés (see below), “The fact is I think all such ministrations as Mrs. Fry’s in the factory to be nearly worthless.”\footnote{TAHO NG1313, Jane Franklin to Ronald Gunn, 14 January, 1839.} She avoided the question of female convict reform as much as possible during her time in Van Diemen’s Land, only briefly taking an interest in 1841 after the arrival of Fry’s envoy, the young Kezia Hayter, on the convict ship \textit{Rajah}.\footnote{For a much fuller treatment of Jane Franklin’s haphazard approach to female convicts, see Alexander, \textit{Ambitions of Jane Franklin}, 94-104.}

Despite Jane’s stated desire to “work morning, noon and night” in the interest of female convicts, she was far more interested in Maconochie’s proposals of broader reform of the entire convict system. As on many other occasions, she was accused of “interference.” She wrote to Mary that while Franklin’s Executive Council had been reviewing Maconochie’s plans, she had also been “much harassed with reading and commenting and suggesting,” on the subject. She thought Maconochie’s proposal “much better” than the existing system, and noted, “I go along with Capt Maconochie in some degree, but not enough to satisfy him.”\footnote{SPRI MS 248/174, Jane Franklin to Mary Simpkinson, 7 October, 1837.} She saw herself as a mediator between Maconochie and the Arthur faction, but as a result, “I am told that great use has been made of my name abroad as their known friend and supporter.” The effect was worrisome, because it meant that Arthur’s supporters in her husband’s cabinet (especially Montagu and Forster) were “using it to my disadvantage” and depicting her, she said, as “double-faced, vacillating, or even treacherous.” She claimed that she was “devoted soul & spirit to Sir John,” and on that account, her actions (whatever they may have been) were above reproach.\footnote{Quoted in F. Woodward, \textit{Portrait of Jane}, 206-207.}
In the meantime, Maconochie secretly introduced his report into Franklin’s sealed diplomatic bag, headed for the Colonial Office and James Stephen, the Under Secretary of State and a committed humanitarian. Maconochie’s action went to the heart of Franklin’s authority. He cleverly bypassed the system that Stephen had himself set up in order to eliminate the bureaucratic nightmare that reams of unofficial correspondence from colonial functionaries like Maconochie (especially about such colonial disputes) had caused in the past. That he was able to get away with it was testament first to his excellent connections, and second to the power of the “transportation-as-slavery” argument in the wake of abolition in 1833. His damning and detailed report was given to the Molesworth Committee on Transportation as crucial evidence, and subsequently printed in a Parliamentary Blue Book. This was detrimental enough to Franklin’s nascent administration, but so too was the fact that it was juxtaposed with sensationalist accounts of colonial sexual disorder – in particular, pervasive homosexuality – which Kirsty Reid has argued “served as a highly potent symbol of the absolute moral inversion suffered by convict men.”

It was partly due to Maconochie’s report that, in 1840, transportation to New South Wales ended, but continued in Van Diemen’s Land, where Franklin was forced to abolish assignment and implement Maconochie’s system of convict probation in stages, beginning in 1839. By that time, Maconochie was already established as the commandant of Norfolk Island, where beginning in 1840, he tested his system on men who had been transported a second time after reoffending in the colonies. He was recalled in 1844 and his

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557 Laidlaw, _Colonial Connections_, 120-121.
559 Reid, _Gender, Crime and Empire_, 175.
560 Alexander, _Ambitions of Jane Franklin_, 179; Reid, _Gender, Crime and Empire_, 174; Fitzpatrick, _Franklin in Tasmania_, 232-237. Franklin argued that to replace assignment with convict gangs, for however short a period, was not “emancipation from slavery, but… a further punishment and degradation.” He was overruled. Fitzpatrick, _Franklin in Tasmania_, 229.
system deemed a failure; by 1846 he had been replaced as commandant by John Price, a notorious sadist married to Mary Franklin.\footnote{Barry, “Pioneers in Criminology,” 151-155; for Price, see Hughes, \textit{Fatal Shore}, 541-551.}

Franklin did not learn about what Maconochie had done until he read about it in a British newspaper in late 1838, and was then forced to dismiss him and (reluctantly) to eject him and his family from Government House.\footnote{Franklin was profoundly uncomfortable about removing the family from the house. See Traill, \textit{Life of Sir John Franklin}, 249-250, 265-267.} He wrote to Richardson of his feelings of betrayal, especially his suspicions that Maconochie had been feeding information to the “vile press” and even more perniciously, “doing all he can to raise an unfavourable impression against me among his friends at Home.”\footnote{DRO D3311/53/74, John Franklin to John Richardson, Government House, 23 May, 1839.} Mary Maconochie wrote to George Back that Franklin was a “false friend,” and Sophy Cracroft wrote a précis of the affair to her cousin Mary Richardson and claimed that Maconochie had always intended to deceive their uncle.\footnote{Fitzpatrick, \textit{Franklin in Tasmania}, 164-5; SPRI MS 1503/17/3, Sophia Cracroft to Mary Richardson, Hobarton, 25 September, 1838.} This was also Jane Franklin’s main concern, and within a short time, her mixed feelings about the Maconochie family developed into a pathological sense of betrayal that she nurtured in many letters to her sister Mary Simpkinson.\footnote{SPRI MS 248/174, Jane Franklin to Mary Simpkinson, 8 October, 1838.} She feared the Maconochie affair (and his repeated assertions that she had encouraged him) would infect all her and Franklin’s relationships and severely undermine both her husband’s government and her own reputation in the colony and at “home.”\footnote{Among other things, Maconochie claimed both to Franklin and to some of their mutual friends in London that Jane had encouraged him (as indeed, her own letters to Mary indicate she had). Franklin refuted this in a letter he showed first to his Executive Council and then copied to Beaufort, while Jane sent her own copy to Mary. SPRI MS 248/174, Jane Franklin to Mary Simpkinson, 4 October, 1838.}

Jane Franklin’s fears were not groundless. The rift between Maconochie and Franklin became common gossip at the RGS, fuelled in part by the correspondence of a Van Diemonian Fellow of the RGS, H. W. Bradbury to the Society’s new secretary, Captain John Washington...
(who would be deeply involved in the Franklin searches ten years later).\textsuperscript{567} While Richardson was in London, attending to his scientific and political relationships, he wrote to his wife that the gossip was, “your Uncle is too mild for Van Diemen’s Land” and that, “Lady F has plunged her husband into difficulty that he would otherwise have avoided.”\textsuperscript{568} He later reported that he had seen Back, who told him on Mary Simpkinson’s authority, “that Lady F has some notions about colonial improvements in which she partly agrees with Capt Maconochie,” and that as a result, “Sir J… stands alone in his government.” Richardson added, “Poor fellow – before he undertook the management of a colony he should have asserted his right of governing his own family.” Mary Franklin, he thought (quite wrongly), would be “well out of such a domestic circle,” when she married John Price.\textsuperscript{569}

In addition to providing gossip amongst Franklin’s friends at home, and widening a rift between Jane Franklin and John Richardson, the Maconochie affair also undermined John Franklin’s important relationship with Sir John Barrow and his family, and threatened to seriously undermine both his colonial and Arctic career. It also formed an important backdrop to a relationship that would later be one of Jane Franklin’s most important during the Franklin searches, that with John Barrow, Jr. Sir John’s youngest son Peter had been sent out with Franklin in the hopes that he would find something for the young man to do.\textsuperscript{570} Having previously served as a schoolmaster in Sierra Leone, Peter Barrow became a schoolmaster in charge of the convict boys at Point Puer, where he apparently wanted to try out Maconochie’s system.\textsuperscript{571} He and Maconochie became quite close, and the younger Barrow publicly supported

\textsuperscript{567} RGS CB2/86, Letters of H. W. Bradbury from Van Diemen’s Land, 1834-1840.  
\textsuperscript{568} SPRI MS 1503/18/1, John Richardson to Mary Booth Richardson, 22 February, 1838.  
\textsuperscript{569} SPRI MS 1503/18/20, John Richardson to Mary Booth Richardson, 23 March, 1838.  
\textsuperscript{570} Alexander, Ambitions of Jane Franklin, 82; SPRI MS 248/174, Jane Franklin to Mary Simpkinson, 13 February, 1839.  
\textsuperscript{571} Jane Franklin reported that he had an extremely violent temper and beat the boys savagely. SPRI MS 248/174, Jane Franklin to Mary Simpkinson, 23 February, 1839.
Maconochie’s various reforms (including a proposal to ameliorate the condition of New South Wales Aborigines by employing Aboriginal men as public officers).\textsuperscript{572} In 1838, Franklin promised him the position of director of schools for the island, while he was also a candidate for holy orders, but then misrepresented the amount of his salary, was not able to secure any position for him, and then the Bishop of Australia refused to ordain him.\textsuperscript{573} Peter returned home and bitterly complained of his treatment to his father and older brother John Barrow Jr., blaming Franklin, Montagu and Forster for undermining him. His complaints were backed up by correspondence from the Colonial Treasurer, John Gregory, Maconochie, and some of Maconochie’s Hobart allies.\textsuperscript{574} Over the course of 1839 and 1840, several angry letters from both Sir John Barrow and John Barrow Jr. came to Government House accusing John Franklin of disloyalty.\textsuperscript{575}

The whole affair deeply distressed Franklin, as he saw his oldest and most useful relationship being destroyed by those closest to him. These included his wife and niece. Jane later wrote to her sister Mary Simpkinson that she had decided that if “a cutting, cruel, heart-rending letter from Sir J. B. shd arrive”, her husband should never see it.\textsuperscript{576} When a letter from Barrow did arrive and was presented to Franklin at the breakfast table on the morning of December 7\textsuperscript{th}, Sophia Cracroft snatched it from him and ran upstairs with it to Jane, who immediately set it on fire.\textsuperscript{577} Franklin was just behind Sophy and, Jane reported to Mary, “was violently agitated, sd I had ruined him with his best friend,” and that “it was long before he could be pacified,” as Jane insisted she had done it for his own good. She then wrote to Barrow directly

\textsuperscript{573} SPRI MS 248/174, Jane Franklin to Mary Simpkinson 13 February, 1839; 23 February, 1839.
\textsuperscript{574} DRO D3311/53/78, John Franklin to John Richardson, 5 December, 1840.
\textsuperscript{575} SPRI MS 248/174, Jane Franklin to Mary Simpkinson 23 February, 1839; SPRI MS 248/174, Jane Franklin to Mary Simpkinson 26 December, 1839; TAHO NS279/1/10, Jane Franklin Diary, 7 December, 1839.
\textsuperscript{576} SPRI MS 248/174, Jane Franklin to Mary Simpkinson, 26 December, 1839.
\textsuperscript{577} TAHO NS279/1/10 Jane Franklin Diary, 7 December, 1839.
and informed him of what she had done.\textsuperscript{578} Clearly, by late 1839, Jane was confident enough of her position as both a wife and a trusted advisor that she did not blink at destroying her husband’s unread correspondence in front of him. It is also clear that by this time, she could already rely on the unwavering devotion of Sophia, who did not feel that she was jeopardizing her position by being party to such an act. Eleanor later wrote that her father had never been so depressed as he was after the incident.\textsuperscript{579}

By the time Jane’s letter reached Barrow in mid-1840, her sister Mary Simpkinson had already been hard at work to diminish the damage in London. Mary was Jane’s best envoy, and Jane wrote long letters to her, begging her to intervene in the crisis. She placed the blame for the entire affair on Maconochie, writing to Mary, “What a dangerous enemy is an alienated domestic friend,” and urging her to circulate that view.\textsuperscript{580} She wrote of how hurt Franklin was “that his old friend and patron declares he has ruined his son,” and worried that “you will hear much of this subject in London,” and begged her to speak to young John Barrow and to “remove some misapprehensions in other people’s minds.”\textsuperscript{581} She sent her a wide collection of newspapers; these, she told Mary, could be marshaled as evidence that the Franklins were being unfairly maligned (in one, he was denounced as an “imbecile” who had lost whatever pluck and energy – and, it was implied, virility - he had had during his Arctic expeditions).\textsuperscript{582}

Mary Simpkinson was indefatigable as her sister’s envoy. She showed Jane’s letters to Parry in February of 1840, who told her he was “grieved and touched at the account & could not bear that his noble-minded and generous friend shd be subjected to such harassing

\textsuperscript{578} SPRI MS 248/174, Jane Franklin to Mary Simpkinson, 26 December, 1839.
\textsuperscript{579} TAHO MM4/1/3, Eleanor Franklin to Catherine Franklin, 18 June, 1840.
\textsuperscript{580} SPRI MS 248/174, Jane Franklin to Mary Simpkinson 13 February, 1839.
\textsuperscript{581} SPRI MS 248/174, Jane Franklin to Mary Simpkinson 23 February, 1839.
\textsuperscript{582} The \textit{Colonial Times} was among the most strident, as Gregory was a frequent contributor and the editor, who was a friend of Maconochie’s, liked to send letters to himself in the paper under the pseudonym “Cadmus.” See for example, \textit{Colonial Times}, 29 January, 1839: 7; \textit{Colonial Times}, 12 February, 1839: 5; “Colonial Magistracy,” \textit{Colonial Times}, 12 February, 1839: 4.
annoyances. 

She discussed the matter with Edward Sabine, who then mentioned it in one of his letters to James Clark Ross, which the latter received in Hobart in September 1840 (see below). Jane was pleased and happy to tell Mary that Sabine had written, “I fear poor Franklin has no very agreeable berth at Hobarton, and I regret greatly some things I hear of Barrow’s conduct towards him.”

Mary, her husband, Parry, and Montagu (who was simultaneously intriguing against the Franklins at the Colonial Office) spent considerable time in early 1840 discussing the matter with John Barrow Jr. over several dinners, portraying Peter Barrow as a feckless, misguided youth who fell prey to Maconochie’s machinations. They were backed up by the elder Barrow’s wife, daughter, and son George, and also by Sabine. The result was that the fences between the Franklin and Barrow families were largely mended, and several other important relationships in the Arctic Circles were as well, especially between Parry and Sabine (though Parry subsequently felt cut off by the elder Barrow).

In the Maconochie affair, Jane Franklin used her sister as her envoy and lobbyist in order to provide context for the potent accusations leveled against her husband, as well as the suggestion that she had promoted Maconochie’s views. She supplied Mary with a barrage of information, supplementing her own long letters with copious newspaper clippings to testify to

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583 SPRI MS 248/88, Jane Franklin Diary, June 1840.
584 SPRI MS 248/174, Jane Franklin to Mary Simpkinson 7 September, 1840, Jane was herself tempted to tell Ross about the letter she had burnt.
585 As Mary reported in her letters to Jane, which Jane recorded in her diaries, TAHO NS 279/1/11 Jane Franklin Diary, June 1840; NS 279/1/12, Jane Franklin Diary, 20 August, 1840. Indeed, the whole affair served to mend fences between Sabine and Parry, who had nourished a longstanding feud over Parry’s broken engagement with Sabine’s niece, Miss Browne, in the early 1820s, see Chapter 2; the reconciliation between the two began with Ross’s encouragement before he left on the Antarctic expedition, see SPRI 248/89, Jane Franklin Diary, 18 August, 1840, SPRI MS 248/174, Jane Franklin to Mary Simpkinson 7 September, 1840.
586 SPRI MS 248/91, Jane Franklin Diary, 30 June, 1841.
the wrongs done to both herself and John Franklin. She insisted that her actions, unorthodox as they were, were simply the result of her wifely devotion. This was as much the case when she was facilitating the flow of information as when she was restricting it – as, for example, when she burned Barrow’s unread letter. But the Maconochie and the Barrow affair are also illustrative of another broader phenomenon - the crucial importance of the “Arctic Circles” to both Franklins’ fortunes, as a discrete group that connected military, scientific, bureaucratic and humanitarian networks, were accessible through circuits of sociability, and several of whom (especially Richardson, Parry, and Sabine) were intimately attached to John Franklin. However, these connections were not automatically available to either Jane or to her sister. These were friendships with John Franklin first and his wife second, and Jane knew this very well. For her husband’s sake as well as her own, she needed to foster and to nurture relationships with influential men built on mutual self-interest and strengthened rather than weakened by distance. She did so in a variety of ways, but among the most important, consistent and memorable was her promotion of colonial science.

“All Things are Queer and Opposite:” The Franklin Family and Colonial Science

During their time in Van Diemen’s Land, Jane Franklin used colonial scientific institutions, individuals, enterprises and networks to bolster the family’s connections and reputations in the antipodes, in Britain, and throughout the empire. These were connections and strategies that later became useful during the Franklin Arctic searches in the 1840s and 1850s. In the process, Jane tried to make Van Diemen’s Land central to the scientific networks that formed a crucial part of the empire’s connective tissue, forging friendships and information exchanges
across great distances while contributing to colonial knowledge and governance.\textsuperscript{587} Scientific pursuits, however, meant different things to the members of the Franklin family. John used scientific practice, correspondence and patronage to maintain his intimate friendships and to temporarily escape from the increasingly fraught politics of Van Diemen’s Land. Jane, on the other hand, patronized the sciences as a means to make new connections. At the same time, Sophia Cracroft, and to a lesser extent Eleanor, used scientific activities as Jane had in the 1820s, as a component of their social lives as well as their relationships with each other and with John and Jane Franklin. The end result was that colonial science was tightly knit into both familial and colonial politics.

The Franklins’ patronage of the sciences in Van Diemen’s Land became their longest legacy on the island. This was perhaps because support of science and scientific pursuits was easily harnessed to that central tenet of settler discourse and identity, e.g., their persistent claims to “improvement” and to “civilization” of both wild landscapes and peoples.\textsuperscript{588} Scientific pursuits were also seen as inherently disinterested, fundamentally gentlemanly, and therefore incomparably virtuous.\textsuperscript{589} They could bolster settler claims to civility, cultural superiority, and strength of moral character.\textsuperscript{590} John Franklin’s appointment was therefore initially greeted rapturously, and the settler press in Van Diemen’s Land in 1837 delightedly recounted his many,
demonstrable Christian virtues as an Arctic explorer and a devotee of science. But though many settlers were inclined to embrace colonial science as proof of their civility, others objected to what they saw as high-minded attempts by the Franklins to gentrify them, while still others felt snubbed by Jane’s exclusive guest lists to her soirees, societies, and converzationes. Perhaps this was why the naturalist Louisa Meredith later recalled, “the constant efforts of Sir John and Lady Franklin to arouse and foster a taste for science, literature or art, were often more productive of annoyance to themselves, than of benefit to the unambitious multitude.”

As John Franklin’s Arctic correspondence had been marked by traffic in specimens, instruments and information, so too was the wider Franklin family’s colonial correspondence. Mary Simpkinson sent her sister all manner of useful things; in just one packet, sending a “chemical apparatus” that she obtained from Michael Faraday, an orrery, and a map of Thebes. John and Mary Richardson, meanwhile, peppered their correspondence with John Franklin with both scientific and personal matters, and sent scientific journals and articles for his amusement and information. Franklin was delighted, writing to his friend, “I receive no letters that are more interesting to me than the joint productions of yourself and Mary – as they contain the scientific as well as the family news.” In return, Franklin sent Richardson specimens crucial to both his work and those of his colleagues, including many barrels of fish collected by amateur naturalists for his new work on the fishes of Australia, in addition to three specimens of

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591 Hobart Town Courier, 26 August, 1836: 2-3; Colonial Times, 10 January 1837: 4; Hobart Town Courier, 13 January 1837: 4; True Colonist, 13 January 1837: 4. The Hobart Town Courier, after giving an extensive précis of Franklin’s career and that of Eleanor Porden Franklin (though not Jane Franklin) also pointed out that Franklin was close friends with the most “scientific men of the age” including John Herschel and Charles Babbage. Hobart Town Courier, 26 August, 1836: 3.
592 For a fuller survey of Jane Franklin’s entertainments at Government House, and her policies of inclusion and exclusion on the guest lists, see Alexander, Ambitions of Jane Franklin, 64-75.
593 Meredith, My Home in Tasmania, 30.
594 SPRI MS 248/174, Jane Franklin to Mary Simpkinson 26 December, 1839.
595 DRO D3311/53/71, John Franklin to John and Mary Richardson, Government House, Hobart Town, 18 August, 1837; DRO D3311/53/74, John Franklin to John and Mary Richardson, Government House, 23 May, 1839.
the now-extinct “Tasmanian tiger,” or thylacine. Discussing the specimens often led into discussions of his other troubles; in 1837, for example, he complained to Richardson that Alexander and Mary Maconochie, “are actively engaged in catching the subjects of Nat’l History for their own purposes – without offering any proportion or share either to me or Jane though they must know we both have many friends who would be glad to receive such presents.” Jane also participated in the specimen traffic, but her offerings were principally of the human variety; as I examine below, she was especially prolific in sending artifacts, portraits, and engravings of Tasmanian Aborigines to Mary for her to display as the curiosities of a “dying race.”

In this traffic, Jane had privileged access to her husband’s correspondence, both private and official. This was usually with his knowledge and consent, though as the Barrow-Maconochie affair indicates, this was not always the case. She copied his letters in her diary on the day they arrived – even when she was suffering from one of her frequent migraines. If she was traveling, Franklin usually summarized and excerpted his correspondence for her. She was very interested in any letters from their scientific friends in London (especially Beaufort, Sabine and Richardson). These received her greatest attention; she would have spent hours copying them in her tiny, cramped hand. The worthy news included (but was not limited to): any new undertakings linked to the developing “Magnetic Crusade,” news about the successes

596 DRO D3311/53/73, John Franklin to John and Mary Richardson, 28 March, 1838; DRO D3311/53/78, John Franklin to John Richardson, 5 December, 1840; DRO D3311/53/76, John Franklin to John Richardson, 22 February, 1841; DRO D3311/53/78, John Franklin to John Richardson, 5 December, 1840. Among Franklin’s amateur naturalists that he recruited for Richardson was Thomas Lempriere, an official at the Port Arthur prison complex. For Lempriere, see Boyce, *Van Diemen’s Land*, 113; Hughes, *Fatal Shore*, 400.
597 DRO D3311/53/71, John Franklin to John and Mary Richardson, Government House, Hobart Town, 18 August, 1837.
598 TAHO NS 279/1/9, Jane Franklin Diary, 11 September, 1839; NS279/1/12, Jane Franklin Diary 18 August, 1840, 20 August, 1840; NS279/1/15, Jane Franklin Diary 23 August, 1841.
599 For example, SPRI MS 248/303, John Franklin to Jane Franklin, 19 April, 1839.
600 TAHO NS279/1/10, Jane Franklin Diary, 11 September, 1839.
and failures of Franklin’s fellow Arctic officers, details of desirable specimens or observations,
summaries of British, European, and colonial politics (especially antipodean or Canadian). She
coured these letters for Van Diemonian references, trying to build up a picture of how the
-colony was seen at home and abroad, and what role it might play in any future scientific
enterprises. She also persuaded several other men to lend her their private letters for copying into
her diary – including Maconochie, the explorer James Clark Ross, and the naturalist Ronald
Gunn (see below).

As she looked after metropolitan allies, Jane was also mindful of nurturing local,
vernacular ones. The role of the police magistrate and amateur naturalist Ronald Campbell Gunn
therefore deserves attention. Gunn was very useful as both a source of vernacular knowledge and
as a man with important (if unequal) metropolitan connections. He was well-respected and
connected, and seemed to have largely kept out of fractious colonial politics. He was also one of
William Dalton Hooker’s most indefatigable collectors, whose efforts materially benefitted Kew
Gardens as it developed into a center of imperial knowledge. Later, when Hooker’s son Joseph
arrived in Van Diemen’s Land in 1840 on HMS Erebus, he became fast friends with Gunn, a
relationship that was crucial to the younger Hooker’s career, and ultimately the development of
Darwinian science. Jane Franklin also recognized Gunn’s usefulness. When she bought 410
acres in Lenah Valley (a suburb of Hobart) that she dubbed “Ancanthe,” she employed Gunn to
turn it into a botanic garden, with the idea that he would cultivate the indigenous plants of the

601 Owen Stanley (Edward Parry’s brother-in-law from his first marriage and a naval lieutenant and accomplished
surveyor) was in Sydney on HMS Alligator in 1838 and sent letters to Franklin that included the latest news of
Parry, Beaufort, and the RGS, as well as a report of his observations during his time on the Terror in 1836-7 under
Back. Though Jane Franklin considered Parry to be an important and sympathetic metropolitan ally, she nevertheless
assiduously copied down – with some relish – any gossip that might be detrimental to him. TAHO NS 279/1/8, Jane
Franklin Diary, 4 October, 1838; NS279/1/10, Jane Franklin Diary, 11 September, 1839; NS279/1/12, Jane Franklin
Diary 18 and 20 August, 1840; NS279/1/15, 23 August, 1841.
602 McCalman, Darwin’s Armada, 128-129.
603 Endersby, Imperial Nature, 31-111; McCalman, Darwin’s Armada, 128-131.
Southern Hemisphere and introduce them to Britain – a clever inversion of the mission of Kew Gardens. She then entered into correspondence with Hooker, and the two planned an exchange. She noted in 1841 that he had written to her “remarking that rich as the collection at Kew proverbially is in Australian plants, there must be many, particularly of Mr. Gunn’s discoveries which would be amply deserving of his cultivation, whilst to us again many of his duplicates would be acceptable.” Jane often took Gunn with her on journeys around Van Diemen’s Land, including to the Aboriginal settlement at Flinders Island (see below). After the Maconochie affair, she installed him in Maconochie’s place as John Franklin’s private secretary, while he also served as secretary of her own Tasmanian Society. All this activity took its toll. By October 1841, Gunn had resigned from these positions, remaining on excellent terms with the Franklins while writing to William Hooker that “the incessant official drudgery [had] almost knocked Botany out of my head.”

Gunn was especially valuable to Jane’s Tasmanian Society (the forerunner of the Royal Society of Tasmania). John Franklin has historically been credited with creating it, and Gunn with the “vigorous policy of correspondence” central to its trans-imperial reputation. It was clearly Jane, however, who sensed that the desire of the Van Diemen’s Land elite for metropolitan recognition could support both the hunger of metropolitan scientists for colonial information and Franklin’s own tenuous authority as governor, and it was Jane who used her particular strengths to fuel that “vigorous policy of correspondence.” In the aftermath of the Maconochie affair, rather than patronize the existing Mechanics Institute (which John Franklin

604 Drayton, *Nature’s Government*, 129-169. Eventually, she built a neoclassical temple on the grounds of Ancanthe. It only turned into the art museum she intended after she left, but it is still called the “Lady Franklin Art Gallery.”

605 TAHO NS 279/1/15, Jane Franklin Diary, 23 August, 1841.


607 Michael E. Hoare, “‘All Things are Queer and Opposite’: Scientific Societies in Tasmania in the 1840s,” *ISIS* 60, no. 2 (Summer 1969): 198-209.
had revived early in his administration in response to settler calls to do so) she decided to set up her own society, whose membership was by her invitation only. Its motto was, in Latin, “All Things are Queer and Opposite” and its mascot was that peculiar monotreme, the platypus – Jane would invariably refer to it as “my Platipus Society.” The society became an important source of both scientific and colonial knowledge, communicating important data about isolated Australasian species and phenomena to a global audience. While Jane, Eleanor, and Sophia were not officially members, they did attend the meetings. The teenage Eleanor, like her mother, was very interested in terrestrial magnetism and happy to stay up past midnight listening to her father read a paper by John Herschel, but she noted acerbically in her diary that “some, not to say many of the gentlemen were charming us with the delightful noise of snoring; we were nevertheless much interested.”

The Society claimed that its origins lay outside Van Diemen’s Land, that Franklin’s influential London friends had asked him to send them interesting information from his post, and that accordingly he had formed the Society. In fact, it was the other way around. Jane Franklin asked her husband to write to his old friends to solicit contributions to their meetings from a distance, while she worked closely with Gunn to draw up a statement, “describing the scientific wants of the colony & interesting conditions & remarkable peculiarities,” which Franklin included with his letters. Richardson was nearly always present in spirit; Franklin wrote to him in February of 1840, “Your letters are most highly valued & the scientific parts of them are read

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608 Alexander, Ambitions of Jane Franklin, 111; for the calls to revive the Mechanic’s Society, see Hobart Town Courier, 17 March 1837: 2; as the Franklins’ interest in the society waned, they were roundly criticized in the press, especially by the Colonial Times. See “Advancement of Knowledge,” Colonial Times, 9 June 1840:2; “Progress of Science,” Colonial Times, 16 June 1840:4; “Mechanic’s Institution,” Colonial Times, 24 August 1841: 3.

609 Hoare, “Queer and Opposite,” 204.

610 Quoted in Alexander, Ambitions of Jane Franklin, 111; John Franklin was guilty of this once, too; the colonial auditor George Boyce complained that the lieutenant governor sometimes attended the meetings and “snored like a hog and blew like a grampus.” Ibid., 112.


612 TAHO NS279/1/10, Jane Franklin Diary, 19 September, 1839.
every fortnight in the library of Govt House to a little party of 6 which meets for the purpose of
promoting the Nat Hist of the Col.”613 Franklin wrote to John Herschel and Edward Sabine
(among others) that any contributions to “our little Philosophical Society” would help him
politically. He wrote to Herschel (then conducting magnetic observations at the Cape) that the
occasional line might “stamp a character on our meetings which would go far to render them
respectable in the eyes of the Community and give an impulse to our feeble researches into the
resources of our interesting & little known quarter of the Globe.”614 To Sabine, he suggested that
scientific matters were unlikely to “excite the inflammatory propensities of our oddly constituted
community,” and would be of “moral advantage.”615 Jane strongly encouraged travelling
naturalists and naval officers to attend and contribute to the Society’s meetings, and many
became corresponding members.616 As a result of all these efforts, by 1842 resident members in
Van Diemen’s Land were outnumbered by corresponding members overseas.617

Jane also wrote to Gunn that “our journal ought to be the appointed vehicle of [Ross’s]
discoveries or experiments.”618 She was referring the Tasmanian Society’s nascent journal,
which she effectively used to promote the Society in London and across the empire. She initially
thought of having the volumes printed in London by John Murray, partly because of his prestige
and close connection to the Admiralty and Colonial Office, and partly to save money on
postage.619 She also wanted to deny business to Tasmanian newspapers that were critical of the
Franklins. As Gunn justified it, “neatness and accuracy were deemed essentials in a Scientific

613 DRO D3311/53/77, John Franklin to John Richardson, 17 February, 1840.
614 Quoted in A. Lambert, Gates of Hell, 114.
615 NA BJ 3/18, John Franklin to Edward Sabine, 3 November, 1838.
616 This began with Captain D’Urville in 1839 and continued until the eve of the Franklins’ recall, when Captain
Béard was elected a member in January of 1843. See TAHO NS279/1/10, Jane Franklin Diary, 26 December, 1839;
NS 279/1/16, Jane Franklin Diary, 2 January, 1843.
617 Hoare, “Queer and Opposite,” 203.
618 TAHO NG1313, Jane Franklin to Ronald Gunn, 15 December, 1839.
619 SPRI MS 248/174, Jane Franklin to Mary Simpkinson, 13 June, 1840.
Periodical, and the miserable blundering style in which all the Newspapers were got up, except the Hobart Town Courier and Launceston Adviser [both pro-Franklin papers], was enough to have deterred from the employment of any but the Printers of these Journals if they could have undertaken the work. Ultimately the journal was printed on the friendly press of the Hobart Town Courier and Jane ensured that these were sent to members in Van Diemen’s Land, on mainland Australia, in New Zealand and at the Cape, as well as to members in Europe, Britain and, importantly, to the Colonial Office. She wrote to Mary, “we expect you will all patronize [it] by purchase in London.” She also hoped that the very existence of the journal would help to dampen political intrigue. In 1840, Montagu and Forster began to spread rumors that the Tasmanian Society was in fact a political society – they implied a radical one – and Jane noted in her journal that “it was very desirable the Platipus Journal should come out with as little delay as possible in order to prove to the public how surpassingly innocent were our lucubrations.”

Despite all the careful planning and promotion of the “Platipus Society,” it was still highly vulnerable to the intrigues of colonial politics. This was partly because Jane used it, as she did other vice regal events at Government House, to reward her friends and snub her enemies. To Montagu and Forster, this behavior, and the society itself, was merely further evidence of Jane’s unseemly trespass into the public sphere, and of her husband’s willing complicity. This combination of the society’s exclusivity and its gender politics prevented it from dovetailing with the desires of white settlers to prove their virtue to an imperial audience. Visiting scientific expeditions, however, were an entirely different matter. Van Diemen’s Land had long had a reputation as good place to replenish supplies while sheltering from the westerly gales in the

620 Mackaness, Some Private Correspondence, 65-65.
621 Alexander, Ambitions of Jane Franklin, 111.
622 SPRI MS 248/174, Jane Franklin to Mary Simpkinson, 13 June, 1840.
623 TAHO NS 279/1/12 Jane Franklin Diary, 7 August, 1840.
“Roaring Forties.”\textsuperscript{624} Its unique natural history – as an island once linked to, but now isolated from the curiosities of the Australian mainland – made it especially attractive to young naturalists, whose brief time in Van Diemen’s Land was knit into a broader set of formative experiences during their voyages.\textsuperscript{625} These included Charles Darwin, Joseph Dalton Hooker, and Thomas Henry Huxley, the latter two of whom were sponsored by John Richardson.\textsuperscript{626} Three Antarctic expeditions called at Van Diemen’s Land during the Franklins’ tenure.\textsuperscript{627} The first was a French expedition under Capt. Cyrille Laplace in the \textit{Artemise}, which called at Hobart in January 1839. The second was another French Antarctic Expedition under Jules Dumont D’Urville (1837-1840) that called in December 1839, followed closely by the British Antarctic Expedition under James Clark Ross in HMS \textit{Erebus} and \textit{Terror} (1839-1843) - the same vessels Franklin would take on his fatal Arctic expedition in 1845.\textsuperscript{628} For both the Franklins and settlers at large, supporting visiting explorers meant potentially securing additional metropolitan envoys and influential friends, not least because a favorable mention in the expedition narrative could quite literally put the colony on the map.

Ross’s Antarctic expedition was the most significant of these voyages, both for the Franklins and the broader scientific community. It constituted the first major British effort to link the Antarctic and sub-Antarctic regions into a global system of scientific and commercial measurements and observations. It was a cornerstone of the “Magnetic Crusade” of the 1830s and 1840s, which was inspired by principles of Humboldtean science that depended upon

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{624} Reynolds, \textit{History of Tasmania}, 5.
\textsuperscript{626} In Hooker’s case, it was Richardson’s intervention and training (at Hooker’s father’s request) that secured him the place on Ross’s Antarctic expedition in 1839-43. Leonard Huxley, \textit{Life and Letters of Sir Joseph Dalton Hooker} (London: John Murray, 1918), 37-40.
\textsuperscript{627} They just missed meeting John Franklin’s friend Captain Robert Fitzroy and the young Darwin when the \textit{Beagle} docked in Hobart in January 1836.
\textsuperscript{628} Another expedition, the United States Exploring Expedition under Charles Wilkes (1838-1842), was also competing with Ross and D’Urville to find the south magnetic pole, but did not call at Hobart.
\end{footnotesize}
The “Crusade” was conceived and directed by a small group of men who were key members of both the “Arctic Circles” and the plurality of scientific institutions springing up in the 1830s, especially the British Association for the Advancement of Science (BAAS) and the RGS. Sabine, Herschel, and Beaufort leveraged their considerable social and institutional connections, as well as their government offices (of which Beaufort’s as Hydrographer was most useful) to utilize the territories, resources, and personnel of the British Empire to chart the globe’s magnetic field, extend scientific and geographical knowledge, and facilitate the flow of global commerce in iron-riveted and compass-guided ships. The 1839-43 British Antarctic Expedition was to be its signature piece, not only seeking the South Magnetic Pole, but also establishing semi-permanent magnetic observatories at St. Helena, Cape Town, and Hobart. In the process, the expedition placed the penal colony of Van Diemen’s Land at the nexus of scientific communication and research for four years. This had the effect of not only keeping the Franklins well informed, but also of painfully juxtaposing John Franklin’s current position as a colonial administrator with his past as a polar explorer. It also generated and strengthened connections between John Franklin, Jane Franklin, and Sophia Cracroft on the one hand, and the “Arctic Circles” in London and the Antarctic officers on the other. These connections would later prove to be crucial, both during the Franklins’ recall in 1843 and the re-equipping of the Erebus and Terror for John Franklin’s fatal expedition in 1845, as well as during the Franklin searches of 1848-1859.

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631 Alison Winter, “‘Compasses All Awry’: The Iron Ship and the Ambiguities of Cultural Authority in Victorian Britain,” Victorian Studies, Autumn 1994: 69-98; Mawer, South by Northwest, 44; M. J. Ross, Polar Pioneers, 205-211.
The expedition depended upon two decades of Arctic experience and connections. Ross’s own bonafides derived from having spent his entire adult life in polar service. He had served on his uncle John Ross’s first expedition in 1818, on all of Parry’s expeditions between 1819 and 1827, and John Ross’s privately-funded *Victory* expedition from 1829-33. During his time with the Igluglingmiut in 1821-23 and the Netsilingmiut in 1829-33, the younger Ross learned Inuktitut and crucial survival skills, including how to drive dogs, orient himself in the ice, and utilize a variety of subsistence resources and practices.632 Because of both Inuit support and these learned skills, he had located the North Magnetic Pole in June of 1831, which brought him lasting fame, but also estranged him from his eccentric uncle, while endearing him to Franklin, Richardson, Sabine, and Parry, all of whom had felt wronged by the elder Ross in the past.633 Accordingly, he ended up right in the middle of the Magnetic Crusade, and was given the command of *Erebus* and *Terror* in 1839. His instructions were written by old members of the Arctic Circles, while the expedition was manned by old Arctic hands and their relatives.634

633 These old grudges were very complex, but basically, Sabine (who had been the naturalist on John Ross’s first voyage in 1818) felt wronged by him during the writing of the official narrative. Parry had also broken from Ross after the first expedition because, as the second-in-command, he had questioned Ross’s reasoning in turning around in Lancaster Sound after sighting the mirage of the “Croker Mountains.” Franklin and Richardson had never had direct dealings with Ross (apart from Richardson volunteering to go and rescue him in 1832, and helping to draw up the plan of Back’s rescue attempt) until 1835 and the publication of his narrative of the second expedition, in which Ross used a combination of the charts drawn by the Inuk man Ikmallik and his own imagination to chart out a speculative Northwest Passage, which angered Franklin, as he wrote to Richardson, for “overthrowing all our rights to discovery.” M.J. Ross, *Polar Pioneers*, 165-198; Cavell, *Tracing the Connected Narrative*, 185; Sabine, *Remarks*; NA BJ 3/16-17, Edward Sabine – John Ross correspondence, NA BJ 3/18, Edward Sabine – John Franklin correspondence; SPRI MS 1503/13/1, John Franklin to John Richardson, London, 30 January, 1835; SPRI MS 438/26/343, W. E. Parry to John Franklin, Lynn, 12 May, 1835; SPRI MS 438/18/6, John Franklin to W. E. Parry, Admiralty, 14 May, 1835; DRO D3311/53/68, John Franklin to John Richardson, Athenaeum, 15 May, 1835.
634 In addition to instructions written by Sabine and Beaufort, Ross’s instructions also included an astronomical segment designed by Herschel (who had just returned from four years studying the stars at the Cape), a tidological remit designed by William Whewell, and a botanical collection list prepared by William Hooker. Mawer, *South by Northwest*, 51.
addition to Ross, these included Francis Moira Crozier as second-in-command of the *Terror* (Ross’s shipmate on three of Parry’s voyages), Thomas Abernethy as the mate on the *Erebus* (a veteran of the Rosses’ small crew of 1829-33 and several of Parry’s) along with Franklin’s nephew Henry Kay (who had been with Franklin on the *Rainbow*) as Ross’s lieutenant on the *Erebus*, who would man the Hobart Observatory until 1853. Some of the crew would sail with Franklin and Crozier to their deaths in 1845.635 Finally, the Franklin connection made Van Diemen’s Land the expedition’s most important base in the Southern Hemisphere. The expedition spent considerable time in Hobart in 1840 and 1841, both before and after their first Antarctic winter. 636

From 1840, Van Diemen’s Land became a communications hub for Ross, his officers, and the Franklins. Beaufort in particular used it as “a southern post office for passing scientific sailors.”637 This meant that things left behind – like a French translation of the Russian Fabian Bellinghausen’s narrative of his Southern voyage in 1819-21 – were forwarded by Beaufort together with news for the Franklins.638 The necessary packages for Ross also contained treats and correspondence for Franklin, while Franklin’s dispatches home now contained letters to his friends and magnetic crusaders, summarizing Ross’s proceedings for them.639 Like so much of

635 M.J. Ross, *Polar Pioneers*, 199, 215. A review of the ship’s musters for HMS *Erebus* and *Terror* indicate that Abernethy was the only member of the lower deck who had previously been in naval Arctic service, but several of the other men (who listed “the sea” as their profession) may well have had experience in Arctic whalers. Five men who went in the *Terror* under Crozier in 1839-43 signed back up to go with him again in the ill-fated 1845 expedition, and four men from the *Erebus* in 1839-43 signed back up to go again in 1845 (two each on the *Terror* under Crozier and the *Erebus* under Franklin). See NA ADM 38/8045, Ship’s Muster, HMS *Erebus*, 1839-43; NA ADM 38/9162, Ship’s Muster, HMS *Terror*, 1839-43; NA ADM 38/672, Ship’s Muster, HMS *Erebus*, 1845; NA ADM 38/1962, Ship’s Muster, HMS *Terror*, 1845.
636 *Erebus* and *Terror* arrived in Van Diemen’s Land on 15 August, 1840 and stayed until 12 November, 1840. They then left for their Antarctic researches and then returned from 7 April to 7 July, 1841.
638 NA BJ 2/3, Francis Beaufort to James Clark Ross, 24 September, 1839.
639 Some of these exchanges were to have long term, unforeseen consequences. In one of his dispatches to Ross, for example, Sabine sent a copy of his wife’s new translation of Baron Ferdinand von Wrangel’s narrative of his 1821-23 Siberian expedition. This translation would ultimately reignite the notion of an “open polar sea” – a geographical
his correspondence, these communications ended up recorded in Jane’s diary and letters to Mary, especially if they mixed science and politics. Early in the expedition’s visit, for example, Jane reported to Mary that “Captn Ross & Major Sabine write to each other by previous compact every Sunday, not sentiment however, but science.” In return, she commissioned a portrait by the convict artist Thomas Bock of Ross, Crozier, and Franklin all standing together in front of Rossbank Observatory, which she sent to Sabine in one of Franklin’s dispatches.

The Ross expedition provided both the Franklins and the colonists with an opportunity to practice metropolitan forms of scientific sociability. Jane invited Ross and his “most scientific” officers to accompany him, Crozier, and Hooker to a meeting of her “Platipus Society,” and they later became corresponding members, attending meetings and contributing papers. But there were other opportunities, especially shipboard balls, for the colonists to demonstrate their civility to the visiting officers, and through them to the wider world. In 1838, the Hobart Town Courier hoped that the ball aboard D’Urville’s L’Astrolabe might mean that, “[the explorers] will give a favorable account of us …. Hence the character of the colonists will be strictly raised in the estimation of other countries, where we are most probably thought of but slightly.” When Erebus and Terror returned to Hobart the autumn of 1841, they put on a massive spectacle to match those of London. The ships were connected to the shore near Government House with a

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myth that Jane and Sophia would rely upon during the Franklin searches, using Wrangel’s narrative to bolster their claims (see Chapter 5). NA BJ 3/18, John Franklin to Edward Sabine, 13 March, 1841.

640 SPRI MS 248/174, Jane Franklin to Mary Simpkinson, 7 September, 1840.

641 F. Woodward, Portrait of Jane, 229. The traffic also made its way into the colonial press; on one occasion, an extract of a letter from Franklin to Sabine was printed in the Hobart Town Courier that Sabine had read aloud at one of the BAAS meetings. “Terrestrial Magnetism and Meteorology,” The Hobart Town Courier, 21 January 1841: 4.

642 TAHO NS 279/1/12, Jane Franklin Diary, 24 August, 1840. Jane also tried to make the young Hooker into one of her protégés, but he resisted, complaining to his father that, “Lady Franklin… would like to show me every kindness, but does not understand how, and I hate dancing attendance at Government House.” Huxley, Life and Letters, 106.

643 Hobart Town Courier, 23 February 1838: 2.
bridge of boats, were “housed over” for a polar winter, and visited by three hundred people.644 Their arrival was celebrated in the local theatre in The South Polar Expedition, whose cast of characters included the entire Franklin family. The sixteen-year-old Eleanor (who was not allowed to attend) secretly reveled in how the play pilloried her parents. She wrote in her diary that in the scene prior to the expedition’s departure, “her Ladyship proposed to drink a bumper of wine with Captain Ross and this highly characteristic act she is said to have performed admirably,” and then pointed out that the play, “is said to have been ridiculous in the extreme, from its extreme dissimilarity. Sir John Franklin, for instance, had a head full of hair.”645

The parodied sociability of the Franklins, Ross and his officers was rooted in reality. From the moment the Erebus and Terror anchored in the River Derwent the first time in August of 1840, the captains moved into Government House and became increasingly familiar with the Franklins. Jane wrote to her father that John, Ross, and Crozier “all feel towards one another as friends and brothers.”646 Franklin and Crozier became so friendly that five years later, Crozier would be Franklin’s second in command on the final, fatal voyage of the Terror. But the associations were bittersweet, for they tended to remind Franklin of the manifold miseries of his colonial administration. He was so excited by the arrival of the expedition that within nine days of Ross’s arrival, Franklin ensured that Rossbank Observatory had been completed, using the forced labor of two hundred convicts.647 Sophy reported in a letter to her mother that all of Franklin’s spare hours were spent in the observatory, “he is so much interested in the subject of

645 Quoted in Alexander, Ambitions of Jane Franklin, 116; John Franklin’s absence was explained in Gilbert Robertson’s hostile Colonial Times as being due to the fact that, “the affecting parting scene at Government House bringing, as it must, to his mind, the departure of Lady Franklin to New Zealand, would have been too much.” “Theatre” Colonial Times, 4 May 1841: 4.
646 Quoted in Alexander, Ambitions of Jane Franklin, 115.
647 M J Ross, Polar Pioneers, 222.
Terrestrial Magnetism that nothing could give him greater pleasure.” Participating in the observations gave him the opportunity to compare his sub-Antarctic observations with the registers he kept during his Arctic journeys (which he had brought with him). He described for Richardson how he loved his time at the Observatory, and the discussions of magnetic science he had with Ross, particularly the prospect of locating the South Magnetic Pole. But, as he lamented to Sabine, “I scarcely ever examine … the observations now in progress here without receiving some new idea which I have not leisure or means of working out.”

The sociability that the Ross expedition brought to Hobart also began to expose the developing tensions between the women of the Franklin family. Their experience of the visiting expedition depended on their status as a teenager, an eligible poor relation, and an ambitious governor’s wife. The teenage Eleanor enjoyed the company of the officers and her cousin Henry Kay, and particularly how they let her indulge her interest in terrestrial magnetism (and her desire to be near her often-absent father) and participate in term days at the Observatory. When the expedition left Hobart in 1841, Eleanor sent letters to Ross and Crozier thanking them for their kindness to her, giving them each a sprig of wattle to wear in their buttonholes to remember her and Van Diemen’s Land by. Romantic attachments were, however, far from her mind; she was being courted by John Phillip Gell (a schoolmaster sent out by Dr. Thomas Arnold), which pleased Jane and enraged Sophia. Jane reported to Mary after the expedition left that Sophy

650 DRO D3311/53/78, John Franklin to John Richardson, Government House, Van Diemen’s Land, 5 December, 1840; DRO D3311/53/79, John Franklin to John Richardson, Government House, Van Diemen’s Land, 13 April, 1841.
651 NA BJ 3/18, John Franklin to Edward Sabine, 13 March, 1841.
652 TAHO MM4/1/3, Eleanor Franklin to James Ross and Francis Crozier, nd. [1841 by context]. It alarmed Jane that either Henry or his brother William (who was designing the new Government House next to the observatory) might be interested in Eleanor; she would have preferred to marry the girl off to one of Mary Simpkinson’s sons. SPRI MS 248/174, Jane Franklin to Mary Simpkinson, 26 December, 1839; SPRI MS 248/174, Jane Franklin to Mary Simpkinson, 10 September, 1842.
“watches [Gell] & Eleanor like a lynx,” and that she blamed Sophy for Gell’s reticence to propose, suggesting that she had given him “some repulsive warning” about the girl who had been raised as her sister.653

Sophy had been very taken with Ross in 1840-41, and abandoned her understanding with Henry Eliot (the son of Lord Minto). Ross, however, was secretly engaged in England to Anne Coulman (who would later assist Eleanor during the Franklin searches, see Chapter 4). Meanwhile, Crozier fell in love with Sophia and proposed to her before the expedition left in 1841, but she refused him. Her behavior in pursuing Ross and undermining Gell’s interest in Eleanor, while rejecting suitable, even desirable, matches perplexed Jane, who wrote to Mary that Sophy had also shown interest in the Polish Count Strzelecki. “I would not be too severe on Sophy’s interest in distinguished & worthy individuals,” she wrote to Mary, “yet a deep sentiment of attachment towards any one of them can scarcely exist when it has so little that is exclusive in its character.”654 Despite her limited means, she was clearly not interested in marrying merely for security, and while Jane might criticize what she saw as Sophy’s fickleness, high standards, and pettiness with respect to Eleanor, it was Sophy who ultimately gained from it. The breach that Jane detected between the girls in 1842 would widen into a rift by 1849, and Sophy would do her best to usurp Eleanor’s filial role with Jane, at the same time placing herself as Jane’s closest confidante and trusted companion. It was a role she would relish, but it was also one that precluded marriage.

