

ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation: GOLD STAR PILGRIMAGES: TRACING
MATERNAL CITIZENSHIP THROUGH THE
GREAT WAR ERA, 1914-1933

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From 1930-1933, the U.S. government funded Gold Star Pilgrimages—two-week voyages for Gold Star mothers to military graveyards in Europe where their sons were buried. These Pilgrimages emerged after a decade of public deliberation over the responsibilities of American mothers to motivate sacrifice during war and commemorate death at war's end. The political rhetoric surrounding the Pilgrimages often valorized white, biological, and patriotic Gold Star mothers as the most authentic ideals of women's citizenship, condemned women who challenged the patriotism of maternal sacrifice, and marginalized African American mothers through segregationist practices.

This project analyzes how Pilgrimage rhetoric constructed American Gold Star mothers as models of citizenship and how this ideal empowered and limited women's political engagement and identity during an era of war, social protest, and suffrage. The chapters specifically trace how public discourse before and during the Pilgrimages defined, challenged, and reinterpreted *maternal citizenship* throughout

the Great War era. In this study, I analyze three case studies that shaped Gold Star rhetoric and in turn conceptions of maternal citizenship from 1914 to 1933. Prior to American entry into the Great War, women's peace and preparedness organizations publicly clashed over meanings of maternal responsibility (Chapter 1). After the war and women's enfranchisement, Pilgrimage advocates and government officials debated Gold Star Pilgrimages through a series of congressional hearings. In the process, they exalted the Gold Star mother over more progressive forms of women's citizenship (Chapter 2). After the government announced its decision to segregate the Pilgrimages, many prospective African American Gold Star Pilgrims publicly justified their decision to accept or boycott the Pilgrimages as a performance of maternal citizenship (Chapter 3).

The Pilgrimages debates ultimately illustrate how war commemoration can function to exalt and discipline performances of maternal citizenship. The contemporary rhetoric of Gold Star mothers continues to spark public debate about what it means to authentically embody the Gold Star ideal. This project challenges the notion that the Great War has been "forgotten" in U.S. public memory by highlighting the enduring rhetorical legacies of Gold Star Pilgrimages in contemporary political discourse.

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THROUGH THE GREAT WAR ERA, 1914-1933

by

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Table of Contents

Introduction: Defining U.S. Women’s Citizenship During Times of War	1
Chapter 1: Performing Peace: Defining Maternal Citizenship During the Early Great War Era, 1914-1917	74
Chapter 2: Embodying Sacrifice: Justifying Pilgrimages as a Performance of Maternal Citizenship	132
Chapter 3: Confronting Pilgrimage Segregation: Navigating the Intersections of Race, Gender, and Citizenship.....	186
Conclusion: The Continuing Legacy of Gold Star Rhetoric.....	234
Bibliography	276

Introduction:

Defining U.S. Women's Citizenship During Times of War

Nine months after the United States declared war on Germany, advice columnist Dorothy Dix responded to mounting fears of low public morale. America's 1917 entry into the Great War—a war more industrialized than any previous war—exposed the public to reports of mass casualties and injuries caused by automatic weapons.¹ Dix observed that as thousands of American soldiers died on the battlefields, thousands of mothers wore black mourning dresses on the homefront. These public displays of grief, Dix insisted, would “cast over us all a pall of gloom in which hope would die and effort slacken and everyone would be downhearted.”² Dix reminded the public that a woman could fulfill a “big patriotic duty” and “avenge their dead,” if she eschewed traditional mourning practices.³ A woman, according to Dix, must not allow her private grief to impact the public good.

President Woodrow Wilson reiterated Dix's concern about women's mourning practices in a letter to Anna Howard Shaw, chairwoman of the Council of National Defense Women's Committee. Wilson's letter reflected his administration's anxiety over how mothers shaped public perceptions of the war.⁴ He suggested that women wear a “badge of loyalty and remembrance as a substitute for mourning for those who have given up their lives in service of their country.”⁵ Shaw replied that women should wear a three-inch black band on their left arm with one gold star to

represent every loved one who died overseas. Shaw's suggestion reflected a popular commemorative practice during the Great War. Families with loved ones serving overseas displayed service flags in their windows.⁶ These handmade flags featured a white background, red border, and a blue star sewn in the middle for each family member serving overseas. If a family member died overseas then the family would cover the blue star with a gold star. The Committee on Public Information posited that the gold star represented the most authentic form of patriotic mourning: "The idea of the honor and glory accorded the person for his supreme sacrifice in offering up for his country his last full measure of devotion and the pride of the family in it, rather than the sense of personal loss, which would be represented by a mourning symbol."⁷ Women who wore the gold star exemplified the government's belief that national pride should outweigh individual grief.

Mothers who lost their sons during the war, popularly known as Gold Star mothers, organized after the war to advocate for government-funded trips to their sons' overseas burial sites. After 11 years of advocacy, the U.S. government spent \$5 million to send over 6,000 Gold Star Pilgrims on two-week pilgrimages to military gravesites in France between 1930 and 1933.⁸ Gold Star Pilgrims represented a central component of U.S. women's citizenship, especially during wartime. A mother fulfilled her civic duty by encouraging her sons to serve and risk death for the nation; if their sons died, the grieving mothers became role models in embodying and honoring this sacrifice.

Maternal sacrifice was framed as an integral aspect of women's civic responsibility. In 1916, Theodore Roosevelt warned the nation that "every woman

who has not raised her boy to be a soldier at need has in unwomanly fashion striven to put a double burden on some other boy whose mother had a patriotic soul.”⁹

Women who were not willing to sacrifice their sons for the nation, Roosevelt argued, did not deserve the right to vote. Roosevelt's argument echoed the historical ties between military service and voting rights. Disenfranchised groups often highlight wartime service to justify full citizenship, framing equality as a reward for sacrifice.¹⁰ Such logic presumed that war highlights the inequalities between citizens who must earn their rights versus citizens granted such rights.¹¹ Because the first World War took place on the eve of women's suffrage, it represents an important period to illuminate how political discourse created and attempted to reconcile tensions between women's rights and responsibilities as U.S. citizens.

Contextualized within the struggle for full political rights, this project examines how Gold Star discourse defined “maternal citizenship” during and following the Great War (1914-1933).¹² Historian Kathleen Kennedy argues that the World War “required women to play a more public role in shaping motherhood and its relationship to citizenship.”¹³ During and after the Great War and passage of the Nineteenth Amendment, political discourse surrounding women's civic responsibilities both reified and challenged traditional gender roles. Gold Star discourse reinforced women's responsibilities to motivate and commemorate male sacrifice. While the Gold Star mother represented a traditional form of women's citizenship, many women utilized this identity to advocate for access to government benefits.¹⁴ In the process, Gold Star discourse privileged and marginalized different groups of women.

This project thus explores how American Gold Star mothers symbolized civic role models and how such constructions constituted idealized notions of gender and race in the era of world war and women's enfranchisement.¹⁵ Some valorized military service in support of war; others valorized the search for peace to forestall war. As women gained individual rights with the vote, the prevailing Gold Star message functioned as "reactionary rhetoric" that reified women's traditional roles as mothers.¹⁶ Some marginalized women fought for equal access to this maternal ideal; others actively resisted service to the nation that oppressed them. Women embraced, contested, and reimagined what it meant to be an authentic U.S. citizen and, in turn, debated the meanings of maternal citizenship. Before delineating the details of this study, I first trace the intersections of women's citizenship, motherhood, and war.

Women's Citizenship, Motherhood, and War

Women have been denied the rights and responsibilities associated with full citizenship throughout American history. American revolutionaries promised new freedoms and protections for citizens after overthrowing British rule, but these citizenship rights did not extend to women. Linda Kerber describes women's legal rights after the Revolutionary War as an extension of coverture, meaning that women did not have rights separate from their fathers and husbands.¹⁷ However the ideals espoused by American male revolutionaries suggested men and women shared some form of equality.¹⁸ White women with means were especially considered citizens with moral authority and responsibility, but no legal equality. As a result, elite white women had to negotiate a political environment where they were considered both dependents and citizens.

Women contested these legal and social contradictions throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Many scholars recognize the Seneca Falls Convention in 1848 as the beginning of an organized women's rights movement.¹⁹ The Declaration of Rights and Sentiments, signed by convention attendees, outlined how "man" systemically oppressed women in the United States.²⁰ Women collectively advocated for a wide range citizenship rights throughout the nineteenth century, including the right to own property, to receive an education, and to vote in elections. However, many scholars associate the early women's rights movement in the United States with suffrage advocacy.²¹ Some suffragists used natural rights arguments to argue for full citizenship, while others highlighted biological and moral differences between the sexes to advocate for increased rights.²² Many women used motherhood and domesticity as rhetorical strategies to advocate for increased civic rights and responsibilities. The following section will examine the intersection of women's citizenship and republican motherhood.

Women's Citizenship & Republican Motherhood

Motherhood and women's citizenship are intertwined within American political thought. Nira Yuval-Davis argues "it is women . . . who reproduce nations, biologically, culturally, and symbolically."²³ Linda Kerber uses the term "republican mother" to describe what an ideal U.S. woman citizen was expected to be in a nineteenth-century context: "dedicated to the service of civic virtue: she educated her sons for it, she condemned and corrected her husband's lapses from it."²⁴ Women served the nation by instilling a sense of morality, patriotism, and loyalty into her family, community, and nation. This ideal circulated in a post-Revolutionary War

period through a diverse range of publications read by both elite and “middle-class” audiences: political speeches, religious sermons, ladies’ magazines, and daily newspapers.²⁵

Republican motherhood ideology celebrated what many considered to be the authentic, virtuous nature of women. Barbara Welter describes this ideal as the “cult of true womanhood” in which women were expected to live by the “four cardinal virtues of piety, purity, submissiveness, and domesticity.”²⁶ Religious, popular, and political discourses framed women’s virtuous nature as a complement to men’s desire for power and self-interest, which enabled a gendered dichotomy between private and public life.²⁷ Separate sphere ideology posits that women’s “proper” sphere was the home, while men’s “proper” sphere occupied all aspects of public life.²⁸ Men and women utilized this ideology to justify women’s exclusion from the public sphere. For example, Thomas Jefferson argued in an 1817 letter that women should not take part in public meetings with men because the “promiscuous mixing” between the sexes would “corrupt civic virtue” and distract men from their work.²⁹ Rhetorics of feminine virtue provided some women an avenue to blur the distinction between the private and public.

Women publicly enacted republican motherhood ideals in a myriad of ways. During the early nineteenth century, women’s benevolent societies formed to serve, educate, and reform the less fortunate.³⁰ Charity became a socially acceptable performance of citizenship as women worked outside of their home, but did not overtly challenge men’s political power.³¹ However, Lori D. Ginzberg notes that scholars must recognize the inconsistencies between the “ideological separation of

politics and morality and their everyday interconnection.”³² The lived experience of many women did not reflect a strict separation between benevolence work and politics. Women formally and informally lobbied civic leaders to help fund their work.³³ Benevolent societies created a space for women to exercise more rights as a collective than they enjoyed as individuals. As a collective, women in these organizations could own and manage significant amounts of property, sue other parties, and apply for permits.³⁴ While benevolent societies allowed women to organize outside of the home, they still relegated many women’s performance of citizenship to the enactment of virtue, piety, and domesticity.

Women also utilized rhetorics of maternal virtue to explicitly advocate for rights and challenge government policies. Women petitioned the government to call for legislative action on a diverse range of issues including prostitution, Native American removal, and slavery.³⁵ Created and signed by women, these petitions utilized a “discourse of domesticity” to frame petitioning as a moral instead of political act.³⁶ The Temperance Movement also utilized maternal discourse to characterize the all-male government as unable to protect the public from the evils of liquor. Movement leaders called on women to take direct action or “crusade” in public places like saloons.³⁷ Frances E. Willard, Woman’s Christian Temperance Union founder, argued that women could use the vote as a righteous weapon against vice. Willard labeled the vote as “home protection” and implored audiences to recognize that the “instinct of a mother’s love” had a purpose beyond the home.³⁸ She argued that the “rays” of a mother’s love could be “put through a magical lens, that powerful sun glass which we term the ballot, they shall all converge their power, and

burn and blaze on the saloon, till it shrivels up and in lurid vapors curls away like mist under the hot glaze of sunshine.”³⁹ Willard grounded her rhetoric in feminine virtue, while challenging the traditional belief that women should be submissive. Women opposed to suffrage also relied on rhetorics of motherhood and domesticity.

Women across the United States mobilized to oppose their own enfranchisement and organized to counter suffrage movement rhetoric. Susan E. Marshall argues that anti-suffragist leaders did not passively follow their husbands’ political dictates, but organized to protect their “unique social location: protection of their own privilege as elite volunteers, political appointees, and custodians of propriety.”⁴⁰ Many anti-suffragists were also active in the social reform movement, and were consequently experienced organizers.⁴¹ The National Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage counted over 700,000 women members in 1920. Organizers of the anti-suffrage movement also served in philanthropic leadership positions and served on local, state, and national government committees. Some anti-suffragists argued that suffrage was not a privilege of citizenship, but an unwanted duty that would impede women’s “true” civic duty of moral and social reform.⁴²

Anti-suffragist activists used arguments grounded in republican motherhood ideology to oppose women’s suffrage. They organized to protect traditional divisions between the domestic and political sphere. Anti-suffragists posited that a man, as head of the household, voted on behalf of his wife and children’s best interest. A woman’s vote would then be redundant, according to this line of argument, because she would most likely replicate her husband’s vote.⁴³ Two household votes could cause discord between a husband and wife, disrupting the natural harmony of the

private sphere. One anti-suffragist wrote: “Men and women must be regarded as partners, not competitors; and the family, to be preserved as a unit, must be represented by having one political head. . . . Anyone can readily see that for women private duty would constantly conflict with public duty.”⁴⁴ She argued that men and women had an equal duty to contribute to the common good, but they fulfilled this duty with different means. This “natural” division of labor allowed men and women to work on pressing issues in a more holistic way, tackling problems from two different standpoints.⁴⁵ According to anti-suffragists, women would actually lose power if they gained the right to vote.

The act of voting, according to anti-suffragists, would take time away from women’s work on moral and social reform issues. In this line of argument, voting women would be corrupted by politics, unable to advocate for reform in a nonpartisan way. Anti-suffragists argued that this nonpartisan status allowed women to argue for reform based on the “merits of a case instead of political association.”⁴⁶ In 1916, Margaret C. Robinson implored the Massachusetts Special Legislature Committee to recognize these dangers:

The influence of this moral force is so strong and has come to be so well recognized that certain types of politicians and commercial interests rebel against it. They wish to destroy it, and as the best means to that end they advocate—woman suffrage! . . . We are told that women need the ballot in order that they may improve the conditions in the home, that they may help the working girl, and put through good legislation. But the rank and file of suffragists are being deceived in these matters, for suffrage works, and will work directly the other way.⁴⁷

Robinson challenged suffragist arguments grounded in republican motherhood, which posited that women would be able to purify the political process. Instead, she argued that women’s vote would “confuse and disorganize government.”⁴⁸ Robinson’s

speech illustrates how republican motherhood ideology can be deployed to constrain and broaden women's citizenship.

Not all women, however, could embody the ideals of republican motherhood. Scholars describe multiple reasons why African American women's experiences are traditionally left out of popular republican motherhood narratives. First, their sons were not considered to be future citizens.⁴⁹ African American women, in this line of reasoning, did not need to teach their sons civic values because their sons, such logic presumed, would never be called upon to utilize these values in the public sphere. Second, women of color were excluded from dominant assumptions of what it meant to be a "good" woman or mother.⁵⁰ The African American woman was often framed by white society as either a sexual deviant or benevolent "Mammy," who happily took care of white children, but not her own.⁵¹ An African American woman's civic responsibility was then historically tied to her labor for members of white society. Deborah K. King argues that labor, "whether unpaid or coerced or paid and necessary," is the distinctive, enduring characteristic of African American women's place in the nation.⁵² This labor was not celebrated as a civic contribution but viewed as historically expected and required of African American women.⁵³

Women's Citizenship & War Service

These gendered boundaries of citizenship are simultaneously strengthened and challenged during times of war. Historically, men and women "served" the nation during war in traditionally gendered ways. Military service is characterized as a principle duty of citizenship.⁵⁴ R. Claire Snyder asserts that "The Citizen-Soldier," "embodies the twin-practices of civic republican citizenship . . . [men] serve in the

military in order to protect their ability to govern themselves for the common good, and they participate in the process of deciding when to engage in war.”⁵⁵ Women have historically been barred from military service and unable to embody this ideal. However, women served the nation during times of war in a multitude of other ways that challenged traditional gender roles (combat nurses, ambulance drivers, munitions workers, spies, disguised soldiers).⁵⁶ In spite of this service, motherhood remained the fundamental expression of women’s civic responsibility in the United States.⁵⁷ Lorraine Bayard de Volo argues that in the same way men are drafted into military service, mothers are “drafted into civilian organizations that engage women actively in supporting the war effort while at the same time remolding the dominant discourse of the ‘good mother’ to fit wartime circumstances.”⁵⁸ My study explores how Gold Star discourse tells us much about what it meant to be a “good mother” and in turn a good citizen during the Great War era.

The Great War era emphasized women’s duty to send their sons to war. Government officials demonized women who did not raise their sons to die for the nation. At the turn of the century, Theodore Roosevelt warned “when men fear work or fear righteous war, when women fear motherhood, they tremble on the brink of doom.”⁵⁹ During the Great War, women who did not fulfill this maternal duty faced legal consequences.⁶⁰ Gold Star discourse reaffirmed the strong connections between motherhood and citizenship in the United States. This discourse was shaped by historical understandings of women’s war work in the United States. The following sections highlight two historical moments that shaped Great War rhetorics of maternal duty. First, I explore rhetorics of domesticity during the Revolutionary War

era. Second, I discuss how Spartan motherhood ideology informed women's Civil War rhetoric.

Revolutionary War & Domestic Labor

In 1774, Abigail Adams famously wrote John Adams, imploring him to “remember the ladies,” as the Continental Congress convened.⁶¹ Abigail spoke to women's ability to revolt if women's rights were not recognized. She warned her husband: “If particular care and attention is not paid to the ladies, we are determined to foment a rebellion, and will not hold ourselves bound by any laws in which we have no voice or representation.” Although John did not heed his wife's warning, Abigail alluded to women's contributions to the ever-growing rebellion against the British. Women knew how to “foment” a revolution because they had been so integral to sustaining boycotts and protests of the Crown. Linda Kerber argues that women's work during the Revolutionary War shaped republican motherhood ideology, linking national and domestic duty.⁶² The following section will explore how this era created a connection between women's war work and domesticity in the United States.

As hostilities between colonists and the British government escalated, American women's domestic role took on increased political importance. Colonial religious and political leaders urged women to actively support the boycott and create homemade alternatives for British tea and other luxury goods. Reverend William Tennent III wrote directly to South Carolina women urging them to boycott British tea. He implored colonial women to take an active role in the increasingly visible American fight for freedom:

Will not my fair Reader be persuaded to lend their hand to save America from the Dagger of Tyranny? . . . You have it in your power more than all your

committees and Congresses to strike the Stroke, and make the Hills and Plains of America clap their hands . . . American patriotism extends even to the Fair sex, and discourage any future Attempts to enslave us.⁶³

He also reminded women that if she purchased British tea then it would be “paid for by the blood of your Sons.”⁶⁴ Tennent illustrated the power of women’s domestic role during times of war, and he connected women’s duty with her son’s sacrifice.

Newspapers during the era published women’s poetry, which framed the act of refusing British tea or any other imported product as a significant political act. Mercy Otis Warren’s poem, “The Squabble of the Sea Nymphs,” alluded to the centrality of women’s boycotts to the movement: “For females have their influence o'er kings,/ Nor wives, nor mistresses, were useless things/ None will neglect the sex's sage advice/When they engage in any point so nice/ As to forbid the choice nectarous sip/And offer bohea to the rosy-lip.”⁶⁵ Women, according to Warren, could help influence the Crown by refusing to consume or serve British tea within their homes. She linked women’s domestic choice of tea to national service. Women’s domestic sphere also began to be politicalized through calls to boycott British tea. The public measured women’s loyalty to the cause through her willingness to refrain from drinking and serving British tea at home. This created a direct connection between the domestic sphere and women’s war duty.

American women also directly addressed the British public. North Carolina officials voted to officially boycott all luxury British goods received after September 10, 1774. In October 1774, fifty-one North Carolinian women gathered in the home of Mrs. Caroline King to discuss how women could best support the boycott.⁶⁶ This group of women became known as the Edenton Tea Party, in homage to the Boston

Tea Party. The women wrote a public pledge notifying the British of their resolve to support any action opposing unfair taxation. The pledge read:

We, the aforesaid Ladys will not promote ye wear of any manufacturer from England until such time that all acts which tend to enslave our Native country shall be repealed. As we cannot be indifferent on any occasion that appears nearly to affect the peace and happiness of our country, and as it has been thought necessary, for the publik good, to enter into several particular resolves by a meeting of Members deputed from the whole Province, it is a duty which we owe, not only to our near and dear connections who have concurred in them, but to ourselves who are essentially interested in their welfare, to do every thing as far as lies in our power to testify our sincere adherence to the same; and we do therefore accordingly subscribe this paper, as a witness of our fixed intention and solemn determination to do so.⁶⁷

The Edenton Tea Party sent the pledge to a newspaper in England that published the document in January 1775. Fifty-one women in attendance signed their names in order to publicly declare support for protest efforts.⁶⁸ It also widely circulated and received immense praise in colonial newspapers. The women were strongly praised because “the drafting of such resolutions so antagonistic to royal authority required a calmer, far more enviable courage than that developed by the fanatical heroism of the crusades, or the feverish bravery of martial music.”⁶⁹ Women exhibited courage, according to these arguments, because they spoke out against taxation.

The pledge also demonstrates the domestic limits of women’s duty during wartime. Women asserted their duty to the colonial cause while framing their political action in terms of their husbands’ wishes and action. The preamble to the pledge declared that women were following the “laudable examples of their husbands.”⁷⁰ This choice demonstrated that women did not frame their pledge as a disavowal of the gendered social order. Women reaffirmed their deference to the actions of their husbands within the preamble to the petition. However, the pledge reveals that the

women were not simply acting as a result of duty to their husbands. The women described a “duty to themselves” to work for the “publik good.”⁷¹ Mary Beth Norton argues that it was rare for American women to issue a collective statement of political responsibility.⁷² She asserts that this was an important moment where some American white women began to view themselves as agentic actors in the political process, moving their influence from the domestic to the civic spaces.

Colonial religious and political leaders also urged women to create homemade alternatives to British goods, specifically cloth.⁷³ As colonists signed non-consumption pacts, they faced the challenging task of producing goods previously imported from Britain. The task of creating these goods often fell to the colonial women, who were in charge of keeping the home.⁷⁴ Traditionally, women spun the cloth for family clothing, but within the American colonies, the ability to purchase cloth from Britain became a sign of wealth and prestige. However, it soon became a sign of colonial loyalty and patriotism for society women to wear their own homespun clothing. One newspaper explained that “true Female Patriots” would not wear dresses made “with the manufactures of a country that is endeavouring to enslave us.”⁷⁵ Upper-class women were celebrated for abandoning luxuries and performing domestic labor.

Women’s dress became symbols of loyalty during the Revolutionary War.⁷⁶ Wendy Parkins argues that citizenship is in part formulated, performed, and challenged through clothing.⁷⁷ If a woman wore homespun clothing, then her family was considered loyal to the colonial cause. If she wore imported fashion, then her family could be condemned as British loyalists. The act of spinning cloth became a

symbol of rebellion against what some colonists viewed as unfair taxations. White women asserted their loyalty to the idea of a new nation through the act of spinning.

These women transformed what was often considered a private action into a collective political act by forming Spinning Clubs and organizing Spinning Bees. These events became public affairs where entire communities gathered to discuss the taxation boycotts and the British response.⁷⁸ Women would compete against one another to produce the most cloth, while crowds of men and women would watch the competition.⁷⁹ The *Boston Evening Post* noted that, “the ladies, while they vie with each other in skill . . . may vie, with men in contributing to the preservation and prosperity of their country and equally share in the honor of it.”⁸⁰ The *Boston Evening Post* positioned women’s role within the revolution as integral, but clearly situated in the domestic sphere. *The Essex Gazette* admirably observed that women’s work would “exalt their Characters in the Eyes of the World, and serve to shew [sic] how greatly they are contributing to bring about the political Salvation of a whole continent.”⁸¹ Women contributed to the “political salvation” of the nation by publicly enacting her domestic skills.⁸² Revolutionary era rhetoric promoted the relationship between women’s war work and domesticity. These civic responsibilities endured and expanded during the Civil War.

Civil War & Spartan Motherhood

In March 1864, Abraham Lincoln responded to calls from a crowd to present remarks on the closing day of a Washington Sanitary Fair. He spoke of Union soldiers’ selfless bravery. However, Northern women’s war efforts, according to Lincoln, were “extraordinary developments” of the war. Lincoln ended his remarks

by noting: “I have never studied the art of paying compliments to women. But I must say, that if all that has been said by orators and poets since the creation of the world in praise of women were applied to the women of America, it would not do them justice for their conduct during this war. I will close by saying, God bless the women of America!”⁸³ Judith Ann Giesberg describes Northern women’s organizing during the Civil War, in particular the Women’s Central Association of Relief (WCAR), as a “missing link” between women’s abolition activism on a local level during the first half of the century and later larger-scale women’s movements.⁸⁴ Women organized to provide a wide range of services, including: sewing military uniforms, shipping food to local troops, and writing letters to lift the soldiers’ spirits.⁸⁵ Similarly, Southern women also organized to support Confederate soldiers. Due to conservative Confederacy culture, Confederate women had to balance how to “provide real and substantial aid . . . without moving from the feminine sphere.”⁸⁶ During the Civil War, women’s war work still needed to be framed in terms of feminine virtue and domesticity.

During the Civil War, republican motherhood ideology melded with the concept of Spartan motherhood. Spartan motherhood ideology, first recounted in Plutarch’s *Moralia*, instructed mothers to prepare their sons not only for civic life, but to die for the nation.⁸⁷ Plutarch recounted the story of a mother who was in the process of burying her sons when a passerby expressed sorrow over their deaths. The mother replied, “No by the two gods, a piece of good fortune because I bore him so that he may die for Sparta, and that is what happened as I wished.”⁸⁸ Through the willing sacrifice of her son, a Spartan mother made the ultimate sacrifice for the

nation. This sacrifice was not viewed as a tragic loss, but the fulfillment of a mother's civic responsibility.

This maternal ideal influenced Western political philosophy. Jean Jacques-Rousseau labeled the Spartan mother as an ideal woman citizen. In *Emile*, Rousseau tells the story of a Spartan mother who sent five sons to die in battle.⁸⁹ When a passerby expressed sorrow for her loss, the Spartan mother replied, "Vile slave was that what I asked thee? We have won the victory."⁹⁰ She then, according to Rousseau, did not shed a tear for her sons, but instead went straight to thank the gods for victory. Rousseau praised the actions of the Spartan mother by stating: "That was a citizen."⁹¹ Women's service to the nation could be measured by her ability not only to educate her son for civic life, but to also encourage her son to die for the nation.

Jefferson Davis, President of the Confederate States, described the Confederate feminine ideal as a Spartan mother. He lauded "the Spartan mother [who] sent her boy, bidding him return with honor, either carrying his shield or on it. The women of the South sent forth their sons, directing them to return with victory; to return with wounds disabling them from further service, or never to return at all."⁹² Davis's praise illustrated Confederate mothers' perceived unwavering loyalty to the Confederate cause. Elizabeth R. Varon argues that Spartan motherhood was synonymous with "Confederate womanhood."⁹³ Women should not only willingly sacrifice their sons, in this line of reasoning, but also encourage others to die for the cause. For example, women would leave hoopskirts and bonnets at the doors of men who did not enlist, urging them to die in battle with glory instead of "hiding" in the

home without honor.⁹⁴ Confederate interpretations of Spartan motherhood shaped women's civic responsibilities in the United States during the first World War.

Women were expected to motivate sacrifice during the war and then honor that sacrifice after war. Drew Gilpin Faust argues that the Civil War drastically altered how Americans understood death on an individual and a collective level. An estimated 620,000 died during the Civil War, which would be the equivalent to six million Americans today.⁹⁵ Before the war, death rituals often took place in the home, where family members would witness the death. American families needed to create new practices to mourn the loss of a loved one. At the same time, Civil War death “created the modern American Union—not just by enduring national survival, but by shaping national structures and commitments.”⁹⁶ The Civil War not only shaped national burial politics and industries, but also the meaning of sacrifice during war.

Southern white women played a critical role in shaping these national meanings of death. One in five Confederate soldiers did not survive the war.⁹⁷ The practice of remembering and honoring those killed for the Confederate cause, “offered women a claim to both prominence and power in the postwar South.”⁹⁸ Local Ladies' Memorial Associations (LMAs) organized around the South to ensure proper burials for Confederate soldiers hastily buried on battlefields and to erect monuments in their honor. LMAs located in five Virginia cities near battlefields reinterred 72,520 Confederate soldiers.⁹⁹ These women worked not only to reclaim the men's bodies, but also the meaning of their sacrifice. United Daughters of the Confederacy and other women's organizations became the guardians of the “Lost Cause myth,” which claimed that the Confederacy stood for the “basic political

principles, especially the rights of property and self-determination.”¹⁰⁰ Women’s organizations fundraised and erected monuments to “devoted infantryman” to honor soldiers’ sacrifices and celebrate the “superiority” of Southern culture.¹⁰¹ These statues were almost exclusively representations of white men, reflecting a white, patriarchal ideal of sacrifice.¹⁰²

Women were expected to commemorate men’s sacrifices, but their own war work was rarely commemorated. Mary Livermore noted this deficiency in her 1887 memoir. Twenty years after the Civil War, Livermore argued that women’s wartime contributions quickly faded from national memory. She recounted how the “public ear” was captivated by stories of great battles and heroic deaths, yet lamented that women’s work remained largely undocumented and untold.¹⁰³ Livermore wrote: “who has fully narrated the consecrated and organized work of women, who strengthened the sinews of the nation with their unflagging enthusiasm and bridged over the chasm between military and civilian life?”¹⁰⁴ Women, Livermore notes, are expected to remember men’s sacrifice but rarely are remembered for their own sacrifices in the national imagery. Gold Star Pilgrims challenged this lack of national commemoration—arguing the government must honor mothers’ and soldiers’ sacrifice to the nation through the Pilgrimages.

Spartan motherhood ideology continued to permeate women’s war discourse in future wars. Leading up to the Spanish-American War, Mrs. C. B. Bryant, first chairwoman of the Daughters of American Revolution (DAR), once again invoked the connection between Spartan and American mothers. She argued that American mothers, in order to preserve the nation, must model themselves after the women of

Sparta: “It was Spartan mothers with their proud injunctions to their loved ones: ‘Bring back your shield or else be brought back upon it’ that for centuries made Sparta so strong.”¹⁰⁵ Bryant stated that victory hinged on mothers imparting on their sons the importance of dying for their country. America would only continue to exist as a strong nation, according to Bryant, if women encouraged their sons to make the ultimate sacrifice during wartime. At the same time, women supported and organized with Anti-Imperialism societies to oppose the Spanish-American (1898) and Philippine-American (1899-1902) Wars.¹⁰⁶ In 1899, a mother questioned the morality of war: “How can the country that has bathed the land in the blood of the best of her sons wash away the sins of slavery, have the right to buy tens of millions of men, and butcher them by the thousands because they will not kiss the hand of their new masters?”¹⁰⁷ These women argued that peace would save their sons from bloodshed, and create a more equitable union for all Americans.¹⁰⁸ During the Great War, women strived to simultaneously prevent, motivate, and commemorate war death.

Contextualizing the Great War Era

The previous sections explored the intersections of women’s citizenship, motherhood, and war. Before I describe the project details, I will next outline how multiple political and social contexts from the Great War inform my project. First, I discuss women’s contributions during the Great War and its aftermath. Second, I discuss burial and international policies after the Great War. Third, I consider rhetorics of racial segregation and violence during this era. Many African Americans predicated the Great War would usher in a new era of equality and desegregation.¹⁰⁹ Yet, the opposite happened, and racial tensions and violence actually escalated as the

war came to an end. The post-war reforms many African Americans longed for never materialized. Gold Star rhetoric was not isolated from, but instead shaped by these unique conditions.

Gendered Politics

During the Great War, American women negotiated traditional and nontraditional gender roles. The Selective Service Act of 1917 required all American men between the ages of 18-30 to register for the draft.¹¹⁰ By the end of the war, over 4.3 million men volunteered or were drafted into active duty military service.¹¹¹ These men left behind their farms, factories, and homes to train and then fight on the European front. Harriet Stanton Blatch aptly noted, “When men go a-warring, women go to work.”¹¹² Long before the symbol of Rosie the Riveter circulated in the Second World War, public campaigns commenced to recruit women into the world of wartime work.¹¹³ Women formed the Women’s Land Army of America (WLAA) to plant and harvest crops across the United States. Many believed the war could be won or lost based on the food supply of the nation.¹¹⁴ Fifteen thousand women volunteered as “Farmerettes” in the WLAA, cultivating a food supply for the homefront and Allied soldiers.¹¹⁵ Women also worked in munitions and arsenal factories, creating the first generation of industrialized weapons.¹¹⁶ Thousands of women served domestically and overseas as military telegraph and telephone operators, ambulance drivers, interpreters, and nurses.¹¹⁷

Many women felt empowered by their nontraditional service to the nation. Dr. Josephine Jackson and Helen M. Salisbury observed that women learned during the war “that many of our so-called handicaps were nothing but illusions.”¹¹⁸ They

argued that this war work countered claims that women could not physically or mentally handle the hardships of political life.¹¹⁹ Governmental officials also lauded women's wartime service. In 1918, President Woodrow Wilson described the Nineteenth Amendment as the "war amendment."¹²⁰ He urged Congress to reward women's service with the vote:

We have made partners of the women in war. Shall we admit them only to a partnership of suffering, sacrifice, and toil and not to a partnership of privilege and right? This war could not have been fought, either by the other nations engaged or by America, if it had not been for the services of the women—services rendered in every sphere—not merely in the spheres of efforts in which we have been accustomed to see them work, but wherever men have worked and upon the very skirts and edges of battle itself.¹²¹

Others framed women's work as temporarily supplementing, but not competing with men's place in the workforce. The WLAA argued that women only took to the fields to support soldiers and that the gender roles would return to normal after the war. One official noted that women only performed their "patriotic duty. . . . This manner will right itself when normal conditions return."¹²² Immediately after Armistice Day, companies laid off almost all women workers hired at the start of the war.¹²³ As the number of women in the workforce dramatically dropped after the war, some Gold Star mothers emerged from the war as important political actors.

War propaganda heavily featured Gold Star imagery. Magazine covers, Liberty Bond advertisements, and popular music featured the Gold Star mother as a model of patriotism and sacrifice. One Liberty Bond advertisement exalted the patriotic spirit of a Gold Star mother, arguing that Americans must follow her example: "And beside that spirit that is going to win must be your spirit, just as bound to win and just as willing to sacrifice."¹²⁴ Gold Star mothers informally organized

throughout the war as support groups for one another, usually through churches and other community groups. In 1919, Gold Star Mothers of America formed to unite these groups and collectively support disabled veterans.¹²⁵ At the same time, the American War Mothers (AWM) formed to continue patriotic efforts after the war. The organization partnered with other “patriotic” women’s organizations like the Daughters of the America Revolution (DAR) to challenge Progressive era reforms including: the Children’s Bureau, Sheppard-Towner Act, and Child Labor Amendment, arguing that the “the next logical step after communizing the children is communizing the mother.”¹²⁶ While the AWM became a prominent anti-feminist voice during the 1920s, their political organizing began in response to Great War burial procedures.

Burial Politics

After Armistice Day, the American public grappled with how to make sense of the Great War. Over 100,000 American men died overseas and over 200,000 returned injured after only nineteen months of fighting.¹²⁷ The reality of wartime casualties and injuries did not match the heroic narratives perpetuated by wartime propaganda. More American soldiers died as a result of complications from the Spanish influenza than enemy fire on the battlefields.¹²⁸ Venereal disease was the number two reason for absence or sickness on the warfront, second only to influenza.¹²⁹ Soldiers were more likely to be disqualified from combat as a result of influenza and venereal disease than combat injuries. Combat veterans returned to a nation ill equipped to accommodate the psychological and physical effects of trench warfare. The relationship between the government and many veterans groups

deteriorated throughout the 1920s and tensions culminated in what became known as the Bonus March.¹³⁰ For over a decade after the war, the American Legion and Veterans of Foreign Wars argued that veterans did not receive equitable compensation for their sacrifices.¹³¹ Frustrated by growing unemployment and government inaction, over 20,000 Great War veterans and their families traveled to Washington DC during the summer of 1932. These veterans, who became known as the Bonus Army, set up camps by the Anacostia River to pressure Congress to authorize immediate payment of veteran bonuses, known as adjusted service certificates. Congress defeated the appropriations bill and Army Chief of Staff Douglas MacArthur deployed soldiers to disband the camps. At the same time that soldiers set fire to Bonus encampments, Gold Star Pilgrims set sail on a luxury cruise liner to France.

The repatriation of battlefield casualties also proved to be a complex political challenge. Secretary of War Newton D. Baker promised in September 1918 that all American combat casualties would be buried on the homefront, but no official policy supported Baker's remarks.¹³² The absence of official policies and procedures generated a multi-faceted controversy after the war. First, the Department of War assumed that the French government would cooperate with the shipping process of the remains. In February 1919, the French Ministry of Interior instituted a three-year embargo on the exhumation and transportation of human remains citing public health dangers and transportation concerns.¹³³ Second, battlefield conditions made it impossible to identify all of the fallen soldiers. Many of the mangled bodies could not be clearly identified and one *American Legion Weekly* editorial noted that, "It was

extremely improbable that the families receiving the bodies of soldiers actually got remains of their own sons.”¹³⁴ These conditions prompted the Department of War to amend Baker’s repatriation promise.

The government originally gave soldiers’ families a choice between repatriation and international burial. Between 1919-1922, the Department of War asked Gold Star families if they preferred their soldier’s body be buried overseas, buried in a national cemetery in the United States, or shipped to their home address. If a deceased soldier was unmarried or his wife remarried, then his father was required to fill out the form. Many Gold Star mothers and remarried widows expressed dismay over their exclusion from the decision-making process.¹³⁵ These impassioned, public controversies over military burial policies shaped Gold Star Pilgrimage discourse.

International Politics

As the Department of War struggled to formulate a commemorative strategy, President Woodrow Wilson engaged in a heated battle with the Senate over the League of Nations.¹³⁶ He championed the League of Nations, an Article in the Treaty of Versailles, during his Fourteen Points speech before Congress in January 1918. Wilson made his case for the League of Nations this way: “A general association of nations must be formed under specific covenants for the purpose of affording mutual guarantees of political independence and territorial integrity to great and small states alike.”¹³⁷ Wilson and his supporters believed this international association could create the lasting peace promised as an outcome of the war. However, the Senate Republicans passionately opposed American entry into the League of Nations. Henry

Cabot Lodge, the Senate Republican Majority Leader, explained the strong Republican opposition:

I have always loved one flag and I cannot share that devotion [with] a mongrel banner created for a League. . . . We would not have our politics distracted and embittered by the dissensions of other lands. We would not have our country's vigour exhausted or her moral force abated, by everlasting meddling and muddling in every quarrel, great and small, which afflicts the world. Our ideal is to make her ever stronger and better and finer, because in that way alone, as we believe, can she be of the greatest service to the world's peace and to the welfare of mankind.¹³⁸

The Senate officially rejected the Treaty of Versailles one week after the first Armistice anniversary. After the United States failed to sign on to the treaty, Gold Star Pilgrimages represented one way the government symbolized America's commitment to peace on an international stage.

The presidential election of 1920 also reflected the American public's isolationist sentiments after the war. Republican candidate Warren G. Harding handily won the election with a promise of a "return to normalcy" and a focus on domestic prosperity.¹³⁹ This message resonated with many Americans disillusioned by the sacrifices made on foreign soil and the staggering costs of the war. Harding argued that "tranquility at home is more precious than peace abroad" and that America needed "not heroics, but healing; not nostrums, but normalcy; not revolution, but restoration; not agitation, but adjustment . . ." ¹⁴⁰ Harding's vision of a tranquil homefront did not reflect the realities of a post-war America, especially for African Americans.

Racial Politics

The Great War era offers a crucial opportunity to explore the intersections of race, gender, and citizenship. Women's citizenship has been historically studied

through the lens of white women, often ignoring the unique social location of African American women.¹⁴¹ Gold Star discourse intersected with public debates over tensions among race, patriotism, and loyalty. African American Gold Star Pilgrims attempted to reconcile these tensions when articulating their civic duty. The following section seeks to illuminate rhetoric surrounding the African American experience during the Great War era.

President Wilson and other government officials called on all Americans to exhibit “100 percent Americanism” during the Great War.¹⁴² African Americans, suffragists, immigrants, and labor activists were urged to put aside their grievances to create a unified, patriotic front against the German enemy. Yet, this rhetoric of a unified America did not extend to the treatment of African Americans during the war. Reflecting Jim Crow-era laws, African American soldiers were trained in segregated bases, and assigned to combat troops separate from their white counterparts.¹⁴³ Women’s war auxiliary groups, nursing corps, and service organizations were also segregated on the homefront.¹⁴⁴ African Americans were expected to demonstrate complete loyalty to the nation while experiencing unequal treatment.

Events tested the “limits” of African American loyalty soon after the beginning of the war. In August 1917, tensions between white civilians and a segregated African American unit erupted when 100 African American soldiers confronted an angry mob of white civilians and officers in Houston. This exchange resulted in the deaths of four African American soldiers and 15 white civilians. The Army took swift action and executed 19 African American soldiers who took part in the “riot,” and sentenced

63 more to life in prison.¹⁴⁵ No charges were ever brought against the white civilians or officers who took part in the confrontation.

This event sparked a nationwide discussion about African American disloyalty during the Great War. Local police and federal government officials accused African Americans of being susceptible to enemy subversion and working on behalf of the Germans.¹⁴⁶ Many African American activists initially advocated for reduced sentences for the Houston soldiers. However, most feared government retaliation and did not openly support the soldiers' use of force. One notable exception was published in the *San Antonio Inquirer*. C. L. Threadgill-Dennis, an African American woman from Austin, wrote a letter strongly supporting the actions of the soldiers. She wrote, "It is far better that you be shot for having tried to protect a Negro woman, than to have you die a natural death in the trenches of Europe, fighting to make the world safe for a democracy that you can't enjoy."¹⁴⁷ The *Inquirer's* editor G. W. Bouldin was sentenced to two years in a military prison for publishing the letter under the Espionage and Sedition Acts. This jail sentence sent a strong, silencing message to the African American community and press.¹⁴⁸ Criticisms of segregation and racism during the Great War were tempered by widespread optimism about post-war race relations as well as fear of government retribution.

Rather than entering a period of racial harmony after the war, the nation experienced a surge of violence against African Americans. According to *The Crisis*, 1919 was a year of extreme racial violence. Seventy-seven African Americans were lynched, and 11 were war veterans.¹⁴⁹ These lynchings were often a town spectacle, and some were even advertised days in advance in local papers.¹⁵⁰ Race riots,

provoked by white mobs, broke out in almost every major city in the United States. One of the deadliest riots lasted for five days in Chicago and ended with 38 dead, 500 wounded, and over 1,000 homeless.¹⁵¹ The 1919 violence contributed to a shift in African American activist discourse.

During the Great War, all mothers, regardless of race or class, were expected to encourage their sons to register for the draft, enlist, and willingly die for the nation. However, African American soldiers did not receive equal treatment overseas, and returned to significant racial violence. This perceived hypocrisy shaped how African American organizations and activists responded to the government's decision to segregate Gold Star Pilgrimages. I heed Glenn's call that to "understand race and gender we must examine not only how dominant groups and institutions attempt to impose particular meanings but also how subordinate groups contest dominant conceptions and construct alternative meanings."¹⁵² Included in this study of Gold Star discourse is an exploration of how many African Americans challenged the government's decision to segregate Pilgrimages and reshaped what it meant to be authentic maternal citizens in the process.

Project Details

This project is guided by two research questions related to Gold Star mothers. First, how are historical ideologies of motherhood and citizenship reflected in the debates over the Gold Star Pilgrimages during the Great War era? Second, how did discourse preceding and surrounding Gold Star Pilgrimages simultaneously privilege and marginalize performances of maternal citizenship in terms of gender and race? To answer these questions, I trace the differing ways ascriptive visions of citizenship

were constituted in the Gold Star discourse throughout the Great War era—before America’s entrance in the war through the end of the Pilgrimages (1914-1933). In studying the Gold Star discourse, I analyze the public words of the Gold Star mothers as well as the public words of others (speeches, congressional transcripts, pamphlets, petitions, editorials) commenting on their sacrifice: presidents, congressional leaders, veterans’ organizations, suffragists, civil rights leaders, journalists, patriotic organizations, and other auxiliary women’s organizations.¹⁵³

Rhetorics of Citizenship

I approach these Gold Star texts rhetorically. Rhetoric is not a monolith, but encompasses many forms of expression, from speeches, letters, pamphlets, newspaper accounts, to commemorative acts. I also understand rhetoric as a “force of history,” with the capacity to shape individual and collective identities, interpretations, and actions.¹⁵⁴ Kathleen Turner argues that this perspective allows scholars to interpret rhetoric as a “perpetual and dynamic process of social construction, maintenance, and change rather than as an isolated, static product.”¹⁵⁵ I conceptualize Gold Star discourse not as a product, but a complex rhetorical process where diverse voices contested the meanings of maternal citizenship during the Great War era. I engage two additional bodies of literature to analyze this complex rhetorical process: citizenship and intersectionality. In this next section, I explain how these three scholarly outlooks informed my study. I first describe three rhetorical perspectives utilized in my examination of Gold Star discourse: public address studies as well as constitutive and instrumental theories of rhetoric. Next, I discuss multiple theories of citizenship that shape this project. Finally, I turn to theories of intersectionality.

Theories of Rhetoric

First, I approach the study of rhetoric from a public address perspective. Such an approach traces the evolution of ideas and ideologies over time and context.¹⁵⁶ Stephen E. Lucas encourages public address scholars to “proceed with due regard for the political, religious, economic, intellectual, and institutional forces that condition both the development of the text and its internal operations.”¹⁵⁷ Public address scholarship illuminates how multilayered contexts and texts mutually constitute one another.¹⁵⁸ This perspective allows me to explore how Gold Star discourse shaped and was shaped by historical, political, gendered, and racial ideas and contexts of the era. Eric King Watts calls on public address scholars to “locate specific deployments of racial tropes in relation to tropes of class, sex, gender, and religion – as contingent upon the intersectionality that structures identification and difference.”¹⁵⁹ My study illuminates the ways that women navigated “multifaceted maternal” and racial rhetorics during the Great War era.¹⁶⁰

Archival research allows scholars to recover diverse voices traditionally underrepresented in public address scholarship.¹⁶¹ Marginalized groups historically have not had as much access to speaking platforms available to heterosexual white men of means. As a result, many groups used alternative rhetorical forms to express their ideas publicly and organize politically.¹⁶² Archival research allows scholars to recover these texts and offer a more inclusive understanding of what constitutes public address. Textual recovery provides insight into how marginalized people resisted or perpetuated systems of power at different times throughout history.¹⁶³ For

example, many African American women eligible for Gold Star Pilgrimages opposed segregation through letters to the editor, newspaper interviews, and newsletters.

Archives of course are not neutral places of discovery but are instead imbued with complexities of access and inclusion. It is critical to recognize the political processes and power relations embedded in archival research.¹⁶⁴ Barbara Biesecker argues that archives are sites of invention that do not “authenticate,” but “authorize” or highlight certain narratives and voices.¹⁶⁵ Archivists evaluate materials when they label and file materials.¹⁶⁶ Their choices inform how scholars interact and interpret texts. Honor R. Sachs calls on scholars to critically read “finding aids for what they gloss over” and explore archival collections that are usually deemed “unimportant or uninteresting.”¹⁶⁷ Davis Houck elaborates that archives are “sites of preferred memory” that may frame historical figures, events, and organizations in a positive light.¹⁶⁸

Second, this project reflects a constitutive and instrumental understanding of rhetoric. James Jasinski writes that a constitutive understanding of rhetoric allows scholars to unpack how “specific discursive strategies and textual dynamics shape and reshape more broadly the contours of political concepts and ideas.”¹⁶⁹ This study attends to the ways that discourse shaped conceptions of Gold Star mothers, and reshaped understandings of maternal citizenship. Yet, I also consider the instrumental impact of Gold Star rhetoric.¹⁷⁰ As a practical art, rhetoric is designed to influence material outcomes and behavior. Instrumental arguments require a nuanced understanding of context, history, and the circulation of texts. As Mary E. Stuckey maintains, instrumental claims may not always be the “simple, direct, and easily

measurable effects that some scholars hope to find.”¹⁷¹ Although these effects may not be simple to trace definitively, Robert Asen illustrates how rhetoric can impact lived experience: “public policies provide money, goods, and services to target populations to achieve particular outcomes.”¹⁷² Public policy debates and policy decisions during the Great War era led to people being drafted into the military service, jailed for speaking against the war, and included or excluded from Gold Star Pilgrimages.

Theories of Citizenship

I also study Gold Star discourse through the lens of citizenship. Citizenship can be defined as a status, as set of rights and responsibilities, and a form of engagement.¹⁷³ My study engages all three definitions. First, women’s voting status changed after the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment in 1920. I examine the way women leveraged this change in legal status to advocate for Gold Star Pilgrimages. Second, I explore the manner in which Gold Star discourse simultaneously framed the Pilgrimages as both a right and responsibility of women’s citizenship. Third, I posit that the Gold Star Pilgrimages represented a form of civic performance. As Robert Alejandro notes, citizenship can be studied as “a fusion between the past and the present; as a web of different vocabularies; and as an interpretive practice against a backdrop of different and conflicting traditions.”¹⁷⁴ I understand citizenship to be contested, historically dependent, and rhetorical.

I also recognize the fluidity and multiplicity of meanings associated with U.S. citizenship. Rogers Smith, for example, describes three traditions of citizenship in the United States: “liberal, republican, and ascriptive.”¹⁷⁵ The liberal tradition frames

citizenship in terms of individual rights. Some suffragists often invoked a “liberal principle,” which “held that because all persons possess natural rights, all must be guaranteed political rights and stand as equal citizens.”¹⁷⁶ Yet, liberal philosophers like Locke, Hobbes, and Rousseau argued that women did not deserve full citizenship, and used “newly interpreted biological facts” to justify women’s unequal status.¹⁷⁷ The republican tradition of citizenship emphasizes civic participation and the “common good” over individual interests.¹⁷⁸ For most of American history, women were thought to best contribute to the common good in the domestic realm, barring them from direct political participation.¹⁷⁹ Smith, recognizing how liberal and republican traditions can be tools of discrimination, characterizes an “ascriptive” tradition of citizenship in the United States in this way:

Rather than stressing protection of individual rights for all in liberal fashion, or participation in common civic institutions in republican fashion, American law had long been shot through with forms of second-class citizenship, denying personal liberties and opportunities for political participation to most of the adult population on the basis of race, ethnicity, gender, and even religion. There were elements in republican and liberal thinking . . . that Americans used to justify some of these forms of inequality.¹⁸⁰

Smith illustrates how full citizenship is not a reality for many marginalized groups in the United States. Others have elaborated these ascriptive components of citizenship. Women, according to Nira Yuval-Davis, must navigate the “dual nature” of gendered citizenship where they are at once “included in the general body of citizens,” yet are also subjected to “rules, regulations, and policies which are specific to them.”¹⁸¹ Politicians and members of the public often enact these formal and informal regulations at times when women are perceived as gaining power.¹⁸² Corey Robin explains how these “reactionary” policies and rhetorics arise from “the felt experience

of having power, seeing it threatened, and trying to win it back.”¹⁸³ While navigating these reactionary rhetorics, women and other marginalized groups still perform citizenship without access to full legal rights.

My project also considers tensions between civic rights and responsibilities embedded in theories of citizenship, especially relating to the “social contract.” Mark Hulliung explains that “the social contract provided a standard of vocabulary for public affairs” to debate the duties and rights of the “governed” versus the obligations and powers of the “governors.”¹⁸⁴ Popular discourse during the years leading up to the Great War “focused, above all, on participatory citizenship by emphasizing the duty and the privilege of citizens to act in support of the nation.”¹⁸⁵ Kimberly Jensen notes that many women served the nation during the war with the expectation that this service would be rewarded with full citizenship rights.¹⁸⁶ The “social contract,” Jensen reasoned, offered women an avenue to equal rights. However, other scholars recognize that the application of the social contract is inherently unequal across U.S. citizens. Carole Pateman argues that a “sexual contract” predates any social contract. She writes that “the social contract is a story of freedom; the sexual contract is a story of subjection.”¹⁸⁷ As Pateman suggests, not all civic rights and responsibilities are codified in laws. Lauren Berlant argues that citizenship can also be understood as “experiential” and “vernacular.”¹⁸⁸ According to Berlant, individuals come to “understand their relation to state power and social membership,” not only through laws, but also through their actions and the actions and words of others.¹⁸⁹

Citizenship can also be understood as “a mode of public engagement.”¹⁹⁰ Robert Asen’s “Discourse Theory on Citizenship” calls on scholars to interrogate

questions pertaining to “how people enact” citizenship, moving its understanding beyond “what counts” as citizenship.¹⁹¹ Individuals can “enact” citizenship through a myriad of discursive acts, many of which may not be tied to legal rights and responsibilities. This perspective allows scholars to understand how “opportunities for and meanings of enactment differ,” reflecting the intersectional nature of civic performance.¹⁹² Gender, race, social class, and other social positions shape how individuals enact citizenship. Many scholars have explored how women “performed” citizenship separate from their legal status.¹⁹³ The public and government officials often judge, laud, or discipline these performances on the grounds of “authenticity”—comparing women’s civic actions to the historically-contingent, contested standards of “real” citizenship.

Citizenship and Authenticity

This study also posits authenticity as a critical component of civic discourse during the Great War era. During this era, government officials and members of the public monitored, celebrated, and disciplined civic performances to ensure that marginalized groups embodied authentic American ideals and gender roles. Leslie Hahner notes that throughout the first two decades of the twentieth century, the “true American patrolled the populace by knowing an authentic American when she saw one.”¹⁹⁴ Public anxieties about authenticity and civic roles can be traced back to the foundations of Western political thought.¹⁹⁵ Shawn J. Parry-Giles explains that modern understandings of authenticity are “often grounded in assumptions of morality, truth, individualism, and culture.”¹⁹⁶ These assumptions are used to assess

potential and current citizens' character, as well as their ability to embody national ideals.

Historically, government officials and the public assessed character in order to distinguish between authentic and inauthentic citizens. The Alien and Sedition Acts of 1795 mandated “good moral character” as a requirement for legal citizenship status and this concept continues to be used as grounds to deport an individual or deny a citizenship application.¹⁹⁷ Citizenship laws and civic education throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries framed the “*most* authentic” American citizens as “white, Protestant, male, and Anglo-Saxon” who were willing to die for the nation.¹⁹⁸ This study interrogates the ways that Gold Star discourse perpetuated, redefined, and challenged this civic ideal.

Scholars have interrogated how the media, corporations, and public officials frame authenticity as a natural state rather than a socially- and discursively-constructed concept. In her study of women and politics, Parry-Giles reveals how rhetorics of authenticity can be employed to exalt women who conform to gendered norms and discipline women who challenge these historical ideologies.¹⁹⁹ Similarly, Greg Dickinson analyzes how seemingly natural “markers” of authenticity are constituted through rhetoric.²⁰⁰ As many challenged traditional gender roles during the Great War era, government officials utilized discourses of authenticity to reaffirm the connection between motherhood, whiteness, and women's citizenship. These constructs functioned to further marginalize women who could not embody a white, maternal performance of citizenship and failed to get on the pro-war bandwagon.

Marginalized groups have historically struggled to embody and redefine the traditional ideals of American citizenship. Anna Hartnell contends that the terms “black” and “American” have historically been “pit[ted] against one another” in American political discourse.²⁰¹ Amy J. Wan notes that citizenship status can be questioned based on legal status, literacy, appearance, or adherence to cultural norms.²⁰² Even though the avenues to acquire legal citizenship may be clearly explicated by governments, Wan makes the point that “the path to acquire full citizenship—citizenship beyond the legal status” or “access to all society’s resources is not clear-cut.”²⁰³ May Joseph contends that marginalized groups often must undergo the process of “reinventing themselves” in order to fit into “prevalent notions of authentic citizenship.”²⁰⁴ Members of the public learn what it means to be an authentic citizen through formal and informal discourses, including, among others: “public images, official definitions, informal customary practice, nostalgic longings, accrued historical memory and material culture, comforting mythologies of reinvention, and lessons learned from the past.”²⁰⁵ Joseph contends that this diverse range of authenticity discourses explicitly and implicitly create a hierarchy between “authentic citizens,” “emergent political subjects,” “immigrant aspirants,” and “inauthentic minorities.”²⁰⁶ Melissa V. Harris-Perry notes that black women are “rarely recognized as archetypal citizens,” illustrating how intersecting hierarchies of power marginalize women of color.²⁰⁷ As this project will show, this hierarchy can create competition among marginalized groups as they struggle to be recognized as authentic and full citizens. Some African American Gold Star Pilgrims, for example,

asserted that they were more authentic citizens than immigrant women who were not segregated during the voyages.

Others used the same rhetorics of authenticity to alter the meaning of the citizen ideal. Sociologist Randolph Hohle illustrates how black nationalists challenged white norms of civic authenticity and asserted “black authenticity” in order to “redefine and then use an empowered black culture as the means of achieving economic and political power.”²⁰⁸ Hohle claims that black nationalists subverted “good black citizen” narratives by rejecting the liberal notion that equality could be achieved through the individual advancement and cooperation with white America.²⁰⁹ This study illuminates the ways that African American Gold Star Pilgrims grappled with similar tensions between national and racial interpretations of authentic citizenship.

Throughout the Great War era, the Americanization movement informed popular understandings of the difference between authentic and inauthentic citizens. Hahner describes how Americanization efforts prescribed the ways that citizens should “act, think and ultimately feel.”²¹⁰ Americanization proponents, in distinguishing authentic and inauthentic performances of citizenships, argued for a unified national identity. Leroy G. Dorsey describes how Theodore Roosevelt and other Americanization leaders called on immigrants, women, and African Americans to “discard the significance they attributed to their culture of origin” and embrace the “true American ideals.”²¹¹ While primarily focused on immigrants, Americanization efforts also called on all Americans to embrace ambiguous ideals of unity and

patriotism over peace movements or other movements for social, political, and economic equality.

Americanization rhetoric reinforced a dichotomy between authentic and inauthentic performances of women's citizenship. Historian John F. McClymer notes that "women mattered to Americanizers as mothers and homemakers," reifying traditional gender roles.²¹² Many Americanization efforts led by women focused on educating immigrant mothers about authentic American values so that they could raise their sons to be loyal citizens. In addition, the movement reified traditional roles for all Americans at a time when many women activists sought to challenge the norms of gendered political action. Theodore Roosevelt summarized these traditional gendered responsibilities at the turn of the century during his "The Strenuous Life" speech, where he reminded the nation:

The man must be glad to do a man's work, to dare and endure and to labor; to keep himself, and to keep those dependent upon him. The woman must be a housewife, the helpmeet of the homemaker, the wise and fearless mother of many healthy children.²¹³

Roosevelt asserted that men and women contributed to the public good by performing traditional gender roles. Gold Star discourse exalted women who embodied these performances of "authentic womanhood" and condemned women who challenged traditional gender norms.²¹⁴

Scholars have also explored how the construct of authenticity informs the social contract. Thomas Ricento argues that Americanization discourse framed "some groups (Caucasian/European), religions (Christianity), and languages (English) as being more authentically 'American' than others" and consequently considered more deserving of civic rights.²¹⁵ As a result, marginalized communities, particularly

immigrants, women, and persons of color, must “prove” their ability to embody the authentic American ideals as they advocate for full citizenship rights and political recognition. These communities must “earn” the same civic rights bestowed upon native-born white men at birth.²¹⁶ After the Great War, government officials and Pilgrimage advocates simultaneously framed Gold Star Pilgrimages as a reward for women’s civic service and a responsibility to commemorate men’s sacrifice.

Commemoration functions as one way that individuals enact, perpetuate, and challenge notions of authentic citizenship. Commemorations serve as models of civic identity and outlets of civic performance. Ekaterina V. Haskins notes that these practices can envision “models of civic identity” and “stage experiences through which people come to embrace or reject these models.”²¹⁷ Such examples can include memorials, national holidays, commemorative speeches, and trips to battlegrounds. These commemorative acts are rhetorical because they involve the “coordination of individual and group memories, whose results may appear consensual when they are in fact the product of processes of intense contest, struggle, and, in some instances, annihilation.”²¹⁸ Commemorative acts can also reflect and reinforce the unequal status of marginalized groups in the United States and function as “ideological battlegrounds.”²¹⁹ This study treats Gold Star Pilgrimages—acts of commemoration—as “ideological battlegrounds” over meanings of authentic maternal citizenship.

Citizenship and Motherhood

Scholars illustrate how rhetorics of motherhood have enabled and constrained women’s citizenship. Lindal Buchanan explains that maternal rhetorics “prove to be

slippery rhetorical terrain for women, on one hand affording them authority and credibility but, on the other hand, positioning them disadvantageously within the gendered status quo.”²²⁰ Women political actors have invoked their status as biological mothers in order to assert political power while conforming to societal standards of normative gender behavior.²²¹ Others may downplay their motherhood as a means to avoid the sexist criticism that many working mothers must confront—choosing a public job can undermine a mother’s ability to raise her children.²²² Indeed, Americans have long debated women’s biological right and responsibility to reproduce in a wide range of contexts from contraception and forced sterilization to abortion rights and the childfree movement.²²³ This study explores the ways that Gold Star mothers utilized rhetorics of biological motherhood after their sons’ wartime death in order to advocate for the Pilgrimages.

Women rhetors may also use rhetorics of symbolic motherhood as a means to assert their political voice. Mari Boor Tonn explains that symbolic motherhood invokes women’s perceived duty to champion “physical preservation, fostering of emotional and intellectual growth, and development of group identity and social responsibility.”²²⁴ Throughout the nineteenth and twentieth century, many women utilized this rhetorical appeal to enter the male-dominated public sphere and advocate for various social reforms. Symbolic motherhood allowed women to reconcile public action with traditional gender norms, framing gender difference as an asset rather than a liability.²²⁵ Women could enter policy debates from what many claimed was an “apolitical” perspective, speaking on behalf of ideals like morality, patriotism, and peace instead of their own self-interest. While often framing their action as apolitical,

women utilize rhetorics of symbolic motherhood to advocate for political causes across historical and ideological spectrums—from antislavery reform to environmental justice and disability rights.²²⁶ Katie L. Gibson and Amy L. Heyse illustrate how women political candidates can craft a “persona of motherhood” and then employ that persona to support a political party’s “celebration of hegemonic masculinity.”²²⁷ These scholars explore rhetorics of symbolic motherhood that uplift *and* discipline women’s voices in the political sphere.

Rhetorics of symbolic motherhood can also constrain political action, relegating women to national and moral symbols instead of political actors. Women, framed as the symbolic mothers of the nation, can be exalted through wartime propaganda. Lorraine Bayard de Volo explains that “maternal imagery is emotionally evocative and thus a powerful symbolic resource in garnering support for the war. . . . [T]he construction of maternal identities for the war effort has implications for women’s place in postwar societies.”²²⁸ Throughout the Great War era, women sought to channel this symbolic power of motherhood to advocate for access to civic rights—both the right to vote and the right to commemorate. Zillah Eisenstein argues that proclamations like “women are mothers to *all* children of the nation,” are grounded in the “fictive powers” of motherhood and stands in contrast to the lived reality of most women.²²⁹ The symbolic power of motherhood, Eisenstein asserts, does not always translate to political, social, or economic power. Instead, it has historically functioned to frame women as mothers first and individuals second, framing women’s individual rights as subordinate.

This study interrogates how women utilized, redefined, and confronted these rhetorics of motherhood in order to define different visions of maternal citizenship. Drawing on Linda Kerber’s conception of “republican motherhood,” Francine D’Amico traces the ways that conceptions of “maternal citizenship” have evolved during times of war in the United States, specifically to counter narratives that “*real* citizens are soldiers and conversely only soldiers are *real* citizens.”²³⁰ D’Amico explains this form of citizenship highlights how rhetorics of war seek to frame women’s “different but comparable responsibilities to the community” while the nation is at war.²³¹ Maternal citizenship is grounded in traditional gender roles, which posit that men fight in wars while women give life to the men who put their lives on the line for the nation. However, some women also framed pacifism as a responsibility of maternal citizenship, asserting that women best serve the nation by working to prevent and end war.²³² Within and outside the context of war, Paige Meltzer explains that rhetorics of “maternal citizenship” often position the “health of the individual family, the local community, and the nation” over the individual rights of women.²³³ To such ends, notions of women’s natural and civic rights are suppressed in favor of their responsibilities as mothers—placing the focus on their service to the nation over any expectations of rights all their own (e.g., movement for the Equal Rights Amendment). These rights are further restricted for women facing other citizenship obstacles associated with race, class, and immigration.

Theories of Intersectionality

Theories of intersectionality also guide this study. Vivian May defines intersectionality as a way to understand “lived identities as interlaced” and systems of

power as “mutually reinforcing.”²³⁴ Expanding on what Frances Beale described as “double jeopardy” in 1970, intersectionality developed as a means to describe the lived experiences of women of color in the United States.²³⁵ Black feminist scholars in the 1980s argued that feminist scholarship did not reflect the lived experiences of women of color. A collection of essays, published in 1982—*All Women are White, All Blacks are Men, Some of Us are Brave*—illustrated how feminist scholarship focused on the experiences of white women and race scholars focused on the experiences of black men. These scholars, according to Gloria T. Hull and Barbara Smith, erased black women’s experience from scholarship.²³⁶ Barbara Smith wrote that black feminist criticism must embody “the realization that the politics of sex as well as the politics of race and class are crucially interlocking factors.”²³⁷ Kimberlé Crenshaw theorized about the need to move away from a “single-axis” framework to reflect the “multidimensional” realities of black women’s lives.²³⁸ “Woman” cannot then be analyzed as a monolithic category because of dynamic, interlocking social positions.

I utilize an intersectional approach to illuminate how women’s multilayered identities shaped and were shaped by Gold Star discourse. Gold Star Pilgrims were not a homogenous group of women. Yuval-Davis asserts that studies of women’s citizenship should not only compare women’s experience to their male counterparts, but also to other “women’s affiliation with dominant and subordinate groups.”²³⁹ My study illuminates the complex power dynamics between the state and women and among Gold Star Pilgrims and motherhood. Vivian May posits that intersectionality “contests conventional ways of thinking about domination, subordination, and

resistance: it approaches privilege and oppression as concurrent and relational and attends to within-group differences and inequities, not just between-group power dynamics.”²⁴⁰ Gold Star mothers actively subordinated other mothers. For example, the American Gold Star Mothers Association only extended membership to mothers of the “Caucasian” race.²⁴¹ Pilgrimage advocates fought for equal accommodations for women of all social classes but would not condemn unequal or segregated accommodations for African American women.²⁴²

Précis

My analysis unfolds in a chronological manner, starting in 1914 and ending in 1933. This 29-year period begins with the rise of peace and preparedness movements in the United States, coinciding with the outbreak of the Great War, the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment, and ends with the last Gold Star Pilgrimage. Each chapter analyzes the many voices that created, shaped, and challenged ascriptive visions of maternal citizenship through news interviews, speeches, pamphlets, essays, and other modes of public communication. This multi-vocal analysis best illuminates how the Pilgrimages functioned as a gendered and racialized performances of citizenship.

Chapter One traces the discourse that informed maternal citizenship—and in turn Gold Star discourse—as America stood on the precipice of the Great War and women’s suffrage. Intersecting with suffrage debates, peace and preparedness advocates debated the future of women’s citizenship through the lens of motherhood. This chapter analyzes *how competing depictions of peace and preparedness shaped ascriptive rhetorics of maternal citizenship during the pre-war years*. President Woodrow Wilson ran for re-election in 1916 with the campaign slogan, “He Kept Us

Out of the War.”²⁴³ While he initially opposed entry into the war, Wilson advocated for a state of national preparedness during the election. In response, Congress passed legislation that expanded the Navy, Army, and National Guard.²⁴⁴ Wilson’s push for preparedness sparked a contentious debate over mothers’ wartime responsibilities.²⁴⁵ Peace organizations like the Woman’s Peace Party asserted that mothers, as “life-nourishers,” must “revolt” against preparedness efforts to save current and future generations.²⁴⁶ Women’s preparedness groups formed, in part, to counter the WPP’s vision of maternal citizenship—arguing that if women wanted to enjoy the “privileges of citizenship” then they needed to accept the “duty of defense,” and send their sons to war.²⁴⁷ American entry into the World War and the Espionage and Sedition Acts suppressed most peace movement rhetoric in the United States. In addition, the Committee on Public Information (CPI) sought to appropriate maternal peace arguments to frame authentic maternal citizenship in terms of war support. This chapter analyzes speeches, magazine articles, CPI pamphlets, and other texts created by and about the women’s peace (e.g., Woman’s Peace Party) and preparedness (e.g., Woman’s Section of the Navy League) movements.

Chapter Two analyzes the 1920s debate over Gold Star Pilgrimage legislation. This chapter seeks to understand how Gold Star Pilgrimage debates functioned as reactionary rhetoric, designed to reify women’s roles as republican mothers rather than citizens deserving of full rights and freedoms under the Constitution. Specifically, I consider *how government officials and Pilgrimage advocates constituted the sacrifice of their sons as the civic responsibility of Gold Star mothers*. In the post-war and post-suffrage era, patriotic women’s organizations argued for

government-funded voyages to their sons' European graves.²⁴⁸ Gold Star mothers testified during congressional hearings that every mother, regardless of social class, earned the right to visit the grave of her son.²⁴⁹ Yet, from 1919 to 1929, Congress, patriotic organizations, and other women's auxiliary groups debated who counted as an authentic Gold Star Pilgrim.²⁵⁰ The sacrifice of a son during war did not automatically warrant the privileges of a Gold Star Pilgrim. Through this deliberative process, Congress created a government-sanctioned model of maternal citizenship. For this chapter, I analyze five House and Senate hearings focused on the Gold Star Pilgrimages that took place between 1920 and 1929. I also examine the advocacy efforts of patriotic organizations like the American War Mothers, Gold Star organizations, and opposition groups during the same time period.

Chapter Three analyzes discourse surrounding the government's 1930 decision to segregate Gold Star Pilgrimages. This chapter considers *how African American Gold Star Pilgrims rhetorically navigated conflicting views of authentic maternal citizenship*. One month before the first Pilgrimage, War Department officials announced that African American Gold Star Pilgrims would embark on segregated voyages that took on the Jim Crow restrictions of the era. I analyze Department of War segregation statements and public responses to the segregation made between 1930 through 1933. The decision to segregate caused significant public debate. Newspapers like the *Baltimore Afro-American* and likeminded activists asserted that an African American Gold Star Pilgrim could only embody the ideals of maternal citizenship by boycotting the Gold Star Pilgrimages and speaking out against segregation. U.S. government officials framed African American Gold Star

Pilgrims as disloyal and ungrateful when boycotting the Pilgrimages. Women had to navigate these conflicting, ascriptive messages about their citizenship.

The Conclusion considers the implications of this study by exploring *how the ideals of maternal citizenship during the Great War era continue to permeate contemporary political discourse*. Cindy Sheehan and Ghazala Khan represent two contemporary Gold Star mothers who sought to define their political actions as extensions of their maternal citizenship. Yet, this ideal remains constrained by traditional ideologies of motherhood and ascriptive citizenship.

The contemporary use of Gold Star discourse to facilitate and constrain women's voices illustrates the need to understand how Gold Star Pilgrimages shaped historic and contemporary definitions of maternal citizenship. This study is designed to enrich understandings of women's public address during the Great War and suffrage era. Most feminist rhetorical studies grounded in the early twentieth century focus on individual suffragists or the suffrage movement in terms of voting rights.²⁵¹ This study explores multiple ways women conceptualized citizenship in an era of progress, prejudice, and change. E. Michelle Ramsey argues that "once we begin looking at the representations of different groups of women in response to a number of cultural developments, feminist rhetorical scholars can begin to piece together the enormous puzzle that is women's history in the United States."²⁵² This study posits the Great War as an understudied era of women's public address.²⁵³ During this time, Gold Star discourse articulated, confirmed, and contested traditional ideals of maternal citizenship.

NOTES

¹ I use the terms “Great War” and “World War” instead of “World War I” in this study. The Great War or World War only became known as World War I after the start of World War II. Barbie Zelizer calls this process of renaming events “retrospective nominalization,” which uses time as a “resource for the establishment and maintenance of memory in its social, collective form.” My use of Great War and World War reflect the language used during the era analyzed in my study. See Barbie Zelizer, “Reading the Past Against the Grain: The Shape of Memory Studies,” *Critical Studies in Media Communication* 12, no. 2 (1995): 222.

² Dorothy Dix, “Wearing Mourning,” *Honolulu Star-Bulletin*, December 21, 1917, 5. Elizabeth Meriwether Gilmor, known as Dorothy Dix, was the longest running advice columnist of the time. “Dorothy Dix Talks” was syndicated to over 300 newspapers and ran from 1896 until her death in 1951. At the height of her career, she received over 100,000 letters a day seeking advice. See David Gudelunas, *Confidential America: Newspaper Advice Columns and Sexual Education* (New York: Transaction Publishers, 2008), 58-69.

³ Dix, “Wearing Mourning,” 5.

⁴ The Wilson Administration considered “maternal subversion” a serious threat to the U.S. military. Department of War, Committee on Public Information, and Army Intelligence officials believed that if mothers expressed fear of their sons’ deaths in battle then sons would be less likely to sacrifice their lives for the nation. Susan Zeiger, “She Didn’t Raise Her Boy to Be a Slacker: Motherhood, Conscription, and the Culture of the First World War,” *Feminist Studies* 22, no. 1 (1996): 21.

⁵ “Woodrow Wilson to Anna Howard Shaw-May 16, 1918,” in *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, hereafter *PWW*, ed. Arthur S. Link (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), 28.

⁶ See: William E. Barton, *Blue Stars and Gold: For Every Home that Flies a Service Flag* (Chicago: The Reilly & Britton Co., 1918).

⁷ “Origin, Design, and Proper Display of the Service Flag; Persons Entitled to Representation and Meaning of Stars,” *Official Bulletin*, May 25, 1918, 12. The *Official Bulletin* was a daily publication created by the Committee on Public Information. The publication had a daily circulation of over 100,000. Many local newspapers also reprinted portions of the *Official Bulletin*, increasing its circulation. See: George Creel, *How We Advertised America: The Telling of the Amazing Story of the Committee on Public Information that Carried the Gospel of Americanism to Every Corner of the Globe* (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1920), 208-211.

⁸ I use the term “Pilgrim” and “Pilgrimage” to reflect the terminology of the era. Government officials used these terms in all official documents. John W. Graham, *The Gold Star Mother Pilgrimages of the 1930s: Overseas Grave Visitations by Mothers and Widows of Fallen US World War I Soldiers* (Jefferson: McFarland & Company, 2005), 11-12.

⁹ Theodore Roosevelt, *Fear God and Take Your Own Part* (New York: George H. Doran Company, 1916), 228.

¹⁰ Judith N. Shklar, *American Citizenship: The Quest for Inclusion* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991), 52-53.

¹¹ Ronald R. Krebs, *Fighting for Rights: Military Service and the Politics of Citizenship* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006), 1-2.

¹² For this project, I define the U.S. Great War era from 1914 (the start of the first World War) to 1933 (the end of the Gold Star Pilgrimages). This time period spans the beginning of the war to the end of U.S. federally sponsored Great War commemoration. Marilyn Lake argues that the Great War impacted understandings women's citizenship across the globe. She defined "maternal citizenship" as "reconceptualize[ing] women's duty, their 'service,' as owing not to an individual master/husband" or family "but to the abstract entity of the state." Marilyn Lake, "A Revolution in the Family: The Challenge and Contradictions of Maternal Citizenship in Australia," in *Mothers of a New World: Maternalist Politics and the Origins of Welfare States* ed. Seth Koven & Sonya Michel (New York: Routledge, 1993), 338. I trace the scholarly use of the term "maternal citizenship" later in this Introduction.

¹³ Kathleen Kennedy, *Disloyal Mothers and Scurrilous Citizens: Women & Subversion During World War I* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999), 2.

¹⁴ Holly S. Fenelon traces Gold Star mothers from the Great War to present day. She illustrates how Gold Star mothers, particularly the American Gold Star Mother Association, act as a "political force" throughout American history. She notes that they are often a "significant factor in the passage or failure of congressional efforts" related to veterans and war commemorations. Holly S. Fenelon, *That Knock at the Door: The History of Gold Star Mothers in America* (Bloomington: iUniverse, 2012), 157.

¹⁵ Maurice Charland describes how rhetoric can function to "constitute" the identity of a person or group of persons. Charland writes that we cannot accept identity as fixed or natural but "must consider their very textuality, their very constitution in rhetoric as a structured articulation of signs. We must, in other words, consider the textual nature of the social being." Maurice Charland, "Constitutive Rhetoric: The Cause of the People Quebecois," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 73, no. 2 (1987): 137.

¹⁶ Rhetorical scholars have discussed this function of reactionary rhetoric in other contexts. In her analysis of the abortion debate Celeste Condit Railsback describes how "we often we find the cause of 'reactionary rhetoric' in the response of one value system to the successes of another." Celeste Condit Railsback, "Pro-Life, Pro-Choice: Different Conceptions of Value," *Women's Studies in Communication* 5 (1982): 16.

D. Robert DeChaine describes how "[a]lienization materializes as a reactionary rhetoric" in discourses about immigration. He posts that reactionary rhetoric used by the Minuteman's Border Defense Project was designed to "both figurally and literally fenced out of the sacrosanct space of U.S. citizenship." D. Robert DeChaine, "Bordering the Civic Imaginary: Alienization, Fence Logic, and the Minuteman Civil Defense Corps," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 95, no. 1 (2009): 45; 46.

¹⁷ Coverture, a remnant of British Common law, helped shape women's rights in the newly formed United States. Linda Kerber, *No Constitutional Right to be Ladies: Women and Obligations of Citizenship* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1998), 11-12.

¹⁸ Rogers Smith posits that the principles of natural rights and Christian thought, which guided American revolutionary thought, implied that men and women shared some form of equality. However, this form of equality did not translate to equal rights. Rogers Smith, *Civic Ideals: Conflicting Visions of Citizenship in U.S. History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), 112. I discuss theories of citizenship that inform my project later in this Introduction.

¹⁹ Belinda A. Stillion Southard, *Militant Citizenship: Rhetorical Strategies of the National Woman's Party, 1913-1920* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2011), 39; Bonnie J. Dow, "Historical Narratives, Rhetorical Narratives, and Woman Suffrage Scholarship," *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 2, no. 2 (1999): 330; Carmen Heider, "Suffrage, Self-Determination, and the Women's Christian Temperance Union in Nebraska, 1879-1882," *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 8, no. 1 (2005): 88. Lisa Tetrault problematizes claims that the Seneca Falls Convention marks the beginning of the women's movement in the United States. She argues that the focus on Seneca Falls Convention foregrounded the voices of elite white women. Lisa Tetrault, *The Myth of Seneca Falls: Memory of the Women's Suffrage Movement, 1848-1898* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2014).

²⁰ Sally McMillen, *Seneca Falls and the Origins of the Women's Rights Movement* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 71-103.

²¹ Dow, "Historical Narratives, Rhetorical Narratives," 321-322.

²² Karlyn Kohrs Campbell describes tensions between natural rights (personhood) and difference (womanhood) as the "ideological dilemma at the core of feminism." Karlyn Kohrs Campbell, "Femininity and Feminism: To Be or Not to Be a Woman," *Communication Quarterly* 31, no. 2 (1983): 102. Aileen S. Kraditor used the terms "justice" and "expediency" to describe these divergent strategies, see Aileen S. Kraditor, *The Ideas of the Suffrage Movement, 1890-1920* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1965), 49-55.

²³ Nira Yuval-Davis, *Gender and the Nation* (London: Sage Publications, 1997), 2.

²⁴ Linda K. Kerber, *Women of the Republic: Intellect and Ideology in Revolutionary America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1980), 229.

²⁵ Rosemarie Zagarri, "Morals, Manners, and the Republican Mother," *American Quarterly* 44, no. 2 (1992) 204-206. Zagarri proposes the term "Anglo-American Womanhood" in place of "republican motherhood." She argues that Kerber did not thoroughly interrogate Scottish theorists and other English Enlightenment writers.

²⁶ Barbara Welter, "The Cult of True Womanhood: 1820-1860," *American Quarterly* 18 (1966): 152.

²⁷ Linda Kerber, "Separate Spheres, Female Worlds, Woman's Place: The Rhetoric of Women's History," *Journal of American History* 75, no. 1 (1988): 9-39. The distinction between the household and the domestic sphere (*oikos*) and public sphere (*polis*) in understandings of citizenship can be traced back to Ancient Greece. J. G. A. Pocock, "The Ideal of Citizenship Since Classical Times," in *Theorizing Citizenship* ed. Ronald Beiner (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995), 31-33.

²⁸ Aileen Kraditor argues that men don't have a "proper sphere" because their actions are not framed in terms of their sex, but instead their "potentialities." Men are considered "human beings who happen to male," while "women are females who

happen to be human.” Aileen S. Kraditor, “Introduction,” in *Up from the Pedestal: Selected Writings in the History of American Feminism* ed. Aileen S. Kraditor (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1968), 9-10. Kimberlé Crenshaw notes that early feminist critiques of separate sphere ideology did not take into account race, particularly the history of slavery. Kimberlé Crenshaw, “Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory, and Antiracist Politics,” *University of Chicago Legal Forum* 1989, no. 1 (1989): 155-156.

²⁹ Susan Zaeske traces the how origins of the “promiscuous audience” charge developed, how the concept circulated, and how women overcame this construct to speak in public. Susan Zaeske, “The ‘Promiscuous Audience’ Controversy and the Emergence of the Early Woman’s Rights Movement,” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 80, no. 2 (1995): 193.

³⁰ Nancy Hardesty describes this as the “Benevolent Empire” and notes that the Society for the Relief of Small Children founded in 1797 was one of the first benevolent societies in the United States. Nancy Hardesty, *Women Called to Witness: Evangelical Feminism in the Nineteenth Century* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1999), 90.

³¹ White women and women of color worked outside of the home since the founding of the nation. Ideals connected to “republican motherhood” and “cult of true womanhood” typically applied only to middle and upper-class white women of the era. See Mary Beth Norton, “The Evolution of the White Women’s Experience in Early America,” *The American Historical Review* 89, no. 3 (1984): 593-619.

³² The rhetoric of benevolence was not a monolith and represented diverse agendas and reforms. Lori D. Ginzberg traces how meanings of benevolence work shifted during different the prewar, wartime, and postwar periods of the nineteenth century. Lori D. Ginzberg, *Women and the Work of Benevolence: Morality, Politics, and Class in the Nineteenth-Century United States* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 69.

³³ Anne M. Boylan, “Women in Groups: An Analysis of Women’s Benevolent Organizations in New York and Boston, 1797-1840,” *The Journal of American History* 71, no. 3 (1984): 505.

³⁴ Anne M. Boylan, “Women and Politics in an Era Before Seneca Falls,” *Journal of the Early Republic* 10, no. 3 (1990): 364-366.

³⁵ Susan Zaeske argues that antislavery petitions are one way women began to see themselves as political actors, which “moved women closer to seeing themselves as national citizens entitled to the rights accorded by national citizenship.” Susan Zaeske, *Signatures of Citizenship: Petitioning, Antislavery, and Women’s Political Identity* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 6. Women’s use of petitioning as a form of collective action predates the abolition movement. For more examples of women’s petitioning, see: Inez Parker Cumming, “The Edenton Ladies’ Tea-Party,” *Georgia Review* 8, no. 4 (1954): 389-395; Barbara Meil Hobson, *Uneasy Virtue: The Politics of Prostitution and the American Reform Tradition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), 139-164; Alisse Theodore, “‘A Right to Speak on

the Subject': The US Women's Antiremoval Petition Campaign, 1829-1831," *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 5, no. 4 (2002): 601-623.

³⁶ Alisse Theodore Portnoy, "'Female Petitioners Can Lawfully Be Heard': Negotiating Female Decorum, United States Politics, and Political Agency, 1829-1831," *Journal of the Early Republic* 23, no. 4 (2003): 575.

³⁷ Between 57,000 to 143,00 women took part in public protests organized by the Women's Crusades in front of saloons and other liquor distributors. These women faced public ridicule and physical harm but were celebrated by the Temperance movement. Carol Mattingly, *Well-Tempered Women: Nineteenth-Century Temperance Rhetoric* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2000), 39-57.

³⁸ Frances E. Willard, *Woman and Temperance: Or, The Work and Workers of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union* (Chicago: Woman's Temperance Publication Association, 1886), 351.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 353.

⁴⁰ Susan E. Marshall, *Splintered Sisterhood: Gender and Class in the Campaign against Woman Suffrage* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1997), 12.

⁴¹ See: Manuela Thurner, "'Better Citizens Without the Ballot': American Anti-Suffrage Women and Their Rationale During the Progressive Era," *Journal of Women's History* 5, no. 1 (1993): 33-60. Kristy Maddux, "When Patriots Protest: The Anti-Suffrage Discursive Transformation of 1917," *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 7, no. 3 (2004): 287.

⁴² Thurner elaborates: "Seeing the suffragists' demand for the vote as an indication of their willingness to sacrifice women's social activism in the arena of male electoral politics, the Antis were upset by this apparent denial of the efficiency and validity of women's public influence as manifested through channels other than electoral politics." Thurner, "'Better Citizens Without the Ballot,'" 48.

⁴³ Cathleen Nista Rauterkus, *Go Get Mother's Pick Sign: Crossing Spheres with the Material Culture of Suffrage* (Lanham: University Press of America, 2010), 26-27.

⁴⁴ Ruth Whitney Lyman "The Anti-Suffrage Ideal," in *Anti-Suffrage Essays by Massachusetts Women*, ed. Ernest Bernbaum (Boston: The Forum of Boston Publications, 1916), 120-121.

⁴⁵ Thomas Jablonsky, "Female Opposition: The Anti-Suffrage Campaign," in *Votes for Women: The Struggle for Suffrage Revisited* ed. Jean H. Baker (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 127.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 126.

⁴⁷ Margaret C. Robinson, "Women Suffrage: A Menace to Social Reform," in *Anti-Suffrage Essays by Massachusetts Women* ed. Ernest Bernbaum (Boston: The Forum of Boston Publications, 1916), 102-103.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 107.

⁴⁹ Evelyn Nakano Glenn, *Unequal Freedom: How Race and Gender Shaped American Citizenship and Labor* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002), 75.

⁵⁰ Shirley Ann Hill, *Black Intimacies: A Gender Perspective on Families and Relationships* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publications, 2005), 19.

⁵¹ Ruth Feldstein, *Motherhood in Black and White: Race and Sex in American Liberalism, 1930-1965* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2000), 5; Patricia Hill

Collins, "Shifting the Center: Race, Class, and Feminist Theorizing About Motherhood," in *Mothering: Ideology, Experience, and Agency*, eds. Evelyn Nakano Glenn, Grace Chang, and Linda Rennie Forcey (New York: Routledge, 1994), 47-50.

⁵² Deborah K. King, "Multiple Jeopardies, Multiple Consciousness: The Context of a Black Feminist Ideology," *Signs* 14, no. 1 (1988): 50.

⁵³ African American women still organized their own benevolent societies and voluntary associations, even though their work was not celebrated as a civic contribution. See: Anne Firor Scott, "Most Invisible of All: Black Women's Voluntary Associations," *The Journal of Southern History* 56, no. 1 (1990): 3-22; Robert L. Harris, "Early Black Benevolent Societies, 1780-1830," *The Massachusetts Review* 20, no. 3 (1979): 603-625; Stephanie J. Shaw, "Black Club Women and the Creation of the National Association of Coloured Women," *Journal of Women's History* 3, no. 2 (1991): 11-25.

⁵⁴ Meyer Kestnbaum traces this connection back to the American militia of the Revolutionary War. Meyer Kestnbaum, "Citizenship and Compulsory Military Service: Revolutionary Origins of Conscription in the United States," *Armed Forces & Society* 27, no. 1 (2000): 7-36.

⁵⁵ R. Claire Snyder, *Citizen Soldiers and Manly Warriors: Military Service and Gender in the Civic Republican Tradition* (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 1999), 1.

⁵⁶ See: Martha Kneib, *Women Soldiers, Spies, and Patriots of the American Revolution* (New York: Rosen Publishing Group, 2004); Maurine Weiner Greenwald, *Women, War, and Work: The Impact of World War I on Women Workers in the United States* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1980); Kimberly Jensen, *Mobilizing Minerva: American Women in the First World War* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2008); DeAnne Blanton and Lauren Cook Wike, *They Fought Like Demons: Women Soldiers in the American Civil War* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2012).

⁵⁷ Carole Pateman, "Equality, Difference, Subordination: The Politics of Motherhood and Women's Citizenship" in *Beyond Equality and Difference: Citizenship, Feminist Politics and Female Subjectivity* ed. Gisela Bock and Susan James (New York: Routledge, 1992), 15-16.

⁵⁸ Lorraine Bayard de Volo, "Drafting Motherhood: Maternal Imagery and Organizations in United States and Nicaragua," in *The Women and War Reader* ed. Lois Ann Lorentzen and Jennifer Turpin (New York: New York University Press, 1998), 241.y

⁵⁹ Theodore Roosevelt, *The Strenuous Life: Essays and Addresses*, (New York: The Century Co., 1902), 4.

⁶⁰ In July 1917, Kate Richards O'Hare gave an anti-war speech to a group of mostly mothers and children. She said that "any person who enlisted in the army of the U. S. for service in France would be used for fertilizer, and that is all he was good for, and that the women of the U. S. were nothing more nor less than brood-sows to raise children to get into the army and be made into fertilizer." As a result this statement, O'Hare was tried and convicted for violating the Espionage Act of 1917. Kennedy,

Disloyal Mothers and Scurrilous Citizens, 18-38. I discuss this case more in Chapter 1.

⁶¹ Abigail Adams to John Adams, March 31, 1776, *Adams Family Correspondence, Volume 1* ed. L. H. Butterfield (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1965): 369-370.

⁶² Kerber, *Women of the Republic*, 8-9.

⁶³ "Letter from the Ladies of South Carolina," August 2, 1774, Digital ID: stfp044, William Tennent III Journal and Album Collection, University of South Carolina, South Caroliniana Library.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

⁶⁵ Warren's poems and plays were all originally published anonymously. In 1790, she published a compilation of all of her writings during the Revolution in a collected volume under her own name. Bohea is a type of black tea that was imported from China. Mercy Otis Warren, *Poems: Dramatic and Miscellaneous* (Boston: I. Thomas and E.T. Andrews, 1790), 203.

⁶⁶ Cumming, "The Edenton Ladies' Tea-Party," 389-395.

⁶⁷ "A Society of Patriotic Ladies, At Edenton, North Carolina, October 25, 1774," in *Historic Edenton and Countryside* ed. Edenton Woman's Club (Edenton: The Chowan Herald, 1859), 3-4. The pledge was originally printed in the *London Advertiser*.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

⁶⁹ Richard Dillard, *The Historic Tea-Party of Edenton, October 25th, 1774. An Incident in North Carolina Connected with British Taxation*, 1898, p. 6, Digital ID: <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.gdc/scd0001.00116999626>. Library of Congress.

⁷⁰ "Society of Patriotic Ladies," 3.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*

⁷² Mary Beth Norton, *Liberty's Daughters: The Revolutionary Experience of American Women, 1750-1800*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1980), 161.

⁷³ For an in-depth discussion of colonists' boycotts of British goods, see: T.H. Breen "Baubles of Britain': The American and Consumer Revolution of the Eighteenth Century," *Past & Present* 119, no. 1 (1988): 73-104.

⁷⁴ Kate Haulman, "Fashion and Culture Wars of Revolutionary Philadelphia," *William and Mary Quarterly* 62, no. 4 (2005): 626.

⁷⁵ "April 1," *Boston Evening-Post*, May 29, 1769, 1. Massachusetts Historical Society, <http://www.masshist.org/dorr/volume/2/sequence/561>

⁷⁶ Merrill D. Smith, *Women's Roles in Eighteenth Century America* (Santa Barbara: Greenwood Publishing, 2010), 111.

⁷⁷ Wendy Parkins, "Introduction: (Ad)ressing Citizens," in *Fashioning the Body Politic: Dress, Gender, and Citizenship* ed. Wendy Parkins (Oxford: Berg Publishers, 2002), 1-18.

⁷⁸ Smith, *Women's Roles in Eighteenth Century America*, 111.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 107-110.

⁸⁰ "April 18," *Boston Evening-Post*, June 19, 1769, 1. Massachusetts Historical Society, <http://www.masshist.org/dorr/volume/2/sequence/591>

⁸¹ “March 30,” *The Essex Gazette*, May 23-30, 1769, 1. Massachusetts Historical Society, http://www.masshist.org/database/viewer.php?item_id=390&img_step=1&mode=dual#page1

⁸² Women also traveled with regiments and were known as “camp-followers,” serving officially and unofficially as laundresses, cooks, nurses, and other support roles for the military. Holly A. Mayer, *Belonging to the Army: Camp Followers and Community During the American Revolution* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1996), 7-10.

⁸³ Abraham Lincoln, “An Address at a Fair for the Sanitary Commission. March 18, 1864,” in *Speeches & Letters of Abraham Lincoln, 1832-1865* ed. Merwin Roe (New York: E.P. Dutton & Company, 1907), 217.

⁸⁴ Judith Ann Giesberg argues that “within the confines of wartime bureaucracy, middle class white women expanded the reach of their reform work to include working-class women and rural women, a geographically dispersed constituency, and a long-term agenda.” Judith Ann Giesberg, *Civil War Sisterhood: The U.S. Sanitary Commission and Women’s Politics in Transition* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 2000), 11.

⁸⁵ Mary Livermore estimated that there were 10,000-12,000 Northern women’s aid societies with an average membership of 20 women during Civil War. WCAR worked to connect these societies to meet the needs of the constantly moving Union troops. Mary Livermore, “Cooperative Womanhood in the State,” *The North American Review* 153, no. 418 (1891): 283-295.

⁸⁶ Drew Gilpin Faust writes that Southern women did not have the same structure of voluntary associations in place at the beginning of the Civil War as their Northern counterparts. Drew Gilpin Faust, *Women of the Slaveholding South in the American Civil War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 29.