For her part, Jane Franklin formed a very close relationship with James Ross. As her biographer Alison Alexander has noted, Ross was the sort of man she appreciated, “clever,

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653 SPRI MS 248/174, Jane Franklin to Mary Simpkinson, 10 September, 1842.
654 SPRI MS 248/174, Jane Franklin to Mary Simpkinson, 10 September, 1842.
personable, younger; sympathetic to her.” She insisted that the Rossbank observatory be named after him rather than Gauss (though, as she wrote to Mary, “I could not give utterance to this sentiment in the presence of the hero himself.”). She also shared precious gossip with him. When Mary wrote to her about the mad popularity of T. F. Buxton’s Niger expedition in 1840, Jane did not miss the opportunity to poke fun at the humanitarian voyage, pointing out that Mary had had an “African Party” attended by the officers “with the Ashantee princes & their tabor etc.” and that she had visited the ships “with all the African grandees – There have been dinners & balls I believe on board & Mrs. Fry lecturing the crew – Such is the mixture of the solemn & the frivolous or gay which most things present to us in this world.” She also told him about her destruction of Barrow’s letter, and quizzed him about his perception of the Barrow-Maconochie affair. Before he left, she assured herself (and Mary) that Ross also had the grip of colonial politics. “Captain Ross, partly by his own penetration, still more perhaps by the hints which I and others have given him,” she wrote to Mary, “had his eyes open before he left as to the intriguing and self willed spirit of the so called Arthur faction in this country,” and she hoped that he would spread this view around England on his return.

As Jane’s observation indicates, colonial science (like everything else in the Franklin household) was inseparable from both familial and colonial politics. That potent mixture was itself tightly woven into the fabric of the complex webs of friendship, sociability, and obligation.

655 Alexander, Ambitions of Jane Franklin, 115.
656 TAHO NS 279/1/12, Jane Franklin Diary, 18 September, 1840.
657 TAHO NS 279/1/15, Jane Franklin to James Ross, 20 July 1841. Parry was at this time working with the very latest, cutting-edge technology, and partly in that capacity (and partly from his own convictions) was helping his friends the Buxtons, Gurneys and Cresswells on the Niger Expedition. See A. Parry, Parry of the Arctic, 197-209; for Parry’s involvement in the Niger expedition, see TAHO NS279/1/15, Jane Franklin Diary, 30 June, 1841.
658 Ross apparently told her what she wanted to hear, that it had “served Barrow right” but she noted that “Captn Ross seemed to feel an interest in my story, but I think he thought my action rather a strange one – he could not of course estimate the necessity for it as I did.” TAHO NS 279/1/12, Jane Franklin Diary, 20 August, 1840. When she was relating this story to Mary, she only said that after receiving encouragement from Ross, “I was tempted to tell [him] about the letter which I burnt,” but restrained herself. SPRI MS 248/174, Jane Franklin to Mary Simpkinson, 7 September, 1840.
659 SPRI MS 248/174, Jane Franklin to Mary Simpkinson, 6 February 1841.
that stretched from London’s “Arctic Circles” to Van Diemen’s Land. Jane and John Franklin, Mary Simpkinson, and to a lesser extent John Richardson all leveraged old and new connections to promote Van Diemonian colonial science as evidence of the successful “improvement” of the colony and its colonists. But beyond occasionally using Ronald Gunn as her proxy, Jane did little to disguise her involvement in either these projects or in their promotion. In the process, she laid herself open to further criticism from the “Arthur faction,” while running the risk of implicating members of the Arctic Circles in the difficulties of Franklin’s administration.

**Experiments in Civility: Tasmanian Aborigines and the Franklin Women**

Of all of Jane Franklin’s projects in Van Diemen’s Land, it was her taking of two Tasmanian Aboriginal children, Timemernedic and Mathinna, from Flinders Island that have figured largest in recent scholarship and in popular culture. The evocative portrait of the seven-year old Mathinna - a young girl who lived at Government House between 1841 and 1843 – by the convict artist Thomas Bock has become emblematic of both the Tasmanian tragedy and the long history of many Stolen Generations of Aboriginal children (Figure 11). The experiences that these children had in Government House, and that the women of Government house had with them, shaped all of their lives. It may well have influenced how the Franklin women later engaged with the evidence provided by other intermediaries during the Franklin searches, and especially how they accorded or refused authority to indigenous or mixed-race persons. The experience was certainly crucial to the lives of Timemernedic and Mathinna, two literate and high-ranking children whose experiences of removal, isolation, nonconformity and ultimately, disappearance, intersected with the developing Tasmanian resistance at Wybalenna.

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Jane Franklin saw the children as specimens of a dying race who supported her firm belief in the developing “extinction paradigm,” the belief that contact with modernity was fatal to indigenous peoples and cultures.\textsuperscript{661} The notion that “savagery” was in a way self-extinguishing, a relic from another age that could not or would not co-exist with “civilization” offered a balm to European and American consciences, especially to nascent anthropologists.\textsuperscript{662} The extinction paradigm’s essential counterpart was the figure of the disappearing “noble savage” that was often central to nation-building epics in white settler colonies.\textsuperscript{663} Jane Franklin neither required nor entertained such sentiments. She frankly recorded a conversation she had with a visiting doctor in 1841, while the little Mathinna was living in Government House, in which, “we came to the Aborigines & I entirely agreed with him in his want of sympathy with those people who think it so very shocking that these inferior races of men should be gradually disappearing from the earth to make room for a higher race – I thought it was more as specimens of natural history that they were regretted than for any thing else.”\textsuperscript{664} Her hope was that Timemernedic’s and Mathinna’s “progress” could be monitored, communicated and displayed for the Franklins’ benefit to both visiting and metropolitan scientists.

It is important to set the narrative of the abduction of Mathinna and Timemernedic against the context of the ongoing Aboriginal resistance on Flinders Island. The 1830s and 1840s saw a generation of indigenous people using missionary and humanitarian rhetoric and education to contest European colonialism and to assert their rights to sovereignty, land and protection. Some did so in letters, others in petitions, still others in the multitudes of other forms of  

\textsuperscript{664} TAHO NS 279/1/16, Jane Franklin diary, 10 September, 1841.
“imperial literacy” that made up new, complex indigenous information orders.665 These practices were often ridden with conflict about the nature of power, the authority of knowledge, and the right to speak both within colonial and traditional societies. The complexity of these indigenous literacies reflected a period of profound cultural and demographic flux, in which the recording of information on paper might coexist and/or contend with traditional practices and media of remembering, and in which those who developed literary skills were not necessarily members of a traditional knowledge-bearing elite.666 As Tracey Banivanua Mar has recently argued, though indigenous protests have been invariably tagged as “intensely local and constrained by the isolation and containment imposed during the height of colonial power,” this may not necessarily have been the case.667 On the one hand, the global phenomena of white settler colonialism and missionary activity produced strikingly similar experiences for colonized indigenous people; on the other, there is tantalizing evidence of concrete linkages between indigenous peoples facilitated both by maritime trade and industry (especially sealing, whaling and deep sea fishing) and by the pidgin languages that these industries gave rise to.668

The Tasmanian Aborigines who survived the Black War and were relocated to Flinders Island were a part of this developing phenomenon. Resistance to white settlement and insistence on sovereignty, land and rights did not end with the move to Flinders. Rather, resistance was translated into a new key as survivors from several nations tried to find new ways to live together

665 Tony Ballantyne, “Paper, Pen and Print,” 232-260; Mar, “Imperial Literacy,” 1-28; Van Toorn, Writing Never Arrives Naked.
666 See especially Ballantyne, “Paper, Pen and Print,” 249-260; Peter Nabokov, A Forest of Time: American Indian Ways of History (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 192-217; for a case within the Russian and then the American Empires, see Sergei Kan, Memory Eternal: Tlingit Culture and Russian Orthodox Christianity through Two Centuries (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 1999). The variety of media in and on which information could be stored was as varied as the cultures which used them. For a few examples, see Ballantyne, “Paper, Pen and Print;” Van Toorn, 20; for an interesting case in which Cyrillic transliterations of the Unangan (Aleut) language were used in semaphore in order to outwit American traders, see Jay Ellis Ransom, “Aleut Semaphore Signals,” American Anthropologist 43, no. 3 (July-September 1941): 422-427.
667 Mar, “Imperial Literacy,” 3.
668 See Mar, “Imperial Literacy,” a variety of the Pacific pidgin she discusses was spoken on Flinders Island.
on George Augustus Robinson’s improvised station. In this complex scenario, a new generation of literate children (most of whom had been removed to the mainland and the Orphan School in Hobart) played significant roles, both as leaders of new communities, and later as supporters and critics of Robinson, of other colonial administrators, and indeed of the whole system of “protection” on the Australian mainland and in London itself. Jane Franklin’s abduction of Timemernedic and Mathinna, both literate children of chiefs, needs to be viewed against this broader background.

In 1835, George Robinson took up his new position as “Protector” of Aborigines on Flinders Island. Both Robinson and Arthur intended for the station to operate like Pacific and West Indian missions; as a place where the Aborigines would approach God and civilization through labor, worship, agriculture and domesticity in organized settlements, paving the way for adopting evangelical faith, middle-class morality, and free trade.669 A short time later, the former Governor Arthur was in London, making the argument to his humanitarian friends – including Buxton – that the policy of “conciliation” was the only way to forestall future settler violence elsewhere in the empire, and that “protectorates” like the one on Flinders (in which Aborigines would live in villages modeled on those built for emancipated slaves in the West Indies) ought to be part and parcel of future Australian colonization, a view with the Aborigines Select Committee endorsed in its 1836 report.670 Such an approach had the distinct advantage of seeming to court Aboriginal consent for land theft, while neatly reconciling settler land hunger with humanitarian sentiment, and for a time, it formed the basis of government policy towards


670 [Anna Gurney], *Report of the Parliamentary Select Committee on Aboriginal Tribes (British Settlements) Reprinted, With Comments, by the Aborigines Protection Society* (London: William Ball, Aldine Chambers, 1837), 13-15; Laidlaw, *Colonial Connections*, 147. For a fine discussion of the transnational “trajectories of protection,” see Lester and Dussart, “Trajectories of Protection.” As a side note, Tasmanian settlers fumed that the Committee had not recognized their own sacrifices and suffering, see *The Hobart Town Courier*, 1 June, 1838:2.
Aborigines in mainland Australia. Robinson hoped, as early as 1836, that he would eventually be appointed Protector of Aborigines in the newly colonized Port Phillip District (now Victoria) and that he might take some or all of the Tasmanians with him as intermediaries with the Port Phillip people.

Robinson’s plans were, however, hampered by continuing Aboriginal resistance to his program of acculturation and by the shocking death toll on Flinders Island. In 1835, there were only 112 survivors of the Black War, and catastrophic deaths continued at Wybalenna. In 1837, outbreaks of pneumonia and gastroenteritis carried off 27 people, including Mathinna’s father Towterrer and Timemernedic’s mother Larratong/“Queen Andromache.” In 1838, fourteen people died, mainly from tuberculosis and pneumonia; in 1839, a terrible influenza epidemic (brought by Robinson from the mainland) killed at least ten people, possibly more. At the same time, Robinson was encountering sustained resistance. A key condition of many leaders’ surrender was that no one would interfere with their way of life, subsistence practices, or ritual observances. Though Robinson tried to take advantage of fracturing of Tasmanian political structures to force acculturation, cohabitation, and conformity, instead the survivors formed three new political units based on their linguistic and cultural affiliations. They spoke in their native language or the Wybalenna vernacular (possibly a variety of Pacific pidgin

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672 Ryan, Tasmanian Aborigines, 219.
673 Ibid., 220-222.
675 After Robinson’s departure from Flinders in 1839, the record keeping becomes more erratic. Between 1840 and when the Aborigines were returned to Oyster Cove on the Tasmanian mainland in 1847, at least twenty-six more people died from disease or misadventure, while several more cannot be accounted for (including Mathinna’s mother Wongerneep, but she seems to have died in 1840). Plomley, Weep in Silence, 941-944.
676 Ryan, Tasmanian Aborigines, 220-222.
677 Ryan, Ibid. 220-22. These groups were the Western group of the North West and South West nations (46 people), the Ben Lomond group of the Ben Lomond, North Midlands and North East nations (36 people), and the Big River group, of the Oyster Bay and Big River nations (23 people).
introduced by women who had been abducted by sealers in Bass Strait), maintained traditional subsistence practices and divisions of labor, conducted rituals and initiated the young. These tensions never went away at Wybalenna – indeed they were eventually exported to the mainland when the Tasmanians who accompanied Robinson warned the Wurundjeri of Port Phillip about their experiences of “protection.”

As Cassandra Pybus has pointed out, Robinson had linked his fortunes to the Aborigines, and by 1838, the stakes in making Wybalenna a success were increasing. He had to make the settlement a model of acculturation and either stem or explain away the death toll. Most of all, he needed to convince the new governor of the mission’s promise. He therefore invited the Franklins to visit Wybalenna soon after their arrival, and when they agreed, Robinson set about desperately trying to make it into a model station. He tried to reorganize social relations, organized marriages, and instituted a market. He insisted that women (especially those who had been living with the sealers) adopt European domesticity, and learn how to knit, sew, and do needlework; by June 1837, he was sending specimens of their handiwork to the Franklins as proof of his success. He also organized an Aboriginal newspaper, the handwritten *Flinders Island Chronicle*. He courted the teenage Walter George Arthur and Thomas Bruney (both of whom were the sons of chiefs who had been educated at the Orphan School in Hobart) to write

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679 Mar, “Imperial Literacy,” 11-17.

680 Cassandra Pybus, *Community of Thieves*. (Melbourne: William Heinemann, 1991), 140-141. Robinson’s contemporary James Bonwick argued that Robinson’s efforts at both conciliation and amelioration were self-serving, and that he was only moved by the mass mortality at Flinders insofar as it impacted his own plans. James Bonwick, *The Last of the Tasmanians; or, the Black War of Van Diemen's Land* (London: Sampson, Low, Son & Marston, 1870), 253-256.

681 Robinson in *Weep in Silence*, 701. As Robinson used these handicrafts to court the Franklin’s favor, so Jane would use them in turn to court the favor of others. In 1844, she sent a pair of gloves from this shipment to John Richardson’s daughter, Beatrice (see below).

the journal in English, which appeared between September 1837 and January 1838. In doing so, he unwittingly sowed the seeds of longer-term literate resistance, for Arthur in particular would become a harsh critic of the regime both on the island and in Port Phillip, and in 1847 would organize the first indigenous petition to Queen Victoria (see below).

The Franklins’ visit to Wybalenna on January 25, 1838 was very carefully scripted by Robinson. They arrived in the evening, accompanied by Eleanor, Maconochie, Henry Elliott, and Ronald Gunn, and were formally welcomed to the island by the leaders of the three composite groups (including Walter George Arthur’s father, “King George”) who waited on the beach at sunset, dressed in European clothes (mirrored by John Franklin’s full naval dress). Robinson put the Franklins up in his own house, and the next day the Franklins inspected the cottages, went on a tour of the settlement, and presented the Aborigines with beads, knives, handkerchiefs and harmonicas. When he took them to the school, Robinson drew their attention to a six-year-old boy he had renamed John Franklin when he arrived with his mother seven months earlier. Robinson noted with pleasure in his diary that “Sir John was greatly amused at the incident and made judicious remarks.” Robinson also paid special attention to Jane – especially after John, having inspected the accounts of the market, asked that they be given to her. Robinson took pleasure in offering her his “protection” during a late evening expedition to the Grass Tree Plains, several steep kilometers from the main settlement, with John, Eleanor, Elliott, and

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683 For a selection of the Flinders Island Weekly Chronicle, see Plomley, Weep in Silence, Appendix C, 1009-1013. For an extended analysis of the Chronicle as an artifact of Aboriginal resistance, see Van Toorn, Writing Never Arrives Naked, 93-122.
684 Robinson had never seen Franklin before, and had to ask the ship’s captain to point him out; Robinson later described him in his journal as an “elderly and corpulent gentleman” in full naval dress who was “very facetious and communicative.” Robinson in Weep in Silence, 524, 527.
685 To John Franklin, it might well have seemed reminiscent of many meetings along the rivers of Northern Canada ten years earlier, when he and his officers carried very similar trade goods. Ibid., 526-527.
686 “John Franklin” and his mother Kal.loon.goo/Sarah/Charlotte had arrived from Kangaro Island. Sealers from the Australian mainland had kidnapped them with several other people. Kal.loon.goo’s account of their horrifying ordeal is in ibid., 445-6; see also 526, 881.
687 Ibid., 526.
688 Ibid., 526.
They were then taken, in the darkness, back to their ship, and Robinson was thrilled that the Governor and his lady were highly pleased with their visit … which they repeatedly expressed and in the strongest possible terms.”

Jane and Maconochie both asked Robinson for Aboriginal skulls for their collections, and he gave Jane Franklin the skull of a woman who may have been Timemernedic’s aunt. Gunn was as disturbed by the visit as the Franklins were pleased. When he sent Hooker his report and some botanical specimens, he wrote, “Unless Sir John at an early day adopts some remedial measures (which I believe he intends) the race in another season or two will become extinct!”

When Robinson visited Hobart in November 1838 to finalize preparations for the move to Port Phillip and his new position as Protector, Jane Franklin asked him, as he recorded it in his journal, “to get a black boy for her, also snakes different species.”

He chose a ten-year-old orphan, Timemernedic, and sent him to Hobart in January of 1839 as he departed for Port Phillip.

Timemernedic was born near Sandy Cape in Northwest Tasmania in 1828 to the chief Wymurric and Larratong/”Queen Andromache,” in the midst of intense conflict with the Van Diemen’s Land Company (in which 600 of the approximately 700 people of the North West nation perished).

Both Wymurric and his brother Pevay led the resistance until 1828 when...

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689 Ibid., 528.
690 Ibid., 530.
691 Ian McFarlane states that Timemernedic’s aunt’s skull (LOE.WER.RID.DIC) was given to Lady Franklin in January 1838 as a keepsake. It is not clear how McFarlane made this determination, as Robinson did not identify the owner of that skull in his notes or in his copiously detailed journal, and neither did Jane Franklin (to the best of my knowledge). According to Plomley, the skull was deposited in the Natural History Museum in London; it seems to have been repatriated to the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre in 2006, along with a number of other Tasmanian Aboriginal remains. Ian McFarlane, *Beyond Awakening: The Aboriginal Tribes of North West Tasmania: a History.* (Launceston, Tasmania: Fullers Bookshop, 2008), 195-6; N.J. B. Plomley, “A List of Tasmanian Aboriginal Material in Collections in Europe,” *Records of the Queen Victoria Museum, Launceston* 15 (1962); “Press Release,” Natural History Museum, 17 November 2006, http://www.nhm.ac.uk/about-us/press-office/press-releases/2006/press_release_10031.html (accessed December 21, 2013).
693 Robinson in *Weep in Silence*, 605.
694 Ryan, *Tasmanian Aborigines*, 166-170; for a synopsis of the conflict with the Van Diemen’s Land Company, see Boyce, *Van Diemen’s Land*, 202-205. The company’s chief agent, Edward Curr, personally committed several of the
they retreated and were later found by Robinson’s “mission” (which by then included Pevay) in 1832, and arrived on Flinders Island in late 1832 or early 1833. Wymurric seems to have died in February of 1833; however, his fate remains unclear. A few months after Wymurric’s death, Robinson made another trip to Southwestern Tasmania, where he captured the chief of the Port Davey people, Towterrer, his wife Wongerneep, and their little girl at gunpoint in June, 1833. The child was sent to the Orphan School in Hobart, where she died, and Towterrer and Wongerneep were taken to Flinders. There, they and the other Port Davey people joined the survivors of Western and Northwestern people in a new composite political unit, and would have become closely associated with Timemernedic’s mother. Sometime in 1836, their daughter “Mathinna” was born, though this was the name that Jane Franklin gave her, not her parents.

atrocities, on one occasion shooting and then butchering an Aboriginal woman with an axe, after which he unrepentantly described the murder to his employers. Boyce, Van Diemen’s Land, 203-204. One episode in this conflict, the Cape Grim massacre, was singled out by Keith Windschuttle as an example of an historical non-event (the massacre) that had been overblown by academic historians. See Windschuttle, Fabrication, 249-294. For an excellent rebuttal to Windschuttle’s case, as well as a far more convincing synopsis of events and their larger significance, see Ian McFarlane, “Cape Grim,” in Whitewash: On Keith Windschuttle’s Fabrication of Aboriginal History, ed. Robert Manne, (Melbourne: Black, Inc. Agenda, 2003), 277-298.

Wymurric is not listed in Robinson’s census of 1836, and Robinson claimed that he had died and been cremated on Flinders Island sometime before 1838, which was also reported by Henry Melville in 1835. However, Lyndall Ryan argues that Wymurric led a composite group of Northern and Western people on Flinders Island until at least 1847, and then moved with them to Oyster Cove. In doing so, she seems to have identified a man named Noemy/Mar.wer.reek as Wymurric, whom Penny Van Toorn argues was an agent of religious syncretism on Flinders Island, who preached eloquent sermons in a combination of English, his own language, and pidgin. To further confuse matters, the previous commandant of Flinders Island, Lt William Darling, had reported the death of a recently captured chief named “Mymerric” in February of 1833. In his recently published PhD thesis, Ian MacFarlane also believes that “Mymerric” and “Wymurric” were the same person. He also seems to have identified Rodney/PEN.DOW.TE.WER with Penderoin, a brother to Pevay and Wymurick. These appear, however, to have been two separate people with separately recorded deaths; the former died August 4 1838, while the latter died in Hobart c. 1835-36. Ryan, Tasmanian Aborigines, 230; Ryan, Weep in Silence, 849, 997; McFarlane, Beyond Awakening, 195-196, 240. According to Robinson, Towterrer and Wongerneep had abandoned their little girl during their attempt to escape from Robinson and the mission Aborigines; if so, this very likely had something to do with Robinson’s earlier abduction of another of their children. Robinson in Friendly Mission, 773.

Plomley, Weep in Silence, 346, 836; Ryan, Tasmanian Aborigines, 220.

Her real name is unknown. At Wybalenna she was known as “Mary,” but Jane Franklin disapproved of giving native people English names and called her “Mathinna” after the distinctive Aboriginal shell necklaces, as she told
By this time, the eight year old Timemernedic had become one of the “juvenile instructors” at the Wybalenna evening school, where he worked alongside Walter George Arthur and his future wife Mary Anne Arthur, teaching elders to read.\textsuperscript{701} Both children lost parents in the epidemics of 1837. Timemernedic’s mother fell ill with typhus in early 1837, and while she was dying, her son had difficulty negotiating Wybalenna’s volatile social and political landscape; between April and August of 1837, he was persecuted by some of the other children, locked up by Robinson on one occasion and flogged by the catechist, Robert Clark on another.\textsuperscript{702} In August of 1837, his mother died and left him an orphan; a month later, Mathinna’s father died and her mother later remarried a man called “Palle,” and died in September or October of 1840.\textsuperscript{703}

Both Timemernedic and Mathinna have usually been seen as Jane Franklin’s pet projects, with several biographers speculating that she may have felt real affection for them.\textsuperscript{704} However, it was Eleanor, not Jane, who had the most contact with the children.\textsuperscript{705} Their education was given over to her in the schoolroom, particularly as Jane was often traveling away from home. From March until August, 1839 (almost half the time Timemernedic was at Government House), she was traveling on the mainland with Sophy, and Eleanor was exclusively in charge of Timemernedic.\textsuperscript{706} In February of 1841, around the time Mathinna would have arrived at Government House, Jane took advantage of a ship leaving for New Zealand and toured the

Josephine Richardson many years later. SPRI MS 1503/28/10, Jane Franklin to Josephine Richardson, 6 December, 1844.
\textsuperscript{701} Robinson in \textit{Weep In Silence}, 346.
\textsuperscript{702} Some protested the boy’s corporal punishment, but Walter George Arthur’s father, “King George” (also a resistance leader and chief of the Big River people) insisted that the flogging be carried out. McFarlane, \textit{Beyond Awakening}, 195; Robinson in \textit{Weep in Silence}, 421, 436-437, 440-441, 472; Sally Dammery, \textit{Walter George Arthur, A Free Tasmanian?} (Melbourne: Monash Publications in History, 2001), 7.
\textsuperscript{703} TAHO NS 279/1/16, Jane Franklin Diary, 3 September, 1841.
\textsuperscript{705} Alexander, \textit{Ambitions of Jane Franklin}, 129.
\textsuperscript{706} For her journal of this trip, see P. Russell, \textit{This Errant Lady}. 
islands until May, returning to Hobart in June. In April of 1842, she and John Franklin
undertook a tour of the largely unexplored west coast of Van Diemen’s Land – a journey of
considerable hardship that took nearly two months, during which time Eleanor was again left in
sole charge of Mathinna. After her visit to Flinders Island in early 1838, Eleanor had begun
reading more widely about indigenous peoples around the Pacific, outlining in her journal the
customs of the Chukchi (“Kamchadales”) and the “disposition the South Sea Islanders have for
thieving.” This reading, together with the instructions of her governess Miss Williams and
conversations with her father about his expeditions, formed the sum total of the teenage girl’s
qualifications as the tutor of the two children.

Timemernedic was conflicted, lonely, restless and dissatisfied at Government House
during the year he lived there. In October of 1839, Eleanor wrote that “he is anxious to be able to
read and write well. He waits at table and does other little things. But unfortunately he is very
idle and obstinate, so that it is difficult to keep him to his duty, unless he is constantly
watched.” In November, Jane drove out to the Orphan School in New Town and spoke to Mr.
Ewing, the headmaster. “I asked him about taking Timeo,” she wrote in her diary, “who is so idle
& disobedient at home, that I fancied under better discipline, he might improve for a time
[there].” Ewing discouraged her, pointing out that he was unable to keep the other Aboriginal
boys within the school walls. Having classified Timemernedic as a failed experiment in
“civility,” Jane Franklin decided he was now principally useful as a physical specimen of
“savagery.” The next month, she displayed him to Durmont D’Urville and his naturalist, the

707 Jane Franklin did keep extensive journals of this trip, and if time or space permitted, it would be an interesting
project to see what her observations were of New Zealand shortly after the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi, and
whether and to what extent she used those travels to inform first her treatment of Mathinna and later her treatment of
indigenous information during the Franklin searches.

708 Alexander, Ambitions of Jane Franklin, 154-158.

709 TAHO MM4/1/3, Eleanor Franklin journal, June, 1838.

710 TAHO MM4/1/3, Eleanor Franklin journal, 7 October, 1839.

711 TAHO NS 279/1/10, Jane Franklin diary, 4 November, 1839.
phrenologist Pierre Marie Dumontier. as one of several specimens of natural history that she judged would be especially interesting. D’Urville had developed his own racial hierarchy of Pacific peoples in 1832 after his return from his first Pacific voyage, with the Tasmanians at the bottom and the Maori at the top. Dumontier, on the other hand, was a confirmed monogenecist. Jane did not record what, if any, observations either man made on the child’s physiognomy, nor whether she supplemented the viewing with the gruesome showing of his aunt’s skull, but it is not likely that she would have failed to satisfy her guests’ curiosity. Shortly thereafter, she sent Timemernedic back to Flinders, and wrote to her sister, “you have heard of my unsuccessful experiment to civilize a native boy…. If my servants had helped me better in the matter, I might perhaps have been more lucky.”

The Flinders Island community that Timemernedic returned to in 1840 was significantly changed from the one he had left a year earlier. Robinson had taken most of the literate Aborigines and the surviving “mission” Aborigines with him to Port Phillip in January of 1839, including Walter and Mary Anne Arthur, Truganini and Timemernedic’s uncle, the former resistance fighter Pevay. He took both experienced “conciliators” and literate youngsters to persuade the Wurundjeri and Koori people of Port Phillip to accept “protection,” and to persuade the settlers that his system worked. This was imperative because, as James Boyce has argued, Port Phillip had effectively become the new frontier in the Black War, as veterans moved across Bass Strait to settle Victoria’s grasslands and conduct campaigns against its native peoples, beginning in 1835. Franklin objected to Robinson’s plans, telling him in December of 1838

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712 TAHO NS 279/1/10, Jane Franklin diary, 16 December, 1839.
715 TAHO NS 279/1/10, Jane Franklin Diary, 16 December 1839; quoted in Alexander, *Ambitions of Jane Franklin*, 130.
716 Boyce, *Van Diemen’s Land*, 246.
not to take the Tasmanians because “the [white] inhabitants would raise such a hue and cry against it that could not be withstood…. He said if the natives were brought, property would immediately fall in value very considerably.”

In Port Phillip, Robinson was in charge of four Assistant Protectors who would set up stations in the country, to which the Tasmanians were supposed to convince the Wurundjeri and Koori to migrate. The Tasmanians immediately settled in and began attending their corroborrees (one of which Jane Franklin attended when she visited Melbourne in April of 1839). Some Tasmanians, like Mary Anne Arthur, were put into domestic service by Robinson; others, like her husband Walter, and Peter Bruny, were employed as stockmen on distant ranches; the majority were sent out to the stations under the Assistant Protectors, and five of them (including Pevay and Truganini) were sent to work at Narre Narre Warren station. Mar has argued that this provided the opportunity for “parallel and shared political discourses to entwine,” and that the Tasmanians used the opportunities to share with the Wurundjeri and Koori their experiences of “protection,” ultimately sparking a walk-off from the Narre Narre Warren station in late 1840 and the beginning of a longer Wurundjeri campaign to “assert and maintain their increasingly curtailed rights to manage movement through country.” By October of 1841, Robinson wrote to Governor Charles La Trobe that the Tasmanians “were of no use to me and I wished to be rid of them.”

In the meantime, John Franklin was placing his own stamp on Wybalenna as Timemernedic was readjusting to it. Franklin’s beliefs were rooted in his Arctic experience and in his Evangelicalism; indeed he occasionally compared his Arctic travels to Robinson’s

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717 Robinson in *Weep in Silence*, 608.
719 Ryan, *Tasmanian Aborigines*, 244.
conciliation journeys.\textsuperscript{722} Above all, he thought Aboriginal survival depended upon cultural transformation through industry, labor, and moral example.\textsuperscript{723} After Robinson’s departure, Franklin instructed later commandants “that the natives should be induced to labour even if in ever so trifling a degree.”\textsuperscript{724} On the ground, native leaders insisted on their rights to practice traditional subsistence and ceremonies, and strenuously objected to physical labor, which they associated with convicts. One of the chiefs once asked Commandant Fisher in 1841, “Why do you make us work like prisoners?”\textsuperscript{725} Henry Reynolds has argued that this refusal to labor was core to postwar Tasmanian Aboriginal identity; they were a free people in exile who had been unjustly deprived of their lands, not like the convicts whose labor was compelled by the state.\textsuperscript{726} Fisher wrote to Franklin that the people refused to labor, and could not be kept from their subsistence practices “with all the luxuries and firmness in the world unless a bayonet is fixed on them.”\textsuperscript{727} Franklin ultimately removed Fisher for operating “utterly at variance” with his instructions, and replaced him with Dr. Henry Jeanneret, a medical officer from Port Arthur (see below). Timemernedic had little patience for the program. After returning to Flinders in 1840, by 1841 he had gone to sea on the ship \textit{Vanissart} as a deckhand. In doing so, he followed the path of several other Tasmanian men and women from the 1820s through the 1860s, who went to sea

\textsuperscript{722} See Plomley, \textit{Weep in Silence}, 607, 610, 700. Years before, Franklin had written to Parry (when he was taking up his position in New South Wales), “When I reflect on the change which was effected on the habits & manners of the people amongst whom my little party was thrown by having their vicious & improper acts pointed out and the example of better conduct shewn them and this too during a hasty progress through the wilds of America, I feel convinced that your efforts and attentions to the moral instructions of those who will be settled around you will be abundantly rewarded, and that in the evening of your life you will look back upon the portion of time you may spend in Australia with the warmest feelings of gratitude & joy.” SPRI MS 438/18/3, John Franklin to W. E. Parry, Gedling Hall, Nottinghamshire, 9 July, 1829.

\textsuperscript{723} Plomley, \textit{Weep in Silence}, 700-701.

\textsuperscript{724} Ibid., 131-2.

\textsuperscript{725} Ibid., 132.

\textsuperscript{726} Reynolds, \textit{Fate of a Free People}, 178-184.

\textsuperscript{727} Plomley, \textit{Weep in Silence}, 132.
(voluntarily and involuntarily) and traveled at least as far as Mauritius and possibly as far as London itself.  

It was against this background that Mathinna came to Government House. She was first mentioned in May of 1841, when Eleanor wrote to her cousin Catherine Franklin that the little girl “is waiting for her lesson, and every few minutes interrupting me to shew me her work.”  

In September, the six-year-old wrote a letter in English to her stepfather Palle, which Eleanor copied in her diary, “I am good little girl, I have pen & ink cause I am good little girl. I do love my father. I have got a doll & shift & petticoat. I read My Father. I thank thee for sleep. I have got red frock. Like my father to come here to see my father. I have got sore feet & shoes & stockings & am very glad.”  

Jane made that red dress her hallmark; she would have Thomas Bock paint Mathinna’s portrait in it in 1842, and engrave it for her friends in London. She wrote to Mary that “Mathinna’s portrait is extremely like, but the figure is too large & tall – she looks there like a girl of 12, but is only 7 – the attitude is exactly hers, & she always wears the dress you see her in – when she goes out, she wears red stockings & black shoes.”  

Much later, after the Franklins had returned to Britain and left Mathinna to her fate, Jane would try to ingratiate herself with Richardson’s daughter Josephine by offering to show her the portrait, writing, “When you come to see me I will show you a portrait of Mathinna Wangeniss Flinders a little native girl whom I brought up for 2 or 3 years in Government House in VD Land. She is dressed in a scarlet frock with a black leather girdle which sets off her naked black arms & legs to great advantage.”

728 Mar, “Imperial Literacy,” 16.
729 TAHO MM4/1/3, Eleanor Franklin to Catherine Franklin, 22 May, 1841.
730 TAHO MM4/1/3, Eleanor Franklin diary, 14 September, 1841.
731 SPRI MS 248/174, Jane Franklin to Mary Simpkinson, 13 February, 1843.
732 SPRI MS 1503/28/10, Jane Franklin to Josephine Richardson, 6 December, 1844.
The chaplain Robert Crooke would later write in his memoirs that to visit Jane Franklin’s rooms in Government House was to walk into both the “sanctum sanctorum” of government and a cabinet of curiosities, in which “snakes, toads, stuffed birds and animals, weapons of savages, specimens of wood and stone, and last though not least, a juvenile lubra arrayed in bright scarlet [were] the staple articles of furniture.”

Penny Russell has argued that Crooke’s description represented “boundary confusion with a vengeance,” especially the gender confusion of Jane Franklin’s role. But though Mathinna likely spent little time in Jane’s boudoir, and though Crooke was hardly an impartial observer, he did capture the fact that when Jane did have Mathinna with her, it was usually to secure her own bonafides. When she gave the new commandant Peter Fisher his instructions in the winter of 1841, she had Mathinna with her. When she visited Mr. and Mrs. Smith, the commandant of the island for a year or so before Mathinna was brought to Hobart, she also took the little girl with her. Mathinna became a useful prop; she was meant to be a living testament to Jane’s projects of “improvement,” a child who would give verisimilitude to Jane’s claims to interest and authority in Aboriginal matters.

Like Timemernedic, Jane Franklin also tried to use Mathinna as a scientific specimen. Sometimes she was described a “remnant” of a disappearing people, at other times as a promising experiment in acculturation. When Jane sent her portrait to Mary in London to be given to Count Strzelecki to have engraved, she also sent a lock of Mathinna’s hair. “I think you will find people much interested in this portrait & the hair,” she wrote, “She is one of the remnant of a people about to disappear from the face of the earth.” She had already given Strzelecki the portraits of two other Tasmanians by Bock (which she had commissioned soon after).
after her visit to Flinders in 1838), but that Mathinna’s was intended to “show the influence of some degree of civilization upon a child of as pure a race as they, and who in spite of every endeavour, and though entirely apart from her own people, retains much of the unconquerable nature of the savage.” But in comparison with Timemernedic, she told Mary, Mathinna was an ideal specimen. The Franklins encountered him again on board the *Vanissart* in March of 1842. He had gone back to using the name Robinson had given him, “Adolphus,” and had been on board for nearly a year, and was rapidly becoming a good seaman, knowing the ropes and keeping his turn on the watch. While Eleanor noted that he was reading with the other boys, Jane remarked to Mary that he “is vastly inferior however to Mathinna in intelligence & sweetness of expression – & is much blacker in complexion than Mathinna who appears to us to be daily growing more copper–coloured as she advances in civilization.” She was driving home both her own theory of how she thought “savagery” and “civilization” were both mutable and physical traits, and trying to impress Mary (and their friends) with the apparent success of one civilizing project and failure of another in the bodies of two orphaned children.

Meanwhile, the experimental protectorate in Port Phillip was failing in the face of Aboriginal resistance. Not only had the Wurundjeri walked off the Narre Narre Warren station in 1840, but Pevay and Truganini had not finished their own reckoning with the settlers after the horrors of the “Black War.” In October of 1841, they and four other Tasmanians (two men and two women) left Port Phillip and began a new war against the Victorian settlers, raiding houses, burning huts, and ultimately killing two whalers. Truganini, who had been raped by whalers on Bruny Island several years before, helped to beat these men to death. The party were caught and committed for trial in late November of 1841. At trial, Robinson testified that the accused were

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738 SPRI MS 248/174, Jane Franklin to Mary Simpkinson, 8 March, 1843.
739 TAHO NS 279/1/17, Jane Franklin diary, 11 March, 1842; TAHO MM 4/1/3, Eleanor Franklin diary, 14 March, 1842.
sufficiently “civilized” to know right from wrong; accordingly the men were sentenced to be hung, while the women were sent back to Flinders Island, followed by all the rest of the Tasmanians. On his way to the gallows, it was reported that Timemernedic’s uncle Pevay declared he would go and join his father to hunt kangaroo at home, and said, “he had three heads, one for the scaffold, one for the grave, and one for V.D. Land.” Pybus has argued that the quote was probably an attempt of the jailer or reporter to capture the tenor of his continuing resistance. If that was the case, then it also captured both an ongoing anxiety by settlers about their own vulnerability to those they had dispossessed, as well as the insistence by some Tasmanian Aborigines on their land rights and sovereignty.

Pevay and Truganini’s guerilla campaign represented an older form of Tasmanian resistance, and Walter George Arthur was its new incarnation. The literate chief’s son who had once edited the Flinders Island Chronicle returned from Port Phillip in 1842 convinced that the system of “protection” – at Port Phillip and at Wybalenna - posed as much of a danger to Tasmanians’ political rights, sovereignty and land as the influx of white settlers had for his father’s generation. This was not least because of the rumors that had reached him and the other Aborigines about the new commandant, Dr. Henry Jeanneret, whom Franklin had appointed, Jane was friendly with, and Governor La Trobe described as “not quite sane.” Jeanneret was not only removing children from Wybalenna, but also compelling the adults (under the threat of violence) to labor in order to earn their basic rations. When the Tasmanians landed at Hobart in September 1842, the Quaker George Washington Walker wrote to Mrs. Jeanneret, asking her to moderate her husband’s behavior, for “the aborigines have received the impression that the present mode of treatment on Flinders is rigid and severe, and that especially in regard to

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740 McFarlane, Beyond Awakening, 208-211; Pybus, Community of Thieves, 152-53.
741 Pybus, Community of Thieves, 152-53.
742 Plomley, Weep in Silence, 133; Ryan, Tasmanian Aborigines, 243.
allowance of food &c a considerable abridgement has taken place.”\(^{743}\) When the Arthurs and the others arrived, a protracted struggle broke out with Jeanneret.\(^{744}\) Arthur complained to Robinson while several of the white staff also complained of Jeanneret’s “overbearing and capricious behavior,” and in November of 1843, Jeanneret was (temporarily) removed by the new Lt. Governor, Sir John Eardley-Wilmot.\(^{745}\)

Meanwhile, as Mathinna grew older and as the Franklins’ recall loomed, the Franklins began to distance themselves from her, and focused on her “wildness,” “disobedience” and above all, her “savagery.” Eleanor wrote to her cousin Catherine in February of 1843, that though “our little native girl… is improving… it will probably be a long time before she becomes quite civilized.”\(^{746}\) But Eleanor did not mention that her engagement to the schoolmaster John Phillip Gell was eclipsing any interest she had in Mathinna. Gell would later reminisce about morning walks with Eleanor, her father, and Mathinna in the gardens of Government House, and the girl “would be darting about, or climbing the trees with hand and toe, native fashion, peering down with wild bright eyes out of the lofty foliage.”\(^{747}\) He found the child “charming” if “wild.” In March, Jane wrote to Mary that Mathinna “retains much of the unconquerable nature of the savage; extreme uncertainty of will and temper, great want of perseverance and attention, little if any, self controle (sic), and great acuteness of the senses and facility of imitation.”\(^{748}\) Shortly thereafter, she visited Launceston and left Mathinna in the care of a Miss MacLaren; when she returned at the end of the month, it was to find that both Mary Franklin Price and Sophia Cracroft had found the girl “deplorably neglected” because of

\(^{743}\) Plomley, *Weep in Silence*, 139.
\(^{744}\) Ibid., 143.
\(^{746}\) TAHO MM 4/1/3, Eleanor Franklin to Catherine Franklin, 14 February, 1843.
\(^{747}\) quoted in Alexander, *Ambitions of Jane Franklin*, 133.
\(^{748}\) SPRI MS 248/174, Jane Franklin to Mary Simpkinson, 8 March, 1843.
MacLaren’s “unwillingness to have any thing to do with [her].” Jane added in her diary that Mathinna was also “very troublesome & disobedient.”\textsuperscript{749} When the Franklins received news of their imminent recall in 1843, Jane placed Mathinna in the Orphan School. Mathinna spent only a few months there, leaving in February of 1844 together with three other children who were taken to Flinders by the new superintendent Joseph Milligan, a protégé of Jane Franklin’s.\textsuperscript{750}

Mathinna was at Wybalenna for one of the most significant acts of Aboriginal resistance in its history. In 1846, the Secretary of State reinstated Jeanneret as commandant after his lengthy petitioning.\textsuperscript{751} In response, Arthur organized seven other high-ranking Aboriginal men to write a petition to Queen Victoria on their behalf to request Jeanneret’s removal. It insisted both upon the Aborigines’ status as free people who “were not taken prisoners but freely gave up our country to Colonel Arthur then the Governor after defending ourselves,” and that they had made a treaty with Governor Arthur through Robinson, “an agreement which we have not lost from our minds since and we have made our part of it good.” They argued that Jeanneret had failed to live up to the agreement and outlined his ill-treatment, including violence, food deprivation, and imprisonment “because we would not be his slaves.” The petition has only recently been recognized as an important political statement, historical interpretation of the “Black War,” and assertion of sovereignty that presaged literate Aboriginal activism in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries.\textsuperscript{752} Jeanneret returned to Flinders before the petition was sent, and imprisoned Arthur for seventeen days. In response many of the literate Aborigines wrote to the newest governor, Sir William Denison, that Jeanneret was continuing to beat them, threaten them, and treat them as slaves, while Jeanneret retaliated that Clark and his family were abusing the

\textsuperscript{749} TAHO NS 279/1/18, Jane Franklin diary, 29 March, 1843.  
\textsuperscript{750} Plomley, \textit{Weep in Silence}, 146.  
\textsuperscript{751} Ibid., 148.  
\textsuperscript{752} Reynolds, \textit{Fate of a Free People}, 7-16; Van Toorn, \textit{Writing Never Arrives Naked}, 2-3, 119-22.
children. It was in the midst of this that the twelve-year-old Mathinna entered the controversy. Mrs. Jeanneret backed up her husband’s accusations and wrote to the wives of the governor and the bishop that Mathinna was “particularly the object of the vindictiveness of those from whom these poor children have suffered so much ill treatment,” that she was sick, dirty, and miserable. Mathinna apparently started to write several letters to Eleanor Franklin’s fiancé Gell (who was still in the colony) to ask for help, but neither finished nor sent them.

In the meantime, Denison forwarded the petition to the Colonial Office, and James Stephen recommended that Jeanneret be dismissed and Wybalenna abandoned. In May of 1847 (about a month before John Franklin died in the Arctic), the Aborigines were all moved to an abandoned penal station at Oyster Cove, about 20 miles southeast of Hobart. There were forty-nine survivors who made the journey and then held a ceremony of several days, possibly hosted by Truganini. Mathinna, however, was not there. She was sent back to the Orphan School with the three other surviving girls, where she remained for four years, when she went to Oyster Cove rather than enter domestic service. There are many rumors about her fate thereafter, most of them that she had taken to drinking and prostitution and had drowned sometime in her twenties – but there is no official record of her death. The death toll at Oyster Cove continued, with thirteen people dying between 1847 and 1851; James Bonwick visited the site in 1859 and found damp, dilapidated buildings that swarmed with fleas. Many succumbed to alcoholism (including Arthur who died in 1861) and there was a rush of scientists eager to secure the skeletal remains of a people characterized as remnants of “extreme primitivism.”

755 Ibid., 135.
757 Ibid., 253.
759 Ibid., 136.
leading to an epidemic of grave robbing and dismemberment.\textsuperscript{761} When Truganini died in May of 1876 at the age of 64, the Tasmanians were declared extinct; the families still living on islands in Bass Strait and on the mainland were designated inauthentic “half-breeds.” However, they continued the political traditions begun on Flinders Island, asserting their legal rights, land rights, and Aboriginality in what Reynolds and Ryan have both argued was an unbroken political tradition that continues to the present.\textsuperscript{762} Among their achievements are the repatriation of both artifacts and human remains, some of which certainly passed through Jane Franklin’s hands.

What, then, can we say the result was of Jane Franklin’s experiments with Timemernedic and Mathinna? The poor state of the record means that any answer must remain purely speculative. Both vanished, Timemernedic at sea sometime after 1843, and Mathinna sometime after she moved to Oyster Cove in 1847. Under different circumstances, they might have occupied leadership positions similar to those of Walter George Arthur and his wife Mary Anne. Arthur was able to wield his own literacy to assert both his own and his community’s power, dignity, and fundamental human rights. But he had advantages that neither Timemernedic nor Mathinna possessed, not least of which was the survival of his father into his adolescence, and his own initiation by his elders into his role as a community leader.\textsuperscript{763} Timemernedic and Mathinna, though only a few years younger than Arthur, had no such connections. Their removal to Government House exacerbated the isolation begun by the deaths of their family members, and seems to have ensured that they lost any advocates they might have had on Flinders Island, leaving both with few options.

The second is, to what extent, if any, did Jane Franklin’s experiments with these children impact how she, Sophy, and Eleanor viewed indigenous people? What, if any, impact did these\

\textsuperscript{761} Ryan, \textit{Tasmanian Aborigines}, 262-271; Stocking, \textit{Victorian Anthropology}, 280-283.

\textsuperscript{762} Reynolds, \textit{Fate of a Free People}, 191-213; Ryan, \textit{Tasmanian Aborigines}, 275-361.