⁸⁷ Plutarch’s compilation of Spartan history is not without controversy. Plutarch wrote *Moralia*, centuries after Spartan civilization disappeared. Plutarch’s remembrances of Spartan sayings are based on sources that have yet to be discovered and therefore cannot be corroborated. See: Chester G. Starr, “The Credibility of Early Spartan History,” *Historia* 14, no. 3 (1965): 257-272.

⁸⁸ Plutarch, *Plutarch on Sparta*, trans. Richard Talbert (New York: Penguin Group, 1998), 160.

⁸⁹ Jean Jacques Rousseau, *Emile: Or Education*, trans. Barbara Foxley (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1921), 14.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² John Joseph Craven, *Prison Life of Jefferson Davis: Embracing Details and Incidents in His Captivity, Particulars Concerning His Health and Habits, Together With Many Conversations on Topics of Great Public Interest* (New York: Carleton, 1866), 272.

⁹³ Elizabeth R. Varon, *We Mean to be Counted: White Women & Politics in Antebellum Virginia* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 137.

⁹⁴ Sarah B. Pomeroy, *Spartan Women* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 62.

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- ⁹⁵ Drew Gilpin Faust, *This Republic of Suffering: Death and the American Civil War* (New York: Vintage, 2009), xi.
- ⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, xiv.
- ⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, xi.
- ⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 243.
- ⁹⁹ Caroline E. Janney, *Burying the Dead But Not the Past: Ladies' Memorial Associations and the Lost Cause* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 9.
- ¹⁰⁰ H. E. Gulley, "Women and the Lost Cause: Preserving Confederate Identity in the Deep South," *Journal of Historical Geography* 19, no. 2 (1993): 128-129.
- ¹⁰¹ David Currey, "The Virtuous Soldier: Constructing a Usable Confederate Past in Franklin, Tennessee," in *Monuments to the Lost Cause: Women, Art, and the Landscapes of Southern Memory*, ed. Cynthia Mills and Pamela Simpson (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2003), 135.
- ¹⁰² Kirk Savage, *Standing Soldiers, Kneeling Slaves: Race, War, and Monument in Nineteenth Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), 188. Savage notes that both Union and Confederate monuments prominently featured the white, male body.
- ¹⁰³ Mary Livermore, *My Story of the War: A Woman's Narrative* (Hartford: A.D. Worthington and Company, 1887), 8.
- ¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 9.
- ¹⁰⁵ Mrs. C. B. Bryant, "Women as Patriots," *American Monthly Magazine* 11, no. 6 (1897): 585.
- ¹⁰⁶ Some women's organizations that supported the Anti-Imperialist League include: Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU), Congress of Mothers, and later the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR). Erin L. Murphy, "Women's Anti-Imperialism, 'The White Man's Burden,' and the Philippine-American War: Theorizing Masculinist Ambivalence in Protest," *Gender & Society* 23, no. 2 (2009): 255-257.
- ¹⁰⁷ "A Lament from Kentucky," *Women's Journal: Boston*, February 25, 1899, 58.
- ¹⁰⁸ Some suffragists argued that militarism during the era contributed to suffrage defeats in states. Kristin Hoganson, "'As Badly off as the Filipinos': U.S. Women's Suffragists and the Imperial Issue at the Turn of the Twentieth Century," *Journal of Women's History* 13, no. 2 (2001): 19.
- ¹⁰⁹ See: Mark Whalan, *The Great War and the Culture of the New Negro* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida Press, 2008).
- ¹¹⁰ Selective Service Act of 1917, Pub .L. No. 65-12, 40 Stat. 76 (1917).
- ¹¹¹ Robert P. Saldin, *War, the American State, and Politics since 1898* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 66.
- ¹¹² Harriot Stanton Blatch, *Mobilizing Woman-Power* (New York: The Woman's Press, 1918), 88.
- ¹¹³ Propaganda and recruitment officials geared campaigns toward women with leisure time or who did not typically work outside of the home. Women's work in factories and on farms predates the war. In particular, immigrant women and native-born women from "working-class" families worked in textile mills, food processing

plants, and garment workrooms. By the turn of the century, over 5 million women worked outside the home. The war brought (temporarily) higher paying opportunities at munitions factories for many of those women. Carrie Brown, *Rosie's Mom: Forgotten Women Workers of the First World War* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 2002), 3-20.

¹¹⁴ In 1917, Woodrow Wilson proclaimed that “upon the farmer of this country rests the fate of the war.” Woodrow Wilson, *The President of the United States Appeals to the Men, Women, and Children on the Farms* (Washington DC: Department of Agriculture, 1917), 2. For an in-depth discussion of the American food supply during the war, see: Amy Bentley, *Eating for Victory: Food Rationing and the Politics of Domesticity* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 1988).

¹¹⁵ “Towns Deserted to Save the Crops,” *Current Opinion* 65, no. 4 (1918): 264. The article also states that this number only includes women who enrolled in the Women’s Land Army of America. Thousands of women organized informally to till their own soil and help neighbors do the same.

¹¹⁶ Greenwald, *Women, War, and Work*, 21.

¹¹⁷ Lettie Gavin, *American Women in World War I: They Also Served* (Niwot, CO: University Press of Colorado, 1997).

¹¹⁸ Josephine A. Jackson and Helen M. Salisbury, *Outwitting Our Nerves: A Primer in Psychotherapy* (New York: The Century, 1921), 301.

¹¹⁹ Women’s mental and physical strength has historically been viewed as inherently inferior to their male counterparts. Aristotle asserted in *Politics*: “the relation of male to female is that of natural superior to natural inferior, and that of ruler to ruled.” Throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth century, the “scientifically proven” inferiority of women’s bodies and minds justified male dominance of the workforce and politics. Aristotle, *Politics*, trans. C. D. C Reeve (Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 1998), 8; Henry Maudsley, *Sex in Mind and in Education* (Syracuse: C.W. Bardeen Publishers, 1884), 29.

¹²⁰ Woodrow Wilson, “An Address to the Senate,” September 30, 1918, *PWW*, 52: 158-60.

¹²¹ This was not Wilson’s first speech about suffrage, but it was his first direct appeal to politicians on the matter. Wilson would reiterate these arguments in his 1918 State of the Union Address three months later. Senate did not pass the Nineteenth Amendment until June 1919. Vanessa B. Beasley, “Engendering Democratic Change: How Three U.S. Presidents Discussed Female Suffrage,” *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 5, no. 1 (2002): 86-89. Wilson was not a strong advocate of suffrage for most of his presidency. The National Women’s Party used Wilson’s own rhetoric of national ideals to reveal his hypocrisy. Southard, *Militant Citizenship*, 121-148.

¹²² “The Woman’s Land Army,” *The Independent*, May 18, 1918, 303.

¹²³ Greenwald, *Women, War, and Work*, 128.

¹²⁴ Fenelon, *A Knock at the Door*, 42.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, 45. Not all Gold Star mothers were members of official Gold Star organizations.

¹²⁶ Michelle M. Nickerson, *Mothers of Conservatism: Women and the Postwar Right* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012), 13-14.

¹²⁷ Nine million people died during the four-year period of Great War. American losses were much lower than European counterparts. Lisa Budreau, *Bodies of War: World War I and the Politics of Commemoration in America, 1919-1933* (New York: New York University Press, 2010), 19-20.

¹²⁸ The Great War experience cannot be separated from the Spanish Influenza epidemic. The influenza outbreak coincided with American entry into the war. The flu killed almost 30,000 American soldiers in training campus before they could deploy to France. Over 57,000 American soldiers, over half of wartime casualties, died due to complications related to the disease while overseas. On the homefront, about 25 million civilians were diagnosed with Spanish Influenza and 675,000 died. See: Carol R. Byerly, *Fever of War: The Influenza Epidemic in the U.S. Army during World War I* (New York: New York University Press, 2005).

¹²⁹ Between 1917-1919, 380,000 American soldiers were diagnosed with a venereal disease. For thorough discussions of how the Great War shaped American understandings of sex education, sexual morality, and disease prevention, see: Andrea Tone, *Devices and Desires: A History of Contraceptives in America* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2001), 91-117; Alexandra M. Lord, *Condom Nation: The U.S. Government's Sex Education Campaign from World War I to the Internet* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2010), 25-47; Nancy K. Bristow, *Making Men Moral: Social Engineering During the Great War* (New York: New York University Press, 1996).

¹³⁰ Stephen R. Ortiz's study on the Bonus March shapes my understanding of this veteran movement. Stephen R. Ortiz, "Rethinking the Bonus March: Federal Bonus Policy, the Veterans of Foreign Wars, and the Origins of a Protest Movement," *Journal of Policy History* 18, no. 3 (2006): 275-303.

¹³¹ Jennifer Keene, *Doughboys, the Great War, and the Remaking of America* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2001), 179-204.

¹³² "To Bring Back Our Dead," *New York Times*, September 5, 1918, 10; G. Kurt Piehler, *Remembering War the American Way* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1995), 95.

¹³³ Budreau, *Bodies of War*, 39-48.

¹³⁴ "Unpardonable," *American Legion Weekly*, September 9, 1921, 12.

¹³⁵ A letter accompanying each form explained the process. If the father was deceased, then the mother had the right to fill out the form. If the mother was deceased, then the closest male relative would be required to fill out this form. The patriarchal structure of the next of kin list angered many women. David William Seitz, "Let Him Remain Until the Judgment in France: Family Letters and the Overseas Burying of U.S. World War I Soldiers," in *Transnational American Memories*, ed. Udo J. Hebel (New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2009), 215-242.

¹³⁶ For a detailed analysis of President Wilson's League of Nations speaking tour, see J. Michael Hogan, *Woodrow Wilson's Western Tour: Rhetoric, Public Opinion, and the League of Nations* (State College: Texas A&M University Press, 2006).

¹³⁷ Woodrow Wilson, "An Address to the Joint Session of Congress, January, 8, 1918," *PWW*, 45: 535.

¹³⁸ Article X read: “The Members of the League undertake to respect and preserve as against external aggression the territorial integrity and existing political independence of all Members of the League. In case of any such aggression or in case of any threat or danger of such aggression the Council shall advise upon the means by which this obligation shall be fulfilled.” Henry Cabot Lodge, *Treaty of Peace with Germany* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1919), 16. Lodge gave this speech on the Senate floor on August 12th, 1919.

¹³⁹ John F. Wilson, “Harding’s Rhetoric of Normalcy, 1920-1923,” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 48, no. 4 (1962): 406-411.

¹⁴⁰ Warren G. Harding, *Rededicating America: Life and Recent Speeches of Warren G. Harding* ed. Frederick E. Schortemeier (Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1920), 223; 227.

¹⁴¹ Bonnie J. Dow and Celeste M. Condit, “The State of the Art in Feminist Scholarship in Communication,” *Journal of Communication* 55, no. 3 (2005): 467; Dorothy L. Pennington, “The Discourse of African American Women: A Case Study for Extended Paradigms,” in *Understanding African American Rhetoric: Classical Origins to Contemporary*, ed. Ronald L. Jackson III and Elaine Richardson (New York: Routledge, 2003), 293-308.

¹⁴² While the concept of “100 percent Americanism” was originally applied to immigrants, it quickly became utilized to discipline conscientious objectors and war protestors. Cecilia Elizabeth O’Leary, *To Die For: The Paradox of American Patriotism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), 110-129. For more information about Americanization campaigns during the era, see: Leslie A. Hahner, *To Become an American: Immigrants and Americanization Campaigns of the Early Twentieth Century* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2017).

¹⁴³ Chad L. Williams, *Torchbearers of Democracy: African American Soldiers in the World War I Era* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 63-144.

¹⁴⁴ For a thorough history of African American clubwomen’s contributions to the war effort during the Great War, see: Nikki Brown, *Private Politics and Public Voices: Black Women’s Activism from World War I to the New Deal* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006).

¹⁴⁵ Brown, *Private Politics and Public Voices*, 26-28.

¹⁴⁶ Theodore Kornweibel, Jr., “Investigate Everything”: *Federal Efforts to Ensure Black Loyalty During World War I* (Bloomington: Indiana Press University, 2002), 37-75.

¹⁴⁷ C. L. Threadgill-Dennis, “Letter to the Soldiers,” *San Antonio Inquirer*, November 1917.

¹⁴⁸ William G. Jordan, *Black Newspapers and America’s War for Democracy* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001), 109.

¹⁴⁹ “The Lynching Industry, 1919,” *The Crisis*, February 1920, 183.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁵¹ Jan Voogd, *Race Riots and Resistance: The Red Summer of 1919* (New York: Peter Lang, 2008), 44-7.

¹⁵² Glenn, *Unequal Freedom*, 17.

¹⁵³ These primary sources were located in multiple archives in the United States, including: the Library of Congress (Washington, D.C.), the National Archives and Records Administration (College Park, MD), and the Swarthmore College Peace Collection (Swarthmore, PA). My archival work focused on locating a wide range of primary, public texts including: speeches, congressional hearing transcripts, essays, pamphlets, petitions, and newspaper interviews.

¹⁵⁴ Shawn J. Parry-Giles and J. Michael Hogan, "Introduction: The Study of Rhetoric and Public Address," in *The Handbook of Rhetoric and Public Address*, ed. Shawn J. Parry-Giles and J. Michael Hogan (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 4.

¹⁵⁵ Kathleen Turner, "Introduction: Rhetorical History as Social Construction," in *Doing Rhetorical History: Concepts and Cases*, ed. Kathleen Turner (Tuscaloosa: University Alabama Press, 1998), 4.

¹⁵⁶ My study reflects a "history of ideas" approach to public address. Ernest Wrage called for an "idea centered" approach to public address, which would contribute to the understanding of the "history of ideas." Ernest J. Wrage, "Public Address: A Study in Social and Intellectual History," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 33, no. 4 (1947): 451. Thomas Rosteck responded to criticism that a history of ideas approach is overly historical and does not focus enough on the text. He argues that if one focuses only on the text or immediate context, then they may no longer grasp the "ideological horizon." Rosteck argues that this approach provides a way for scholars to analyze text, immediate context, and historical context without giving one "controlling determinacy." See Thomas Rosteck, "Form and Cultural Context in Rhetorical Criticism: Re-reading Wrage," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 84, no. 4 (1998): 471-490.

¹⁵⁷ Stephen E. Lucas, "The Renaissance of American Public Address: Text and Context in Rhetorical Criticism," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 74, no. 2 (1988): 248.

¹⁵⁸ Kirt H. Wilson, "The Racial Contexts of Public Address: Interpreting Violence During the Reconstruction Era," in *The Handbook of Rhetoric and Public Address*, 212. Kristan Poirot's work also informs my understanding of how multi-layered contexts inform and are informed by texts. She writes: "A rhetorical context is not merely an aggregate of immediate variables (e.g., audience, rhetor, medium, topic obstacles, setting, etc.), nor is it exclusively the producer of pressing exigencies. Rather, context saturates public discourse, comprising both itself and rhetorical acts as amalgamations and orchestrations of various traditions." Kristan Poirot, *A Question of Sex: Feminism, Rhetoric, and Differences That Matter* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2014), 10.

¹⁵⁹ Eric King Watts, "The Problem of Race in Public Address Research: W. E. B. Du Bois and the Conflicted Aesthetics of Race," in *The Handbook of Rhetoric and Public Address*, 391.

¹⁶⁰ Sara Hayden analyzed Michelle Obama's maternal performance through "multiple, shifting, and paradoxical contexts." See: Sara Hayden, "Michelle Obama, Mom-in-Chief: The Racialized Rhetorical Contexts of Maternity," *Women's Studies in Communication* 40, no. 1 (2017): 11-28.

¹⁶¹ Susan Zaeske and Sarah Jedd describe archival research as the "bedrock" of women's public address scholarship. Susan Zaeske and Sarah Jedd, "From

Recovering Women's Words to Documenting Gender Constructs: Archival Research in the Twenty-First Century," in *The Handbook of Rhetoric and Public Address*, 199.

¹⁶² See: Karlyn Kohrs Campell, *Man Cannot Speak for Her: A Critical Study in Early Feminist Rhetoric* (New York: Praeger, 1989); Cheryl R. Jorgensen-Earp, *Discourse and Defiance Under Nazi Occupation: Guernsey, Channel Islands, 1940-1945* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2013); Cheryl Jorgenson Earp, "Lilies and Lavatory Paper: The Public and Private in British Suffrage Archives," in *The Handbook of Rhetoric and Public Address*, 229-249.

¹⁶³ Davis Houck, "Textual Recovery, Textual Discovery: Returning to Our Past, Imagining Our Future," *The Handbook of Rhetoric and Public Address*, 125-127.

¹⁶⁴ Charles E. Morris III, "The Archival Turn in Rhetorical Studies; Or, the Archives Rhetorical (Re)turn," *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 9, no. 1 (2006): 113.

¹⁶⁵ Barbara Biesecker, "Of Historicity, Rhetoric: The Archive as a Site of Invention," *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 9, no. 1 (2006): 130.

¹⁶⁶ Cara Finnegan, "What Is This a Picture Of?: Some Thoughts on Images and Archives," *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 9, no. 1 (2006): 116-123.

¹⁶⁷ Honor R. Sachs, "Reconstructing a Life: The Archival Challenges of Women's History," *Library Trends* 56, no. 3 (2008): 651.

¹⁶⁸ Davis Houck, "On or About June 1988," *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 9, no. 1 (2006): 135. I recognized the need to critically evaluate archival sources as I worked to recover the voices and the depictions of Gold Star Pilgrims.

¹⁶⁹ James Jasinski, "A Constitutive Framework for Rhetorical Historiography: Toward an Understanding of the Discursive (Re)constitution of the 'Constitution' in *The Federalist Papers*," in *Doing Rhetorical History: Concepts and Cases*, 74. Jasinski and Jennifer R. Mercieca explain how scholars can analyze textual interiors and exteriors to understand the constitutive potential of a text. Textual interiors refer to the "arguments, narratives, and/or tropes" within a text, and textual exteriors refer to a text's "reception, circulation, and articulation." See, James Jasinski and Jennifer R. Mercieca, "Analyzing Constitutive Rhetorics: The Virginia and Kentucky Resolutions and the 'Principles of '98'," in *The Handbook of Rhetoric and Public Address*, 315-316; 335.

¹⁷⁰ Poirot notes "Rhetoric as both an instrumental and a constitutive art has grounded much of our understanding of the way feminist movement discourse functions in broad cultural contexts." Poirot, *A Question of Sex*, 9. Michael Leff and Ebony A. Utley also illustrate the instrumental and constitutive functions of rhetoric. They argue Martin Luther King Jr. rhetorically deployed his ethos "instrumentally as a means of allaying fears about the immediate scene of social protest" and simultaneously constituted "a persona that black readers can use as a model for becoming effective actors on the American scene." Michael Leff and Ebony A. Utley, "Instrumental and Constitutive Rhetoric in Martin Luther King Jr.'s 'Letter from Birmingham Jail,'" *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 7, no. 1 (2004): 49.

¹⁷¹ Mary E. Stuckey, "Jimmy Carter, Human Rights, and Instrumental Effects of Presidential Rhetoric," in *The Handbook of Rhetoric and Public Address*, 294.

¹⁷² Robert Asen, "Reflections on the Role of Rhetoric in Public Policy," *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 13, no. 1 (2010): 126.

¹⁷³ J. David Cisneros, "Rhetorics of Citizenship: Pitfalls and Possibilities," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 100, no. 3 (2014): 386. Cisneros asserts that "[r]hetorical studies of citizenship . . . should examine the tensions and relationships between citizenship's substance, subjects, domain, and manifestations."

¹⁷⁴ Robert Alejandro, *Hermeneutics, Citizenship, and the Public Sphere* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993), 36.

¹⁷⁵ Smith, *Civic Ideals*, 6.

¹⁷⁶ Suzanne M. Marilley, *Woman Suffrage and the Origins of Liberal Feminism in the United States, 1820-1920* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996), 3. Other suffragists used expediency claims, which highlighted differences between men and women. Many suffragists used a combination of both claims.

¹⁷⁷ Poirot, *A Question of Sex*, 49.

¹⁷⁸ Ruth H. Bloch, "Meanings of Virtue in Revolutionary America," *Signs* 13, no. 1 (1987): 38.

¹⁷⁹ See my earlier discussion of republican motherhood.

¹⁸⁰ Smith, *Civic Ideals*, 2.

¹⁸¹ Yuval-Davis, *Gender & Nation*, 24.

¹⁸² For example, Sara Evans describes how the "New Right" gained political power in the 1980s by "framing its concerns around family values (the mother-centered traditional patriarchal family). Making effective use of the cultural themes initially politicized by feminists" and attempting to lessen the feminist movements' legal and legislative victories (e.g. Roe v. Wade, Title IX) of the 1970s. Sara M. Evans, *Tidal Wave: How Women Changed America at Century's End* (New York: Free Press, 2003), 176. Susan Faludi describes how this can function in popular culture. She notes that "a backlash is not an organized movement. . . . A backlash against women's rights succeeds to the degree that it appears *not* to be political, that it appears not to be a struggle at all." Susan Faludi, *Backlash: The Undeclared War Against Women* (New York: Three Rivers Press, 1991), 13.

¹⁸³ Corey Robin, *The Reactionary Mind: Conservatism from Edmund Burke to Sarah Palin* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 4.

¹⁸⁴ Hulliung cautions that "the social contract was not one but several" and that "each variation had its incarnation in the America." Two of the theorists he highlights are John Locke and Samuel Pufendorf. Pufendorf conceptualized a social contract where sovereignty rested with government, foregrounding duties over rights. A Lockean conception of the social contract vested power in the people, where the government exists to protect natural rights. Hulliung traces these competing conceptions from the American Revolution through the beginning of Progressive era. Mark Hulliung, *The Social Contract in America: From the Revolution to the Present Age* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2007), 1-2.

¹⁸⁵ Kimberly Jensen elaborates on a study of U.S. popular magazines from 1900-1918, which found that over 400 articles focused on citizenship and patriotism. Kimberly Jensen, "Women, Citizenship, and Sacrifice," in *Bonds of Affection: Americans Define Their Patriotism* ed. John Bodnar (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 141.

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 140.

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- ¹⁸⁷ Carole Pateman, *The Sexual Contract* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988), 2.
- ¹⁸⁸ Lauren Berlant, "The Subject of True Feeling: Pain, Privacy, and Politics," in *Transformations: Thinking Through Feminism* eds. Sara Ahmed, Jane Kilby, Celia Lury, Marueen McNeil, and Beverly Skeggs (New York: Routledge, 2000), 35.
- ¹⁸⁹ Ibid.
- ¹⁹⁰ Robert Asen, "A Discourse Theory of Citizenship," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 90, no. 2 (2004): 196.
- ¹⁹¹ Ibid., 191.
- ¹⁹² Ibid., 205.
- ¹⁹³ See: Kristy Maddux, "Without Touching Upon Suffrage: Gender and Economic Citizenship at the World's Columbian Exposition," *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 47, no. 2 (2017): 105-130; Kate Zittlow Rogness and Christina R. Foust, "Beyond Rights and Virtues as Foundation for Women's Agency: Emma Goldman's Rhetoric of Free Love," *Western Journal of Communication* 75, no. 2 (2011): 148-167; Angela G. Ray, "The Rhetorical Ritual of Citizenship: Women's Voting as Public Performance, 1868-1875," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 93, no. 1 (2007): 1-26; Alyssa A. Samek, "Mobility, Citizenship, and 'American Women on the Move' in the 1977 International Women's Year Torch Relay," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 103, no. 3 (2017): 207-229.
- ¹⁹⁴ Leslie Hahner, *To Become an American: Immigrants and Americanization Campaigns of the Early Twentieth Century* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2017), 100.
- ¹⁹⁵ Alexander Nehmas described a central component of Plato's "philosophical project" as uncovering "the difference between what is authentic and what is fake, what is genuine and what is at best only imitation." Plato framed the "inauthentic as the unethical." Nehmas posits Plato's focus on authenticity may be a result of the trial of Socrates where the public could not discern the "authentically good" from the criminal. Alexander Nehmas, *Virtues of Authenticity: Essays on Plato and Socrates* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), xxxii.
- ¹⁹⁶ Shawn J. Parry-Giles, *Hillary Clinton in the News: Gender and Authenticity in American Politics* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2014), 10.
- ¹⁹⁷ James B. Salazar, *Bodies of Reform: The Rhetoric of Character in Gilded Age America* (New York: New York University Press, 2010), 14.
- ¹⁹⁸ Pamela Johnston Conover, Donald D. Searing and Ivor Crewe, "The Elusive Ideal of Equal Citizenship: Political Theory and Political Psychology in the United States and Great Britain," *The Journal of Politics* 66, no. 4 (2004): 1050. For a discussion of the intersections of citizenship, authenticity, and military service, see: Meyer Kestnbaum, "Citizenship and Compulsory Military Service: The Revolutionary Origins of Conscription in the United States," *Armed Forces & Society* 27, no. 1 (2000): 12. Kestnbaum notes that conscription is a means "forcing individuals to declare publicly their support for resistance and identifying dissidents" or those who are not willing to die for the nation.
- ¹⁹⁹ Parry-Giles illustrates how "the traditional roles for women were naturalized through images of a faithful and supportive wife more ideologically cognizant with

historical notions of authentic womanhood.” Parry-Giles, *Hillary Clinton in the News*, 22.

²⁰⁰ Dickinson asserts that “authenticity articulates with the natural in larger pursuit of providing comfort and coherency in a time of discomfort and incoherency.” Greg Dickinson, “Joe’s Rhetoric: Finding Authenticity at Starbucks,” *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 32, no. 4 (2002): 17.

²⁰¹ Struggles over the meaning “of the relationship between ‘black’ and ‘American’ has been at the center,” Hartnell argues, “of much of African American politics since slavery.” Anna Hartnell, “*When the Levee Broke: Inconvenient Truths and the Limits of National Identity*,” *African American Review* 45, no. 1-2 (2012): 18; 22-23.

²⁰² For example, Wan notes that the “birther” movement questioned the authenticity of Barack Obama’s citizenship. Amy J. Wan, *Producing Good Citizens: Literacy Training in Anxious Times* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2014), 1. Wan interrogates literacy trainings programs connection to producing “good citizens” throughout the first two decades of the twentieth century. She defines citizenship “as more than just a constructor or political institution that determines who can vote; as a membership structure, it works to determine who is acceptable and who is not.” *Ibid.* 6.

²⁰³ Wan describes how American law explicates the following ways to achieve legal citizenship: “by birth, by naturalization, and by blood (parentage).” *Ibid.*, 27.

²⁰⁴ May Joseph, *Nomadic Identities: The Performance of Citizenship* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), 4. Joseph’s analysis interrogates the intersections of migration, authentic citizenship, and transnationalism. She describes how “the citizen and its vehicle, citizenship, are unstable sites that mutually interact to forge local, often changing (even transitory) notions of who a citizen is, and the kinds of citizenship possible at a given historical-political moment.” *Ibid.* 3.

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 5.

²⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁷ Melissa V. Harris-Perry, *Sister Citizen: Shame, Stereotypes, and Black Women in America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011), 20.

²⁰⁸ Randolph Hohle, *Black Citizenship and Authenticity in the Civil Rights Movement* (New York: Routledge, 2013), 9.

²⁰⁹ *Ibid.* 9-10.

²¹⁰ Hahner notes that while Americanization efforts focused on immigrants, these discourses “did not simply supply lessons in becoming a citizen, but identified a set of standard for marking patriotism in all Americans.” Hahner, *To Become an American*, xviii.

²¹¹ Leroy G. Dorsey, *We are All Americans Pure and Simple Theodore Roosevelt and the Myth of Americanism* (Tuscaloosa: University Alabama Press, 2007), 7.

²¹² John F. McClymer, “Gender and the ‘American Way of Life’: Women in the Americanization Movement,” *Journal of American Ethnic History* 10, no. 3 (1991): 7.

²¹³ Theodore Roosevelt, *The Strenuous Life* (New York: The Reviews of Reviews Company, 1899), 5-6. Roosevelt was the Governor of New York when he gave this speech.

²¹⁴ Parry-Giles, *Hillary Clinton in the News*, 13.

²¹⁵ Thomas Ricento, "The Discursive Construction of Americanism," *Discourse & Society* 16, no. 3 (2003), 633.

²¹⁶ This is not an exhaustive list of identities. Many scholars have analyzed how discourses of authenticity can privilege and marginalize identities in a wide range of contexts. Robert Westerfelhaus and Celeste Lacroix analyze how the television show *Queer Eye for the Straight* employed a "veneer of queer authenticity" to exalt "values at odds with the full and open expression of Queer sexuality." See, Robert Westerfelhaus and Celeste Lacroix, "Seeing 'Straight' through *Queer Eye*: Exposing the Strategic Rhetoric of Heteronormativity in a Mediated Ritual of Gay Rebellion," *Critical Studies in Media Communication* 23, no. 6 (2006): 434. Other scholars explore how trans individuals define, navigate and are framed through lenses of "gender authenticity" or what it means to be a "real" man or "real" woman. See, Valerie Jenness and Sarah Fenstermaker, "Agnes Goes to Prison: Gender Authenticity, Transgender Inmates in Prisons for Men, and Pursuit of 'The Real Deal,'" *Gender & Society* 28, no. 1 (2014): 13; Michael Lovelock, "Call me Caitlyn: Making and Making over the 'Authentic' Transgender Body in Anglo-American Popular Culture," *Journal of Gender Studies* 26, no. 6 (2017), 675-687. Scholars have explored how descendants of immigrants navigate "ethnic authenticity" in terms of exploring and challenging their "ancestral roots." See, Andra Louie, *Chineseness across Borders: Renegotiating Chinese Identities in China and the United States* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004); Sunaina Maira, *Desis In The House: Indian American Youth Culture in NYC* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2002). Scholars have also explored intersections of authenticity and religious identity. Kristy Maddux interrogates debates about what actions informed "authentic Christianity" and who could be considered "authentically Christian" during the 2012 presidential election. See, Kristy Maddux, "Religious Dissociation in 2012 Campaign Discourse," *Rhetoric and Public Affairs* 16, no. 2 (2013): 355-368.

²¹⁷ Ekaterina V. Haskins, *Popular Memories: Commemoration, Participatory Culture, and Democratic Citizenship* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2015), 17.

²¹⁸ John R. Gillis, "Memory and Identity: The History of a Relationship" in *Commemorations: The Politics of National Identity* ed. John R. Gillis (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 5.

²¹⁹ Roseann M. Mandziuk, "Commemorating Sojourner Truth: Negotiating the Politics of Race and Gender in the Spaces of Public Memory," *Western Journal of Communication* 67, no. 3 (2003): 272.

²²⁰ Lindal Buchanan, *Rhetorics of Motherhood* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2013), xvii.

²²¹ Virginia McCarver discusses how Sarah Palins emphasis on her status "as a working mother with young children provided an opportunity for women to discuss motherhood, work, and the 'choices' involved in navigating both." Virginia McCarver, "The Rhetoric of Choice and 21st Century Feminism: Online Conversations About Work, Family and Sarah Palin," *Women's Studies in Communication* 34, no. 1 (2011): 21.

²²² Brittany L. Stalsburg and Mona S. Kleinsburg studied analyzed the campaign websites of congressional candidates during the 2008 and 2010 elections. They found that “despite the proliferation of mother candidates, women still tend to de-emphasize their children compared to their male colleagues, who are more likely to showcase their families, most notably in pictures.” See, Brittany L. Stalsburg and Mona S. Kleinsburg, “‘A Mom First and a Candidate Second’: Gender Differences in Candidates’ Self-Presentation of Family,” *Journal of Political Marketing* 15, no. 4 (2016): 285-310.

²²³ Many scholars have discussed the intersections of political action and reproduction. For studies about the early birth control movement, see: Wesley C. Buerkle, “From Women’s Liberation to their Obligation: The Tensions Between Sexuality and Maternity in Early Birth Control Rhetoric,” *Women & Language* 31, no. 1 (2008): 27-34. Jennifer Emerling Boone, “When Publics Collide: Margaret Sanger’s Argument for Birth Control and the Rhetorical Breakdown of Barriers,” *Women’s Studies in Communication* 33, no. 1 (2010): 16-33; Emily Winderman, “S(anger) Goes Postal: Angry Rhetoric as a Collectivizing Moral Emotion,” *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 17, no. 3 (2014): 381-420; For an analysis that examined forced or coerced sterilization, see Rebecca M. Kluchin, *Fit to be Tied: Sterilization and Reproductive Rights in America, 1950-1980* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2009); Mark A. Largent, *The Story of Coerced Sterilization in the United States* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2011); Jessica Enoch, “Survival Stories: Feminist Historiographic Approaches to Chicana Rhetorics of Sterilization Abuse,” *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 35, no. 3 (2005): 5-30; Allison C. Carey, “Gender and Compulsory Sterilization Programs in America, 1907-1950,” *Journal of Historical Sociology* 11, no. 1 (1998): 74-104. For analyses related to abortion rights, see, Celeste Michelle Condit, *Decoding Abortion Rhetoric, Communication Social Change* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1990), Marsha L. Vanderford, “Vilification and Social Movements: A Case Study of Pro-Life and Pro-Choice Rhetoric,” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 75, no. 2 (1989): 166-182; Tasha N. Dubriwny, “Consciousness-Raising as Collective Rhetoric: The Articulation of Experience in the Redstockings’ Abortion Speak-Out of 1969,” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 91, no. 4 (2005): 395-422; Nathan Stromer, “In Living Memory: Abortion as Cultural Memory,” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 88, no. 3 (2002): 265-283. For discussions of childfree movements, see Jenna Healey, “Rejecting Reproduction: The National Organization for Non-Parents and Childfree Activism in 1970s,” *Journal of Woman’s History* 28, no. 1 (2016): 131-156; Julia Moore, “Reconsidering Childfreedom: A Feminist Exploration of Discursive Identity Construction in Childfree LiveJournal Communities,” *Women’s Studies in Communication* 37, no. 2 (2014): 159-180; Erin N. Taylor, “Throwing the Baby Out with the Bathwater: Childfree Advocates and the Rhetoric of Choice,” *Journal of Women & Politics* 24, no. 4 (2003): 49-75.

²²⁴ Mari Boor Tonn, “Militant Motherhood: Labor’s Mary Harris ‘Mother’ Jones,” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 82, no. 1 (1996): 2.

²²⁵ For example, Grace Wetzel analyzes how *San Francisco Examiner* reporter Winifred Black’s rhetoric “revises the rhetorical tradition of the ‘stunt girl reporter’ in

order to craft a teacherly ethos anchored in a ‘symbolic motherhood.’” In doing so, Black was able to craft rhetorics of social change not focused on her “public body” but instead on her maternal ethos. Grace Wetzel, “Winifred Black’s Teacherly Ethos: The Role of Journalism in Late Nineteenth Century Rhetorical Education,” *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 44, no. 1 (2014): 68-70.

²²⁶ See, Leslie J. Harris, “Motherhood, Race, and Gender: Rhetoric of Women’s Antislavery Activism in the *Liberty Bell* Giftbooks,” *Women’s Studies in Communication* 32, no. 3 (2009): 293-319; Christopher Scott Thomas, “The Mothers of East Los Angeles: (Other)Mothering for Environmental Justice,” *Southern Journal of Communication* 83, no. 5 (2018): 293-309; Jennifer L. Peebles and Kevin M. DeLuca, “The Truth of the Matter: Motherhood, Community, and Environmental Justice,” *Women’s Studies in Communication* 29, no. 1 (2006): 59-87; Rachel D. Davidson and Lara C. Stache, “The Body and its Able-ness: Articulating In/Eligibility through Rhetorics of Motherhood, Unjust Language, and Questionable Medical Authority,” *Disability Studies Quarterly* 36, no. 1 (2016): <http://dsq-sds.org/article/view/4429>. Davidson and Stache analyze how Chrissy Rivera, who fought a hospital’s decision to deny her daughter a kidney transplant due to a mental disability, “performed symbolic motherhood by adopting a confrontational maternal persona that resonated with various publics.”

²²⁷ Katie L. Gibson and Amy L. Heyse, “The Difference Between a Hockey Mom and a Pit Bull: Sarah Palin’s Faux Maternal Persona and Performance of Hegemonic Masculinity at the 2008 Republican National Convention,” *Communication Quarterly* 58, no. 3 (2010): 239.

²²⁸ Bayard de Volo, “Drafting Motherhood,” 240.

²²⁹ Zillah Eisenstein, “Writing Bodies on the Nation for the Globe,” in *Women, States, and Nationalism: At Home in the Nation?* eds. Sita Ranchod-Nilsson and Mary Ann Tetreault (New York: Routledge, 2000), 41.

²³⁰ Emphasis in original. Francine D’Amico, “Citizen Solider? Class, Race, Gender, Sexuality, and the US Military,” in *States of Resistance: Gender, Violence and Resistance* eds. Susie Jacobs, Ruth Jacobson, and Jen Marchbank (New York: Zed Books, 2000), 105.

²³¹ *Ibid.*, 117. Sherilyn Macgregor further explains that the “vision of maternal citizenship” was strengthened by some suffragists who made the argument that since “mothers raised the next generation of men who fought in wars . . . their ‘nurturant labor’ out to be rewarded with the status of citizenship.” Sherilyn Macgregor, *Beyond Mothering Earth: Ecological Citizenship and the Politics of Care* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2006), 23.

²³² For example, Deborah Cohler notes that Cindy Sheehan’s pacifist rhetoric “produces an oppositional response to war through the symbolism of maternal citizenship.” Deborah Cohler, “Fireman Fetishes and Drag Queen Dreams: Queer Responses to September 11,” in *Gender, War, and Militarism: Feminist Perspectives* eds. Laura Sjobert & Sandra Via (Santa Barbara: Praeger, 2010), 220-221.

²³³ Paige Meltzer, “‘The Pulse and Conscience of America’: The General Federation and Women’s Citizenship, 1945-1960,” *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies* 30, no. 3 (2009): 54.

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- ²³⁴ Vivian May, *Pursuing Intersectionality, Unsettling Dominant Imaginaries* (New York: Routledge, 2015), 3.
- ²³⁵ Frances Beale, “Double Jeopardy: To Be Black and Female,” in *The Black Woman: An Anthology*, ed. Toni Cade Bambara (New York: Washington Square Press, 1970). Bonnie Thornton Dill and Ruth Enid Zambrana illustrate how intersectionality can be understood as a “field, theory, and analytical perspective.” Bonnie Thornton Dill and Ruth Enid Zambrana, “Critical Thinking about Inequality: An Emerging Lens,” in *Emerging Intersections: Race, Class, and Gender in Theory, Policy, and Practice* eds. Bonnie Thornton Dill and Ruth Enid Zambrana (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2009), 4.
- ²³⁶ Gloria T. Hull and Barbara Smith, “Introduction: The Politics of Black Women’s Studies,” in *All Women are White, All Blacks are Men, Some of Us are Brave* ed. Gloria T. Hull, Patricia Scott, and Barbara Smith (New York: Feminist Press At City University of New York, 1982), xvii-xxxiii.
- ²³⁷ Barbara Smith, “Toward a Black Feminist Criticism,” *Conditions* 1, no. 2 (1977): 26.
- ²³⁸ Crenshaw, “Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex,” 139.
- ²³⁹ Nira Yuval-Davis, “Women, Citizenship and Difference,” *Feminist Review* 57, no. 1 (1997): 4.
- ²⁴⁰ May, *Pursuing Intersectionality*, 4.
- ²⁴¹ G. Kurt Piehler, “The War Dead and the Gold Star,” in *Commemorations: The Politics of National Identity*, 177.
- ²⁴² Piehler notes that “Socialites and farm women, Catholics, Protestants, and Jews, native-born and foreign-born” all traveled together on the Pilgrimages. The government only arranged separate voyages and accommodations for African American women. Piehler, “The War Dead and the Gold Star,” 178-179.
- ²⁴³ President Wilson’s 1916 election campaign rhetoric appealed to voters who did not support U.S. entry into the Great War. Other campaign slogans included “America First!” and “Peace With Honor.” For more information about Wilson’s campaign rhetoric, see: Steven A. Seidman, *Posters, Propaganda, and Persuasion in Election Campaigns Around the World and Through History* (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 2008), 53-55.
- ²⁴⁴ This legislation significantly expanded the scope and size of the U.S. military. The National Defense Act of 1916 also designated the National Guard as the official reserve force of the U.S. military and authorized the president to use this force in cases of national emergency. See: National Defense Act of 1916, Pub.L. No. 64–85, 39 Stat. 166 (1916); Naval Act of 1916, Pub L. No. 64-241, 39 Stat. 556 (1916).
- ²⁴⁵ Lisa Mastrangelo, “Changing Ideographs of Motherhood: Defining and Conscripting Women’s Rhetorical Practices During World War I,” *Rhetoric Review* 36, no. 3 (2017): 214-231.
- ²⁴⁶ Anna Garlin Spencer, “Moral and Religious Aspects of the War Against War,” in *The Overthrow of the War System*, ed. Lucia Ames Mead (Boston: The Forum Publications of Boston, 1915), 114. Pnina Werbner argues peace movements “attempted to reconstitute citizenship in terms of sentiments of motherhood, justice and compassion.” Pnina Werbner, “Political Motherhood and the Feminisation of

Citizenship: Women's Activisms and the Transformation of the Public Sphere,” in *Women, Citizenship and Difference* ed. Nira Yuval Davis and Pnina Werbner (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999), 232.

²⁴⁷ Josephine Bates, “Woman's Duty to Preparedness,” *The Bulletin* 3, no. 12 (1916): 79. Women's preparedness organizations included groups like the Woman's Section of the Navy League, Women's Department of the National Civic Federation, and the National League for Women's Service. These organizations produced pamphlets, articles, and books detailing how mothers could prepare their sons to die in war.

²⁴⁸ The first national Gold Star organization (American Gold Star Mothers) received a congressional charter in 1928. Many organizations advocated for Gold Star Pilgrimages. I analyze the rhetoric of these organizations in Chapter 2.

²⁴⁹ While a Gold Star Pilgrim could be a mother or unmarried widow, the majority of Pilgrimage discourse focused on mothers. According to Lisa Budreau, Gold Star mothers held an exalted position in this debate because they held “blood ties” with deceased soldiers. Budreau, *Bodies of War*, 9.

²⁵⁰ Fathers, siblings, remarried widows, and veterans were excluded from the Gold Star Pilgrimage legislation. Congress debated over 30 different versions of the Gold Star Pilgrimage legislation. Most of these versions of the bill proposed different eligibility requirements. Budreau, *Bodies of War*, 204.

²⁵¹ Some studies include: Jennifer L. Borda, “The Woman Suffrage Parades of 1910–1913: Possibilities and Limitations of an Early Feminist Rhetorical Strategy,” *Western Journal of Communication* 66, no. 1 (2002): 25-52; Sara Hayden, “Negotiating Femininity and Power in the Early Twentieth Century West: Domestic Ideology and Feminine Style in Jeannette Rankin's Suffrage Rhetoric,” *Communication Studies* 50, no. 2 (1999): 83–102; Kate Zittlow Rogness, “The Vote as Voice: Tracing the Intersections of Feminism and Free Speech Through Emmeline Pankhurst's Address ‘Freedom or Death’,” *First Amendment Studies* 49, no. 2 (2015): 71-85; Donna M. Kowal, “One Cause, Two Paths: Militant vs. Adjustive Strategies in the British and American Women's Suffrage Movements,” *Communication Quarterly* 48, no. 3 (2000): 240-255; Kristy Maddux, “When Patriots Protest,” 283-310; Catherine H. Palczewski, “The 1919 Prison Special: Constituting White Women's Citizenship,” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 102, no. 2 (2016): 107-132.

²⁵² E. Michele Ramsey, “Addressing Issues of Context in Historical Women's Public Address,” *Women's Studies in Communication* 27, no. 3 (2004): 368.

²⁵³ Although the era is understudied, there has been rhetorical scholarship focused on the Great War. For studies on the intersections of suffrage and the Great War, see: Belinda A. Stillion Southard, *Militant Citizenship*; Belinda A. Stillion Southard, “Militancy, Power, and Identity: The Silent Sentinels as Women Fighting for Political Voice,” *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 10, no. 3 (2007): 399-417; E. Michele Ramsey, “Inventing Citizens during World War I: Suffrage Cartoons in the *Woman Citizen*,” *Western Journal of Communication* 64, no. 2 (2000): 113-147. For studies on wartime propaganda see: Leslie Hahner, “The National Committee of Patriotic Societies and the Aesthetics of Propaganda,” *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 17, no. 1 (2014): 35-65; Lisa Mastrangelo, “World War I, Public Intellectuals, and the Four Minute Men: Convergent Ideals of Public Speaking and Civic

Participation,” *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 12, no. 4 (2009): 607–633; Thomas A. Hollihan, “Propagandizing in the Interest of the War: A Rhetorical Study of the Committee on Public Information,” *Southern Speech Communication Journal* 49, no. 3 (1984): 241–257. Gold Star discourse is often overlooked in women’s rhetorical studies of the interwar years. A recent edited book included fifteen chapters that interrogate women’s discourse during the interwar years, but no chapter analyzes or refers to Gold Star Mothers or Gold Star Pilgrimages. See, *Women and Rhetoric Between the Wars* eds. Ann George, M. Elizabeth Weiser, and Janet Zepernick (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2013).

Chapter 1:

Performing Peace: Defining Maternal Citizenship During the Early Great War Era, 1914-1917

To honor Mothers' Day 1918, government officials released numerous statements urging the nation to pray for soldiers' mothers. Major General John J. Ryan declared that "the fullest measure of sacrifice in war is made by mothers. That their fortitude and spirit of sacrifice can be stimulated and strengthened by prayer will not be doubted."¹ President Wilson asked the public to revere the "patriotic sacrifices which are being so freely and generously made by mothers of our land so unselfishly offering their sons to bear arms, and, if need be, to die in defense of liberty of justice."² Secretary of Navy Josephus Daniels reminded the nation that "it is always true that the morale of a nation's soldiers and the ideals for which they fight are born in the spiritual heroism of a nation's mother."³ Dr. Anna Howard Shaw, Chair of the Women's Committee of the Council of National Defense, called on mothers to "rejoice that they, too, may serve in the same great struggle for justice, and that with every rising son they may rejoice that they are mothers of men who hold that honor is more precious than life and that the crowning glories of nations."⁴ These messages articulated a uniform ideal of women's citizenship during war—a mother must willingly sacrifice her son for the nation. This ideal arose after a bitter rhetorical

struggle over a mother's civic duty that preceded American entry into the Great War and the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment.

From 1914-1917, maternal rhetorics of peace and preparedness reflected conflicting visions of women's wartime responsibility. Women's peace organizations proclaimed that mothers must protect their sons from the horrors of war. Conversely, women's preparedness auxiliaries countered that mothers must prepare their sons to fight for the nation. I argue that the Gold Star ideal of maternal sacrifice arose from these warring visions.⁵ As America drew closer to entering the Great War, government officials and popular media appropriated peace arguments to encourage mothers to sacrifice their sons during the war. Censorship laws and public pressure limited peace advocates' ability to challenge this appropriation. This government ideal of *maternal citizenship*, rooted in earlier conceptions of republican motherhood, later commemorated by Gold Star Pilgrimages, emerged from this era as a woman who patriotically sacrificed her son for the enduring cause of peace.

This chapter traces the rhetorical evolution of maternal civic duty during the early years of the Great War era. First, I discuss how rhetorics of women's suffrage shaped and were shaped by the peace and preparedness movements during the pre-war years. Second, I analyze how the peace movement stood in stark contrast against the preparedness movement to define competing conceptions of maternal civic duty as the United States prepared to enter the Great War. Third, I illustrate how government officials, in collaboration with popular media, appropriated peace arguments to define mothers' wartime responsibility. Specifically, I trace how *The Ladies' Home Journal* outlined an ideal of wartime motherhood using the language of

peace. Finally, I interrogate how the government disciplined women who spoke out against this state-crafted vision of maternal citizenship.