\textsuperscript{763} Reynolds, \textit{Fate of a Free People}, 16-26; Dammery, \textit{Walter George Arthur}, 26-27.
experiences have on their behavior during the Franklin searches? This too must remain circumspect, but clearly all of them thought that their travels, their residence at Government House, and their experiments on the two children endowed them with some authority and knowledge about indigenous peoples. Like so many others, Jane collected artifacts of people she was convinced were vanishing, and she included Timemernedic and Mathinna amongst those mementoes. She also shared with some of her contemporaries the belief that individuals could be culturally and physically transformed from a state of “savagery” to one of “civility” under the right conditions. She experimented upon Timemernedic and Mathinna, but according to her own tests, she failed. What she did not appreciate – and in fact utterly repudiated – was the person in-between, the cultural broker who resisted complete assimilation. When both children failed to come up to her standard of acculturation, they were abandoned as no longer useful as specimens of either “savagery” or “civilization.”

This may help to explain Jane’s approach to indigenous go-betweens, mixed-race agents, intelligence and information during the Franklin searches of the 1840s and 1850s. In later years, she rejected outright the evidence of some men like the Danish-Inughuit translator Adam Beck or the Inuk William Ouligbuck, while accepting and promoting others as competent and experienced men, like the mixed-race William Kennedy (who captained her ship Prince Albert in 1851-2 and the Isobel in 1853) or his nephew Alexander Kennedy Isbister, who was one of her mainstays of support in the press (see chapter 5). To her mind, neither Kennedy nor Isbister bore any trace of their Swampy Cree heritage, and if either occasionally had a flash of being a man “in-between,” it was only fleeting and, to Jane’s mind, registered as an example of “noble savagery” that she had denied to the Tasmanian Aborigines. But she was just as willing to

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764 For example, she wrote in 1852 to Sir Roderick Murchison (then the Secretary of the RGS) that, “The Indian character is strongly developed in Mr K’s face & now & then in his character when the wrongs of his maternal race
designate other mixed race interpreters as disingenuous “half-breeds,” which depended in part on the information they imparted, but also upon their place on the civilizational scale as she understood it from her antipodean experiences.

“Petticoat Government” and Arctic Circles

One of the key themes of John Franklin’s administration was the struggle of John Montagu and Matthew Forster for power over him and the colony. It is impossible to do justice to the complexities of these colonial politics here, but as Maconochie fell from grace, Montagu and Forster gained ascendency, exposing Franklin to intense criticism from the anti-Arthur colonial press as merely a tool of the “Arthur faction.”765 They were also keenly aware – and bitterly resentful – of Jane Franklin’s influence as a counterweight to their own; she in turn was equally aware of their animosity.766 What this meant was that both men, especially Montagu, would argue in public and in private, in London and in Van Diemen’s Land, in print and in gossip, that Franklin’s administration was fundamentally corrupt because it had upset the colony’s gendered balance of power. Both Franklins used every means and every connection at their disposal, metropolitan and antipodean, to counteract Montagu’s flurry of accusations. They particularly enlisted the assistance of the “Arctic Circles” to defend their reputations in London, circles that they had nurtured and cultivated from afar.

There were three important consequences here. The first was that John Franklin was ignominiously recalled from Van Diemen’s Land in 1843, and that his final, fatal Arctic
expedition in 1845 was largely organized by the “Arctic Circles” to recuperate his reputation. The second was that both Franklins (and some of their friends and relatives) made an argument in public and in private with which Mary Simpkinson was deeply familiar – that all Jane’s actions proceeded from her duty and devotion to her husband, therefore did not exceed the boundaries of gendered propriety. When the members of the Arctic Circles heard this argument after Franklin’s disappearance in 1845, it was nothing new. This leads directly to the third important consequence, which had been developing long before the Montagu affair and indeed, even before Franklin’s appointment in Van Diemen’s Land: that Jane Franklin could never count on complete access to all of her husband’s friends and colleagues. In the years after her husband’s disappearance in 1845, some (notably Beaufort, Parry and Sabine) would willingly help her to weave new networks of knowledge, to leverage institutional connections, and to gather and interpret information. Others, like Richardson, would be far less obliging to Jane, though still dedicated to John. Finally, all of them were uncomfortable with the triangle of hostility that had developed between Jane, Sophy, and Eleanor. The first flickers of these reservations emerged during the campaign to save John Franklin’s reputation; but in later years, many of John’s friends were, for many reasons, more sympathetic to Eleanor than to Jane.

From 1839-41, Montagu was in England, ostensibly to see to his son’s education and to act as Franklin’s envoy; in fact, he used the time to spread rumors at the Colonial Office and in “society” that Jane Franklin was governing the colony by proxy. Zoe Laidlaw used Montagu to illustrate how envoys could exacerbate governors’ already precarious, vulnerable, and isolated position, but failed to discuss that his case rested principally on portraying Jane Franklin as a “man in petticoats” and John Franklin as weak, ineffective, and imbecilic.767 Jane was, however, keenly aware of the dangers he posed. Even as she sought his intervention in the Maconochie

affair, she begged Mary to be cautious, “Do not suffer Mr. Montagu to suppose I have told you
that I am so much in their councils.” She defended her political involvement to her sister:

To me there is no other gratification in my position than that I am enabled to be of some
use to Sir John. It is exceeding disagreeable to me to be thought to meddle with affairs of
state which I suppose people must think…. I suppose every woman whose husband is in
public life helps him if she can & if he gives her the opportunity which he will not fail to
do if he can trust in her ability & discretion, & as to the rest, nobody knows half so well as
myself the weakness of my faculties rendered weaker still by my physical infirmities…. My
mind is always on the stretch & sometimes it seems to threaten to fail me altogether.

Her devotion to her husband, she argued, was so profound that it exacerbated the natural
infirmities of her womanly physique. Franklin could not do without her good sense and reason,
and yet her womanly faculties threatened to fail altogether under constant exertion and especially
under criticism. It was a theme she would often reprise during the Franklin searches in the 1840s
and 1850s. These protestations of gendered conformity often won support, not least from the
Bishop of Australia who once said of Jane “if her stockings are blue, her petticoats are so long
that he has never found it out.” But she was not always so convincing.

Montagu returned to Van Diemen’s Land in 1841 and to his position as Franklin’s
advisor. In October, he persuaded Franklin to dismiss a negligent doctor at Richmond; when
Franklin later reinstated him after receiving a petition from the townsmen, Montagu accused Jane
of interference and of instigating the petition. Beginning in December, Montagu had his contacts
in the colonial press print a series of hostile articles about the Franklins, accusing John of
imbecility and Jane of political meddling; both Franklins later characterized these as “dastardly
and impudent, though cunningly devised falsehoods.” Franklin suspended Montagu in January

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768 SPRI MS 248/174, Jane Franklin to Mary Simpkinson, 13 February, 1839.
769 Ibid.
770 SPRI MS 248/316 John Franklin to James Clark Ross, 13 September, 1843.
771 John Franklin, Narrative of Some Passages in the History of Van Diemen's Land, During the Last Three Years of Sir John Franklin's Administration of its Government (privately printed, 1845), 28-29.
of 1842. Meanwhile, Montagu wrote to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Lord Stanley, to reassert his claims of “petticoat government,” and then went to London to make his case directly again. As he would later write, though he presented a host of reasons for John Franklin’s recall, “My whole case turned upon the fact of Lady Franklin’s improper interference in the business of Government.” At the Colonial Office, James Stephen had a low opinion of Franklin which he said was based on his dispatches (which were either too sparse or too voluminous) and his demeanor (which was either too forbearing or too capricious), and he concluded that in general, Franklin was “deficient in the authority and self-reliance required in such an Office.” Montagu explained Franklin’s inconsistencies as the result of Jane’s influence, and Stephen was persuaded, concluding that John Franklin was weak and his wife was “a vindictive intermeddling woman” who had overcome “a plain Sailor and a man of sense.”

It was Stephen who wrote a dispatch in Lord Stanley’s name that the Franklins received in January of 1843, which exonerated Montagu from any wrongdoing, blamed Franklin’s enervation for the state of the colony, and informed Franklin that Montagu had been given a plum position as Colonial Secretary at the Cape. With respect to the charge that Montagu had made “improper use” of Jane Franklin’s name both in London and in Van Diemen’s Land, he only commented, “I pass as rapidly as possible from such a topic, confining myself to the single remark, that the imputation does not appear to me to be well-founded.” Stephen shared the dispatch with Montagu, who copied it and sent it, together with copies of his correspondence, to his friends and to newspaper editors in Hobart, Melbourne and Sydney, including the New South

772 Alexander, Ambitions of Jane Franklin, 191. Jane clearly sent these articles to Mary and commented extensively upon them, but that correspondence has not survived. She referred to the several letters on the subject in SPRI MS 248/174, Jane Franklin to Mary Simpkinson, 7 February, 1842.
774 Quoted in Fitzpatrick, Franklin in Tasmania, 339.
775 Alexander, Ambitions of Jane Franklin, 195.
776 Ibid., 196.
777 A copy of the dispatch can be found in Franklin, Narrative of Some Passages, 1-5.
Wales Governor Sir George Gipps.\footnote{SPRI MS 248/316 John Franklin to James Clark Ross, 20 July, 1843; Alexander, \textit{Ambitions of Jane Franklin}, 198; Fitzpatrick, \textit{Franklin in Tasmania}, 335.} The speed of the mails meant that Montagu’s packet of papers was in circulation long before Franklin saw them.\footnote{Fitzpatrick, \textit{Franklin in Tasmania}, 335.} This is what became known locally as “Montagu’s Book,” and its main case was that Jane Franklin and her “unprincipled coterie of flatterers” had been responsible for Montagu’s dismissal in 1842, and that the good of the colony had been “sacrificed to female artifice.”\footnote{Alexander, \textit{Ambitions of Jane Franklin}, 198.} Montagu also circulated his attacks in London, in the Athenaeum and United Service Clubs (to which both he and Franklin belonged), and in the press.\footnote{Fitzpatrick, \textit{Franklin in Tasmania}, 342-343.}

As the Franklins became aware of the extent of the damage, they called upon every available source, metropolitan and colonial, to help their case. Jane was used to attacks in the colonial press (having written to Mary once, “I shall never die of the newspapers.”)\footnote{SPRI MS 248/174, Jane Franklin to Mary Simpkinson, 23 February, 1839.} But to be attacked in the press in Van Diemen’s Land was one thing – she could easily send those articles to Mary with her commentary and explanations, ensuring that Mary could counteract them if rumors spread in London.\footnote{Nevertheless, both she and John Franklin suspected that the newspaper editors saved their most vitriolic and insupportable commentary for the day before the mailbag left, so that “the freshest newspaper at least will be placed before the [Secretary of State for the Colonies] and attract his attention. This practice is well understood in the colony and boasted of.” Franklin, \textit{Narrative of Some Passages}, 35.} But the independent circulation of hostile reports in metropolitan papers was an entirely different matter. She wrote to Mary,

\begin{quote}
I believe the knowledge that my publicity, my odious loathed publicity, not only existed here, where everyone knows the malignant foundations of it, but in England, in my own home, where things are necessarily judged of as they appear and not as they are, the knowledge that I was shewn up in the London newspapers and in the Colonial Office in a light the most repulsive to my nature, my tastes, my habits and my principles, I believe it was this fatal and startling knowledge which first gave me a mortal blow.\footnote{Quoted in Fitzpatrick, \textit{Franklin in Tasmania}, 343.}
\end{quote}
This “odious loathed publicity” was especially traumatic because she was so far removed from it, and could not rapidly respond with her normal argument that she was merely acting as a devoted wife. Stephen had privately written that she had “forfeited the immunities of her sex by meddling in Public Affairs” and that Montagu’s behavior towards her was therefore perfectly justified. What would have been ungentlemanly and libelous under other circumstances were given a veneer of respectability – and at a distance, neither Jane, John, nor any of their supporters could adequately defend her actions.

Franklin immediately turned to the “Arctic Circles” to vindicate him, writing to Richardson, Parry, James Ross and Beaufort to ask them to “to confer together and determine on what next steps they can take.” He begged Richardson to organize their friends to speak to Stanley so that he could at least “shew myself within the walls of the United Service Club or… any other Club” on his return. The next day, he asked Richardson to contact “any of our mutual scientific friends who continue their interest in the happiness and welfare of my self my dearest wife & daughter?” He looked especially to Ross for help (who had just returned from the Antarctic), because he had firsthand knowledge of Franklin’s administration, and wrote “The warm regard you have for the Colony and your sincere friendship for me and mine and the knowledge you possess of the real character of Montagu & Forster … point you out as the most qualified of my friends to make known personally to Lord Stanley the distressing course pursued by them.” He sent Ross duplicates of his dispatches to Stanley, pointing out that though they would be sealed, Ross could easily find out their contents by merely applying to Mary Simpkinson – and indeed, Franklin begged him to read it all. Montagu, he said, returned from

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785 Alexander, Ambitions of Jane Franklin, 196.
786 NA BJ3/18, John Franklin to Edward Sabine, Government House, 29 January, 1843.
787 DRO D3311/53/80, John Franklin to John Richardson, 19 April, 1843.
788 DRO D3311/53/81, John Franklin to John Richardson, 20 April, 1843.
789 SPRI MS 248/316 John Franklin to James Clark Ross, 13 September, 1843.
England “determined to destroy Lady Franklin,” and that “she cannot help being clever but that is what the party cannot bear – They think they could have got on with a simple unsuspicious & obstinate old fool like myself, but her discernment has unveiled them.”

By 1843, the Richardsonses, Parrys and Mary Anne and Edward Kendall were all living in Gosport and Portsmouth, where both Richardson and Parry were stationed at Haslar Naval Hospital, and formed a new hub of both Arctic socialization, and the defense of the Franklins. From their base in Gosport, the “Arctic Circles” were more than willing to help John Franklin, but nevertheless seemed convinced that Jane was indeed to blame for her husband’s predicament. Richardson wrote directly to Beaufort as soon as he heard of the controversy in May of 1843 (well before any of Franklin’s letters arrived) pointing out that Franklin’s only fault was a failure to play venal colonial politics. Richardson claimed that he was not privy to Franklin’s thoughts or opinions on official matters, and that his opinion was rather founded upon other sources (he had a wide range of scientific contacts, including the new colonial secretary J. E. Bicheno); Franklin’s main fault, he argued was that he “suffers from acting in a too straightforward & Seamanlike manner.” Jane was never mentioned either in this letter or in the copy that Mary made and sent to her mother (Franklin’s sister) to show to the family. Mary added, “I must say that the less the thing is talked of, the better – No man rises by grumbling or by speaking of disappointments, and as Uncle F is sure to be well heard on his return the best that his friends can do is to let the thing rest till then.” Parry also leaned on Stanley directly (who was his brother-

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790 Ibid.
792 SPRI MS 1503/24/6, John Richardson to Francis Beaufort, 23 May, 1843. For a wider swath of correspondents, see SPRI MS 1503/24, Sir John Richardson correspondence, 1841-43.
793 SPRI MS 1503/24/6, Mary Richardson to Mrs Booth, 23 May, 1843.
in-law from his first marriage) and possibly through his formidable mother-in-law, Lady Maria Josepha Stanley, but to no avail.  

When the Franklins returned to England in 1844, Portsmouth was their first stop, and according to Jane’s biographer, a reference by an unnamed relative to the Montagu affair caused Jane to have “an attack of hysterics so violent that her sobs could be heard all over the house.”

It may have been Mary Richardson, who remarked in a letter to a friend,

…you know both Lady F & I need not be told that we do not suit…. She is just exactly what she was, only vexed and harassed by personal affronts w'h she cannot get above or disregard. Her mind is active and interested in the colony, but she is quite unable to bear the misrepresentation she has met with….She was vexed that I did not see all as she did & thought all I said unfeeling & factious. Strangely enough I believe she has the feeling that I have always been friendly with those who did not like her & I perceive that she thought I had given her up easily. How strange it is that if one cannot think just as people do one will be supposed not to see their many virtues.

Eleanor was different, “an angel of mercy & peace among them all.” Mary wanted to get to know her better, but feared that Lady Franklin’s and her mutual dislike would get in the way. “I see in [Eleanor] already gleams of her dear & lamented mother’s true unselfish good sense & quiet working, and I have rarely felt more inclined to take up a new friend as cordially as in her case. There will be great difficulty to overcome in accomplishing this, as she is admirably bent on doing a child’s duty to Lady F… she has got to learn that I have no reason but her good for the speaking out on the one or two occasions as I have done.” It was in this context that Jane Franklin gave Mary Richardson’s daughter Josephine the pair of gloves made by one of the Aboriginal women that Robinson had sent her as a token from Flinders Island in 1837, and tempted her to visit by promising to show her Mathinna’s portrait.

794 For the Parry family connection with the Stanleys, see Nancy Mitford, The Ladies of Alderly (London: Hamish Hamilton Ltd, 1967), xix-xx, 6, 8.
795 F. Woodward, Portrait of Jane, 249.
796 SPRI MS 1503/28/4, Mary Richardson to Mrs. Day, June 1844.
797 SPRI MS 1503/28/10, Jane Franklin to Josephine Richardson, 6 December, 1844.
After their return, the Franklins, Richardson, the Sabines and Sophy all worked together on a pamphlet to vindicate John Franklin, *A Narrative of Some Passages in the History of Van Diemen’s Land*. The 157-page pamphlet was privately printed in London in 1845 for distribution in Van Diemen’s Land, all after Franklin had left Britain on his fatal voyage in the *Erebus*. Copies were also sent to the Colonial Office. It included a copy of Stanley’s dispatch and Franklin’s rebuttal, as well as correspondence between Franklin and Stanley, support from Franklin’s friends in Van Diemen’s Lands, and correspondence between Montagu and Franklin’s supporters, as well as extensive commentary upon them. It made the case that Montagu had tried to continue Arthur’s administration in his capacity as Colonial Secretary, and in the process sought to defame Jane as a means to undermine John Franklin. As it argued that Montagu and Forster had colluded with the hostile Van Diemen’s Land press to libel Jane, it also made it clear that Montagu’s quarrel ought properly to have been with John Franklin but that he had improperly singled out Jane for attack – that she had always behaved with the strictest propriety and had always tried to conciliate Montagu and make peace with him, and she had been scrupulously mindful of both his feelings and those of his wife throughout the ordeal. It was a simulacrum of the personal networks, flows of information, and family dynamics that characterized the Franklin administration in Van Diemen’s Land. John Franklin claimed authorship, but the pamphlet was largely crafted by Jane, and edited by Edward Sabine and his wife, Elizabeth Leeves Sabine, with Sophy Cracroft working as an amanuensis. The extent of the Sabines’ involvement cannot be fully determined, but Franklin did write in his last letter to Sabine, “I cannot thank Mrs Sabine & yourself enough for the aid you have given in the

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799 Franklin, *Narrative of Some Passages*, iii-v.
800 Ibid., 26-28.
preparation of the Pamphlet.”801 In his last letter to his wife from the Erebus in 1845, Franklin wrote with admiration, “that you managed the points & the arrangements of [the pamphlet] so well that Everyone [who] has read it here, is struck with the moderation and yet firmness of the language.”802

Conclusion

In Van Diemen’s Land, Jane Franklin developed a key argument that she would perfect during the Arctic searches; that if she trespassed on the male realms of politics and science, it was only out of wifely devotion. That claim was deeply influenced by her experiences in the imperial prison and white settler colony of Van Diemen’s Land. It developed in the storm of colonial and familial politics that rested upon a traffic in information and in (often bitter) feeling that she superintended, and that was central to the governance of the penal colony during her husband’s tenure. As subsequent chapters demonstrate, these connections, tactics, politics were also signature features of Jane Franklin’s involvement in the searches for her husband’s lost Arctic expedition from 1848 to 1859.

The Maconochie affair highlighted Jane’s awkward relationship with the tactics and networks of British humanitarianism. Philanthropy offered both political engagement and respectability to many thousands of British women, but only insofar as they followed the rules, picking appropriate causes and venues to avoid charges of radicalism or blue-stockingsim. But in Van Diemen’s Land, Jane Franklin thought she had the freedom to largely eschew the “appropriate” venue for her activities (the reform of the system for female convicts) only paying it lip service as required. Instead she turned her attention to Maconochie’s proposed reforms of

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801 NA BJ3/18, John Franklin to Edward Sabine, 5 July, 1845.
802 RGS SJF/7/6, John Franklin to Jane Franklin, HMS Erebus, 1 July, 1845.
the entire system, and found herself and her husband exposed to criticism. This caused her to more aggressively defend her actions (even the burning of her husband’s correspondence) as examples of womanly propriety in order to salvage her husband’s most important alliances. In that sense, though she did not share the sentiments of the humanitarian lobby, she did utilize one of the core arguments that humanitarian women employed – that they were compelled to action because of their respectability and femininity, not in spite of it.

Like so many others engaged in the traffic of imperial science, Jane Franklin used scientific correspondence, specimen-sharing, and patronage (of both colonial collectors and visiting expeditions) to gain sympathetic ears and allies who could prove useful to her husband’s troubled administration, including James Clark Ross, Edward Sabine, and Francis Beaufort among many others. She promoted colonial science and her own botanical gardens (among many other projects) and when necessary, she disguised the extent of her involvement by giving credit to her husband or to Ronald Gunn. Patronizing the sciences and the arts, she thought, could only reflect well on the enlightened nature of her husband’s administration. Like the free white settlers, she saw visiting expeditions as venues for sociability and self-promotion, a way to advertise to the rest of the world what had been and could be achieved in the penal colony. The Aboriginal children Timemernedic and Mathinna were important props in that advertisement during their time living at Government House with the Franklin family. Whether it was presenting one to a visiting phrenologist or having Mary share the engraved portrait of another to their scientific friends in Britain, Jane saw both these literate children of chiefs as either specimens or experiments, who in either case could serve her purposes and promote the Franklins’ projects of colonial improvement. That the children were orphaned, deracinated and vulnerable only made them more attractive, for she hoped that she would be able (or rather,
Eleanor would be able) to culturally and racially transform them. In that sense, the later attitudes of the Franklin women to indigenous persons, indigenous information, and cultural go-betweens during the Franklin searches may well have derived from their participation in one of the early phases of Australia’s Stolen Generations.

To the Colonial Secretary John Montagu, Jane Franklin constituted an existential danger to the colonial gender order, and both he and other members of the “Arthur faction” worked in Van Diemen’s Land and in Britain to cement the notion that she was a “man in petticoats” who truly ruled the colony. They scored some important successes, including John Franklin’s recall, but perhaps the longest legacy of both their efforts and the complaints of Alexander Maconochie were to further distance Jane from some of her husband’s close friends within the Arctic Circles, especially John Richardson. Others, like Beaufort, Parry, and Sabine, she could continue to count on. Nevertheless, partly because of the stain of Van Diemen’s Land, during the Franklin searches she would be forced to make a series of new connections amongst a wide swath of able sympathizers to forward her aims, including those with whom she might not have socialized otherwise – humanitarians, mixed-race intellectuals, and vernacular agents like whalers and fur traders. She certainly would never stop seeking the approbation, friendship, and sponsorship of men like Richardson, but she knew she could not count on it. During this period, she also developed tense, suspicious relationships with the colonial press (which she always felt had her worst interests at heart), with colonial agents (who often were ranged against her), and with official metropolitan institutions (whose bureaucrats she suspected of ill-will). These too would leave their marks on her and on the Franklin family as a whole.

Above all else, during her time in Van Diemen’s Land, Jane Franklin developed a near total-reliance on her sister Mary Simpkinson as her close confidante and indispensable
metropolitan envoy. Without Mary’s involvement, Jane could have achieved very little. To a certain extent, she would continue this role during the first year of the Franklin searches, but in September of 1850, she suffered a stroke during a trip to Germany that left her partly paralyzed, and in early 1852, was severely burned when her bed caught on fire. Mary’s severe disabilities corresponded with Jane’s turn to Sophia Cracroft as amanuensis, confidante, and equally indispensible envoy. In Van Diemen’s Land, she had been a poor relation who competed with her foster sister Eleanor for both possible marriage partners and filial status with Jane. After their return to Britain, the tense triangle between the three women that had developed in Van Diemen’s Land would fracture into an open rift, one that would play a key role in the search for the lost Franklin expedition.

803 Most of these developments are detailed in letters from Sophia and Catherine Cracroft, Eleanor Franklin Gell, and others, to Mary Franklin Price while she was stationed on Norfolk Island with her abusive husband John Price during the Franklin searches. See TAHO NS 1004.
In 1845, still smarting from the experience of Van Diemen’s Land, Sir John Franklin departed on his final, fatal expedition in HMS *Erebus* and *Terror*. His voyage was not only supposed to chart the Northwest Passage, but also to generate irreproachably trustworthy data, geographical and scientific discoveries that would be processed within centralized institutions and circulated to an informed public. Instead, Franklin, his men, and his ships disappeared into Lancaster Sound in July of 1845, and while there were dozens of expeditions sent in search of them from 1848 to 1859, not a single written document was found until 1859 to attest to their fate. The absence of written documents, however, by no means stopped the flow of information. Indeed, it seemed to accelerate it, as other evidence from “relics” to rumors to Inuit intelligence proliferated both in the Arctic and in Britain, all of which competed for authority as important clues or definitive accounts of the missing men.

After glossing the circumstances leading up to Franklin’s departure from Britain in 1845, this chapter examines a moment at the beginning of the Franklin searches when a Hull whaling captain claimed that the long-missing expedition was safe and trapped in Prince Regent Inlet in northern Canada. His proof was an Inuit map drawn at Pond Inlet, Baffin Island (Mittimatalik), showing four ships stuck in the ice. The map instigated an “information panic” as the press, the old “Arctic Circles” of Franklin’s colleagues, and the Franklin family all tried to work out its meaning. This chapter argues that in the arrhythmic pulse of silence and chatter produced by the collision of the Arctic information order and rapidly changing British technologies of transportation and communication, Jane Franklin, Sophia Cracroft, and Eleanor Franklin claimed the authority to gather and interpret information, to determine trustworthiness, to apportion credibility, and to demand action. This was a highly contested, often confusing, and wholly
uncertain process, in which the women questioned the validity of Inuit testimony and the characters of the whalers while weighing the extant evidence against their own speculations. In doing so, they claimed for themselves the armchair geographer’s authority to interpret data from the field, but they invested it with their emotional “interest” as women and as relatives of the missing, casting themselves as representatives of a larger community of maritime families. This process was infused with a deep suspicion of the mobility of Inuit, from their ability to travel where the British could not, to the network of tracks and trails that carried information and trade across the ice of the Canadian archipelago that prevented a British Northwest Passage. At the same time, hope for the missing expedition depended on Inuit authority, and denying that authority led to despair. As the Franklin women tried to craft the Inuit map to suit their own purposes in the autumn of 1849, they drew both on old connections with the “Arctic Circles” of Franklin’s colleagues (many of which had been badly strained during the Franklins’ time in Van Diemen’s Land) and a developing network of friends and relatives to make a case to the Admiralty and to the public that the missing men were the deserving objects of British philanthropy and must not be abandoned. In doing so, they wove a new network of knowledge conditioned by asymmetric speeds of information, debates over the credibility of indigenous and vernacular information, their colonial pasts, and by the dimensions of their gendered cabinet in which they tried to reframe trust, testimony, and authority.

All of this coincided with a broader sense of a crisis of authority in mid-nineteenth century Britain and its empire. This took many forms: from the domestic threats posed to social and political stability by Chartists, Irish nationalists and socialists, to fears of revolutions like those that shook the Continent in 1848, to the insistence of white settlers in British colonies on self-governance and land, to the resistance of indigenous peoples to white settlement in New
Zealand, the Cape Colony, New South Wales, and Canada. In science, men struggled to secure their credibility amidst a broader climate of heterodoxy in which mesmerism competed with and complimented magnetism, in which queries into the mechanisms of change over time in geology and natural history threatened religious orthodoxy, and in which a book like the anonymous *Vestiges of the Natural History of Creation* in 1844 could cause an enormous and controversial “sensation” with its claims that humans descended from apes and that life could be created by men. 804 As specialist scientific societies expanded in the wake of the collapse of the Royal Society, the Royal Geographical Society (RGS) was riven by struggles between the authority of the cabinet and of the field, while its heterogeneous character made it, as Felix Driver has argued, “less a centre of calculation than an information exchange.”805 It was against this background that women, whaling captains, clairvoyants, and the general public claimed the authority to interpret the Mittimatalik map and persuaded a deeply reluctant Admiralty to commit blood and treasure to Arctic rescue missions, rather than foisting the search off on the Hudson’s Bay Company and the whaling fleet. Understanding how and why is the subject of this chapter.

**The *Erebus* and *Terror* Depart, 1845**

John Franklin’s final, fatal Arctic expedition in 1845 was designed to connect the world, but not necessarily by making a Northwest Passage. It was rather part of the larger “Magnetic Crusade” that had sent the *Erebus* and *Terror* to Hobart and Antarctica in 1839-43, and their new voyage to chart the Northwest Passage was also supposed to harness magnetic observation at the

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poles to the fabric of commerce and imperial travel.\textsuperscript{806} That it was Franklin, and not James Clark Ross, who commanded the expedition at all was because of the shadow of Van Diemen’s Land. Sabine and Beaufort wanted Ross, as he had spent twenty-four years of his life on polar service and had located both magnetic poles. But Franklin deeply hoped to go, partly in order to reclaim his reputation and partly to return to the Arctic. Jane Franklin insisted that he go, and wrote to Ross, begging him to refuse the command and advocate for Franklin. It was only the prospect of her husband’s happiness after the Tasmanian debacle, she wrote, “which enables me to support the idea of parting with him.”\textsuperscript{807} Ross, exhausted by polar service and recently married, wrote to Beaufort to refuse.\textsuperscript{808} Beaufort and Sabine, though they liked Franklin personally, were circumspect about placing him in command of the expedition. Ross reported to Franklin that both George Back and Sabine approached him, raising discreet objections to Franklin’s appointment based on his age and the fact that he “suffered greatly from cold.”\textsuperscript{809} Beaufort asked Richardson and Parry for their opinions on Franklin’s ability and state of health, but failed to reckon with the fact that both men wanted to get Franklin into an Arctic environment they saw as physically and spiritually regenerative (see Chapter 1). Richardson wrote that Franklin was fit and healthy, while Parry told the first lord of the Admiralty, “If you don’t let him go, the man will die of disappointment.”\textsuperscript{810}

The design of the expedition was supposed to ensure its success, but instead laid the basis for its failure. The ice-strengthened \textit{Erebus} and \textit{Terror} were refitted with steam engines to enable them to power through the ice, and supplied with the latest tinned provisions, scientific

\textsuperscript{807} Quoted in M. J. Ross, \textit{Polar Pioneers}, 274-275.
\textsuperscript{808} It was rumored that Ross had promised Anne and her family that he would never undertake another polar expedition after they married, and that this was one of the conditions of the marriage. Ibid., 274-275.
\textsuperscript{809} Ibid., 276.
\textsuperscript{810} Quoted in ibid., 276.
equipment, and a huge variety of luxuries (including fine silverware). The overloaded deep
draught ships would be caught in the shallow ice-choked passages of the Canadian Archipelago,
the tinned provisions would poison the men with their lead soldering, and the equipment would
burden retreating parties on the ice.811 Franklin tried to remedy his own lack of experience in ice
navigation by surrounding himself with experienced men. He recruited whaling captains to serve
as his ice masters, and sent them to whaling ports in Scotland and Northern England to find
experienced crewmen. The effect would be to weld these communities and their fellow whalers
to the search, opening avenues of conflict between vernacular and institutional knowledge for the
duration of the search (see below and Chapter 5). Finally, there were the instructions themselves,
written by Franklin, Richardson, Parry, Ross, Beaufort, and Sabine. The Admiralty’s reliance on
the opinions of these experienced men (who constituted the remnants of the “Arctic Circles” of
the 1820s, and the core of the self-styled “Friends of Franklin” during the search) would continue
throughout the Franklin searches, becoming partly institutionalized in the demi-official “Arctic
Council” in 1851 (see Chapter 5). Franklin was to head west along Lancaster Sound, heading
southwest after Cape Walker at 98°W, joining the Canadian coast after the Coppermine River.
An alternative route was added at the last minute: if the southwest route was blocked, Franklin
was to head north up Wellington Channel (an offshoot of Lancaster Sound) to investigate
whether there was, as Ferdinand Pavlovich Wrangel (the President of the new Imperial Russian
Geographical Society) suggested, an open polar sea.812 These instructions would be key to the

811 Savours, Search for the North West Passage, 270-281.
812 This ancient theory had recently been revived by the publication of Elizabeth Sabine’s translation of Ferdinand
Petrovich Wrangel’s 1821-3 Siberian expedition, when Wrangel had sighted open water off the north coast. By this
time, Wrangel had completed his tenure as the Governor of Russian America, and had recently returned to St.
Petersburg. In 1845, he, together with his fellow Arctic explorer (and Baltic Russian) Fydor Petrovich Lutke,
founded the Imperial Russian Geographical Society (IRGO) which, Joseph Bradley has argued, was a key element
of an emerging and distinctively Russian civil society. Both men, and the institution of the IRGO, would
periodically play important roles in the Franklin search. See Joseph Bradley, “Subjects into Citizens: Societies, Civil
Society, and Autocracy in Tsarist Russia,” American Historical Review 107, no. 4 (2002): 1094-1123; Nathaniel
contest of authority that characterized the Franklin search. Jane Franklin, Sophia Cracroft, and their network of supporters would point to the whichever of the dramatically different routes served their purposes at the moment: to undermine the testimony of fur traders and whalers, to lay claim to Franklin’s priority as the discoverer of the Northwest Passage, to bolster Jane Franklin’s claim to knowledge of her husband’s whereabouts, and above all, to counteract unwelcome indigenous intelligence.

This takes us back to the *Erebus* and *Terror*’s departure from Greenhithe in May of 1845, and their subsequent disappearance into Lancaster Sound in July. What is known from a combination of Inuit testimony, archaeological evidence, and a single scrap of paper found in 1859, is that the *Erebus* and *Terror* anchored at Beechey Island on the north side of Lancaster Sound in the fall of 1845 where three of the crew died over the winter of 1845-1846. In the summer of 1846, the ships went up Wellington Channel and circumnavigated Cornwallis Island and then, probably because they were hemmed in by ice, went back to Lancaster Sound to try to find a passage west. By the fall of 1846 they found themselves pushed down Peel Strait by ice and were stuck off the east coast of Victoria Island. On the 11th of June, 1847, John Franklin died of unknown causes. By the 22nd of April, 1848, nine officers and fifteen men had died, and the ships were abandoned by a party of 105 men left hauling heavy boats under the command of Crozier and (now Captain) James Fitzjames, who had been Franklin’s second-in-command of the *Erebus* when they left. They stopped at a cairn on King William Island that James Ross had erected in 1832 to leave a message indicating where they intended to go—south for Back’s Fish

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813 Their bodies were subsequently exhumed, first in 1853 by Commander Robert Inglefield, and then by Owen Beattie in 1983. See Owen Beattie and John Geiger, *Frozen in Time: Unlocking the Secrets of the Franklin Expedition* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1988).
River on the edge of the Barren Grounds– and jettisoned hundreds of pounds of heavy and useless articles (like cooking stoves and brass curtain rods). At some point the massive party split up into smaller groups, with some going back to the ships, some continuing to travel south towards the Fish River, and some heading north and east towards the stores of the *Fury*. In the early spring of 1849 or 1850 a group of Netsilingmiut encountered a party of about forty starving men on the southern shores of King William Island, traded them a seal in exchange for some silverware, metal and coins, and found out that they were still heading south for the Fish River. At around this time, other Netsilingmiut hunters came across the still-beset ships with at least one man still living in them, with tents nearby with other groups of men. The hunters kept a safe distance, as the strangers had clearly gone mad and may have eaten some of their companions. Other people kept the traveling group of forty men under surveillance, eventually finding their bodies on King William Island in the fall of 1850 among evidence of cannibalism. There were stories of small groups of survivors sprinkled across the region, and at least one of them (who roughly fit Crozier’s description) spent the rest of his life with different Inuit groups, apparently looking every summer for ships that never came.

“Frozen Up Beyond Our Ken”: The First Relief Expeditions, Spring, 1848 – Summer, 1849

The *Erebus* and *Terror* were provisioned for three years, and when that time had elapsed without any news, rescue expeditions began to be organized. Three things need to be understood about these relief expeditions, which would continue until 1859. Firstly, they took place during a

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814 The bizarre nature of the things the sailors took with them has perplexed scholars for years. Some think they point to a free-for-all looting, some think that the sailors were being driven mad by lead poisoning, others that their brains were fogged by profound scurvy, and still others that the items were taken to trade for food with the Inuit. 815 This is a composite account drawn from Eber, *Encounters on the Passage*, 64-107; Richard J. Cyriax, *Sir John Franklin’s Last Arctic Expedition; a Chapter in the History of the Royal Navy* (London: Methuen & Co, 1939); David C. Woodman, *Strangers Among Us* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1995); D. Woodman, *Unravelling the Franklin Mystery: Inuit Testimony* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1991).
period of substantial change across both Arctic America and Great Britain, characterized above all by the changing pace of information, travel, and goods. Secondly, that pace was uneven, even arrhythmic. As modes of communication sped up across both Arctic America and Great Britain, communication between the two places was painfully slow. Ships under sail or steam took weeks to cross the Atlantic (and much longer to return from the Pacific), and ships that overwintered were effectively cut off from the outside world for at least nine months of the year. Thirdly, the Admiralty was always unwilling to send men and equipment to “these regions of thick-ribbed ice,” and persistently tried to throw the burden of the search on both the Hudson’s Bay Company, and the Arctic whaling fleet.\textsuperscript{816} Understanding these conditions, and how they contributed to the quality and speed of Arctic information is crucial to understanding how authority over information was negotiated during the Franklin searches. Under these circumstances, Jane Franklin, her networks of supporters, Arctic veterans, and the press worked to evaluate the credibility of partial Arctic intelligence, sometimes in concert, and sometimes at cross-purposes. At the same time, whalers and fur traders often found themselves forced to defend both their credibility and their reputations to institutions (and the personal networks that cross-hatched them), as well as to the public at large.

The 1840s was a period of unprecedented change across northern North America, principally because of the expansion of the British and Russian fur trades and British and American commercial whaling. For Inuit and Inupiaq people, the density of strangers was something new and remarkable – especially in societies in which territories were vigilantly defended, outsiders were carefully monitored, and trade was carefully regulated.\textsuperscript{817} The influx of strangers in the Western and Eastern Arctic changed this, creating both new links to European

\textsuperscript{816} NA ADM 7/190, 11 February – 15 March, 1851, Comments on Circular No 183, John Barrow’s proposal to send a Screw Steamer early in the Spring to the Northward to Communicate with Captain Austin.

\textsuperscript{817} Burch, \textit{Alliance and Conflict}, 29-30, 151-8, 171-180.
outsiders (and European markets) as well as to historic enemies like the Athapaskan-speakers of the interior. By 1845, the Russian American Company (RAC) and the Hudson’s Bay Company (HBC) had established trading posts within 300 miles of each other on the Yukon River in Alaska and Canada. Each company was anxious about the other’s operations as well as those of indigenous middlemen, especially the Athapaskan-speaking Gwich’in whose trading networks linked the HBC posts on the MacKenzie River in Northern Canada to the Russian Mikhailovsky redoubt (St. Michael) on Bering Strait. There was a separate and vibrant trading network across Inupiaq territories of the far north of the continent. Since 1789, substantial trade goods flowed east across Bering Strait from trading fairs in northern Asia as far as the MacKenzie River Delta, while Alaskan furs made their way west and ultimately to the Chinese market at Kiakhta. The sudden, massive expansion of the American whaling fleet into Bering Strait after 1848 injected a flood of trade goods and information into both the Inupiaq and Athapaskan networks, even as it heralded an unprecedented period of introduced disease, resource depletion, and social upheaval.

These evolving Alaskan networks of trade and communication were linked to an Inuit system of trails across the land and sea ice of the Eastern Canadian Arctic Archipelago. For the

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818 The most recent and extensive exploration of this near-constant conflict between Inuit and Athapaskan speakers can be found in Burch, *Alliance and Conflict* with respect to the Western Arctic. For the MacKenzie River Delta area see Helm, *People of Denendeh*. For the Central and Eastern Arctic, see James G. E. Smith, “Chipewyan, Cree and Inuit Relations West of Hudson Bay, 1714 - 1955,” *Ethnohistory* 28, no. 2 (Spring 1981): 133-156.

819 The expansion of both the HBC and RAC territories was at least partly a result of the expeditions of Franklin up the MacKenzie River in 1825-7, the HBC employees Peter Warren Dease and Thomas Simpson in 1837-38 along the northern coast of Canada and Alaska to Point Barrow, the Creole (Suqpiag-Russian) explorer Aleksandr Kashevarov in Bering Strait in 1838, and the Russian naval expedition under Lt. Lavrentii Zagoskin in 1842-44 up the Yukon River. Bockstoce, *Furs and Frontiers*, 179-224. See also Shepherd Krech III, “The Eastern Kutchin and the Fur Trade, 1800-1860,” *Ethnohistory* 23, no. 3 (Summer 1976): 213-235.

820 Bockstoce, *Furs and Frontiers*, 143.

821 Thomas Roy’s voyage in 1848, which opened up the Bering Strait fishing grounds, illustrates the extent of the Pacific whaling routes. He had set out from New Bedford to ply the Southern Pacific, with a base at Hobart. A series of unsuccessful trips in the Southern Ocean led him to decide, on the spot, to try the other end of the earth, writing to his owners in New Bedford and knowing that he would already be in the Arctic by the time they objected. John Bockstoce, *Whales, Ice and Men: The History of Whaling in the Western Arctic* (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 1986), 21-26, 93-102.
Inuit of the Canadian Arctic, sea ice use (an element of regular travel and of the seasonal subsistence round) was central to their identity. At its greatest extent, the network of trails linked the MacKenzie River Delta in the west to Baffin Island in the east, with Barter Island as the connection point with the Inupiaq trading networks to the far west and the Gwich’in middlemen to the south. As in the western Arctic, the increased presence of Scottish, English, and American whalers in Lancaster Sound, together with relatively peaceful relations with the Chipewyan (who acted, as the Gwich’in did, as middlemen for the HBC fur trade) meant that there were by the 1840s a number of increasingly important trading points along the network of trails, especially at Pond’s Inlet (Mittimatalik) and Chesterfield Inlet, where much of the following story takes place. Whalers began overwintering here in 1851, and setting up whaling and trading stations which both altered Inuit subsistence and residence patterns and injected still more trading goods into the system. Accompanying the trade in goods in both the Eastern and Western Arctic was a brisk trade in information. Fur traders wanted to keep an eye on their competition, while whalers were always looking to expand their grounds, and starting in 1848, every outsider asked about the missing Franklin expedition. What this meant was that as indigenous people traveled further than ever before, stories about wandering white men became

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an especially useful form of currency, circulating through expanding and diversifying networks of trade.

Meanwhile in Britain, the rapidly increasing speed of communication and transportation seemed to collapse time and space across the isles. The introduction of the telegraph, the railway, the dizzying expansion of the periodical press and the rapidity of steam printing made for a public that was saturated with information at a pace unimaginable a generation, or even a decade, before.826 Between 1840 and 1850, the rail network had expanded from 1,497 to 6,084 miles, while a corresponding revolution in steam printing, combined with the abolishment of the newspaper tax in 1836, fuelled a 70% increase in press circulation in 7 years.827 News traveled at lightning speed along telegraph lines, and was consumed by an expanding readership that patronized public libraries, bought and distributed pamphlets, tracts, and increasingly cheap books. Personal correspondence, too, was increasing, with the introduction of the penny post in 1840.828 The overall effect, James Secord has argued, was for a broader cultural experience of “sensation” as the exhilarating speed of information and travel were seen to quicken the sense and jostle bodies, threatening nervous and potentially moral collapse.829

Amidst this dizzying speed of travel and communication, there were still enormous blank spaces on the map of England in 1848 and beyond its shores where neither the telegraph nor the railway reached. As the media historian Mark W. Turner has argued, this geography contributed to a pattern of progress and pause of information that was characteristic of nineteenth century life, in which the pause constituted an important space for interaction and communication.830

826 J. Secord, *Victorian Sensation*, 41-76.
828 The number of chargeable letters increased from 75 million in 1840 to 329 million in 1849. Secord, *Victorian Sensation*, 29.
829 Ibid., 28.
This was also a constitutive feature of Arctic exploration, as each autumn was marked by the return of whale ships and naval ships bearing competing reports from the shifting Arctic information order, from indigenous people, traders and whalers, which would then circulate through the periodical press. For participants in Arctic exploration, that arrhythmic pulse was palpable. “Even these days of rail-roads and steam vessels and electric telegraphs,” John Richardson wrote to his new wife Mary Fletcher Richardson in February of 1849, “I must wait longer for an answer [to my letter] than [the Roman poet] Horace was required to do; nor can I receive it until I have crossed a tract equal to the breadth of the whole Roman empire.” As Bayly has argued, gaps and silences could produce anxiety and “information panics” in colonial settings when it seemed as if indigenous information orders were equal or superior to that of the British. In the case of mid-nineteenth century Arctic exploration, those gaps and silences were coupled with confusion over the validity of indigenous information, and it was in those meaningful pauses that the Franklin women negotiated their authority.

The dangers and frustrations that characterized Arctic exploration also meant that the Admiralty was always unwilling to send more naval expeditions in search of Franklin, and lived in the hope that the search could be foisted off on the Arctic whaling fleet. This too led to perennial conflicts between institutional and vernacular knowledge that the Franklin women would be entangled in, and these in turn must be understood against the difficult relationship between government and the whaling industry.

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831 Cavell, Tracing the Connected Narrative, 3.
832 SPRI MS 1503/39/6, John Richardson to Mary Richardson, February 1849. Richardson had remarried in 1847 after the death of Mary Booth Richardson, Franklin’s niece. His third wife was Mary Fletcher Richardson, the daughter of the well-known Edinburgh radical Eliza Fletcher, who was rumored in the 1790s to carry a dagger under her cloak and to behead her chickens with a guillotine in preparation for imminent revolution. Kathryn Gleadle, “British Women and Radical Politics in the Late Nonconformist Enlightenment, c. 1780-1830,” in Women, Privilege and Power: British Politics, 1750 to the Present, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001), 123.
833 Bayly, “Knowing the Country,” 4; Bayly, Empire and Information, 165-171.
834 ADM 7/188/2-3
incorporated whaling skippers who left potentially lucrative voyages to serve as ice masters for the Navy, but they frequently clashed with naval officers whose experience of ice navigation was often rudimentary.  

They got very few rewards in terms of either money or fame, which was especially galling since whalers could say they had instigated the expeditions in the first place, as was William Scoresby who had first approached Sir Joseph Banks in 1817 to suggest that conditions were favorable for a Northwest Passage, and Scoresby whose offer of command had been rejected by Sir John Barrow who wanted to retain scientific and geographical glory for the Navy (see Chapter 1).  It was during the Franklin relief expeditions that Scoresby, who had since become a reverend preaching at seamen’s bethels and an expert on magnetism, finally was recognized as the Arctic expert that he was.

No whaling captain had ever been put in charge of an expedition, and it meant that throughout the search for Franklin, captains would repeatedly echo the message of Captain William Jackson, who once wrote to Scoresby, “I do not intend going without I have command of the Vessel as I do not intend to be overruled by any Naval Commander.” The lack of glory and respect for experience were compounded by the fact that government support for the northern fishery had steadily declined as a result of British expansion into the Pacific, declining stocks of bowhead whales, and American competition. Over the objections of both the whaling industry and the East India Company, government had provided a series of financial incentives to develop the “Southern Whale Fishery” in the Indian and South Pacific Oceans in the early

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837 WL&PS, SCO 778, Box N, William Jackson to William Scoresby, Hull, 25 March, 1851. Whaling captains made similar remarks to Jane Franklin personally. John Graville, for example, wrote to her to offer his services in command of her own expedition but pointed out, “I would by no means take charge of a ship unless I had the entire command. I should not feel at liberty to Act according to my own judgement if I was tied down by another perhaps that had little experience in those regions.” NA ADM 7/608, John Graville to Jane Franklin, Hull, 14 December, 1849.
nineteenth century, and in 1843, the tariff on American whale and sperm oil was dramatically decreased.\textsuperscript{838} It was this combination of factors – declining whale stocks, a lack of appreciation for whalers’ experience, and above all government’s removal of protections for the northern fleet that led both captains and owners to look askance at claims that Arctic expeditions were in the best interests of the whaling industry. In early 1849, Thomas Ward, the owner of the whaler \textit{Truelove} wrote to the town clerk of Hull after Captain Edward Belcher had suggested the whalers try harder to find Franklin, that there was a “lukewarm feeling” by the whalers towards government in general, because they felt the removal of the tariffs “have left us to struggle unequally with the Americans” making it impossible for owners to “\textit{volunteer any generosity}” in the search for Franklin. Indeed, as he and others pointed out, individual whaling captains were subject to “heavy penalties & restrictions to prevent them neglecting their fishery in order to look out for rewards,” up to and including the £20,000 reward offered by the Admiralty for news of the missing expedition.\textsuperscript{839}

It was against this background that the first expeditions were sent in search of Franklin in 1848, and the Lords of the Admiralty certainly intended that there would be no more. James Clark Ross, over his wife’s objections, went in HMS \textit{Enterprise} and \textit{Investigator} to search Lancaster Sound and Prince Regent’s Inlet to see if Franklin had been penned up on the eastern side of the archipelago. HMS \textit{Herald} and \textit{Plover} were sent under Captain Rochfort Maguire to Bering Strait to search and coordinate with Russian authorities in Alaska, in case Franklin had made his way through the Passage to Bering Strait.\textsuperscript{840} Franklin’s oldest Arctic companion and closest friend, the sixty-one year-old John Richardson, finally used the overland plan he had been

\textsuperscript{838} John Bockstoce, “From Davis Strait to Bering Strait: the Arrival of the Commercial Whaling Fleet in North America's Western Arctic,” \textit{Arctic} 37, no. 4 (December 1984): 530.
\textsuperscript{839} NA ADM 7/188/3, Thomas Barkhurst, Braffords, to Thomas Thompson, 13 January, 1849.
\textsuperscript{840} Savours, \textit{Search for the North West Passage}, 186-189.
proposing for twenty years to ascend the Coppermine and search Canada’s northern coast.