Debating Women's Suffrage Through Rhetorics of War

Prominent American suffragists and anti-suffragists separately mobilized to influence wartime policies and public opinion as fighting broke out in Europe. As a result, women's suffrage debates bled into public deliberations over America's involvement in the Great War. William G. Ross explains that "many suffragists were pacifists . . . prominent in the prewar peace movement."⁶ In contrast, anti-suffragists most often aligned themselves with the "doctrine of preparedness," which Leslie A. Hahner defines as "a widespread movement for building the nation's military strength and patriotism."⁷ Prominent anti-suffragists, like the President of the National Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage (NAOWS), were founding members of preparedness auxiliaries like the Woman's Section of the Navy League (WSNL).⁸ Susan E. Marshall describes how antisuffragists "attempted to present a consistently noble, self-sacrificing antifeminist image in contrast to the blatant self-interest of suffragists demanding rights" through their preparedness work during the years before the United States entered the Great War.⁹ These distinctions became blurred during the months leading up to the United States declaring war on Germany. The following section describes the formation of the Woman's Peace Party (WPP) and WSNL and how the question of suffrage shaped their maternal rhetoric.

Women led many peace organizations and actions during the Great War era. Barbara J. Steinson argues that there would not have been a "viable" U.S. peace movement without women's leadership.¹⁰ In 1914, 1,500 women marched down New

York City streets in the name of peace and to keep America out of the war. The *New York Times* warned readers that the Woman's Peace Parade served as "evidence of the definite determination of women to exert a practical influence on a field of public action from which in the past they have been almost wholly withdrawn. Those who do not look on this prospect with much satisfaction must at least take cognizance of the fact and prepare to reckon with it."¹¹ Critics of women's political participation would have to "reckon" with significant peace activities led by women throughout the Great War era.

Founded less than a year after the Woman's Peace Parade by Jane Addams and Carrie Chapman Catt, the WPP emerged as the largest peace organization for women in the United States.¹² Harnessing anti-war sentiment, the WPP quickly gained over 40,000 members around the nation. WPP founding platform sought to enlist "American women in arousing the nations to respect the sacredness of human life and to abolish war."¹³ The WPP national platform also decried "racial injustice" as an hinderance to lasting peace but historian Joyce Blackwell notes that "many members were reluctant to accept, and an equal number adamantly opposed to the acceptance of, black members."¹⁴ As a result, the intersections of racism, preparedness, and war were rarely mentioned in WPP rhetoric during the years leading up to American entry into the war.¹⁵ WPP state and local branches varied widely in terms of ideology and discursive action, which created organizational discord as the United States moved closer to declaring war on Germany.¹⁶

While national WPP leadership was composed of prominent suffragists, not all WPP branches endorsed women's voting rights. The official WPP platform listed

suffrage as an organizing principle but state and local branches were not required to adopt the entire national platform in their own constitutions.¹⁷ WPP-Massachusetts attempted to repeal women's suffrage from the national platform at the 1916 convention.¹⁸ WPP-Connecticut adopted their own statement about the vote, which asserted that the WPP was not meant to be "suffrage propaganda."¹⁹ One Maryland branch of WPP removed suffrage from their state platform and forbade members from bringing up the "suffrage question" during meetings.²⁰ Even with these internal debates about voting rights, Harriet Hyman Alonso explains that the WPP was viewed by the public as the "suffrage wing of the peace movement and the pacifist wing of the suffrage movement."²¹ As a result, the actions of all women peace advocates were often attributed to the WPP even if they were not official members.

Women's duty to end war could only be fulfilled, WPP national officers maintained, through gaining the right to vote. The fifth plank of the national platform described the organization's commitment to the "further humanizing of governments by the extension of the franchise to women."²² If mothers could vote, WPP members argued, then there would be no more war because women functioned as natural caregivers to children of the world. The *Woman's Journal* hypothesized that "woman's suffrage . . . would not only render wars less frequent but make war impossible."²³ Peace advocates posited that women, as current or future mothers, would always vote in the name of peace not preparedness. These arguments reflected what Belinda A. Stillion Southard describes as an "idealization of motherhood" in some suffrage rhetoric that challenged traditional gender norms while simultaneously defining motherhood as inherently "sacred."²⁴ Novelist Mary Johnston declared that

“the mother sex does not like to see its offspring killed or maimed . . . the mass of their ballots will go, I think, into the side of the balance marked Peace.”²⁵ Women, many reasoned, would use the vote to fulfill their responsibility to protect the nation from war atrocities. Anti-suffragists and women’s patriotic organizations challenged the WPP definition of maternal responsibility and the meaning of peace.

The women’s preparedness movement arose, in part, as a reaction to the growing popularity of the WPP. The WSNL, the largest female preparedness organization, was formed in 1915 as the “most timely protest against the ‘peace at any price’ propaganda circulated in the names of women.”²⁶ The WSNL and other patriotic organizations wrote articles, gave speeches, and organized educational activities to urge mothers’ support of preparedness activities and the mobilization of American troops.²⁷ By the end of 1915, over 100,000 women signed the WSNL pledge to support “patriotism, Americanism, and national defense.”²⁸ Women’s preparedness organizations often did not have the same level of autonomy as the WPP and reported to the all-male leadership of organizations like the Navy League.²⁹ Similar to the WPP, women’s preparedness and patriotic organizations were not monolithic. Some advocated for efforts that focused on citizenship training and military drills for young men, while other organizations advocated for immediate American entry into war.³⁰ Both forms of preparedness argued that mothers had a duty to prepare their sons to serve the nation during times of war.

Suffragists, some preparedness advocates claimed, used the WPP as a façade for radical agitation designed to destroy traditional motherhood. One WSNL member remarked that “the suffrage leaders seized on the Peace Party with the avidity” in

order to elevate their own political status and eliminate their maternal responsibility to the nation.³¹ They argued WPP members advocated for their own selfish interests over the good of the nation and would be “morally responsible for the thousands of American boys needlessly killed or wounded.”³² By advocating for suffrage as an avenue for peace, preparedness advocates framed WPP members as unpatriotic and unworthy of full citizenship. One *New York Times* editorial questioned, “And, what, anyhow, is the organization that calls itself the Woman’s Peace Party . . . [They are women] in whom the spirit of patriotism has either died out or never developed—of persons who not only feel but say, that neither rights nor liberty are worth fighting for.”³³ The WPP, the editorial reasoned, believed their personal fight for the vote superseded the national fight for security. A woman who could not be loyal to her nation during times of war, preparedness advocates argued, could not be trusted with the vote during times of peace.

Preparedness advocates highlighted the WPP’s suffrage arguments as evidence of how the vote would corrupt women’s maternal role in the nation. Josephine Dodge, NAOWS President and WSNL founding member, decreed that “the truly patriotic woman . . . will ask for no reward” in return for service to the nation.³⁴ Dodge claimed that suffragists would use the vote for selfish reasons, placing their individual needs above the needs of the nation. Similarly, WSNL member and Corresponding Secretary of the Massachusetts Women’s Anti-Suffrage Association Mary B. Strong echoed this belief when she mockingly described the “Suffrage Woman’s Peace Party” as a “mad philosopher who suggested it would be well to profit by the eruption of Vesuvius [volcano] in order to boil an egg.”³⁵ Like many

WSNL members, Strong described American entry into the war as an inevitability and a means to achieve world peace through victory. She claimed that the WPP attempted to exploit the conditions of the Great War in order to devalue traditional motherhood. Echoing republication motherhood ideology, she questioned: “What is the work of women? In this field as in all others it is not to try to compel, but to educate. . . . The suffragist is an enemy to the diffusion of the peace spirit, because she would force women into political warfare, where contention is bred.”³⁶ Strong believed that women could only remain symbols of peace if they stayed out of the political sphere. This supports Kristy Maddux’s scholarly assertion that anti-suffragists during this era “reframed woman suffrage from a ‘right’ to a ‘duty,’” which would not serve the interests of the common good.³⁷ Through rhetorics of preparedness, anti-suffragists claimed that the vote would diminish women’s ability to serve as a moral compass in the private sphere. As “mothers of men” instead of political actors, Strong claimed that the antisuffragist “has the true vision of the road that leads to a lasting peace.”³⁸ WSNL members claimed women did not need the vote to equally serve the nation as mothers of future soldiers.

Crafting Competing Visions of Maternal Duty

Although peace and preparedness advocates channeled their discourse into opposing efforts, both invoked ideologies of motherhood to frame women’s wartime responsibilities. Advocates from both sides utilized rhetorics of symbolic motherhood to validate their entry into male-dominated debates about war.³⁹ Women, according to these advocates, provided a critical perspective on war that their male counterparts lacked. The WPP grounded the rationale for women’s peace demands in maternal

sentiment and responsibility. The WPP's preamble read, "[As] the mother half of humanity, we demand that our right to be consulted in the settlement of question concerning not alone the life of individuals but of nations be recognized and respected. . . . We demand that women be given a share in deciding between war and peace in all the high courts of debate."⁴⁰ According to the WPP, women served as the natural "custodians of life" and therefore must be included in war policy discussions in all spheres of influence.⁴¹ Many preparedness advocates used strikingly similar language to advocate for women's role in wartime debates. Vylla Poe Wilson, WSNL Organizing Secretary, argued that women provided a unique, maternal perspective to the preparedness movement. She wrote:

There is no more important duty before American women today than the imperative need of arousing her countrymen and women to the need of national defense. Conservation is natural to womankind and to preserve and conserve this country for posterity through national preparedness is a present-day duty. Woman has always been the conservator of the home life. It is only just that her voice, raised in a cry for preparedness to protect the lives and homes she has been the chief factor in building up, should be harkened onto.⁴²

Wilson explained that women should naturally support the preparedness movement because of their desire for sons to emerge victorious (and alive) from battle.

Women's peace and preparedness movements also employed rhetorics of biological motherhood to support their entry into war debates. A mother who birthed a soldier, these advocates argued, deserved a voice in wartime decisions; similar to businessmen who manufactured weaponry or politicians who created war strategy. Anna Howard Shaw addressed the inaugural meeting of the WPP and asked the audience "shall the very sex who furnished more than mere implements of war, shall that sex sit dumb in the face of outrage and that which deeply concerns them?"⁴³ For

Shaw and other WPP members, women had a right to speak out against war because war “destroyed the product of their labor”—their sons.⁴⁴ Preparedness advocates echoed this biological motherhood argument. During the first Women’s National Defense Conference, organized by the WSNL in 1915, women invoked biological motherhood as they spoke in front of military personnel like then Secretary of Navy Franklin D. Roosevelt and manufacturing leaders. They argued that women must be recognized as critical voices in the preparedness movement because they produced the most critical war equipment—soldiers. One speech bluntly explicated why a mother had the right to engage in preparedness debates: “For every rifle, there must be a man manufactured by some woman to pull the trigger and push the shells into the magazine. . . . You cannot have any preparedness for war except such as is based upon the assumption that women will continue to supply you indefinitely with the chief material for war.”⁴⁵ Peace and preparedness advocates both utilized biological and symbolic motherhood appeals to justify their wartime advocacy. However, advocates utilized these appeals to frame mothers’ civic responsibility in vastly different ways. The following sections illustrate how peace and preparedness advocates defined a mother’s civic responsibility differently to the nation and to her son.

Responsibility to nation

Many women affiliated with the peace movement argued that mothers must use their influence to keep the nation out of war. Emmeline Pethick-Lawrence asserted in a 1914 *Harpers’ Weekly* article that, “Women all over the world, speaking broadly, have one passion and one vocation, and that is the creation and preservation

of human life. . . . The woman's movement has awakened women to their great responsibilities as natural custodians of the human race."⁴⁶ Her article echoed popular claims that women, as "natural" gatekeepers of life, should use their influence to keep the nation's sons from dying overseas.⁴⁷ Many peace advocates contended that, similar to a mother's duty to keep her son out of playground fights, all women citizens must work to keep the nation from fighting overseas. Women's responsibility to protect the nation from the horrors of war, according to this line of reasoning, stemmed from their natural maternal instinct.

Women active in the peace movement claimed that a mother's civic duty extended beyond the borders of her nation. The WPP argued that women acted not only as citizens of their individual nations, but citizens of the world. They reasoned that all women, driven by maternal sentiment and an intrinsic spirit of internationalism, would unite against war. In 1914, Carrie Chapman Catt, WPP co-founder and NAWSA leader, called on women to rise up "as one woman; the motherhood of the world will refuse to give their sons to be shot in support of vagaries of monarchs or false deals of national honor."⁴⁸ According to Catt, women's responsibilities transcended arbitrary national boundaries drawn by male politicians. She argued that women must infuse national debates about war, dominated by bombastic patriotic appeals by men, with a global perspective. In 1915, Jane Addams also emphasized women's international civic perspective. She reasoned that "[Women] belong to the human race as whole and constitute a spiritual internationalism which surrounds and completes our national life, even as our national life itself surrounds and completes our family life; they do not conflict with

patriotism on one side any more than family devotion conflicts with it upon the other.”⁴⁹ Addams’s speech reflected a discourse of symbolic motherhood in multiple ways. Utilizing familial metaphors, she argued that a woman’s devotion to peace parallels her natural devotion to the family. Second, she maintained that peace and patriotism are not incompatible. Women performed patriotism, Addams reasoned, by ensuring children’s safety in her own nation and around the world. This illustrates Christy Jo Snider’s assertion that the broader peace movement in the United States sought to reframe civic responsibility and demonstrate that “citizens could be patriotic by protecting their countries from wartime violence.”⁵⁰ Finally, Addams contended that women must rise above divisive war propaganda perpetuated by male politicians. The WPP maintained that women could infuse humanity and morality into political debates about war.

In opposition to the WPP, preparedness advocates argued that loyal women citizens supported war readiness efforts. After the outbreak of war in 1914, Theodore Roosevelt urged all Americans to prepare for armed conflict. Roosevelt insisted that “[i]n the time of war every citizen in the Republic whenever the Republic needs him or her.”⁵¹ Roosevelt and other preparedness organizations called on women to prepare the nation for war. Mabel Boardman, representing the American Red Cross, reminded WSNL members that “it is patriotic for us to be prepared and patriotism is not a virtue, but a duty.”⁵² These patriotic efforts included: providing youth with a patriotic education, supporting compulsory military training, and advocating for increased military spending. Utilizing the language of symbolic motherhood, the WSNL framed women as responsible for rallying the patriotic spirit of America toward preparedness.

One WSNL member explained that “it is the very instinct of motherhood, which prompts me to work for a mighty first line of defense against war.”⁵³ According to the WSNL, all mothers naturally protected her young from harm. In the same way a mother defended her children from harm, preparedness advocates reasoned that women citizens needed to ensure national defense from international threats.

All citizens, preparedness advocates insisted, must sacrifice during war and mothers could not be exempted from this duty. If a mother evaded her duty to the nation, such logic suggested, then she could not be considered a loyal citizen. In a 1916 *Woman's Home Companion* article, writer Agnes Repplier posited that “citizenship embraces women as well as men. . . . They cannot escape their duty to the country by pleading their averseness to suffering, by dwelling on the fears and sorrows of motherhood.”⁵⁴ She made the case that women’s so-called sentimental nature could not be used as an argument against war. Women, Repplier claimed, must be held to the same standard of citizenship as men because in the end, men and women must be equals in sacrifice in order to be considered equals as citizens.

Preparedness advocates also invoked historical mothers to define women’s responsibility to the nation. “Spartan” mothers, they argued, served as an ideal model for maternal citizenship. American mothers, the WSNL maintained, must send their sons to “serve their country and come back with their shields on them just as cheerfully as did the Spartan women ages ago. I am with the new woman’s movement for patriotism and National Defense heart and soul.”⁵⁵ Spartan mothers, preparedness advocates insisted, did not view their sons’ death as a sorrowful event, but instead the fulfillment of patriotic duty. The inability to fulfill this patriotic duty of sacrifice, they

claimed, would bring shame on both the son and mother. One preparedness advocate questioned, “Why will some mothers make a fool of themselves over their boys? Have they never read what the Spartan mothers did with the education of their young? . . . The fate of boys with fool mothers is worse than that of those who face war’s grim realities.”⁵⁶ For many preparedness advocates, the dishonor of a son’s pacifism would be worse than his death on the battlefield.

Revolutionary War and Civil War mothers also served as maternal models for preparedness advocates. Historical mothers, according to this line of argument, stood in contrast to the maternal ideal exalted by the peace movement. According to preparedness advocates, the WPP’s growing popularity did not reflect the “true” spirit of American womanhood. One woman called on mothers to reject WPP rhetoric by invoking the memory of wartime mothers from the Revolutionary War, Civil War, and Spanish-American War. She wrote, “if the mothers of heroes had clung and sniveled and been afraid for their boys, there perhaps wouldn’t be any free America for the world to look to.”⁵⁷ If mothers followed the WPP model for civic action, this article posited, then foreign invaders could easily overtake American borders.

Women, according to the preparedness movement, needed to embody the civic performances of the nation’s founding mothers. This illustrates Stuart Tannock’s scholarly assertion that “the nostalgic subject turns to the past to find/construct sources of identity, agency, or community, that are felt to be lacking, blocked, subverted, or threatened in the present.”⁵⁸ The WSNL asserted that the WPP’s vision of motherhood undermined centuries of women’s civic action in the United States. Mary A. Lockwood, DAR co-founder and WSNL member, blamed the

WPP for promoting a historically inaccurate narrative of women's citizenship. She wrote:

The assertion of professional peace advocates that the women of America are for peace, even at the price of dishonor . . . is a travesty on patriotism and an insult to the intelligence of American womanhood. Of course the women of this country want peace, as do all good citizens, but who can look back on the history of the women of this country in our struggle for independence and on both sides of the Civil War and say that our women are less patriotic than its men and less willing to suffer and make sacrifices so that our honor remain untarnished and our nation endure.⁵⁹

Loyal female citizens, preparedness advocates argued, secured their country's safety and prosperity, no matter the cost. Grace M. Pierce, DAR Registrar, echoed these calls and urged women to join the WSNL to reclaim the patriotic spirit of America's founding mothers. She wrote "it is time that the women of this country freed themselves from the stigma of standing for peace at any time. . . . The spirit of Martha Washington, Dolly Madison and Nancy Hanks still lives in this land."⁶⁰ Women, according to preparedness advocates, must embody the spirit of their foremothers in order to be authentic maternal citizens.

Responsibility to son

Echoing republican motherhood ideology, peace and preparedness advocates both argued that mothers must raise their sons to be good citizens. Both implied that a woman's citizenship could be measured by her ability to influence the men around her to serve the nation. However, each side framed ideal male citizenship in divergent ways. Peace advocates argued that mothers must raise their sons to be citizens who worked in the name of peace and challenged rhetorics of war glory. For preparedness advocates, a mother needed to raise her son to be a good soldier who followed orders.

Peace advocates argued that mothers did not raise their sons to be slaughtered during war. Sons, in this line of reasoning, did not achieve their civic potential if they died a horrible death on a battlefield. “I Did Not Raise My Boy to be a Soldier,” a top-ten song of 1915, illustrated the popularity of this message during the first years of the Great War.⁶¹ Titled “A Mother’s Plea for Peace,” the song’s illustrated sheet music featured a mother protectively embracing her son as a chaotic battle scene unfolded above their heads. Mothers, according to the song, had a duty to stop their son from going to war just “to shoot some other mother’s darling boy.”⁶² The lyrics echoed WPP arguments that a mother should encourage her son to oppose war and refuse to volunteer for military service.

Maternal peace discourse sought to redefine men’s citizenship in terms of peace. R. Claire Synder explains that the masculine ideal of U.S. citizenship is the “patriotic manly warrior,” who is willing to “risk one’s life for the good of one’s community or nation-state.”⁶³ The WPP challenged this historic construct of men’s citizenship. Mothers, peace advocates insisted, must teach their sons to serve their nation through peace and settle differences without bloodshed. Fannie Fern Andrews, Secretary of the American School Peace League, described how children “must be taught the principles of co-operation and good-will as applied first to his family, then to his school, his town, his state, his nation and the family of nations.”⁶⁴ If men learned how to settle differences peacefully at a young age, Andrews insisted, then war would become unnecessary. Preparedness advocates often romanticized war sacrifice, while peace advocates sought to explicate the realities of trench warfare. Mothers, peace advocates argued, should teach their sons to aspire for more than a

horrific death in a muddy European trench. Rose Dabney Forbes summarized this line of reasoning in a 1916 speech to the Executive Board of the National Civic Federation. She advocated for “civic citizenship,” positing that sons must be taught “to turn to their courage and energy of constructive service to their cities and to their counties. . . . It is a grave mistake to assume that the one and the highest form of service to one’s country is that of a soldier.”⁶⁵ Forbes’s speech underscored a central tenant of the WPP platform: women could end war through fostering a civic education grounded in peace. Mothers, these advocates argued, must redefine the masculine tenets of courage and self-sacrifice for their sons. To do this, mothers would need to deconstruct historical narratives promoted by preparedness advocates, which asserted military service as the gold standard of citizenship. While many peace advocates focused on redefining good citizenship for the nation’s sons, others utilized maternal arguments to advocate for wartime policy changes.

Peace advocates called on mothers not only to educate their sons for peace, but also actively protest to keep their sons from war. The WPP coordinated a telegram campaign to reach mothers across the nation. The telegram urged women to write President Wilson “for the sake of anxious mothers dreading that their sons may be added to the ten million men already killed off or crippled in this war.”⁶⁶ The *New York Times* estimated that the telegram reached over one million women. Thousands of mothers heeded the WPP’s campaign calls and telegram companies were forced to make special arrangements with the White House to deliver the neutrality messages to Wilson.⁶⁷ The WPP highlighted this campaign as evidence that mothers of nation wanted to keep their sons out of war.

Many preparedness advocates countered that childless WPP leaders had no right to lecture mothers about how to raise sons. Mrs. W.L. Putnam, a prominent preparedness advocate, warned that “The Woman’s Peace Party is one of the most dangerous movements which has threatened our emotional people for a long time. . . . [Most WPP leaders] are childless and many of whom are spinsters were lined up together and photographed as ‘mothers of men’ and no-one saw the absurdity of it all.”⁶⁸ She implied that only biological mothers of future soldiers had a right to speak on behalf of mothers. Reiterating Putnam’s argument, WSNL member Dorothy Potter satirized childless WPP members who extolled the virtues of a “civic citizenship” education. She wrote:

She didn’t raise her son to be a soldier for the very good reason that she has no boy to raise. But if she had one—even then—no indeed, she wouldn’t. She would raise a self-respecting, clear-thinking, upright sane citizen; not a hysterical militarist marching about with doubt in his eye and a gun on his shoulder. . . . But after all she has no son to raise; she isn’t a mother then. Oh, but you are wrong there; she is a mother, a world-mother, a mother of all the children of all the nations.⁶⁹

Preparedness advocates argued that childless pacifists, who could only claim symbolic motherhood, did not understand the “true” responsibility of motherhood. They decried these “sentimental pacifists” who attempted to derail “real” mothers’ efforts to raise their sons to be soldiers. One *New York Times* editorial admonished women who were “using all their small influence to place obstacles in the way of defense and the efforts to arouse citizens throughout the country to a clear sense of their duty.”⁷⁰ Preparedness advocates framed WPP’s rhetoric of symbolic motherhood as a significant threat to national security. If childless women could convince mothers

to spurn military service, then the nation's borders would be vulnerable to German invasion. Peaceful sons, they reasoned, would be useless during times of war.

Preparedness advocates derided the WPP's vision of a peace-centered civic education for the nation's sons. Potter described civic citizenship as a "subtle poison" that would rob men of "soldier qualities" like self-sacrifice, loyalty, obedience, and courage.⁷¹ Without these traits, she argued, the men would be unable to lead and protect the nation. Mothers, WSNL claimed, emasculated their sons by teaching them to abhor war. These arguments reflect cultural anxieties about the state of American manhood during the early twentieth century. Historian Nancy K. Bristow notes that the growth of industrialization and social reform movements like women's suffrage prompted some to fear the "feminization" of American men.⁷² A mother who "feminized" her son to hate war not only shirked her own civic duty, these advocates argued, but also robbed her son of his civic potential. A 1916 letter from one Mississippi mother published in the *New York Times* explicated this argument: "There is no higher honor in my mind than a soldier's duty faithfully performed . . . and no mother is worthy the honor of having borne a son who would hold him in a coward's or a shirker's place."⁷³ Preparedness advocates reasoned that "the authority of motherhood" did not supersede what "manhood authorizes," meaning that mothers did not have a right to discourage their sons from military life.⁷⁴

A patriotic mother and loyal citizen, preparedness advocates claimed, raised her son to be a fearless soldier. Condemning the WPP, the NAOWS national headquarters released a statement calling on "mothers of the country" to teach their children "reverence to authority, obedience to law and willingness to sacrifice selfish

interest for the country's good."⁷⁵ A patriotic son, according preparedness advocates, grew up to be a heroic soldier. Therefore, mothers must instill in their sons the value of "patriotic sentiment," which led to "the willing service of a soldier to lay down his life and feel that it is well spent."⁷⁶ Reiterating Spartan motherhood ideology, preparedness advocates often highlighted stories of mothers who encouraged their sons to voluntarily enlist before the U.S. entered war. One mother remarked that "I'll be worried about them all of the time, but I'd rather not have them at all than see them be cowards. . . . It's a satisfaction to see your boys be patriots."⁷⁷ A woman's civic responsibility was satisfied, the mother claimed, when her son fulfilled his military duty to the nation.

Countering the WPP rhetoric, the WSNL formed programs to educate children about the importance of wartime sacrifice. The WSNL encouraged mothers to form Junior Sections of the Navy League in their neighborhoods. All had to sign the following pledge to the nation: "I consecrate my heart, mind and body to its service and promise to work for its advancement and security in times of peace and to shirk from no sacrifice or privation in its cause if I am called upon to act in its defense for the freedom, peace, and happiness of our people."⁷⁸ WSNL and other preparedness advocates claimed that respect for and willingness to engage in military service created the foundation for a patriotic education.

Preparedness advocates also emphasized women's responsibility to educate immigrant mothers about these patriotic ideals. Leslie Hahner notes that the Great War "amplified" fears concerning immigrants' loyalty to the nation.⁷⁹ Many white clubwomen feared that immigrant mothers would raise disloyal sons. Mrs. James G.

Dunning, Chairman of Patriotic Education, warned DAR chapters: “Little has been done to reach the immigrant mother. She has been permitted to remain the embodiment of foreign ideas and ideals, her home is a foreign home, and foreign homes are not reliable for the production of patriotic American citizens.”⁸⁰ By working to “educate” the immigrant mother, many women’s clubs justified and lauded their Americanization efforts as war preparedness. General Federation of Women’s Clubs President Anna Pennybacker noted that women’s clubs may not agree on all forms of war preparedness but they must “stand as a unit upon the necessity of preparedness when it comes to Americanizing the immigrant.”⁸¹ Specifically, she decried the lack of resources for immigrant mothers.

Pennybacker directed women’s clubs to interact with immigrant mothers as a form of war preparedness. She advised women to assess the following questions: “Is the mother learning English, and what does she know of America? . . . Is she hopefully watching her family and herself work out their destinies in America? . . . Is she stubbornly holding to the memories and prejudices she knows and to which she feels she has a right?” Woman’s clubs, Pennybacker counseled, should assess answers and then create appropriate resources to help immigrant mothers teach their sons how to be patriotic citizens. She cited the California chapter of her organization as a model for this form of patriotic education. The California chapter wrote and advocated for “home teacher” legislation, which instructed immigrant families about the rights and responsibilities of American citizenship.⁸² These efforts to “Americanize” immigrant mothers reflect an implied civic responsibility for elite,

white women—to dictate and discipline women of color and immigrant women’s maternal choices.

Peace and preparedness advocates created two distinct visions of maternal citizenship. Reimagining republican motherhood ideology, peace advocates framed peace work as the highest form of service for the nation’s sons. The WPP justified women’s entry into male-dominated war debates by positioning women as symbolic mothers of humanity. Echoing Spartan motherhood ideology, preparedness advocates urged mothers to prepare their sons to die for the nation. Women served the nation, the WSNL asserted, by placing the safety of the state over the safety of an individual son. This argument reinforced rhetorics of the social contract where citizens are expected to give up certain rights and sacrifice on behalf of the common good. In addition, preparedness advocates asserted that loyal women monitored, informed, and disciplined the patriotism of all Americans. Both communities utilized rhetorics of symbolic and biological motherhood to justify their positions to the public. These rhetorical similarities allowed popular media and government officials to combine their disparate visions of maternal responsibility during war.

Appropriating Peace: Creating an Ideal of Maternal Citizenship

While preparedness and peace movements publicly clashed, government officials began to craft an idealized version of maternal citizenship through popular media and censorship laws. This idealized version of maternal citizenship combined peace and preparedness arguments. Beginning in 1916, military personnel expressed concerns that mothers, influenced by the WPP, could derail any future draft and military efforts. Historian Susan Zeiger notes that the Wilson administration believed

that mothers, “especially those in the prewar women’s movement,” might publicly oppose any draft measures and “constitute a subversive element in the nation.”⁸³ To address this possible subversion, government officials collaborated with popular women’s magazines to merge peace and preparedness arguments. This created an idealized version of maternal citizenship—a mother who sacrifices her son for peace. In this section, I illustrate how popular media and government officials appropriated peace arguments to frame mothers’ civic responsibility during war.

The pre-war coverage of *The Ladies’ Home Journal* illustrates how government officials informally utilized popular media to craft an idealized version of maternal citizenship. Over one million monthly readers relied on the *Journal*, known as the “monthly Bible of the American home,” to learn about the latest trends in fashion, homemaking, literature, and politics.⁸⁴ Throughout the war era, the *Journal* purposefully shifted from a publication that praised the peace movement to a “semi-official mouthpiece” of government war readiness efforts.⁸⁵ This shift can be traced through an analysis of how the *Journal* framed maternal responsibility during wartime.

Defining Peace as Patriotic

Throughout the first two years of the Great War, the *Journal* published editorials and articles that criticized American militarism and praised the peace movement. In a July 1915 feature, “Patriotism Makes Peace,” a writer decried the military’s presence during President Wilson’s first inaugural parade. She wrote that the military pageantry of the parade was “far more like the return of a victorious war lord than the installation of a President chosen by popular vote to guide for four years

of a peace-loving nation.”⁸⁶ Wilson’s inaugural parade represented a corrosive patriotism, the *Journal* insisted, which exalted the triumphs of war over the cooperation of peace. Echoing popular arguments for peace, the writer urged mothers to teach their sons to aspire to serve in the civil service or a “great army of peace” instead of the military.⁸⁷

Journal editor Edward Bok’s early writings on the war urged mothers to teach their sons to abhor war. In a February 1915 editorial, Bok reflected on how the European war impacted American mothers. He strongly condemned those who glamorized battles and encouraged their sons to aspire to military greatness. Bok wrote that American women, after witnessing the carnage in Europe began to realize that “our notion that war meant valor is criminally wrong. . . . We know now as never the world has known, what war really is: what it means to the mother and to the child. The soul of the child is the price we pay for our Waterloos.”⁸⁸ An ideal woman citizen, according to Bok, did not allow her son to “play” at war, but educated him about the horror of war. Bok further posited that American women would take lessons of the European war with them to the voting booth and vote for peace. Bok instructed his readers that the “woman who eventually will have it in her hands to say whether there shall be war; whether she will allow her children to play at killing; whether it is the duty of her son to leave her and kill another woman’s husband, another children’s father, another woman’s son. . . . With woman’s veto there could be no war.”⁸⁹ When a woman gained the right to vote, Bok implied, she would put an end to all future wars in order to protect her son. Bok’s argument reaffirmed the peace movement’s

assertion that a woman would inherently vote against war due to her maternal duty. However, the *Journal's* editorial alignment with the peace movement was short-lived.

Defining Preparedness as Peaceful

By 1916, the *Journal* urged all mothers to support the war effort as an act of peace. Bok described the *Journal* as neutral source of information while peace versus preparedness debates dominated public discourse. He asserted, "I am not favoring or opposing preparedness here. That is not the function of this magazine."⁹⁰ However, Bok's language of neutrality did not reflect the reality of his editorial choices.⁹¹ The same year, Bok opened a *Journal* editorial office in Washington D.C. to cover women's governmental affairs and support the growing war effort. Months before the Committee on Public Information's founding and American entry into the war, Bok met with President Wilson to offer the *Journal* as a wartime resource. According to Bok, Wilson stated that the *Journal* had the "ear of the American women by the millions, and there will be much for you to tell her."⁹² Wilson counseled Bok that many other news outlets covered the trenches, but that the *Journal* had a patriotic duty to "teach the big elephant to dance" and "get mothers into a frame of mind to let their boys enlist."⁹³ Bok was tasked with harnessing peace discourse to convince mothers that war will lead to peace.

The *Journal* attempted to reconcile peace and preparedness rhetoric by arguing the Great War represented a war for peace. American mothers, according to the *Journal*, could only accomplish a lasting international peace through supporting preparedness and the war effort. Bok utilized *Journal* editorials to echo increasingly popular arguments that peace could only be achieved with a "war that will end

war.”⁹⁴ Less than a year after Bok criticized war valor, he wrote that “it is always an act of heroism when a mother lets her boy go to war.”⁹⁵ It is an act of heroism, Bok surmised, because war forced a mother to reject the natural instinct to protect her son. This natural instinct, he posited, explained why “women are foremost in all peace movements.”⁹⁶ However, Bok urged mothers to accept the inevitability of American entry into war so they could encourage their sons fight for a lasting peace.

The *Journal* utilized historical narratives to illustrate how a strong mother-son bond held a patriotic purpose. One 1916 bedtime story about George Washington illustrated how a son’s obedience to his mother could be used in the service of peace. The author argued that Washington became known as “first in war, first in peace, and first in the hearts of countryman” because his mother provided proper guidance.⁹⁷ Mary Bell Washington, the author wrote, acted as a strict mother who required complete obedience from her son. In turn, her son “recognized her authority and never questioned her decisions.”⁹⁸ The young George Washington dreamed of making his living and finding adventure on the sea, but his mother urged him to find more suitable employment on land. Washington followed his mother’s wishes and became a leader who secured freedom, peace, and prosperity for the nation. The moral of the story, the author reminds mothers, is that “the boy who had trained in obedience and could sacrifice himself for the love of his mother became the man who could bow to the command of his country and would sacrifice self to serve others.”⁹⁹ Washington, the author reminded readers, was remembered as a man of peace; a peace achieved through the Revolutionary War. Like Washington’s mother, the story implied, a mother during the preparedness effort needed to ensure the obedience of

her son for the nation. In addition to these historical narratives, *Journal* editorials and features encouraged mothers to consider how military preparedness could lead to a lasting peace.

Utilizing language that mirrored peace advocate's pleas, *Journal* articles posited that mothers had a duty to protect their sons from harm. However, these articles suggested that military training was the only way a mother could ensure her son's well-being during war. Bok urged mothers to ask themselves: "Whatever may be my personal view of the war, am I willing to let my boys be drafted and go into war untrained, inefficient, for a foreign soldier, trained and efficient, to shoot at and my boys unable to take care of themselves?"¹⁰⁰ A mother, Bok posited, would be responsible for her son's death if he was drafted to the battlefield with no prior training. The editorial assured mothers that preparedness would not compromise a woman's "natural" desire to protect. If anything, the editorial posited, preparedness was the only way to ensure a lasting future peace. As Bok reminded his readers, "We do not invite punctures by having extra tires aboard our automobiles; nor fires by having extinguishers; nor the end of life by being insured; nor drowning by having life preservers. But these precautions do prepare us."¹⁰¹ In the same way, a mother who encouraged her son to prepare for war did not encourage war. Mothers, according to the *Journal*, could simultaneously advocate for peace and support the preparedness movement.

The *Journal* also featured editorials written by military leaders, urging mothers to support military readiness as a function of peace. Secretary of War Lindley M. Garrison appealed to mothers for their support of the National Defense

Act of 1916. The law significantly expanded the military force and established the Reserve Officer Training Corps. He addressed his appeal to the woman who may be “one of the thousands of women who are supporting organizations for world peace and abolishment of war.”¹⁰² Garrison acknowledged that women around the nation had to decide if they would “direct whatever influence [they] may possess” toward the peace or preparedness effort. Women, according to Garrison, could only ensure a lasting peace through war readiness efforts. Preparedness, this line of reasoning maintained, was not a weapon of war but a tool of peace. Garrison’s *Journal* article reflected what Wilson would later describe as “armed neutrality.”¹⁰³ Preparedness, Garrison argued, would keep America out of the war because it deterred German attacks on American soil and ships. If mothers truly wanted peace, Garrison reasoned, then they needed to support calls for increased military funding. He called on mothers to recognize that readiness “is preparedness AGAINST war not for war.”¹⁰⁴

Government officials also called on mothers to support voluntary enlistment as a function of peace. Assistant Secretary of Navy Franklin D. Roosevelt appealed to mothers in a *Journal* feature titled, “What Can the Navy Do For Your Boy.”¹⁰⁵ Roosevelt reminded mothers of their duty to encourage sons to serve the nation. Roosevelt observed that many sons viewed military service as a burden instead of an integral aspect of citizenship. Roosevelt argued that, “It will be good when we think of service not as a duty, but as a privilege of our citizenship.”¹⁰⁶ He implied mothers who opposed voluntary service not only damaged national security, but also weakened their sons’ civic potential and masculinity. This illustrates Elizabeth McKillen’s scholarly assertion that propaganda of this era often contrasted the

patriotic mother with the “overly protective mother who impeded her son’s efforts to fulfill his military responsibilities and thereby undermined both his manhood and U.S. military efforts.”¹⁰⁷ Roosevelt combined this argument with WPP rhetorics of benevolence. As described earlier, many peace advocates argued that mothers must end war in order to end suffering. Roosevelt countered this argument by reminding mothers that the “golden rule appeals to our conduct toward other people.”¹⁰⁸ He argued that temporary peace for American families came at the expense of families around the world. Mothers, Roosevelt reasoned, could not selfishly protect their own sons when European sons and daughters endured despotic rule. Mothers, according to Roosevelt, needed to support war in order to fulfill their duty to end suffering. Like the WPP, government officials also framed peace as an integral component of maternal civic responsibility but argued that lasting peace could only be achieved through supporting war preparedness.

Echoing the WPP, the *Journal* maintained that peace must be the foundation of a patriotic education. However, these articles asserted that a true appreciation for peace could only be obtained through military training. In one editorial, a “Swiss Mother” urged American mothers to support conscription and mandatory military training.¹⁰⁹ The “Swiss Mother” explained that military service prepared Swiss sons to be selfless citizens who served in the name of peace. The *Journal* article argued that Swiss and American mothers may inhabit different countries but share a common goal: “peace for us is our highest ambition. Patriotism means love and service to one’s country; and peace, love, and service to humanity.”¹¹⁰ If American mothers wanted sons to understand the value of peace, the article posited, then they needed to

teach sons the price of war. The Swiss mother maintained that their long tradition of mandatory military service allowed Switzerland to remain neutral as war raged near their borders. She posited that the Kaiser witnessed Swiss military exercises two years before war broke out and did not dare try to invade Swiss borders. Countering WPP rhetoric, the *Journal* illustrated how Switzerland utilized military training for peace.¹¹¹

Mirroring WPP language, the author asserted that Swiss mothers taught their sons to value peace above all else. She wrote: “We teach them that war is too terrible a game to play at, that they will be real soldiers one day to help to keep the peace. We make them see that each one of them must serve for all, and that all must serve for the individual’s freedom and right.”¹¹² Countering WPP claims that military service created less civil men, the writer assured American mothers that conscription taught men how to value peace. However, the article posited that a son’s patriotic education began with mothers: “How do we raise our boys to be soldiers, guardians of our ideal, defenders of our liberty, and champions of the rights of our people? We begin with them when they are just tiny tots. We, the mothers, root deep in their ready minds the thought that they—even *they*—are responsible for the little country in which they have been born.”¹¹³ Mandatory military training, the article asserted, continues the patriotic education mothers impart on their young sons. The *Journal* implied that American mothers could implement a significant WPP tenant—peace education—through their support of conscription policies.

The *Journal*’s pre-war coverage illustrates the multiple ways government officials and popular media combined peace and preparedness arguments to create an

ideal of maternal responsibility. First, many *Journal* articles emulated peace advocates' claim that women were naturally responsible for international peace work. Instead of deriding this claim, editorials and articles embraced this symbolic motherhood argument to argue for preparedness efforts. However, they asserted that peace could only be achieved through preparing for war. Second, the *Journal* provided government officials a platform to speak directly to mothers, anchoring their arguments in the language of peace. Assistant Secretary of the Navy Franklin D. Roosevelt and Secretary of War Lindley M. Garrison both framed their calls for preparedness and military support as instruments of peace, not war. Finally, many articles prioritized internationalism, a key component of peace rhetoric. Mothers, the *Journal* implied, could join an international movement for neutrality by supporting the Swiss-style of conscription. In editorials, Bok claimed his publication was a "neutral" source. However, the *Journal* functioned as a vehicle to encourage mothers to support government interests before America entered the Great War.

Disciplining Maternal Citizenship

In the months before Congress declared war on Germany, peace advocates faced significant public pressure to pledge their loyalty to the government. In early 1917, multiple events caused government officials and public leaders to heighten their nationalistic rhetoric and challenge the viability of American neutrality.¹¹⁴ Many preparedness advocates intensified their critiques of the WPP, describing members not only as naïve or misguided, but also treasonous. Five days before Congress declared war on Germany, a woman's preparedness committee issued the following statement:

The hysterical cry of the feminine pacifist to arise the timidity in American women is an insult to our sex and is deserving of the sternest rebuke by the patriotic womanhood of our country and must be repudiated. In our past history American wives, mothers and daughters have never failed to fulfill their duty to the country. . . . Just as there exist the physical defective and the moral defective, so now today we have among us the patriotic defective, for such is the pacifist. The road from pacifism to disloyalty and pro-Germanism is a short one. At one end is cowardice and at the other is treason.¹¹⁵

The statement reflected a popular preparedness belief that all citizens must unquestioningly support the war effort. As this public pressure mounted, many WPP members shifted away from anti-war efforts and toward war relief.

WPP national leaders reduced or ended their criticism of Wilson and war entry during the first months of 1917. After the United States ended diplomatic relations with Germany, Carrie Chapman Catt, pledged suffragists' support to the government.¹¹⁶ Her pledge angered some WPP branches and the New York branch removed Catt from an honorary leadership position. One New York WPP member summarized the controversy for the *New York Times*: "We are first of all against war and have nothing to do with anything connected with the waging of war. Many of us are members of the National Woman Suffrage Party and resented our services being offered for any other purpose until we consented."¹¹⁷ Catt resigned her national WPP membership after the actions of the New York branch. Like Catt, many other WPP suffragists believed women could "earn" the right to vote through war-work.¹¹⁸ Women's war-work, in this line of reasoning, could prove that women deserved an equal voice in political matters. Anna Howard Shaw maintained "that ninety percent of loyal, active suffragists deplore" the actions of women who did not engage in war-work.¹¹⁹ Shaw's argument reflected the belief that all women, regardless of their affiliations to the suffrage or peace movements, should unite to support the war effort.

America's entry into the war marked a significant shift in the WPP's use of maternal rhetoric. The WPP national board released the following statement after Congress declared war on Germany: "All the activities of the Woman's Peace Party have been, of course, modified by the entrance of the United States into the World War."¹²⁰ Some WPP national leaders asserted that the organization, as symbolic mothers of the nation should work within the system to lessen suffering of war victims and American citizens on the homefront. Scholars Sherry R. Shepler and Anne F. Mattina explain that the WPP faced significant public and government pressure to support the war effort.¹²¹ Jane Addams, for example, became active in food conservation programs led by Herbert Hoover's Food Administration. While Addams spoke on behalf of the Food Administration and appeared in CPI brochures, her rhetoric did not completely conform to the government's patriotic propaganda. Scholar Marilyn Fischer explains that Addams eschewed rhetorics of victory and patriotism by describing the conflict as a "problem with humanity" instead of a conflict with clear winners and losers.¹²² However, she did not explicitly condemn the government's war policies again until after Armistice.

On April 11th, six days after declaring war, Wilson established the Committee on Public Information (CPI) to create and distribute wartime propaganda. The CPI created pamphlets, movies, and speakers' bureaus to promote the government's patriotic narrative of war.¹²³ Throughout the war, the government sought to control the narrative of maternal responsibility. The CPI's Division of Women's War-Work published 2,305 stories in 19,471 newspapers and women's magazines during the war.¹²⁴ While the CPI promoted a wide variety of women's wartime activity, many

early articles focused on mobilizing mothers' support for the Selective Service Act. After the war, George Creel, CPI Chairman, noted that government literature compelled "mothers of the country" to give up "their sons to the Selective Service law without question."¹²⁵ Many of these publications targeted mothers who previously supported the peace movement.

The CPI attempted to further erase distinctions between the peace and preparedness movements. A CPI published pamphlet, *War for Peace*, posited that "between a worthy War-patriotism and a virile-Peace patriotism there is no difference."¹²⁶ Women peace workers, most affiliated with WPP-Massachusetts, wrote a section of the pamphlet directed toward mothers who still identified with the peace movement. They argued that "our ultimate goal—the establishment of a durable peace through international organization—can only be established through the defeat of German might."¹²⁷ The CPI accused women who did not engage in war relief work of extending suffering around the war. The statement read: "We feel that those persons who are continually rebuking the Government for our entrance into it and who are constantly at this time for peace are prolonging war."¹²⁸ Peace advocates who did not conform to this "war for peace" narrative became subjects of public shaming and prosecution.

In addition to public and propaganda pressures, government officials also implemented policies to silence peace advocates who continued to challenge their ideal of maternal civic duty. Woodrow Wilson warned in his 1917 War Message to Congress: "If there should be disloyalty, it will be dealt with a firm hand of stern repression."¹²⁹ This "firm hand of stern repression" officially took the form of two

laws: The Espionage Act of 1917 and the Sedition Act of 1918. The Espionage Act of 1917 made it illegal to publicly incite or support “insubordination, disloyalty, mutiny, or refusal of duty.”¹³⁰ The Sedition Act of 1918 added nine additional offenses to the Espionage Act, including any public speaking, writing, or publishing that utilized “any disloyal, profane, scurrilous, or abusive language” to describe the government, Constitution, or any “military service.”¹³¹ Government officials would use both of these laws during the war to silence women who challenged wartime propaganda about maternal citizenship. The following sections illustrate this process by analyzing the New York City Branch of the Woman’s Peace Party’s *Four Lights* periodical and the trial of socialist Kate Richards O’Hare.

Pressuring Peace Advocates

The New York City branch of the Woman’s Peace Party (WPP-NYC) rejected government and popular media’s attempts to persuade the public that a mother’s duty to preserve peace could be fulfilled through war-work. In January 1917, WPP-NYC members published the first issue of *Four Lights*, describing it as an “attempt to voice the young, uncompromising women’s peace movement in America, whose aims are daring and immediate—to stop the war in Europe, to federate the nations for organized peace at the close of the war, and meanwhile to guard democracy from the subtle dangers of militarism.”¹³² Described by journalism scholar Linda Lumsden as the “only feminist-pacifist publication during World War I,” *Four Lights* vocally opposed all forms of war-work and satirized CPI depictions of wartime motherhood.¹³³ The editors, a rotating group of 28 women, argued that American

women had been “deceived into establishing an enormous military machine” and deemed themselves “fighters of peace”—waging rhetorical war against militarism.¹³⁴

WPP-NYC fought for peace, in part, by illuminating the propaganda geared toward mothers created by the CPI. Editor Olivia Howard Dunbar stated that propaganda militarized the language of peace. She argued that the “word ‘peace’ recently conscripted, has likewise now come to find itself in the strange company of the word ‘force.’”¹³⁵ Similarly, editors observed that mothers had been conscripted through propaganda and preparedness efforts to teach the “tiny fluttering hands” of the nation’s children to clasp “closely about a gun” in the name of peace.¹³⁶ The peaceful mother no longer symbolized an anti-war stance, editors argued, but instead represented a dangerous version of American patriotism. *Four Lights* challenged linguistically this “conscription” by proposing alternative ways women should engage with war.

In the first published issue, *Four Lights* editors encouraged women to withhold their sons from the war effort. The issue featured a reprinted speech by actress Alla Nazimova who called for a “Mothers’ Strike.” Nazimova urged women to withhold sex until the end of the war. She reasoned that there could be no more war if women stopped producing sons. Editors echoed Nazimova’s statement: “We will not bring more children into the world until we are assured that they will never be food for cannon . . . give us peace, then we will give you sons.”¹³⁷ Mothers, Nazimova argued, held all of the power over future wars because they could stop producing future soldiers. While writers stated this strike may happen in the future, they argued for more immediate action against compulsory training and conscription.

Defying censorship laws and public calls for unity, editors of *Four Lights* urged mothers to actively protest conscription and compulsory training. Less than three weeks after Congress declared war on Germany, the same editors pled with mothers to stand against “blind patriotism.” The editors observed: “We hear the Star-Spangled Banner at every place of amusement and our daily press rings with the cry of ‘America first.’ . . . [O]ur boys of eighteen and nineteen, too young to vote but not too young to execute the will of the voter, are going out to shoot and maim and perhaps die.”¹³⁸ Zealous patriotism, the editors argued, concealed the horrors that awaited young American men on the battlefield. Women, *Four Lights* editors posited, became complicit in war slaughter if they did not actively speak out against the war.

Four Lights featured poetry written from a mother’s perspective, highlighting women’s responsibilities to keep the nation’s sons out of war.¹³⁹ Florence Guerttin-Tuttle urged women to assert themselves as leaders of the draft resistance, calling on mothers to rise up against nationalistic rhetoric. She wrote: “Wanted—Woman Insurgent who will lead not follow. . . . Waging a war to halt the mad blood-letting of nations/Marshalling Mothers to arms—the arms that the nations have emptied.”¹⁴⁰ Her poetry blended biological and symbolic maternal arguments to argue that women must lead the war against war. Echoing early WPP arguments, Guerttin-Tuttle asserted that women’s maternal love was not “flag-bound,” but extended to all children. Defying calls for “America First,” she asserted that women’s innate duty to children could not be contained by national boundaries. Biological mothers, Geurttin-Tuttle implied, must use their peaceful, maternal influence to counter the “dogma of war-like tradition” that infiltrates their sons’ worldview at a young age. Another *Four*

Lights contributor called on all women to publicly mourn for the nation's embrace of war: "Democracy is dead in America and to-morrow its ghosts will walk our streets . . . we will wear black until the conscription law is repealed."¹⁴¹ Her call foreshadowed government anxieties about Gold Star mothers' mourning practices as American losses continued to mount overseas throughout 1918.

Four Lights mocked other branches of the WPP who performed war work after Congress declared war. Articles criticized the WPP-Massachusetts members, derisively deemed "Sister Susies," who knit socks and rolled bandages as a form of war relief.¹⁴² *Four Lights* contributor Katharine Anthony described these actions as an "infantile form of patriotism," which undermined the women's peace movement.¹⁴³ She also noted that this unpaid, volunteer work by wealthy WPP-Massachusetts leaders may imperil the wages of working-class women.¹⁴⁴ One reprinted CPI photograph featured a young mother holding a baby, surrounded by young girls voluntarily rolling bandages and knitting socks. The altered captions read, "These involuntary scabettes of the war range in age from ten to five. They are paid three cents per 144. . . . The earnings of all, including the mother comes to two dollars a week. The baby is a slacker."¹⁴⁵ By volunteering in the name of war relief, *Four Lights* argued that WPP members not only sent men to certain death but also endangered the livelihood of working women.

WPP-NYC also publicly denounced WPP national leaders who pledged their support for the war relief effort. Scholar Harriet Hyman Alonso explains that WPP-NYC directly criticized the government in the months following the war declaration while national WPP leaders "approach was to avoid confrontation with the

government by solely proposing plans for postwar peace.”¹⁴⁶ *Four Lights* questioned the authenticity of WPP national leaders like Jane Addams who described women as “conservators of life,” yet began to participate in government-sponsored war relief campaigns. One editor derided the “hypocrisy” of WPP national leaders for their symbolic motherhood rhetoric: “Women have often been accused of being essentially producers and conservers. Now it is time to lay forever that slander and prove that they are glad and eager to destroy joyfully all that the ages and other women have produced. Courage sisters! It takes but a minute to destroy a boy into whose making have gone eighteen years of thoughtful care.”¹⁴⁷ *Four Lights* editors argued women could not be described as “conservators of life” if they actively supported war efforts. WPP suffragists, editors claimed, compromised the peace movement by “shaping things that kill” in exchange for the vote.¹⁴⁸ While *Four Lights* illuminated schisms between WPP leaders’ rhetoric and actions, the publication gained national attention for their rebukes of government propaganda.

Four Lights mocked government-sponsored songs and posters that urged mothers to support conscription. The CPI-funded song, “I Didn’t Raise My Son to be a Slacker,” posited that a loyal mother would rather see her son die on the battlefield than refuse to serve the nation.¹⁴⁹ Imitating the song’s language, *Four Lights* contributor Ada Chase Dudley reimagined women’s responsibility to the nation. She wrote:

Mother think straight: Are you a slacker? . . . To most mothers, because they know the price of life, war is forever both senseless and wicked. If it were up to you, you would find another way. Is it fair—is it motherly to allow your boy to do that which you know to be morally impossible for you to do? Are you shouldering your responsibility in this crisis? Think straight! Are you a slacker?¹⁵⁰

Dudley argued that a mother fulfilled her duty to the nation by working against conscription and voluntary recruitment efforts. She defined overzealously patriotic politicians, not Germans, as the real enemies to American democracy. *Four Lights* framed mothers as warriors for peace and liberty when they protested conscription.

Condemning Spartan motherhood ideology and symbolic motherhood, *Four Lights* editor Mary Alden Hopkins wrote a satirical guide for raising a soldier. Her writing style mirrored CPI propaganda, which instructed mothers in how to raise patriotic citizens. This form of CPI propaganda called on mothers to view their homes as a “great line of defense” and training ground for future soldiers.¹⁵¹ While lauding women’s war-work in nontraditional places like the munitions factories, the CPI reminded women not to neglect their essential role in the home. Hopkins’ guide satirized this maternal propaganda: “Women must not feel that because they work in the narrow confines of the home, they cannot help in the great work on destruction. It is a tender nursery thought that the baby in the mother’s arms, properly trained . . . may some-day write his mother’s name in the blood of the enemy.”¹⁵² She satirically advised mothers to “accustom your children gradually to the sight of blood. And for yourself learn to kill a little every day. One sweet woman is accustomed to ask herself searchingly each night, ‘whom have I killed today?’ And to fall asleep resolving to kill more in the morrow.”¹⁵³ Her writing contrasted the bloody realities of war with the glamorized vision exalted in propaganda directed toward mothers. This use of satire and the explicit anti-draft tone of *Four Lights* caught the attention of the Postmaster General.

Government officials deemed *Four Lights* a threat to the state-sanctioned version of maternal duty and by extension national security. The U.S. Post Office labeled *Four Lights* as treasonous material and sought to shut down the publication.¹⁵⁴ Under the Espionage Act, the post office could censor or refuse to publish any material that may hinder the draft effort.¹⁵⁵ The Post Office refused to deliver issues of *Four Lights* on the grounds that the periodical published material that could hinder the war effort, specifically the draft. The U.S. Department of Justice opened an investigation into the “treasonous statements” and *Four Lights* suspended publication in October 1917 after months of government harassment and mailing rejection. Before suspending publication, editors described how government interference impeded distribution “presumably under the Espionage Act although the first issue to be suppressed met its fate nine days before the Bill became a law. When we inquired why the two numbers had been held up we met ‘Orders from Washington’ was the best we got or are likely to get.”¹⁵⁶ The WPP-NYC did not publish *Four Lights* again until after war and focused their efforts on advocating for New York suffrage legislation.

Prosecuting Peace Advocates

In addition to organizations, the government targeted individual women who did not embody their ideal of maternal citizenship. The Department of Justice successfully prosecuted over twenty women under the Espionage and Sedition Acts. Historian Kathleen Kennedy argues that many of these women were convicted, in part, because they did not embody “gender appropriate behavior” during the war.”¹⁵⁷ On July 27, 1917, socialist Kate Richards O’Hare was indicted for obstructing the

draft. O'Hare toured the nation as an anti-war orator and often invoked her role as mother to four children in speeches and writings.¹⁵⁸ She delivered a speech during the summer of 1917 to an audience of 125 people, mostly women and children, urging them to disavow the war. This speech in North Dakota led to a federal indictment under the Espionage Act. As historian Annelise Orleck explains, a state-sanctioned expectation of motherhood "regulates acceptable behavior, restricts expression, and designates appropriate spaces for action. . . . Substantial privileges await those who perform their roles properly. Punishment awaits the 'bad mothers' who don't."¹⁵⁹ The prosecution of O'Hare illustrates how the government punished women who challenged their ideal of maternal responsibility.

The Department of Justice charged O'Hare under the Espionage Act for endangering the draft and inciting draft resistance. Her two-hour remarks primarily warned of the intersections between capitalism and war, but her indictment highlighted one brief remark about mothers and soldiers. O'Hare disputed the Department of Justice's transcript of her speech. Prosecutors argued that O'Hare claimed "that any person who enlisted in the army of the United States for service in France would be used for fertilizer, and that is all she is good for; and that the women of the United States were more or less brood sows to raise children to get into the army and be made into fertilizer."¹⁶⁰ O'Hare maintained that this section of her speech focused on how European governments and clergy demanded that women reproduce for their nation and that the women of Europe "were reduced to the status of breeding animals on a stock farm."¹⁶¹ O'Hare argued that she was a loyal American who sought to protect future generations from the interconnected dangers

of war and capitalism. Her appeal invoked the nativist belief that her American lineage established her loyalty to the nation. O'Hare insisted that she would never defame American mothers because to do so "would have involved myself, my mother, my grandmothers, and all my ancestors back to revolutionary times."¹⁶² This also served to remind the public of O'Hare's status as a biological mother. Her actions, this argument implied, were not only guided by socialism, but also the desire to protect her son from the horrors of war.

District Attorney Melvin A. Hildrith reiterated the government's ideal of maternal citizenship during war. During the highly publicized trial, O'Hare argued that mothers had a right to question the government's motives for war since they must sacrifice their sons for the cause. Hildrith countered that a loyal mother would not raise such questions that could destabilize national security. He offered this warning during his closing argument: "Why was it necessary for her to warn the women at that meeting that if they raised children to go into the army they were no better than brood sows on western farms? . . . False and pernicious doctrine! A doctrine that, if instilled in the minds of the people of this country, would prevent us from raising armies and navies."¹⁶³ If mothers began to question their responsibility to raise loyal soldiers, he implied, then the nation would not have the manpower necessary for war. The jury embraced Hildrith's vision of maternal loyalty and reached a guilty verdict after 30 minutes of deliberation. Judge Martin J. Wade sentenced O'Hare to five years in federal prison, which was considered severe in comparison to similar cases.¹⁶⁴ Wade would justify this harsh sentence as a means to protect traditional maternal citizenship.

During O'Hare's sentencing, Wade reiterated the belief that a mother should teach her son to be a soldier. He noted that "at a time when mothers are sacrificing their sons" all loyal citizens must "suppress any desire which they may have to utter words which may tend to weaken the spirit and confidence of the people."¹⁶⁵ A mother's anti-war rhetoric, Wade implied, could damage national spirit because she was her child's first civics teacher. According to Wade, O'Hare's activism did not meet the ideal standard of maternal citizenship in two ways: she failed to raise her own son to be a soldier and encouraged other women to question their duty to sacrifice their sons for the nation. He reiterated the government-sanctioned narrative that a mother should unquestioningly sacrifice her son for the nation. O'Hare's sentence served as an unsettling warning for other women activists about the consequences of speaking out against maternal sacrifice.¹⁶⁶ If a mother did not fulfill or encouraged others to question this duty then she faced the "firm hand of stern repression" Wilson articulated in his War Message.¹⁶⁷

While formally and informally disciplining peace advocates, the government also disseminated their ideal of maternal citizenship through various forms of propaganda. Films created by the CPI featured patriotic mothers who encouraged their sons to volunteer instead of waiting to be drafted.¹⁶⁸ Films juxtaposed these "heroic" mothers with overly sentimental mothers who impeded the war effort due to an "unnatural" attachment to their sons. Liberty Loan posters and magazine advertisement often utilized the image of a grieving, yet resolute mother to encourage the nation to financially support the war.¹⁶⁹ These forms of propaganda featured a Gold Star mother holding a service flag, speaking directly to the audience. She

reminded the public that her son “finished his great fight-his fight to make his mother and other mothers of the world safe for all time . . . all the money you gave cannot equate the life blood those over there. It is your obligation to the dead that they not have died in vain and to the living that they may finish the work they have undertaking.”¹⁷⁰ The Liberty Loan advertisement implied that mothers should commemorate their sons’ sacrifice by setting a patriotic example for others. This ad foreshadowed the Gold Star mother’s responsibility to simultaneously honor her son’s sacrifice for peace, support government initiatives, and model proper maternal citizenship.

When reflecting on the Great War, Creel noted that the CPI strengthened the connection between mothers’ civic responsibility, sacrifice, and peace. He argued that propaganda “imparted a sublime militancy to the innate pacifism of America. A war against war! Mothers gave their sons so that the dream might be made to come true, and men went to death with a new courage.”¹⁷¹ Men, Creel implied, derived the courage to serve the nation from their mother’s belief that sacrifice could ensure a lasting peace for the world. A mother’s responsibility to motivate and commemorate peace through war would be foregrounded as America grappled with how to remember the Great War. This further codified traditional ideologies of republican motherhood at the same time that women prepared to take on the full rights and responsibilities of citizenship with the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment.

Conclusion

The outbreak of the Great War ushered in a new era of public debate over maternal citizenship. Throughout three years of parades, public forums, magazine

articles, speeches, and conferences, women publicly debated the boundaries of maternal civic duty during war. In this chapter, I illustrated how government officials and popular media combined peace and preparedness rhetorics to articulate a singular ideal maternal citizenship. A patriotic mother during the Great War, according to popular discourse, sacrificed her son for the nation and the promise of international peace. The government publicized and defended this ideal of maternal citizenship through propaganda and prosecution.

These public deliberations highlighted the rhetorical challenges and opportunities that motherhood presents for women engaged in political debate. Sara Hayden notes that rhetorics of traditional gender ideologies had a “paradoxical effect on the lives of women” throughout the first decades of the twentieth century.¹⁷² Rhetorics of motherhood simultaneously created opportunities for women to enter wartime debates as experts and constrained women’s expertise to the boundaries of traditional gender roles. As this analysis demonstrated, peace and preparedness advocates asserted their right to shape government policies through the lens of motherhood. WPP utilized symbolic motherhood to simultaneously advocate for an end to war and a new era of women’s voting rights. Preparedness advocates used WPP’s dual advocacy as evidence that suffragists prioritized their fight for the vote over the collective fight for international peace. This analysis reveals how women who relied on symbolic motherhood to advocate for their own rights or against government interests were labeled as unpatriotic, disloyal, and inauthentic. However, the early popularity of WPP’s maternal rhetoric ensured that peace became embedded in the government’s idealized version of maternal citizenship.

Many women transcended traditional gendered boundaries during the war. Wartime propaganda also actively encouraged women to construct weaponry, till the soil, and drive ambulances through war zones.¹⁷³ However, the government and popular discourse framed these newfound responsibilities as a temporary patriotic duty. A 1918 *Rotarian* editorial reflected this belief, arguing that factories, farms, and the other agencies “must release the women to their reunited homes and replace them incidentally with returned warriors.”¹⁷⁴ The responsibility of women who sacrificed their sons for the nation, popularly known after the war as Gold Star mothers, continued to expand after the war. The next chapter illustrates how the Gold Star Pilgrimages not only commemorated male sacrifice, but also this ideal of maternal citizenship.

NOTES

¹ “Victory Prayers on May 12,” *New York Times*, hereafter known as *NYT*, May 5, 1918, 9.

² “Calls on Nation to Honor Mothers,” *NYT*, May 12, 1918, 8. The *NYT* published a compilation of 1918 Mothers’ Day messages from government officials.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ While rhetors in this chapter refer to “women” and “mothers” as a uniform group, white citizens created this ideal for white, non-immigrant women citizens. Chapter Three of this analysis examines war readiness appeals created by and directed toward African American women.

⁶ Ross further explains how suffragist Jeanette Rankin (R-MT), the first woman elected to Congress, voted against the declaration of war. Ross notes that “[o]pponents of suffrage cited Rankin’s antiwar vote and her emotional explanation of it as evidence of the unfitness of women for participation in politics.” William G. Ross, *World War I and the American Constitution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 147.

⁷ Hahner, “The National Committee of Patriotic Societies,” 41.

⁸ “Women’s Presidents to Aid Navy League: Heads of Ten Organizations with 500,000 Members Will Act on National Committee,” *NYT*, August 16, 1915, 9. Other organizations involved in the formation of the WSNL include: Daughters of the American Revolution, Ladies of the Grand Army of the Republic, United Daughters of the Confederacy, and Women’s Made in the U.S.A. League.

⁹ Susan E. Marshall, “Ladies against Women: Mobilization Dilemmas of Antifeminist Movements,” *Social Problems* 32, no. 4 (1985), 353.

¹⁰ My analysis primarily focuses on the WPP. Steinson explains that, in addition to the WPP, women “performed much of the difficult, but unrecognized, behind-the-scenes organization work” for other prominent peace organizations. Other peace organizations prominent during this era include: American Union Against Militarism, Ford Peace Venture, American Neutral Conferences Committee, the Emergency Peace Federation, and the Peoples’ Council. Barbara J. Steinson, “‘The Mother Half of Humanity’: American Women in the Peace and Preparedness Movements in World War I,” in *Women, War, and Revolution* ed. Carol R. Berkin and Clara M. Lovett (New York: Holmes & Meier Publishers, 1979), 261; 277.

¹¹ “The Women’s Manifestation,” *NYT*, August 30, 1914, 14.

¹² Harriet Hyman Alonso, *Peace as a Women’s Issue: A History of the U.S. Movement for World Peace and Women’s Rights* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1993), 65.

¹³ “Declaration of Principles: The Organization of the Woman’s Peace Party,” *The Independent*, January 25, 1915, 120.

¹⁴ Joyce Blackwell, *No Peace Without Freedom: Race and the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom, 1915-1975* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2004), 37. By the end of 1915, Jane Addams extended WPP membership to

five prominent African American clubwomen: “Mary Church Terrell, Mary B. Talbert, Charlotte Atwood, Dr. Mary Waring, and Addie Hunton.” Blackwell argues that throughout the Great War era the dominant belief of the WPP (renamed the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom after the war) was that “few black women were ready for the organization.” She notes that the WPP framed “ideal peace activist” and woman citizen as white. Ibid. 41.

¹⁵ Blackwell further explains that the African American women, for multiple reasons, were not an active in the WPP from 1915-1918. She describes how African American clubwomen “rooted peace soundly in racial justice, it made going to Europe to assist black troops all the more necessary, that is, as essential part of their peace work.” Ibid., 91. Race was more foregrounded after the war in when the WILPF elected Mary Church Terrell to the national board in 1919. Ibid., 95.

¹⁶ Linda K. Schott, *Reconstructing Women’s Thoughts: The Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom Before World War II* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997), 55-77.

¹⁷ Linda K. Schott explains that the WPP “policy of only asking for ‘substantial sympathy’ of its members allowed the WPP to encompass, rather than exclude, differing positions.” Ibid. 57.

¹⁸ C. Roland Marchand, *The American Peace Movement and Social Reform, 1889-1918* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972), 205.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Alonso, *Peace as a Women’s Issue*, 54.

²² Lucia Ames Mead, “The Woman’s Peace Party,” *The Advocate of Peace*, February 1915, 35-36. Mead contextualized the platform by explaining that 3,000 women met in January 1915 in order to form the Woman’s Peace Party. She explained that the idea for the organization arose “in the response of women suffragists in Chicago, Washington, and other cities to the stirring appeals of Mrs. Pethick-Lawrence of London and Madame Rosika Schwimmer of Budapest.”

²³ *The Woman’s Journal*, a suffrage publication, asked seven well-known peace advocates if they believed that women’s suffrage would end war. They published their responses in the November 1914 issue. “Woman and War,” *The Woman’s Journal*, November 14, 1914, 300. Preparedness advocates cited this issue as evidence that suffragists attempted to “co-opt” the peace movement for their own political gain. See, Agnes Repplier, “Women and War,” *Atlantic Monthly*, May 1915, 580.

²⁴ Belinda A. Stillion Southard, “A Rhetoric of Inclusion and the Expansion of Movement Constituencies: Harriot Stanton Blatch and the Classed Politics of Woman Suffrage,” *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 44, no. 2 (2014): 138-139.

²⁵ “Woman and War,” 300.

²⁶ This quote was attributed to Sally Yates Faison who served as the Vice President of the United Daughters of the Confederacy. “Women to the Front,” *Seven Seas Magazine*, October 1915, 37.

²⁷ Patriotic organizations like the DAR, Daughters of the United Confederacy (UDC), and other women's clubs strongly supported preparedness efforts and took an active role in the Woman's Section of the Navy League.

²⁸ Virgil Johnson, "How You Can Help Prepare," *Everybody's Magazine*, September 1915, 267; "The Women's Campaign," *Seven Seas Magazine*, March 1916, 38.

²⁹ Barbara J. Steinson explains that women in the preparedness movement were often viewed as supporters instead of leaders. She writes: "It is difficult to believe that there would have been a viable peace movement after 1914 without the participation of women. Women's role was not so decisive in preparedness activities; their endeavors were overshadowed in a movement that included individuals like Theodore Roosevelt." Barbara J. Steinson, "Sisters and Soldiers: American Women and the National Service Schools, 1916-1917," *The Historian* 43, no. 2 (1991): 226.

³⁰ Kathleen Kennedy, *Disloyal Mothers and Scurrilous Citizens: Women & Subversion During World War I* (Bloomington: University of Illinois Press, 1999), 12-13.

³¹ Mary D. Colvorcoresses, "Woman's Peace Party," *Seven Seas Magazine*, November 1915, 31.

³² Margaret C. Robinson, "Anti-Suffrage Notes," *Woman Patriot*, February 7, 1920, 6. Robinson argued that the WPP, a suffrage organization, poisoned the minds of many Americans against preparedness during the early years of the Great War.

³³ "Topics of the Times," *NYT*, November 15, 1915, 10.

³⁴ "First Woman's National Defense Conference: Woman's Section of the Navy League," *Seven Seas Magazine*, January 1916, 37.

³⁵ Mary B. Strong, "Woman Suffrage and War" in *Anti-Suffrage Essays by Massachusetts Women* ed. Ernest Bernbaum (Boston: The Forum Publications of Boston, 1916): 67.

³⁶ *Ibid.* 75-76.

³⁷ Maddux, "When Patriots Protest," 289. Maddux describes how antis "suggested that society would have been better served by the suffragists' devoting that energy to other social reforms." In addition, they also argued that suffrage would be "bad for the government." *Ibid.* 289-290.

³⁸ *Ibid.* 76.

³⁹ Lisa Mastrangelo explains that "many of the women active in both movements (particularly the peace movement) were actually not mothers themselves" yet still used the ideology of motherhood to make their claims. Mastrangelo, "Changing Ideographs of Motherhood," 218.

⁴⁰ "Declaration of Principles: The Organization of the Woman's Peace Party," *The Independent*, January 25, 1915, 120.

⁴¹ The preamble read: "We demand that women be given a share in deciding between war and peace in all courts of high debate; within the home, the school, the church, the industrial order, and the State." *Ibid.*

⁴² "Woman to the Front," 37.

⁴³ "Minutes of the Organizational Conference," WPP Papers, reel 12.1, 28-29.

⁴⁴ Anna Howard Shaw spoke during the organizing meeting of the WPP but did not actively support the peace movement throughout the war. President Wilson would

later appoint Shaw as the Chairwoman of the Woman's Committee of the Council of National Defense. Like many suffragists, Shaw believed women's war support could lead to women's voting votes. Linda Schott, "The Woman's Peace Party and the Moral Basis of Women's Pacifism," *Frontiers* 8 (1985): 22.

⁴⁵ "First Woman's National Defense Conference," *Seven Seas Magazine*, January 1916, 37.

⁴⁶ Emmeline Pethick-Lawrence, "Motherhood and War," *Harpers' Weekly*, December 5, 1917, 542.

⁴⁷ The WPP Preamble utilized phrases from Pethick Lawrence's influential essay. Susan Zeiger argues that the WPP was successful in 1915 and early 1916, in part, because of their effective use of maternal argument, which resonated with the American public. Zeiger, "She Didn't Raise My Son to be a Slacker," 10-11.

⁴⁸ Carrie Chapman Catt, "Woman and War," *Irvington Gazette*, August 21, 1914, 3.

⁴⁹ Jane Addams, "Women and War," in *The Overthrow of the War System* ed. Lucia Ames Mead (Boston: The Forum Publications of Boston, 1915), 3.

⁵⁰ Christy Jo Snider, "Patriots and Pacifists: The Rhetorical Debate about Peace, Patriotism, and Internationalism, 1914-1930," *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 8, no. 1 (2005): 61

⁵¹ Roosevelt, *Fear God*, 227.

⁵² "First Woman's National Defense Conference, Woman's Section of the Navy League," *Seven Seas Magazine*, January 1916, 37.

⁵³ "Field Notes," *Sea Power*, August 1916, 39.

⁵⁴ Agnes Repplier, "Women and Preparedness," *Woman's Home Companion*, March 1916, 9.

⁵⁵ "Successful Work of Women," *Seven Seas Magazine*, September 1915, 31.

⁵⁶ "Foolish and Fool Mothers," *The Lake County Times*, December 22, 1916, 4.

⁵⁷ Abbie Farwell Brown, "I Didn't Raise My Boy," *Daughters of the American Revolution Magazine*, October 1917, 213.

⁵⁸ Stuart Tannock, "Nostalgia Critique," *Cultural Studies* 9, no. 3 (1995): 454.

Building on Tannock, Shawn J. Parry-Giles and Trevor Parry-Giles explain: "Nostalgia becomes a means for the political rhetor to affiliate their image and character to a distorted, yet memorialized aspect of the community's heritage." Shawn J. Parry-Giles and Trevor Parry-Giles, "Collective Memory, Political Nostalgia, and the Rhetorical Presidency: Bill Clinton's Commemoration of the March on Washington, August 28, 1998," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 86, no. 4 (2000): 421.

⁵⁹ "Successful Work of Women," *Seven Seas Magazine*, September 1915, 32.

⁶⁰ Ibid. In 1916, DAR President Daisy Allen Story encouraged all members to join the WSNL, which technically violated institutional rules against official affiliation with other organizations. Francesca Morgan, *Women and Patriotism in Jim Crow America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005), 108.

⁶¹ Susan Zeiger, "She Didn't Raise Her Boy," 11.

⁶² Albert Piantadosi and Alfred Bryan, *I Didn't Raise My Boy to be a Soldier* (New York: Leo Feist, 1915), 1-5.

⁶³ Synder, *Citizen-Soldiers and Manly Warriors*, 148.

⁶⁴ "Summary of Addresses," *Yearbook of the Woman's Peace Party*, 14.

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- ⁶⁵ Rose Dabney Forbes, "The Peace Movement and Some Misconceptions, (n.p.: n.pub., 1916), <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=mdp.39015069749854;view=2up;seq=2>
- ⁶⁶ "Peace Plea by Wire to Millions of Mothers," *NYT*, November 24, 1915, 3. Mrs. Henry Ford donated \$10,000 to the WPP for the telegram campaign.
- ⁶⁷ "Pleas Flood White House: Telegram Campaign of Peace Party to Influence President," *NYT*, November 25, 1915, 2.
- ⁶⁸ "Scores Women Pacifists," *NYT*, April 28, 1915, 2.
- ⁶⁹ Dorothy Potter, "In the Negative," *Seven Seas Magazine*, May 1916, 13.
- ⁷⁰ "Types of Pacifists," *NYT*, October 17, 1916, 12.
- ⁷¹ Dorothy Potter, "The Military Quality," *Sea Power*, October 1916, 43. Potter advocated for National Service Schools where young women could learn more about "soldier qualities" so that she could instill these values in future sons.
- ⁷² Bristow notes that the process of redefining manhood is not unique to the Great War era. She argues that public debates about what constitutes "real manhood" have been a feature of American society since the nation's founding. See, Nancy K. Bristow, *Making Men Moral: Social Engineering During the Great War* (New York: New York University Press, 1996), 18-54.
- ⁷³ "Mother-love and Peace at Any Price," *NYT*, July 10, 1916, 10.
- ⁷⁴ Repplier, "Women and Preparedness," 9.
- ⁷⁵ "Antis for Preparedness," *NYT*, January 29, 1916, 10.
- ⁷⁶ *Ibid.*
- ⁷⁷ "Spartan Mother Gives Three Sons," *Evening Public Ledger*, June 21, 1916, 3.
- ⁷⁸ "A Big Junior Section," *Seven Seas Magazine*, November 1915, 36.
- ⁷⁹ Hanher notes that the "coordinated movement for Americanization fashioned a new outlook on national identity centered on loyalty and patriotism." Hahner, *To Become an American*, 27.
- ⁸⁰ Quoted in Ann Rhodes, "Americanization Through Women's Organizations," *The Immigrants in America Review*, April 1916, 71.
- ⁸¹ Mrs. Percy J. Pennybacker, "A Citizens' Training Camp for Women," *The Ladies' Home Journal*, hereafter known as *LHJ*, May 1916, 33.
- ⁸² Mary Gibson, a California Federation of Women's Clubs officer, co-wrote The California Home Teacher Act of 1915. A California chapter of DAR funded the first wave of home teachers. Gayle Gullett, "Women Progressives and the Politics of Americanization in California, 1915-1920," *Pacific Historical Review* 64 (1991): 73. One teacher was appointed for every five hundred students in a school system. In addition to civic education, home teachers provided instruction related to English language competency, sanitation, and "household duties, such as the purchase and preparation of food and clothing ." E.V. Leighton, "California Americanizes the Immigrant Mother," *Primary Education*, October 1915, 533.
- ⁸³ Zeiger, "I Didn't Raise my Son," 8.
- ⁸⁴ *The Ladies' Home Journal* was first published in 1883 and reached one million homes in 1904. Jennifer Scanlon, *Inarticulate Longings: The Ladies' Home Journal, Gender and the Promise of Consumer Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 4. By the October 1919 issue, the *Journal* doubled its circulation and reached two million

homes. Edward W. Bok, *The Americanization of Edward Bok: The Autobiography of a Dutch Boy Fifty Years After* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1921), 421.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 391.

⁸⁶ Mrs. Percy V. Pennybacker, "Patriotism that Makes For Peace," *LHJ*, July 1915, 21. As GFWC President, Anna Pennybacker edited a monthly feature in the *Journal* titled "What the Women's Clubs are Doing." Pennybacker's second term (1914-1916) coincided with the first years of the Great War. She represented the GFWC at numerous peace conferences and argued that peace could be achieved through the education of young citizens and preparedness. When the U.S. declared war, she suspended her peace activities until after Armistice Day. Kelly M. King, *Call Her a Citizen: Progressive-Era Activist and Educator Anna Pennybacker* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2010), 124-126.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸⁸ "What is Coming Out of This War that is Touching American Women," *LHJ*, February 1915, 3.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

⁹⁰ "Your Boy and Mine," *LHJ*, May 1916, 11.

⁹¹ He contradicted this statement of neutrality in his 1921 autobiography when he described the *Journal* as the "semi-official mouthpiece of all various government bureaus and war-work bodies." Bok, *The Americanization of Edward Bok*, 391.

⁹² Edward W. Bok, *Twice Thirty: Some Short and Simple Annals of the Road* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1925), 344.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 345. In addition to the draft, Wilson urged Bok to educate women about food conversation.

⁹⁴ Although often attributed to Woodrow Wilson, Herbert George (known as H.G.) Wells first popularized the phrase with a 1914 publication in Britain. See, H.G. Wells, *The War That Will End War* (New York: Duffield Company, 1914).

⁹⁵ "Your Boy and Mine," 11.

⁹⁶ Edward W. Bok, "Editorial," *LHJ*, May 1916, 11.

⁹⁷ Georgene Faulkner, "Bedtime Stories," *LHJ*, February 1916, 53.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁰ Bok, "Editorial," 11.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰² Lindley M. Garrison, "The American Woman and the New Military Policy," *LHJ*, February 1916, 7.

¹⁰³ *Second Inaugural of Woodrow Wilson as President of the United States and Thomas Riley Marshall as Vice President of the United States, March 5, 1917* (Washington DC: GPO, 1918), 45.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁵ Franklin D. Roosevelt, "What the Navy Can Do For Your Boy," *LHJ*, June 1917, 88.

¹⁰⁶ Roosevelt, "What the Navy Can Do For Your Boy," 88.

¹⁰⁷ Elizabeth McKillen, "Pacifist Brawn and Silk-Stock Militarism: Labor, Gender, and Anti-War Politics," *Peace & Change* 33, no. 3 (2008): 389.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ Preparedness advocated often invoked Switzerland's as a "model" for American military training. For example, Theodore Roosevelt often urged the public to recognize that "we in this great Republic do what has been done for many decades in the little Republic of Switzerland." Theodore Roosevelt, *Americanism and Preparedness: Speeches of Theodore Roosevelt, July to November 1916* (New York: The Mail and Express Job Print, 1917), 108.

¹¹⁰ "Why I Raise My Boy to Be a Soldier By a Swiss Mother," *LHJ*, April 1916, 76.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² Ibid., 27.

¹¹³ Emphasis in original. Ibid.

¹¹⁴ In January 1917, British intelligence intercepted an encrypted note from German Foreign Secretary Arthur Zimmerman to the German ambassador to Mexico. The message instructed the ambassador to propose an alliance between Mexico and Germany if the United States entered the Great War. On January 31, 1917, Germany announced that it would once again begin unrestricted submarine warfare, directly threatening American ships. The United States severed all diplomatic ties with Germany on February 3rd, 1917. By March 1917, the existence of the "Zimmermann Telegram" was widely reported in the United States. It was widely reported the Germany would "give" Mexico parts of the United States if Allies lost the war. For a thorough discussion of the Zimmermann Telegram and its impact American public opinion, see Thomas Boghardt, *The Zimmerman Telegram: Intelligence, Diplomacy, and America's Entry into World War I* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2012). Jason Flanagan traces how Wilson's rhetorically constructed an "enemy image" German government for the American public throughout the entire war era, see: Jason C. Flanagan, "Woodrow Wilson's 'Rhetorical Restructuring': The Transformation of the American Self and the Construction of the German Enemy" *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 7, no. 2 (2004): 115-148.

¹¹⁵ "Women Spurn Pacifists," *NYT*, April 1, 1917.

¹¹⁶ Catt's statement to Wilson sparked significant debate within the larger suffrage movement. For a detailed discussion of this debate see, Alonso, *Peace as a Women's Issue*, 73-92.

¹¹⁷ "Peace Party Ousts Mrs. Carrie Catt," *NYT*, March 7, 1917, 10.

¹¹⁸ Suffragist and author Ida Clyde Clarke meticulously documented the war-work efforts of women in every state. Her over 500-page publication detailed projects ranging from women's leadership in food conservation and Liberty Loans to women's overseas work with the Red Cross and military nurse corps. Clarke implied that the "golden deeds by twenty million loyal-hearted women in every state" earned women the right to vote. See, Ida Clyde Clark, *American Women and the World War* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1918).

¹¹⁹ "Dr. Shaw Against Pickets," *NYT*, August 17, 1917, 7. Shaw was referring to the Silent Sentinels affiliated with the National Woman's Party (NWP). For a thorough analysis of the NWP's rhetorical activity during the war era, see: Stillion Southard, *Militant Citizenship*, 90-149. Shaw drew public distinctions between her suffrage work and war work. In a statement at the NASWA headquarters, she told reporters

“Do not mention suffrage in connection with [war] work. In my work on the [Council for National Defense] committee I am only a patriotic citizen working for my country.” “Mobilizing Women For Unity in Work,” *NYT*, May 10, 1917, 10.

¹²⁰ Jane Addams, *Peace and Bread in the Time of War* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1922), 107. Addams reflected on the challenges of balancing pacifism and war relief in this retelling of the Great War through her lens as a leader in the peace movement.

¹²¹ Shepler and Mattina further describe how Addams’ peace work harmed her popular image in the United States “As was the case with other female activists during the era, Addams’s challenge represented a threat that needed to be contained. Her rhetorical choice to directly confront the role of war [considered a masculine endeavor] in resolving conflicts, therefore, undid her popularity.” Sherry R. Shepler and Anne F. Mattina *Paying the Price for Pacifism: The Press’s Rhetorical Shift from ‘Saint Jane’ to ‘The Most Dangerous Woman in America,’* *Feminist Formations* 24, no. 1 (2012): 168.

¹²² Marilyn Fischer, “Caring Globally: Jane Addams, World War One, and International Hunger” in *Feminist Global Ethics* eds. Rebecca Whisnant and Peggy DesAutels (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2008), 64-65.

¹²³ For a thorough discussions of the CPI’s propaganda activity during the war, see Stephen L. Vaughn, *Holding Fast the Inner Lines: Democracy, Nationalism, and the Committee on Public Information* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2017).

¹²⁴ These stories did not only feature maternal arguments. Articles also encouraged women to join the Red Cross or Women’s Land Army, work in munitions factories, and buy Liberty Bonds. The Women’s Bureau answered over 50,000 letters from women around the United States about wartime activities. George Creel, *How We Advertised America: The First Telling of the Amazing Story of the Committee on Public Information that Carried the Gospel of Americanism to Every Corner of the Globe* (New York: Harpers & Brothers Publishers, 1920), 213-221.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, 447.

¹²⁶ Committee on Public Information, *War for Peace: The Present War as Friends of Peace* (Washington DC: The Committee on Public Information, 1918), 4.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, 17-18.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*

¹²⁹ Woodrow Wilson, *The President’s War Message and Proclamation of War* (San Francisco: A.M. Robertson, 1917), 19.

¹³⁰ Espionage Act of 1917. Pub.L. 65-24, 65th Congress, 1st Sess. (June 15, 1917).

¹³¹ Sedition Act of 1918. Pub.L. 65-150, 65th Congress, 2nd Sess. (May 16, 1918).

¹³² “An Adventure in Internationalism,” *Four Lights*, January 27, 1917, 1.

¹³³ Linda Lumsden, “‘Excellent Ammunition’: Suffrage Newspaper Strategies During World War I,” *Journalism History* 25, no. 2 (1999): 54.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.* Due to the rotating editorial board, *Four Lights* did not follow a specific rhetorical form. Every issue featured a mixture of poetry, articles, cartoons, satires, and speech reprints.

¹³⁵ Olivia Howard Dunbar, “Conscripted Words,” *Four Lights*, May 5, 1917, 4.

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- ¹³⁶ Edna Mead, "A Mother to Her War-Time Baby," *Four Lights*, July 28, 1917, 2.
- ¹³⁷ Alla Nazimova, "The Women's Terms," *Four Lights*, January 27, 1917, 2.
- ¹³⁸ "What We May Do Today," *Four Lights*, April 21, 1917, 2.
- ¹³⁹ Mark W. Van Wiener observes that "*Four Lights* contributors relied heavily on brief, incisive poems to augment the news, criticism, and exhortation contained in its articles." Mark W. Van Wiener, *Partisans and Poets: The Political Work of American Poetry in the Great War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 174.
- ¹⁴⁰ Florence Guerttin Tuttle, "A Call to Arms," *Four Lights*, May 19, 1917, 1.
- ¹⁴¹ "You are the Widows of Democracy," *Four Lights*, September 8, 1917, 2.
- ¹⁴² The use of "Sister Susies" to describe the WPP-Massachusetts refers to a popular song from 1914 called "Sister Susie's Sewing Shirts for Soldiers." The song admonishes young girls for sending hundreds of shirts overseas to soldiers who have no use for their handicrafts.
- ¹⁴³ Katharine Anthony, "The 'Sister Susie' Peril," *Four Lights*, July 14, 1917, 1.
- ¹⁴⁴ Erika Kuhlman describes how the Massachusetts branch of the WPP "heartily endorsed such relief work." According to Kuhlman, New York feminists viewed the WPP's national shift toward "war relief work as the most crucial issue they faced after intervention." Erika Kuhlman, "'Women's Ways in War': The Feminist Pacifism of the New York City Woman's Peace Party," *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies* 18, no. 1 (1997): 90.
- ¹⁴⁵ "Events that Pass While Susie Sews," *Four Lights*, July 14, 1917, 3.
- ¹⁴⁶ Harriet Hyman Alonso, "Dissension in the Ranks: The New York Branch of WILPF vs. the National Board, 1914-1955," in *The Women and War Reader* ed. Lois Ann Lorentzen and Jennifer Turpin (New York: New York University Press, 1998), 296. She further explains that tensions between the national and NYC branch began before April 1917. She describes how "the differences were rooted primarily in women's preference for one of the two philosophies of organizing within the suffrage movement: the local aligned with the militant Congressional Union, the national with the more conservative National American Women Suffrage Association." Ibid.
- ¹⁴⁷ Mary Alden Hopkins, "Woman's Way in War," *Four Lights*, June 2, 1917, 4.
- ¹⁴⁸ "A Study in Evolution," *Four Lights*, April 12, 1917, 2.
- ¹⁴⁹ Theodore Baker, *I Didn't Raise My Boy to Be a Slacker* (New York: G. Shirmer, 1917), 1-6. Slacker was a commonly-used term used for draft dodgers and people who did not participate in war-work on the homefront.
- ¹⁵⁰ Ada Chase Dudley, "Thoughts For Bandage Rollers," *Four Lights*, June 2, 1917, 1.
- ¹⁵¹ Nevada David Hitchcock, "The Mobilization of Women," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 78 (1918): 30-31.
- ¹⁵² Hopkins, "Woman's Way in War," 4.
- ¹⁵³ Ibid.
- ¹⁵⁴ Kuhlman, "'Women's Ways in War,'" 93.
- ¹⁵⁵ Espionage Act of 1917. Pub.L. 65-24, 65th Congress, 1st Sess. (June 15, 1917).
- ¹⁵⁶ "Women's War in World Reprinted," *Four Lights*, July 28, 1917, 4.
- ¹⁵⁷ Kennedy, *Disloyal Mothers and Scurrilous Citizens*, xv. In addition to O'Hare other well-known women convicted under the Espionage and Sedition Acts include

Emma Goldman and Rose Pastor Stokes. Kennedy argues that all three women were charged and convicted because they “corrupted women’s reproductive powers, in particular women’s ability to and responsibility for producing loyal citizens.” *Ibid.*, xix.

¹⁵⁸ During her trial, O’Hare claimed that she gave the same speech over one hundred times before her indictment in North Dakota. O’Hare was the first woman in Kansas to run for Congress with her unsuccessful Senate campaign with the Socialist party in 1910. During campaign speeches and interviews, O’Hare explained that she would prefer a more domestic life with her children but felt compelled to run for political office as a champion of socialist causes in order to protect the home for other mothers. She also held numerous regional and national offices with the Socialist party before the war and was the first woman to represent the Socialist Party of America abroad. Sally M. Miller, *From Prairie to Prison: The Life of Social Activist Kate Richards O’Hare* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1993), 76-77; 111.

¹⁵⁹ Annelise Orleck, “Tradition Unbound: Radical Mothers in International Perspective,” in *The Politics of Motherhood: Activist Voices from Left to Right* eds. Alexis Jetter, Annelise Orleck, Diana Taylor (Hanover: University Press of New England, 1997), 5.

¹⁶⁰ “The Trial of Kate O’Hare For Disloyalty in America,” in *American State Trials, Volume XIII* ed. John D. Lawson (St. Louis: Thomas Law Book Company, 1921), 3.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 8.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*, 15.

¹⁶⁴ O’Hare and her lawyers expected a guilty verdict but thought that she would be sentenced to at the most six months. O’Hare conviction occurred less than two months after the passage of the Espionage Act. She served fourteen months in prison before being released in 1920. Kennedy, *Disloyal Mothers and Scurrilous Citizens*, 18-39.

¹⁶⁵ “The Trial of Kate O’Hare,” 50.

¹⁶⁶ Kathleen Kennedy, “Declaring War on War: Gender and the American Socialist Attack on Militarism, 1914-1918,” *Journal of Women’s History* 7, no. 2 (1995): 37. Kennedy argues that many socialists and feminists stopped making explicit statements that challenged maternal responsibility (e.g. birth strike) after O’Hare’s conviction.

¹⁶⁷ Wilson, *The President’s War Message and Proclamation of War*, 19.

¹⁶⁸ Zeiger notes that more than a dozen films explored the mother-son dynamics of enlistment. These films were produced by the War Cooperation Committee of the National Association of the Motion Picture Industry. Zeiger, “She Didn’t Raise her Son,” 21-27.

¹⁶⁹ Fenelon, *That Knock at the Door*, 16.

¹⁷⁰ United States Treasury Department, “Her Boy,” *LHJ*, April 1919, 34.

¹⁷¹ Creel defined propaganda as the “the fight for the promotion and maintenance of morale.” George Creel, “Propaganda and Morale,” *The American Journal of Sociology* 47, no. 3 (1941) 350.

¹⁷² Hayden, “Negotiating Femininity and Power in the Early Twentieth Century West,” 99.

¹⁷³ Maurine Weiner Greenwald argues that the Great War significantly impacted the variety and structure of women’s industrial work in the United States. See, Maurine Weiner Greenwald, *Women, War, and Work: The Impact of World War I on Women Workers in the United States* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1980); For a thorough overview of how the Woman’s Land Army of America contributed to the war effort, see: Elaine F. Weiss, *Fruits of Victory: The Woman’s Land Army of America* (Washington DC: Potamac Books, 2008).

¹⁷⁴ “Rotary After the War,” *The Rotarian*, February 1918, 56.

Chapter 2:

Embodying Sacrifice: Justifying Pilgrimages as a Performance of Maternal Citizenship

In July 1918, Anna Howard Shaw reiterated women's responsibility to wear the Gold Star as the symbol of patriotic sacrifice during war. She called on women to wear Gold Star armbands "as a means of honoring our dead . . . not so much a symbol of mourning as a sign of rank for those who have been counted worthy to make the supreme sacrifice for their country and humanity."¹ A mother, Shaw argued, could proudly wear the Gold Star as a symbol that she fulfilled her duty to the nation. Her statement reflected a common gendered trope of wartime propaganda—framing men as "warriors" and women as patriotic mourners.² In the same way that soldiers met death with "shouts of victory," Shaw called on women to show that "as our men can die bravely we women can live bravely."³ While wartime responsibilities ended for many men only four months later, women's responsibility to commemorate war endured.