Eleanor Franklin wrote to her father (a letter that was never read) that nothing “but the purest sense of duty & strong attachment to you, dear Papa, has prompted him to the undertaking.”

He went in the company of the son of an old family friend, Dr. John Rae, Ouligbuck (Richardson’s translator from Churchill on the 1825-27 expedition), and Ouligbuck’s son William. Ouligbuck was widely regarded as one of the most traveled and knowledgeable Inuit men in the HBC’s service, and Rae was a highly skilled traveler renowned in Canada and in Orkney for his ability to construct and travel in snowshoes and the apparent ease with which he lived off the land. Both Rae and the younger Ouligbuck would later play key roles in the resolution of the Franklin drama in 1854 (see conclusion).

Jane Franklin also tried to get a place on Richardson’s expedition, but Scoresby and Parry urged her to reconsider, and Richardson flatly refused to take her. Scoresby made a case that, while it was sensitive to Jane’s desire to travel and to be “on the spot,” nevertheless recognized the leverage that she could exert from “home.” “You are now in your own place,” he wrote, “in the place of duty & where you are more likely to have early news, in my opinion, than elsewhere. But whether or not – it is your

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841 DRO D3311/28/15, Eleanor Franklin to John Franklin, 28 April, 1848.
842 Originally from Churchill, Ouligbuck had become one of the most travelled Inuit men of his generation since the 1825-27 expedition, covering virtually the whole Canadian Arctic with his son, and exemplifying the high degree of mobility that characterized the lives of Inuit men involved in the fur trade. See HBCA B.42/a/151-157, 179, 185; B.157/a/1; B.186/b/34; B.200/a/26, 141; B.200/b/13-17; B.239/a/141; B.239/b/104b; B.239/c/3
843 Rae’s father had been the HBC agent at Stromness in 1825 and had helped with Richardson’s and Franklin’s second expedition, and Richardson’s family had kept up a friendship with the Raes for years. See SPRI MS 248/281/1, John Franklin’s Letter Book, 1825-1826, See SPRI MS 1503/18 for the correspondence between John and Mary Richardson about the Raes taking possession of their house briefly in 1838. Dr. John Rae is revered as a local hero in Orkney, with a large crypt in St. Magnus Cathedral in Kirkwall, and a whole section of the Stromness Museum dedicated to him, where he is considered not only an unsung hero of Arctic exploration (and a representative of the many thousands of Orcadians who worked with the Hudson’s Bay Company) but also one who was badly maligned by the English geographical establishment. Richards, Dr. John Rae; Ian Bunyan, Jenni Calder and Dale Idiens, No Ordinary Journey: John Rae, Arctic Explorer, 1813-1893 (Edinburgh: National Museums of Scotland, 1993).
844 Jane and Sophy had visited Richardson and Parry in 1847 at Haslar, partly to convince Richardson to take her in the canoe journey. Jane wrote in her diary, “I mentioned to [Parry] the thoughts that had lately been passing through my mind respecting accompanying Sir John Richardson, he had heard of it before, but advised me against it, without however treating the matter as either ridiculous or absolutely impracticable.” Quoted in A. Parry, Parry of the Arctic, 221.
Scoresby was prescient, because it was Jane Franklin’s position in terms of gender and geography that allowed her to remake the reputation so damaged in Van Diemen’s Land. As a sentimental figure, a wife left on shore, she could lay claim to a right to be informed about her absent husband. She would justify her transgressions into the masculine realms of geography and exploration partly as the effect of anxiety upon a woman’s reason, and she would express it using the imperial humanitarian woman’s “language of conscience.”

It was to the whalers that Jane Franklin and the extended Franklin family turned for information and support in the spring of 1849. This is important to understand, since extant scholarship has largely focused on Jane Franklin’s appeal to a “transnationalism of sentiment” to prompt other nations (America, Russia, and France) to take up the search where the Admiralty was apparently willing to leave it. As Penny Russell has argued, her carefully worded pleas to foreign heads of state appealed simultaneously to national self-interest, individual sympathy rooted in a common “civilized” identity, all of which depended on her gendered performance of intense anxiety and wifely devotion. But viewed against the background of the state of Arctic knowledge and expertise, it becomes clear that despite that virtuoso performance on an international stage, Jane Franklin remained subject to the conditions of the Arctic information order. Her best chance of getting information was to appeal to the whalers. She offered a £3000 reward for news of her husband, and in February travelled to the northern whaling ports with Eleanor to advertise it. Her tour was reported in Scotland as the “pious pilgrimage” of a “devoted wife” which inspired the “daring and generous commanders of these ships in her cause.”

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844 WL&PS, SCO 778, Box N, William Scoresby to Jane Franklin, Whitby, 29 April, [1847?]
Jane’s “pilgrimage” may have tapped into a vein of maritime support that transcended whalers’ frustrations with government. Franklin had taken many whalers as officers and crew, and this meant that the most experienced captains in the whale fleet invariably knew someone who was missing. Moreover, there was a tradition of community support for sailors’ wives, a category that not only encompassed Jane Franklin, but which she came to embody (see Chapter 5).\[848\] Several whalers offered to help her: Captain Charles Reid, whose brother Thomas was the ice master of the *Erebus*, carried supplies, cylinders, charts and letters to leave in a depot for Ross, while Captain David Kerr of the *Chieftain* and William Penny of the *Advice* both carried letters for Jane Franklin to her husband and promised to do their best to look for him.\[849\]

At this point, both Jane and Eleanor Franklin were working together and clearly saw themselves as the representatives of a larger community of the *Erebus* and *Terror*’s families. Indeed, in her letter to the U.S. President, Zachary Taylor, Jane had claimed “the intense anxieties of a wife and of a daughter” as well as “hundreds of others” as the primary reason she presumed on his sympathy to ask him to dispatch a rescue expedition.\[850\] Eleanor’s marriage would change this. She insisted on marrying John Phillip Gell almost as soon as he returned to England from Van Diemen’s Land, without waiting for her father to return. This caused a rift with her stepmother, and it helped to solidify the intense relationship between Jane Franklin and Sophia Cracroft, exacerbating the tense triangle that had developed between the three women in Van Diemen’s Land. Sophia had been staying with her mother in Guernsey in reduced circumstances for the four years since her return. She was in her mid-thirties with no prospect of

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\[848\] Norling, *Captain Ahab Had a Wife*, 142-150.
\[849\] NA ADM 7/188/3, Charles Reid to Captain W. A. B. Hamilton, Aberdeen, 21 March, 1849; SPRI MS 116/63/56, William Penny to Jane Franklin, Dundee, 6 March, 1849; OA D 23/7/15/5, Captn David Kerr to Lady Franklin, 21 March, 1849, Chieftain, Whaler of Kirkaldy, lying in anchor in Lng Home Strousa Island Orkney
\[850\] Jane Franklin to Zachary Taylor, 4 April, 1849, in *As Affecting the Fate*, 71.
marriage, and she was already fiercely devoted to her aunt.\footnote{Alexander, \textit{Ambitions of Jane Franklin}, 211.} After Eleanor’s marriage (which Jane did not attend) Sophia was summoned to London, and immediately eclipsed Eleanor as Jane’s helpmeet. She was as indefatigable a correspondent and traveler as her aunt and, as the search progressed, the two women were drawn closer together and Eleanor was pushed farther away.\footnote{F. Woodward, \textit{Portrait of Jane}, 264.} Jane would write to the absent Franklin (in a letter carried by one of the whalers), “Sophy has been almost consistently with me & has been to me as a daughter since E’s marriage – without her aid I shd not have been able to get thro’ this work.”\footnote{Quoted in Alexander, \textit{Ambitions of Jane Franklin}, 212.}

In July, Jane and Sophia moved to Orkney to await the whalers and any news they might bring, as well as to promote their own reward, while Eleanor denounced her stepmother to the rest of the family as “slightly deranged.”\footnote{\textit{Chambers’s Edinburgh Journal}, “Gossip from London,” 14 April, 1849: 232; DRO D3311/122/3, Eleanor Gell to Mrs. Majendie, nd (late June/early July, 1849 by context).} Meanwhile, the \textit{Herald} and \textit{Plover} reported no sign of Franklin in Bering Strait, and no intelligence received from the Russian authorities, the whalers, or the Inupiat.\footnote{NA ADM 7/188/17, Report of Sir John Richardson.} Richardson’s dispatches and his letters to his wife also revealed that he had found no sign of his old friend either on the Canadian coast or along the routes they had once traveled together in the 1820s.\footnote{SPRI MS 1503/38-39, John Richardson Correspondence, 1848-49; NA ADM 7/188/17, Report of Sir John Richardson.} Ross seemed, like Franklin, to have disappeared into the ice of Lancaster Sound, for nothing had been heard from him at all. No news was grim news, and the \textit{Athenaeum} reported in early September, “Nothing occurs to thaw the secret which, like everything else in those latitudes, seems frozen up beyond our ken.”\footnote{\textit{The Athenaeum}, “Our Weekly Gossip,” 8 September, 1849: 913.}
While Jane and Sophy were waiting for the whalers, people were gathering at Mittimalik on Baffin Island. There were still 20 miles of shorefast ice hard up on the land, and people came from as far away as the Boothia Peninsula to the west and Igloolik to the south to hunt narwhal and to meet relatives. It was also one of the key new sites on the network of trails that crossed Baffin Island, principally because it was a good place to meet and trade with whalers. This was where the whalers Captain William Penny, Captain John Parker, and Captain David Kerr were all fishing and trading for goods and information. On the 28th of July, a man whom the whalers called “Usky” went aboard the Chieftain with a dozen of his relatives. In broken Inuktitut, Kerr asked him if he had seen other ships entering Lancaster Sound. Their conversation was a halting mixture of Inuktitut, English, and gestures, which continued in Kerr’s cabin where he asked Usky to draw him a chart (Figure 12). As he consulted with his relatives, Usky drew four ships separated by a peninsula. This consultation was crucial, for in talking with each other, the men were producing consensus, and therefore certainty about their information. Kerr, however, understood their discussion as the opposite, as uncertainty or even dissimulation. He asked pointed but guarded questions of Usky, and the two men produced a story that two ships had passed by four years ago, and two again the previous year, all were now stuck in the ice to the west, but all were well. Kerr interpreted this information to meant that Franklin and Ross were trapped in Prince Regent Inlet, were in communication with each other and also that

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860 See Aporta, “Trail as Home,” 131-146.
Usky had personally visited them, but later would recall that he had never actually heard either of those things, but had inferred them from the evidence at hand.  

Usky’s account was sailing into troubled waters. This product of the shifting Arctic information order, transported by whalers, would, when it hit the British communications system, take on a new and meaningful life as the defining document around which authority and trustworthiness were negotiated in the fall of 1849, setting a pattern for the rest of the Franklin searches. One of the key disputes within the mid-century geographical establishment was over how geographical knowledge could best be acquired, and specifically to what extent it could be gleaned from reports versus directly observed. This was a debate that crossed the otherwise separate realms of the “field” and the “cabinet” because both armchair geographers and travelers relied upon the testimony of others to formulate their geographical knowledge. But around the middle of the century, there was a shift in favor of direct, trained observation, as opposed to the gathering of testimony by a skilled linguist. It was supposed to be easier, after all, to train an eye than a tongue, and the publication of “hints to travelers” (among which the RGS’s was the most prominent) in the hopes of usefully directing the traveler’s gaze and ensuring the credibility of his observations. As Felix Driver has pointed out, however, what to observe, how to observe, and who could observe were matters of significant contention, as the hostile reception of Harriet Martineau’s *How to Observe – Morals and Manners* in 1838 indicated, especially its message that “the methods of the enlightened observer were in principle available to all travelers.

861 ADM 7/189/13, “Memorandum of Capt Parker’s attendance at Admiralty.”
863 Dane Kennedy has finely illustrated this tension between the linguistic knowledge of the Orientalist and the direct observation by the explorer in the field in his examination of the conflicting methodologies and personalities of Richard Burton and John Hanning Speke in the White Nile Controversy on the East African Expedition of 1857-9. See Kennedy, *Highly Civilized Man*, 108-116.
irrespective of their class, gender and education." For indigenous information to be considered valuable and “trustworthy” by the geographical establishment, it needed to be subjected to a barrage of tests. It needed to be given voluntarily, needed to have the appearance of truthfulness, needed to be given without promises of reward, the character of the individual and of “the people” as a whole needed to be known. The character of the interviewer matter, too. Did they ask “leading questions?” Did they understand what was said? The ultimate test was corroboration by the European eye – by “ocular demonstration” though this too was subject to debate, particularly if sight (or indeed, reason) was damaged or inhibited by conditions of travel.

These, at least, were the standards by which indigenous information was evaluated in the geographical community. But whalers had a similar set of standards, as they were frequently using Inuit information and maps to expand their own territory and formulate their own systems of vernacular knowledge, some of which they communicated to the Admiralty. Some, Parker and Penny included, had previously not only used indigenous geographical information and maps, but had taken Inuit back to Scotland to train them as interpreters, later returning them near their homes so that reliable, known interpreters could be contacted later on. Penny had been credited with opening the new whaling ground in Cumberland Sound in 1840 based on information from Eenoolooapik, an Inuk boy he had taken to Aberdeen for a year. Penny’s

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865 Ibid., 61-62.
867 Withers, “Mapping the Niger,” 170-193; Kennedy, Highly Civilized Man, 112. The damaging of sight was historically a problem in the Arctic, where snow-blindness (a burning of the retina from the glare of the sun on ice and snow) combined with the frequent inability to distinguish sea from shore meant that explorers invariably had to rely on Inuit information.
868 SPRI 116/63/46, William Penny to Sir Francis Beaufort, Aberdeen, 13 October, 1840. Penny had previously sent Barrow an Inuit map of Dariesouik Inlet, drawn by Eenoolooapik, and he was sending corrections to it after personal observation.
surgeon, Alexander M’Donald, had published Eenoolooapik’s biography for the information of the general public and other whalers, while the map of Cumberland Sound that Eenoolooapik and Penny had drawn together was published as an Admiralty chart in the same year.\(^{869}\) Parker had much more recently brought an Inuit couple back from Nyatlick (in Cumberland Straits) to Hull in 1847 both for the purposes of displaying them (he made plaster casts of their heads) and in order to teach them English. The husband, Uckaluk, died from measles aboard the *Truelove* on the way back to Cumberland Straits the following year.\(^{870}\)

The day after he was approached by Usky, Captain Kerr told his version of the story to Captain Parker of the *Truelove* and Captain Penny of the *Advice*. All agreed that the story merited investigation. The ships weighed anchor and headed into Lancaster Sound, but they were stopped by a terrible storm and a barrier of ice across Prince Regent Inlet.\(^{871}\) Unable to proceed, they went back to whaling. Meanwhile, the *Advice*’s surgeon Robert Anstruther Goodsr (whose brother was on the *Erebus*) worried about the way Kerr’s story had been produced. He wrote to his family that after his initial excitement, “I soon saw much to throw doubt upon [the report’s] correctness and authenticity.”\(^{872}\) He pointed out “the extreme difficulty of extracting correct information of any kind from the Esquimaux even by those best acquainted with their habits and language,” and that he feared Kerr had put “leading questions” to them which, “they are sure to answer in the affirmative.” Captain Parker of the *Truelove* was heading home early with a copy


\(^{871}\) ADM 7/189/13, “Memorandum of Capt Parker’s attendance at Admiralty.”

of the map, and Goodsir warned his family, “there can be no confidence placed in it
whatever.”873 Parker headed back to England, carrying both the map (which he altered, adding a
line labeled “Track from ship to ship”) and Goodsir’s letter to his family. In Kerr, Parker, and
Penny’s eyes, the partial information and the map were sufficiently convincing to get them to
risk their ships and their catch to investigate – no small matters when there were owners to report
to, crews requiring their lays, and wives and families to support. If they considered it to be
actionable intelligence, based on their experience, then the Admiralty might too – and at least
they and the families should be informed. Then there was the matter of a reward, since between
the Admiralty and Jane Franklin there was £23,000 on the table; and Jane Franklin’s reward was,
happily enough, being administered by the Truelove’s owner, Thomas Ward.874 And so the
questions of truth, trust, and testimony became a commercial matter, with the ships’ owner as
one of the people who would decide on the quality of information.

When Parker arrived at Stromness, Orkney on September 29 with Usky’s map, a sailor
named James Donaldson ran 20 miles to Kirkwall to inform Jane and Sophia that Franklin was
safe, and the news immediately began to reverberate through the press and Franklin’s family.875
Sophia wrote to her mother (Franklin’s sister Isabella) “it has pleased God to send us news of the
Expedition which seems to be as authentic as it is favorable.”876 When the Mittimatalik map
reached London in the first week of October, the press proclaimed the “Safety of Sir John
Franklin’s Expedition,” the safety of Ross’s rescue mission, and rejoiced that their families’ trial
was over.877 The Morning Chronicle assured its readers that both Franklin and Ross’s ships were

873 ADM 7/189/13, Robert Goodsir to his family, copy by Sophia Cracroft. 21 August, 1849.
874 “Reward Offered by Lady Franklin,” 20 March, 1848, in As Affecting the Fate, 64.
875 ADM 7/189/13, “Report of James Donaldson, Shetlander, belonging to the “Truelove” 29 September, 1849”
Copy by Sophia Cracroft.
876 SPRI MS 248/247/13, Sophia Cracroft to Isabella Cracroft, Skail, Orkney, 2 October, 1849.
877 “Safety of Sir John Franklin’s Expedition,” Times, 6 October, 1849: 3.
stuck in Prince Regent’s Inlet and, “no doubt is entertained in the highest official quarters as to the authenticity of the intelligence.” The *Sun* rejoiced, “A gleam of news … has at length broken through the hitherto impervious haze of uncertainty.” The *Literary Gazette* published a facsimile of the map and insisted, “there is every reason to be assured of its TRUTH.” The next day, Eleanor’s cousin Anne Weld wrote to her, “Does not the rumour of the safety of the Expedition make your heart beat wildly? If true, I suppose my Uncle may be in England even while I write – have you seen the Esquimaux sketch of the ships?” Her husband Charles R. Weld was not so sanguine. Weld was at that point the assistant secretary and librarian of the Royal Society and a frequent contributor to the *Athenaeum* who would go on to write the definitive institutional history of the Royal Society (which Anne would illustrate). He published an anonymous article in the *Athenaeum* in which while he praised the “heroic confidence,” of Lady Franklin, he pointed out that the map’s authority “rests on the testimony of the natives. If that can be received with confidence, the safety of Sir John Franklin and his companions… would seem to be assured.”

In response to this intelligence, some of the self-styled “Friends of Franklin”—Parry, Scoresby, and Back—began to correspond both with Barrow at the Admiralty and with Jane Franklin about their evaluations of the trustworthiness of both the Inuit and the whalers. Above all, the Arctic men doubted the whalers’ capabilities to properly acquire and to calibrate Inuit information. The question rested not on their experience but on their “interest,” particularly in the rewards offered by the Admiralty and by Lady Franklin. Parry wrote to John Barrow, Jr. at

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879 “Safety of Sir John Franklin,” *The Sun*, 5 October, 1849, in ADM 7/188/13
880 DRO D3311/122/25, Anne Weld to Eleanor Gell, 7 October, 1849.
the Admiralty on October 5th that it was essential to determine *exactly* how the Inuit were questioned, noting “when I wanted to obtain from them information as to the line of coast or opening in the land…you might, without great care, make them say *almost anything*.”884 Here he was remembering his own experience of friction in the spring of 1822, when the young Iglulingmiut woman, Iligjaq, drew her map of the coast to the north and west of the frozen-in HMS *Fury* and *Hecla*. Iligjaq’s map depicted her own life on the move, recording birthplaces, settlements, and subsistence grounds, and reflected the deeply gendered geographical knowledge of a non-hunter.885 Parry became convinced that his method of questioning and calibration produced an “accurate” map with respect to the coastline but not to scale (since he could not work out how “sleeps” related to miles travelled).886 Now he emphasized that if the whalers had no similar system of determining “accuracy,” then the map’s value was doubtful. Determining this meant figuring out what questions had been asked and how, what relationships existed between whalers and Inuit, and who those Inuit were.

Scoresby and Back also entertained doubts about the whalers. Scoresby warned Barrow that the whalers’ anxiety might have compromised their objectivity, for “it is natural to interpret ambiguous signs by our ideas of probable facts.”887 He was a little more generous than Parry, suggesting that their interest might have been emotional as much as financial, noting that many of them had friends on the missing expedition. Back was concerned about the rough compass rose that appeared on some versions of the map, and when he found out that the *Truelove*’s owner Thomas Ward had inscribed it at Hull without reference to either magnetic or “true” north (especially important so close to the pole), he wrote to Captain Washington, the Secretary of the

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884 ADM 7/189/13, W. E. Parry to John Barrow, Jr., Holyhead, 5 October, 1849.
885 Collignon, *Knowing Places*.
887 ADM 7/189/13, William Scoresby to John Barrow, Jr., Whitby, 9 October, 1849.
Admiralty, “This just makes the difference between Barrow’s Strait and Regent’s Inlet.”

This was an especially damaging revelation, considering that Ward was responsible for administering Jane Franklin’s £3,000 reward for information. Yet despite their concerns about the whalers’ credibility, the “polars” still generally trusted the Inuit information, not least because of their own experiences in the ice and their confidence in their own ability to make Inuit information commensurate with western cartography. Parry wrote to Barrow on October 7 that the map “conveys to my mind hope, almost amounting to certainty, that the 4 ships are still in being.”

Scoresby also wrote to Barrow that he believed in the “general accuracy of the Esquimaux” and that the report was “extremely plausible and likely.” Back, despite his doubts, was quoted in the Athenaeum asserting that he “never knew an Indian or an Esquimaux tracing to fail.”

In the anxious pause as Britain waited for more news, many others in the network of Franklin’s family and friends not only tried to evaluate the trustworthiness of Inuit information, but also contributed to the public discussion of its validity. There was a pervasive need to assert authority over indigenous information, even at the expense of appearing unhopeful (and therefore potentially disloyal to the family). Alexander Maconochie, who had so damaged the Franklins in Van Diemen’s Land, resurfaced to propose an unorthodox solution. In late September he consulted Emma, the famed “Bolton Clairvoyante,” and anonymously sent her revelations to several papers and to Jane Franklin. Maconochie’s hope was that mesmerism
could collapse time and space in the Arctic as the telegraph and railway had in Britain. As he put it, “in these days, when we make the lighting carry our messages, and the sun take our pictures, it is very difficult to draw the precise line betwixt the possible and the impossible.” On the one hand, Maconochie was gesturing to a widespread problem – the thin boundaries between orthodoxy and heterodoxy in science in which practices like mesmerism and phrenology dwelt. But he was also addressing the lack of information and the unlikelihood of getting more in the near future. These two factors made it possible for Maconochie to suggest (albeit anonymously) his unorthodox solution of employing clairvoyants in the search – while at the same time, beginning to assert authority over Inuit evidence. On October 13th, Goodsir’s letter to his family from Baffin’s Bay discrediting the map was published in the Athenaeum, reiterating the charge of “leading questions” and untrustworthiness. Weld wrote a companion article in which he referenced the information arrhythmia, arguing that the public’s judgment had been led astray by “news [which] generally travels with the properties of an avalanche.” He asked why the Inuit had no tokens to prove they had visited the ships, and why Ross had not sent any messengers with them because, “the road to the whalers was as open to [Ross] as to the Esquimaux who brought that report.” He was effectively moving questions about the corroboration of native testimony – questions that were crucial within both field and cabinet sciences and common topics of debate in the societies that he frequented into the public sphere.

The question of Inuit credibility circulated rapidly through newspapers and magazines, and they were lent credence by Goodsir’s suspicions, because he was an emotionally “interested”

897 Ibid.
898 Ibid.
party with a missing brother. It developed into an argument that would be a constant refrain for the next decade - that where an Inuk could travel, so could an Englishman. The *Belfast News-Letter* claimed, “It is an incontestable fact that a European can sustain as much cold, hardship, hunger and all the privations of savage life...as well as any Esquimaux in the world, and perhaps better.” Even the “Bolton Clairvoyante” was skeptical, for she had asked Franklin during her mesmeric trance, “Have you seen any natives? Then what makes them say you have seen them? Well, I thought so; if they could get over these heaps of ice, you could get over them also.”

Then, too, there was the matter of Inuit “interest” in producing the map. On October 25 and 26, the *Manchester Guardian*, *Hull Packet and East Riding Times*, and the *Newcastle Courant* all ran the same story claiming that the “cunning” Inuit “have invented the statement they give of the position of Sir John Franklin and Sir James Ross, in the hope of obtaining some reward.”

This tapped into a widespread view of Inuit as inveterate thieves, drawn in part from the expedition narratives of the early nineteenth century. Thievery was attributed to poverty of climate, lack of restraint when presented with trade goods, promiscuousness and a willingness to do anything for wood, metal, and beads. The stereotype was effectively a gross misrepresentation of Inuit and Inupiat desire for trade and insistence on control over resources. Trade was desirable, and often people were more than happy to swap information for goods.

There was, however, no moral obligation for that information to be correct or total, especially

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901 “Sir John Franklin: Further Revelations by the Bolton Clairvoyante.” *Hull Packet and East Riding Times*, 26 October 1849:5.
when given to strangers. It might be fed in bits and pieces, articulated by people whom outsiders
designated as “authorities” without knowing the social context.\footnote{Charles Withers has examined the problem of how locals were assigned “authority” on geographical questions by outsiders, see Charles W. J. Withers, “Authorizing Landscape: ‘authority’, naming and the Ordnance Survey’s mapping of the Scottish Highlands in the Nineteenth Century,” \textit{Journal of Historical Geography} 26, no. 4 (2000): 532-554.} Stealing also served a purpose, asserting authority over strangers.\footnote{See Burch, \textit{Alliance and Conflict}, 19, 20, 119; Bockstoce, \textit{Furs and Frontiers}, 132-4.} These were the ways in which Inuit were responding to a changing world with increased trade (in both goods and information); and those responses tended to devalue individual and corporate credibility in European eyes.

In response to these critiques, Parry wrote to Barrow on October 25\textsuperscript{th}, asking, “is it not possible that the Eskimaux was only retailing the information he had derived \textit{from ourselves}, the exact purport of his conversation being mistaken in consequence of the very imperfect knowledge of the language possessed by our people?”\footnote{ADM 7/189/13, W. E. Parry Memorandum to Barrow, Haslar, Gosport, 25 October, 1849.} He pointed to the whalers’ practice of taking and returning Inuit abductees, and he pointed out that Parker had brought two Inuit from Davis Strait to England two years ago, and that one had been taken home in 1848. Parry speculated that the Inuit had been closely monitoring the news in England up to the time that Ross departed in the spring of 1848, had gone home and spread the news throughout the community at Mittimatalik and then fed it back to whalers. The end result was, “Eskimaux in Pond’s Bay must have known the most important facts as well as we do.” In Parry’s view, inconsistency in Inuit information should be attributed to the nature of the Arctic information order, to the fact that these informants had been compromised by, or were themselves partly acculturated go-betweens rather than pure “savages.” That meant that there was not necessarily any reason to trust that they either knew more than the searchers, or were willing to part with
truly valuable information, and if the whalers who had at least partly engineered this scenario
failed to understand this, they were not necessarily trustworthy either.

Parry’s assessment mirrored a broader anxiety inherent to colonial intelligence – that
British knowledge was at the mercy of local informants pursuing their own agendas – an anxiety
partly responsible for the elevation of statistical information at the expense of both vernacular
and indigenous intelligence from the 1830s. What made the Inuit intelligence suspicious was
its status as both what Bayly has termed “affective” and “patrimonial” knowledge, that it might
proceed from Parker’s personal relationship with either this informant or someone known to
him. This of course inverted one of the key criteria for evaluating indigenous information –
personal knowledge of the informant and his (and sometimes her) past. But as Vanessa Smith
has pointed out in her study of cross-cultural friendship, a degree of intimacy – especially if it
was in any way connected with personal or financial interest - might either corrupt judgment or
belie strict honesty. This was not least because “European thought has been consistently troubled
by the entanglement of friendship with self interest,” especially when rituals of friendship
involved an exchange of gifts or other transactions. But while these kinds of deliberations are
normally considered to have been the province of either colonial officials or male intellectuals, in
the case of the Franklin expedition, they were inherently linked to other kinds of intimacy: both
familial intimacy (and especially the right of family members to information) and to the
obligations of old friendships. Accordingly, Parry forwarded the report to both Jane Franklin and
to Eleanor Franklin Gell.

906 Bayly, *Empire and Information*, 6-7
907 Ibid., 16-19.
909 Smith, *Intimate Strangers*, 18, 104-139.
910 ADM 7/189/13, Jane Franklin to John Barrow Jr., Kirkcaldy, 30 October, 1849; DRO D3311/74/1, W. E. Parry
to Eleanor Gell, Haslar, 5 December, 1849.
That Parry sent both Jane and Eleanor a copy of his report is important. As Franklin’s closest- and therefore most “interested” family, they were entitled to information and informed opinion. Parry was mindful of the tornado of information in which they found themselves, and like his colleagues at the Admiralty (especially John Barrow Jr. and Beaufort) felt obligated to help both women chart a path through that chaos. But in offering the support of information, they also invited interpretation by the Franklin women. Jane, Eleanor and Sophy, as well as the extended Franklin family, were all laying claim to their own authority: a right to be informed and a right to evaluate the character of informants. They augmented these general rights with the specific ones due to their particular status as wife, daughter, and niece. Furthermore, as Jane and Sophy were increasingly estranged from Eleanor, each woman made these claims relative to their own family drama. These attacks on each other’s authority were grounded in the language of sentiment and duty, as Jane, Eleanor, and Sophia each argued that their relatives’ capacities to rationally evaluate the evidence were compromised by both self-interest and spite.

Jane Franklin’s precarious authority stemmed from her “interested” role as a loving wife whose interpretations of evidence were governed by both reason and anxiety, and she and Sophia deployed it in their correspondence with John Barrow Jr., Scoresby, Parry and others (including members of their own family). Despite their earlier friction while the Franklins were in Van Diemen’s Land (see Chapter 3), John Barrow Jr. was one of Jane Franklin’s most crucial supporters, especially valuable because of his position at the Admiralty.911 Jane frequently wrote to Barrow complaining of how the clairvoyant and Inuit reports either contradicted or supported each other, and begging to know how they were received at the Admiralty.912 “It is thus that I reason,” she wrote on October 20, “while yet my imagination is affected, & I derived a relative

911 For the background between the younger Barrow and the Franklin family, see Chapter 3.
912 ADM 7/189/13, Jane Franklin to John Barrow, Jr, Peterhead, 7 October, 1849
comfort I fear in observing that they all agree in one thing – that my husband is alive.” As she had in her letters to her sister Mary from Van Diemen’s Land, Jane frequently complained of how headaches and bodily weakness limited her capacity to think, letting her imagination run away with her. When directed at Barrow rather than Mary, these letters had a very different register, casting the young man as her chivalrous defender. She wrote once, “I cannot tell you how deeply I feel your unwearied exertions – I am always afraid that every body will get tired at last, but you, impelled alike by principle and feeling, have made me believe you will never fail – God knows how I want such a support.” Yet even as the correspondence suggested that her feminine frailty and corporeal weakness limited her ability to reason, her letters nevertheless always contained diamond-hard assertions of authority, and nowhere was this more evident than in her evaluations of the whalers.

As Jane and Sophy used the combination of sentimentality, frailty, and reason to nurture sympathy and assert their legitimacy with Barrow, they also used it with the whalers as they assessed and responded to both vernacular knowledge and indigenous evidence. Like white women from missionaries to feminists, at “home” and throughout the empire, they staged their claims to credibility by circumscribing the authority of both indigenous people and working-class men. During the month of October 1849, Jane and Sophy traveled to the whaling ports and reported back to Barrow, Scoresby, and Parry. Their key questions were, to what extent had “leading questions” been asked of the Inuit who had produced the map, and to what extent had the captains subsequently embellished the story? In doing so, they, like Parry, linked the

913 ADM 7/189/13, Jane Franklin to John Barrow Jr., Kirkcaldy, 20 October, 1849.
914 ADM 7/189/13, Jane Franklin to John Barrow, undated [1849].
915 The scholarship is vast, but see especially Burton, Burdens of History: Hall, “Rethinking Imperial Histories,” 3-29; Fiona Paisley, Loving Protection? Australian Feminism and Aboriginal Women's Rights (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2000); Susan Thorne, “Religion and Empire at Home,” in At Home with the Empire: Metropolitan Culture and the Imperial World, ed. Catherine Hall and Sonia O. Rose, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006),143-165. See also Lora Wildenthal, German Women for Empire, 1884-1945 (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2001).
credibility of the Inuit informants to that of the whalers who interviewed them, and they took the opportunity to contrast their own respectability – as the naval wife of a famous explorer and as that explorer’s spinster niece – with the markedly disreputable character of a class of men often seen as “uneducated, uncivilized, and fundamentally unrestrained.” As sailors, they were especially vulnerable to the charge of being undomesticated – not tied to land, they were subject to their own rules, and prone to spinning tales, either for their own gain or simply as a part of their character. Penny was the exception here, they met his wife Margaret and were impressed by her, and particularly the willingness with which she handed over his letters. When they met Penny, they agreed that his character, though rough, was admirable. Jane told Barrow that he was “far superior to all the other whaling masters” and Sophy wrote to her mother, “we are much pleased with him…. He always leads the way in the very difficult navigation of the heavy Pack of ice in getting across Davis Straits.”

On October 11, Sophia wrote to her mother from Edinburgh to assure her that both the whalers and the Arctic officers, “all believe the [Inuit] report to be founded in truth,” and that the reports had correspondingly improved Jane’s health. But as they traveled between Aberdeen, Dundee, Kirkcaldy and Leith they became increasingly convinced that Parker had embellished Kerr’s version of the encounter. After Jane questioned Parker on October 20, she wrote Barrow that he required, “a little cross-examination – even if I s[d] be thwarted in this, you at the
Admiralty will have him to yourself.” When Jane met Goodsir (the surgeon who had been suspicious of the map) on October 24th, Jane wrote to Barrow that he had “painfully annihilated… my remaining hopes abt the Esq report,” noting that Kerr had asked “leading questions” of the Inuit, “in fact the very reverse of Parker’s statement that this information was given without questioning.” According to Goodsir both Parker and Kerr were “noted for telling tales,” and in his estimation, the Advice’s Captain Penny was “far superior to either” who had urged Parker not to “go home & make assertions, but to be very careful what he said.” She claimed here, as she would throughout the search, that unpleasant news from an ungentlemanly character caused her physical pain, and that her hopes were dashed, she was prostrated by headaches. Sophia wrote to her mother “Indeed there is no doubt that Captain Parker has made up a story…. Is this not scandalous conduct in Captn Parker? We shall take good care to expose his treachery.” This treachery stemmed from having given them false hope, and Sophia begged her mother to write to her cousin Mary Price on Norfolk Island, for “I fear you must also have told her ab’ the Esquimaux story, w’h must now be recalled.” Now they could only wait for Kerr to return in the Chieftain, and Jane wrote to Scoresby about her anxiety to get “his own unprompted story, before he knows what Parker has said before him.”

As Jane performed her role of the fragile yet determined wife, Eleanor (now 25 and pregnant) was performing her own, creating her own network of information and intimacy in the process. Eleanor had emotional claims that were in some ways rivaled her stepmother’s. She had, after all, grown up in circles of Arctic sociability. The surviving men of those circles

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921 ADM 7/189/13, Jane Franklin to John Barrow Jr., Kirkcaldy, 20 October, 1849.
922 Ibid.
923 SPRI MS 248/247/21, Sophia Cracroft to Isabella Cracroft, Royal Hotel, Dundee, 25 October, 1849.
924 Ibid. Isabella did write to Mary but received no reply. This might have been because Mary Price was herself marooned, married to John Price, the psychopathic commandant of Norfolk Island who inspired a brutal fictional commandant in Marcus Clarke’s For the Term of His Natural Life. See Hughes, Fatal Shore, 541-51.
925 WL&PS, SCO 819 Box P, Jane Franklin to William Scoresby, Kirkcaldy, 24 October, 1849.
remembered her mother, and indeed may have (and certainly did in Richardson’s case) compare Jane Franklin unfavorably to her predecessor, not least because she was partly relying on clairvoyant evidence supplied by her old friend Maconochie. As Eleanor characterized it, her stepmother was acting rashly in public (implying, much as she had done in Van Diemen’s Land) again exposing the whole family to censure. Eleanor was just as concerned for her father’s safety, just as convinced he was alive, and therefore had just as much of a right and a duty to engage with the evidence and to question the authorities, but she would do so in private. Moreover, she had a legitimate legal concern about the disposal of her inheritance, a legacy left by her mother to her, which Jane Franklin might be spending against her stepdaughter’s wishes and possibly outside her own authority.926 In early October Eleanor wrote to her friend Rosalind Beaufort (Admiral Francis Beaufort’s daughter) to ask for her father’s opinion of the Inuit intelligence, and Rosalind replied, “Papa is much too happy and too thankful in the hopes held out by this good news to have any doubts of its truth.” She also assured Eleanor, “He has no belief in Clairvoyance and no admiration for the present sample of it – which he thinks both false and clumsy. If she [Jane Franklin] is ignorant of the Subject, those about her are not.”927 Eleanor also wrote to Parry, who replied, “With respect to the Clairvoyante I am sorry that I omitted to answer you, but I was too much occupied with the realities of the case at that time, to allow me to give one thought to what I believe to be mere delusion – for such is the impression, I am free to confess, wh the several Accounts I rec’d from Miss Cracroft, have, upon the whole, left upon my mind.”928

926 The family dispute about finances and how they were being used in the Arctic expeditions is extremely complex. The best and most thorough discussion of them is in F. Woodward, Portrait of Jane, 260-304.  
927 DRO D3311/122/25, Rosalind Beaufort to Eleanor Gell, Dover, 6 October, 1849.  
928 DRO D 3311/74/1, W. E. Parry to Eleanor Gell, Haslar, 5 December, 1849.
Sophia Cracroft rightly perceived Eleanor as a significant threat to her aunt’s authority and reputation, and in her self-appointed role as companion and guardian, did her best to undermine Eleanor to their family and friends. As Sophia characterized it, Eleanor was selfish and unfilial, venally concerned with money, and willing to consign her father to an early grave and her stepmother to solitude. Neither Eleanor nor her husband John Phillip Gell could, in short, be trusted. The Mittimatalik map initially offered Sophia a new avenue of attack, for if the Inuit information was right and Franklin was alive, then Eleanor was clearly wrong to take any steps apart from those with Jane Franklin. Sophia’s letters, especially those to her mother Isabella (who had raised Eleanor after her mother’s death) all accused Eleanor of heartlessness and hopelessness, and of “[overlooking] the sorrow of others concerned in the Expedition and even more, the feelings of agony wh my Uncle must be suffering….” It exposed Eleanor to censure from the wider family. Her cousin Marian Simkinson wrote to Eleanor in October to give her a digest of news sent by Jane to her mother, Mary Simkinson (who was enraged by Eleanor’s conduct), and Marian urged Eleanor to make peace with her stepmother. “You have had great provocation, as all candid people who know both sides of the question, must acknowledge,” she wrote, but “it has been hitherto on her side, do not, by showing irritibility (sic) give her any advantage over you.” In her dogged, even vituperative defense of Jane from Eleanor, Sophia was crystallizing her own position in the household as Jane’s confidante and companion, over and above all others and especially her step-daughter.

In the meantime, Eleanor met personally with Parker, and sent a copy of the sketch, newspaper clippings, and her impressions of Parker’s character to Lady Anne Ross sometime in mid-October. When Lady Ross replied to Eleanor, she wrote, “These excited hopes and weary
silence are sadly trying in every way, bodily, mentally & spiritually.” She, too, had been pouring
over the evidence and had been in contact with Jane Franklin, though her residence in Ayrshire
made it more difficult to stay in touch. While she worried that the map had been drawn “in the
hope of gain,” she hoped Inuit rather than the whalers had made it, “So if from them I am still
building hope upon it.” Lady Ross perfectly captured the central problem. Hope depended on
the ability of Inuit to travel, observe, and report in the ice where the British could not, and on the
authority of whalers to collect and transmit that information. Jane Franklin and Sophia Cracroft
understood this perfectly, and simultaneously asserted their authority to interpret indigenous
evidence and to question the whalers. To that end, they used their emotional capital and prior
affiliations to lay claim to the attention of sympathetic ears as they were subsumed under a
whirlwind of conflicting information, amidst shifting family dramas and arrhythmic pulse of
information from the Arctic. In this they were by no means alone. Eleanor Gell and Anne Ross
partook of the same authority that Jane Franklin laid claim to - that they were women whose
natural households and families had been broken up by imperial service, naval and scientific
exploration. This was the root of the emotional support and sympathy that was offered to them
by those men who “counted” as public authorities – but it was also the root of their authority to
interpret, to question, and to act on that intelligence.

“The Grounds of Reasonable Hope”: November-December, 1849

In October 1849, a tornado of information circulated amidst a climate of ignorance made
by the peculiar arrhythmia of Arctic exploration. November presented a different, though linked
set of problems. While explorers’ families and friends continued to assert their authority to
gather and interpret indigenous and vernacular knowledge, they began to organize and to

932 DRO D3311/57/3, Lady Anne Ross to Eleanor Gell, Aston House, Aylesbury, 1 November, 1849.
circulate those interpretations in the public sphere. As new information about the Mittimatalik
cmap came to light, Jane Franklin and Sophy Cracroft’s contacts reformulated partial and
misunderstood Inuit information into a powerful case for hope for the missing expeditions,
drawing on the language of philanthropy to make a case for further Admiralty expeditions. They
would also make skilled use of the press to make their case to the general public, something Jane
had not been able to do in Van Diemen’s Land.

At the beginning of November, the whaling captain William Kerr, James Clark Ross, and
John Richardson all returned to Britain. Richardson’s return was a deeply emotional one. He had
covered, at the age of 61, much of the same territory that he and Franklin had travelled twenty-
odd years before, and found no trace of his old companion, relative, and closest friend. He was
exhausted, and settled back into domestic life at Haslar Hospital in Gosport near Mary Anne
Kendall and the Parrys. Rae and Ouligbuck had been left behind to continue the search.
Richardson’s return, then, was seen as wholly honorable, and largely attributed not to lack of
devotion to Franklin, but rather to the exigencies of age.933 The same could not be said of Ross.
He had had to contend with a bad “ice year,” forcing him to anchor in Port Leopold at the top of
Prince Regent’s Inlet and preventing him from carrying out part of his instructions, to search
Wellington Channel. He dispatched sledges pulled by sailors instead of dogs that travelled in
several directions, mainly towards the southwest in the general direction of the magnetic pole,
but not reaching the missing expedition.934 Neither he nor his men had found anything – no trace

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933 ADM 7/189/13, Jane Franklin to Barrow, “Sunday night” (early November, 1849, by context).
934 These man-hauled sledging parties would start a practice that would characterize the search. Though both Ross
and his old companion from 1829-33 and 1839-43, Thomas Abernethy, knew how to drive dogs properly, neither of
them bothered to teach their men, and instead elected to “man-haul” hundreds of pounds over hundreds of miles.
They effectively started the heroic tradition of British polar sledging, which was in the nineteenth century (and still
is to a certain extent, especially with respect to the memorialization of Robert Falcon Scott’s fatal attempt on the
South Pole in 1911) lauded not as sheer idiocy but as an example of nobility entailing “sheer hard work… a strong
sense of duty… and that indomitable pluck which has ever characterized the British sailor.” Jones, Last Great Quest,
71.
of Franklin and no communication with any Inuit. His return home after one year (he had been provisioned for two) seemed simultaneously to damn his own character and that of the Inuit informants who had drawn the map, and therefore the credibility of both. Parry wrote to Barrow at the Admiralty as soon as he heard of Ross’s return, “I need not say how greedy I am for further intelligence… How entirely the Eskimaux Reports have thus vanished! Alas! For poor dear Lady F!.”

The *Athenaeum* reported that they had received “inferential confirmation” of the “unsatisfactory view which we [e.g., Charles Weld] were compelled to take of the Esquimaux rumour that vouched for the safety and whereabouts of Sir John Franklin.” Jane Franklin wrote to Barrow, “I have felt palsied by [Ross’s] return and all its fearful consequences.” Ross’s return without searching Wellington Channel would cause an enormous rift between him and Jane Franklin, one she would revisit for years as she accused her old friend of a lack of loyalty, later writing to Scoresby that, “he shut himself up in Port Leopold & sent out a sort of pleasure packet of 6 dogs.”

Ross was at first cautiously, and then much more heavily, criticized for failing to search Wellington Channel, with some suggesting that he had been attempting to follow up on his expedition of 1829-33 in preference to searching for Franklin, criticism which Parry characterized as “atrocious, abusive, and ignorant.”

The extant Arctic literature takes for granted that this widespread disappointment at Ross’s return prompted the Admiralty to send out a fleet of eight ships in 1850 to Lancaster Sound and Bering Strait to continue the search for Franklin where Ross left off. This is an insufficient explanation, because not only does it fail to fully account for the Admiralty’s

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935 ADM 7/189/13, W. E. Parry to Barrow, 5 November, Haslar, 1849.
937 ADM 7/189/13, Jane Franklin to John Barrow, “Sunday Night.”
938 WL&PS, Jane Franklin to William Scoresby, 11 October, 1851.
continuing and deep-seated reluctance to commit further ships to what they saw as a hopeless search, but it also ignores the power of the Mittimatalik map, which continued to command attention among Arctic circles and in the press well after Ross’s return and its apparent discrediting. Arctic scholars, when they have noticed the map at all, have assumed that Inuit authority was so fragile and tenuous that it would easily blow away and be dismissed. Yet scholars have eagerly embraced the notion that another Inuit report in 1854 of cannibalism among Franklin’s crews shook the foundations of British confidence in their own civility (see Conclusion). These two propositions are irreconcilable. If Ross was damaged by his early return, the same was not necessarily true of the Inuit report. It was reformulated into not only a credible, but in fact a cornerstone piece of evidence that was crucial to the dispatch of the Arctic Squadron in 1850. We cannot understand how this happened without understanding the work that the Franklin women and their supporters did to circulate it, nor without understanding that they were engaged in a constant quest to assert their authority as they did so. Jane Franklin’s supporters – especially William Scoresby – continued to interpret the map as a trustworthy document that offered hope. This was in spite of the face that there were no European eyewitness, no way to cross-examine the Inuit informants, and no way to confirm any detail of the report prior to committing further ships to the Arctic.

One of the most powerful tools in Scoresby’s and Jane Franklin’s hands was the rhetoric of philanthropy and humanitarianism. As Jane Franklin knew from personal experience in Van Diemen’s Land, the humanitarian movement constituted a powerful voice and a vital intelligence network in the fabric of the British empire (see Chapter 3). But by the 1840s, the movement was

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beginning to falter. Metropolitan political shifts meant that humanitarians no longer had helpful ears in Parliament, while there was widespread disappointment with the apprenticeship system in the West Indies, as former slaves seemed to be less industrious and domesticated than missionaries had hoped. A series of imperial crises and indigenous rebellions in the Cape Colony, New South Wales, and New Zealand, combined with the failure of the Niger Expedition in 1840 (in which Parry had been involved) and increasing emigration to white settler colonies, meant that public sympathy in Britain was gradually shifting towards white settlers and away from aboriginal peoples.942

Nevertheless, the core message of humanitarian movement still had widespread purchase, especially among middle class Evangelicals. Many continued to feel deeply that philanthropy was inseparable from Britishness, and that the state, society, and the individual had a duty of care towards the vulnerable if (and this was important) they were deserving subjects who could demonstrate their embrace of middle-class values of domesticity and self-improvement.943 What Jane Franklin’s contacts, and especially Scoresby, argued was that the sailors of Franklin’s missing expedition were just such eminently deserving philanthropic subjects, since they were white, Christian men risking their lives on their country’s service. Similar arguments would be made five years later with respect to soldiers in the Crimea. Indeed, as Anita Rupprecht has shown in her work on Mary Seacole, humanitarian work and demonstrable selflessness in a “deserving” cause (like Seacole’s nursing of wounded white soldiers in the Crimea) could

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942 Lester, “Humanitarians and White Settlers,” 64-85; for Parry’s involvement in the Niger expedition, see A. Parry, Parry of the Arctic, 210-218.
considerably complicate hierarchies of race, class and gender. In the case of the Arctic expeditions, the Mittimatalik map was used as credible evidence that though the men’s provisions had run out, hope was not lost, and therefore philanthropy would not be wasted.

The shift began when Jane interviewed Kerr at Kirkcaldy on 30 October, where he told Jane about his encounter with “Usky,” emphasizing that he had never visited the ships and had not said, “whether the two sets of ships had any communication with each other, but [Kerr] only inferred that they had.” Kerr had apparently drawn the “track from ship to ship” after the fact, inferring communication between the ships based on his understanding of what Usky told him. Meanwhile, Parker was called to attendance at the Admiralty, and explained in detail the Inuit trails of travel and information around Baffin Island to Prince Regent Inlet. As he illustrated his knowledge of the comprehensiveness of Inuit travel and communication, he also asserted both Usky’s willingness to communicate and his incomprehensibility, saying that he was “very anxious to express his meaning [and] ‘spluttered so much as not to be understood’,” and then was taken to the cabin where he immediately drew the map. Both men implied, to Jane Franklin and to the Admiralty, that “Usky” was a reliable informant insofar as he was willing, even eager, to provide information. Whether or not that information could ever be understood or confirmed was not certain. Fault could not lie with the whalers, who had acted in good faith – rather it lay with Usky, who had not sufficiently translated either his words or his knowledge into a medium that could be understood. The indigenous informant’s credibility therefore lay in a no-man’s land. His information was simultaneously accurate and inaccurate, incomprehensible yet promising, authoritative yet compromised. It was an example of what George Stocking has

945 ADM 7/189/13, Jane Franklin to John Barrow Jr, Kirkcaldy, 30 October, 1849.
946 ADM 7/189/13, “Memorandum of Capt Parker’s attendance at Admiralty.”
947 Ibid.
called the “paradoxical double image of savagery” in Victorian anthropology and pre-Darwinian evolutionary theory, in which indigenous people simultaneously exhibited signs of reason and the possibility of “improvement,” while remaining stubbornly stuck in an earlier stage of human development.\(^\text{948}\) It seemed, however, that the key objection to the map, that there were no “relics” or “tokens” to accompany the claim that Inuit had visited the ships, was dismantled. Sophia wrote to her mother that their doubts had been dispelled, and that “the Capt’n’s [Kerr’s] story has confirmed our former hopes. The story is so consistent & apparently so careful is he not to infer too much, i.e. more than was expressed that we believe that the Esquimaux have seen the ships” and then asked her to correlate it to the most recent statement of the Bolton Clairvoyante.\(^\text{949}\) Jane Franklin wrote to Barrow detailing her interview with Kerr, and asked him to pass her notes along to Eleanor.\(^\text{950}\) Effectively the episode reasserted the accuracy and credibility of both Inuit communication and of the whalers’ reports. Inconsistencies were attributed to failures of communication, but the fact remained that Inuit had observed four ships on their extensive travel along the train networks, even if they had not chosen to communicate with them.

Jane appears to have written to Scoresby about her interview with Kerr, because a week later, he used her information in an influential address at the Whitby Institute.\(^\text{951}\) Noting that the public sympathy “had been greatly excited by ‘the reports of certain Esquimaux,’” he displayed a lithograph of the Mittimatalik map and argued that Ross’s return should not put a “depressing check” on hope. He was “still disposed to hold by the intimation given by the Esquimaux sketch,” because Kerr’s testimony had convinced him that some men were still alive, and had

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\(^\text{949}\) SPRI MS 248/247/22, Sophia Cracroft to Isabella, Catherine and Elizabeth Cracroft, 1 November, 1849.
\(^\text{950}\) ADM 7/189/13, Jane Franklin to John Barrow, Kirkcaldy, 30 October, 1849.
been seen by the Inuit. He then asked rhetorically, if there was no news this season, “shall we
give up hope and abandon them to their fate? The sympathy of Britain, yea, and of the civilized
world, would forbid!” Scoresby was explicitly invoking the language of philanthropy, for it was
one he knew well. He had long been involved in varied campaigns for improvement, partly
through his geographical and commercial interests, but more recently through his floating church
and efforts at social reform in his parish at Bradford, which ranged from improved sanitation in
the streets and in the workhouse to the establishment of schools for the children of “factory
operatives.” As Alison Winter has argued, these campaigns contributed considerably to his
cultural authority in the public sphere as a man of the sea, of the ice, of science and of the cloth,
and accordingly gave great weight to his interpretation of the Inuit map.

Scoresby’s address at Whitby might have remained in that seaside port if it were not for
John Barrow Jr. It is important to note how improbable this was. Scoresby had considered
Barrow’s father, Sir John Barrow, to be one of his lifelong enemies, the man who had initially
denied him command of the first Northwest Passage expedition in 1817. But Scoresby and the
younger Barrow forged an important connection through the Franklin search, and it was
principally through their allegiance to Jane Franklin. The autumn of 1849 marked the beginning
of their collaboration. Barrow ensured that Scoresby’s address gained a London audience by
sending an article to the Evening Herald and wrote to Scoresby, “we must all be up and moving”
and that “all that human aid can accomplish must be brought to bear.”

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953 Winter, “Compasses All Awry,” 69-98.
954 In 1847, he was still smarting – noting during a trip to America that the mapping of portions of the Greenland
cost were attributed to him, he wrote in his journal, “These researches which Sir John Barrow tries to hid & never
notices in his Arctic discoveries, America acknowledges and gives to the author.” Stamp and Stamp, William
Scoresby. 203.
955 WL&PS, SCO 778 Box N, John Barrow to William Scoresby, Admiralty, 12 November, 1849.
a few weeks later, “Your article is much admired – only it is too short.” He followed it up in December with a series of articles in the *Morning Herald* (possibly also through Barrow’s agency) that were subsequently published in a pamphlet in January. In them he argued the real honor of the rescue expeditions lay in the spontaneous yielding of sympathy in the absence of (European) evidence. He asked, “Shall we… allow our increased anxieties to check further enterprise in researches? Or shall despair of success be allowed to stultify the impulses of humanity? The grounds of reasonable hope forbid.” Scoresby’s key point was that Franklin and his men “are the legitimate objects of a national duty and care” because they were sent out on government service, “and not only is this a Government expedition, and therefore national, but by the general interest given to its objects, and the universal sympathy yielded to its perils, by the British public, we as the people, have recognized it as our own [emphasis original].” In short, Scoresby argued, the missing sailors were deserving, legitimate objects of philanthropy, and to express sympathy with the missing and their families, and to insist on their rescue, was to give voice to the best impulses of philanthropy and patriotism.

Jane Franklin and John Barrow Jr.’s promotion of Scoresby’s interpretation of the map and philanthropic argument shifted the tone of the public debate. Though the storyline could easily have been to discredit Inuit information (as indeed it initially seemed to) instead the argument for reasonable hope gained purchase and circulated widely. The *Standard* and the *Morning Chronicle* now felt that all their doubts about the Inuit report had been based on “mere inferences” made as the story percolated first through the whale fleet and then through the press. “Usky’s” statement that the ships had passed by “would warrant us in believing that this was all

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956 WL&PS, SCO 819 Box P, Jane Franklin to William Scoresby, Bedford Place, 1 December, 1849.
958 Ibid., 15.
the Esquimaux wished to communicate.” This was crucial. Inuit information was not *ipso facto* creditable or trustworthy, but it was sufficiently suggestive to demand further investigation. Ross and his crew had not had this intelligence, and therefore could not have investigated it, despite their “philanthropic zeal.” Whalers had tried to, but had bungled. The only possible solution was to send out a government expedition manned by both trained officers and by those devoted to the cause. What remained was the hope that the men were alive, and even though none of the expeditions had found any traces, the press announced that “we still rejoice in the hope that the lost ones are yet in safety,” somewhere on the unknown Arctic coast. At least four papers expressed their hopes that government would call forth “every possible energy… to devise new means for renewing and pursuing our philanthropic task of ascertaining the fate of so many good, gallant and brave men.” Backing out of such a task now was, of course, impossible. Roger Harwood, the subeditor for the *Morning Chronicle*, wrote on November 24, “As a nation, we are bound in honour to any great and worthy purpose which we have once taken up: we cannot be severed from it without losing a part of ourselves; willfully to surrender it would be baseness – to resign it on compulsion must be a pain and a grief.” Meanwhile, the Mittimatalik map was published again, this time superimposed over an Admiralty map of Baffin’s Bay drawn by Parry and John Ross in 1818. Black lines on the map indicated the track of the *Truelove*, while red lines demarcated the extent of the ice and narrated the Inuit report. Franklin’s and Ross’s locations (behind the ice barrier) were clearly marked with Xs and the

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caveat “by Esquimaux report” while Usky’s sketch was inset at the bottom, but turned so that Ward’s compass rose pointed in the wrong direction (see Figure 13).  

A massive file in the Admiralty archives labeled “Suggestions for the Relief of Sir John Franklin” documents a sudden deluge of letters from members of the public to the Admiralty in November and December of 1849. Most of the letters and plans were convinced that modern technology could penetrate the ice, erase the arrhythmia, and rescue the missing men. A man who heard Scoresby’s lecture at Whitby sat down the next day to draw up a plan for a flying ship suspended by three balloons. Other plans included fitting ships with steam-driven circular saws in the prow; a railway engineer’s model for an amphibious proto-snowmachine (on the premise that “Ice forms its own Railway, as you can steer (sic) to any point,” see Figure 14); messages printed on Gutta Percha and delivered by balloon; the release of ten thousand carrier pigeons; the development of a “Franklinean Dispatch Carrier” (a remotely operated hot air balloon that dropped messages from exploding grenades, see Figure 15) and many more plans that involved a combination of rockets, balloons, and ice blasting (which received its own subfile). Almost to a man, they argued (like Scoresby) that it was the humanitarian duty of government and of every Briton to rescue Franklin. As a Cornish schoolmaster wrote, “it is the duty of every one who can think on any means likely to be useful in restoring our lost countrymen, to do so, as their object was to extend our geographical knowledge, and thus confer a general boon on all mankind.” Many of the ideas were, of course, crackpot ones. Many were referred to the weary Richardson, who, deluged with inventions and proposals, commented and sent them all back to Beaufort or Barrow.

964 A copy of the map is at SPRI MS 395/96/16/d BL.
965 ADM 7/608, “Suggestions for the Relief of Sir John Franklin.”
966 ADM 7/608, Mr. Jones to the Lords of the Admiralty, Hilda Cottage, Whitby, 9 November, 1849.
967 ADM 7/608, “Suggestions for the Relief of Sir John Franklin.”
968 ADM 7/608, Mr. John Moore West, Castle Cottage, Liskeard, 15 December, 1849.
Jane and Sophia returned to London in November and took rooms in Spring Gardens, where Jane was reportedly “closeted from morning to night with her niece… near the Admiralty, day after day and week after week, doing all she can to promote the object nearest and dearest to her heart.”969 She wrote again to the U.S. President Zachary Taylor to urge the Americans to join in the “chivalric and humane endeavour”, which could not be given up, “till the shores and seas of those frozen regions have been swept in all directions, or until some memorial be found to attest their fate.”970 She was then organizing her own expedition in a ship she called the Prince Albert (and drawing on Eleanor’s inheritance to do so) and consulting her new favorite, the whaling captain William Penny, for advice on its crew and composition, intimating that she might like to put him in command of it. She had a wide variety of whaling captains to choose from – not only Parker, Penny and Kerr, but also others who had written to her to volunteer their services.971 But Penny was the one who impressed her and Sophia as the most respectable, trustworthy and persevering of them all. In his letters to Jane, he seemed to combine both an apparent pliability and developing personal devotion to Jane with the experience of a whaling captain and the subjective qualities associated with naval officers – straightforwardness, honesty, and a rough respectability.972 He repeatedly told her that he was unwilling to serve on an expedition with naval officers unless he was under a “joint and equal command” or, preferably, if he could go out in command of her own expedition.973 He seemed, in any case, to be eminently useful, and Jane praised him both to Scoresby and to Beaufort. She pressed Beaufort to consider

969 Quoted in F. Woodward, Portrait of Jane, 271.
970 Lady Franklin to Zachary Taylor, 4 Spring Gardens, London, 11 December, 1849, in As Affecting the Fate, 79-81.
971 NA ADM 7/608, John Graville to Jane Franklin, Hull, 14 December, 1849.
972 SPRI MS 116/63/57-59, 73, William Penny correspondence with Jane Franklin, December, 1849.
973 SPRI MS 116/63/59, William Penny to Jane Franklin, Bolmum, Aberdeen, 26 December, 1849.
him for a naval command, writing to Scoresby that “I want him to go his own way to work with a set of whalers – he is a man of the most undoubted perseverance.”974

Meanwhile, Jane’s immediate family saw her renewed Arctic activity, her companionship with Sophia, and especially her marginalization of Eleanor, as awkward and frustrating. They linked the companionship with Sophia directly to Jane’s obsessive, aggressive pursuit of public fame, at the expense of what her role should have been, which was to wait and work behind the scenes, and this is what they advised Eleanor to do. Marian Simpkinson wrote a note to Eleanor to commiserate with her, writing, “I hope Government will be induced to send to Behring’s Straits, but I am afraid my aunt will do a great deal of mischief, her violence and strong feeling and her strange way of viewing everything will be very likely to frustrate any attempt she may make to have another ship sent out.” She dreaded having Jane and Sophy come to stay with them, but wrote, “I suppose [Sophy] and my aunt are inseparable.” Her objections were drowned out by her mother Mary, Jane’s sister, who Marian reported “does not care if I sleep on the ground, these are her words, rather than not gratify every wish of Aunt F’s.”975 Though severely disabled from a stroke, Mary Simpkinson, who had defended her sister so vigorously while Jane was in Van Diemen’s Land, would now do the same against her family. Mary Anne Kendall wrote to Eleanor to urge her to persevere with a reconciliation, pointing out, “I doubt not that there will be forebearance to be exercised, and probably in a very trying way.” She urged Eleanor to adopt Mary Anne’s own course of conduct with Jane, to view it as her duty to be “loving and conciliatory” but she also pointed out that the deceased Mary Booth Richardson (John Franklin’s niece) had never been able to do so.976

974 WL&PS SCO 819 Box P, Jane Franklin to William Scoresby, Bedford Place, 1 December [1849].
975 DRO D3311/122/21, Marian Simpkinson to Eleanor Gell, nd. [December 1849 by context]
976 DRO D3311/122/23, Mary Anne Kendall to Eleanor Gell, Royal Naval College, Sunday [penciled, 11 November, 1849].
In response both to the public’s interest and suggestions, as well as Jane Franklin’s influence, Beaufort drew up a plan to send out a new and massive rescue fleet in 1850. His argument was that the search would be considered incomplete if Bering Strait and Lancaster Sound were not searched. Bering Strait was considered to be the most important location, since Ross thought that Franklin was west of any navigable point in Lancaster Sound. Yet Lancaster Sound (and implicitly, the Inuit report) was by no means neglected by Beaufort, who argued that steam powered vessels should be used to investigate whether Franklin had followed his instructions and gone up Wellington Channel. The use of steam, he pointed out, was essential to erase the arrhythmia of the past fall. “Only useless expenditure and reiterated disappointment will attend the best efforts of sailing vessels,” he argued, “leaving the lingering survivors of the lost ships as well as their relatives in England in equal despair.” He incorporated several of the suggestions sent in by the public – ice blasting equipment, circular saws, and balloons for dispatching messages. In addition, he proposed that Penny be allowed to command a separate detachment to investigate Jones Sound with sailing ships, arguing that “his local knowledge, his thorough acquaintance with all the mysteries of ice navigation, and his well-known skill and resources seem to point him out as a most valuable auxiliary.”

Parry, Richardson, Back and Beechey – the self-styled “Friends of Franklin” – were all invited to comment on the proposal, and as they had for Franklin’s expedition, effectively wrote the instructions for the Squadron in their comments on Beaufort’s proposal. Back and Parry agreed on the usefulness of steamers, and while Parry thought the best chance lay in pressing further west, he agreed that the search would be incomplete without Wellington Channel being searched, and suggested that Jones Sound was one of Franklin’s possible avenues of retreat.

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977 NA ADM 7/188/9, Memorandum of Sir Francis Beaufort.
978 ADM 7/188/6, “Opinions of Sir Edw Parry, Sir Geo Back, Captain Beechey, & Sir John Richardson, as to the expediency of adopting further measures for the relief of Sir John Franklin.”
advised that Penny’s “intelligence, zeal, and long experience in ice navigation appear to me to entitle his opinion to their Lordship’s consideration.” Richardson reiterated his position from his official report on his expedition, that life was sustainable at high latitudes and therefore hope for the missing expedition remained. He insisted that official expedition be coordinated both with the trading activities of the HBC and the RAC as well as with the Inuit. Hope, he pointed out, was to be located in the Inuit and Inupiaq trading network between MacKenzie River and Bering Strait, in which “intelligence of any interesting occurrence is conveyed along the coast,” and he suggested that both the HBC and the Russians should be encouraged to offer rewards for information, pointing out that evidence like the existing map “forbid us to lose hope.” He commented little on Penny’s role, but what he said spoke volumes: “Mr Penny’s project, restricted as it is by Sir Francis Beaufort to the search of Jones Sound at its outlets seems to be a fitting appendage to the other measures.” Parry summed up the case by stating, “it is my deliberate conviction that the time has not yet arrived, when the attempt ought to be given up as hopeless” and pointed out that if energetic efforts were made now, both the Lords “and the Country at large” would later be satisfied that they made every effort “so long as the most distant hope remains of ultimate success.”

Over the course of the winter, the Lords of the Admiralty were reluctantly persuaded by the arguments of the Polar officers, the pressures of the public, and the efforts of the Franklin family and agreed to renew expeditions because, “It appears to be our bounden duty to continue our search after our Missing Expedition, and to use every feasible means at our disposal for their

979 ADM 7/188/6, W. E. Parry to John Parker, Esq., 2 December, 1849.
980 ADM 7/188/17, Report of Sir John Richardson’s Expedition. Richardson’s opinion was also published alongside an account of Scoresby’s address in “The Arctic Expedition,” Caledonian Mercury, 22 November, 1849: 2.
981 ADM 7/188/9, Sir John Richardson to the Lords of the Admiralty, 7 February, 1850.
982 ADM 7/188/6, W. E. Parry to John Parker, Esq., 2 December, 1849.
recovery.” Admiral Cowper was however hesitant to expose any more men “to the risks of penetrating that vast unknown region without anything but guesses to guide them.” His comment indicated that credibility, and the extent of intelligence, was still very much in doubt. Known colloquially as the “Arctic Squadron,” the new fleet consisted of eight ships whose tracks spanned the North American Arctic. HMS Enterprise and Investigator were sent to Bering Strait to search the northern coast of Alaska and to dispatch overland expeditions into the Hudson’s Bay Company territories. Meanwhile, Captain Horatio Austin was put in charge of the search from Lancaster Sound in the eastern Canadian archipelago. A veteran of Parry’s 1824-25 voyage, Austin commanded HMS Resolute and was ordered to investigate every possible route Franklin count have take from Lancaster Sound – north up Wellington Channel, west to Melville Island, or southwest via Cape Walker. Austin was accompanied by naval commanders and crews aboard HMS Assistance (Captain Erasmus Ommanney), and two screw steamers, the Pioneer (Lt. Sherard Osborn) and the Intrepid (Lt. Bertie Cator). There were also two American ships and two private expeditions, one of which was Lady Franklin’s Prince Albert, and one was led by the elderly Captain John Ross and backed by the HBC. Finally, Penny was placed in command of the newly christened HMS Lady Franklin with a companion ship, HMS Sophia. The Lady Franklin’s figurehead was, appropriately enough, Hope leaning on an anchor.

Conclusion

In the autumn of 1849, a pattern and a pulse was set that would characterize the remainder of the Franklin search. Both naval and whaling ships would continue to depart in the

983 ADM 7/188/6, Remarks on the Opinions of Sir Edw Parry, Sir Geo Back, Captain Beechey, & Sir John Richardson, as to the Expediency of Adopting Further Measures for the Relief of Sir John Franklin.
984 Ibid.
985 Savours, Search for the North West Passage, 193-203.
986 Ibid., 194
spring and return in the fall, bringing with them stories, maps, and very occasionally, a relic of the lost expedition. These pieces of evidence might be observed or collected in situ, and frequently they would have been extracted from indigenous informants. Detailed and vague, thorough yet inscrutable, Inuit intelligence drawn from the extensive (and expanding) indigenous trading networks across the North American Arctic testified to the fact that indigenous people could travel, observe, and report whether the British could not. In Arctic exploration, as in colonial intelligence more broadly, this asymmetry of information caused, and would continue to cause, intense anxiety. It had a built-in arrhythmia, and when that combined with the already unsettled nature of geographical authority, indigenous testimony and vernacular knowledge, a space was opened for the women of the Franklin family (principally Jane Franklin, Sophia Cracroft, and Eleanor Gell) to claim a gendered authority to access and interpret geographical data. Drawing on existing and developing networks of intimacy, they ultimately were able to reframe expeditions as a philanthropic venture and as a duty of government to pursue, and in the appointment of Penny to naval command, the first such appointment since expeditions began in 1818.

Yet as this chapter has shown, this was a highly contested, uncertain, and often confusing process. It laid the groundwork for still more conflicts between familial, vernacular, and institutional authority, especially with respect to the interpretation of indigenous intelligence and geographical knowledge. While Jane and Sophy sought influence on the claims of intimacy, both with Franklin and with his old comrades, it was not a foregone conclusion that they would be successful. The formulation of policy and of instructions still lay with the “Arctic men,” and a great deal of weight was attached to Richardson’s opinion in particular. His approval of the restriction of Penny’s Arctic instructions in 1850 is instructive, as are both Parry’s and
Beaufort’s dismissal of Jane and Sophy’s reliance on clairvoyance in their correspondence with Eleanor. The core, male network of companions – still inflected with memories and allegiances of the past in both the Arctic and Tasmania, would not open themselves to the accusations that had sent Franklin from Tasmania and from England in the first place. If there had been “p Petticoat government” there would not be “p Petticoat exploration,” and these concerns would be expanded and highlighted with the return of the Arctic Squadron with new Inuit intelligence in 1851.
CHAPTER 5: “THE ARGUMENT FROM NEGATIVE EVIDENCE:” THE WELLINGTON CHANNEL CONTROVERSY OF 1851

The “Arctic Squadron” that the Admiralty dispatched in 1850 was supposed to finally lay to rest the “Arctic Question” and the lingering mystery of what had happened to HMS Erebus and Terror, which had been missing for nearly five years. It was a long time to be missing, but there was still hope that there might be survivors, and if not, then some definitive evidence – ideally some document – about where the ships had gone, what had happened to them, and where they were now. This was conjured in the figurehead of Captain William Penny’s ship, HMS Lady Franklin, which was Hope leaning on an anchor, a symbol of Christian hope in the Resurrection and also of women waiting patiently on shore for departed sailors.987 When the Arctic Squadron returned to Britain in 1851, however, it brought only more uncertainty, confusion, and discord. The officers had fallen out, and there was a great rift between the squadron commander, Captain Horatio Austin, Penny the whaler, and the old Arctic veteran Sir John Ross. It did return with records, the depositions of a literate Kalaallit interpreter named Adam Beck. These testified that he had been informed that two ships had wrecked off the coast of Greenland, and their crews killed. The squadron also returned with “relics,” artifacts from Franklin’s 1846-7 winter camp that the ships found on Beechey Island, at the base of Wellington Channel (see Figures 4 and 5). Together, these pieces of evidence and the stories woven around them came to be known as the “Wellington Channel Controversy” of 1851.

This chapter examines how the uneven, dynamic and contested intelligence produced by the Arctic Squadron were processed by Jane Franklin, Sophia Cracroft and their supporters. It

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traces how they asserted their moral authority over the written testimony of a literate indigenous subject, over the voiceless artifacts of a scientific expedition that left no written record, and over the “littoral literacy” of a whaling captain. In response to the perceived threats posed by native testimony and official records, Jane, Sophy, and their supporters formulated an emotional and geographical argument based on “negative evidence”: that the correct reading of the available evidence proved that the missing expedition must have gone up Wellington Channel to be trapped behind a barrier of ice in an open polar sea. I argue that their overriding need was to determine the relative authority of individuals and written testimony, and to establish control of an archive defined by silence and absence on multiple levels – absence of the missing men, absence of any written records, absence of any indication where they had gone, and above all, calculating and erasing both the influence indigenous intermediaries and themselves. To do so, they drew on the experience of a wide body of individuals, from veteran philanthropists to sympathetic journalists, all of whom were well-versed in methods of imperial critique and the circulation of information, and who were drawn from the networks built up over the Franklins’ imperial lives detailed in the preceding chapters.

The coherence of the “argument from negative evidence” and the efficacy of that network depended in large part on Jane Franklin and Sophia Cracroft’s strategic performance of their gendered identities in these new and changing circumstances. They used their roles as a naval wife and a devoted niece to curry favor with potential helpers, to devalue the character of their opponents, and to assert authority over both evidence and individuals. At the same time, while those gendered identities were used to produce an alternate reading of the heterogeneous archive of the Arctic Squadron, they were also used to both create and erase the record of the women’s own activities. Jane, Sophia, and their supporters scrupulously hid themselves from public view,
trying to ensure that their agency did not register in the official and public archive of the search.
Yet as they detailed their activities in their own and each other’s journals, the women documented not only the broad extent of their operations, but also the centrality of their own companionship, which eclipsed all other intimate relationships (including that with the missing John Franklin).

The period that this chapter covers, from 1850 to 1852, also constitutes the most extensive archive of the women’s activities at any point during the Franklin search, including both Jane Franklin’s and Sophy Cracroft’s journals. Consequently, it represents a unique opportunity to examine how they worked to silence literate indigenous testimony as they built up a wholly speculative argument that the relics of Beechey Island and the testimony of William Penny proved that Franklin had gone up Wellington Channel, that he and his crews were still alive, that they had followed their instructions and were now trapped behind a barrier of ice in an open polar sea. They tried, in essence, to make the ice in Wellington Channel qualitatively different than that in any other quarter of the Arctic – a barrier, to be sure, but one that was both permeable and hopeful. In doing so, they defined the Wellington Channel problem and the larger Arctic Question as problems that were simultaneously geographical and moral. The consequence was that those who threatened the Wellington Channel argument, from Lords of the Admiralty to naval officers to indigenous interpreters, had to be conclusively disposed of.

Archives in the Ice: Depositions, Relics and Hypothesis in the Arctic Squadron, 1850-51
The Wellington Channel controversy began in Greenland in the summer of 1850 when the ships of the “Arctic Squadron” stopped there to re-provision. These consisted of the Admiralty ships HMS Resolute (Captain Horatio Austin, who commanded the whole
expedition), HMS *Assistance* (Captain Erasmus Ommanney), HMS *Pioneer* (Lieutenant Sherard Osborn), HMS *Intrepid* (Lieutenant Bertie Cator), and HMS *Lady Franklin* and Sophia (commanded by the whaler William Penny). They were joined by two private expeditions, Lady Franklin’s *Prince Albert* (Captain William Forsyth) and the HBC-financed *Felix* (captained by Sir John Ross). The Danish colony of Greenland was a common stopping point for all Arctic expeditions en route to the Canadian Archipelago, as well as for Scottish and American whalers, since the Danish government had opened it up to foreign whalers in the 1760s.988 There was a tiny population of Danes (250 in 1855) and about 10,000 Kalaallit Inuit (many of whom were of a mixed background), mainly engaged in industries like whaling, sealing, and the fur trade. Moravian missionaries had a substantial foothold in Greenland as part of their broader mission to evangelize the globe’s most difficult and remote regions; as a result of their efforts, literacy was widespread among Kalaallit living in Danish and satellite settlements.989

In late June at Holstenborg/Sisimiut, Ross engaged a young Kalaallit man named Adam Beck as an interpreter.990 Like many of his contemporaries, Beck was literate in Kalaallisut and spoke Danish, but not English. He was twenty-nine years old, probably unmarried, and at least his father was still living, though he did not tell him where he was going, or why.991 Ross described him “a very intelligent person and an excellent fiddler” who was “already a great

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989 The establishment of the Moravian mission in Greenland came only a year after the first mission was established in the Danish West Indies in 1732, and as a result of their inter-imperial activities, Moravian missionaries had to, as Andrew Porter has pointed out, be “politically unobtrusive and economically self-sufficient” though, as Felicity Jensz has recently observed, they still had to tiptoe around accusations of political interference as a result of their inter-imperial global mission. Porter, *Religion versus Empire*, 29-31; Jensz, “Imperial Critics,” especially 189-191.
990 SPRI MF 1008/33, John Ross to Archibald Barclay, 30 June, 1850.
991 This would later torment him, as he would write, “on the voyage I reflected that I had forsaken him in his old age.” PP 1852 [1449] Arctic Expedition. Further Correspondence and Proceedings Connected with the Arctic Expedition, no. 11, “English Version of the German Translation of an Esquimaux-Greenlandish Document,” 136.
favourite with the men.”\textsuperscript{992} This betrayed either Ross’s optimism or total ignorance of Beck’s real treatment. Most of the crew (all of whom were whalers from Peterhead) had been drunk and out of control since they left Scotland, and according to Beck, three of them threw him overboard shortly after they left port “either to make a game of me, or with serious designs on my life.”\textsuperscript{993} The only person on board whom Beck could talk to was Ross, who spoke Danish – otherwise, he was utterly isolated. Farther north in the Lady Franklin, Captain William Penny also acquired an interpreter, the Danish Carl Petersen, who was the sub-governor of the tiny new trading station of Upernavik, and eager to take £75 per annum as a white interpreter.\textsuperscript{994} On August 13, all the British ships anchored off Cape York/Savissivik (some three hundred miles north of Upernavik) where some Inughuit were seen on shore. These were the same group of people whom Ross and Parry had encountered on their first expedition in 1818, whom Ross had dubbed the “Arctic Highlanders,” and who still in 1850 had extremely limited contact with outsiders.\textsuperscript{995} While Beck talked to the people, Captain Erasmus Ommaney of HMS Assistance engaged one of them as another interpreter for the Assistance, a young man named Qalersuaq.\textsuperscript{996} Beck was taken aboard Lady Franklin’s private ship, the Prince Albert, and began talking to the steward John Smith (who knew some Inuktitut from his years working for the HBC.

\textsuperscript{992} SPRI MS 1008, John Ross to Archibald Barclay, Secretary of Hudson’s Bay Company, 30 June, 1850.  
\textsuperscript{993} Ibid.; PP 1852 [1449], no. 11, 136; The Shipping Gazette recorded that the Felix had gone to sea “in a sad state of disorder, from the continued drunkenness of the crew…. The sailing master had drank himself into a state of insanity… and was in his bed; the mate was little better, perhaps worse, for he was furious with drink and the whole of the crew were much in the same state, and positively refused to weigh the anchor or make sail on the vessel.” Quoted in M. J. Ross, Polar Pioneers, 327.  
\textsuperscript{994} PP 1852 (390) Arctic Expedition. Copy of Further Correspondence which has been transmitted to the Admiralty between Admiral Sir John Ross and the Danish Inspector-General, touching the fate of the expedition under Sir John Franklin. Enclosure to No. 6, 8.  
\textsuperscript{995} John Ross, A Voyage of Discovery Made Under the Orders of the Admiralty in His Majesty's Ships Isabella and Alexander, for the Purpose of Exploring Baffin's Bay and Inquiring into the Probability of a North-West Passage (London: John Murray, 1819), 119-135.  
\textsuperscript{996} Savours, Search for the North West Passage, 197.
in Churchill). Beck said that Qalersuaq and his companions told him that four years earlier, two ships had come from the south and been beset by ice at a place called “Omanek;” that the officers wore epaulettes on their shoulders, and that local people had killed the crews and burned the ships. He was then confronted by Petersen and Qalasersuaq, both of whom immediately called him a liar. Beck later said, and Ross agreed with him, that Petersen had intimidated both Kalaallit men, ordering them to say nothing so that the ships would stay out longer and they would be paid more. Nevertheless, the Intrepid was sent up Wolstenholme Sound and found that HMS North Star had overwintered there in 1849-50, and caused a deadly epidemic among the local people. This, the officers decided, was the root of Beck’s tale, and the fleet headed west into Lancaster Sound. Despite repeated bullying by Petersen, however, Beck had maintained that he was telling the truth about what he heard, and wrote out a deposition to that effect in Kalaallisut on August 17, which Ross enclosed in his own dispatch home.

One week after Beck wrote his first deposition, the remains of Franklin’s 1845-46 winter camp were found at the base of Wellington Channel in Lancaster Sound, where all the ships of the squadron met, pushed together by the ice. Beck’s written testimony of what he had heard from the Inughuit at Cape York would always be contrasted with these wordless “relics.” On August 23rd, Ommannney and a party of officers found the first “relics” of the missing expedition – bits of wood, some ragged clothing, naval stores, and empty meat tins. All the evidence was turned over to Forsyth, who immediately left for England in the Prince Albert. A few days later,

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997 ADM 7/192/4, John Ross to the Secretary of the Admiralty, Felix Discovery Yacht, 22 August 1850. John Smith was subsequently engaged by Jane Franklin and Sophia Cracroft as an interpreter (amongst several other duties) and was instrumental in helping them outfit and crew the Prince Albert when she was sent out a second time in 1851 under William Kennedy. SPRI MS 248/106 BJ, Lady Franklin and Sophy Cracroft, Letter Book, 17 January – March 1851; SPRI MS 248/107 BJ, Jane Franklin, Sophia Cracroft, Letter Book, March-May 1851.

998 M. J. Ross, Polar Pioneers, 328; D. Woodman, Unravelling the Franklin Mystery, 56-58.

999 PP 1852 (390), Enclosure to No. 6, 8; PP 1852 [1449], No. 11, 136.

1000 ADM 7/192/4, John Ross to the Secretary of the Admiralty, Felix Discovery Yacht, 22 August, 1850.

1001 Ice conditions prevented both Penny and Forsyth from carrying out their instructions and searching Jones Sound and Prince Regent’s Inlet.
a traveling party on Beechey Island found Franklin’s main 1845-46 camp, including the graves of three crew members of the *Erebus* and *Terror*. It looked as if the expedition had only just left, an impression reinforced by the discovery of a pair of cashmere gloves weighed down by stones to prevent them blowing away. Yet there were no written records – nothing to indicate how long they had stayed, when they had left, or most importantly, where they had gone. As Sherard Osborn (the commander of the *Pioneer*) wrote, “everyone felt that there was something so inexplicable in the non-discovery of any record, some written evidence of the intentions of Franklin and Crozier on leaving this spot, that each of us kept returning to again search over the ground, in the hope that it had merely been overlooked in the feverish haste of the first discovery of the cairns.”

Over the long dark winter, spring sledging and sailing expeditions were planned to look for survivors, and there was mad speculation among the officers and crews over the direction and fate of the lost expedition. Adam Beck, meanwhile, continued to insist that he had accurately reported that the expedition had perished, and as a result, he was persecuted by the crews of all the ships. The bullying of Beck not only constituted sport for the crew, but also a means to discredit him. Petersen and the sailors on the *Felix*, the *Lady Franklin* and the *Sophia* (which were all frozen up together near Beechey Island) blamed him for thefts, accused him of drunkenness, and threatened him with violence.

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1002 Quoted in Savours, *Search for the North West Passage*, 203.
1004 PP 1852 [1449], no. 11, 136. The crews of all three ships were mainly whalers, most of whom probably knew each other from previous service in the whaling fleet. Whether or not this contributed to their treatment of Beck, or
they blamed it on him, and so he was later described by officers and crew as a drunkard. On one occasion, he was pursued across Beechey Island by three sailors. While he was running, he came across a piece of wood with a metal plate attached to it, inscribed, “September 1846,” which he collected but lost when he slid down a snowy hill to escape – when he could not find it again, it was considered further proof of his mendacity. At least one of Beck’s tormentors would later point to the abuse as a reason for Beck’s untrustworthiness. Carl Petersen later told Jane Franklin and Sophy Cracroft that Beck had been “badly treated by Ross’s people, even beaten – & had not clothes enough, had been deceived, & did not know when he started that he wd be out all the winter,” though Beck’s own depositions note that Petersen was as much to blame for the abuse as anyone.

Systemic bullying and intimidation of Inuit interpreters by officers and crews was common aboard Arctic exploring ships. Another literate Kalaallit interpreter, Hans Hendrik, went on four Arctic expeditions between 1853 and 1876 (two of which were in search of Franklin) and published a memoir of his experiences. In addition to suffering from profound isolation, homesickness, and the disorienting twenty-four hour darkness of midwinter (which not all Inuit were familiar with), Hendrik and others were constantly accused of stealing and lying, and threatened with everything from flogging to summary execution. Many ran: some, like

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1005 PP 1852 [1449], no. 11, 136.
1006 Ibid; Penny would later claim to Sophia that this was “fabulous – the invention of Adam Beck.” SPRI 248/241 BJ Sophia Cracroft Journal, 29 September, 1851.
1009 Hendrik (and possibly Beck) had been born too far south to experience the two-month long, twenty-four hour night of the high Arctic, and he reported that on his first Arctic expedition with Kane, “Never had I seen a dark season like this, to be sure it was awful, I thought we should have no daylight any more,” and became deeply
Hendrik, to other Inuit groups with whom he established relationships, while others took the more drastic step of “turning Kivigtok,” and going alone into the wilderness, rejecting human society altogether.1010 Perhaps the worst were the long, sustained, whispering campaigns – threats muttered in English in the darkness that preyed on the minds of Inuit men and their families.1011

As Beck suffered, Penny remained convinced that the “relics” on Beechey Island indicated that Franklin had gone north, up Wellington Channel, and he himself ascended it three times in the spring of 1851. He was finally forced to turn back just as he sighted open water ahead of him in the channel that he named “Queen Victoria Channel,” and where he was convinced Franklin had gone – into an open polar sea.1012 Upon his return to the squadron, Penny asked Austin on August 11, 1851 if he could take one of the steamers up Wellington Channel, to take advantage of any opening in the pack ice. Austin, apparently, refused. Several stormy discussions followed, and Austin finally demanded that Penny write down whether he thought Wellington Channel required any further search. In the heat of the moment, Penny sent Austin a terse dispatch that said precisely the opposite of what he meant: “Sir – Your question is easily answered. My opinion is, Wellington Channel requires no further search; all has been done in the power of man to accomplish and no trace can be found. What else can be done?” 1013 With that, Austin ordered the squadron back to England. Ross followed in the Felix, now convinced depressed. Hendrik also records ample and detailed descriptions of abuse directed at himself and other Inuit interpreters. Hendrik, Memoirs, 24, 33, 37-38, 42, 49, 57, 89-91.

1010 Hendrik explained that “turning Kivigtok” was an incomprehensible step, cutting oneself off from community and support under dire circumstances. Ibid., 33, 37-38.

1011 Hendrik recorded that Umarsuaq (the man who “turned a Kivigtok”) ran after months of such whispering, asking all his Inuit companions, “What does J----- say when he whispers in passing by me?” and telling Hendrik just before he ran, “That is the only awkward thing, to understand neither Danish nor English.” Hendrik experienced this himself on the Nares expedition, and also ran away in desperation. Ibid., 38, 89-91.


that Wellington Channel was a waste of time and that, as Beck had reported, Franklin must have perished in Baffin’s Bay. He stopped at Upernavik on the way home where Beck made another sworn deposition before a Danish magistrate. In this document, Beck laid out not only the circumstances of what he had heard at Cape York, but also how Petersen had threatened him and Qalersuaq, and how he had been repeatedly isolated and persecuted throughout the voyage. Ross asked the Danish governor’s wife (who was also of mixed Danish-Kalaallit descent) to give a brief translation of the account, which he then included in his own report upon his return to Britain.

There were, then, two principal problems at the heart of what became the Wellington Channel controversy, both of which revolved around the relative authority of individuals, and the relative authority of written testimony. Firstly, the only written evidence was Adam Beck’s deposition, whereas the British story of the expedition could only be inferred from the material traces at Beechey Island. One indicated that Franklin’s crews had perished in Baffin’s Bay, while the other seemed to suggest that they might have gone up Wellington Channel. Secondly, there was the conflicting documentary record of the search itself – the communiqués that Austin had demanded for the Admiralty records and which Penny had unwillingly provided, and in which he had claimed exactly the opposite of what he intended to argue. Finally, the state of the ice in Lancaster Sound, Baffin’s Bay, and Wellington Channel prevented ships’ ability to follow up on and clarify information, whether it was narrated (as in the case of Adam Beck’s story of the destruction of the ships) or material (as in the case of the Beechey Island “relics.”). Since none of the possibilities could be investigated, they were all, apparently, equally likely to be true.
Circulating the “Argument from Negative Evidence”: Autumn 1851

In response to the conflicting archives brought home by the Arctic Squadron in 1851, Jane Franklin and Sophia Cracroft generated their own: a vast record of how their networks of knowledge and intimacy operated and tried to subvert and shape both evidence and characters. Confronted with a literate, indigenous subject, voiceless “relics” and a contrary whaling captain, Jane and Sophy called on friends, family, and acquaintances to formulate what Franklin’s nephew Charles Weld called the “argument from negative evidence:” that the missing expedition had ascended Wellington Channel, that its members were alive but trapped behind a barrier of ice in an open polar sea. Essentially, this argument was that even if there was no evidence that Franklin had gone up Wellington Channel, there was no credible evidence that he had not. They mobilized their contacts – especially their acquaintances among the influential members of the humanitarian movement – to keep the “argument from negative evidence” circulating in both society and in the public sphere – and thus, to achieve credibility. It meant drawing on both their Van Diemen’s Land experiences and the very people who had been most critical of the penal colony.

These circuits of information and sociability were already in place, and both Jane and Sophy and many of their supporters knew how to use them. They were operating in the middle of an extended mid-century moment characterized by a hardening rhetoric of racial difference, the changing nature of imperial humanitarianism, and a shifting field for women’s activities in the public sphere. From the apparent failure of the apprenticeship system in the West Indies, to the Maori wars of the 1840s, to the strengthened claims of white settlers to self-government at the expense of indigenous peoples, to the Sepoy Rebellion of 1857; all contributed to a “harsh logic

1014 In the process, they participated in a central tenet of positivist science – that circulation achieves credibility, that if an idea can be talked about for long enough, it must have inherent merit. Shapin, “Placing the View from Nowhere,” 5-12.
of racial difference” that emerged between 1840 and 1860, and formed the ideological building block of the late-nineteenth century popular imperialism. These developments were fundamentally entangled in debates about the extension and limitation of citizenship, into which white British women entered on the basis of their (fittingly maternal) philanthropic interests in the condition of slaves and indigenous peoples in British colonies. These were the building blocks of an imperial feminism that laid its claims to enfranchisement against “others” in terms of race and class from the 1860s. This dynamic would be mirrored in the Wellington Channel Campaign, as the expertise and techniques developed by the humanitarian movement would be used to silence Adam Beck’s testimony while claiming legitimacy for the women’s “argument from negative evidence.”

Engagement with scientific exploration was nothing new for British humanitarians. As part of their larger engagement with imperial governance, humanitarian and missionary networks were also involved with the practices of geography and exploration as they wove their own colonial geographies, their own moral and “spatial politics of knowledge.” The global scope of missionary and humanitarian activity meant that it had been fundamentally entangled with scientific exploration since Cook’s voyages both expanded a mission field for the newly energized Evangelical movement in the 1760s and facilitated the expansion of white settler colonies. While explorers and humanitarians could be (and often were) at odds with one

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1016 Midgley, Women Against Slavery; Clare Midgely, “Anti-Slavery and Feminism in Nineteenth Century Britain,” Gender & History 5, no. 3 (1993): 343-362. As Susan Thorne has demonstrated, these concerns not only came to inform philanthropy in industrial Britain (which increasingly associated the “heathen classes at home” with the “heathen races” of the empire), but also constituted an important means of disseminating information about colonized people (as well as imperial policy) to the general public. Thorne, “Religion and Empire at Home,” in At Home with the Empire, 143-165; Thorne, “Conversion of Englishmen,” in Tensions of Empire, 238-262.
1017 Burton, Burdens of History: Hall, “Rethinking Imperial Histories,” 3-29.
another, state-sponsored geographical exploration could also be a tool to foster “legitimate commerce” and the spread of Christianity, as Thomas Fowell Buxton’s doomed Niger expedition in 1841 was intended to do.1020 This broader relationship, sometimes friendly, sometimes acrimonious, between humanitarians and explorers also included deeply personal relationships with Arctic explorers. William Edward Parry, for example, had married into the Gurney family of Quakers after the death of his first wife in 1835. He had been instrumental in facilitating and planning the Niger expedition, and moreover, he had been responsible for getting the young Samuel Gurney Cresswell to Bering Strait as a lieutenant on HMS Investigator in 1850; a ship that in the autumn of 1851 was locked in the ice off Melville Island in the western Canadian archipelago.1021

There were two women in particular who aided Jane Franklin and Sophy Cracroft during the Wellington Channel controversy, women who were not only experienced humanitarians, writers, and advocates but also had important backgrounds in science and exploration. These were Anna Gurney and Sarah Bowdich Lee, and without them, it is unlikely that the contest for authority over Wellington Channel – or the silencing of Adam Beck – would have transpired. But the very backgrounds as imperial humanitarians that made them so desirable as Jane Franklin’s agents also led them to go off-message, to be unpredictable, which was a constant source of anxiety and frustration for Jane and Sophia. Anna Gurney was the niece of Thomas Fowell Buxton, and had been deeply involved in the humanitarianism of the 1830s, facilitating the correspondence networks that were the lifeblood of the humanitarian movement and

1020 Indeed, the failure of the Niger expedition is identified as one of the causes of the widespread faltering of the imperial humanitarian movement, held up as an example of what Charles Dickens called “the prime example of philanthropic folly.” Lester, “Humanitarians and White Settlers,” in Missions and Empire, 81; Porter, Religion Versus Empire, 150-152.
missionary enterprise, and in the process creating “indigenous peoples” as a “series of comparable categories across the globe.” As Laidlaw has demonstrated, Gurney, together with her cousin Priscilla Buxton, was largely responsible for the composition of the 1837 Report of the Select Committee on the Protection of Aborigines which the Gurneys and Buxtons called “Aunt Anna’s Report,” and which had held up the Tasmanian genocide as a horror of white settlement that could not be repeated elsewhere in the empire. Gurney and women like her built up a fund of human capital of practical assistance: lecturers, letter-writers, experienced campaigners, and foot soldiers who circulated petitions, as well as highly-placed connections in government, in society, amongst the nobility and especially in the press (both in the dedicated and growing humanitarian press and in the more widely read weeklies and dailies). These skills, networks and techniques would be mobilized in service of the Wellington Channel campaign in 1851, (as indeed they had been during the Niger expedition), not least because again, the extended Gurney family was personally involved in the expedition.