Armistice Day marked the official end of the Great War and the beginning of a new commemorative era. Historian Jay Winter describes this era as a "memory boom," which shaped how future wars "were imagined and remembered."⁴ The government's choice to create overseas military cemeteries marked a significant shift in American commemorative practices. V. William Balthrop, Carole Blair, and Neil

Michel explain that officials were “entering unknown territory” as they sought to represent national ideals on international soil.⁵ They explain that the nation had to create new commemorative practices in order to respond to the unique conditions of the Great War. The American War Mothers (AWM), the “official liaison” between Gold Star mothers and the Department of War, and other women’s organizations lobbied Congress to fund “pilgrimages” so that mothers could travel to the European graves of their sons.⁶ Throughout this deliberative process, Pilgrimage advocates and members of Congress constituted the Gold Star mother as a civic ideal for women. This ideal undermined more progressive visions of maternal citizenship articulated by suffragists and pacifists.

This chapter examines the rhetoric of Gold Star Pilgrimage debates, which spanned the decade following the Great War. Throughout the 1920s, the Senate Subcommittee on Military Affairs and the House Committee on Military Affairs held five separate hearings on Pilgrimage legislation.⁷ In addition to the AWM, a significant number of women’s patriotic and veterans’ organizations publicly advocated for Pilgrimage legislation. The patriotic organizations that supported the Pilgrimages were numerous and included among others: Gold Star Circles, American Gold Star Mothers, Gold Star Mothers’ Association of America, American Gold Star Mothers of the World War, American Gold Star Association, Gold Star Service Organization, National War Mothers, Women’s Council of National Defense, American Legion Auxiliary, Daughters of the American Revolution, Legion of Valor, American Legion, Disabled American Veterans, and Veterans of Foreign Wars.⁸ Many Gold Star mothers who testified during congressional hearings disclosed their

affiliation with multiple patriotic organizations, expressing their dedication to a wide range of causes in order to honor their sons' legacy. Pilgrimage deliberations intersected with this new era of political advocacy after the Nineteenth Amendment passed.⁹ Discourse during this era illustrates how Pilgrimage advocates, many of whom identified as anti-suffrage, anchored their newly enfranchised status in their traditional beliefs.

In this chapter, I examine how Gold Star Pilgrimage discourse shaped women's citizenship during the post-war era by analyzing congressional hearings, newspaper coverage, magazine editorials, and other forms of discourse created by Pilgrimage advocates. Specifically, I posit that Pilgrimage advocates strategically utilized this decade of commemorative deliberation to craft an ideal of maternal citizenship grounded in civic sacrifice. Pilgrimage advocates invoked the social contract throughout these hearings to define maternal citizenship, framing Pilgrimages as payment for their maternal sacrifice during the war and fulfilling their civic responsibility to protect the nation.¹⁰ They also articulated Gold Star mothers' responsibility to ensure that future generations of mothers would readily make the same sacrifice for the nation—sacrificing their sons in support of the public good. In the process, Pilgrimage advocates asserted what Amy Heyse describes as women's "authority as public commemorators" on the grounds of maternal sacrifice.¹¹

To interrogate these intersecting rhetorics of commemoration, motherhood, and citizenship, I first discuss how reactionary rhetorics responding to the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment influenced Gold Star discourse. I then provide an overview of women's localized commemorative practices after the Great War. The

AWM and women's organizations planned, financed, and oversaw thousands of "functional" or "living" and traditional war memorials across the nation in the years immediately following Armistice Day.¹² Third, I interrogate how Pilgrimage advocates asserted Gold Star mothers' responsibility to commemorate and be commemorated during the Pilgrimage hearings. Finally, I examine how Gold Star mothers explicated their civic responsibility to embody the sacrifices of their sons and influence future performances of motherhood.

Containing Women's Citizenship in a Post-Suffrage Era

Some suffragists foregrounded women's war-work and mothers' wartime sacrifices as they advocated for the passage and eventual ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment. Carrie Chapman Catt and Nettie Rogers Shuler explained how "the suffragists of 1917 had read history; they knew how prone men were to accept the help of suffragists in their hour of need and forget women's suffrage in the hours of calm."¹³ Many prominent suffragists who participated in war-work and war relief rejoined the peace movement immediately after Armistice Day. Anna Howard Shaw argued that women must be enfranchised in order to protect the lasting peace that their sons died to preserve. Before her death in 1919, Shaw implored the public to support the League of Nations and the Nineteenth Amendment: "Oh, men, we women, the mothers of the race, have given everything, have suffered everything, have sacrificed everything, and we come to you now and say: 'The time has come when we will no longer sit quietly by and bear and rear sons to die at the will of a few men. We will not endure it!'"¹⁴ After the war, historian Alan Dawley explains that newly renamed Woman's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF)—

formerly known as the Woman's Peace Party in the United States—"picked up the thread where it had been dropped upon U.S. entrance into the war."¹⁵ As Congress debated the Nineteenth Amendment in 1919, the organization called on all nations to make women full and equal citizens.¹⁶ Catt became active again in the peace movement and co-founded the National Committee on the Cause and Cure of War (NCCCW) in 1924, which posited that women would be responsible for preserving post-war peace.¹⁷ Scholar Linda Schott describes how the "women of the NCCCW believed it was their duty to establish world peace" and grounded this duty in the belief that "women were more desirous of peace than men because both their biological role as child-bearers and their prescribed social role as nurturers contributed to women's preference for peace."¹⁸ While these arguments were used to advocate for the eventual ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment, they also became a source of post-suffrage backlash against suffragists and other progressive women.

After the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment, government officials and some patriotic organizations challenged the patriotism of suffragists and pacifists. One form of such reactionary rhetoric was known as the "Spider Web Chart," created in 1922 by Lucia Maxwell, an employee of the Department of War's Chemical Warfare Bureau.¹⁹ Described as the "most notorious attack on female activists" in the 1920s, scholar Kirsten Marie Delegard explains that the web-like diagram purported to show that 16 women's organizations—like the WILPF and the National League of Women Voters—led by 29 former suffragists, were "fostering subversion and putting millions of female voters at the service of Soviet agents."²⁰ The chart circulated widely among patriotic organizations between 1922-1923 and was published for a

national audience in 1924, the same year of the first congressional hearing to deliberate Gold Star Pilgrimage legislation.²¹ Historian Christine K. Erickson explains that the chart was widely viewed as evidencing “a frightening web of alliances between feminist, radical, and pacifist organizations” who could not be trusted with the rights and responsibilities of citizenship.²²

Catt responded to the chart’s widespread circulation in a 1924 article published in the *Woman Citizen*. She asserted that former suffragists were targeted because they attempted to stand against the government’s plan to increase military spending and exercise their newfound rights:

Here are women conducting themselves as they always have when they want something which can only be attained by political action, that is, speaking, arranging meetings, petitioning, reading, investigating, thinking, how to abolish war, the world's greatest crime. Yet . . . they suddenly discover that a department of their own government is systematically discrediting them by the distribution of false and libelous charges.²³

Secretary of War John W. Weeks released a brief statement that apologized for the chart in 1924 and stated that it would be destroyed.²⁴ However, Catt observed, “[i]t is not easy to catch up or to stop a lie when it has once started on its course.” She made the case that the chart severely damaged the reputation of women’s organizations with ties to the suffrage movement.²⁵ Reflecting back on the time period, scholar Nancy F. Cott argues that the chart and other organized efforts by anti-radicalism groups—often led by former anti-suffragists— was “principally to defame pacifists” but also hampered the work of women working toward “social welfare legislation” and the Equal Rights Amendment.²⁶ These women constantly had to defend their civic loyalty while women who did not challenge patriarchy through their political actions were more likely deemed as patriotic and thus authentic citizens.

In an era of post-suffrage, the government and patriotic organizations undercut more progressive constructions of women's enfranchisement by reconstituting the Gold Star mother as the ideal of maternal citizenship.²⁷ Historian Kate Hallgren explains how wartime "praise of mothers of soldiers as the true mothers of the nation helped galvanize a conservative women's movement" in a post-war America.²⁸ The political power of the Gold Star mother arose as local communities around the nation grappled with how to remember fallen soldiers in the direct aftermath of the Great War.

Shaping Local Commemoration and Constituting Maternal Responsibility

A cohesive narrative of victory did not emerge on the American homefront after the Great War. Steven Trout notes that Americans struggled locally and nationally to "distill an ambiguous war into a collective memory."²⁹ Many Americans questioned why the nation entered the war and how the nation benefitted from the war.³⁰ Politicians struggled to define American international policy after the war, impacting the government's ability to craft a cohesive war narrative for the nation.³¹ The Senate rejected the Treaty of Versailles and did not formally end the war with Germany until 1921, almost three years after Armistice Day.³² During these three years of bitter national debate, local communities grappled with how to commemorate a war with an ambiguous outcome for Americans.

These political uncertainties impacted the commemorative practices of local communities across the nation. Some community members rejected internationalism, while others viewed the government's treaty inaction as a betrayal to fallen soldiers.³³ Quoting Senator Hiram Johnson (R-CA), one 1919 newspaper editorial argued, "this

League means that American boys shall police the world; that all tottering nations of the earth shall be upheld by our blood and our bone.”³⁴ Summarizing the opposing viewpoint, one woman observed that community members were “indignant with American politicians who are fighting with their mouths against what soldiers fought to win with their lives—the League of Nations and the end of all war.”³⁵ This political uncertainty encouraged many memorial committees to foreground the local soldier instead of national victory. Monuments often featured a statue of a soldier and plaques inscribed with names of all local war dead. Trout notes that this focus on “ordinary American infantryman” reflected an “enshrinement of the citizen soldier” that defined interwar commemorative art.³⁶ Local commemorations honored individual soldiers while reaffirming national civic responsibilities of patriotism, loyalty, and sacrifice.

Commemorative efforts also functioned to assuage collective guilt over the war dead. Many members of the public argued that the United States did not “gain” anything from the war, but lost thousands of the nation’s sons. Historian Lisa Budreau notes that commemorative practices after the war provided mothers and veteran’s organizations with “assurances that the sacrifice of life had not been in vain.”³⁷ One Gold Star mother reflected this sentiment during a memorial fundraising luncheon in Kansas City. She expressed that the efforts to create a memorial “meant everything to me, although at first I thought I couldn’t bear to come. But when I see how all these people feel, I know that my grief is their grief and I haven’t given my son in vain.”³⁸ According to the mother, community commemorative practices exalted her son as a model citizen, which lessened the pain of his death.

Community memorial dedications sought to reaffirm citizen's patriotic responsibilities. In addition to international policy debates, post-war cities around the nation grappled with intersecting social and economic tensions including: public health crises caused by the influenza epidemic, an "unprecedented" number of labor strikes, mounting fears of Communist infiltrators, and a significant rise in racial violence.³⁹ Fallen soldiers, community leaders argued, offered a model for citizenship that countered the divisive politics of a post-war America. Secretary of State Bainbridge Colby illustrated this sentiment during an address at Brooklyn's Prospect Park World War memorial. He said: "There are no factions under the flag of the United States . . . how fine a thing if we could reconstitute in our public lives and in the hearts of public servants the fine spirit of complete and selfless devotion that we record in those bronze hard names in yonder monument."⁴⁰ Colby's description of factionless remembrances also did not reflect the reality of America's commemorative practices. Monuments funded by organizations like the American Legion, Gold Star organizations, and American War Mothers (AWM) rarely depicted African American soldiers who served in segregated units and died during the war.⁴¹ War monuments in this era exalted the white male soldier as the paradigm of masculinity and citizenship. Foreshadowing national Gold Star Pilgrimage practices, localized memorialization utilized a discourse of equality while excluding African Americans in practice.

Local memorial dedications ceremonies also exalted Gold Star mothers' sacrifice for the nation. Gold Star mothers received reserved seating, unveiled statues, and laid floral wreaths during these events.⁴² Dedication addresses by men also

highlighted the importance of maternal citizenship to the public good. During a 1921 dedication in Philadelphia, Father Edward J. Murthaugh reminded thousands gathered that mothers also made the ultimate sacrifice during the war. He recounted the story of one mother after her only two sons were drafted overseas. The Department of War offered to send one of her sons home, but the mother rejected this offer. Echoing Spartan motherhood rhetoric, Murthaugh recalled that “the woman demurred and said: ‘God gave them to me—I give them to my country.’”⁴³ Murthaugh framed Gold Star mothers as equals in sacrifice to the soldiers immortalized in the memorial. While Gold Star mothers sponsored, attended, and participated in memorial dedications, they were not immortalized in monuments. These memorial dedications illustrate how women are traditionally framed as “helpers of commemoration”—expected to commemorate men but not be commemorated in public spaces.⁴⁴ Gold Star Pilgrimages sought to foreground Gold Star mothers in national commemorative practices.

Many Great War commemorative practices challenged traditional norms of war memorialization. Members of the public questioned if fundraising efforts should be used to erect monuments without a functional purpose. Communities raised funds to build thousands of meeting halls, schools, public parks, bridges, roads, theatres, and other community spaces in honor of fallen soldiers.⁴⁵ One woman in Macon, Georgia, summarized this popular argument for functional or living monuments. She asked the public to consider if it was moral to “offer in return for the sacrifice which our soldiers made for humanity our thanks, appreciation, and love in the form of cold stone and marble unless it is used to help humanity.”⁴⁶ Functional memorial

proponents reasoned that commemorative practices should enrich the community since deceased soldiers could no longer contribute to the public good.

Some functional memorial proponents argued that Gold Star mothers should be commemorated alongside their fallen sons. Henry E. Jackson, a Special Agent in Community Organization for the Bureau of Education, proposed local community buildings called “Liberty Halls” around the nation that would feature a tablet with the names of all fallen soldiers.⁴⁷ The Liberty Halls, Jackson noted, could facilitate social and civic activities that honored the war dead and trained a new generation of productive citizens. Jackson called on communities to include the names of all Gold Star mothers on memorial tablets. He justified this inclusion by arguing that mothers “furnished the heroes. In their loss they have already suffered more than the boys and will bear an additional burden of loneliness and hardship down the long trail of the future. While we remember the heroic boys, it is unfair to forget their equally heroic mothers.”⁴⁸ Jackson’s argument foreshadowed arguments for the Gold Star Pilgrimages—women earned the right to be commemorated through their sons’ sacrifice. Women’s organizations facilitated another form of living commemoration that explicitly invoked motherhood.

Many women’s organizations sought to line newly built buildings, roadways, and parks with trees to honor the memory of fallen soldiers and serve as “a practical step in the reforestation of America.”⁴⁹ Organizations coordinated throughout the nation with the goal to plant at least one tree in their community for every deceased soldier, with many states significantly exceeding expected numbers.⁵⁰ Hattie M. Rincker, the AWM’s National Memory Tree Chairman, reported that communities in

Massachusetts lined state highways with 50,000 memory trees by 1929.⁵¹ Other regional chapters created “memorial groves” in city parks. For example, the Philadelphia AWM collaborated with community partners to plant over 300 oak trees in Fairmont Park. AWM and other community organizations affixed a metal label to each tree with biographical information of a local soldier who died in combat.⁵² Proponents of this commemorative form argued that trees represented a symbolic rebirth of the fallen soldiers. The Service Star Legion of the Utah Federation of Women’s Clubs published an essay that summarized this argument. The writer explained:

What more fitting symbol could be placed to the memory of one who gave his life for the same soil? A cathedral is a man-made place of worship; but a tree only God can make. It is a cathedral, monument, and more—it lives. A man-made monument soon crumbles, losing its power to inspire but the history of a tree is one of alternative death and resurrection . . . symbols of mother-love giving all. And perhaps you will watch the leaves falling, covering the roots knowing that their component parts will again circle through the limbs, again unfold as leaves, bringing life to the dead.⁵³

A memorial tree, proponents argued, planted in a soldier’s hometown allowed his patriotic spirit to grow and flourish even if his body may lie under foreign soil. A mother’s love during the tree planting process, the essay noted, allowed for the patriotic ideal of fallen soldiers to also flourish.

Patriotic organizations framed memorial trees as an extension of maternal responsibility. *TAWM* contributor Florence Magers Geeslin articulated the connection between memorial trees and Gold Star mothers through poetry. Her poem described memorial trees as a symbol of a mother’s undying love for her fallen soldier and the nation: “Long shall it stand, a shade it shall be/Yea, man yet unborn will its meaning revere/A token of motherlove, fadeless and pure/Ever enfolding a memory dear.”⁵⁴

The memorial tree, Geeslin asserted, illustrated that a Gold Star mother fulfilled her civic duty by sacrificing her son for the nation. However, AWM asserted that a son's death did not end a mother's responsibility to her son. During a 1924 memorial grove dedication, one speaker called on war mothers to cultivate the newly planted trees "as carefully as the mothers did their boys before they made the great sacrifice."⁵⁵ The speaker implied that a Gold Star mother must cultivate her son's patriotic legacy as symbolized by the tree with the same care that she raised him to be a soldier. Gold Star Pilgrimage advocates applied this reasoning to war commemorations on a national level.

Local communities often did not have to choose between functional and traditional war memorials. Cities across the nation featured a mixture of statues, honor rolls, tribute trees, dedicated buildings, and other forms of functional memorials.⁵⁶ Many local communities invoked the importance of mothers in their commemorative practices but failed to formally include the Gold Star mother in local memorials. Proponents of Gold Star Pilgrimages sought to rectify this omission, invoking Gold Star mothers' right to be commemorated while honoring their sons. The government objected to these diverse range of local commemorative practices, urging the public to focus on national forms of memorialization overseas and on the homefront. The American Battle Monuments Commission (ABMC), formed in 1923, called on communities to support "official sanctioned monuments" erected for the American military cemeteries in Europe.⁵⁷

Some politicians attempted to include a Gold Star mother commemoration on the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Arlington Cemetery in Virginia. Dedicated in

1921, the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier was designed to commemorate all fallen soldiers who could not be identified or remained missing in action.⁵⁸ In 1926, the Senate passed a resolution to add an overhead enclosure to the Tomb. Senator Henrik Shipstead (FL-MN) called on the Senate to require an addition to the enclosure that would “memorialize the sacrifices of the mother who gave birth to the unknown soldier” on the proposed enclosure designs.⁵⁹ He argued that Gold Star mothers earned the right to be recognized on a national memorial. In a *TAWM* article, Shipstead called on Congress to require a Gold Star mother tribute on the Tomb’s “canopy,” arguing that it would remind the public that “you cannot separate the idea of a boy who gives his life for his country from that of a mother who gave him birth.”⁶⁰ Shipstead described motherhood as synonymous with civic sacrifice—they give birth to their sons who they sacrifice for the public good. They also sacrifice for the nation by committing to serving as the embodiment of their sons’ patriotic memory. While senators rejected his Tomb proposal, Pilgrimage advocates utilized similar arguments to ensure maternal commemoration on a national level.

Advocating for Gold Star Pilgrimages and an Ideal of Maternal Citizenship

Pilgrimage rhetoric was widely used in national and international commemorative discourse. In his study of Great War commemorative practices, David William Lloyd asserts that post-war publics utilized the “language of pilgrimage” to describe travels to battlegrounds and cemeteries. The language was used, he claims, to “provide greater meaning to the loss and bereavement caused by war” and “express the spiritual nature of the struggle.”⁶¹ The American Legion and other organizations helped facilitate pilgrimages throughout the 1920s for returned

veterans and some families to experience the European battlefields and visit the under-construction American cemeteries in France and Belgium.⁶² In 1927, the Legion hosted their national conference in Paris and 20,000 members engaged in a pilgrimage to the battlefields and cemeteries.⁶³ Peace advocates also described their travels through post-war Europe as pilgrimages, documenting what they described as the unnecessary destruction of war and urgency to prevent future wars.⁶⁴ Many pilgrims utilized private funds or organizational sponsorships to visit European cemeteries and battlegrounds.⁶⁵ Pilgrimage advocates asserted that a Gold Star mother earned the right to a government-funded voyage to the European cemeteries.

Advocacy efforts for Gold Star Pilgrimages spanned a decade. Representative Fiorello La Guardia (R-NY) authored the first Pilgrimage bill in 1919, proposing funding for entire Gold Star families to travel to European gravesites.⁶⁶ This legislation did not receive congressional or widespread public support due to uncertainty over the future of European cemeteries. LaGuardia described how the entire nation was “focused on getting the bodies back” instead of planning how to execute government-funded pilgrimages.⁶⁷ By 1924, members of Congress and the majority of citizens supported the idea of government-funded pilgrimages for Gold Star mothers. Reflecting this widespread support, Representative Samuel Dickstein (D-NY) proclaimed, “I do not think there will be a Congressman on the floor who will vote against the bill.”⁶⁸ Congress primarily grappled with the logistics of the Pilgrimage including: how the money would be allocated, what government or nonprofit agency would be responsible for executing the voyages, and who would be eligible for Pilgrimages. For the next ten years, members of Congress debated over 30

versions of Pilgrimage legislation until a final version of the bill passed and was signed into law by President Calvin Coolidge in 1929.⁶⁹ The final legislation called for 54 Pilgrimages to take place over a three-year period, beginning in 1930.⁷⁰

Throughout this period of commemorative deliberation, Pilgrimage advocates and members of Congress positioned the Gold Star mother as the most authentic embodiment of maternal citizenship. In the process, they rhetorically constructed a “hierarchy of sacrifice,” which positioned Gold Star mothers as ideal citizens primarily entitled to and responsible for commemorating national ideals.⁷¹ In this section, I specifically analyze how Pilgrimage advocates and members of Congress articulated Gold Star mothers’ rights and responsibilities during congressional hearings and public advocacy. Such commemorative practices expressed Gold Star mothers’ right to commemorate and articulated women’s civic responsibility.

Articulating Rights in a Post-War and Post-Suffrage Era

The Gold Star Pilgrimage debates provide unique insight into how women affiliated with the anti-suffrage movement asserted their rights after the Nineteenth Amendment passed. Women who testified in support of the Gold Star Pilgrimages never explicitly invoked their newly enfranchised civic status during congressional hearings. Instead, Pilgrimage advocates framed themselves as mothers rather than “political actors,” foregrounding sentimentality in their advocacy.⁷² Mrs. Matilda Burling, Gold Star Service Organization President, began her testimony by pointing out to senators that mothers “have no paid lobbyists, we have but ourselves and our hearts to crave a favor our country should grant.”⁷³ She described Gold Star mothers as uninterested in politics and only concerned with preserving the memory of their

sons. Similarly, AWM President Margaret M. McCluer began her testimony by apologizing for her lack of political acumen, undercutting women's newfound political power. Even though she led one of the largest women's organizations in the nation, McCluer reminded the all-male congressional committee "that I can make better biscuits than I can make speeches. I hope you will off balance any mistakes I may make against my good biscuits."⁷⁴ She implied that the AWM—in the aftermath of woman's enfranchisement—would not rhetorically challenge male's political power or seek to transform traditional gender roles. However, Pilgrimage advocates' seemingly apolitical testimony obscured their efforts to organize and engage war mothers as voters.

The AWM called on members to view motherhood as a powerful tool for conservative political organizing. Eve Sheerer, *TAWM* Associate Editor, argued that members must politically engage not only as mothers, but citizens qualified to vote on every political issue. Sheerer wrote, "If there is any body of citizens in America who are better fitted to vote than war mothers, the writer has not met them."⁷⁵ Her essay reflected the AWM's belief that members must reorient their anti-suffragist views on women's citizenship and exercise their right to vote. Sheerer admonished members who advocated for legislation but refused to vote, calling on mothers to recognize that they "have no right to ask Senators and Representatives to favor political measures, unless we have voted in the polls and so become in reality part of the governing portion of America."⁷⁶ AWM national leaders assured members that voting was no different than "house cleaning," echoing "municipal housekeeping" arguments.⁷⁷

Sheerer used “domestic metaphors” to justify women’s entry into politics and encourage anti-suffragists to vote. Sheerer urged members to consider that:

You wouldn’t fail to move into a house your ancestors had died to get for you because it was dirty and you did not want to get your hands soiled by cleaning it up. You would start the job of house cleaning that would leave you a wreck and a sight, but you would soothe your sore muscles with the reflection that it could never get in the condition again if you had anything to say. If Mothers would only look on political parties as dirty houses needing cleaning and wade into each campaign, there would be a change for the better.⁷⁸

Sheerer argued that war mothers could not allow feminists and pacifists, guided by self-interest, to dictate the nation’s future. The AWM and other Pilgrimage advocates centered commemoration as a foundational aspect of women’s citizenship. The Gold Star mother, Pilgrimage advocates implied, exercised her rights to further the patriotic legacy of her son.

Advocates often described the Pilgrimages as both a gift and form of repayment from the government. After initially referring to the Pilgrimage as a “favor,” Burling articulated why Gold Star mothers earned the right to pilgrimage.⁷⁹ She reasoned that the government owed Gold Star mothers for their wartime service, framing their efforts as essential to war victory. Burling admonished senators to remember that “it was our [mothers’] flesh and blood who enriched foreign soil. . . . Can the government not repay us for our loss? The cost of the Pilgrimage is very little for the government to do for us.”⁸⁰ This strategy reflected “Tough Mother” rhetoric, which combined aggressive and traditionally feminine speaking styles to advocate for increased rights.⁸¹ Jennie Walsh, American Gold Star Association President, utilized this rhetorical style when she chided members of Congress who questioned whether the government could afford to pay for the Pilgrimages. She testified: “It is not a

question of money with your Government. They have money for everything else—they had money for the war; they had money for guns; they had money to kill them, and then why have they not the money to help these poor mothers, whose hearts are just breaking at the sight of the grave.”⁸² Their testimony also reflected the belief that the government must fulfill its duty to Gold Star mothers. Advocates argued that Gold Star Pilgrimages functioned as the payment for mothers’ wartime service.

Gold Star mothers invoked the social contract to advocate for the Pilgrimages. Mrs. Jennie M. Mason, 106th Infantry Gold Star Circle President, praised the “good hearts” of the senators and asked them to “realize we are not asking too much when we so willingly gave all for our country.”⁸³ E. Michele Ramsey notes citizenship grounded in the social contract relies on a “marketplace metaphor” where citizens earn rights in return for their “service to democracy.”⁸⁴ Pilgrimage advocates argued that women earned their right to the Pilgrimage due to their wartime service. One Gold Star mother testified that soldiers and mothers equally “did their best for the country and now I hope that our government will do its best and send mothers over there.”⁸⁵ Gold Star mother L.A. Slauon advised members of Congress that they could never fathom the depth of mothers’ service for the nation. She wrote, “It is the least they [Congress] can do to recompense us for our loss, which they can never repay.”⁸⁶ Although Congress could never fully compensate Gold Star mothers, advocates maintained that the Pilgrimages functioned to fulfill the social contract.

Members of Congress also claimed that the government must fulfill their responsibility to Gold Star mothers. Senator Robert F. Wagner (D-NY) explicitly connected the Pilgrimages to women’s fulfillment of the social contract. He urged a

quick passage of the bill by arguing that Gold Star mothers fulfilled their “government duty which was involved in the war.”⁸⁷ By paying for the Pilgrimage, he asserted, Congress and the American public “are paying them for the sacrifices which they have made.”⁸⁸ Representative Charles Stengle (D-NY) asserted that the Gold Star mothers represented “a vast army of mothers who have given up their offspring for the benefit of the country.”⁸⁹ By utilizing a military metaphor, Stengle positioned mothers and soldiers on an even playing field in sacrificing for the nation.

Representative David J. Connell (D-NY) asserted that Gold Star mothers’ sacrifice even exceeded the sacrifice of soldiers buried overseas. He reminded the committee: “No person has ever been called upon to make a greater sacrifice for our Government than have they [Gold Star mothers], and we ought to do what we can to hurry this measure.”⁹⁰ Members of Congress who authorized Pilgrimage legislation emphasized that the government had greater responsibility to Gold Star mothers than any other group of living citizens.

Pilgrimage advocates and members of Congress asserted that Gold Star mothers earned the right to commemorate, implying that the loss of a son was more traumatic than death. The government did not fund pilgrimages for any other group, illustrating the exalted status of maternal sacrifice. However, this exalted status prescribed additional civic responsibilities for Gold Star mothers—responsibilities expressed by both government officials and Pilgrimage advocates.

Invoking Mothers’ Responsibility to Embody Sacrifice

Gold Star mothers justified the Pilgrimages by invoking women’s traditional responsibility to honor the war dead. AWM member Mrs. William H. Marshall testified

that “the grave of a loved one is generally the mother’s care. It is a sacred spot; a place to be visited regularly; to plant a flower; to shed a tear and to say a prayer.”⁹¹ Marshall explained that the generations of war mothers before her honored their responsibility to care for military burial grounds. Her testimony referred to efforts by the Confederate Ladies’ Memorial Associations (LMAs) to rebury soldiers on Southern soil and organize annual events to decorate those graves that functioned to glorify the ideals of the “Lost Cause.”⁹² Similar to LMAs, Pilgrimage advocates maintained that women must live to honor the memory of their fallen soldiers. One Pilgrimage advocate described the challenge for Gold Star mothers to honor patriotic sacrifice when their sons “lay in a narrow space where their bodies will become French clay.”⁹³ Overseas military cemeteries, Pilgrimage advocates argued, disrupted women’s ability to care for soldiers’ burial grounds and cultivate patriotic sensibilities for future generations.

Gold Star mothers voiced concerns that traditional commemorative practices could not properly honor the sacrifices of Great War soldiers buried overseas. One Gold Star mother testified that “the Civil War and Spanish American War seem to be so different to this war. Did we have airplanes and poison gas? Did the boys have to suffer the torture of hell as the boys of the World War did?”⁹⁴ By describing the horror of new technologies of battle, Pilgrimage advocates argued that commemorative practices must evolve due to realities of twentieth-century warfare. During the Civil War, families of fallen soldiers received condolence letters that commemorated “the Good Death.”⁹⁵ These letters, written by a death witness, would

describe how a soldier accepted their fate, declared their belief in salvation, and spent their last moments thinking of their loved ones.⁹⁶

Most Pilgrimage advocates grappled with the knowledge that their sons experienced the opposite of “the Good Death.”⁹⁷ The Department of War sent “casualty telegrams” with sparse details, leaving families to imagine the agony of their loved ones’ final moments.⁹⁸ Some veterans’ groups confirmed these fears by providing “unflinchingly graphic death reports,” which detailed how agonizing gas burns or gaping head wounds kept soldiers from uttering sentimental last words.⁹⁹ Pilgrimage advocates testified that the government must support new commemorative practices to honor fallen sons and counter national feelings of ambivalence toward the war. For some Americans, the European cemeteries and newly built Tomb of the Unknown Soldier functioned as a “solemn” deterrent for future wars.¹⁰⁰ Pilgrimage advocates and other patriotic organizations feared that this anti-war narrative would inhibit men from serving in the military. As a result, Gold Star mothers articulated their responsibility to infuse patriotism back into national commemorations.

Pilgrimage advocates testified that the harrowing deaths of soldiers buried overseas complicated mothers’ civic duty to encourage men to sacrifice for the nation. This argument reflects Susan A. Brewer’s scholarly observation that war must be glamorized in order to embolden future generations to fight and die for their country.¹⁰¹ Pilgrimage advocates implied the inability of Gold Star mothers to view their sons’ final resting place and patriotically honor wartime death would also make them incapable of fully serving the nation. Gold Star mothers who paid for their own voyages testified to how the experience allowed them to overcome crippling grief and

advocate for patriotic causes. One mother testified that since seeing first hand “the white crosses overseas,” she “devoted” her “life to . . . taking an active part in several patriotic organizations.”¹⁰² She implied that the act of visiting the grave provided mothers with the strength to motivate future sacrifice.

Disillusioned Gold Star mothers, advocates warned, would pose a risk to the future of military readiness. This sentiment illustrates Suzanne Evans’ assertion that a “mourning mother” who channels her grief against the state rather than for it has historically been treated as a threat to national stability.¹⁰³ Reflecting this scholarly insight, Mrs. Frederick Guderboard noted that: “I think if mothers can go over there then, perhaps it would not be so bitter for the younger boys who are being brought up. And it would make a bad impression on those younger boys if the mother was bitter.”¹⁰⁴ Gold Star mothers assured Congress that the Pilgrimages would provide mothers with the resolve and strength necessary to instill patriotic values in future generations. In doing so, Pilgrimage advocates reified traditionally gendered understandings of civic responsibility.

Furthering such gender traditions, Gold Star mothers asserted their moral authority over male government officials during the Pilgrimage hearings. Pilgrimage advocates argued that male members of Congress could never comprehend the suffering that soldiers and their mothers endured during the war. Gold Star mother Ethel Nock testified: “I hope you gentleman will realize that when a man lays down his life he takes a part of his mother’s heart as well—a mother never really gets over her son’s death.”¹⁰⁵ Nock and other Pilgrimage advocates positioned Gold Star

mothers as the moral compasses for war-related legislation, able to speak on behalf of their sons who died for the nation.

Gold Star mothers utilized this belief to advocate explicitly for other legislation during the Pilgrimage hearings. Some Gold Star mothers used part of their testimony to criticize congressional inaction related to the Bonus Act. Gold Star mother Effie B. Vedder warned: “if your Government would like to stand well with mothers, their hearts are pretty bitter with the way you are treating boys on the bonus, and you do not know, because you do not know how a mother’s heart feels; the mothers of the boys feel a great deal more than the boys themselves that they are not being treated properly.”¹⁰⁶ She asserted that if a political party wanted war mothers’ support during the 1924 election then they needed to support Pilgrimage legislation and other legislative initiatives supported by the AWM. Vedder’s testimony illustrates how conservative women’s groups utilized commemorative work to highlight war mothers’ growing political power.

While many war mothers expressed support for the Gold Star Pilgrimages, others believed that government funds could be better allocated to commemorate men’s sacrifices. A few women’s organizations wrote their members of Congress to advocate against Pilgrimage legislation and offer alternative ways to utilize the allocated funds. The Women’s Club of Upper Montclair, New Jersey’s passed a resolution to strongly oppose the Pilgrimage bill. In their letter to Senator Hiram Bingham (D-CT), the organization, made up of 1,200 members, described the Pilgrimages as a “flagrant misappropriation of public funds” and called on the government “not” to “perform so sentimental and questionable . . . service” that “is

highly objectionable to American ideals.”¹⁰⁷ The Women’s Club argued that the public funds must be used to support programs to help veterans who struggled to reintegrate into society. The Essex County Clearing House of Women’s Organizations (ECCHWO) also dismissed Gold Star mothers who advocated for the Pilgrimage bill as selfish and misguided. They wrote: “We feel that dignified women would not take advantage of an offer to send them to France . . . we feel that money thus appropriated could be much better used to give employment to disabled men and therefore enable them some self-respect.”¹⁰⁸ They argued that Pilgrimage advocates acted out of their own self-interest instead of the best interests of the nation. For the ECCHWO, assisting returned veterans represented the best way to commemorate men’s sacrifice.

War mothers opposed to Pilgrimage legislation argued that commemorative efforts should focus on the living instead of the dead. Reflecting this belief, war mother Mabel Kay wrote to Senator Bingham and asked him to oppose the legislation. She also called on Gold Star mothers to consider how they could improve the lives of returned soldiers: “If people would only visit the hospital and see where the money could be placed to an advantage, and the asylums—make life worth living for those that are worse off than dead . . . look after the living is my thought” as they attempted to integrate into society with the physical and mental scars of war.¹⁰⁹ These war mothers called on Pilgrimage advocates to highlight and honor disabled veterans’ sacrifices instead of exalting an overseas burial ground. While disabled veterans received public praise, they faced significant challenges when they attempted to reintegrate after war.¹¹⁰

Some war mothers also questioned why the government planned to compensate Gold Star mothers for fulfilling their duty to the nation but would not do the same for mothers who cared for disabled veterans. One war mother asserted that, “No Gold Star Mother lost her son more than I did.”¹¹¹ She claimed that Gold Star mothers were lucky because their son died quickly instead of suffering a lifetime of war wounds. Many soldiers suffered from “shell-shock”—a severe form of psychological trauma. Even though many doctors struggled to treat shell-shock, mothers of returning soldiers were expected to “realize the soldier’s suffering” and “dedicate herself to his care.”¹¹² Some war mothers worried that mothers of disabled veterans would not be recognized for this unpaid service to the nation. A war mother, Emma Keesler Sweet, wrote to Senator Bingham: “What’s the idea of giving the gold-star mothers a trip to Paris and doing absolutely nothing for the mothers of the disabled soldiers who for the last ten years have had to shoulder the burden forced upon them by the draft.”¹¹³ She questioned why “Silver Star” mothers, who also sacrificed for the nation, did not receive the same treatment as Gold Star mothers. Families typically replaced a Blue Star with a Silver Star on a military service flag if a loved one was “disabled or invalided by injury or disease” during active duty.¹¹⁴ Service flags visualized the hierarchy of sacrifice for families, framing injury (silver) as a less valuable for the nation than death (gold). Sweet explicated how mothers like her “had to witness their promising lads, the fruit of their life’s work returned wrecks. Some of us put our shoulders to the wheel and grinned and bore it; others left theirs in hospitals. Even after 10 years of hard and devoted work our boys aren’t and never will be the same.”¹¹⁵

Members of Congress dismissed the Silver Star mothers' concerns as separate from the commemorative question at hand. Wagner interpreted their Pilgrimage opposition to be motivated by jealousy. He questioned: "For what reason do they give? Is it because someone else is not included is their main objection?"¹¹⁶ He argued that the "committee could not be convinced" by the arguments that equated Gold Star Pilgrimages, veteran benefits, and Silver Star family assistance. Wagner and other committee members viewed veteran assistance and war commemoration as distinct issues.

While congressional members lauded disabled veterans' service to the nation, veterans also served as visible reminders of war's destructive power. This reflects what Jay Winter describes as "embodied" memories, which are "*written on* the men who fought" in wars.¹¹⁷ Veterans' embodied memories produced "national anxiety" about the cost of war, challenging the CPI's narrative of battlefield glory.¹¹⁸

Pilgrimage advocates illustrated how Gold Star mothers could simultaneously commemorate and motivate sacrifice, inspiring future mothers to give their sons to military service. Gold Star mothers who testified in front of Congress articulated how the Pilgrimage would allow mothers to fulfill their duty to commemorate their son's sacrifice while serving as peaceful symbols for the nation.

Outlining Maternal Peace-Work in a Post-War Era

Gold Star mothers also asserted their responsibility to memorialize their sons' and by extension the nation's commitment to peace. This responsibility was grounded in the traditional belief that mothers naturally cultivated peace and cooperation, echoing arguments by pre-war peace advocates.¹¹⁹ The AWM's original charter

reflected this belief in their organizational mandate to “keep sacred the ties that bind together the mothers who gave their own blood and energy for their Country’s heroes and the World’s Peace.”¹²⁰ The charter explicated the intertwined nature of a mother’s responsibility, her son’s legacy, and the world’s future peace. While this sentiment echoes the pre-war peace movement, AWM and other patriotic organizations defined military readiness as the ultimate keeper of peace.¹²¹ Pilgrimages, advocates maintained, would allow a Gold Star mother to honor her son’s memory by continuing his fight for peace. In doing so, Gold Star mothers attempted to define peace for a post-war America.

Pilgrimage advocates framed Gold Star mothers as the most authentic symbols of peace and international cooperation. One Gold Star mother testified: “What a wonderful peace mission it would be if such a group of mothers could be sent abroad as is proposed in the bill. I believe it will bring countries closer together than any act that could ever be suggested. That I am sure is the wish of every Gold Star mother.”¹²² She went on to note that a statue could not do justice to her son’s death in pursuit of a peaceful future. Pilgrimage advocates maintained that no monument, memorial, or government proclamation could fully encapsulate how their sons selflessly mobilized and sacrificed for the nation. Instead, Gold Star Pilgrimages could function as living memorials of sacrifice— embodying the nation’s past war effort and current pledge for peace. Representative Mary T. Norton (D-NJ) endorsed this argument in a letter, describing the legislation as supporting a “solemn and sacred pilgrimage—the greatest movement of all toward peace.”¹²³ Norton implied that

mothers, not intergovernmental organizations, must be at the forefront of any lasting peace efforts.

Members of Congress maintained that Gold Star mothers were uniquely qualified to serve as national ambassadors for peace. When the Senate rejected the Treaty of Versailles, peace advocates and other nations challenged that in doing so the government also rejected an enduring symbol of America's commitment to peace.¹²⁴ Pilgrimage advocates and government officials argued that Gold Star mothers could function as the most powerful representatives of peace for the world. Invoking symbolic motherhood, Representative Loring Black (D-NY) described mothers' innate peaceful nature. He asserted that the Pilgrimages would show the world that "we have a spiritual side to us" and that mothers could do more for peace than anything done by "our diplomats and other represented."¹²⁵ Senator Wagner posited that the "ranks of mothers" would travel to Europe and serve as "a new expeditionary force and a first line of defense for peace."¹²⁶ These statements illustrate how members of Congress envisioned Gold Star mother's responsibility to define and represent peace on behalf of the nation.

Representative La Guardia explicated this vision of maternal citizenship during a 1924 hearing. Invoking the social contract, he began his statement by reiterating the government's responsibility to Gold Star mothers: "I want to say this, Mr. Chairman, that besides the duty and desire on the part of the United States Government to give the mothers this relief, to be able to visit the graves of her son, I see in this measure an opportunity of doing a great deal of good for world peace."¹²⁷ La Guardia then described how American and French Gold Star mothers could

accomplish more to achieve war's peace goals than any male statesman. La Guardia explained this logic: "when these American mothers arrive in France, they will come in contact with Gold Star Mothers of France, and they will create a common understanding that will be far more lasting than any peace treaty we can negotiate. In other words, the companionship of sorrow is more enduring than the comradeship of victory."¹²⁸ He expressed that Gold Star mothers from both countries served as the most authentic embodiment of wartime sacrifice—their sons and their own. La Guardia continued to describe how the "comradeship of victory" can often be tainted by the "petty jealousies" of men. In doing so, he also reiterated the belief that women could function as a moralizing force in politics. This argument reflects Kathleen Hall Jamieson's description of a "new and fragile pedestal" for women in politics.¹²⁹ An "assumption of feminine virtue" provided an avenue for increased political influence but it also limited what was considered a women's issue. Pilgrimage advocates sought to expand their political influence by advocating for international peace policies through the lens of their son's memory.

Many Americans questioned the definition of peace after winning a war fought to end all wars. Warren Harding's successful 1920 presidential campaign and Calvin Coolidge's 1924 reelection illustrated that the majority of citizens craved a "return to normalcy," which rejected complicated "foreign entanglements" in favor of nativism.¹³⁰ Echoing the pre-war preparedness movement, many government officials called for a strong and well-funded military as a function of peace. Many Americans, disillusioned by the horrors of war, believed that peace could not be sustained by "vague hopes of human good-will."¹³¹ President Warren Harding invoked Gold Star

mothers as he described a post-war vision for peace. During a 1921 speech in Atlanta, Harding maintained that “every gold star mother or maimed veteran, will agree that peace is preferable to war, and that to train a world in the ways of peace is better than to prepare for war.”¹³² Harding argued that peace and military power were not mutually exclusive, stating that “it is wholly consistent to preach peace and its triumphs in that convincing sincerity which an unselfish nation commands and yet make sure about our proper defense.”¹³³ Harding implied that every Gold Star mother, the female version of the war hero, believed that peace required a strong national defense. His vision of peace rejected intergovernmental agencies and focused on securing American interests.

Pilgrimage advocates embraced this militarized version of peace. The AWM called on the government to increase training opportunities for young men in honor of their own son’s sacrifice for peace. They wrote: “We, all of us [war mothers], want peace and believe in peace, but we do not believe in total disarmament which some organizations are advocating. We feel that the best way to insure everlasting peace is to have adequate national defense.”¹³⁴ In an article for *TAWM*, Representative Florence Kahn (D-CA) articulated this belief: “I would *resent* any insult to our flag at any sacrifice, but I would continue to lend all our efforts to promote harmony and good will among the nations of the earth, so long as we keep the purity of the flag unsullied. We want it neither dyed red nor tinged with yellow.”¹³⁵ Kahn’s statement reflects Christine K. Erickson’s assertion that the government viewed the peace movement as a “conduit for Anti-American propoganda” where foreign influences could infiltrate women’s organizations and utilize the spirit of internationalism to

weaken America's military.¹³⁶ In contrast, Pilgrimage advocates maintained that Gold Star mothers embodied a desire for peace motivated by patriotism.

Gold Star mothers maintained that the Pilgrimages compelled the American public to remember that peace required sacrifice. Pilgrimage advocates argued that Gold Star mothers uniquely understood that peace required a strong military presence. A *TAWM* article explained that Gold Star mothers valued the nation over an international promise of peace. An AWM contributor explained: "We do not desire war. We know what agony it entails. But we would prefer war—war mothers as we are—rather than let American leadership and American idealism be dimmed by dishonor or disgraced or marred by shortsighted weakness."¹³⁷ AWM also noted that many of their sons died because the United States entered the war unprepared, echoing the preparedness movement's pre-war criticism of the government. After the 1924 Pilgrimage hearings, AWM President McClure wrote, "Surely if the World War taught us anything it brought home, to even the most peace-loving and internationally-minded of us, the terrible sacrifice that the young men of America paid in blood upon the field of France, by America entering the war unprepared."¹³⁸ She described the need for the nation to remember that international peace was not earned through diplomatic means, but paid for with the blood of America's sons.

Echoing the arguments of the "Spider Web Chart," Pilgrimage advocates disparaged women still active in the peace movement as anti-American. General James H. McRae lauded the AWM's outreach work to help children reject the "peace at any price" narrative, which he argued women pacifists attempted to inject into school curriculum.¹³⁹ McRae, invoking republican motherhood ideology, implied that

peace could not be the foundation of a son's civic education. *TAWM* quoted D.A.R. President Edith Hobart to illustrate women's historic responsibility to promote peace while protecting American interests. She wrote that the D.A.R. and all patriotic women's organizations "stand for no principle or policy not based upon the very words of Washington and his revolutionary compatriots. In other words, the body is opposed to pacifism, socialism, and any form of internationalism which would sacrifice just national rights or interest, threaten the national safety or subvert the federal Constitution."¹⁴⁰ Hobart's statement reflected Pilgrimage advocates' belief that commemorations of peace must illuminate the importance of national defense.

The AWM and other Pilgrimage advocates also condemned pacifists' use of maternal appeals to promote peace at the expense of national defense. After the war, pacifists again utilized symbolic motherhood arguments to encourage women to oppose national defense spending and support international collaboration.¹⁴¹ Pilgrimage advocates argued that pacifists did not earn the right to define peace. Five months after the 1924 Pilgrimage hearing, the AWM President publicly denounced women's peace organizations that utilized "pacifist propaganda that seeks to play on women's heartstrings" by targeting mothers and "pointing out that war deprives them of their offspring."¹⁴² She then claimed women pacifists appropriated Gold Star mothers' suffering in a way that misled future mothers and dishonored the memory of fallen soldiers. When considering national defense policies, the AWM asserted that the public must listen to "mothers who made sacrifices on the altar of war, who furnished the material for the World War," and recognize the mothers who "paid for peace" with their sons' lives "stand ready to pay again if the nation's honor and safety

demand it.”¹⁴³ Hobart’s statement illustrates how Pilgrimage advocates helped make Gold Star mothers the definitive voice on matters of peace and national defense. In doing so, Gold Star mothers also articulated their responsibility to guide future generations of mothers.

Idealizing Maternal Sacrifice and Defining Motherhood for Future Generations

Pilgrimage advocates also articulated Gold Star mothers’ responsibility to serve as a symbol of motherhood for the nation. Magazine articles, newspaper editorials, and other forms of discourse positioned Gold Star mothers as the model of patriotic and devoted motherhood. One florist magazine illustrated this belief by reminding readers that: “There is one great division of Motherhood holding an especial claim upon the consideration of every loyal American—the Gold Star mother of America whose sons, our country’s heroes are sleeping today, many on alien soil.”¹⁴⁴ Pilgrimage advocates asserted that Gold Star mothers must utilize this exalted public platform to shape maternal responsibility for future generations.