Science, natural history, missionary activity and philanthropy were mutually entangled in London as they had been for the Franklins in Van Diemen’s Land, and provided further avenues for women’s participation in the public sphere. Many of the women who were successful “popularizers of science” in the mid-nineteenth century cut their teeth on humanitarian and philanthropic projects. They used those experiences and connections to reach out to an adult male audience at mid-century, even as they retained their roles as religious and ethical guides to

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1024 Clare Midgley, Women Against Slavery, 9-71; Porter, Religion versus Empire, 116-162.
the human and natural world in order to justify their trespass on the public sphere.\footnote{Bernard Lightman, \textit{Victorian Popularizers of Science: Designing Nature for New Audiences} (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 100.} Sarah Bowdich Lee was one among many such women, both an explorer’s widow and a successful popularizer of science. She accompanied her first husband, the explorer T. E. Bowdich to Africa in 1818, and after his death she supported herself and her children by writing popular books of natural history and editing her husband’s memoirs. As Mary Orr has noted, she was particularly adept in “dressing her learning in the female modesty of potential error,” using her edition of her husband’s last journey to present her own scientific findings, while begging indulgence for a young widow’s imperfect understanding of her husband’s work.\footnote{Orr, “Pursuing Proper Protocol,” 277-285. See also Lightman, \textit{Victorian Popularizers}, 102-103.} Her later works of natural history and travel narratives for children (published anonymously and under her own name) all bore the strong imprint of the broader humanitarian cause.\footnote{This was especially the case with her collection, \textit{Stories of Strange Lands; and Fragments from the Notes of a Traveller}. (London: Edward Moxon, 1835).} She would be an indispensible part of Jane Franklin and Sophia Cracroft’s networks in the autumn of 1851, alongside useful relatives of the Franklins like Charles Weld, Mary Anne Kendall, and Sarah Majendie, who were connected by profession or by marriage (or both) to imperial, scientific, and naval society (and societies).

Jane Franklin was also keenly aware of the need to have the periodical press on her side as much as possible. Her experiences both in Van Diemen’s Land and during the 1849 Mittimatalik map panic had taught her how crucial it was to have both sympathetic agents in the periodical press who could represent her views to a wider public, as well as able and willing contacts in society to circulate the “right” articles and interpretations amongst influential people. In 1850-51, she and Sophy put these pieces in play. They had excellent contacts at the \textit{Athenaeum} where C. R. Weld was crucial (as he had been in 1849), as was the Métis intellectual
Alexander Kennedy Isbister, whose grandfather had sheltered John Franklin at Cumberland House in 1818, and whose uncle William Kennedy later commanded two of Jane’s private expeditions. They also had help at the *Nautical Standard*, while Barrow fed sources to the *Morning Herald*, though this was far from reliable. But by far their most important contacts were at the *Morning Chronicle*, and especially with the editor John Douglas Cook and subeditor Phillip Harwood. Barrow urged them to cultivate the *Chronicle* in the first place “as it is more read than the Herald and taken by the Board of Admiralty.” The women had done so since at least 1850 (and probably earlier) and by 1851 Sophy’s journal indicates that Harwood and Cook dropped by the house constantly, asked the women in advance before running articles, and published nearly everything that Sophy, Jane and their supporters wrote. Both Jane Franklin and Sophia promoted the *Chronicle* to their supporters, describing the paper as “the organ of the Arctic Question.”

Like imperial webs of knowledge, the webs of information and connections that Jane Franklin and Sophia Cracroft wove in 1851 were fragile, subject to breaking, and required constant maintenance. They knew that their success depended on mobilizing their different femininities as a white middle-class spinster niece and an upper-class naval wife, as they traded

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1029 Their principal contact at the *Nautical Standard* was a Mr. Buxton, but I have been unable to determine whether or not he was related to the wider Buxton-Gurney-Fry clan.
1031 SPRI MS 248/162, Sophia Cracroft Journal, 27 September, 1851.
1032 SPRI MS 248/162, Sophia Cracroft Journal, 20 September, 1851; Jane Franklin wrote to Scoresby in October that they had forwarded his letters to the *Chronicle* because, “that journal Mr Barrow tells us is decidedly that which is of most authority in Arctic matters & is taken in and exerts an influence at the Admiralty.” WL&PS SCO 819 Box P, LJF to WS, 16 October, 1851.
in what Vanessa Smith has called an “affective economy” of friendship to drum up support. Their roles complimented each other: Jane could be fragile, dedicated and maternal, while Sophy, in her devotion to her aunt, could be abrasive and even abusive to those who got out of line (she was described by one contemporary as “a good hater.”) It was their own companionship, more than those made with others or even that with the missing John Franklin, around which their world turned. They were becoming ever more closely welded together, writing in each other’s journals and composing joint letters. In letters to the dead John Franklin, Jane would write that Sophy “has been to me as a daughter since E’s marriage,” and Sophy that “I cannot express to you how entirely I honor and love her, and to be permitted to endeavour to comfort her and share her sorrow is a privilege which I value above any other.” Both women saw this companionship as indispensible. That relationship lies at the center of their archive. All of the emotional and epistemological shocks they received in 1851 registered as existential threats to their companionship, and were dutifully (and often furiously) recorded by Sophia, whether they came from indigenous interpreters or naval officers. That companionship had, by 1850, completely eclipsed Jane’s relationship with Eleanor, who was now completely estranged from her stepmother.

Among the most important tasks of Jane and Sophy’s networks was to circulate the argument that any kind of European evidence trumped native intelligence even if there was no narrative and no eyewitness to support or counteract it. This was, of course, the opposite of what they had done in 1849, when they had argued that Inuit communication networks were sufficiently widespread, and Inuit intelligence sufficiently reliable, that both could be incorporated into the instructions of expeditions looking for Franklin. Unlike the Mittimatalik

1036 Quoted in ibid., 212-213.
map, however, Adam Beck’s depositions that the crews had been murdered in Greenland were indisputably unhopeful, and therefore had to be counteracted. In October of 1850, Ross’s report, Adam Beck’s depositions and Penny’s and Ommaney’s reports to the Admiralty were published in the *Times.*\(^{1037}\) Though their inclination was to disbelieve Beck’s story, nevertheless the editors published his deposition in full, inviting “some learned philologists to solve the problem” and translate it.\(^{1038}\) Jane Franklin wrote to William Scoresby that the “deplorable story of the Esquimaux” had at first “made me very uneasy” but that both she and Sophy felt that the Cape Reilly relics “at once demolished the Esquimaux story.”\(^{1039}\) Her contacts at the *Morning Chronicle* made a similar argument that the Cape Reilly relics, “conclusively dispose of the absurd rumour of their having been set upon and murdered in Baffin’s Bay.”

Not all members of expedition families concurred with Jane and Sophy’s strategy of burying indigenous evidence that was unhopeful. In particular, Anna Gurney took a different approach to Adam Beck’s testimony. An amateur philologist, Gurney translated Beck’s deposition after it was published in the *Times,* and several months later sent it to Edward Parry, her relative by marriage. He, in turn, forwarded it to Barrow, stating that she was “very zealous in the cause of our Missing Friends… [and] has bestowed a great deal of time & attention on the Report.”\(^{1040}\) At her own expense, Anna printed a circular for all the captains of the Arctic whaling fleet asking them to determine, to the best of their ability, where exactly “Omanek” was, where the massacre was supposed to have taken place. Parry then sent a copy to Barrow and to Captain Hamilton, the Secretary of the Admiralty, with the request that the Admiralty distribute

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\(^{1037}\) “The Arctic Expedition,” *The Times,* 1 October, 1850: 8.

\(^{1038}\) *Times,* 2 October, 1850: 8.

\(^{1039}\) WL&PS, SCO 819 Box P, Jane Franklin to William Scoresby, 21 Bedford Place, 14 October, 1850.

\(^{1040}\) NA ADM 7/192/22, W. E. Parry to John Barrow, Jr., Haslar, 24 February, 1851.
it to the whalers at Hull “with something like official Sanction.”¹⁰⁴¹ This was apparently done, to
Jane Franklin’s great irritation. She wrote, “this enquiry has been instituted at request of Miss
Gurney, who means well, but the consequences will be lamentable – we shall have all sorts of
fictions & foolish stories brought home – are not the relics of Cape Reilly enough… & say
something to counteract this.”¹⁰⁴²

Beck’s testimony lay dormant until the squadron returned in the autumn of 1851 when
Ross returned with Beck’s additional depositions. Ross stated unequivocally in his official report
and in letters to Lloyd’s Weekly and The Nautical Standard that he believed Franklins ships had
left Cape Reilly in the summer of 1846 and that “they had, on their attempt to return home round
the north end of the Pack, been wrecked on the east coast of Baffin’s Bay, and, in short, that the
report of Adam Beck is in every respect true.”¹⁰⁴³ Jane and Sophy’s networks of supporters
sprang into action to suppress the story, which acquired a dynamic life of its own. As soon as he
heard about Ross’s article, Harwood left the office of the Morning Chronicle to tell Sophia about
it, and also to warn her that it “had appeared as a matter of news in the Evg. Edition of Chronicle
& wd be repealed on Monday.”¹⁰⁴⁴ The next day, Lt. Sherard Osborn wrote to Sophia to ask, “if
he can do anything to set aside Adam Beck’s story wh is flying abt everywhere.”¹⁰⁴⁵ A flurry of
visitors descended on Jane and Sophy’s to offer their help in denouncing the “despairing story”:
Jane’s sister Fanny Majendie came promising to write to the editor of the Nautical Standard,
while Franklin’s sister Mrs Booth (Richardson’s mother-in-law) called “much excited – wd write
to Times,” and Weld brought them an article that he was preparing for the Athenaeum which

¹⁰⁴¹ NA ADM 7/192/22, W. E. Parry to Barrow, Haslar, 24 February, 1851.
¹⁰⁴² HBCA MG2 C1/40, Jane Franklin to William Kennedy, 19 March, 1851.
462, September 28, 1851: 7.
¹⁰⁴⁴ SPRI MS 248/241 BJ, Sophia Cracroft Journal, 28 September, 1851.
¹⁰⁴⁵ SPRI MS 248/241 BJ, Sophia Cracroft Journal, 29 September, 1851.
Sophia noted “will be very effective.” Meanwhile, Jane recorded (in Sophy’s diary and not her own) that she was “writing to & fro Mrs [Sarah Bowdich] Lee abt Adam Beck.”

Anna Gurney was not convinced, and Sophy noted with irritation that Sarah Lee “had seen Miss Gurney, who actually interpreted the signs of haste in quitting Beechey Bay, to an attack upon our people by the Esquimaux, by whom they might have been overpowered! Mrs Lee seems to have no suspicion that she is imperfectly informed as to the facts of this subject.”

Since the credibility of indigenous information was usually linked to the credibility of the Europeans who vouched for it, suppressing Beck’s depositions required destroying Ross’s reputational capital. In the press, letters and articles from Jane’s and Sophy’s network accused Ross of credulity, vanity, and moreover, a lack of sympathy and feeling. In the *Athenaeum*, Weld suggested that Ross was using Beck’s story for self-promotion, “having failed to discover the living bodies of Sir John Franklin and his companions, seems ambitious of securing to himself the notoriety of a summary, but very disagreeable, solution of their fate,” and demanded that the Admiralty contradict it, or be guilty of a dereliction of duty.

When Harwood did decide to publish Ross’s dispatch in the *Chronicle*, Sophy and Jane stayed up until midnight to write a preface to it, which claimed that Ross’s credulity and the revival of Adam Beck’s story was “calculated to bring anguish to the hearts of many a humble individual, ignorant of the facts, and incapable of weighing conflicting evidence.” Two days later, Sophy attacked Ross (anonymously in the *Chronicle*) for claiming that Franklin would have run out of provisions in 1846, writing that it was, “a double instance of that fertile imagination for which

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1046 SPRI MS 248/241 BJ, Sophia Cracroft Journal, 30 September – 1 October, 1851.
1047 SPRI MS 248/241 BJ, Sophia Cracroft Journal, 23 September, 1851.
1050 *The Morning Chronicle*, “The Arctic Expedition” October 4, 1851: 5.
the veteran Admiral has long been distinguished, and which it appears neither the snows of age
nor the ice of another Arctic winter has been able yet to chill.” Pointing out that Franklin was
provisioned for at least one more winter, she then added that “these ingenious creations of Sir
John’s fancy…. [were] necessary, before he drove Sir John Franklin and his crew back into the
dreadful bay, on purpose to be murdered.”1051 She also encouraged Sarah Bowdich Lee to speak
to one of her particularly gossipy contacts at Somerset House and to “[bring] forward Sir John
Ross’s villainy.”1052 When Penny’s surgeon Dr. Sutherland visited, Sophia “impressed upon him
the necessity of everywhere, publicly & privately denouncing the wicked fabrications of old
Ross & the absurd fallacies wh were entertained in Omnibuses, on Railways.”1053 When Captain
McClintock called on October 31st Sophia recorded that he “is disgusted with Sir John Ross’s
falsehood.”1054

The purchase of Beck’s testimony and Ross’s support was significant enough, however,
that the women and their supporters had to provide a new argument to counteract it. This was
what Weld had called the “argument from negative evidence,” one which they had been
developing on the basis of the evidence prior to Ross’s return, but which became more necessary
after the publication of his report.1055 In two articles for the Chronicle on September 13th and
15th, Sophia developed the first stage of this argument, that it was likely that Franklin and his
men were trapped behind a barrier of ice in Wellington Channel, and that life was sustainable at
such high latitudes.1056 She returned repeatedly to Penny’s discovery of open water beyond the

1051 [Sophia Cracroft] “The Arctic Searching Expeditions” Morning Chronicle, October 6, 1851: 5. Jane forwarded
the article to Cook, as she noted in her diary. SPRI MS 248/162, Jane Franklin diary, 4-5 October, 1851.
1052 SPRI MS 248/241 BJ, Sophia Cracroft Journal, 4 October, 1851.
1055 Or so he told Sophia. SPRI MS 248/241 BJ, Sophia Cracroft Journal, 15 September, 1851.
1056 Sophia had either drafted these articles herself or outlined them for Harwood – in any event, her diary records
that both Cook and Harwood met with her and promised a leading article on the subject. SPRI MS 248/241 BJ,
Sophia Cracroft Journal, 12-13 September, 1851.
ice barrier in Wellington Channel, with driftwood and “enormous numbers” of animals. “Now, with signs so indisputably hopeful,” she wrote, “will any one say that Sir John Franklin’s party are not still living, though unable to extricate themselves from the great northern ocean into which they have plunged?” She also relied on the evidence of Dr. John Rae, Richardson’s companion on the 1849 overland expedition who was still out looking for Franklin on the Canadian mainland. Rae detailed in a letter to Richardson how he and his companions had recently survived on very low provisions by living off the land. He added “we had by our own exertion, in a country previously totally unknown to us, obtained the means of subsistence for twelve months. Why may not Sir John Franklin’s party do the same?” Sophy bolstered Rae’s evidence with the recent English translation of Wrangel’s narrative of his 1821-24 expedition to the north coast of Siberia, in which he had also seen open water and a multitude of animal life. Taken together, she argued, both Rae and Wrangel proved that life was sustainable at high latitudes. In her journal, she recorded how she made this argument to any willing listener, often pulling out a copy of Wrangel or Rae’s letters in support.

The “argument from negative evidence” was enthusiastically propagated by Sophy’s supporters. Weld backed her up in the Athenaeum, arguing that it was certain Franklin had ascended Wellington Channel because there was no credible evidence to the contrary, pointing out that Franklin or his officers would have left documents in a cairn if they were going anywhere else. Scoresby also wrote a pair of articles (which he submitted to Sophy and Jane for insertion into the Chronicle) further developing the Wellington Channel case, and in

1057 “The Arctic Expedition” Morning Chronicle, September 13: 5.
1058 “Dr Rae’s Search for Sir John Franklin,” Times, September 30, 1851: 8.
1060 SPRI MS 248/241 BJ, Sophia Cracroft Journal, 1 October, 1851.
particular the high-latitude argument which depended on Rae’s and Wrangel’s evidence.\textsuperscript{1062} Sarah Bowdich Lee also wrote a letter to the \textit{Daily News} (signed “Arcticus”) in which she represented herself as a member of a large community especially concerned with Arctic affairs—a reader might reasonably have concluded that it was written by an Arctic officer. She directly addressed the problem of “traces”, writing, “Captain Penny has returned with the most certain evidences, not of the wreck of the ships in Baffin’s Bay, where they ‘ought’ to have foundered, but of their safety and prosperity and an advanced part of Lancaster Sound.” The absence of records, she argued, pointed not to a sudden, helpless “drifting out” in the pack ice, but rather a rapid response to the clearing of ice in Wellington Channel, and she made the case for survival at high latitude in an open polar sea. It was incumbent upon the Admiralty, she argued, to give Penny a steamer to return and solve the problem, and then presciently warned, “If they do otherwise, this Arctic question, which they like so little, will be an incubus on their bosoms for years to come. The very uncertainty in which it may be left will give it an undying vitality.”\textsuperscript{1063}

The “argument from negative evidence,” though highly speculative and emotionally charged, was designed to undermine the power of Beck’s written testimony in contrast with the “relics” of Beechey Island. But it depended in part on the credibility of the whaling captain William Penny, which was about to be thrown into doubt on the basis of his own written record of the search. As soon as he returned to Britain in September 1851, Penny immediately requested a steamer to return to Wellington Channel to finish, as he said, the search in which Austin had thwarted him. On the advice of the Arctic veterans Parry, Beechey, and James Clark Ross, the

\textsuperscript{1062} SPRI MS 248/241 BJ, Sophia Cracroft Journal, 10 October, 1851.
\textsuperscript{1063} [Sarah Bowdich Lee] Arcticus, “The Search for Sir John Franklin” \textit{Daily News}, September 22, 1851: 6. Jane Franklin’s diary indicates that Sarah Lee’s letter took a rather tortured path, and ultimately it was her publishers, Grant and Griffiths, who knew the editor of the \textit{Daily News} and smoothed its passage. Mrs. Lee took the opportunity to leave a petition with them, see below. SPRI MS 248/162, Jane Franklin diary, 19 September, 1851.
steamer was declined. On October 2nd, Jane and Sophy visited Barrow at the Admiralty, where they were interrupted by the arrival of Austin and Ommanney. According to Sophy,

A very painful & even stormy discussion took place. Captn. A declared his belief that my Uncle had not gone up Wellington Channel, & upon that point he was prepared to stand or fall. My aunt asserted her conviction that he had – and Captn. A said they must remain at issue upon that point…. Unfortunately Penny’s conduct was discussed & my Aunt alluded to his request for a steamer wh Austin declared he had never made!

Four days later, the Admiralty released Austin’s correspondence with Penny at the base of Wellington Channel, in which Penny had claimed that Wellington Channel required no further search. Jane recorded in her diary that she was “shocked” and that Sophia had immediately summoned Penny from Aberdeen to explain himself. On his arrival, they wrote a letter for him to the Admiralty asking for the chance to explain himself, and claiming that he had done exactly the opposite of what he had written – that he had in fact urged Austin to go up Wellington Channel. The letter was partly responsible for convening the demi-official Arctic Committee at the Admiralty a few weeks later to sit in judgment on the search as a whole (see below).

For Jane, Sophia and their supporters, bolstering Penny’s credibility was crucial to the success of their argument for Wellington Channel, at the expense of Austin’s. In both cases, the men’s professional credibility was directly related to their treatment of Jane Franklin and to their hope for the survival of her husband. After the stormy interview at the Admiralty on October 2nd, they ensured that Austin was vilified in print and in society as an unconscionable boor guilty of professional incompetence at best and heartlessness and ungentlemanly behavior at worst. On

1064 SPRI MS 248/162, Jane Franklin diary, 17/18 September, 1851.
1065 SPRI MS 248/241 BJ, Sophia Cracroft Journal, 2 October, 1851.
1067 SPRI MS 248/241 BJ, Sophia Cracroft Journal, 6 October, 1851; SPRI MS 248/162, Jane Franklin diary, 5 October, 1851 (NB from this point on, Jane’s diary is persistently off by a day).
1068 SPRI 248/241 BJ, Sophia Cracroft Journal, 12 September, 1851; 7 October, 1851; 9-10 October, 1851; PP 1852 [1435], Enclosure No 29, William Penny to the Secretary of the Admiralty, 437 Strand, 10 October 1851, lviii.
October 4th, Weld warned in the *Athenaeum* that, “the public will never acquit Capt Austin of a fearful neglect of his duty… and Capt. Austin, it may well be supposed, will never be able to forgive himself,” if it later emerged that any member of the expedition *might* have been saved by going up Wellington Channel.\(^{1069}\) He sent a copy to Sophy, together with a note “saying he thinks worse of Captn A than ever.”\(^{1070}\) While Jane kept to her room, apparently incapacitated by migraines and stress, Sophy repeated the story of the incident at the Admiralty to anyone who would listen, always referencing the physical harm it had caused her aunt. When Captain and Mrs. Ommaney visited on the 17th of October, Jane claimed to be so ill that she could not receive visitors, and Sophy wrote in her journal, “I urged [Ommanney] to come again, observing to Mrs O that conversation with her husband might have a healing influence after the interview with Capn A of wh she must have heard. They both assented, tho’ evidently did not wish to speak abt it.”\(^{1071}\) When the Admiralty’s cartographer Mr. Arrowsmith called, Sophy reported that “I told him of scene in Admiralty wh drove him into a state almost of fury…. He said he wd not if I had not assured him of the fact, have believed that any officer in the Navy could have so treated my aunt.”\(^{1072}\) When the junior officer Leopold McClintock came to visit them on the 31st, Sophy told him, “[Austin’s] manner was unfeeling and overbearing beyond anything I had ever witnessed,” which “seemed to disgust him.”\(^{1073}\)

Denigrating Austin in print and in social circles was one thing, but it was necessary at the same time to demonstrate widespread support for Penny, his version of events, and the Wellington Channel route. To that end, Jane and Sophia’s supporters organized a massive petition drive that began when Sarah Bowdich Lee called on September 16 “& took away

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\(^{1070}\) SPRI MS 248/241 BJ, Sophia Cracroft Journal, 4 October, 1851.  
\(^{1071}\) SPRI MS 248/241 BJ, Sophia Cracroft Journal, 17 October, 1851.  
\(^{1072}\) SPRI MS 248/241 BJ, Sophia Cracroft Journal, 27 October, 1851.  
\(^{1073}\) SPRI MS 248/241 BJ, Sophia Cracroft Journal, 31 October, 1851.
heading for Petition & paragraph for newspaper announcing it.”

By the 1850s, petitioning was a common and familiar method for the disenfranchised to make their political voices heard in British political culture. In addition to Chartists, petitioners for judicial mercy, and Corn Law dissenters, female petitioners often legitimated their political interest and their trespass into the public sphere as the consequence of their role as moral guardians.

The petition campaign escalated over the autumn, with petitions pouring into the Admiralty for months. Eighty-nine were received in total – so many, in fact, that the Admiralty’s clerks simply stopped replying to them and merely filed them, sometimes even without the date in which they were received.

Some were an incredible length – great long sheets of paper that the Admiralty clerk fitted with difficulty into the binding of the Admiralty files. They were signed by a wide variety of predominantly middle class people. There were jewelers, merchants, saddlers, joiners, bakers, shipmasters, ironmongers, tellers, grocers, booksellers and more. While the vast majority of the signatories were men, these were mixed petitions – sometimes husbands and wives signed them together, sometimes families signed as a body, but there were also a number of women who simply signed their names. Though the headings of the petitions varied, the message was the same: all the credible evidence pointed to Wellington Channel as Franklin’s “certain route,” and therefore the Admiralty was bound by honor to dispatch a steamer (ideally under Penny’s command) as soon as possible to that quarter.

Circulating the petitions required the use of all the intimate and trusted contacts within Jane and Sophy’s network. Jane’s sister Fanny Majendie (married to the geologist Ashurst

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1074 SPRI MS 248/241 BJ, Sophia Cracroft Journal, 16 September, 1851.
1077 The petitions have been preserved in one of the massive Admiralty files of the Arctic Search, NA ADM 7/611.
Majendie) laundered petitions through her own contacts in scientific and social circles.\textsuperscript{1078} Sarah Kay (Eleanor Porden Franklin’s sister) and her daughter Emily were responsible for getting up a petition at the naval hub of Greenwich.\textsuperscript{1079} Franklin’s sister Mrs. Booth was responsible for organizing one in Franklin’s hometown of Spilsby and neighboring Friskney.\textsuperscript{1080} The two key organizers, however, were outside the family, and these were Sarah Lee and John Barrow Jr. In addition to forwarding the petitions to her own extensive correspondence network and through her publishers, Lee personally walked them around various neighborhoods in London. Sophy reported on November 11 that she had “been with a Petition into Shops in South\textsuperscript{n} [Southampton] Row, Padding\textsuperscript{n} [Paddington], & Dawes & Edwards - & others.”\textsuperscript{1081} She also sent them to Anna Gurney, who in turn passed them onto her influential relatives.\textsuperscript{1082} Barrow, meanwhile, kept Sophy appraised of how the petitions were being received at the Admiralty, suggested new contacts through whom they could be laundered, and funneled news of the petitions to newspapers with which they did not have direct contact.\textsuperscript{1083}

Influence with the press was key to controlling how the petitions were both circulated and identified, for they needed to be promoted and reported upon, but could not be directly associated with Jane Franklin. This was because, while the Wellington Channel campaign had a sympathetic, moral dimension, it was also clearly a geographical problem, gendered masculine,

\textsuperscript{1078} Though she did not sign the one organized at her home in Castle Hedingham, her husband Ashurst was among the first to sign his name. SPRI MS 248/241 BJ, Sophia Cracroft Journal, October 18, 1851; ADM 6/11, Petition from the Inhabitants of Marlborough, 29 November, 1851.
\textsuperscript{1079} SPRI MS 248/241 BJ, Sophia Cracroft Journal, 31 October, 1851.
\textsuperscript{1080} SPRI MS 248/241 BJ, Sophia Cracroft Journal, 20 November, 1851; she did not sign it, but her husband, F. W. Booth the vicar of Friskney, did. ADM 7/611, Petition from residents of Lincolnshire and Dublin, 3 December, 1851.
\textsuperscript{1081} SPRI MS 248/241 BJ, Sophia Cracroft Journal, 11 November, 1851.
\textsuperscript{1082} Sophia was delighted to record on November 22 that she had received “A note from Mrs Lee saying that Miss Gurney had sent one of the Papers (Petitions) signed by Sir E Buxton, the Gurneys & Lord Bayring, & that another is to follow.” SPRI MS 248/241 BJ, Sophia Cracroft Journal, 22 November, 1851. Unfortunately, these petitions have been so closely sewn into the binding of the Admiralty’s files that they are impossible to unfold and check the signatories. NA ADM 7/611, Petitions from the residents of Cromer, Norfolk, to the Admiralty, 10 November, 1851.
\textsuperscript{1083} SPRI MS 248/241 BJ, Sophia Cracroft Journal, 19 October, 1851; 23 October, 1851.
and therefore Jane and Sophy did not want to be seen to promote it.\textsuperscript{1084} This was problematic, for on September 24\textsuperscript{th}, newspapers across the country, from the \textit{Lady's Newspaper} to the \textit{Northern Star} subsequently ran a report that originated in the \textit{Morning Herald} that “A requisition, promoted by Lady Franklin, calling upon the Admiralty to give Captain Penny the means of proceeding this year to pursue the traces of Franklin up Wellington Channel, was numerously signed” in London.\textsuperscript{1085} Sophy did her best to suppress this story. When the paragraph first emerged in the \textit{Herald}, she,

\ldots wrote to Mrs Lee & to Anne Weld abt it.\ldots Wrote \ldots [a] note to M Harwood begging him not to admit such a statement into Chronicle. Mrs Lee called & says (Tho’ without the confidence one cd desire) that she believes she has not spoken of my aunt’s approval of the Petition. I had afterwards a very long talk with her upon the subject with the map before us & I think made her understand it a little better.

Later in the day, when Alexander Isbister called on them, Sophia noted, “I told him of Petition & Herald paragraph. He quite agreed with the disadvantage of my Aunt’s being supposed to promote it.”\textsuperscript{1086} Much more acceptable was Harwood’s approach. He hinted at the petition campaign when he wrote in the \textit{Chronicle} that if the Admiralty was to send a steamer up Wellington Channel, it might well require, “such pressure from without as – we grieve to say it – has alone produced the measures of which we now see the partial result.”\textsuperscript{1087} He was alluding

\textsuperscript{1084} Indeed, while they used some family members to circulate petitions, they kept their involvement secret from others: Sophia assured John Franklin’s sister Henrietta Wright that “altho’ the Petitions were got up without [Jane’s] instigation, yet that the step had her sanction.” SPRI MS 248/241 BJ, Sophia Cracroft Journal, 22 September, 1851.
\textsuperscript{1086} SPRI MS 248/241 BJ, Sophia Cracroft Journal, 24 September, 1851.
\textsuperscript{1087} [Roger Harwood] “Sir John Franklin” \textit{Morning Chronicle}, 25 September, 1851: 5.
both to the petitions and to the public outpouring at the end of 1849 that had caused the squadron to be sent out in the first place (see Chapter 4).1088

These efforts produced significant results. Many “memorials” were got up by town councils, learned societies, and universities.1089 Others were arranged by parish, town or even by neighborhood.1090 Still others were left open in coffee houses for anyone to sign, as they were in the whaling port of Dundee. A few were organized by occupation: the employees of the Great Western Railway Company submitted one, while another was enigmatically signed “The Artizans of London.”1091 All of them argued that a steamer should be immediately dispatched to Wellington Channel and many of them specifically named Penny as its ideal commander. Sophy was delighted with them all. She loved petitions signed by “influential people” but also explicitly valued bulk over rank. In late November, for example, she instructed the organizer of the Boston petition, John Conington, to get as many signatures as possible for “numbers were of more consequence … than mere station.”1092 In other cases, she and Jane suggested that “distinguished” petitions be supplemented by others “with the signatures of the Tradesmen.”1093

The petition campaign also gave voice to the wider frustration of whaling communities with the government. This was not least because so many whaling ports in Scotland and the north of England felt especially connected to Arctic expeditions because of the manpower and

1088 Correspondents from Cardiff to Edinburgh also reminded their readers that the Arctic Squadron had undertaken by the Admiralty extremely reluctantly. The correspondent for the North Wales Chronicle recalled that “Originally the expedition had to be forced upon them [the Admiralty] by great pressure from without,” and now their failure to grant Penny a steamer, and their continued delay and deliberations on the Arctic Question “is most disgraceful to their lordships,” a position which the London correspondent for Chambers’ Edinburgh Journal agreed with. “What They Are Doing in the Great Metropolis,” North Wales Chronicle, October 2, 1851: 2; Chambers’ Edinburgh Journal, “Things Talked of in London,” iss. 408, October 25, 1851: 266-267.
1089 ADM 7/611, Memorial of the Provost, Magistrates, Clergy, and Inhabitants of the City of St Andrews, 21 October, 1851 to the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty.
1090 ADM 7/611: Petition from the Inhabitants of Yarmouth, 18 October, 1851.
1091 ADM 7/611, Petition from the Employees of the Great Western Railway Co, 30 October, 1851; Petition “From Artizans in the City of London”, 24 November, 1851 (whose 38 signatories noted that they were “called upon by a sense of public duty” to address the Admiralty. Their signers included at least seven women).
1093 SPRI MS 248/241 BJ, Sophia Cracroft journal, 28 November, 1851.
expertise they had historically provided, and many accordingly identified Penny in particular as a slighted man. The Dundee paper, for example, reported on October 12 that the petition was left open for public subscription in the Baltic coffee room, and was about to be taken to the Exchange coffee room, “where we cannot doubt but it will also be numerously and respectably signed.” This was not least because “several of the crew of the missing expedition belong to Dundee, or are related to parties resident here, it becomes almost a local duty that every gentleman in this town should lend his influence in overcoming the hesitations of the Admiralty, especially as Captain Penny has given admirable proof of his zeal, intrepidity and ability to command such an expedition.”

When the Dundee petition finally did arrive at the Admiralty, it was an especially pugnacious one, accusing the Lords of “dereliction of duty” in failing to provide for the missing men. In this way, the contest over the value of indigenous, vernacular, official and written evidence allied with local grievances and regional, cultural, and economic identification with the Arctic regions.

Jane and Sophia’s connections, then, effectively drew from their experience and connections as humanitarians, writers, and members of scientific and naval social circles to argue in the press, society, and the public sphere for a particular, emotional interpretation of the heterogeneous evidence brought back by the Arctic Squadron. Weld’s characterization of this as the “argument from negative evidence” was apt – because the insistence that Franklin was to be found up Wellington Channel depended on discounting the written testimony of both Adam Beck and William Penny, while accepting a speculative interpretation of the voiceless “relics” of Beechey Island. The petition campaign demonstrated that the argument had traction with a wide swath of the public, articulating as it did with regional identities and grievances. But this was no

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1094 “Another Proposed Arctic Expedition” Lloyd’s Weekly, October 12, 1851: 5.
guarantee that it would find favor where it mattered most – within the institution that Sophia and her supporters so frequently criticized as “hidebound” and “derelict”: the Admiralty.

Scripting the Arctic Committee: Autumn 1851-Spring 1852

In late October of 1851, the Admiralty convened the demi-official Arctic Committee to enquire into the conflicting evidence brought back by the Arctic Squadron, the friction between Penny and Austin, the evidence of Adam Beck, and indeed, the entire future of the search. It was compose entirely of naval officers: Rear Admiral William Bowles, Read Admiral Arthur Fanshawe, and the three Arctic veterans Parry, Back, and Beechey. As shown in Chapter 4, the broader group of the self-styled “friends of Franklin” constituted the Admiralty’s only source of Arctic institutional knowledge. Since they had originally come together in 1845 to write Franklin’s instructions, they had become agglomerated as the “Arctic Council,” which Stephen Pearce commemorated in a group portrait. The “Arctic Committee” was a subset of this informal “council” – an advisory body that was meant to be rational, deliberative, experienced, and professional, ostensibly free from the interference of informal influence. However, when Sophia’s journal is read in tandem with the Committee’s minutes, a picture emerges of her and Jane’s continuous efforts to influence the quality of the information, credibility of informants, and the decision-making process.

1095 W. Gillies Ross has argued that historians have wrongly pointed to the “Arctic Council” as an important advisory body during the search, misled in part by the existence of Pearce’s group portrait. He suggests that it was conflated with the Arctic Committee which was a demi-official but temporary body, and notes that several other contemporary Arctic historians (including Andrew Lambert, Barry Gough, Ann Savours and Ian Stone) do not believe that there was a formal “Arctic Council” ever convened precisely because there is no file in the Admiralty archives of such a council’s proceedings. My suggestion is that if a broader view is taken that understands both the continuing power of informal influence and knowledge within institutions into the 1850s on the one hand, and the ongoing significance of Arctic sociability on the other, that the multitudinous correspondence between Barrow, Beaufort, and the Lords of the Admiralty with the older polar explorers depicted in Pearce’s portrait (contained both within the Admiralty archives and the private collections of the explorers) should be considered as that missing archive of the Arctic Council. Furthermore, the fact that the “council” of explorers frequently socialized and deliberated outside the boundaries of the Admiralty walls and the fact that these deliberations were frequently reported upon in the press as the activities of the “Council” ought to have some weight. W. Gillies Ross, “The Arctic Council of 1851: Fact or Fancy? ,” The Polar Record 40, no. 2 (April 2004): 135-141.
and above all, the nature of the archive within its walls, principally by trying to script the words of William Penny. Read together, the official archive of the Committee’s deliberations, the private archive of the Franklin family, and the record of Adam Beck’s testimony in absentia illustrate not only how the debate over information was deeply inflected by gender, race, class, and intimacy, but also how that struggle imprinted the remainder of the Franklin search.

Jane and Sophia were convinced that the Committee was innately hostile both to Penny’s interests and to their own agenda. As previous chapters have discussed, their relationships with Franklin’s colleagues were by no means uniformly good; in fact the men of the wider “Arctic Council” (especially Beaufort, Richardson, and Sabine) had been materially involved in recuperating John Franklin’s reputation from the damage Jane was perceived to have done to it in Van Diemen’s Land. The women had been trying since 1848 to bolster good relations with these men. Parry and Beaufort seemed to be their most steadfast supporters; yet for reasons discussed below, neither was available to them while the Committee was sitting. Richardson was not sitting on the Committee, but his opinion carried weight: not only was he Franklin’s oldest friend, but he was also a member of the broader Council whose opinion was frequently solicited, in addition to being Parry’s neighbor and close friend at Gosport. Both Jane and Sophy wrote to him often, expressing mutual affection and begging for advice. Yet Richardson remained cool for the most part, seldom communicating with them except through Mary Anne Kendall,

1096 Parry and Richardson examined the Beechey Island “relics” together when they first arrived, and Richardson would frequently be called upon to repeat that duty. PP 1851 (97) Arctic Expeditions, No, 7, C-D. They were close friends by this point, as the Parrys had taken Richardson’s family under their wing while he was in the Arctic in 1848-9 (see Mary Richardson’s correspondence in SPRI MS 1508/38/1-59; see also SPRI MS 438/26/639, W. E. Parry to Lady Maria Stanley, 29 September, 1851). In the winter of 1851-52, they were in fact so chummy that on the eighty-second birthday of Richardson’s mother-in-law, Eliza Fletcher (the Edinburgh radical who was supposed to use poultry to prepare for revolution), Parry and Richardson entertained her together with a performance of charades and singing in the style seen on an Arctic expedition. Eliza Dawson Fletcher, Autobiography of Mrs. Fletcher of Edinburgh: With Letters and Other Family Memorials, ed. Lady Mary Fletcher Richardson (Edmonston and Douglas, 1875), 296.

1097 They also persistently asked Mary Anne Kendall to speak to him on their behalf. SPRI MS 248/241 BJ, Sophia Cracroft diary, 16 September, 24 September, 8 October, 1851; SPRI MS 1503/44/11, Sophia Cracroft to John Richardson, 21 Bedford Place, 10 October, 1851.
and was clearly unconvinced by the “argument from negative evidence.” Jane went so far as to try to offer him £500 in recompense for a life insurance policy he had forfeited to search for Franklin. To do so, she had her husband’s will opened to discover that she had, effectively been misusing her power of attorney over Franklin’s affairs to spend money from Eleanor Franklin’s estate, which was rightly Eleanor Gell’s to command. When word reached the Gells, both they and Frank Simkinson (Mary Simkinson’s son) broke from Jane, seemingly irrevocably, and leaving Jane in dire financial straits. The women were also nervous about the presence of George Back, Franklin’s old lieutenant (and Mary Anne Kendall’s former lover), with whom Franklin had had an acrimonious relationship, and whom Jane Franklin and Sophy Cracroft believed still harbored resentment towards all the Franklins and Jane in particular. They complained that he was untrustworthy (the “wicked Sir G. Back” as Sophia dubbed him) and frequently implied that this view was widely shared amongst other old explorers, and earnestly hoped that he would be excluded from the Committee altogether. These cool relationships cut off important channels of informal influence, a situation that both women found deeply frustrating.

At the same time, there was a real, measurable decline in the credibility of their solid contacts within the Admiralty. In the first week of the Arctic Committee, John Barrow Jr., the Secretary of the Admiralty Captain Hamilton, and the Admiralty Hydrographer Sir Francis Beaufort were all publicly exposed as Jane Franklin’s agents within the Admiralty. A letter of

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1099 This is a brief digest of a complex legal matter that is too lengthy to do justice to here. See F. Woodward, Portrait of Jane, 280-2.
1100 SPRI MS 248/107, Jane Franklin and Sophia Cracroft Letter Book, 2 April, 1851; SPRI MS 248/241 BJ, Sophia Cracroft Journal, 19 October, 1851, 27 October, 1851.
1101 Sophia wrote to Scoresby, for example, that “Sir Geo Back has I am sorry to say now taken his place at the Board, to the regret of all most deeply interested in their work.” WL&PS, SCO 819 Box P Sophia Cracroft to William Scoresby, n.d.; SPRI MS 248/241 BJ, Sophia Cracroft Journal, 15 October, 1851; 19 October, 1851; 27 October, 1851.
Jane’s to the American millionaire Henry Grinnell (who had privately financed the US expeditions in the Advance and Rescue) was published in dailies across Britain as soon as the Arctic Committee commenced. As she wrote of her “agitation and confusion of mind” at the return of the Squadron, and her determination to have Wellington Channel searched, she also assured Grinnell that Beaufort, Hamilton and Barrow, “will allege the necessity of prompt measures [at the Admiralty] with all their powers.” Jane and Sophy tried to keep the letter suppressed, but it was nevertheless republished widely, almost invariably with the headline “The Arctic Committee” or “Lady Franklin and the Arctic Committee.”¹¹⁰² In doing so, the letter directly linked Jane Franklin to the demi-official body’s work, conjuring her shadowy presence within the halls of the Admiralty. The publication of the letter meant that Sir Edward Parry, their most sympathetic ear, cut them off, “saying he cd not have any personal commun with us at present.”¹¹⁰³ Jane continued to try to contact him, but they did not hear from him (except through Mary Anne Kendall) for nearly a month.¹¹⁰⁴ After the Committee adjourned, Parry visited and discussed his long silence, “and to our great astonishment & amusement (he, too, evidently thinking it rather a good joke) told us that my aunt’s letter to Mr Grinnell was the cause – that it had actually been sent down to the Committee with other papers, and in some Paper where the names of Captn Hamilton & Mr Barrow & Adl Beaufort appeared – he had said at the Committee that he was going to see my aunt that day – but when this unfortunate letter appeared, some of them said that he had better not go to her!”¹¹⁰⁵

¹¹⁰² These are only some of the places in which it appeared: “The Arctic Committee” Daily News, 28 October 1851: 3; “The Arctic Committee” Caledonian Mercury, 30 October, 1851: 3; “The Arctic Committee: Letter from Lady Franklin” The Era, 2 November, 1851: 2; “Lady Franklin and the Artic (sic) Expedition” Lloyd’s Weekly, 2 November 1851: 3.
Denied direct access to the Arctic Committee, Jane and Sophia focused their attention on asserting William Penny’s credibility. They did so by attempting to take control of Penny’s archive, of his words both spoken and written, and of Penny himself. Penny and the other whalers practiced what Ballantyne has called a “littoral literacy,” characterized by a specific form of “useful knowledge” relative to the environment in which they worked and the records which they kept for their employers (and tended to keep from the public eye). While these forms of “useful knowledge” were crucial for the expansion of both imperial markets and the collection of imperial knowledge, whalers seldom thought of themselves as writers per se – writing home or to ships’ owners was a fundamentally different thing than writing for the public, and they tended to avoid the latter if possible. They were keenly aware of the fact that this was a form of writing significantly different from that used by the navy, and extremely sensitive to it. This was especially the case with Penny, as the surgeon on the Lady Franklin, Dr. Peter Sutherland wrote:

> His detailed descriptions are *sui generis*. A complicated net-work of valuable facts, fearlessly expressed opinions, most sanguine expectations, faithful inductions, and mere hypotheses, is what one may look for at his hands. Without rhetoric and unsophisticated, his arguments fell to the ground before men whose lives had ever been closely associated with figures.

Sophia was also frustrated by this, and would write of Penny in her journal, “his own imperfect understanding of the value of words & rambling way of explaining himself makes it almost impossible to get at his real mind.”

Penny’s weakness was Sophy’s strength. She traded in the written word: correspondence, articles, circulars and petitions formed the backbone of her networks of informal influence. That

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1106 Ballantyne, *Webs of Empire*, 126, 131-133.
1107 Ibid., 132; for whalers’ correspondence with their wives and families, see Norling, *Captain Ahab Had a Wife*, 165-261; Norling, “‘How Frought with Sorrow,” 422-446.
1109 SPRI 248/241 BJ, Sophia Cracroft Journal, 9 October, 1851.
which Penny loathed, she relished. Sophy saw Penny, wrongly, as a man who could be scripted and manipulated to keep on message, playing on his vulnerabilities and insecurities as a writer. Yet while Sophy rightly judged a great deal about Penny’s character, she underestimated him.

Truly, he was profoundly out of place, a whaling captain amongst naval officers, an Aberdeen man in the throbbing heart of London, a sailor on land, a man being judged by his words and not his actions. But she expected that her moral force and gendered identity as Franklin’s niece, combined with her skill in the written word, would compel the disoriented whaling captain to acquiesce to her demands. But while Penny depended heavily on his wife Margaret for advice (as he had done for years) and clearly saw Jane Franklin as another maritime wife in need, he was not willing, as he would later put it, to “dance attendance” on Sophia. 1110

After the publication of Penny’s correspondence with Austin, and in conjunction with her campaign to cast Austin as an ungentlemanly boor, Sophy tried to simultaneously cast Penny in society and in the public mind as a natural gentleman but one who was a man of action, not a writer. She struggled to transform Penny’s literary limitations into a source of moral strength and therefore geographical credibility. So she told Richardson that “Penny has the disadvantage (of wh he exaggerates the importance) of not writing with ease tho’ such letters as are his genuine composition are full of character,” while she wrote to Mary Anne Kendall “explaining the meaning of Penny’s words,” to enable her to make his case within naval social circles at Portsmouth. 1111

1110 Margaret Penny later accompanied her husband on an Arctic whaling voyage, becoming one of the first non-Native women to visit the high Arctic. Her journal of the voyage is published in W. G. Ross, This Distant and Unsurveyed Country. Penny’s correspondence with Margaret indicates that theirs was in some ways a typical maritime marriage, in which Margaret became his agent, a “deputy husband” on shore. See SPRI MS 116/63/114-116. William and Margaret Penny correspondence, and Chapter 2.

1111 SPRI MS 1503/44/11, Sophia Cracroft to John Richardson, 21 Bedford Place, 10 October, 1851.
faction term, but said how cd she be other than for him, when he is all for further search, Austin declares there shall be no more.”

Explaining the meaning of Penny’s words was one thing within the social circles of Sophia and her supporters, but it was quite another within the halls of the Admiralty to which the women had no access. Before the Arctic Committee convened, the women followed suggestions from Barrow and from the naturalist Robert Brown that Penny should write down his testimony first, in case he was “entrapped if not bullied into making contradictory statements.” Accordingly, Sophia and Jane either framed or personally wrote Penny’s testimony. As the Committee sat, they also reviewed his evidence on a daily basis, noting after his first appearance that “some of his answers are exceedingly good, others bad in every way, mere evasions. We wrote marginal notes w[h] set him right, or rather explain his [words] & put him in a better position.” Essentially, they wanted Penny to stand up and make the “argument from negative evidence” personally: that all the creditable evidence indicated that Franklin had gone up Wellington Channel (and had neither “drifted out” nor been killed by Inuit); that survival was possible at a high latitude; and that his own written record (his correspondence with Austin) should be set aside. He must say that he had always asked for a steamer and always believed in Wellington Channel, and if the written record read differently, then it was because he was a semi-literate sea captain who had let his passions overtake him. As might well be imagined, Penny was deeply uncomfortable with this arrangement. In fact, he felt that both his supporters and opponents were trying to extract words from him against his will and minutely examining

1113 SPRI 248/241 BJ, Sophia Cracroft Journal, 12 September, 1851; 7 October, 1851; 9-10 October, 1851.
1114 SPRI 248/241 BJ, Sophia Cracroft Journal, 28 October, 1851. At the end of the week, he presented the chairman with an extensive list of these corrections, most of which were rejected as being too extensive and substantive. PP 1852 [1435] 31 October, 1851, 60-62.
his decisions and conduct day after day. He loathed the experience, was stressed to the point of physical exhaustion, and vacillated daily between rage and apathy.