Members of Congress described how Gold Star mothers epitomized the American motherhood ideal. Representative William P. Connery, Jr. (D-MA) asked the Senate subcommittee to imagine how the Pilgrimages “will be a wonderful thing for the mothers, a wonderful thing for the country, and God knows no one has sacrificed more for the United States Government than the mothers of those who died on the field of battle.”¹⁴⁵ Connery insisted that the Pilgrimages would induce the nation to honor and recognize the “valor” and loyalty of Gold Star mothers. Representative Robert G. Simmons (R-NE) reminded his colleagues that “we cannot do enough to honor Gold Star Mothers” who paid the “greatest price” for the nation

and continued to inspire women across the globe.¹⁴⁶ These statements illustrate how Congress envisioned that these Pilgrimages would not only honor fallen soldiers, but also commemorate Gold Star mothers' enactment of motherhood. This was illuminated through debates over who should be deemed an authentic Gold Star Pilgrim.

Many Pilgrimage advocates opposed the inclusion of widows to the Pilgrimage legislation, noting the maternal bond superseded the marital bond. Historian Erica Kuhlman notes that congressional testimony and media coverage foregrounded mothers over widows, privileging "blood ties" over the symbolic ties of marriage.¹⁴⁷ As a result, mothers were framed as the most authentic symbols of feminine mourning in a post-war America. Newspapers, government officials, and patriotic organizations primarily referred to the Pilgrims as Gold Star mothers even after unmarried widows were included in the legislation. Historian John W. Graham notes that widows did not take an "active role in lobbying Congress for pilgrimages," which some Gold Star mothers used as evidence to claim that widows did not deserve the responsibility to commemorate fallen soldiers.¹⁴⁸

Members of Congress and Pilgrimage advocates explicated why they believed mothers had a stronger commemorative claim than widows. During the 1924 hearing, Representative Dickstein stated, "I do not believe, and it might not be pleasing to some ladies to have me say this, that some ladies who have lost their husbands would care much about going across."¹⁴⁹ He implied that widows could make the choice to move past their grief, while mothers bared the responsibility to live for the memory of their sons. In 1928, Gold Star mother Ethel Nock reiterated this statement as she

argued that widows may take advantage of the Pilgrimage for a free trip. Nock warned:

[Y]ou must remember, Senator Wagner, that many of the widows are girls whom boys would never have met had it not been for the contingency of camp life. Many of these girls were married immediately after their departure [death]. Many of these boys would not have been married except under the sympathies of the moment. Many of these widows are not worthy.¹⁵⁰

Nock's harsh words reflected how widows during the interwar years were often accused of "morally contemptible" behavior for remarrying and considered unfit to be the keepers of their husbands' memory.¹⁵¹ While denigrating widows, she reiterated the "sacred" responsibility of mothers to properly mourn their sons. She emphasized that the bond between a mother and son outweighed any other attachment, remarking that, "I think that mother love is greater than anything in the world. The widows, those who have not married again, perhaps it is a result of circumstances and not of wish. The mother lets no one take the place of that boy."¹⁵² Nock implied that an unmarried widow was not necessarily loyal to her husband's memory. Mothers, this logic presumed, embodied the authentic, living embodiment of patriotic sacrifice. For Pilgrimage advocates, the Gold Star ideal represented a singular and enduring commitment to her son's memory.

Congress also never meaningfully considered adding male Pilgrims even though some men called on legislators to include fathers. One father wrote to Senator Bingham and questioned how the bill could move forward "not mentioning fathers at all."¹⁵³ He suggested that the bill could be amended so that Gold Star mothers could bring her husband if she needed assistance. Veterans of Foreign War (VFW) representative Edwin Bettelheim requested that the committee consider amending the

legislation to add fathers as eligible if the mother or widow was deceased or too ill to travel. The VFW proposed the following amendment: “In the case there is no mother or widow, or in the case that either of these women are unable to make the trip, that the privilege be afforded to the gold-star father, who I am sure you will agree, is just as much interested (if not so much advertised) in his deceased son.”¹⁵⁴ After reading the proposed amendment, he made clear that the VFW would fully support the legislation if the amendment was not added: “He [a gold star father] probably feels not quite but almost as keenly the situation as the mother, and we would be glad to see it inserted, but if it would in any way jeopardize the passage of the bill, we would not want to press it.”¹⁵⁵ Betelheim implied that fathers did not publicly mourn in order to conform to the gendered norms of the era.¹⁵⁶ Pilgrimage advocates maintained that men could never comprehend the inherent connection between a mother and her fallen son. Gold Star mother Effie Vedder illustrated this ideal by telling the all-male Senate Armed Services Committee that “you are all men and you have not and cannot feel the way a mother does. A part of her body is laying over there.”¹⁵⁷ The Pilgrimages, advocates insisted, reminded the nation to honor the almost sacred bond between a soldier and mother.

Pilgrimage advocates positioned reproduction as the source of a Gold Star mother’s authenticity. In addition to strongly opposing widows and fathers as Gold Star Pilgrims, many commemorative organizations created strict boundaries about who constituted a “mother.” The national AWM limited membership to “women who gave their sons to the World War, the blood mother” and required all adoptive mothers to resign their membership.¹⁵⁸ Similarly, the American Gold Star Mothers

Association restricted membership to biological mothers when the organizational applied for a congressional charter in the late 1920s. They defined an authentic Gold Star mother as “the author of the dead patriot’s being; not a step-mother; not a foster-mother nor one by adoption but the blood Mother.”¹⁵⁹ For the organization, the ability to embody the sacrifice of a fallen soldier was intertwined with the act of reproduction. This emphasis on biological motherhood troubled women who considered themselves to be Gold Star mothers but did not give birth to their fallen soldier.

Representative Richard J. Welch (R-CA) spoke on behalf of women who self-identified as maternal figures but did not give birth. He called for an amendment that would allow these women to complete the Pilgrimage with “real mothers of the boys who are buried there.”¹⁶⁰ While Welch recognized these women as mothers, he still described women who gave birth as the “real mothers” of soldiers overseas—bolstering Pilgrimage advocates’ rhetoric of biological motherhood. In a compromise, the final Pilgrimage legislation deemed women who “stood *in locis parentis*” as eligible for the Pilgrimages but set strict criteria for these women.¹⁶¹ As a result, many aunts, step-mothers, and other women guardians who did not raise the soldiers from a very young age were deemed ineligible for the Pilgrimage. These membership and Pilgrimage restrictions reflect Nira Yuval-Davis’s assertion that women are honored, condemned, and controlled based on their ability to be “biological reproducers” for the state.¹⁶² By foregrounding a biological understanding of motherhood, Pilgrimage advocates venerated women’s responsibility to create future soldiers for the nation.

Gold Star mothers also articulated their responsibility to shape the meaning of motherhood for the nation. Advocates maintained that the Pilgrimages would inspire all “mothers of this great nation [to] continue to give the world true hearted, whole hearted, one hundred percent American sons.”¹⁶³ Gold Star mothers who testified before Congress noted that they would not directly benefit from the Pilgrimage legislation. Members of Congress lauded Gold Star mothers for their “selfless” nature, applauding their decision to advocate on “behalf of the humbler, the poorer mother who could not pay the price to go there.”¹⁶⁴ Advocates implied that the Pilgrimages would erase socioeconomic divisions among Gold Star mothers, allowing them to stand as a united front against unpatriotic forces. Representative Dickstein reminded committee members to consider the “moral effect” Pilgrimages would have on the nation, describing how Gold Star mothers would serve as a model of morality and sacrifice to all women of the nation.¹⁶⁵ As members of Congress extolled the virtues of Gold Star mothers, Pilgrimage advocates asserted Gold Star mothers’ exalted civic status empowered them to regulate the maternal choices of other women.

AWM member Ethel Stratton asked all Gold Star mothers to imagine what they would do after receiving the “great privilege of placing your tribute of love at the spot where his name is perpetuated in stone above the earth that cradles his beloved body. This is my message—will you carry it on?”¹⁶⁶ For Stratton and other Pilgrimage advocates the answer was clear—Gold Star mothers “carried on” the spirit of maternal sacrifice by advocating for conservative politics. In 1928, *TAWM* called on the Gold Star mother to pledge “herself not only to vote constructively but to help

get out the conservative vote of the Nation.”¹⁶⁷ By embracing their commemorative mandate, Pilgrimage advocates sought to shape future generations of mothers.

Pilgrimage advocates asserted themselves as the authentic voice of mothers, disparaging “widely planned, well-organized, able-led propaganda” that sought to disconnect motherhood and military service.¹⁶⁸ Rebecca Jo Plant suggests that Gold Star Pilgrimages illustrate how “patriotic maternalism” began to overshadow “progressive maternalism” during the interwar years.¹⁶⁹ Plant notes that Congress “effectively killed” the Maternity and Infant Protection Act, the first federal program focused on infant and maternal health, three months after it unanimously passed the Gold Star Pilgrimage legislation.¹⁷⁰ Pilgrimage advocates used their national platform to advocate against these social welfare policies, which they asserted would weaken the legacy of Gold Star sacrifice.¹⁷¹ Soldiers learned to sacrifice, in this line of reasoning, because their mothers had the autonomy to raise them to be soldiers.

Social welfare policies, Pilgrimage advocates maintained, encouraged sons to rely on the government instead of their mothers. Senator Royal S. Copeland (D-NY) illustrated this argument when he asserted during the 1928 hearing that “under no circumstances would I have the government be made a nursing bottle.”¹⁷² He implied that the Pilgrimages functioned as payment for services rendered to the nation while social welfare programs constituted handouts for the public. Gold Star mother Eve Sheerer called on all war mothers to oppose the Child Labor Amendment, a proposed Constitutional Amendment, which would allow Congress to “limit, regularize, and prohibit” the labor of those not yet eighteen years old.¹⁷³ She wrote: “The boys of yesterday, our boys, have shown the world their mettle. Have we any right to allow

paternalism and socialism of the worst kind to emasculate the boys of today?"¹⁷⁴ Sheerer implied that Gold Star mothers must oppose ideologies that could embolden future generations to neglect their duty to sacrifice. The rhetoric of Gold Star Pilgrimages illustrate Yuval-Davis's assertion that not all women are "passive victims" of "policies or ideologies" that seek to control motherhood.¹⁷⁵ She notes that some women function as "cultural reproducers" and are "empowered" by social and political forces to "exert control over other women" deemed wayward or disadvantaged.¹⁷⁶ Gold Star mothers, Pilgrimage advocates implied, taught their sons to sacrifice for the government, while social welfare mothers taught their sons to take from the government.

Conclusion

On May 14, 1933, Representative Norton stood before hundreds of Gold Star mothers in Arlington Cemetery. The last groups of Pilgrims prepared to take their voyages and many gathered for an annual tribute that honored the mothers of the Great War dead.¹⁷⁷ As the Pilgrimages came to an end, Norton praised the rhetorical power of Gold Star mothers to shape how the nation viewed women's civic responsibility. Norton proclaimed that Gold Star mothers served as a national reminder that motherhood was "without qualification the most important career to which any woman may aspire. There never was an act of heroism, there never was a valorous deed that could compare to the life work of the humblest little mother."¹⁷⁸ As she stood under the ornate marble arches of the Arlington Cemetery amphitheater, she maintained that "[m]others battles' are waged in the silences, away from popular acclaim" and the influences of partisan politics.¹⁷⁹ For Norton and her fellow

Pilgrimage advocates, Gold Star mothers represented the ideal woman citizen—a patriotic mother willing to sacrifice her son for the nation and then publicly honor that sacrifice.

In an era of post-suffrage, the government undercut the more progressive constructions of women's enfranchisement. Pilgrimage advocates relied on the seemingly apolitical nature of women's commemorative practices to articulate a reactionary vision of women's citizenship. This study affirms Caroline E. Janney's assertion that white women, under the guise of nonpartisan mourning, utilize commemoration to "deploy politics in the interest of [the] state" and traditionally gendered ideologies.¹⁸⁰ Pilgrimage advocates articulated women's responsibility to commemorate sacrifice, peace, and motherhood in a way that supported the government's vision for national defense and international cooperation. In the process, they also asserted Gold Star mothers' right to shape a wide range of legislation related to foreign policy, veterans' benefits, labor practices, and maternal welfare in order to safeguard the patriotic memory of their fallen sons. The Gold Star Pilgrimages created a foundation for Gold Star mother political advocacy throughout the following decades.¹⁸¹ Pilgrimage rhetoric constituted an enduring Gold Star civic ideal, which foregrounded maternal sacrifice for the nation.

This study also highlights how Gold Star mothers' exalted civic status was dependent on the sacrifice of their sons. Government officials and Pilgrimage advocates articulated a hierarchy of sacrifice that privileged motherhood and death over fatherhood, widowhood, and veteran disability. Pilgrimage advocates presented Gold Star mothers as a unified front, singularly devoted to the memory of fallen

soldiers. As a result, Gold Star discourse linked motherhood to sacrifice on a personal and national level. This ideal of maternal citizenship expected mothers to encourage their sons to die for the nation and then serve as symbols of patriotism for the nation. According to Pilgrimage advocates, the maternal responsibility to commemorate superseded any economic, social, or racial divisions. As a result, the Pilgrimages were widely celebrated by white women's organizations and government officials as voyages of equality and benevolence. However, Pilgrimage advocates' rhetorics of inclusivity did not match reality for African American Gold Star Pilgrims. The next chapter examines the Gold Star Pilgrimage segregation controversy, illuminating the limitations of this civic ideal.

NOTES

¹ “Insignia of Sacrifice,” *NYT*, July 26, 1918, 11.

² Joy Damousi, “Gender and Mourning,” in *Gender and the Great War* eds. Susan R. Grayzel and Tammy M. Proctor (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 213.

³ “Insignia of Sacrifice,” 11.

⁴ Jay Winter, *Remembering War: The Great War Between Memory and History in the Twentieth Century* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), 1. Winter cautions that the Great War generation was not the “first generation to be magnetically drawn to memory.” *Ibid.*, 18.

⁵ William V. Balthrop, Carole Blair, and Michel Neil, “Rhetoric, Materiality, and the US Western Front Commemoration,” in *Communication Matters: Materialist Approaches to Media, Mobility and Networks* eds. Jeremy Packer and Stephen B. Crofts Wiley (New York: Routledge, 2012), 96.

⁶ “The Gold Star Pilgrimage,” *The American War Mothers*, hereafter *TAWM*, July, 1929, 6. The AWM was founded by Alice French in 1917 as the War Mothers of Indiana, an organization dedicated to supporting the food conservation effort. In May 1918, Indiana organization had over 3,000 members. In August 1918 the organization opened membership to war mothers nationwide. The membership grew to 24,000 by 1924. Elizabeth Cafer du Pleiss, “Alice French—Indiana War Mothers: From World War I 'Kitchen Soldiers' to Postwar Immigrant Reformers,” in *Feminist Frontiers: Women who Shaped the Midwest* ed. Yvonne J. Johnson (Kirskville, MO: Truman State University Press, 2010), 100.

⁷ House Committee on Military Affairs, *To Authorize Mothers of Deceased World War Veterans Buried in Europe to Visit the Graves*, 68th Cong., 1st sess., February 19, 1924 (hereafter 1924 House Hearing); House Committee on Military Affairs, *To Authorize Mothers and Unmarried Widows of Deceased World War Veterans Buried in Europe to Visit the Graves: Hearing before the Committee on Military Affairs*, 70th Cong., 1st sess., January 27, 1928 (hereafter 1928 House Hearing); Senate Subcommittee on Military Affairs, *To Authorize Mothers and Unmarried Widows of Deceased World War Veterans Buried in Europe to Visit the Graves: Hearing before the Subcommittee of the Committee on Military Affairs*, May 14, 1928 (hereafter 1928 Senate Hearing); Senate Subcommittee on Military Affairs, *To Authorize Mothers and Unmarried Widows of Deceased World War Veterans Buried in Europe to Visit the Graves: Hearing before the Subcommittee of the Committee on Military Affairs*, 70th Cong., 2nd sess., February 12, 1929 (hereafter 1929 Senate Hearing); House Committee on Military Affairs, *To Authorize Mothers and Unmarried Widows of Deceased World War Veterans Buried in Europe to Visit the Graves (Proposed Amendment to Law)*, 71st Cong., 2nd sess., December 17, 1929 (hereafter 1929 House Hearing).

⁸ *Ibid.* I use the term “Pilgrimage advocate” throughout this study to describe members of organizations who publicly campaigned for the Gold Star Pilgrimages.

The majority of Pilgrimage advocates were also Gold Star Mothers. The American Legion, Disabled American Veterans, and Veterans of Foreign Wars did not include women, but sent a representative to testify during the hearings to voice support for their support for Pilgrimage legislation.

⁹ Scholars note that suffragists and anti-suffragists shifted their political advocacy after the “question” of women’s enfranchisement was decided. The National Woman’s Party championed the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA). See, Nancy F. Cott, “Historical Perspectives: The Equal Rights Amendment Conflict in the 1920s,” in *Conflicts in Feminism* ed. Marianne Hirsch and Evelyn Fox Keller (New York: Routledge, 1990), 44-59. Reflecting their pre-war peace work, many suffragists began to work for causes that opposed military expansion and sought international cooperation. See, Chapter 3 of Alonso’s *Peace as a Women’s Issue* titled “Former Suffragists for Peace During the Interwar Years, 1919-1935,” Alonso, *Peace as a Women’s Issue*, 85-124. Other suffragists continued to advocate for social welfare programs like the Child Labor Amendment and Sheppard-Towner Act, which funded infant and maternal health programs. See, Wendy Sarvasy, “Beyond the Difference versus Equality Policy Debate: Postsuffrage Feminism, Citizenship, and the Quest for a Feminist Welfare State,” *Signs* 17, no. 2 (1992): 329-362. Many anti-suffragists focused their energies on “patriotic” causes. For example, the NAOWS renamed their newspaper *The Woman Patriot* and began a campaign that Kim E. Nielson describes as a “Red Scare antifeminist campaign against a wide variety of social welfare programs.” Nielson, *Un-American Womanhood*, 55.

¹⁰ Roger D. Markwick and Nicholas Doumanis argue that in nations throughout the world during the Great War era “the mobilization of society in order to wage industrial warfare was secured through a social contract whereby subjects or citizens would be rewarded through sacrifices.” Roger D. Markwick and Nicholas Doumanis, “The Nationalization of the Masses,” in *The Oxford Handbook of European History, 1914-1945* ed. Nicholas Doumanis (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 371.

¹¹ Amy Heyse, “Women’s Rhetorical Authority and Collective Memory: The United Daughters of the Confederacy Remember the South,” *Women & Language* 33, no. 2 (2010): 39.

¹² These are both terms used in the era to reflect memorials that contributed to the “public good” beyond aesthetic value of a traditional war statue. I discuss the different forms these memorials took later in the chapter. Kirk Savage, *Monument Wars: Washington, D.C., The National Mall, and the Transformation of the Memorial Landscape* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 2.

¹³ Carrie Chapman Catt and Nettie Rogers Shuler, *Woman Suffrage and Politics: The Inner Story of the Suffrage Movement* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1923), 295. Catt and Shuler were referring to the disappointment of suffragists during the Civil War when former male slaves were enfranchised but women were not included in the Fifteenth Amendment. They explained that after the Civil War: “Women were equally justified in the hope that the lofty expressions of sentiment and frank admission of gratitude for their war sacrifices would be written into law.” *Ibid.*, 35.

¹⁴ “Dr. Shaw’s Last Message: Suffrage Leader Finishes Revision of League Appeal Just Before Death,” *The League Bulletin*, July 12, 1919, 441.

¹⁵ Alan Daly, *Changing the World: American Progressives in War and Revolution* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003), 241.

¹⁶ Kathryn Kish Sklar, "'Some of Us Who Deal with the Social Fabric': Jane Addams Blends Peace and Social Justice, 1907-1919," *The Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era* 2, no. 1 (2003): 87.

¹⁷ Officially founded in 1925, the NCCCW was an "umbrella" organization for "eleven large and influential women's clubs." Alonso explains that "Cause and Cure of War Affiliates each had a Peace Committee that organized on a local level and expressed their own points of view. On a national level, Catt became their spokesperson. Study-groups, round-table discussions, and regional, state and yearly national conferences were all part of the program." Alonso, *Peace as a Women's Issue*, 108.

¹⁸ Linda Schott, "'Middle-of-the Road' Activists: Carrie Chapman Catt and the National Committee on the Cause and Cure of War," *Peace & Change* 21, no. 1 (1996): 15.

¹⁹ Nick Fischer traces the creation of the Spider Web Chart. Fischer explains that women's pacifist organizations were often in "direct conflict" with the Department of War after Armistice. Secretary of War John W. Weeks believed his previous failed run for Senate had been "derailed by suffragists" and that organizations like the WILPF perpetuated "'insidious propaganda.'" Maxwell, also an ardent anti-radicalist and DAR member, was a librarian at the Bureau and worked for Colonel Amos Alfred Fries. Fries blamed "progressive women's and anti-military lobbies" for persuading Congress to cut "military appropriations after Congress." The Military Intelligence Division of the Department of War asked Fries to "evaluate the politics of feminists and female pacifists as well as the organizations that they represented." Maxwell based her "Spider Web Chart" on information gathered during this investigation and other reports created on suffragists and other women deemed radical during the war. Nick Fischer, *The Spider Web: The Birth of American AntiCommunism* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2016) 72-74.

²⁰ Deleгарd describes the chart: "[f]ifty-two lines of ink on a one-by-two-foot chart connected the names of the most prominent women with a conspiracy to sabotage the republic." Kirsten Marie Deleгарd, *Battling Miss Bolsheviki: The Origins of Female Conservatism in the United States* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012), 48. Nancy F. Cott explains that 11 of the 29 women specifically named were members of the National Woman's Party (NWP). Nancy F. Cott, *The Grounding of Modern Feminism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987), 249.

²¹ The *Dearborn Independent* (owned by Henry Ford) first published the article for a national audience. Lucia Maxwell, "Spider Web Chart: The Socialist-Pacifist Movement in America Is an Absolutely Fundamental and Integral Part of International Socialism," *The Dearborn Independent*, March 22, 1924, 11.

²² Christine K. Erickson, "'So Much for Men': Conservative Women and National Defense in the 1920s and 1930s," *American Studies* 45, no. 1 (2004): 88.

²³ The *Dearborn Independent* did not retract the chart and it continued to circulate throughout the 1920s. Carrie Chapman Catt, "Poison Propaganda," *The Woman Citizen*, May 31, 1924, 32.

²⁴ Carrie Chapman Catt, "The Lie Factory," *The Woman Citizen*, September 20, 1924, 25.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 24.

²⁶ Cott, *The Grounding of Modern Feminism*, 249.

²⁷ Rebecca Jo Plant describes how Maxwell and others involved with the construction of "Spider Web" chart were also strong advocates of the Pilgrimages. Rebecca Jo Plant, "The Gold Star Mothers Pilgrimages: Patriotic Maternalists and Their Critics in Interwar America," in *Maternalism Reconsidered: Motherhood, Welfare and Social Policy in the Twentieth Century* eds. Marian van der Klein, Rebecca Jo Plant, Nicole Sanders, Lori R. Weintrob (New York: Berghahn Books, 2012), 144.

²⁸ Kate Hallgren, "Maternalism Goes to War: Class, Nativism, and Mothers' Fight for Conscription in America's First World War," *Women of the Right: Comparisons and Interplay Across Borders* ed. Kathleen M. Blee and Sandra McGee Deutsch (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2012), 118.

²⁹ Steven Trout, *On the Battlefield of Public Memory: The First World War and American Remembrance, 1919-1941* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2010), 121.

³⁰ Kimberly J. Lamay Licursi describes how "public discourse about war never congealed into a consensus view" and that many "questioned the purpose of any war and lamented the 'lost generation' that emerged from the conflict." She traces how American public desire "to put the war behind them," impacted war documentation through an analysis of state war histories, memoirs, and fiction books, and movies. Kimberly J. Lamay Licursi, *Remembering World War I in America* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2018) xvi ;xx.

³¹ Budreau, *Bodies of War*, 1.

³² Erika Kuhlman's chapter entitled "What to Do with the Germans?": American Exceptionalism and German-American Reconciliation" traces this political process. Erika Kuhlman, *Reconstructing Patriarchy after the Great War: Women, Gender, and Postwar Reconciliation Between the Nations* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 71-104.

³³ For an in-depth discussion of local debates over memorialization, see David Glassberg and J. Michael Moore, "Patriotism in Orange: The Memory of World War I in a Massachusetts Town," in *Bonds of Affection: Americans Define Their Patriotism* ed. John Bodnar (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 160-190.

³⁴ "Not a Political Issue," *Cleveland Gazette*, June 21, 1919, 2.

³⁵ Mrs. J. P. Caldwell, "What Some Boys 'Over There' Think of People 'Over Here,'" *Charlotte Observer*, March 27, 1919, 10.

³⁶ Trout, *On the Battlefield of Public Memory*, 121.

³⁷ Budreau, *Bodies of War*, 99.

³⁸ "Gave Their All for Us," *Kansas City Star* (MI), November 5, 1919, 2.

³⁹ Jennifer Wingate, *Sculpting Doughboys: Memory, Gender, and Taste in America's World War I Memorials* (Burlington: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2013), 22.

⁴⁰ "War Dead Honored at Prospect Park," *NYT*, May 19, 1924, 2.

⁴¹ Ross J. Wilson, *New York and the First World War: Shaping an American City* (New York: Routledge, 2016), 214.; Jennifer Wingate, "Over the Top: The Doughboy

in World War I Memorials and Visual Culture," *American Art* 19, no. 2 (2005): 38-40. I will discuss African American Great War commemorations more in Chapter 3.

⁴² Fenelon, *That Knock at the Door*, 121.

⁴³ "Memorial Services for the War Dead Held Throughout the City," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, May 31, 1921, 5.

⁴⁴ Amy Heyse, "Women's Rhetorical Authority," 34.

⁴⁵ Trout, *On the Battlefield of Public Memory*, 107-108. Savage notes that modern viewers may not recognize the functional aspects of some memorials. For example, civic leaders designed the 1931 D.C. War Memorial to be a bandstand where the community could gather to hear patriotic music. Kirk Savage, *Monument Wars*, 241.

⁴⁶ "Wesleyan Girls Feel Public Pulse on Memorials of War They Find Wide Range of Views," *Macon Telegraph*, January 19, 1919, 8.

⁴⁷ Henry E. Jackson, "Tribute to the Men Who Gave Their Day For Our Tomorrow," *The Sunday Star* (Washington DC), February 2, 1919, 27.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹ "Tree Planting on Highways Urged as Memorials," *Fort Worth Star Telegram*, April 21, 1921, 2. Kirk Savage describes how trees have long functioned as "repositories for sentiment." He notes that the use of "memorial trees" dates back to before the Revolutionary War. Savage, *Monument Wars*, 91-94.

⁵⁰ Hattie M. Rincker, "Tree Meetings Called," *The American War Mother* (hereafter *TAWM*), April 1929, 5.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² The Pennsylvania Historical Society in collaboration with the AWM affixed the labels to each tree. This was a common practice for memorial tree plantings across the nation. Ethel Stratton Nock, "World War Memorial Grove, Philadelphia, PA," *TAWM*, January 1929, 9.

⁵³ William Hutchins, "Gold Star Driveway," *Utah Payroll Builder*, January 1923, 20.

⁵⁴ Florence Magers Geeslin, "The Mother's Offering," *TAWM*, February 1928, 12.

⁵⁵ "Omaha Honors Heroes Upon Armistice Day," *TAWM*, December 1924, 7.

⁵⁶ Trout, *On the Battlefield of Public Memory*, 107.

⁵⁷ Wingate, *Sculpting Doughboys*, 20.

⁵⁸ For an analysis of Tomb of Unknown Soldiers' commemorative arguments around the world, see: Carole Blair, William V. Balthrop, and Michel Neil, "The Arguments of the Tombs of the Unknown: Relationality and National Legitimation," *Argumentation* 25, no. 4 (2011): 449-468.

⁵⁹ Shipstead was a member of the Farm-Labor Party. 67 Cong. Rec. S10793 (1926).

⁶⁰ "War Mothers' Tribute Urged," *TAWM*, July 1926, 2.

⁶¹ Lloyd traces the history of pilgrimages, describing the religious origins of the term. He also acknowledges that this era was also marked by emotional debates about the difference between tourist and a pilgrim to battlefield sites. David W. Lloyd, *Pilgrimage and the Commemoration of the Great War in Britain, Australia, and Canada, 1919-1939* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 1998), 25-26. Rhetorical scholars have studied the "rhetorical pilgrimage" and the "rhetorical pilgrim" through the lens of memory sites like the Vietnam War Memorial and the Holocaust Memorial Museum in the United States. See, Marouf Hasian, Jr., "Remembering and

Forgetting the ‘Final Solution’: A Rhetorical Pilgrimage through the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum,” *Critical Studies in Media Communication* 21, no. 1 (2004): 64-92; A. Cheree Carlson and John E. Hocking, “Strategies of Redemption at the Vietnam Veterans’ Memorial” *Western Journal of Communication* 52, no. 3 (1988): 203-215.

⁶² John W. Graham describes these as “Do-It-Yourself” pilgrimages. John W. Graham, *The Gold Star Mother Pilgrimages of the 1930s* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, 2004): 75-94.

⁶³ Lloyd, *Pilgrimage and Commemoration*, 107.

⁶⁴ This would align with what Sara C. Vangerhaagen and Angela G. Ray describe as a “pilgrim-critic.” Vangerhaagen and Ray describe a pilgrim-critic as someone who “performs a deep affective connection to memory places but also undertakes a critical investigation of what happened there.” Many peace advocates who undertook pilgrimages met the “five fundamental attributes” of a pilgrim-critic. Peace advocates sought to not only “bear witness” to suffering destruction but also sought to gather “testamentary evidence” by recording the experiences of locals who experienced the devastation of war and imperialistic ideologies. See, Ethel Snowden *Political Pilgrim in Europe* (New York: Cassel and Company, 1921); Sara C. Vangerhaagen and Angela G. Ray, “A Pilgrim-Critic at Places of Public Memory: Anna Dickinson's Southern Tour of 1875,” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 100, no. 3 (2014): 349; 356; 360.

⁶⁵ Graham, *The Gold Star Mother Pilgrimages of the 1930s*, 75.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.* 51.

⁶⁷ 1928 House Hearing, 27.

⁶⁸ 1924 House Hearing, 12-13.

⁶⁹ Lisa M. Budreau, “The Politics of Remembrance: The Gold Star Mothers’ Pilgrimage and America’s Fading Memory of the Great War,” *The Journal of Military History* 72, no. 2 (2008): 395.

⁷⁰ The Pilgrimages visited the following cemeteries: Aisne-Marne Cemetery in France, Brookwood Cemetery in England, Flanders Field in Belgium, Meuse-Argonne Cemetery in France, Oise Aisne Cemetery in France, Homme Cemetery in France, St. Mihiel Cemetery in France, and Sureses Cemetery in France. Every Pilgrimage schedule was constructed to meet the needs of the Gold Star Pilgrims on the specific voyage and lasted about two weeks. The Pilgrimage groups were created based on the pilgrims’ hometown. First Lady Lou Hoover “drew lots” to determine the pilgrimage order. Nebraska was the first state chosen through the random drawing and Colorado was the last. “Nebraska to Lead God Star Sailings,” *NYT*, February 8, 1930, 11.

⁷¹ The concept of a “hierarchy of sacrifice” has been utilized in multiple contexts related to wartime discourse. Joy Damousi analyzes how debates over financial assistance for the families of war dead in Australia created an “hierarchy of sacrifice.” For example, the public bitterly debated whether an officer’s widow should receive a higher pension than a private’s widow. Joy Damousi, *The Labour of Loss: Mourning, Memory and Wartime Bereavement in Australia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 77. Jessica L. Ghilani, articulates how a World War II “hierarchy of

sacrifice” framed sacrifice on the homefront as “subordinate” to sacrifice on overseas battleground. Ghilani illustrates how advertising agencies exploited these national anxieties to “sell” consumer decisions as a critical civic sacrifice. See, Jessica L. Ghilani, “DeBeers’ ‘Fighting Diamonds’: Recruiting American Consumers in World War II Advertising,” *Journal of Communication Inquiry* 36, no. 3 (2012): 222-245. I posit that the rhetorical construction of a gendered “hierarchy of sacrifice” shaped commemorative practices after the Great War.

⁷² Elizabeth Cafer du Pleissis, “Indiana War Mothers: From World War I ‘Kitchen Soldiers’ to Postwar Immigrant Reformers,” in *Feminist Frontiers: Women Who Shaped the Midwest* ed. Yvonne Johnson (Kirksville, MO: Truman State University Press, 2010) 112

⁷³ 1928 Senate Hearing, 4.

⁷⁴ Joint Committees on the Judiciary, *To Incorporate the American War Mothers, Joint Hearing Before the Committees on the Judiciary*. 68th Cong., 1st sess. May 6, 1924 (hereafter 1924 Joint Hearing), 2. Although this congressional hearing was not explicitly about the Pilgrimages, the AWM articulated the exalted commemorative status of Gold Star Mothers. They highlighted that Gold Star Mothers did not have to pay dues and received honorary lifetime membership. McCluer noted that their organization had done so to “pay homage to their sacrifice,” and called on the government to do the same with the Pilgrimages.

⁷⁵ Eve Sheerer, “Mothers and Suffrage,” *TAWM*, August 1924, 15.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷⁷ Tiffany Lewis, “Municipal Housekeeping in the American West: Bertha Knight Landes’s Entrance into Politics,” *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 14, no. 3 (2011): 469-471.

⁷⁸ Sheerer, “Mothers and Suffrage,” 15.

⁷⁹ Lewis, “Municipal Housekeeping in the American West,” 469-471.

⁸⁰ 1928 Senate Hearing, 4.

⁸¹ Christina R. Foust notes that the origins of “Tough Mother” rhetoric can be traced to the Temperance movement. Christina R. Foust, “A Return to Feminine Public Virtue: Judge Judy and the Myth of the Tough Mother,” *Women’s Studies in Communication* 27, no. 3 (2004): 274-277.

⁸² 1924 House Hearing, 21.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 24.

⁸⁴ Ramsey, “Addressing Issues of Context,” 362.

⁸⁵ 1928 Senate Hearing, 24.

⁸⁶ 1924 House Hearing, 24.

⁸⁷ 1928 Senate Hearing, 25.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

⁸⁹ 1924 Hearing, 2.

⁹⁰ 1928 Senate Hearing, 11.

⁹¹ 1929 Senate Hearing, 16.

⁹² See, Caroline E. Janney, *Burying the Dead but Not the Past: Ladies’ Memorial Associations & The Lost Cause* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008).

⁹³ 1924 House Hearing, 23.

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- ⁹⁴ 1928 Senate Hearing, 29.
- ⁹⁵ Faust, *This Republic of Suffering*, 17-22.
- ⁹⁶ Faust observes that letters describing from Union and Confederate almost sounded like writers used a “checklist” because they were so similar. This similarity illustrated how embedded “The Good Death” in the culture. Ibid.
- ⁹⁷ David W. Seitz, *World War I, Mass Death, and the Birth of the Modern US Soldier: A Rhetorical History* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2018), 187.
- ⁹⁸ One post-war book described these telegrams as “terse,” providing this example of a casualty telegram received by a family: “Commander-in-Chief in France reports the death in battle on August 30th of Henry D. Bradbury.” The authors described the complicated challenges the military faced to properly identify bodies and notify families. “How Men Were Traced,” in *The Battle of Bourges: American Expeditionary Forces* ed. Francis Sinclair and Lawrence J. Weidmann (New York.: Sinclair & Weidmann, 1919), 34.
- ⁹⁹ Some veteran groups believed that families would receive closure from receiving all the details of their loved ones’ deaths, even if the information was graphic and unsettling. Other groups were troubled by the sanitized narrative of war created by the CPI and believed they had a duty to disclose the full horrors of war. Seitz, *World War I, Mass Death*, 186.
- ¹⁰⁰ Budreau, *Bodies of War*, 100.
- ¹⁰¹ Susan A. Brewer, *Why America Fights: Patriotism and War Propaganda from the Philippines to Iraq* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 1-8.
- ¹⁰² 1929 Senate Hearing, 6.
- ¹⁰³ Suzanne Evans, *Mothers of Heroes, Mothers of Martyrs: World War I and the Politics of Grief* (Quebec: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2007), 142.
- ¹⁰⁴ 1924 House Hearing, 21.
- ¹⁰⁵ 1929 Senate Hearing, 7.
- ¹⁰⁶ 1924 House Hearing, 16.
- ¹⁰⁷ 1929 Senate Hearing, 23. Bingham served as the chairman of the subcommittee that considered the Pilgrimage legislation.
- ¹⁰⁸ 1928 Senate Hearing, 26.
- ¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 19.
- ¹¹⁰ During the months American troops were on the frontlines of battle, 224,000 soldiers were injured in direct combat. Seventy thousand soldiers suffered poison gas-related injuries. Almost all of the 1.3 million American soldiers deployed to combat zones experienced some sort of health complication from “shell shock” to debilitating muscle spasms or gastrointestinal diseases. By 1923, over 930,000 soldiers applied for disability benefits. John M. Kinder, *Paying With Their Bodies: American War and the Problem of the Disabled Veteran* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015), 5.
- ¹¹¹ 1928 Senate Hearing, 19.
- ¹¹² Annessa C. Stagner, “Healing the Soldier, Restoring the Nation: Representations of Shell Shock in the USA During and After the First World War,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 49, no. 2 (2014): 263.
- ¹¹³ 1928 Senate Hearing, 19.
- ¹¹⁴ “The Service Flag,” *National Service: A Military Journal*, August 1918, 20.

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- ¹¹⁵ 1928 Senate Hearing, 19.
- ¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 27.
- ¹¹⁷ Winter, *Remembering War*, 56
- ¹¹⁸ Kinder, *Paying With their Bodies*, 3.
- ¹¹⁹ Zeiger, “She Didn’t Raise My Son to be a Slacker,” 10-11.
- ¹²⁰ “History of Indiana Chapter of American War Mothers, Scrapbook of Alice Moore French,” Box 1, Folder 9, p. 31, Alice Moore French Papers, Indiana Historical Society. Indianapolis, Indiana.
- ¹²¹ Francisca Morgan explains that for many patriotic organizations during this era “women’s advocacy for peace never constituted pacifism.” Francesca Morgan, *Women and Patriotism in Jim Crow America* (Chapel Hill: University of Carolina Press, 2005), 109.
- ¹²² 1928 Senate Hearing, 5.
- ¹²³ *Ibid.*, 12.
- ¹²⁴ The League to Enforce Peace released a statement before the Senate rejected the Treaty of Versailles, which articulated this point: “In this chaotic world of peril America can yet, in unchallenged strength, uphold international democracy and the right of people everyone to govern themselves according to their own will, unhindered by any foreign power. Does the Declaration yet live in America’s conscience? Article X without reservation secures independence of small nations around the world. And it thereby promotes the peace of the world, for no Government will dare challenge the plighted word of America and the nations leagued with her against aggression.” Wallace McClure, “Opposition to Article X,” *NYT*, February 29, 1920, 103.
- ¹²⁵ 1928 House Hearing, 29.
- ¹²⁶ 1928 Senate Hearing, 28.
- ¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, 14.
- ¹²⁸ *Ibid.*
- ¹²⁹ Kathleen Hall Jamieson, *Beyond the Double Bind: Women and Leadership* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 106.
- ¹³⁰ Wilson describes the many reasons Americans may have desired a “return to normalcy” including unprecedented levels of debt from the war, rising immigration numbers, industry and agriculture surplus, rising taxes, and racial tensions. Wilson, “Harding’s Rhetoric of Normalcy, 1920-1923,” 407; Calvin Coolidge signed the National Origin Act of 1924, which utilized the 1890 census to set the two percent immigration cap for countries. During his 1923 State of the Union address, Coolidge declared: “New arrivals should be limited to our capacity to absorb them into the ranks of good citizenship. America must be kept American.” Vanessa B. Beasley, *You, The People: American National Identity in Presidential Rhetoric* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2004), 80-82.
- ¹³¹ Maurice Leon, “The Safeguards of Peace,” *The American Review of Reviews: An International Magazine* 68 (1921): 159.
- ¹³² Warren G. Harding, *Address of the President of the United States at Atlanta Georgia, October 21, 1921* (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 1921), 7.
- ¹³³ *Ibid.*

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- ¹³⁴ “President’s Activities,” *TAWM*, March 1929, 2.
- ¹³⁵ Florence Kahn, “A Widow Pleads for Army,” *TAWM*, February 1927, 4. For an analysis of how “yellow peril” and “red menace” memory frames have been utilized throughout history to characterize Chinese immigrants, see Michelle Murray Yang, *American Political Discourse on China* (New York: Routledge, 2017).
- ¹³⁶ Patriotic organizations and the War Department viewed the peace movement as “the largest and most organized threat to America’s safety.” Specifically, they feared that radicals joined women’s groups to “turn public opinion against a program of military defense that would leave the U.S. vulnerable to possible attack.” Erickson, “So Much for Men,” 88.
- ¹³⁷ H. H. McCluer, “Letters as to Defense Day,” *TAWM*, June 1925, 14.
- ¹³⁸ Margaret N. McCluer, “Notice,” *TAWM*, August 1924, 9.
- ¹³⁹ “McRae Warns of Pacifism,” *NYT*, November 2, 1927, 3.
- ¹⁴⁰ “Mrs. Hobart Answers for the D.A.R.,” *TAWM*, April 1930, 6.
- ¹⁴¹ Susan Zeiger, “Finding a Cure for War: Women’s Politics and the Peace Movement in the 1920s,” *Journal of Social History* 24, no. 1 (1990): 72. The Committee for the Cause and Cure of War, Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom, and the Women’s Peace Union were the three largest women’s peace organizations in the United States during the 1920s.
- ¹⁴² “War Mothers Pledge Aid,” *NYT*, August 10, 1924, 6.
- ¹⁴³ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁴⁴ W.B. Stoddard, “Methods that Increase Spring Seed Store Sales,” *The Seed World*, April 21, 1922, 18.
- ¹⁴⁵ 1928 Senate Hearing, 15.
- ¹⁴⁶ 1929 House Hearing, 16.
- ¹⁴⁷ Erika Kuhlman, *Of Little Comfort: War Widows, Fallen Soldiers, and the Remaking of the Nation after the Great War* (New York: NYU Press, 2012), 73.
- ¹⁴⁸ Graham, *The Gold Star Mother Pilgrimages*, 59.
- ¹⁴⁹ 1924 House Hearing, 10.
- ¹⁵⁰ 1928 Senate Hearing, 12.
- ¹⁵¹ Damousi, “Gender and Mourning,” 213.
- ¹⁵² 1928 Senate Hearing, 10.
- ¹⁵³ 1929 Senate Hearing, 10.
- ¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 21.
- ¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 22.
- ¹⁵⁶ Carol Acton notes that a traditionally masculine version of grief would be to seek revenge or kill in honor of a fallen soldier. Public grief would be considered “unpatriotic, feminine, and weak.” Carol Acton, *Grief in Wartime: Private Pain, Public Discourse* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2007), 5; 50; 113.
- ¹⁵⁷ 1924 House Hearing, 15.
- ¹⁵⁸ 1924 Joint Hearing, 3; Budreau, *Bodies of War*, 205.
- ¹⁵⁹ “RE: Bill S 498 and HR 9,” undated, Box OV 1, Scrapbook No. 9, American Gold Star Mothers, Inc., Records, 1917-1941, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.
- ¹⁶⁰ 1929 House Hearing, 5.

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- ¹⁶¹ Ibid., 7.
- ¹⁶² Nira Yuval-Davis, "Women and the Biological Reproduction of 'The Nation,'" *Women's Studies International Forum* 19, no. 1-2 (1996): 22.
- ¹⁶³ Lillie Bradbury, "A War Mother's Viewpoint," *TAWM*, March 1924, 15.
- ¹⁶⁴ 1924 House Hearing, 4.
- ¹⁶⁵ Ibid., 3.
- ¹⁶⁶ Ethel Stratton Nock, "The Pilgrimage of the Gold Stars to the White Crosses," *TAWM*, March 1929, 10.
- ¹⁶⁷ This statement was also one of the resolutions passed at the 1928 Women's Patriotic Conference of National Defense. "National Patriotic Conference," *TAWM*, March 1928, 10.
- ¹⁶⁸ "National Patriotic Conference Continued," *TAWM*, April 1928, 21.
- ¹⁶⁹ Plant, "The Gold Star Mothers Pilgrimages: Patriotic Maternalists and Their Critics in Interwar America," 122. Plant argues that scholars of women's history seem to overlook the importance of the Pilgrimage legislation during the interwar years because it focuses on commemoration instead of traditional maternal policies.
- ¹⁷⁰ Plant notes that the funding for the Gold Star Pilgrimages and the Maternity and Infant Protection Act (also known as the Sheppard-Towner Act) were almost identical. The government projected that the pilgrimages would cost \$5.38 million, while the Maternity and Infant Protection Act cost \$5.23 million during its four years of existence.
- ¹⁷¹ Many of the Pilgrimage advocates, active in women's patriotic organizations, originally supported some of these social reform policies. However, Michelle M. Nickerson explains that these women "antifeminist women came to recognize themselves as 'patriotic' by virtue of their antiradicalism had helped turn the tide against maternalist reforms that many had helped initiate." Michelle M. Nickerson, *Mothers of Conservatism: Women and the Postwar Right* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012), 13.
- ¹⁷² 1928 Senate Hearing, 3. Ibid.
- ¹⁷³ For a thorough discussion of the Child Labor Amendment, see Joan Aldous, "The Political Process and the Failure of the Child Labor Amendment," *Journal of Family Issues* 18, no. 1 (1997): 71-91.
- ¹⁷⁴ Eve Sheerer, "The Child Labor Amendment," *TAWM*, January 1924, 3.
- ¹⁷⁵ Yuval-Davis "Women and the Biological Reproduction," 23.
- ¹⁷⁶ Ibid.
- ¹⁷⁷ "War Mothers Hold Arlington Service, Gold Star Wearers Decorate Join in the Decoration of Unknown Soldier's Tombs," *NYT*, May 15, 1933, 13.
- ¹⁷⁸ Ibid.
- ¹⁷⁹ Ibid.
- ¹⁸⁰ Janney, *Burying the Dead but Not the Past*, 6.; Heyse, "Women's Rhetorical Authority," 40.
- ¹⁸¹ Fenelon traces Gold Star mothers' political activities through current day. Fenelon, *A Knock at the Door*, 129-301.