In addition to laying out Penny’s general argument, the women also wrote official letters for him, which were copied at the house. After the Austin-Penny correspondence was published in the *Times* on October 6, William and Margaret Penny left Aberdeen for London. When they arrived, Penny was too exhausted and overwhelmed to write anything, so Jane and Sophia wrote his official letter to the Admiralty for him, drawing on Barrow’s advice. According to Sophy, he was “delighted with his letter, and copied it here.”\(^{1115}\) In fact, it instigated the convening of the Committee, as Penny asked for a chance to officially explain himself. Reiterating that, “their Lordships know that my training has not been to write official letters,” the letter contained a new assertion that Penny had urged Austin to “‘Go up Wellington Channel, Sir, and you will do good service to the cause.”\(^{1116}\) No one ever heard Penny say this, and it may well have been an addition purely of Sophia and Jane’s making. In fact, on September 16\(^{th}\), Sophia recorded that Penny came “with his newly written dispatches…and confessed that he had left out sentence “Go to W. Channel Capn Austin” and I expressed myself to him very strongly & made him feel…the Mrs Penny came in the Evn & we spoke very strongly abt her husband’s omission of the sentence.”\(^{1117}\)

This background helps to explain Penny’s performance before the Arctic Committee. From the moment the hearings began on October 27\(^{th}\), Penny was anxious and defensive. As he started making the case Sophy had outlined, he stopped and asked, “Do you understand? As they say I sometimes put in a word that completely changes the sense of a sentence.”\(^{1118}\) Things went

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\(^{1115}\) SPRI 248/241 BJ, Sophia Cracroft Journal, 12 September, 1851; 7 October, 1851; 9-10 October, 1851.  
\(^{1116}\) PP 1852 [1435], Enclosure No 29, William Penny to the Secretary of the Admiralty, 10 October, 1851, Iviii.  
\(^{1117}\) SPRI 248/241 BJ, Sophia Cracroft Journal, 16 September, 1851.  
\(^{1118}\) PP 1852 [1435], October 27, 1851, 1.
from bad to worse when the chairman read Penny’s letter to Austin (in which he had claimed that Wellington Channel required no further search), and asked him to explain it. Penny said he had been angry – that he and Austin had been arguing for hours, and he was insulted that Austin had demanded his opinion in writing at all. “I told him everything that had taken place about the Wellington Channel,” he said, “which would have been worth fifty letters from me.” Later he added, “I was very angry at being written to at all by Captain Austin when we had conversed so long upon the very same subject…. Had I been cool I should have used better words.” When Austin was examined, he maintained that Penny had been both unreasonable and incomprehensible at the base of Wellington Channel in August, just before their terse correspondence. “I could not reason with Captain Penny,” he stated. “I could not get anything that was satisfactory. It was a sort of rambling conversation of which I could make nothing.” He struggled, he said, to understand whether Penny really thought Wellington Channel had been searched. “How I was able to maintain myself as an officer and a gentleman under the circumstances I cannot tell,” he said. Throughout his testimony, he presented himself as calm, rational and deliberative, as opposed to Penny’s mercurial moods. After Austin’s testimony, the letter that Sophia had written for Penny, in which he claimed he had told Austin to search Wellington Channel, was read out loud by Chairman Admiral Bowles in front of both men. It gave Austin the chance to unequivocally deny it; in effect, giving Austin the opportunity to say on record that Penny was a liar. Penny reported to Sophia that he had felt Austin had “endeavoured to prove him utterly unworthy of credit.” Shortly afterward, Barrow came to

1119 PP 1852 [1435], October 27, 1851, 8.
1120 PP 1852 [1435], October 27, 1851, 6.
1121 PP 1852 [1435], October 29, 1851, 34.
1122 PP 1852 [1435], October 29, 1851, 35.
Sophy and told her that Penny “ought to feel as if every member of the Committee were
concerned in proving him wrong, they were in fact trying to convict him.”

If William Penny felt that every member of the Committee was trying to convict him,
Adam Beck might well have felt the same way. His testimony about what he was told at Cape
York was the only written evidence of what had happened to the Franklin expedition, and
consequently its treatment was part and parcel over the broader struggle over the value of the
written word that lay at the heart of the Arctic Question. In the institutional context of the demi-
official Arctic Committee, the questions would be posed: how was indigenous testimony to be
weighed vis-à-vis vernacular knowledge, and what was its value when there was no European
record to corroborate it? How could it be evaluated given its broader context of
misunderstanding and partial translation? These geographical concerns were also linked to two
broader developments within the imperial information order: the growth of increasingly paper-
dependent, depersonalized bureaucracy since the 1830s, and a broader imperial reckoning
(within and outside the British Empire) with the consequences of indigenous literacy as native
peoples contested the conditions of colonial rule and engaged in new strategies of self-
representation in bids for self-governance. Greenland was not an exception to developments
in New Zealand, Australia, Africa and North America: within a decade of Adam Beck’s
testimony, there would be an explosion of Kalallit writing in the first Greenlandic newspaper,

Atuagagdliutit, nalinginarmik tusarumisasassumik univkat in which people from native

1124 SPRI 248/241 BJ, Sophia Cracroft Journal, 1 November, 1851.
1125 Laidlaw, *Colonial Connections*; Mary Poovey, *A History of the Modern Fact: Problems of Knowledge in the
Sciences of Wealth and Society* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1998); The work over the
last twenty years on indigenous literacy and its consequences is too vast to do justice to here, but see for example:
Jean Comaroff and John L. Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution: Christianity, Colonialism and Consciousness
in South Africa* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1991); Bayly, *Empire and Information*; Hall, *Civilising
Subjects*; Ballantyne, “Paper, Pen and Print,” 232-260. For examples in Russian and American empires, see Kan,
*Memory Eternal* and Paul Werth, *At the Margins of Orthodoxy: Mission, Governance, and Confessional Politics in
schoolteachers and seal hunters urged people to give up “European dainties and articles of clothing,” European food, and debts contracted with white traders, and repeatedly pointing out, as one seal hunter put it, that “The Greenlanders have great need of acquiring an approximate idea of their home affairs.”

The discussion of Beck’s testimony within the Arctic Committee also brought to Britain one of the characteristic elements of Arctic exploration and information: the constant struggle of Inuit interpreters for credibility and reputation. Hans Hendrik’s memoir of his four Arctic expeditions indicates that like Beck, he was constantly accused of stealing and lying, persecuted by sailors, and often threatened with corporal punishment and extreme isolation, as were several of the other Inuit interpreters with whom he worked. As “John” (Ebierbing, the brother-in-law of Eenoolooapik, Penny’s interpreter in 1840) cautioned Hendrik during his second expedition in search of Franklin, silence was always the best policy, pointing out that “we poor natives must be very careful with regard to ourselves.” The interpreters were in a constant irreconcilable position: their value to the expedition lay in their ability to communicate, and yet their silence was often the best guarantor of their safety. Beck came to notice because he had refused to be silent, not only insisting that he was reporting to the best of his ability what he had learned at Cape York, but also formally stating that he had been mistreated by Ross’s crew.


1128 Ibid., 57. For more on Ebierbing and his wife, Tookoolitoo or “Hannah” (both of whom were originally from Baffin Island and traveled to Britain and to America on ships of exploration) see Chauncey Loomis, “Ebierbing (ca. 1837-ca. 1881),” *Arctic* 39, no. 2 (1986): 186-187; W. G. Ross, *This Distant and Unsurveyed Country*, 52-58.

1129 PP 1852 [1449] Arctic Expedition. Further Correspondence and Proceedings Connected with the Arctic Expedition. Enclosure no 11, “English Version of the German Translation of an Esquimaux-Greenlandish Document,” 135-137. There are several translations of this document, made at different times, in different places, by different people, and all of which claim to be “literal” translations of the original. I am unable to determine which is
Now some of those crew and the officers of the expedition were called to testify against him in his absence, stating that he was unreliable, a drunkard and, as Austin put it, “about the worst description of a civilized savage I ever saw.”

Ross was Beck’s only defender. In his presentation to the Arctic Committee on October 31st, Ross said that he had been convinced by the Danish authorities that Adam Beck’s character was sound, because he was firstly, an educated Christian, and secondly, an Inuk (and therefore, in Ross’s estimation, incapable of lying) and thirdly, as both Ross and the Inspector-General Lewis Platon would later clarify, Beck had been threatened “very severely.” Ross stated, “The Resident at Godhavn informed me … that he had never known a man under these circumstances speaking falsely, and that he believed every word he said was true.” In Ross’s interpretation, the lack of any further records “may be considered a proof that Sir John Franklin had given up all hope of proceeding further, had determined on proceeding home, and was lost,” and therefore that he considered Beck’s report to be highly probable.

Silence and withdrawal were not an option for Qalersuaq, the Kalaaliit boy who had been brought to England from Cape York by Erasmus Ommaney, the Captain of the Assistance, for the express purpose of counteracting Adam Beck’s testimony. He had been on board the Assistance for a year, during which time he was christened “Erasmus York,” dressed up in blackface and mocked in the ship’s newspaper before being paraded at the Great Exhibition. Qalersuaq’s background was much different from Beck’s – he grew up beyond the territories of the Moravian missionaries, was neither literate nor part Danish, and consequently was regarded the best, nor do my linguistic skills permit me to make my own. I have chosen this one as it seems to have been the least edited, with the fewest words put into Adam Beck’s mouth.

1130 PP 1852 [1435], 29 October, 1851, 27; 4 November, 1851, 97.
1131 PP 1852 (390). Arctic Expedition. Copy of Further Correspondence which has been transmitted to the Admiralty between Admiral Sir John Ross and the Danish Inspector-General. Lewis Platon to John Ross, 6 February, 1852.
1132 PP 1852 [1435], 31 October, 1851, 54.
1133 Arctic Miscellanies, 89-93; “The Great Exhibition” Times, 11 October, 1851: 5.
by Ommanney and the other officers as a “pure Esquimaux” who, unlike the mixed-race Beck, was untainted by the outside world. On November 8th, he was brought before the Committee, accompanied by Ommanney, the Moravian bishop Peter Latrobe, and a Moravian missionary, Rev. Christian Beck.\footnote{PP 1852 [1435], 8 November, 1851, 135. LaTrobe, it should be noted, was also one of Jane and Sophy’s confidants. He may have been related to Charles LaTrobe, the governor of Victoria with whom the Franklins had been friendly in Tasmania. He had already been in correspondence with Sophia about Beck; in early 1851, he had dismissed Anna Gurney’s translation of his deposition, stating “I question how much reliance is to be placed on her skill in interpretation,” and in October, Sophia noted in her journal that he “entirely [acquiesced] in our view of Adam Beck’s deposition.” ADM 7/192/4, Peter Latrobe to E. P. Elsner, 30 January, 1851; SPRI 248/241 Sophia Cracroft Journal, 12 October, 1851.} He was questioned through the interpreters, with Christian Beck translating questions and responses between Inuktitut and German, and then LaTrobe translating into English. Qalersuaq admitted that he had told Adam Beck “a number of things, chiefly about the country,” which were recorded in his first deposition (see below). He maintained that though he had heard of shipwrecks, these were a long time ago, and that he had never heard anything about any murders. He was very reluctant to discuss Adam Beck’s character, apart to state again, as he had from their first meeting, that he was a liar.\footnote{PP 1852 [1435], 8 November, 1851, 137.} Adam Beck had always thought that Qalersuaq’s apparent hostility to him was because of the threats of Carl Petersen, Penny’s Danish interpreter. According to Beck, after Qalersuaq had been taken aboard Ommanney’s ship Petersen told both men to keep quiet about the Cape York evidence so that the expedition would remain out longer and they would earn more.\footnote{PP 1852 [1449], Arctic Expedition. Further Correspondence and Proceedings Connected with the Arctic Expedition, Enclosure No. 11, 136.} Ross would later corroborate this, writing both to the \textit{Nautical Standard} and to the Admiralty that Petersen had bullied Qalersuaq into contradicting Beck.\footnote{PP 1852 [390] Arctic Expedition. Copy of Further Correspondence… Rear Admiral John Ross to Secretary W. A. B. Hamilton, 10 March, 1852; Enclosure 6, John Ross to the Editor of the \textit{Nautical Standard}.} But in the spectacle of intimidation that the Arctic Committee constituted, this earlier intimidation was not entered into evidence. Any equivocation of
Qalersuaq’s was dismissed by the Moravian missionary, who (perhaps significantly) remarked that, “after the Esquimaux fashion. Erasmus [Qalersuaq] was very reluctant to speak out.”

In addition to interrogating Qalersuaq, Adam Beck’s first deposition was also presented to the Committee, as it had been translated by LaTrobe’s contacts in Germany. Designed to set the context in which the story should be understood, the deposition described a country, both in terms of its geography and its animal life. This kind of contextual information was a crucial element of Inuit geographical knowledge. Inuit utilize a complex and multidimensional spatial orientation; finding one’s position and one’s way requires observing and recording topography, wind direction, ice formation, animal movements, and constellations, among other features and phenomena. These subtle observations were normally narrated in meaningful sequences that could make reference to group histories, personal experience, or legends as further devices for orienting oneself within an animate landscape. These narratives were most meaningful to those within a group; to strangers, these narratives might be confusing and require clarification. Adam Beck was just such an outsider: he did not understand the dialect, he had had only fleeting contact with the informants, and when he had pressed Qalersuaq to tell him more, Petersen had kept them apart. Another deposition, the one originally printed in the *Times* which referred to the burning of the ships and deaths of the crew (and which Anna Gurney had also translated) was also presented to the Committee. Latrobe admitted that it was “imperfect,” because no one in the room or in his circle of informants knew Adam Beck’s dialect, and in fact, they could not work

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1138 PP 1852 [1435], 8 November, 1851, 137.
out if Beck had characterized the people at Cape York as “murderers” or “people.”1141 The difficulty may have lain with Beck as much as with the translation – as a man from southern Greenland, he had grown up with stories of people from the north being murderers and cannibals, and few of his fellow countrymen were willing to go on ships of exploration because of the danger of meeting them.1142 Two years later, when Hans Hendrik first met people at Cape York while he was serving as an interpreter on Elisha Kent Kane’s expedition, he wrote, “When first I saw these people, whom I knew nothing about, and nobody had examined, I feared they might perhaps be murderers, as they lived apart from any Kavdlunak [white people].”1143

The version of Adam Beck’s testimony that was entered into the records of the Committee was marked not only by the difficulties of translation, but also by the tensions of the expedition and the constant struggle for credibility and for safety in an unfamiliar environment which had pitted Qalersuaq and Beck against each other. But the ambiguity in the Committee chamber was interpreted in the press and by Sophia and Jane Franklin as a triumphant – and comical – rebuttal of Adam Beck’s testimony. On December 8th, the Morning Chronicle published an article entitled “Alleged Murder of Sir John Franklin and the Crews of the Erebus and Terror in Baffin’s-Bay.” Harwood pointed out that, “the public mind has been much agitated for the last year and a half by the report of this awful catastrophe, given upon the authority of

1141 PP 1852 [1435], 8 November, 1851, 138.
1142 Parry, it should be noted, should have been aware of this condition and how it might have affected Beck’s understanding of the initial report. His own interpreter on his first Arctic expedition, John Saccheuse, had been inspired to go only because he wished evangelize the northerners even though, as Parry reported, he “always entertained an idea that the people to the North were wild and fierce.” SPRI MS1199/1, William Edward Parry, private journal, HMS Alexander, August 10, 1818, 22. Wilhelm A. Graah also noted that this was still the case in 1828, and moreover, that the fear was reciprocated, because “The Greenlanders about the Bay of Disco habitually call the Eastlanders cannibals, and apprehend that they will, one day or the other, cross the country and eat them up,” Narrative of an Expedition to the East Coast of Greenland, Sent by the Order of the King of Denmark, in Search of the Lost Colonies..., trans. G. Gordon Macdougall (London: John W. Parker, 1837), 31.
1143 Hendrik, Memoirs, 25. He later married a woman from Cape York and lived there for six years, writing, “The amiability of these unbaptised people is to be wondered at; they are never false, but always loving towards each other,” 44.
Adam Beck,” and then reproduced the first of Beck’s depositions, which had been translated to read:

While I have been here there have been many ships. There were also many people upon the land. On the islands there were but few native people. A good many show themselves when pleased.…. There were birds, such as eider fowl…. There were also other little birds, that look white, that are found in the country, and also ravens – little ravens and great ravens – and various birds mixed together….there is a little bird with red at the top of the head. The people here are few. And this is written by me from my heart.”

This was represented as being the sum total of Adam Beck’s communication as well as a translation of what had been published in Inuktitut in the Times the year before. It was made to seem ridiculous, a child’s tale, a fairy story, and Harwood added, “We recommend an attentive perusal of this document to the Honourable Hudson Bay Company, and to - Punch.” Sophy was delighted, gleefully writing that the recommendation to “Punch” constituted “the truly exquisite finale of the Adam Beck story,” and she wrote a note to Harwood to thank him for it. A person (possibly Sophy) subscribing themselves “Risum Teneatis” wrote to the editor of the Chronicle on the 10th not only mocking the “exquisite fairy tale” of the “venerable Adam Beck” but also expressing credulity, bordering on disgust, that the Admiralty had already wasted so much time and energy on the matter. The same day, Jane Franklin visited Mrs. Lieves (Edward Sabine’s mother-in-law) and “read the 2 Adam Beck articles to them…much amused. Had told the story at dinner to Miss Oldfield, F & Marianne.” So far as they were concerned, this was their victory over the troublesome evidence of the literate interpreter. He had been silenced in the very institutional context that they had been trying so hard to influence, and

1144 “Alleged Murder of Sir John Franklin and the Crews of the Erebus and Terror in Baffin’s-Bay - Deposition of Adam Beck,” Morning Chronicle, 9 December, 1851: 3.
1145 SPRI 248/241 BJ, Sophia Cracroft Journal, 8 December, 1851.
1147 SPRI MS 248/162, Jane Franklin Journal, [10 December, 1851].
though they had had little to do with it, still they celebrated the ridiculing of Adam Beck as a triumph.

That vituperative glee at Adam Beck’s humiliation was the more sweet for the women because it came in the broader context of the partial defeat of their agenda within the institutional context of the Admiralty. In mid-November, they had been rather pleased about their prospects of conquering that venue through their scripting of Penny and review of other officers, all while apparently remaining out of sight. Sophy, at any rate, noted with delight when Lt. Sherard Osborn’s visited her to express his “inward conviction that we had been behind the scenes in prompting questions.” ¹¹⁴⁸ A few days later, Sophy recorded in her journal that Parry said, “many things had come out & been said of w'h we could know nothing – little imagining, good man, how much we really do know, & when & how certain strings have been pulled.” ¹¹⁴⁹ But Sophia’s confidence was misplaced. Rather than concurring with the “argument from negative evidence” that she and her networks had built up over the fall, the Committee based its findings entirely on the written records of the squadron – judging Penny’s correspondence with Austin above his reported speech and his testimony before the committee. This meant that Austin was found blameless in not searching farther up Wellington Channel, and Penny was judged to have only thought of the idea when he returned to England and “found everybody disappointed.” ¹¹⁵⁰ While they admitted that “some desultory conversation… appears to have taken place” on the subject of a steamer, this they gave no weight to it. The portrait of Penny as a man of action and not of letters that Sophia had propagated through her contacts and in Penny’s testimony worked against

¹¹⁵⁰ PP 1852 [1435], Report of the Arctic Committee, iii.
him, as the Committee members concluded that his written opinions were “very laconic [but] sufficiently explicit.”  

As for Wellington Channel, they all agreed based on the relics at Cape Reilly and Beechey Island that it required further search and cautiously recommended that another expedition be dispatched the following spring. Here too, however, they couched their opinion with a careful nod to, and caution for, Jane Franklin and Sophy Cracroft, writing:

> We should deeply grieve at being considered capable of treating with coldness or indifference the natural and praiseworthy feelings of those who are still without certain information of the fate of their nearest and dearest relatives, who in this state naturally cling to hope “even against hope.” And whose thoughts (as might be expected) turn eagerly towards any future explorations, in any and every direction; but we have felt at the same time, while considering calmly and carefully this difficult question, that we have an equally important duty to perform towards those brave and meritorious men whose lives must be risked in this arduous and perilous search, and to reflect in what manner it may be best conducted with a due regard to their safety.  

Here the Committee’s “calmness and carefulness” was directly contrasted with Jane Franklin’s carefully stage-managed hope and anxiety. Though her anxiety did her credit as a loving and devoted wife, it could not be allowed to intrude upon matters of state. Neither was hopefulness creditable as a useful means for the interpretation of evidence, or rather, the lack thereof. Sophia took note of this, writing in fury in her journal that the statement was caught between the “Scylla and Charibdis (sic)” of anxiety and pragmatism, and that “one w’d have though that this bug bear had been chased away for ever, by facts.”

To some degree, each of the successive voyages sent in 1852 and afterwards bore some imprint of the struggle over archives and evidence in 1850-51. They were, of course, entirely misdirected. Franklin had indeed gone up Wellington Channel in 1846 and circumnavigated Cornwallis Island, but then had been driven by drifting ice not into Baffin’s Bay, but to the

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1151 Ibid., iv.
1152 Ibid., v.
1153 SPRI 248/241 BJ Sophia Cracroft Journal, 5 December, 1851.
southwest into Victoria Channel, far beyond the barrier of ice in Barrow’s Straits. In 1852, the Admiralty dispatched Sir Edward Belcher with five ships to search for Franklin up Wellington Channel. Part of his brief was to scour Beechey Island for documents; none were found, but the three graves of Franklin’s men were exhumed. A search up Wellington Channel, three winters spent at high latitude, and repeated sledging expeditions produced no further traces of the Erebus and Terror. What they did discover was the other missing Admiralty search expedition, a posse of travelers on foot from HMS Investigator including Captain Robert McClure and Lt. Samuel Gurney Cresswell. The Investigator was frozen up and crushed near Melville Island, and the traveling party had made their way east to look for help. In the process they made a Northwest Passage on foot in 1853, and unwittingly laying the groundwork for twenty-first century Canadian claims to Arctic sovereignty. The Resolute and Intrepid, in Belcher’s squadron, would also be abandoned in 1853, as would the Assistance and Pioneer in 1854, bringing to five the number of British ships left in the ice. Only the Resolute would survive, drifting out in the pack ice to be recovered by American whalers, refitted, and eventually presented to Queen Victoria as a symbol of Anglo-American friendship.

There were also several private expeditions dispatched in search of Franklin. Two were Lady Franklin’s own. The first was dispatched before the Wellington Channel controversy took hold in 1851, when Jane sent the Prince Albert back out under the command of William

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1154 As they would be again in the 1980s. Beattie and Geiger, Frozen in Time.
1155 Savours, Search for the North West Passage, 242-247, 251-269.
1157 Savours, Search for the North West Passage, 264-267.
1158 The Resolute has continued to be a symbol of the “special relationship” to the present day. After being broken up at Chatham in 1880, a “writing table” was constructed from her timbers and presented to President Hayes. It has been used either in the Oval Office or in the president’s private study by every U.S. President since Hayes, with the exception of Johnson, Nixon, and Ford, and is currently in use by President Barack Obama. White House Museum, Resolute Desk - White House Museum, http://www.whitehousemuseum.org/furnishings/resolute-desk.htm (accessed April 23, 2013).
Kennedy, together with John Hepburn (who had returned from Van Diemen’s Land to assist in the search) and the French Lieutenant Rene Bellot. The second came after the controversy, when Jane dispatched the *Isabel*, under the command of Edward Augustus Inglefield, on special loan from the Admiralty. It is especially notable that while the Admiralty expeditions were searching Wellington Channel, Jane Franklin asked Inglefield to sail up Baffin’s Bay to further investigate Adam Beck’s testimony and to search the entrances to Baffin’s Bay. Inglefield wrote from Holstenborg, “I intend putting his veracity to the test, by offering him £20, if he will accompany me to the spot of the catastrophe he reported, and prove the truth of his relation,” but Beck apparently refused.1159 Inglefield sailed farther north than any vessel before him, and thought that he had entered the mythical “open polar sea,” prompting “wild thoughts of getting to the Pole – of finding our way to Behring Strait – and most of all of reaching Franklin.”1160 Another American expedition was bankrolled by Henry Grinnell and commanded by Elisha Kent Kane. He would take Hans Hendrik as an interpreter with him on the voyage that ended with Kane also losing his ship, nearly starving to death, returning to America a hero and then dying of his various diseases, while Hendrik fled Kane’s abuse and lived with the Inughuit at Cape York.1161 John Ross also made a proposal for a new expedition to the Admiralty in March of 1852, asking permission to take HMS *Lady Franklin* and *Sophia* to Greenland to investigate further, John Barrow wrote a secret memo to the Lords of the Admiralty. He noted that while the “alleged bad character of Beck,” the disbelief of the other officers, and the lack of any other stories about the crews’ murders argued against the truth of the story, “It cannot however be denied… that the narrative is within the bounds of possibility.” If an expedition was sent to Greenland, however,

1159 RGS JMS 17/24, Jour Mss Arctic, 1853, Abstract, from letters received from Commander Inglefield, RN of the Screw Discovery Vessel Isabel, July 19, 1852.
I would earnestly recommend that it should at present be kept a profound secret, for no man should be allowed to join the squadron now preparing without the full conviction that the parties exist for whom he is going to search, and such a measure of doubt as would be cast upon it by their Lordships even entertaining the question, would at once rob this expedition of all that hearty enthusiasm which can alone sustain it in vigour, or lead it to success.\footnote{NA ADM 7/192/4, John Barrow to the Lords of the Admiralty, 4 March, 1852.}

Here Barrow was reproducing the crux of Jane Franklin’s core argument – that the success of the searching expeditions depended on the hope entertained by both the searchers and the public at large. Anything that might derail that hope would lead to failure – even, and perhaps especially, if it was indigenous intelligence.

The judgment of the Arctic Committee and the activities of Jane and Sophy’s domestic cabinet had serious ramifications for the two men whose voices the women alternately tried to script and to suppress. Publicly accused of lying by Austin and belittled by the final report of the Committee, Penny felt as if his career and his character had been shattered, and he at least partly blamed the women. Sophy recorded that in January, Penny was preparing to return to Aberdeen, apparently without visiting the women. When he finally made his appearance, she recorded that:

\[\text{[He] said he was tired of dancing attendance, spoke haughtily & unkindly of having followed our advice even at the sacrifice of his own interests…. He ‘Miss Sophia’d’ me very much & was very trying. At last I told him that a day wd come, when he wd think more kindly of his friends and be sorry for many things he had thought of them. He said, ‘perhaps so’. He was going into the City & I begged him to be here again to see my Aunt abt 3 as we were going out at 3.30. He promised to do so if possible…. He did not however return.}\footnote{Quoted in Clive Holland, “The Arctic Committee of 1851: A Background Study, Part II.” \textit{Polar Record} 20, no. 125 (1980): 117.}

He wrote to Barrow at roughly the same time, “I entered upon this search with the ardour of a generous… seaman. My God what is the return, that I have met with: Robbed of everything but my integrity that they cannot rob me off (sic). It is hard indeed.”\footnote{BL add ms 35306, William Penny to John Barrow, nd [December 1851/January 1852 by context] Penny’s fortunes, and those of his family, would remain tied in more than one way to Jane and Sophy. This was not least}
Adam Beck’s credibility was similarly shattered. For having failed to negotiate the troubled dictates of speech and silence that governed the lives of Inuit interpreters on Arctic expeditions, he was publicly ridiculed and branded a liar. These accusations did not remain in Britain, but traveled to Greenland and plagued him for at least the next decade. When the American Charles Francis Hall set out on his first expedition to try to find more Inuit news of Franklin in 1860, he stopped in Greenland and interviewed Beck. Hall wrote, “Even here his name is blackened by the public notoriety given him abroad as the man who fabricated falsehoods relative to the destruction of two ships … and the violent deaths of the officers and men supposed to refer to Sir John Franklin’s expedition.” He had fallen into extreme poverty and was unable to feed his wife and three children, and Hall reported that he had “lost all self-respect, for all shun him.”

Yet despite all of this, Beck continued to insist that he had only reported what he had been told, and continued to report the abuses he had endured on the expedition. Hall did not transcribe his conversation with Beck, but did write that Beck insisted that Petersen and Ross’s second, Commander Phillips “repeatedly told Beck that he was a liar, and otherwise abused [him].” It cannot be determined whether Beck wrote about his experiences again in the developing Kalalliit public sphere in Greenland after the establishment of Atuagagdliutit, nalinginarmik tusaruminasassumik univkat, or the “Greenland Journal” in 1861. It should also be noted that the aspersions Jane Franklin cast upon his character as a

because the Lady Franklin, after she was returned to the whale fleet, would be his ship for many more years, and so would the Sophia. He would use them both on repeated whaling voyages, and take them when he started his own shore whaling venture on Baffin Island in 1857, on which his wife Margaret accompanied him, and where he also met up with, and utilized the skills of, Tookoolitoo and Ebierbing. W. G. Ross, This Distant and Unsurveyed Country, xv-xli.

1165 Hall, Life with the Esquimaux, 67.
1166 Ibid., 66.
1167 Extracts from the journal were published by Heinrich and Signe Rink from the 1860s to the 1890s, but the bulk of these remain untranslated from the Danish, and in the English version of Heinrich Rink’s publications, the Kalalliit contributors remain anonymous. Archival editions of the journal itself (which continues in the modern bilingual publication Atuagagdliutit/Gronlandsposten) have been digitized under the title Atuagagdliutit, but to the
“mendacious half-caste Esquimaux” who invented a story “when he desired to put an end at once to the search, in order to get earlier back to the home he had been enticed to leave” have not faded with time.\(^{1168}\) John Franklin’s most recent biographer, the naval historian Andrew Lambert, never mentions Beck by name, referring only to his “horror story” as “one of many frauds perpetrated on men like Ross, men who were willing to suspend disbelief.”\(^{1169}\)

**Conclusion**

The Wellington Channel controversy revolved around the uneven, dynamic and contested intelligence produced by the Arctic information order, and the effort to interpret it directly pitted Jane Franklin’s and Sophia Cracroft’s networks against the Admiralty and John Franklin’s old friends and colleagues. Ultimately, the controversy testified to the power of silence – the silence of the Arctic ice, and from the Franklin expedition itself, a silence in which an “argument from negative evidence” could be made, circulated, and affirmed – when ranged against a bewildering, proliferating cacophony of conflicting intelligence. This included the voice of Adam Beck, who consistently asserted his own credibility as an interpreter and rights as a human being. As they tried to establish control over the heterogeneous archive produced by the Arctic Squadron, Jane Franklin, Sophia Cracroft and their supporters actively sought to further unsettle already unstable hierarchies of authority and above all, to silence Adam Beck. They did so by asserting their moral irreproachability as victimized women, while they attacked the characters of naval officers

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\(^{1168}\) Jane Franklin to the Lords of the Admiralty, 24 February, 1854, in *As Affecting the Fate*, 105.

like Austin and Ross and portrayed them as ungentlemanly, and while closely scripting the
whaler William Penny so that he would adhere to their argument that he was essentially a
gentleman, albeit a diamond in the rough. Most of all, they did so by attacking the character of
Adam Beck as a “mendacious half-caste Esquimaux” who was therefore inherently
untrustworthy. In the process, the women staged themselves as victims many times over, even as
their actions led to serious consequences for all those involved. The Wellington Channel
controversy also testifies to how they strategically erased (or thought that they erased) evidence
that might point to excessive interference and the kind of calumny that Jane had been subject to
in Van Diemen’s Land. All the while, they drew on techniques and connections built up
haphazardly over their imperial careers, enabling them to organize petitions to the Admiralty and
to attempt to directly influence the Arctic Committee.

There is no other period of the Franklin searches that is so thoroughly well-documented
as the Wellington Channel controversy, so it is impossible to say definitively whether this flurry
of complex activity continued at quite such a pace and intensity as it did in the autumn of 1851.
But together, the Wellington Channel Controversy and the Mittimatalik map panic that preceded
it demonstrate how Jane Franklin and Sophia Cracroft used every tool and resource at their
disposal to assert their authority and to craft and disseminate their interpretations of Arctic
intelligence, and to try to influence both government bodies and public opinion. This did not
mean that they were universally successful – far from it. It was not until the conclusion of the
Franklin searches between 1854 and 1859, and their attempts to assert control over John
Franklin’s legacy and his archive, that they truly came into their own as gatekeepers of
information and guardians of reputation.
CONCLUSION: SECURING JOHN FRANKLIN’S LEGACY, 1854-59

In the middle of the night in late October of 1854, a carriage hurtled up to a country house near Brighton. A man leapt out and hammered on the door (“a violent, pealing rap,”) and demanded to see Sophia Cracroft, who was at the house with Jane Franklin and her sister Lady Mary Simpkinson. Sophy went to the upstairs window in her dressing gown. The man announced that he was a Special Messenger from the Admiralty, sent by John Barrow Jr. to tell the women that the HBC explorer Dr. John Rae had returned with news of the missing expedition. When Sophy demanded more information, the man hesitated, and instead tried to throw a package to her containing a letter from Barrow and a copy of Rae’s report. Sophy later wrote to her cousin Mary Franklin Price on Norfolk Island off the east coast of Australia, “No words can describe the horror of that night.”

The contents of Rae’s report were deeply shocking. Though he had long been employed in the Franklin searches, in 1853-4, Rae was trying to work out whether Boothia was an island or a peninsula. He had only a small party with him, including the young Inuk William Ouligbuck as an interpreter, whose father had served with Franklin and Richardson in the 1820s. In the spring of 1854, they encountered a group of Netsilingmiut while traveling on the Boothia Peninsula. In this chance meeting, the Netsilingmiut told Rae, through Ouligbuck, that they had heard of a group of about forty dead white men who had starved to death four years earlier on King William Island, not far from Cape Walker; having lost their ships, they were heading south for the Great Fish River. The Netsilingmiut hunters were carrying several personal possessions, scientific instruments and pieces of plate that had been discovered near the bodies, which Rae purchased. He wrote a report to his employers at the Hudson Bay Company, who sent it to the

1170 TAHO NS 1004/1/15, Sophia Cracroft to Mary Franklin Price, 4-21 November, 1854.
Admiralty, who leaked it to the press on October 24th, 1854. It included a passage that was reproduced in almost every paper in the British Isles, that “from the contents of the kettles, it is evidence that our wretched countrymen were driven to the last dread alternative – cannibalism – as a means of prolonging existence.” 1171

The Rae report has long been seen as a singular one, as a moment in the decade-long Franklin search when Native testimony threatened to undermine British civilized identity, spurring vitriolic defenses of the character of Franklin and his men by Charles Dickens (amongst others) and attacks on Rae’s character, before being quickly swept under the carpet as the nation turned its attention to the Crimean War. But in fact, it was just the most visible of many such episodes in which the women of the Franklin family laid claim to the authority to interpret information, to determine credibility, and to craft their own story out of a complex archive of indigenous testimony, vernacular experience, artifacts and speculation, and then to disseminate that story through their varied connections. Consequently, the Rae report serves as a useful conclusion to this dissertation. It shows how Jane Franklin and Sophia Cracroft used timeworn tools against interpreters, Inuit, and vernacular agents to argue that their “interest” and unreliability discredited them and any information that they offered, mediated, or discovered. It shows how they shaped the meaning of the archive and the meaning of silence, defining what counted as definitive evidence of disaster, and how in the lack of such evidence, what stories could be believably told. And it shows how they used new relationships and repaired damaged old ones in order to retool the Inuit evidence, and so to shape not only John Franklin’s legacy as the discoverer of the Northwest Passage, but also his entire career in the Arctic and in Van Diemen’s Land – through which they had “careered” along with him.

1171 “The Arctic Expedition” Times, October 23, 1854: 8.
The Rae news came on the heels of two bad years for Jane Franklin and Sophia Cracroft. In 1852, Franklin’s nephew Henry Kay wrote from Van Diemen’s Land and offered Jane £1700 from the colonists to finance a new expedition. The condition was that she use her influence with the press to contest the colony’s “detestable penal character” and present its free colonists as respectable imperial citizens, worthy of self-government. She used the money to finance a new expedition to Bering Strait in the Isabel, led by the Métis explorer William Kennedy, but the crew mutinied at Valparaiso and Kennedy was left trying to make money as a fur-trading vessel. Coming on the heels of the realization in 1852 that Jane’s father had disinherited her, the women, frankly, were broke. Then in January of 1854, the Admiralty removed the names of the officers on the Erebus and Terror from the active duty list, effectively acknowledging their deaths. Eleanor put on mourning, while Jane took off the deep black she had worn for years and commenced wearing bright pinks and greens in what Spufford has called a “sartorial protest.” As the Gells agitated for John Franklin’s will to be proved and for Jane to reimburse the money she had spent from Eleanor Porden Franklin’s estate, Jane’s cheques were no longer honored in London. Jane and Sophy maligned the Gells as unfilial at best, and wicked at worst. Sophy wrote to Sir Roderick Murchison that the Gells had tried to thwart the rescue efforts since their marriage in 1849, when they had “frustrate[d] the scheme … which would have put us in possession that year of the fact that my Uncle went up Wellington Channel.” Jane wrote to William Kennedy and his nephew Alexander Isbister that Eleanor was an “unnatural daughter” who was essentially guilty of patricide. The outbreak of the Crimean War, followed by the

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1172 DRO D3311/43/1, J. H. Kay to Jane Franklin, Van Diemen’s Land, 1 October, 1852.
1173 HBCA MG1 C2, William Kennedy correspondence.
1174 Spufford, I May Be Some Time, 119.
1175 F. Woodward, Portrait of Jane, 286.
1176 RGS CB4, Sophia Cracroft to Roderick Murchison, 2 November, 1853.
1177 HBCA MG2 C1/5 Jane Franklin to William Kennedy, 16 February, 1854.
return of Sir Edward Belcher’s Arctic Squadron in 1854 (leaving five ships behind in the ice) effectively sealed the fate of any future naval expeditions. The Admiralty, always loathe to send more ships to the Arctic, could now refuse even the most compelling requests with propriety, not least because the Belcher squadron also brought Robert McClure home, who immediately set out to claim the £10,000 reward for his completion of the Passage on foot in 1853 (see Chapter 5).

Rae’s news, then, seemed to be the nail in the coffin of Arctic rescue expeditions. From the moment it hit the papers (amidst the news from Sebastopol), the press tried to reconcile the most lurid part of the report with a heroic narrative of martyrdom and sacrifice. The Sunday Times editor speculated that the men must have been “tortured and devoured by famine day after day … before men so educated, so cultured, so enlightened by civilization, so softened by the influence of religion, could have conceived the idea of cannibalism.” The report inevitably raised the ghosts of Fort Enterprise as people speculated on whether Franklin had been present at the end. The Hull Packet and East Riding Times, for example, argued that the report and the relics constituted “distinct and positive evidence of the presence of Sir John Franklin and his officers” at the final scene. In response to such accounts, Charles Dickens republished some of the most gruesome extracts from Franklin’s narrative of his first disastrous expedition in Household Words, emphasizing the profound suffering on the First Land Arctic Expedition in 1822 as he claimed that Englishmen were constitutionally incapable of intentionally reaching “the last resource,” but that indigenous people (like Michel the Iroquois – and, by extension, the Inuit) most certainly were. Then there was the question of whether further expeditions were necessary to confirm or deny the Inuit report. The Sunday Times argued that,

1178 Sunday Times, October 29, 1854: 8.
1180 Charles Dickens, “Lost Arctic Voyagers” Household Words, 2 December, 1854: 364. Though some have speculated that Dickens was acting under Jane’s influence, there is no evidence to document any such collaboration.
It was perfectly right and proper, so long as the lives of those gallant adventurers remained covered with doubt and mystery, to explore every part of the Arctic regions in which there existed the slightest chance of discovering them.... But... reason and philosophy unite in forbidding the further exploration of regions an acquaintance with which can be of no service to any portion of the human race.”

The *Bristol Mercury*, however, urged the urgent dispatch of “an experienced party to pay the last sad duties to the bleaching remains of our brave countrymen, and to gather up all the fragments that are left, whether in the shape of neglected books or of trinkets worn by the Esquimaux, insensible of their precious worth in the eyes of Englishmen.”

The Admiralty instructed the HBC to send an expedition under James Anderson up the Great Fish River expressly for the purpose of finding journals and confirming the Netsilingmiut testimony, which was dispatched in the fall of 1854.

The “relics” that Rae had brought back lent much greater verisimilitude to this Inuit account than to any other, though amidst the hardening racial discourse of the 1850s, the trustworthiness of the Inuit remained very tenuous. The relics were placed on display at the Painted Hall at Greenwich, where Horatio Nelson’s shattered body and most recently, the Duke of Wellington’s corpse, had lain in state. Illustrated weeklies like the *Illustrated London News* and the *Lady’s Newspaper* published huge reproductions of the silver spoons with Franklin and Crozier’s crests, Franklin’s medals, the bone handled knife with James Hickey’s name scratched into it, and the one scrap of paper reading, “Are you not afraid to die? No.”


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1181 *Sunday Times*, October 29, 1854: 8.
1182 “The Fate of Sir John Franklin and His Crews,” *Bristol Mercury*, October 28, 1854:4
were also perplexing, especially because they seemed so useless, and this cast considerable doubt on the Inuit, on how they came by the artifacts, and particularly whether it was through trade or by violence. A letter to the editor of the *Times* under the pseudonym “Medicus” suggested that, “it is more reasonable to suppose that our men were murdered, and that the possessors of the plate were themselves the authors of the foul deed.”

Dickens, meanwhile, combined an attack on the Inuit with a swipe at the imperial humanitarians who were falling out of favor with the British public, writing,

> There are pious persons who, in their practice, with a strange inconsistency, claim for every child born to civilization all innate depravity, and for every savage born to the woods and wilds all innate virtue. We believe every savage to be in his heart covetous, treacherous, and cruel; and we have yet to learn what knowledge the white man - lost, houseless, shipless, apparently forgotten by his race, plainly famine-stricken, weak, frozen, helpless and dying – has of the gentleness of Esquimaux nature.

An article in the *Athenaeum* (which might well have been written by Jane Franklin’s nephew Charles Weld) stated bluntly that, “All who know the Esquimaux know that they have no sense of truth. Like all savages, they lie without scruple; - so that any statement made by them, unless reasonable in itself and consistent with known facts, goes for little or nothing.”

In response to this blizzard of multiplying stories, Jane Franklin and Sophia Cracroft used Rae’s report to secure John Franklin’s legacy and their own. They did so by using the authority and practical experience built up over thirty years of acting as gatekeepers of information in order to shape the extant archive and the meaning of silence. They selectively laid claim to elements of the Inuit report, while burying others and questioning the trustworthiness of the vernacular agents who brought them, including both Rae and Anderson. They used the parliamentary rewards for the discovery of Franklin’s fate and of the Northwest Passage as

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leverage to undermine the authority of both John Rae and Robert McClure. They set the terms by which the “mystery” of Franklin’s fate could be resolved, accepting paper records and journals and nothing else as positive evidence of catastrophe (in marked contrast to their behavior over the previous six years). Finally, and most importantly, they took control of Franklin’s biography, archive and legacy, both themselves and through intermediaries.

Discrediting Rae’s interpreter, William Ouligbuck, was one of Jane and Sophy’s first steps, and one with which they were well familiar from their many similar attempts during the Franklin searches. Like so many other indigenous intermediaries, William Ouligbuck had spent a difficult and highly mobile life in-between cultures. His father had been Richardson’s interpreter in 1825-7, and father and son had served together at several HBC outposts from Churchill to Slave Lake and on several expeditions, including the Rae-Richardson overland expedition of 1848. William spoke English fluently, and Rae claimed “more correctly than one-half of the lower classes in England or Scotland,” in addition to Cree (and perhaps more Indian languages). But like Franklin’s interpreter Augustus/Tattanouek before him, William Ouligbuck found life in the HBC forts difficult. Rae claimed he was prone to bouts of “sulkiness,” and described him in 1848 as “one of the greatest rascals unhung” and accused him of “falsehood and misconduct.” But William’s life history, spent among traders, explorers, and many indigenous peoples, made him an excellent interpreter, and so Rae rehired him for the 1853-4 Boothia expedition, during which it was clear that the young man was deeply unhappy. Whether he was exposed to the same kinds of abuse that his contemporaries Adam Beck, Hans

Hendrik and Ebierbing and others did on other Arctic expeditions is unclear, as William left behind no record of his own. Like Hendrik and other Inuit interpreters, he also ran away (twice during Rae’s expedition), which was no small matter in a strange country where he had no relations. And like Adam Beck and other interpreters caught in the double-bind of being vulnerable and indispensible, Ouligbuck’s credibility and character were laid open to attack in Britain, particularly since he was in the unenviable position of being suspected of having “secret knowledge” about Franklin’s fate.1191

As they had with Adam Beck, Jane and Sophy launched an assault on Ouligbuck’s character, first to discredit him as an interpreter, and second, to indict him as an accomplice to murder. When Ouligbuck left Churchill to visit his mother and his wife in February of 1855 and did not return to join the Anderson expedition, news filtered back to Sophia Cracroft in Britain.1192 In her correspondence with her supporters, she pointed to Ouligbuck’s disappearance as evidence that he was both untrustworthy, and that he had secret knowledge of the disaster. She wrote to Richardson that, “We cannot but feel that it has a suspicious look, that … Ouligbuck refused to go again.”1193 She wrote to Scoresby that “Some little time ago, we learned the fact that Rae’s former Interpreter, Ooglibuck (sic), absolutely refused to go again, and we were only the more confirmed in our belief that he has given false intelligence & that there has been foul play with our poor people.”1194 And in a letter to William Kennedy, she assumed that, “You will agree with us that the refusal of Ooglibuck casts the greatest possible suspicion upon his testimony, never considered reliable.”1195 All of this played out against a background set by

1191 On indigenous translators being suspected of having “secret knowledge,” see especially Kennedy, Last Blank Spaces, 163.
1193 SPRI MS 1503/50/40, Sophia Cracroft to John Richardson, 15 November, 1855.
1194 WL&PS, SCO 819 Box P, Sophia Cracroft to William Scoresby, Regent’s Park, 12 November, 1855.
1195 HBCA MG2 C1/6/92, Sophia Cracroft to William Kennedy, Westminster, 7 December, 1855.
Dickens in *Household Words*, who had singled Ouligbuck out in his original “Lost Arctic Voyagers” essays as singularly untrustworthy, emblematic of the fault of interpreters “whether savage, half-savage or wholly civilized, interpreting to a person of superior station and attainments, [who] will be under a strong temptation to exaggerate.”

Discrediting Ouligbuck was a key part of Sophy and Jane’s broader project to dispense with the unpleasant and specific details of the Netsilingmiut report (especially the accusation of cannibalism) while preserving other portions, particularly the accuracy of the geographical location (near Cape Walker in Victoria Strait) and the timeline of the disaster (around 1850). They had three aims: firstly, to bolster Jane’s authority as both a loving wife and an Arctic expert who had always known the precise spot where her husband had perished, but had been ignored by the Admiralty; secondly to direct a new expedition (ideally in a ship) to the spot of the disaster to find bodies (or survivors among the Inuit) and written records; and thirdly to secure Franklin’s reputation as the discoverer of the Northwest Passage over Robert McClure. Of these, the claim that Jane Franklin had always known where to direct the search was the most dubious. She had indeed sent the *Prince Albert* out in the spring of 1851 under William Kennedy to examine the area around Cape Walker, but her later intense anxiety to search Wellington Channel in the aftermath of the Adam Beck report had largely distracted her from the southern route. When Franklin had been taken off the active duty list at the beginning of 1854, Jane had written to the Admiralty that she was still convinced he was up Wellington Channel, and added, “I could not have dared to plead with you at all unless I had a husband’s life at stake for my excuse; so it may look as if for his sake alone I pleaded, and expected such great things to be done.” In doing so, she reprised her use of the language of conscience that she had learned

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1197 Jane Franklin to the Lords of the Admiralty, 24 February, 1854, in *As Affecting the Fate*, 113.
from women humanitarians and philanthropists, a strategy that had been lacking in Van Diemen’s Land but had become highly effective during the Franklin searches. The Rae news, however, seemed to eclipse her single-minded focus on Wellington Channel. Either Cook or Harwood pointed out in the *Morning Chronicle* that only Lady Franklin’s expedition had gone “to the only quarter where, as it now seems, he might have been sought for successfully.”

Sophy Cracroft wrote to William Scoresby that, “It is indeed almost wonderful to look back & perceive the complete accuracy of her views and reasoning. All are now reminding her of this, & the thus (sic) doing her justice at last, brings with it a certain consolation – deeply indeed does she need any & all comfort.”

Their desire for a new expedition to find bodies or journals dovetailed with Sophy and Jane’s broader intention to make the actual written testimony of the explorers themselves, rather than the reported testimony of indigenous people or “relics,” the only credible solution to the mystery of Franklin’s fate. This constituted a major epistemological shift for the women, who had for years been making “arguments from negative evidence” and arguing that such sources, correctly interpreted (by themselves) could and should be more than sufficient to compel the Admiralty to commit blood and treasure to their cause. Now, however, only journals or letters would suffice as satisfactory evidence, and this required a new expedition – not least because, as the women frequently suggested, they thought the Inuit were holding the written records hostage. Soon after the original report, Sophy wrote to William Scoresby, “only think what a comfort it would be to reach the ships & obtain certain records of the past. Already we know that books are in the hands of the Esquimaux – of course journals are of priceless worth to us.”

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1199 WL&PS SCO 819 Box P, Sophia Cracroft to William Scoresby, 7 November, 1854.
1200 WL&PS, SCO 819 Box P, Lady Franklin Correspondence, Sophia Cracroft to William Scoresby, 7 November, 1854.
Franklin wrote to Roderick Impey Murchison, the President of the RGS, using the Inuit evidence together with the relics to speculate on which courses the ships might have taken, and arguing that the shores of Victoria Land, the coast of Boothia, and the area around the Great Fish River and King William Land ought to be searched accordingly.1201 Later she wrote to him that she thought the bizarre collection of “relics” suggested that the Inuit had pillaged the ships “& I believe that when the Esquimo (sic) Interpreter ran away from Rae to join the tribe, it was in order to share in the spoil at its source.”1202 The *Morning Chronicle*, predictably enough, echoed Jane’s accusation, noting that these journals “containing, perhaps, not only their discoveries and adventures, but their last words to relatives and friends – are said to be in the hands of the Esquimaux, and whose unburied corpses may yet be bleaching on the frozen soil.”1203

The Admiralty had dispatched a new expedition, under the HBC Chief Factor James Anderson, to follow up on Rae’s report and to find journals, bodies, and relics. But though it was wartime, and therefore naval officers were needed in the Crimea and not in the Arctic, nevertheless Jane Franklin and Sophy Cracroft consistently argued that vernacular agents (and Rae and Anderson in particular) could not and should not be entrusted with what they called a “sacred” search for the remains or records of the Franklin party. In their eyes, Rae and Anderson both lacked zeal, the emotional attachment to Jane Franklin and investment in her husband’s fate that the women had used as the gold standard of credibility for the entirety of the search. Previously, they had used it to bolster the credibility of whalers like William Penny as essentially “gentlemanly,” vis-à-vis the “heartlessness” of naval officers like Horatio Austin. Now the tide was turned, and it was again vernacular agents who were exposed to accusations of, if not ungentlemanly conduct, then certainly a lack of chivalry. In a letter to the Admiralty (widely

1201 BL add ms 46126, Jane Franklin to Roderick Murchison, 6 November, 1854.
1202 BL add ms 46126, Jane Franklin to Roderick Murchison, nd.
quoted), Jane Franklin argued that a new expedition that should be led by a naval officer partly because of its “peculiar and almost sacred character” but also because the expedition leader was to act, in a way, as a chief mourner. The expedition’s aim, she argued:

…is also to perform for those who have perished, and on behalf of their mourning families, the duties which are indispensable in civilized communities, & especially those of searching for & collecting and keeping inviolate those official records of the Expedition so interesting to the public, and the private letters & papers so precious to their surviving friends. The Officer undertaking such an Office, is in fact therefore in the position of Administrator to the departed, and should he not be one in whom we can place entire trust, rather than a distant stranger!  

Anderson, nevertheless, was dispatched, and the letters that he sent back to Jane Franklin indicated that he meant to show that whatever other faults he might have, inadequate zeal was not one of them. He wrote her extremely detailed accounts of his efforts, from his disintegrating birchbark canoes, to his aggressive questioning of Inuit to determine whether they had seen books, bodies, graves or ships, and praised his men as the “most zealous, & as quick-sighted beings as exist.” Such detailed and dramatic reports would have been prime currency in the sociable worlds of polite science of Jane Franklin’s youth, and would certainly have accorded both author and recipient a degree of credibility and authority. But to Jane and Sophy, Anderson’s accounts of his considerable difficulties only bolstered their opinion that he was insufficiently zealous. Sophia wrote to John Richardson after receiving one dispatch that “it is a very disappointing account, and one which we were certainly not prepared for” and that they had read it to John Hepburn (who was preparing to emigrate to the Cape) who “was much struck with the desponding tone.”

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1204 SPRI MS 248/212/8, Jane Franklin to the Lords of the Admiralty, 29 November, 1854.
1206 SPRI MS 1503/50/40, Sophia Cracroft to John Richardson, 15 November, 1855.
the expedition, “we were not prepared to find disaster & utter failure predicted even before they started, by the very Commander himself.”

Rae presented a rather different, and far more difficult problem. Jane and Sophy had long depended on him as a cornerstone of the Arctic search – insisting that he should remain out as long as possible, believing that his “researches” would turn up useful information and delighting in his frequent reports from the field, which they had used and circulated during the Wellington Channel controversy to bolster their “arguments from negative evidence” and which Sophy described to Richardson as “full of minute details as to his place & equipment” and “the tone & character of the letters are hearty & cheerful and give one encouragement in hoping that he will be successful in accomplishing the search he proposes.” Eleanor liked Rae, too, describing him once in a letter to her absent father as “a young, active, cheerful, young man, who does not make difficulties, and who is inured to fatigue & hardships.” Moreover, partly because of Jane’s, Sophy’s, and their supporters’ efforts throughout the search to bolster Rae’s credibility, he was already known to the public as an exceptionally skilled Arctic traveler and a reliable, honorable man. Indeed, the *Times* suggested that Rae’s Arctic experience might be handy in the awful Crimean winter of 1854-55, “There is among us just now an enterprising man, who has spent all his life in teaching even the Esquimaux how to better their horrid condition, and who knows by experience life in the snow. Why should not Dr. Rae, the discoverer of Franklin’s fate and the bearer of his relics, be consulted as to the best mode of succouring and comforting another still surviving, still struggling band, in a more necessary cause?”

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1207 WL&PS, SCO 819 Box P, Sophia Cracroft to William Scoresby, 12 November, 1855.
1208 SPRI MS 1503/44/11, Sophia Cracroft to John Richardson, 10 October, 1851.
1209 DRO D3311/28/15, Eleanor Franklin to John Franklin, 29 April, 1848.
1210 *Times*, November 24, 1854: 6.
Jane and Sophy did not mount the same kind of sustained assault on Rae’s character as they had with Ross’s or Austin’s during the Wellington Channel controversy of 1851. Rather, they suggested that Rae’s sudden fame had changed him, from a hearty, capable, unassuming man to a self-interested fortune-seeker. Sophy wrote to William Scoresby on November 7th, 1854 to say, “I must honestly tell you, that [Rae’s] head appears to be completely turned by being for the moment a lion. He is not like the same man, and seems to think that no one has a right to make even a representation for the sake of fair argument, & getting at the truth.” The fact that he had even communicated the Netsilingmiut claim of cannibalism was also a mark against him, as Sophy said, “I need not stop to say that with one voice Rae’s revolting details are rejected, & himself condemned for having made them known. At one time, we were told, he was sorry for having done so – now, his mood is changed, & he defends that, as well as every other point.”

They claimed that Rae was pugnacious, defensive, and uninterested in rational argument, and his desire for a reward precluded any real devotion, either to “the truth” or to the missing. This tactic had the added benefit of permitting the women to represent themselves as reasonable and rational, even though they were shocked and grieving. But they did not write Rae off entirely, nor did he feel especially maligned by them. Indeed, in the summer of 1855, he wrote to Richardson to offer his services for any future private expedition of Jane’s, writing, “I am enough of a sailor and navigator for the charge, I could also act as surgeon, can build snowhouses, set nets, and knock down a deer pretty well still, and besides have a very fair idea where either deer or fish are most likely to be found.”

Rae made his offer, however, before two pamphlets came out in 1856, at least one of which was anonymously authored by Alexander Kennedy Isbister, the Scottish-Cree intellectual

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1211 WL&PS, SCO 819 Box P, Sophia Cracroft to William Scoresby, 7 November, 1854.
1212 SPRI MS 1503/50/32, John Rae to John Richardson, Stromness, 18 August, 1855.
(and nephew of William Kennedy) who was an active member of the Aborigines’ Protection Society, contributor to the *Athenaeum*, and core supporter of Jane Franklin and Sophia Cracroft (see Chapter 5). One was entitled “The Great Arctic Mystery” and the other “Arctic Rewards and their Claimants,” (this was Isbister’s) and both were prompted by the announcement in the *London Gazette* that the Admiralty was considering Rae’s claim for the £10,000 reward for the discovery of the fate of Franklin. The announcement enabled Jane Franklin to argue privately to Sir Roderick Murchison that Rae’s interest in Franklin’s fate was purely venal, and not at all noble. She wrote to him, “Dr Rae’s discovery of the relics procured from the Esquimaux was purely accidental. He did not I believe go a step out of his way to ascertain the fate of the Erebus & Terror…. even when he had accidentally fallen upon their traces, & while admitting that he had ample means for remaining out another year, he hurries home (to claim the reward?)”\textsuperscript{1213}

Both pamphlets attacked Rae’s character and the Netsilingmiut report. Rae could make no claim to the reward, Isbister stated, because the reward was based entirely on “effort” – but Rae, when presented with the Netsilingmiut news, had not made the effort to investigate it further, but rather travelled eighteen days to the north to complete his geographical survey. “He had but to put out his hand,” Isbister wrote, “and the secret involving the fate of his countrymen, if not the rescue of some of them, might have been wrested from the fastnesses which had hitherto concealed it.”\textsuperscript{1214} He had failed to do so, Isbister argued, either through callous indifference or cowardice, fear of the Inuit around the Great Fish River. Rae’s reliance on Netsilingmiut testimony and his defense of Ouligbuck also put him in the same camp as John Ross and his defense of Adam Beck’s testimony in 1851, and Isbister argued that “[W]e conceive the authority of his interpreter to be without any value, unless supported by incidental

\textsuperscript{1213} BL add ms 46126, Jane Franklin to Roderick Murchison, 60 Pall Mall, 26 January, 1856.
\textsuperscript{1214} [Alexander Kennedy Isbister], *Arctic Rewards and their Claimants* (London: T. Hatchard, 1856), 10.
proof.” Since the basis of the reward was on the effort to either rescue or to find evidence of the missing crews, then Rae had resolutely failed. Isbister even suggested, tongue in cheek, that, “The Esquimaux are the sole authorities on which Dr Rae does or can rely – sole discoverers and sole depositaries of all the information we possess; and in the name of common justice, if they can but free themselves from the charge of murder, let the reward go to them, if anywhere.” Finally, Isbister argued that if Rae received the parliamentary award, it would cripple further enterprise to seek “the truth” at the heart of the mystery. Sophy and Jane were very pleased with both pamphlets. Sophy recommended that Isbister should take out notices in the papers that the women favored, and that one “should recommend the perusal of “a very able pamphlet on the subject, called Arctic Rewards and their claimants” – and in reference to this, I wish you would give orders to have a few Advertisements of the pamphlet [printed]” while Jane’s note at the end read, “A little more money wd be well spent in re-advertising yr pamphlet.”

All of this activity – the discrediting of Ouligbuck, Rae and Anderson through social circles, correspondence, and anonymous articles and pamphlets and the reformulation of extant evidence to suit Jane’s and Sophy’s purposes – all of this was familiar, and all of it drew on the networks and strategies they had developed over the previous thirty years, especially since returning from Van Diemen’s Land and finding the old “Arctic Circles” largely closed to them. What was new was how the women convinced John Richardson (who had always been circumspect and aloof towards them) to write John Franklin’s first biography in 1855. It represented the first moment when Jane Franklin shared a claim to authority with her husband’s oldest friend over his memory. It was a process which required conjuring the ghosts of the past, from Fort Enterprise to Van Diemen’s Land to the Netsilingmiut testimony, reweaving them into

1215 Ibid., 16.
1216 Ibid., 25.
1217 HBCA MG2 C1/100, Sophia Cracroft and Jane Franklin to Alexander Kennedy Isbister, 25 June, 1856.
a compelling narrative of Franklin’s life and career, and so laying them to rest. It was an echo, perhaps, of the difficult rapprochement that Eleanor Porden Franklin had reached in 1823 between her role as Franklin’s wife and his enduring companionships with the living and the dead from his 1819-22 expedition, one which she signaled on the wedding dress embroidered with flowers named for Franklin, Richardson, and the murdered Robert Hood. In the process, Jane Franklin and Sophia Cracroft also laid the groundwork for a new dimension of their moral authority. They would, like so many other women in their social circles, transform their role as gatekeepers of information into guardians of memory, and particularly of archives.

It began in the summer of 1855, when Robert McClure stepped forward to claim the parliamentary award for completing the Northwest Passage on foot in 1850, while escaping from his wrecked ship HMS Investigator. An editorial in the Times supported his claim, and though it noted that “The discovery… is entirely useless to the human race for all purposes of navigation and commerce,” nevertheless hoped that with recognition of McClure’s achievement, “the cycle of Arctic discovery may appropriately be closed.”

Richardson wrote a letter to the Times in response, in which he argued that the priority of discovery lay with “the 40 determined men whose bones are blanching near the mouth of the Great Fish River.” Drawing both on the Netsilingmiut evidence and on Franklin’s last letter to him from the Erebus, in which his old friend indicated that he thought the southern route was the most likely Northwest Passage (if not the most practical for deep draught vessels), Richardson placed the survivors in the blank space on the map in-between the territory covered by earlier overland expeditions, some six months before McClure traversed his passage far to the north.

Jane and Sophy were surprised and delighted by Richardson’s letter, so much so that they went to the *Times* to get extra copies of it to circulate amongst their contacts.\(^{1220}\) Jane wrote Richardson a florid letter in which she said, “I have always secretly felt exactly as you have expressed respecting the discovery of a NW passage which must have been made by those who were found in the neighbourhood of the Gt Fish River, but I felt it was for others to recognize & not for me to bring forward.”\(^{1221}\) Rae also wrote to Richardson that McClure’s claim, “was all balderdash and could only go down with those who knew nothing of the subject.”\(^{1222}\) Sophia wrote a letter to Kennedy sometime in the fall of 1855 noting that Beaufort, Murchison “& many others of the highest weight” all supported “my Uncle’s claim” to the discovery of the passage. She wrote that “I need not say that we have always felt that it was so, ever since Rae returned, but felt that it was not for us to seek the justice wh shd have been spontaneously afforded” and that “It is considered very bad in McClure to maintain his own claim wh was no longer tenable after Rae’s return.”\(^{1223}\)

A few months later, Jane Franklin wrote to Richardson to remind him about the article, and to ask him to follow up by writing a biography of Franklin for the *Encyclopedia Britannica*. Richardson agreed (though his daughter noted that he was frustrated because he had only a few days notice) and Sophy sent him an enormous collection of materials about his friend’s life (including the pamphlet that John and Jane Franklin had written to exculpate themselves from the charge of “petticoat government” in Van Diemen’s Land, as well as newspaper clippings and pamphlets at the time of Franklin’s recall which attacked John Montagu, all of which were in a

\(^{1220}\) SPRI MS1503/50/27, Sophia Cracroft to Sir John Richardson, nd.
\(^{1221}\) SPRI MS 1503/50/19, Jane Franklin to Sir John Richardson, 27 June, 1855.
\(^{1222}\) SPRI MS 1503/50/32, John Rae to John Richardson, 18 August, 1855.
\(^{1223}\) HBCA MG2 C1/5/8, Sophia Cracroft to William Kennedy, nd [summer/fall, 1855].
stable loft with Jane’s huge collection of journals).\textsuperscript{1224} She emphasized that Richardson was to hammer home that Jane Franklin had always known where the disaster was, but no one had ever carried out her instructions, writing, “Of all the Expeditions sent out, my Aunt’s Prince Albert is the only one which, if her conception & object (and may I use the word, instructions) had been carried out, would have discovered all we now seek to know.”\textsuperscript{1225}

What Richardson might have felt in writing this eulogy for his oldest and closest friend and relative can only be imagined. He was no stranger to sorrow, having by 1855 lost two wives and three of his children with Franklin’s niece Mary Booth (including his sons John Franklin Richardson and Henry Hepburn Richardson).\textsuperscript{1226} Now he had to revisit his and Franklin’s first expedition together, and the starving and violence on the Barren Grounds that he had long since translated into evidence of divine providence and grace, and which he and Franklin had reminded each other of during twenty years of friendship and loss. That experience, and especially his own episode of cannibalism followed by the killing of Michel, had been luridly detailed by Dickens (one of his favorite authors) only the year before.\textsuperscript{1227} The last time it had been so widely discussed, Richardson and Franklin were working together to contain it, as they tried to reconcile their lingering trauma with their conjugal and domestic lives. Richardson also had to survey the most difficult portion of his friend’s life in Van Diemen’s Land, when Richardson was largely unable to help Franklin navigate difficult colonial and familial politics from half a world away. Finally, he had to engage with the history of the searches for his lost friend (including his own overland journey), who had gone missing on a voyage that Richardson

\textsuperscript{1224} SPRI MS1503/50/45, Beatrice Richardson to John Booth Richardson, 29 November 1855; MS1503/50/47, Sophia Cracroft to John Richardson, 30 November, 1855; MS 1503/50/48, Sophia Cracroft to John Richardson, 1 December, 1855.
\textsuperscript{1225} SPRI MS 1503/50/48, Sophia Cracroft to John Richardson, 1 December, 1855.
\textsuperscript{1226} SPRI MS 1503/19/21, Inscription on the memorial to John Franklin and Henry Hepburn, second and eldest sons of Sir John Richardson, 1836.
\textsuperscript{1227} For Richardson’s appreciation of Dickens, see SPRI MS1503/19/14, John Richardson to Mary Booth Richardson, 15 April, 1838.
and the wider “Arctic Circles” of their old polar colleagues had helped to organize to recuperate Franklin’s reputation after Van Diemen’s Land. All this, he had been asked to do by a woman whom he deeply disliked, who had become entangled in the networks of imperial science crucial to his own career as a naturalist, who had estranged Franklin’s only child, and whom Richardson had always felt exerted too much influence over her husband.

In his biography, Richardson praised Franklin’s “cheerful buoyancy of mind… sustained by religious principle of a depth known only to his most intimate friends even in the most gloomy times.” When he came to the disastrous episode on the Barren Grounds, he referred his readers to the narrative he and Franklin had written together at Frith Street in 1823, noting only that at the time of its publication, it had “excited universal interest and commiseration.” In Van Diemen’s Land, he pointed to Franklin’s “independent political principles,” his “strict honour and integrity,” and the “benevolence of his character.” He pointed to promotion of science, the hospitality towards visiting Antarctic expeditions, and the founding of the Royal Society of Tasmania as John Franklin’s achievements (knowing full well that they had been part of Jane’s program to secure her own and her husband’s authority and reputation in the colony). He alluded to Franklin’s difficulties in government, but placed them entirely at the feet of John Montagu, the colonial secretary who had accused Jane of “petticoat influence,” whom Richardson described as “hostile,” “subversive,” “factious,” and “injurious to the interests of the colony.” When it came to the relief expeditions, he spent some considerable time summarizing Jane Franklin’s efforts, writing, “In this pious undertaking Sir John’s heroic wife took the lead. Her exertions were unwearied, she exhausted her private funds in sending out auxiliary vessels to quarters not comprised in the public search, and by her pathetic appeals she roused the sympathy of the whole civilized world.” He said nothing about any kind of prescient knowledge of the location of
Franklin’s fate, nor did he mention the “contents of the kettles,” nor did he question the validity or credibility of indigenous testimony, nor did he cast aspersions on Rae’s character. What he did do was to make it clear that it was impossible that Franklin, at his age, could have been among the survivors that the Inuit had seen (not least because no one reported having seen an older man). Moreover, he pointed out, Franklin would never have willingly headed for the Barren Grounds again, writing, “had he been then in existence, he would have taken another route on the abandonment of his ship, as no one knew better than he the fatal result of an attempt to cross that wide expanse of barren ground lying between the mouth of the Great Fish River and the far-distant Hudson’s Bay post on the south side of Great Slave Lake.” He speculated, however, that the reason the survivors made for the Great Fish River was to finish the Northwest Passage, which he argued they had done, and so “forged the last link with their lives.”¹²²⁸ Jane and Sophy were delighted with the result, and scooped up at least fifty copies of the article, which they sent throughout England, to Van Diemen’s Land, and to the United States.¹²²⁹

By 1856, Jane and Sophy had spent years struggling for authority over the heterogeneous archive of the Franklin searches. Richardson’s biography of Franklin, based both upon his own memories and on information funneled to him by Jane and Sophia, marked the beginning of the women’s attempt to formulate that archive into something substantial and enduring as a means to secure Franklin’s (and their own) legacy. This was by no means unusual. As John Randolph and Janet Browne have shown elsewhere, in Russia and in Britain the women of the Bakunin family and the Darwin family drew on their distinct social and cultural authorities as noble estate


¹²²⁹ SPRI MS1503/50/55, Jane Franklin to John Richardson, 29 December, 1855.
managers and domestic caretakers to steward and shape the archives of their famous relatives. For the Franklin women (as for other Arctic relatives in the mid-nineteenth century), guarding archives of correspondence was a natural outgrowth of their domestic roles as gatekeepers of information, as correspondents themselves and as circulators (and censors) of their relatives’ letters. The authority that they had derived as the recipients of private letters – understood to be essentially trustworthy and reliable because they were intimate, personal, unaffected and therefore ‘authentic’ – now extended to their preservation. Like so much of their authority, this too was shared and contested. Sophy and Jane reserved for themselves the right to contribute to Richardson’s biography of Franklin– even when Franklin’s youngest sister Henrietta Wright asked permission to contact Richardson, Sophia wrote to Richardson to disregard anything she might send to him. Eleanor was also keen to write a biography of her father, but when she wrote to Edward Parry’s widow Catherine (who was herself compiling materials for her son to write a memoir of his father, who had died in 1855) to get her father’s correspondence with his old friend, Lady Parry wrote that she had already given Jane Franklin priority over the letters. When Eleanor approached Frederick Leicester (a distant cousin) to ask him to write the memoir for her, he declined on the grounds that he could not afford to displease Jane.

To Jane Franklin’s mind, her husband’s archive and legacy would be incomplete without a document testifying to his fate and to that of the expedition. When James Anderson returned in

1232 SPRI MS 1503/50/49, Henrietta Wright to Lady Jane Franklin, 1 December, 1855; MS 1503/50/50, Sophia Cracroft to Sir John Richardson, 3 December, 1855.
1233 DRO D3311/122/9, Catherine Parry to Eleanor Gell, 8 April, 1856; DRO D3311/122/11, Catherine Parry to Eleanor Gell, 14 April, 1856.
1234 DRO D3311/122/17, Frederick Leicester to Eleanor Gell, 19 May [1856].
1856 without any such document (but did find more “relics”) Sophia’s sister Emma Lefroy forwarded the news to Jane and Sophy who were in Paris, and Sophy urged her to go with her husband to the need meeting of the RGS and to report back on what was said there.\footnote{SPRI MS 248/247/49-50, Sophia Cracroft to Emma Lefroy, January, 1856.} She also dashed off a quick letter to William Kennedy, urging him to “ask Mr Isbister to send something to Daily news, Illustrated News, & Daily Telegraph, shewing that this news confirms abt the North West Passage.”\footnote{HBCA MG2 C1/6/95, Sophia Cracroft to William Kennedy, Paris, 10 January, 1856.} The women, however, remained unsatisfied, and in 1857, using funds gathered by subscription, they dispatched the yacht \textit{Fox} under the naval captain Leopold McClintock to Victoria Strait. In her instructions to McClintock, Jane wrote, “I trust it may be in your power to confirm directly or inferentially the claims of my husband’s expedition to the earliest discovery of The Passage, which, if Dr Rae’s report be true (and the Government of our country has accepted (& rewarded it as such) these martyrs in a noble cause achieved at their last extremity after 5 long years of labour & Suffering, if not at an earlier period.”\footnote{RGS CB4 1851-60, Lady Jane Franklin and Sophia Cracroft letters to Roderick Impey Murchison. Lady Franklin to Captain McClintock, Aberdeen, 29 June, 1857.}

In 1859, McClintock returned to Britain with the one and only document generated by the lost expedition, a scrap of paper found in a cairn on King William Island. It had been scrawled on twice, once in May of 1847, and again in April 1848. The message read:

28 of May 1847 H.M.S hips Erebus and Terror Wintered in the Ice in Lat. 70°5’N Long. 98°.23’W Having wintered in 1846-7 at Beechey Island in Lat 74°43’28”N Long 91°39’15”W After having ascended Wellington Channel to Lat 77° and returned by the West side of Cornwallis Island. Sir John Franklin commanding the Expedition. \textit{All well.} 25th April 1848 HMShips Terror and Erebus were deserted on the 22nd April 5 leagues NNW of this having been beset since 12th Sept 1846. The officers and crews consisting of 105 souls under the command of Captain F. R. M. Crozier landed here—in Lat. 69°37’42” Long. 98°41’ …. Sir John Franklin died on the 11th of June 1847 and the total loss by deaths in the Expedition has been to this date 9 officers and 15 men.—James Fitzjames Captain HMS Erebus F. R. M. Crozier Captain & Senior Offr And start on tomorrow 26th for Backs Fish River.\footnote{Quoted in Savours, \textit{Search for the North West Passage}, 293.}
Not far away, McClintock came across a whaleboat containing two skeletons in European
clothes. The silence that surrounded the Franklin expedition, it seemed, had finally ended.

In the eyes of the public, McClintock’s discoveries fully vindicated Jane Franklin’s claim
to intimate and authoritative knowledge of her husband’s plans. The *Athenaeum* hailed the
victory of “feminine courage which no disaster could dismay” and her constancy – “a woman’s
restless and indomitable love proving once more, in the face of all the world, mightier than the
greatest Boards and Cabinets.”\textsuperscript{1239} Intertwined with these celebrations of her devotion and
“indomitable love” was the notion that all these ideal wifely characteristics had informed her
geographical knowledge. One of her naval favorites, Captain Sherard Osborn, wrote in *Once A
Week* that “this energetic, self-reliant woman… [carried] out by private means what ignorance,
rather than ill-will, prevented the Admiralty from executing.”\textsuperscript{1240} Jane’s perseverance was
twinned with her prescience, and her willingness to bankrupt herself (and her step-daughter) was
the highest kind of mid-Victorian feminine heroism. As a result, in 1860 she received the first
Gold Medal the Royal Geographical Society would bestow on a woman (which she shared with
McClintock), for her “noble and self-sacrificing perseverance in sending out, at her own cost,
several searching expeditions, until at length the fate of her husband has been finally
ascertained.”\textsuperscript{1241} The Gold Medal and all the praise testified to the very great success translating
the “language of conscience” used by so many women in the humanitarian movement into a
geographical key. The stain of Van Diemen’s Land and all the accusations of “petticoat
government” had evaporated. In claiming all that moral authority and prescient, intimate
knowledge, Jane Franklin eclipsed the labors of all those others within the broader “Arctic

\textsuperscript{1241} “Presentation of the Gold Medals to Lady Franklin and Captain Sir F. L. McClintock” *Journal of the Royal
Circles” upon whom she had depended, from Sophia Cracroft, to Mary Anne Kendall, to Anna Gurney and Sarah Bowdich Lee, to William Scoresby, Alexander Kennedy Isbister, and Charles Weld. She stood alone and unassailable in the public eye as “England’s Penelope.”

Jane’s labors were not yet finished. Amidst a culture of extravagant mourning, rituals, dress and memorials there was no body of Franklin’s to bury, and so she and Sophia ensured that there would be memorials. She arranged for statues to be cast of John Franklin (as a much slimmer man than he was when he departed), braced against an anchor and looking firm and determined. One was erected in 1867 at Waterloo Place, not far from Nelson’s column and adjacent to the Athenaeum Club (which Franklin once felt he could not enter because of the rumors spread by John Montagu about “petticoat government” in Van Diemen’s Land). Another was unveiled by Richardson in Spilsby, and, after Jane had reconciled with the Gells (and after Eleanor’s death in 1860) she took her grandson Phillip Lytellyton Gell to see the founding of a companion statue to stand in Hobart.1242 In 1875, just two weeks before Jane Franklin died, a plaque was erected to John Franklin in Westminster Abbey. It was inscribed with a poem by Franklin’s nephew, Alfred, Lord Tennyson, which read:

Not here! The white North has thy bones, and thou,
Heroic sailor soul
Art passing on thy happier voyage now
Towards no earthly pole.

A copy of the inscription is on Franklin’s memorial statue in Franklin Square in Hobart’s Central Business District, overlooking the wharf where convicts used to come ashore and where Government House, the Franklins’ old home, once stood.

1242 NMM REY/2 Reynolds Bequest, Catalogue of Engravings known to exist of Franklin, Richardson, Parry etc; DRO D3311/113, Recollections of Lady Franklin by Phillip Lyttleton Gell.
Conclusion: Archives, Authority, Silences, and Ships

The authority that the Franklin women had built up over thirty years of Arctic exploration and colonial postings, as well as the tensions between the women, were translated into the fabric of the archives they left behind. While Sophia Cracroft hoarded her aunt’s and uncle’s journals and correspondence (perhaps in the stable loft where they were in 1855), Jane Franklin developed a gallery of portraits of her husband, his colleagues, and the men like Kennedy and Penny who had aided her during the search. These mixed with her vast collections of years of travel and colonial residence. Visitors to her home (and there were many, including David Livingston, Henry Morton Stanley, and Queen Emma of Hawaii) would have seen these portraits arranged against busts of Tasmanian Aborigines, while Tasmanian pictures (perhaps including the portrait of Mathinna) went into the best bedroom.\footnote{F. Woodward, Portrait of Jane, 326; DRO D3311/113, Recollections of Lady Franklin by Phillip Lyttleton Gell.} These would later be donated by Sophia to the National Portrait Gallery. Sophia ultimately went blind editing her aunt’s papers, and passed them along to H.D. Traill for his biography of her uncle in 1896.\footnote{Traill, Life of Sir John Franklin, 1.} The publication of this biography coincided with the efforts of Sir Clements Markham (then President of the Royal Geographical Society) to instigate a new wave of polar expeditions to Antarctica, and a new cast of polar heroes and martyrs (including Sir Robert Falcon Scott and Sir Ernest Shackleton) would ultimately have their stories hitched to Franklin’s story.\footnote{Jones, Last Great Quest, 16-48.} Ultimately, Sophy’s sister Emma Lefroy would inherit Jane Franklin’s papers, which Sophy had culled, edited, and extracted (some of the originals were cut apart, others had postage stamps placed over passages, and many were copied out in Sophy’s hand). It was, perhaps, her most enduring protection of her aunt, for who knows what might have been contained in those passages. It might also help to explain why there are no journals of Jane’s for most of the Franklin searches – for that period, her
comparative silence mirrors her husband’s.\footnote{Alison Alexander has also noted the censorship of Jane Franklin’s archive, see Alexander, \textit{Ambitions of Jane Franklin}, ix-x.} In the 1930s, the Lefroys donated the collection to the Scott Polar Research Institute at Cambridge University, with the instruction to “take out whatever is of polar interest and burn the rest.”\footnote{F. Woodward, \textit{Portrait of Jane}, 1.}

Eleanor Gell, Mary Fletcher Richardson, Catherine Gurney Parry, and Mary Anne Kendall also kept their own archives with a view towards writing biographies of their polar relatives. Before she died in 1860, Eleanor managed to obtain her parents’ correspondence, her mother’s poetry, and her father’s correspondence with John Richardson (strongly suggesting that Richardson intended for his oldest friend’s daughter, and not Jane Franklin, to steward this record of their friendship). These were held along with Eleanor’s own Tasmanian journals and correspondence during the Franklin searches at the family home at Hopton Hall in Derbyshire, together with Eleanor Porden’s wedding dress, until the 1930s when Eleanor’s descendent Edith Mary Gell published John and Eleanor’s correspondence.\footnote{Gell, \textit{John Franklin’s Bride}.} Later, the papers made their way to the Derbyshire Record Office, where Jane Franklin remained only a ghostly presence, overshadowed by her predecessor Eleanor, her estranged stepdaughter, and her husband’s oldest friend. Mary Fletcher Richardson and Catherine Parry both hoarded their husbands’ correspondence and both passed it on to relatives and friends to write biographies (Mary Richardson intended hers to be an instruction manual for boys) and both of these collections ended up alongside Franklin’s at the Scott Polar.\footnote{A. Parry, \textit{Parry of the Arctic}; McIlraith, \textit{Life of Sir John Richardson}; Mary Fletcher Richardson tried to get John Murray to publish the biography of her husband, writing, “The book has been prepared very much in the hope that it might become a useful one for boys, having a Mixture of the heroic, as well as the practical, and Christian.” NLS John Murray Archive, MS.41017, Mary Fletcher Richardson to John Murray, Lancrigg, 24 October, 1867 and 26 October, 1867.} Mary Ann Kendall’s papers, many of which detailed the world of scientific sociability in which she had “come out” in the 1820s, ended up in
the National Maritime Museum. And in Hobart, the official records of the Franklins’ reform projects, colonial discord and scientific endeavors ultimately rubbed shoulders with microform copies of both the Scott Polar and the Derbyshire collections, bringing Jane, Sophy, and Eleanor’s labors together in the place where their tense triangle of relationships had originated.

The papers of the Franklin women, and those of the broader Arctic Circles, therefore did not suffer the fate of so many women’s efforts, disappearing into official catalogs of institutional archives. Preserved because they seemed to testify to the apparently ahistorical domesticity of explorers as well as to their authentic experiences in the field, the papers survived in dizzying numbers, and have been (especially Jane Franklin’s papers) a mainstay of polar research. So the Franklin women do not suffer from a lack of empirical depth – their archive is huge – but that in and of itself requires the historian to read against its grain, to question its written-in assumptions of authority, to examine the social, cultural, emotional, historical, and geographical pressures on its making, and to scour it for traces of the “others” who helped to shape it, but may be deeply embedded in it. It requires getting away from the monolith of Jane Franklin’s diaries and correspondence, and a corresponding focus on her elusive subjectivity, and rather to read these against other archives – official, institutional, regional and private – that were themselves shaped by the fabric of empire and imperial lives. That has been, in part, the project of this dissertation.

This is especially important because these archives – and especially Jane Franklin’s papers at the Scott Polar Research Institute - bear additional traces of how the Franklin women consistently staged their authority against indigenous peoples, intermediaries, and vernacular

1251 For critiques of the presumed ahistoricity of the home and its archives (as well as the value of examining those assumptions), see Burton, Dwelling in the Archive, and Randolph, “Bakunin Family Archive.”
authorities, as this dissertation has demonstrated. As in government and official archives of empire, the voices of indigenous people are often torn out of context, sublimated, suppressed, or harnessed to broader projects in the Franklin women’s papers. When they do appear, it is invariably in a context in which their trustworthiness, credibility and character is questioned or undermined. Their testimony is almost always harnessed to (or rejected by) purely speculative arguments, a variety of “authoritative” sources (from relics to scraps of paper) and always couched against Jane and Sophy’s deep suspicions of partly acculturated intermediaries and firm belief in the extinction paradigm, both legacies of their residence in Van Diemen’s Land and perhaps of their failed “civilizing” experiments on Timemernedic and Mathinna.

There is a profound echo of Jane and Sophy’s complex maneuvers with respect to indigenous testimony in the Arctic scholarship on the Franklin expedition. Early Arctic historians like Richard Cyriax frankly discounted it, while later biographers of Franklin like Andrew Lambert were prone to labeling people like Adam Beck “frauds.” In the 1990s and 2000s, alongside the efforts of historians, anthropologists and legal scholars to define indigenous oral histories as authoritative (particularly with respect to land claims in former white settler colonies) a new wave of scholarship led by David Woodman meticulously collected Inuit oral histories to figure out “what really happened” to the Franklin expedition. Though the intent was to “validate” Inuit testimony, there was nevertheless a clear corollary with Jane Franklin’s and Sophia Cracroft’s belief that Inuit had possessed “secret knowledge” of what had occurred that they would not part with and could not be compelled to divulge. Though explorers

1253 Cyriax, Franklin’s Last Arctic Expedition; A. Lambert, Gates of Hell, 202.
frequently appeared in these histories as purely ephemeral, or as comical figures, or as conglomerates of whalers and explorers whose infiltrations were mainly notable for their disruptions or their childlike incompetence, nevertheless the histories themselves were always harnessed to the drama Jane Franklin and Sophia Cracroft had woven out of and around the silence and “mystery” of the Franklin expedition. The insistence on the accuracy of Inuit information, if properly calibrated against European sources, however well intentioned, was nevertheless a powerful echo of the complex maneuvers performed by Jane Franklin and her supporters in the 1840s and 1850s.

It is notable, therefore, that when one of Franklin’s ships was discovered in September of 2014 in Victoria Strait, as part of an expensive and elaborate Canadian project to assert sovereignty over the waterways of the Northwest Passage, that journalists focused on how the location of the ship “confirmed” Inuit testimony.\(^{1255}\) Elders and the historian Louie Kamookak emphasized the enduring strength of oral history, but also the limited encounters between explorers and native people and the ephemeral impression they left behind, noting, “When you talk to an elder, you can’t ask about Franklin, because they don’t know who he is.”\(^{1256}\) It is also notable, however, that the hunger for journals, records, and photographs has by no means disappeared with the discovery of the ship. Russell Potter, a literary scholar and Arctic historian, posted on his blog immediately after the discovery of the ship about a number of details from Inuit testimony “that might be verifiable with good imagery,” and wondered, “Will we see a hole

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below the water-line, one deliberately cut?” He speculated, based on the ghostly image of the
ship on the sea floor, that it looked as though it had been abandoned “in good order” and wrote,
“Let’s hope that they made sure to leave behind a secured copy of the ship’s log and other papers
indicating the events before its abandonment. And books? How I would love to browse that
library. If these kinds of paper materials can be recovered, the Franklin story will have a
completely unexpected new chapter.”

In the introduction to this dissertation, I noted that Tony Ballantyne has recently argued
that we have yet to assemble a full and rich understanding of the colonial information order “by
identifying places of knowledge production, roles of ‘knowledgeable groups,’ changing shapes
of communication networks and technologies, and debates over status of particular forms of
knowledge.” The story of the Franklin women and their quest for authority over Arctic and
colonial information maps directly onto that agenda. From the 1820s to the 1850s (and indeed,
beyond in the lives of their archives) they consistently defined and staged their roles as wives,
daughters, and nieces against their relatives’ Arctic experiences and companionships. In doing
so, they naturally linked their own reputations to those of their famous relatives, and they did so
by superintending a traffic in information and by maintaining complex networks of
correspondents, patrons and supporters across a wide variety of imperial sites and discourses,
from the Canadian Arctic to Van Diemen’s Land, from imperial humanitarians to white settlers
and scientists. Far from being merely passive spectators, married chattel or other “strong links”
across masculine networks of colonial governance, science, or transnational networks of
conscience or correspondence, the Franklin women were vital actors who consistently attempted

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1257 Russell Potter, VISIONS OF THE NORTH: Inuit Testimony and the Franklin Ship, 10 September 2014,
1258 Ballantyne, Webs of Empire, 187.
to apprehend and to manipulate Arctic and colonial information orders, government
bureaucracies, and the masculine worlds of science and polar exploration.

The Franklin women built up their moral authority over information gradually, over time
and space as they “careered” along with John Franklin, and as they consistently engaged with
(and often tried to subvert) indigenous peoples, intermediaries, and vernacular agents, many of
whom they never met. They did so in their homes, as they tried to accommodate the trauma and
companionships that were the legacies of the field. They did so in their social circles, as they
circulated correspondence from the field and tried to secure their relatives’ credibility. They did
so in the penal colony of Van Diemen’s Land, where they (and especially Jane Franklin) tried to
engage in projects of “civilization,” science and reform, projects that were necessarily linked to
the dispossession and near-extermination of the Tasmanian Aborigines. And they did so during
the Franklin searches of the 1850s, when they gathered and reformulated their resources to shape
the nature of the search and what counted as reliable evidence of disaster.

As this dissertation has shown, this process was historically contingent, frequently messy,
and often ad hoc. The Franklin women drew on models, individuals, discourses and networks as
it suited them and as they encountered them, in response to discreet crises, programs and
campaigns in the Arctic, in Britain and in Van Diemen’s Land, crises that were themselves
productive of uneven, competing, and dynamic information. Over the long term, this developed
into a unique assemblage of supporters, enemies, discourses and skills that reflected their own
webs of empire, bringing together whalers, philanthropists, ex-fur traders, naval wives, old
explorers, government bureaucrats, and clairvoyants. This was because the Franklin women (and
especially Jane Franklin) were made by the fabric of empire, by its maritime communities,
imperial science, humanitarianism, white settler colonialism, extractive industries, and most of all, by its dynamic hierarchies of authority.

Finally, a note on silence. As much as the Franklin women were conditioned by their own imperial webs, paths and trajectories, and as much as they traded and trafficked in information, they were also made by silence. Their tenuous and shifting authority, wherever they went, was rooted in the peculiar power of silence. It derived from the gaps produced by long lags or arrhythmic pulses of communication over great distances, and from the pervasive silence about things best not discussed (like episodes of starvation and cannibalism). Their authority grew in the silence that emanated from the lost Franklin expedition, and was exerted in the silence they tried to impose on persistent, and often insouciant, indigenous and vernacular testimony and individuals. They guarded and wrapped themselves in the silence with which they tried to cover their own activities, from using anonymous intermediaries to make their arguments to the public, to their strategic self-representation, to their censoring of their own archives. Ultimately, it was the enduring silence of the lost expedition which preserved those archives, and within them all the fragments of persistent indigenous voices, of lingering companionships, of abandoned children, of “relics,” and of the many proliferating stories of the polar ice, which Jane Franklin and Sophia Cracroft tried so hard to control.
APPENDIX A: FIGURES

Figure 1: Timeline of British Arctic Expeditions, 1818-1828

1818: NW Passage via Lancaster Sound
HMS Isabella, HMS Alexander
Capt. J. Ross (OC), Lt. W.E. Parry, Capt. E. Sabine, Mid J.C. Ross

1818: North Pole via Spitzbergen
HMS Dorothea, HMS Trent
Capt. J. Buchan (OC), Lt. J. Franklin, Mids G. Back, F. Beechey, Gunner J. Hepburn

1819-20: NW Passage via Lancaster Sound
HMS Hecla, HMS Griper
Lt. W.E. Parry (OC), Mids F. Beechey, J.C. Ross, Capt. E. Sabine

1821-23: NW Passage via Hudson Strait
HMS Hecla, HMS Fury
Capt. W.E. Parry (OC), Capt. G. Lyon, Lt. J.C. Ross

1821-22: First Arctic Land Expedition via Coppermine River
Lt. J Frankin (OC), Dr. J. Richardson, Mids G. Back and R. Hood, J. Hepburn, Tattanoeuck/Augustus (translator)

1822-23: First Arctic Land Expedition via Coppermine and Mackenzie Rivers
Capt. J. Franklin (OC), Dr. J. Richardson, Lt. G. Back, Mid E. Kendall, Tattanoeuck/Augustus and Ouligbuck, (translators)

1824: NW Passage via Hudson Bay
HMS Griper
Capt. G. Lyon (OC)

1824-25: NW Passage via Lancaster Sound
HMS Hecla, HMS Fury
Capt. W.E. Parry (OC), Capt. H.P. Hoppner, Lt. J.C. Ross

1825-26: NW Passage via Hudson Bay
HMS Griper
Capt. G. Lyon (OC)

1825-27: Second Arctic Land Expedition via Coppermine and MacKenzie Rivers
Capt. J. Franklin (OC), Dr. J. Richardson, Lt. G. Back, Mid E. Kendall, Tattanoeuck/Augustus and Ouligbuck, (translators)

1825-28: NW Passage via Bering Strait
HMS Blossom
Capt. F. Beechey (OC)

1825-28: NW Passage via Bering Strait
HMS Blossom
Capt. F. Beechey (OC)

1826-27: Second Arctic Land Expedition via Coppermine and MacKenzie Rivers
Capt. J. Franklin (OC), Dr. J. Richardson, Lt. G. Back, Mid E. Kendall, Tattanoeuck/Augustus and Ouligbuck, (translators)

1827-28: North Pole via Spitzbergen
HMS Hecla
Capt. W.E. Parry (OC), Lt. J.C. Ross, T. Abernethy (mate)

1827-28: North Pole via Spitzbergen
HMS Hecla
Capt. W.E. Parry (OC), Lt. J.C. Ross, T. Abernethy (mate)

OC = Officer Commanding
Figure 2: Timeline of British Arctic and Antarctic Expeditions, 1828-1845

- 1833-35: Third Arctic Land Expedition via Great Fish River (Ross Relief Expedition)
  Capt. G. Back (OC), Dr. R. King

- 1836-37: NW Passage via Lancaster Sound
  HMS Terror
  Capt. G. Back (OC)

- 1838-40: Hudson's Bay Company Overland Arctic Expedition
  T. Simpson (OC), P.W. Dease, Ouligbuck (translator)

- 1839-1843: British Antarctic Expedition
  HMS Erebus, HMS Terror
  Capt. J.C. Ross (OC), Capt. F.M. Crozier, J.D. Hooker (naturalist), T. Abernethy (mate)

- 1829-33: NW Passage via Lancaster Sound Victory
  Capt. J. Ross (OC), Lt. J.C. Ross, T. Abernethy
Figure 3: Timeline of Arctic Expeditions in search of Sir John Franklin, 1845-1859

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Event</th>
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<tr>
<td>1845</td>
<td>NW Passage via Lancaster Sound</td>
<td>HMS Erebus, HMS Terror</td>
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<tr>
<td>1846</td>
<td>April: Erebus and Terror abandoned in ice</td>
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<tr>
<td>1847</td>
<td>June: Franklin dies</td>
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<tr>
<td>1848</td>
<td>49: RN via Lancaster Sound</td>
<td>HMS Enterprise, HMS Investigator</td>
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<td>1848-1849</td>
<td>Private via Lancaster Sound Whalers: Advice, Truelove, Chieftain</td>
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<td>1850</td>
<td>51: RN via Bering Strait</td>
<td>HMS Herald</td>
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<td>1850-1851</td>
<td>British Private Expeditions via Lancaster Sound</td>
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<td>1852-1853</td>
<td>RN via Bering Strait</td>
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<td>British Private Expedition via Lancaster Sound (First Grinnell)</td>
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<td>1855-1856</td>
<td>HBC Expedition via Great Fish River</td>
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<td>1856-1857</td>
<td>British Private Expedition (Lady Franklin) via Lancaster Sound</td>
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<td>1858-1859</td>
<td>American Private Expedition via Lancaster Sound (First Grinnell)</td>
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<td>1860</td>
<td>55-56: HBC Expedition via Great Fish River - Factor James Anderson</td>
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<td>1855-1856</td>
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<td>1859-1860</td>
<td>RN Arctic Squadron via Bering Strait</td>
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**OC = Officer Commanding**

**1850-51**: RN Arctic Squadron via Lancaster Sound
- **HMS Lady Franklin** (whaler), Capt. W. Penny (OC)
- **HMS Sophia** (whaler), Capt. A. Steward (OC)
- **HMS Resolute**, Capt. Horatio Austin (OC)
- **HMS Assistance**, Capt. E. Ommanney (OC)
- **HMS Intrepid**, Lt. B. Cator (OC)
- **HMS Pioneer**, Capt. S. Osborn (OC)

**1850-54**: RN via Bering Strait
- **HMS Plover**, Capt. T. Moore (OC)

**1850-55**: RN Arctic Squadron via Bering Strait
- **HMS Investigator**, Capt. R. McClure (OC)

**1850-51**: British Private Expeditions via Lancaster Sound
- **HMS Prince Albert**, Capt. C. Forsyth, W. Kennedy (OC)
- **Felix**, Capt. John Ross (OC), Adam Beck (translator)

**1850-51**: American Private Expedition via Lancaster Sound (First Grinnell)
- **Advance, Rescue**, Lt. E.J. de Haven USN (OC)

**1852-54**: RN Arctic Squadron via Lancaster Sound
- **HMS Herald**, Capt. H. Kellett (OC)

**1852-54**: HBC Boothia Expedition
- Dr. J. Rae

**1855-56**: HBC Expedition via Great Fish River
- Factor James Anderson

**1855-57**: British Private Expedition (Lady Franklin) via Lancaster Sound and Beechey Island
- **Isabel**, Capt. E. Inglefield RN (OC)

**1855-56**: American Private Expedition via Smith Sound (Second Grinnell) Advance, Rescue
- Lt. E.J. de Haven USN (OC)

**1856-1858**: RN Arctic Squadron via Bering Strait
- **HMS North Star**, Capt. S. Osborn (OC)

**1856-1860**: RN Arctic Expedition via Lancaster Sound
- **HMS Assistance**, Cmdr. F. McClintock, HMS Resolute
- **HMS Intrepid**, Capt. E. Kellett
- **HMS Pioneer**, Capt. S. Osborn

**ALL SHIPS ABANDONED IN ICE**

**1857-1859**: British Private Expedition (Lady Franklin) via Lancaster Sound
- **Fox**, Capt. F. McClintock (OC)

**1858-1860**: RN Arctic Expedition via Bering Strait
- **HMS North Star**, Capt. S. Osborn

**1859-1861**: RN Arctic Expedition via Lancaster Sound
- **HMS Enterprise**, Capt. R. Collinson (OC)

**1860-1861**: RN Arctic Expedition via Bering Strait
- **HMS Enterprise**, Capt. R. McClure (OC)
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Figure 4: The Northwest Passage, after Ann Savours, *The Search for the Northwest Passage* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1999) x.
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Figure 6: Captain Sir John Franklin in 1828. Watercolor by W. Derby, autographed print in Mary Anne Kendall’s private collection. NMM FRN/1
Figure 7: Dr. John Richardson in 1822, proof plate for John Franklin’s \textit{Journey to the Shores of the Polar Sea, in 1819-22, with a Brief Account of the Second Journey in 1825-27} (London: John Murray, 1829). Based on a portrait by T. Phillips, engraved by Finden. SPRI Y: 78/12/10
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