Chapter 3:

Confronting Pilgrimage Segregation: Navigating the Intersections of Race, Gender, and Citizenship

From 1930-1933, mainstream newspapers across the nation printed glowing accounts of the Gold Star Pilgrimages, describing the voyages as the ultimate expression of American motherhood, patriotism, and sacrifice. The *New York Times*, for example, published an article featuring 74-year-old Kate Mike, “full-blooded Indian from Wisconsin,” to illustrate the inclusive nature of the Pilgrimages.¹ A photograph depicted Mike, clothed in traditional Native American dress, waving an American flag in front of other Gold Star Pilgrims. The article also highlighted “poor, feeble” mothers who accepted the Pilgrimage invitation, paying tribute to “those who were not strong enough to walk up the gangway” but chose to undertake a grueling journey to visit the graves of their sons.² The *Times* depicted how a diverse range of Gold Star Pilgrims all embodied the same ideals of motherhood. In doing so, the article illuminated one way the government sought to eliminate the “hyphen” for newly-enfranchised women during an era of social protest—celebrating traditional motherhood as the ideal performance of women’s citizenship.³

The *Times* article illustrated a tension in the government’s Gold Star rhetoric. On one hand, the *Times* framed maternal citizenship as uniform for all women, regardless of race, nationality, class, or ability. On the other, they implemented

practices that marginalized African American women. Gold Star rhetoric, a seemingly “apolitical framework” of maternal citizenship, functioned to maintain what Patricia Hill Collins describes as “the illusion of gender solidarity while allowing hierarchy to be reformulated via actual practices.”⁴ The government publicly celebrated *all* Gold Star mothers as maternal ideals even after the War Department announced that African American women would sail on segregated voyages. Historically black newspapers countered this rhetoric of maternal citizenship, arguing that Gold Star mothers committed to racial uplift must boycott the Pilgrimages. This chapter illustrates how African American women navigated these different ideals of maternal responsibility—one grounded in loyalty to the government and the other based on protesting the government’s restrictions of rights. In both conceptions, maternal citizenship functioned to subordinate black women’s individual rights to the needs of the nation, community, and family.

This chapter analyzes how the rhetorics surrounding the government’s decision to segregate Gold Star Pilgrimages affirmed and challenged ideals of maternal citizenship. Specifically, I argue that African American women confronted conflicting discourses of civic responsibility as they chose to accept or decline Pilgrimage invitations. Through this process, Gold Star rhetoric perpetuated what Salamishah Tillet describes as “civic estrangement.”⁵ After the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment, African American women were “simultaneous citizens and noncitizens” with (unequal) access to the legal rights of citizenship but still excluded from national commemorative practices and many other arenas of public life.⁶ In examining the ascriptive visions of authentic citizenship, this chapter illustrates how

African American women navigated conflicting racial and national ideals of maternal responsibility.

I first provide an overview of how African Americans created, circulated, and challenged rhetorics of authentic citizenship during the Great War era. Next, I analyze how government officials justified the choice to segregate the Gold Star Pilgrimages and how African American leaders responded to these officials' segregation efforts. Finally, I illuminate how Gold Star mothers and widows rhetorically managed these competing conceptions of citizenship, focusing on the ways that African American women (re)defined maternal responsibility through the lens of ascriptive citizenship, particularly intersecting gendered and raced identities in the post-war and post-suffrage years. Such a focus helps contextualize why the decision to segregate Gold Star Pilgrimages became a source of civic estrangement.

Rhetorics of Race, Motherhood, & Authentic Citizenship During the Great War

Reflecting wartime rhetorics of unity, prominent African American activists urged the public to put aside their racial justice efforts to focus all of their energy on the war effort. W. E. B. Du Bois wrote the following in his well-known 1918 "Close Ranks" editorial published in *The Crisis*: "Let us not hesitate. Let us, while this war lasts, forget our special grievances and close our ranks shoulder to shoulder with our own white fellow citizens and the allied nations that are fighting for democracy."⁷ This discourse reflects historian Adriane Lentz-Smith's assertion that "many African Americans looked to use World War I to forestall white supremacy's ascent and to fulfill their quest for racial justice."⁸ Many African Americans like Du Bois used the war opportunistically to prove their loyalty to the nation. War service, after all,

represented the ultimate expression of sacrifice and responsibility so foundational to the social contract.⁹

Some African American leaders viewed wartime service as a means to demonstrate their authentic citizenship. *The Pittsburgh Courier* editor Robert Vann argued that, “When this war shall have ceased, THE NEGRO WILL HAVE ASSUMED HIS RIGHTFUL PLACE IN THE OPINIONS OF AMERICANS.” He could then “ASSERT HIMSELF AS A MAN—not a black man—AS A MAN.”¹⁰ Such wartime service could justify their access to all of the trappings of citizenship, making segregationist practices a relic of the past. Vann believed that African Americans could shed the stigma of “hyphen-ism” through patriotic service on the battleground and homefront.¹¹ The Atlanta Chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) echoed these sentiments in a resolution passed on the same day Wilson called on Congress to declare war on Germany. The resolution read: “The Negro is American first, last, and all the time; that he neither entertains nor tolerates any division in his allegiance to the American Constitution.”¹² Leaders grounded their argument in the belief that the government and the public would reward sacrifice for the common good with equal social and political standing. Over two million African American men answered these calls for patriotic service by registering for the draft and over 370,000 served overseas in segregated units.¹³

Leaders also called on women to embody a patriotic spirit at home and in the community. Some publications called on mothers to urge their sons to enlist, reinforcing the loyalty of African American mothers to the nation. The *Washington*

Bee recounted the story of one woman who stood up during a community meeting and proclaimed, “I have two sons and I offer them to the country.”¹⁴ The publication followed this story up one month later by describing another mother who encouraged her four sons to enlist voluntarily. African American leaders and newspapers called on mothers to embody the spirit of the “Spartan Mother”—positioning a mother’s love of country as greater than the love of her individual sons. The *Bee* wrote, “the mother, as proudly as any matron of Sparta, said she was happy to know she was doing her duty to her country.”¹⁵ The *Bee* utilized these narratives as evidence that the sacrifice of African American mothers would equal her white counterparts.

Many African American women organized wartime support efforts through churches, school associations, and segregated chapters of organizations that did not allow black members.¹⁶ Leaders called on women to suspend their grievances over white women’s racism and to focus their energy on contributing to the public good. Less than a month after Congress declared war on Germany, Martha Venable asserted in the *New York Age* that African American women should “prove our worth now and demand our rights at the proper time.”¹⁷ In particular, she called on African American women to “arouse our people to the proper spirit of patriotism. This is not the time to nurse grievances or present them to our country to right wrongs.”¹⁸ Venable’s letter to the editor reflected the belief that African American women must serve as models of civic responsibility and patriotism for the entire community, echoing the preparedness movement’s rhetorics of symbolic motherhood. She noted that African American women had a responsibility to cultivate patriotism and American values not only for their sons, but for the entire nation.

African American clubwomen also took an active role in cultivating this patriotic spirit through Liberty Loan drives and other fundraising efforts to support segregated troops. The National Association of Colored Women (NACW), for example, raised over \$125 million in order to send care packages and aid to African American soldiers overseas.¹⁹ Clubwomen also engaged in a variety of war relief projects designed to supplement the insufficient supplies that segregated units often received on the battlefield.²⁰ Alice D. Carey, President of the Georgia Federation of Colored Women's Clubs, stated that African American women "spent hours sewing, knitting, making trench candles" and supporting the war effort.²¹ Carey articulated how African American women contributed to the war effort while also negotiating racist rhetorics and the burdens of segregation. As a result, she positioned African American women as the most selfless citizens on the homefront, sacrificing for the nation without asking for equal treatment in return.

Some African American women confronted racialized attacks on their character throughout the Great War. Feminist historian Victoria M. Wolcott asserts that African American women have historically been framed as "inherently licentious and unclean" by white media publications, popular culture, and leaders.²² This racist and sexist stereotype informed social purity discourses throughout the Great War. Many people believed that the domestic training camps for soldiers were breeding grounds for vice and immorality.²³ These fears were substantiated when the Surgeon General reported that venereal disease contracted on the homefront was one of the leading causes of sickness for troops on the battlefield.²⁴ As the nation sought to curb vice at training camps, many members of the public of blamed the rise in venereal

disease on women of color. NACW President Mary Talbert recognized this trend and wrote a letter to all chapters, urging members to stay away from training camps so that African American women would not be blamed for the increase in venereal disease.²⁵ Talbert's letter illustrates Jordyn Jack and Lucy Massagee's assertion that historically "white women's purity was assumed and defended, while African American women had to prove that they were not lascivious and did not seek out male attention."²⁶ Talbert warned NACW members that their perceived actions could perpetuate harmful stereotypes of African American women as inauthentic citizens.

Some women publicly objected to the use of these racial stereotypes by the popular press. One mother, writing as "A Loyal Negro's Mother" for the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, expressed disgust that many white people referred to "poor colored" war mothers as "mammies."²⁷ The mammy stereotype, embedded in the "lexicon of southern mythology," invoked a female slave who took care of white children instead of her own biological offspring.²⁸ In this *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* article, the mother challenged this stereotype when she wrote: "Colored mothers have to suffer and shed as much blood for her children as any white mother."²⁹ She asserted black and white mothers equally performed the primary duty of maternal citizenship—producing soldiers for the nation. In light of this fact, the mother incredulously asked how white men could question the authenticity of African Americans' citizenship:

The colored boys have gone at the call of the stars and stripes, willing to shed their blood and die for the country, for me and all other Americans. The colored men have fought in every war America has ever had and helped win freedom and Independence, and all other wars. Just think, the first blood ever shed was by a negro. The biggest majority of the white mothers and ladies and white gentlemen were raised by old black bigger mammies, without a doubt. . . Now, my white brother, let's quit criticizing the poor black soldier and the

black mammies and respect us as American citizens, for we certainly deserve it.³⁰

This mother argued that African Americans deserved equal civic rights because they fought for the nation even when the nation did not protect their rights as citizens. She implied that African Americans embodied authentic citizenship more than immigrants and other naturalized citizens because their ancestors had fought for the nation since the Revolutionary War. Through the use of historical evidence, she made the case that African Americans consistently prioritized the nation over all other allegiances.

African American women argued that their wartime service, in spite of segregation and racialized stereotypes, illustrated their right to full citizenship. Alice Dunbar-Nelson reflected this in her comprehensive account of African American women's war work.³¹ The Council of National Defense appointed Dunbar-Nelson, a popular author and well-known clubwoman, to serve as the coordinator for segregated war relief efforts in the South.³² She observed that African American women "asked for no odds, remembered no grudges, solicited no favors, and asked for no privileges. They came by the thousands, hands wide open to give of love and service and patriotism. It was enough for them that their country was at war."³³ Dunbar-Nelson's writing reflects what Melissa V. Harris-Perry calls the "self-sacrificial strength" used as a foundation for the "social construction" of African American women's citizenship.³⁴ Dunbar-Nelson reinforced this construct as she described how African American women responded when white women refused to fully admit them into war relief organizations:

They offered their services and gave them freely, in whatever form was most pleasing to the local organizations of white women. They accepted without a murmur the place assigned to them in the ranks. They placed national need

before the local prejudice; they put great heartedness and pure patriotism above the ancient creed of racial antagonism.³⁵

Dunbar-Nelson argued that African American women fulfilled their civic responsibility by rising above blatant racism and supporting the nation. She further described why African American women should be lauded as civic ideals during war: “For pure, unalloyed unselfishness of the highest order, the conduct of the Negro women of the United States of the world war stands out in splendid relief, a lesson to the entire world of what womanhood of the best type really means.”³⁶ Black women citizens, Harris-Perry notes, are expected to embody an “irrepressible spirit” that endures and overcomes “intersecting” oppressions and trauma.³⁷ Reflecting this spirit, Dunbar-Nelson made clear that racial injustice did not repress African American women’s patriotic service to the nation. Instead, she made the case that women who served the nation in spite of segregation should be lauded as models of authentic citizenship.

African American women consequently had to balance their need to “accommodate or resist” segregation all the while trying to support the war effort and assert themselves as authentic citizens.³⁸ This tension between national and racial responsibilities ultimately framed at least part of Gold Star Pilgrimage discourse. Government officials expected Gold Star Pilgrims to similarly accept segregated voyages as a means to commemorate their sons’ sacrifice for the nation. At the same time, African American leaders expected Gold Star Pilgrims to sacrifice their opportunity to visit graves as a form of protest and a way to embody an “‘authentic performance’ of black womanhood.”³⁹ Discourses of racial uplift arose after the post-war promise of racial equality did not materialize.

Rhetorics of Race, Motherhood, and Authentic Citizenship in Post-War America

As the war ended, many questioned why African Americans died for the freedom of foreign countries when they did not experience that freedom at home. *The Messenger* founders, A. Phillip Randolph and Chandler Owen, captured this sentiment in 1919: “We are not concerned any longer about any loose and meaningless praise of the Negroes part in the war. What we are concerned about is granting the Negroes the rights and privileges to which they are entitled as citizens.”⁴⁰ Randolph and Owen articulated the widely-held belief that the nation did not fulfill their end of the social contract with African Americans after the war. They reminded readers that wartime service was not honored by the nation with full citizenship for African Americans: “*the loyalty of the oppressed to the oppressor does not result in the securing liberty for the oppressed.*”⁴¹ Instead of returning to equal protections, many African American soldiers returned to heightened levels of racial violence and rhetorics of white supremacy.⁴² Many leaders accordingly shifted their discourse from rhetorics of national loyalty to rhetorics of community responsibility.

This shift in discourse also coincided with the second rise of the Ku Klux Klan in the United States. The Klan stoked fears that returned African American and immigrant soldiers could use their combat training to demand equal treatment for their services rendered during the war.⁴³ *The Watcher on the Tower*, a Washington Klan-funded publication, articulated why the Klan rejected people of color as authentic soldiers, arguing that it perpetuated the notion “of racial equality into the heads of the colored races. This tends to create strife, in that the colored man in many instances is ignorant enough to believe that such should be and consequently attempts

to take a place with the white man in social and political affairs.”⁴⁴ Throughout the post-war years, the Klan gained significant popularity throughout the nation and boasted that 16 U.S. Senators were active members of their organization.⁴⁵ By 1924, the same year of the first congressional Gold Star Pilgrimage hearing, Klan membership reach over four million.⁴⁶

The Klan sought to frame maternal citizenship as synonymous with white motherhood. Kathleen M. Blee notes that the Klan urged mothers to take an active role in preserving white, Protestant superiority through private and public action.⁴⁷ Members of the Women of the Ku Klux Klan (WKKK) held national and state leadership positions in numerous patriotic organizations, including the American War Mothers.⁴⁸ One WKKK advertisement emphasized their role as the authentic mothers of the nation: “The duty of the American Mother today is greater than ever before . . . IT IS YOUR DUTY TO RESPOND.”⁴⁹ The WKKK called on white Protestant women to “protect” all national institutions from the dangers of racial equality.⁵⁰ Many African American leaders argued that community members must prioritize protecting one another and teaching their children racial pride to counter this hate-filled rhetoric and violence.

African American leaders called on communities to organize and fight back against lynching attempts and other forms of racial injustice.⁵¹ A *Washington Bee* editorial stated: “The black man is loyal to his country and his flag, and when his country fails to protect him, he means to protect himself.”⁵² The editorial argued that the government and white Americans betrayed African Americans by not rewarding war sacrifices with equal rights guarantees. In May 1919, after the first major race

riots, Du Bois published an essay entitled “Returning Soldiers,” in which he explicated the civic responsibilities of returning African American soldiers. By this point, Du Bois had shifted his stance back to that of a civil rights activist and away from wartime patriot. He outlined the many transgressions of white society against African Americans and ended his essay with a plea for African Americans to join together in the fight for equality: “We are cowards and jackasses if now that war is over, we do not marshal every ounce of our brain and brawn to fight a sterner, longer, more unbending battle against the forces of hell in our own land. *We return. We return from fighting. We return fighting.*”⁵³ Du Bois urged African Americans to fight back against racial injustice, reflecting rhetorics of racial uplift.

Many white Americans viewed these rhetorics as an unwanted renegotiation of racial norms. Government officials posited that protests against racial injustice did not embody “true” American values, functioning instead as “Bolshevik” propaganda in the Red Scare era.⁵⁴ Newspaper editorials also decried African American veterans who no longer abided by norms of segregation and advocated for equal treatment in public spaces. A 1919 editorial from the *New York Times* reflected this sentiment: “The majority of negroes in Washington before the war were well behaved . . . most of them admitted the superiority of the white race, and troubles between the two races were undreamed of.”⁵⁵ The editorial described how the war emboldened African Americans to fight for civil rights, removing the “politeness” between the races. In a 1921 speech, President Warren G. Harding reflected the belief that African Americans should not attempt to challenge the norms of segregation. He stated:

Men of both races may well stand uncompromisingly against every suggestion of social equality. Indeed, it would be helpful to have that word ‘equality’

eliminated from this consideration; to have it accepted by both sides that it is not a question of social equality, but a question of recognizing a fundamental, eternal, and inescapable difference. We shall have made real progress when we develop an attitude in the public and community of thought of both races which recognizes this difference.⁵⁶

This line of reasoning reflected in Harding's speech created a dichotomy between what sociologist Randolph Hohle describes as the "racially nonthreatening good black citizen" who sought to conform to political norms and inauthentic citizens who defied segregation and challenged claims of national unity.⁵⁷ African American women had to navigate the tension between the government's civic (and racist) ideal and the ideal communicated through rhetorics of racial uplift.

African American women articulated their place in this "New Negro" movement.⁵⁸ Hallie Q. Brown, NACW President, argued that African American women needed to focus on issues solely pertaining to racial uplift. She wrote in a letter to NACW members, "Now as never before must Negro Women stand solidly together for the elevation of her own to the very highest and best in spiritual, intellectual and industrial achievement."⁵⁹ Brown described the historical connection between African American women's civic duty, motherhood, and the advancement of the race. This illustrates scholar Anne Meis Knupfer's assertion that African American clubwomen reshaped republican motherhood ideologies and "wove" those "threads of motherhood into the very fabric of the race's destiny."⁶⁰ Women's primary goal, according to movement leaders, was to ensure that children be educated with a sense of racial pride. Educator Elise Johnson McDougal wrote that the New Negro woman is "measuring up to the needs of her family, community and race, and radiating a hope throughout the land. The wind of the race's destiny stirs more briskly

because of her striving.”⁶¹ Similar to the ideology of republican motherhood, the New Negro woman was tasked with educating children about what it meant to be a good citizen. However, this education was not for the benefit of the nation, but explicitly for the advancement of African Americans.

The New Negro movement sought to frame racial uplift as the most authentic performance of maternal citizenship. Popular writer E. Azalia Hackley described how “a colored mother lives not only for herself, and for her children, but for the race. A colored mother is a success in the way she measures up to her relation and obligation to her race.”⁶² Hackley’s writing reflected calls for African American mothers to raise their children to work for the advancement of the race. She argued that the mother did not live for herself or her son, but to ensure the uplift of her community. Regarding this link between biological motherhood and community, Patricia Hill Collins writes that “conceptualizing family as intricately linked with both community and nation effectively joins women’s activity in socializing the young in individual households to that of transmitting the symbols, meanings, and culture of the Black nation itself.”⁶³ Maternal citizenship, for many African American women, was intimately tied to countering racist narratives and policies perpetuated throughout the nation. These tensions between racial and national loyalty shaped Gold Star discourse as African American women navigated the segregation controversy.

Rhetorics of Race, Gender and Commemoration in Post-War America

Government officials and white community leaders excluded African American soldiers from post-war commemorations. The War Department forbade African American soldiers from marching in a 1919 Allied victory parade in Paris. In

his 1923 recounting of the parade, Charles H. Williams observed that “other nations had all the races that fought under their flags in line” while the African American soldier “alone in this day of glory was the Disowned, Disinherited.”⁶⁴ Many of the same soldiers barred from participating in the parade were assigned the grim responsibility of reburying American soldiers in government-funded overseas cemeteries. Throughout the summer months of 1919, some 6,000 African American soldiers dug up, identified, and reburied over 30 miles of decomposed bodies to create the Argonne National Cemetery in Romagne, France.⁶⁵ The government would not allow black bodies to be celebrated on an international stage but used their labor to create official commemorative sites.

African Americans were also excluded from many of the organizations that created, funded, and designed local commemorations.⁶⁶ The American Gold Star Mother Association restricted membership to white women citizens.⁶⁷ The American War Mothers’ national bylaws extended membership to all “blood mothers” of veterans or deceased service members, but the organization allowed states to create their own rules regarding segregation.⁶⁸ The American Legion and VFW barred African American members in some chapters and created racially segregated groups in other regions.⁶⁹ As a result, most functional and living memorials funded by these organizations and dedicated to the memory of local soldiers did not include the names or images of African American soldiers. For example, the Natchez Memorial Hall in Mississippi, dedicated in 1924, excluded the names of over 500 local African American soldiers who died in battle.⁷⁰ Many African Americans objected to these erasures and created their own commemorative projects.⁷¹

African American community members framed post-war commemoration as an extension of their fight for racial justice. These intersecting efforts could be found in a wide variety of rhetorical forms including: poetry, paintings, photography, and memoirs.⁷² Commemorative organizations highlighted African American soldiers' fight for racial equality instead of national patriotism. For example, the Society of Wives, Mothers, and Relatives of U.S. Negro Soldiers and Sailors called on every city to start a chapter in order to "fight for that democracy for which many of their men died on the battlefields of France."⁷³ The Society argued that African American women must continue soldiers' fight for racial equality to honor those who died or were wounded in battle.⁷⁴ Jennifer Wingate notes that Chicago's *World War Black Soldiers' Memorial*, dedicated in 1928, is one of the few memorials to visually depict African Americans during the interwar years.⁷⁵ The *Pittsburgh Courier* noted that the memorial served as a critical reminder of the war's unfulfilled promise of equality. The article reminded readers that "an extraordinary exhibition of patriotism" by African American soldiers killed in action should have been "fittingly rewarded by the abolition of lynchings, peonage, segregation and discrimination."⁷⁶ Instead, the *Courier* described how the African American community confronted seemingly worse conditions and that "[t]he fact that they laid down their lives in vain is all the more reason why the account of their fruitless sacrifice should be carved deep down in marble and bronze."⁷⁷ The article reflected the belief that war commemoration must confront and indict the post-war conditions of African Americans in the United States.

Throughout the early 1920s, the NACW and other African American women's organizations advocated to halt a proposed national "Mammy" memorial. In 1923, the Senate passed a bill that authorized the Jefferson Davis chapter of the UDC to build a monument dedicated to the "the faithful colored mammies of the south" in Washington DC.⁷⁸ The proposed memorial not only celebrated slavery, but also functioned to communicate how African American women should embody their newly enfranchised citizenship status. This reflects historian Micki McElya's assertion that the "[t]he UDC hoped that the mammy's mythic traits of loyalty and contentment with slavery might be a model" for African American women that would dissuade them from challenging "segregation, disenfranchisement, and white privilege."⁷⁹ The proposed memorial situated African American women's citizenship as intertwined with service to white America. In doing so, the UDC and government officials sought to define African American maternal citizenship in a way that undercut civil rights activism. African American women, this argument implied, should only be celebrated for their ability to mother white children.

The NACW vigorously protested the Senate vote through letter writing campaigns, editorials, and public speeches.⁸⁰ They argued that the memorial exalted a form of servitude that ripped biological children away from their enslaved mothers. In a letter to *The Evening Star* editors, Mary Church Terrell decried the monument, explaining that it represented "the anguish of heart and the physical suffering which mothers and grandmothers of the race for nearly 800 years" endured.⁸¹ She described how "the black mammy was often faithful in the service of her mistress's children while her heart bled over her own babies, who were thus deprived of their mother's

ministrations and tender care.”⁸² Terrell argued that the proposed memorial treated black maternal citizenship as intertwined with service to white women. The *Afro American* described the monument as “an effort to glorify the type of ante-bellum Negro slave who did not aspire for American citizenship.”⁸³ Editors noted that elected officials voted to commemorate a racist stereotype while they refused to memorialize soldiers who died for the nation, illustrating how the government did not view African Americans as authentic American citizens.

After President Hoover signed the Pilgrimage bill in 1929, African American newspapers lauded the voyages as a turning point for racial equality because the legislation did not mandate segregated accommodations. The *Afro-American* celebrated that every Gold Star mother, regardless of race, class, and nationality, would be officially and equally honored by the government. The article read: “It is assured that invitations will reach every section of the country and almost every nationality of the civilized world, as many of the soldiers and sailors buried on foreign soil . . . were of foreign parentage.”⁸⁴ The publication assured readers that all Gold Star Pilgrims would travel on “first class steamers with first class accommodations from start to return.”⁸⁵ The publication expressed optimism that the Pilgrimages could function as a turning point in their fight against segregation, heralding the beginning of the end of Jim-Crow era segregation.

The *Chicago Defender* also praised the Pilgrimages as a symbol of reconciliation offered “by a benevolent American government” that finally rewarded African American’s equal sacrifice during war.⁸⁶ Articles described how African American Gold Star mothers across the nation rejoiced at the news of the

Pilgrimages. A November 1929 article, published shortly after the legislation passed, described how an elderly Gold Star mother “who had given two sons sobbed when she heard that she could see her son’s graves. ‘Now I can rest easier,’ she cried gladly, ‘and now my boys will also rest easier now that they know I have at last found them.’”⁸⁷ The article expressed how Pilgrimages would function to honor African American soldiers and mothers as full citizens.

African American leaders initially framed the Pilgrimages as a responsibility of maternal citizenship, urging mothers and widows to accept the invitation. The *Defender* described how Gold Star Pilgrims “are entitled to a free trip to Europe where there is absolute freedom, at least from racial prejudices, and should lose no time in taking advantage of their opportunity.”⁸⁸ Leaders believed that Gold Star Pilgrims would return from the Pilgrimages prepared to fight for the equality they experienced during their European travels. This reflected how France functioned as what historian Chad L. Williams describes as a “metaphorical beacon for racial equality” throughout the Great War era.⁸⁹ Williams notes that the black press lauded African American soldiers’ experience in an “equal” France as the impetus for their activism when they returned home.⁹⁰ Over ten years later, black newspapers urged prospective Gold Star Pilgrims to experience equality on the voyages and then fight to recreate those conditions in their hometowns. One publication wrote: “The *Defender* calls upon all war mothers and widows to regard it as their sacred duty to go to Europe.”⁹¹ The *Defender* articulated Gold Star Pilgrims’ civic responsibilities in a post-war America. First, she must uplift her race through the Pilgrimages, continuing her departed loved ones’ fight for equality. Second, she must travel on the non-

segregated voyages to demonstrate how African Americans equally sacrificed for the nation and deserved the equal treatment as a reward for those sacrifices.

The Department of War announced the Pilgrimages would be segregated in March 1930, only weeks before the first official voyage. The single sentence announcement stated: “Invitations to mothers and widows of the Negro race shall be extended for such a time as will permit the organization of separate groups of such mothers and widows.”⁹² Unlike non-segregated voyages where Pilgrims traveled with women from their local communities, the government announced African American Pilgrims would travel in groups with women from around the nation.⁹³ The new policy prompted a swift reaction from African American leaders. The editorial team of *The Pittsburgh Courier* released a statement that indicted Hoover’s administration: “We hereby inform the War Department and the present administration, earnestly and solemnly, that if it carries out its despicable jim crow plan on this Pilgrimage that the action will never be forgotten by the Negro voters of this country.”⁹⁴ The *Courier* and other publications called on the elected officials and the Department of War to justify their decision to segregate the Pilgrimages, explaining that “[n]o amount of appeals to party loyalty or no conjuring up of images of Lincoln and Roosevelt will ever make the colored citizens of this nation forget the worst of its insults, this last straw of jim crowism.”⁹⁵ Representative Robert L. Bacon (R-NY) was one of the first to respond to NAACP and media inquiries through telegram, explaining to the black press “that there is no discrimination” intended in the decision to segregate the voyages.⁹⁶ Brown wrote that the War Department would further explain the so-called benevolent reasons behind their decision at a later date.

After months of backlash, Secretary of War Patrick N. Hurley explained the government's decision-making process. He argued: "After thorough study, the conclusion was reached that the formation of white and colored groups of mothers and widows would best assure the contentment and comfort of the Pilgrims themselves. No discrimination between the various groups is contemplated."⁹⁷ Hurley's statement represented the "separate but equal" doctrine codified within Jim Crow policies.⁹⁸ Reflecting this doctrine, Hurley explained, the "War Department will, at all times, be solicitous of the welfare of colored mothers and widows as they will be of the welfare of those of the white race."⁹⁹ He described how the War Department wanted to lessen the stress of travel by "not disturbing the normal contacts of individual Pilgrims. It is natural to assume that these mothers would prefer to seek solace in their grief with companions of their own race."¹⁰⁰ The government did not provide any further explanation for their shift in policy. This decision was lauded by Southern, white Gold Star mothers who thanked the Secretary of War for not giving in to the protests of the NAACP and other radical groups.¹⁰¹ Black newspapers strongly protested the decision and encouraged Gold Star mothers and widows to boycott the voyages.

Separate and Unequal: Defining Women's Ideal Responses to Segregation

The controversy escalated when the War Department revealed the travel plans for the segregated Pilgrimages. The non-segregated voyages would travel to France on luxury steamliners, while the segregated voyages would travel on mixed-freight vessels that transported cargo and occasionally accommodated small groups of travelers.¹⁰² Many black newspapers protested that this illustrated how the

government viewed African American Pilgrims as separate and unequal citizens. The *Defender* published a poem depicting an imagined conversation between the Secretary of War and an aide who questioned the decision to charter mixed-freight ships. The aide asked, “But, sir, we’ve shown in every way that she must keep her place,/I thought perhaps this time/We’d show a little grace.”¹⁰³ The aide observed that all aspects of American society were designed to instruct an African American woman about her unequal status. However, the aide reasoned that a Gold Star Pilgrim earned an equal experience due to her sacrifice for the nation. The poem imagined the Secretary of War’s response for this plea of equality: “Our banner is unfurled,/And we must teach our hatred/To the just ones of the world/So put her in the steerage,/A dark and stinking hole,/With the hatches tightly fastened/When the wild waves roll.”¹⁰⁴ The Secretary of War, according to this poem, sought to exploit African American Gold Star Pilgrims as symbols of segregation instead of national sacrifices and patriotic expressions.

As they condemned the War Department’s decision, black newspapers also articulated expectations for African American maternal citizenship. These publications expressed sympathy for mothers but argued that the pain of one mother could not outweigh the collective pain of racial injustice. The *Afro-American* reminded prospective Gold Star Pilgrims that: “There are some factors in human feelings which outweigh even the mother-love which would make one brush aside every consideration to stand beside the grave of a dead hero son.”¹⁰⁵ Publications argued that a mother’s desire to assuage her individual grief could not mitigate the harm Gold Star segregations inflicted on the entire black community. This reflects

Patricia Hill Collins' theory that black women's political actions are often expected to embody a "paradigm of individual sacrifice" in service of "racial solidarity."¹⁰⁶ Gold Star mothers, newspapers implied, could not reconcile the Pilgrimages with their responsibility to uplift the race. A *Defender* editorial noted that, "while the trip to France means much to those mothers and widows of heroes buried over there, it cannot possibly mean as much as the disgrace of going over on Jim Crow ships will mean."¹⁰⁷ Publications called on mothers to promote the public good over their own maternal desire to see the graves of their sons. In their "willing[ness] to be segregated," black newspapers claimed that Gold Star mothers would allow "one of the most damnable insults offered to a race in the history of these United States" to occur.¹⁰⁸ Pilgrimage segregation was so egregious, leaders maintained, because it magnified that African American soldiers died for an ideal of freedom and "a democracy their own families will never know."¹⁰⁹ Gold Star widows and mothers, they insisted, must continue their loved ones' fight for a democracy grounded in equality.

Many African American leaders maintained that Gold Star Pilgrims could not simultaneously fight for full citizenship and sail on voyages that invoked memories of slavery. They argued that the use of mixed-cargo ships harkened back to the transatlantic slave trade, where people were treated as cargo. Scholars note that the "legacies of racial slavery" are explicitly and implicitly infused in formations of "American citizenship."¹¹⁰ Women who accepted the invitations, publications warned, would allow the conditions of slavery to be visibly replicated through the segregated voyages. The *Afro-American* described the Pilgrimages as a "cruel,

inhumane” return to the slave-master dichotomy: “Three hundred and more years ago white men brought Negro women across the water in chains. Now they are sending a group of the descendants of these women back across the water, who went down to the valley of sacrifice to give them sons who died in the country’s service, back across the water not in chains, but worse.”¹¹¹ These metaphorical chains were worse than physical chains, the article implied, because Gold Star Pilgrims did not need to be forced onto the ships. She “sold” her racial pride, according to this line of reasoning, for the chance to visit the grave of her loved one. The “chains” that bound women to ships were framed as a Pilgrim’s loyalty to a nation that openly oppressed and segregated her people. The *Defender* lamented that “our mothers and widows, like galley slaves, should sneak aboard Jim Crow ships . . . with heads bowed with the shame and disgrace of it all.”¹¹² These women were described as willingly shackling themselves to a voyage that reinforced and perpetuated a history of oppression against African Americans. One *Pittsburgh Courier* editorial described Gold Star mothers as “crowded upon cattle ships like our ancestors . . . shipped to foreign shores like cargo, segregated and despised.”¹¹³ The women who accepted the Pilgrimage invitation were framed as recreating the shame and humiliation of the slave trade.

Publications described Gold Star widows and mothers’ responsibility to embody the sacrifice of their fallen soldier and continue his fight for full citizenship. In doing so, they asked the women to ignore their own maternal grief and instead turn their attention to uplifting the whole community. Many publications implied that a woman must reject the Pilgrimage in order to honor men’s sacrifice—not as a protest for her own equal treatment. The *Defender* warned prospective Pilgrims that “no

mother would knowingly disgrace the memory of her son by going to his grave under Jim Crow auspices.”¹¹⁴ Editorials maintained that Gold Star mothers must act in accordance with their deceased sons imagined wishes: “Any mother . . . knows what it cost them to make such a decision, but it is what their dead sons, if they could know, would have them do it.”¹¹⁵ *The Pittsburgh Courier* called on “churches, clubs, societies, businesses, associations, leagues, and individuals to get busy and flood the White House with strong protest” against the segregation in order to honor the memory of African American soldiers who died on overseas battlefields. Instead of framing the protest on behalf of the mothers and widows, the *Courier* called on the community to act on behalf of “those who twelve years ago on the fields of fair France fell before the hail of bullets from the common foe.”¹¹⁶

Some black newspapers publicly shamed the individual women who accepted the Pilgrimage invitations, questioning their Gold Star status. Gold Star Pilgrims, they reasoned, aligned themselves with a government that stands for “prejudice, hypocrisy, and racial hatred” instead of their own race.¹¹⁷ Publications implied that a real black citizen would never choose a segregated voyage over racial solidarity. When the first segregated Pilgrimage departed from New York, the *Defender* published the Pilgrims’ full names and hometowns under a large title of: “Their Sons Died for Segregation.”¹¹⁸ The *Afro-American* captioned a photograph of the same women with “War Mothers Waving the Flag which allows them to be Jim Crowed.”¹¹⁹ Frank Crosswaith, Negro Labor Committee founder, created a script that imagined how Gold Star Pilgrims should have rejected the invitation:

‘Though we are eager to rest our tear-stained eyes upon the spot where sleep in a foreign land our loved ones, we would much rather they rest undisturbed

where they now lay than to bend our knees over the hallowed spot and suffer our womanhood and racial pride to be wounded so brazenly. Our Gold Star has been turned to dross.’¹²⁰

Women who chose to visit the graves of their sons, according to Crosswaith, could no longer embody the Gold Star ideal. He argued that African American women’s “Gold Star” turned to “dross” or rubbish the moment women accepted the terms of the segregated trips. His column reflected the belief that a Gold Star Pilgrim rendered the ultimate sacrifice of a loved one meaningless if she embarked on a segregated voyage to his grave.

Government officials challenged black newspapers’ depiction of the segregated voyages. Secretary Hurley countered these protests by stating that “true” Gold Star Pilgrims did not mind being segregated, and the controversy was manufactured by “agitators” like the NAACP and black press.¹²¹ Hurley implied that a mother’s love for her son and country should supersede all other concerns. The government released press statements, describing how African American Gold Star Pilgrims experienced an “official greeting” at City Hall in New York from the mayor and other gathered officials.¹²² They also reported that the segregated Pilgrimages received a “rousing welcome” from adoring crowds in France, met with Major General John J. Pershing, the leader of the American Expeditionary Forces during the war, at a “tea given in their honor,” and enjoyed special performances by a jazz band.¹²³

The War Department also strongly relied on the narratives of returned Pilgrims to strengthen their argument that African American Pilgrims were treated “equally” on the voyages.¹²⁴ The *Washington Post* noted that after African American

Gold Star mothers heard directly from their returned counterparts, they “reconsidered and have accepted the invitation of the War Department.”¹²⁵ The *Post* later claimed that no Gold Star mothers “making the trip minded the segregation. To them it is an old problem and is accepted by a matter of course.”¹²⁶ The African American mothers ultimately faced a dilemma in whether to honor their sons by making the Pilgrimage in support of patriotic nationalism or by protesting ongoing forms of segregation in support of their community.

Accept or Decline: Reconciling National and Racial Civic Ideals

In the midst of this highly contentious debate about the meaning of segregation, Gold Star mothers and widows were required to respond to the government’s official invitation. Of the 600 African American mothers and widows deemed eligible for the Pilgrimage, 279 women accepted the invitation.¹²⁷ Many women publicly justified their decision to accept or refuse the Pilgrimage invitation.

Some Gold Star mothers and widows publicly refused their invitations, framing their refusal as an act of maternal responsibility. Fifty-five mothers and widows signed an anti-segregation petition created by the NAACP, which described African American women’s responsibility to fight for the equality their loved ones died for overseas. The petition began: “I wish to protest against the gratuitous insult in the attitude of the War Department and the United States in segregating colored Gold Star mothers.”¹²⁸ The petition described how it would betray the memory of their loved ones’ sacrifice if they traveled on “Jim Crowed” ships when their soldiers died so that the “world might be a better place in which to live for all men, of all races, and all colors.”¹²⁹ The signers argued that they would not dishonor their sons’

memory by choosing to sail on segregated Pilgrimages. The *Philadelphia Tribune* published letters from 25 Gold Star Pilgrims who refused the government's invitation.¹³⁰ They described the women's public protest as a "fight against the surrender of the cardinal virtues of justice and equality of all citizens of the United States irrespective of the color of their skins."¹³¹ The *Tribune* urged other Pilgrims to cancel their scheduled voyages, citing the women who refused the trip as "immortal" ideals of black, maternal citizenship.¹³²

In the letters published by the *Tribune*, some Gold Star Pilgrims articulated how their decision to refuse the Pilgrimage reflected a commitment to national values. Gold Star mother Carrie J. Brown wrote to the Secretary of War that the decision to segregate betrayed "the cause for which my son died."¹³³ She argued that her son died for international equality and the Pilgrimages represented a "humiliating" return to bondage. Brown ended her letter with an historical quote: "As Mr. Patrick Henry said: 'Give me liberty or give me death.' I hope Pres. Hoover will see this in like manner and not allow segregation on so Solemn of an occasion."¹³⁴ By invoking Henry's speech, Brown positioned the decision to segregate Gold Star Pilgrimages as a battle over the meaning of equality and freedom in a post-war America. Like Henry, Brown asserted the cause she championed was a matter of "freedom or slavery."¹³⁵ Brown's letter reflects historian Chad L. Williams's assertion that many African Americans after Armistice Day committed themselves "to winning a more protracted and potentially painful war for full citizenship rights in the United States, lest their sacrifice in war be in vain."¹³⁶ Women who rejected the invitations framed the Pilgrimages as a battle in their war for full citizenship.

Similarly, the Baptist Ministers' Conference of Pittsburgh released a statement describing these Gold Star mothers as "heroines and patriots" that history books would one day laud as leaders in the fight for true equality. The conference chairman wrote: "The Gold Star mothers who refused the jim crow transportation to the graves of their loved ones in France have displayed the highest respect to American ideals in refusing to visit the graves of their sons in a dishonored and ignoble role."¹³⁷ Gold Star mother Emma Houston also echoed this argument, arguing that her son's death and her Pilgrimage protest were "in defense of American democracy." She wrote to President Hoover:

As a Gold Star mother, I earnestly protest the insult to the living as wanton and unnecessary act. It is inconceivable that a government founded on the principles of fraternity, equality, and even-handed justice could so cruelly wound the bleeding hearts of mothers whose sons have given their all for freedom's cause.¹³⁸

Both Houston and Brown articulated their responsibility to fight for equality in honor of their fallen sons. African American women were compelled to justify why their decision to protest the Pilgrimages did not dishonor their loved ones' memory.

Protest letters framed their decision to reject the invitation as the embodiment of civic sacrifice. Mothers and widows asserted that they would willingly sacrifice their only chance to visit the overseas graves in order to take a stand against segregation. Widow Ciara B. Taylor described how she waited over ten years to visit the grave of her husband but refused to visit his final resting place under segregated conditions. She wrote: "As a Gold Star widow, I empathetically protest the insult and will not board a JIM CROW ship to visit the grave of a soldier, of a race of people who stands for right and who is not afraid to fight for its country."¹³⁹ Taylor

emphasized that she would make this personal sacrifice in order to uplift her community and fight for equality. Similarly, Gold Star mother Margaret King asserted that she “long[ed] to visit the resting place of her one and only beloved son” but could never betray her race by accepting a “Jim-Crow invitation.”¹⁴⁰ King positioned the Pilgrimage invitation as a choice between her individual desire to mourn as a mother and her responsibility to uplift the race.

Gold Star mothers and widows who published their letters in the *Tribune* described this tension between a personal desire to visit the overseas graves and a responsibility to embody their loved ones’ sacrifices for equality. Mabel Johnson wrote: “I wish to most empathetically state that despite my intense desire to visit the grave of my husband, I should feel that I would be offering an insult to his memory and the great sacrifice that he has made for his country and his race if I were to accept such a Jim Crow segregation.”¹⁴¹ Similar to white Pilgrimage advocates, Johnson asserted that women had a unique responsibility to commemorate the patriotic sacrifice of men. However, she reframed this as a responsibility to oppose racist government policies. Johnson continued:

If my country and his is so devoid of any feeling of appreciation and gratitude for his noble service that Negroes gave and were willing to give in the World War, as to repay these sacrifices by heralding to the world that even among the honored dead, there must be with Americans a discrimination, a difference, then I will not be a party to this conspiracy against the dead, nor do I think any other self-respecting War Mother or widow shall accept such an invitation.¹⁴²

Johnson articulated a sharp distinction between “self-respecting” African American women who rejected segregation and those who accepted a “Jim-Crowed” invitation. She implied that any Gold Star mother or widow who accepted a Pilgrimage

invitation chose her own self-interests over racial uplift. Feminist scholar Pauline Terrelonge asserts that African American communities often “regard the role of uniting” the race as the “primary duty of the black woman, one that should supersede all other roles she might want to perform.”¹⁴³ As a result, women who acted out of self-interest instead of racial uplift could be labeled as what scholar Shelly Eversley describes as “imitation whites.”¹⁴⁴ African American Pilgrims responded to these charges of race betrayal.

African American Pilgrims defended their choice to accept the Pilgrimage invitation, also framing their choice as a performance of maternal citizenship. One Gold Star mother described the segregation controversy as a “a matter of politics” whereas her maternal duty to visit the grave of her son transcended political debate.¹⁴⁵ Another Gold Star mother explained to the *Afro-American* why she chose not to boycott: “Ever since I lost my son in 1918, I have been waiting to come. I would have come over on a cattle-boat, I would have swam over if possible.”¹⁴⁶ The mother asserted that her responsibility to commemorate her son superseded her responsibility to protest the segregation. Echoing wartime calls for patriotism by African American leaders, she explained: “I love my race as strongly to any other, but when I heard that the United States was going to send us over, I could not refuse.”¹⁴⁷ She described how the intersections of maternal and patriotic duty compelled her to accept the Pilgrimage invitation.

Invoking the social contract, another Gold Star mother described the Pilgrimages as a just payment for her sacrifice during the war. Many Gold Star mothers observed that if African American leaders encouraged sons to fight under

segregated conditions then they should not mandate that mothers refuse trips due to segregation. The Gold Star mother Mamie Sills exemplified this line of reasoning, describing why she chose to ignore boycott calls:

“I’m going if there don’t nobody go but myself. Was the color line drawn [sic] when the Lord put us all on one boat? . . . He was right up there fightin’ and now the Government’s fixed it so I can go see his grave, the only way I could be treated any better would be to be going to heaven, tell them I said so and let the world read it.”¹⁴⁸

Sills questioned why African American leaders expected mothers to sacrifice their sons during the war and then expected mothers to sacrifice their one chance to visit the graves. Sills also challenged the “paradigm of individual sacrifice” by asserting her right to choose an individual reward from the government over calls for racial solidarity.¹⁴⁹ While justifying their decision to accept the invitation, Pilgrims discussed how their voyage allowed them to heal personally from the trauma of their sons’ death and finally experience equal treatment in France.

Challenging the rhetoric of segregation protests, Gold Star Pilgrims framed their trips as a lesson in the true meaning of “liberty.”¹⁵⁰ Some Pilgrims noted that boycotting the voyage would be the same as trying to “chang[e] the leopard’s spots” by painting them.¹⁵¹ Echoing early calls by black newspapers, Gold Star Pilgrims argued that the voyages allowed them to experience the equality many African American soldiers experienced in France. The *Afro-American* summarized Pilgrims’ descriptions of their time in France: “Many of them have seen in reality what they have undoubtedly felt; that human beings, so far as color is concerned can live in the same hotels, eat at the same restaurants, travel in the same conveyances, and get along with the same tranquility as the colored and white dead lying side by side in the

cemeteries they have visited.”¹⁵² The article described how Gold Star Pilgrims would return to America energized to recreate these conditions of equality in their hometowns. Women who accepted the voyages asserted that it was hypocritical for black newspapers to celebrate soldiers for learning about equality in France and condemn their mothers and widows for desiring the same experience.

These Gold Star Pilgrims challenged black newspapers’ harsh criticism of their civic choices. Some Gold Star Pilgrims questioned whether leaders who condemned Pilgrims ever spoke to a Gold Star mother from the Deep South about her voyage preferences. One newspaper editorial argued that “to force the mixing of white and black Gold Star mothers on the trip to Europe” illustrated the difference between the “uppity” opinions of northern African Americans and the “common sense” of southern African Americans.¹⁵³ They opined that southern, black Gold Star mothers did not want to “share the same cabin” for weeks with openly racist white women. Another letter to the editor questioned if it would truly be an exercise in equality for African Americans to travel with a “bevy of white women” who may actively take part in lynchings or cross-burnings.¹⁵⁴ In the *Afro-American*, One Gold Star mother spoke directly to other Gold Star mothers:

Every effort was made to get me not to come. I received several letters [from the NAACP and NACW]. I think it is a shame that some mothers were induced not to come by people who had nothing to lose, and who, if they were in our places, certainly would have come. Nothing more could have been done for us and I hope everyone who has refused will reconsider.¹⁵⁵

The mother argued that the activists writing for black newspapers were often male, and therefore could never understand the obligations of maternal duty and sacrifice. Similarly, she implied that wealthy African American Gold Star mothers associated

with the NACW “had nothing to lose” by publicly protesting because they could self-fund their own pilgrimages to the European graves. She illuminated the rarely-discussed socioeconomic tensions embedded in the Pilgrimage segregation debate.

Finally, Gold Star Pilgrims justified their decision by framing the segregated voyages as the only groups of “real” American citizens to partake in the Pilgrimages. Some Gold Star Pilgrims described how their segregated groups included all native-born Americans, echoing the language of the Americanization movement. African American Gold Star Pilgrims asserted that they were more “American” than non-segregated immigrant Gold Star Pilgrims, arguing that they “represent[ed] the most truly American group that has been here so far.”¹⁵⁶ One Gold Star mother observed that “all other groups there has been a number of women who do not speak English. . . . Interpreters have been necessary for them, consequently such people respond to their impulses of their own lands rather than to America. Some of these women, we are told, were homesick and lonely because they knew no English, while the colored group acted always like real American ‘home-folks.’”¹⁵⁷ Black newspapers that condemned the segregation also questioned why “foreign-born mothers” were not also forced to sail on separate ships.¹⁵⁸ Gold Star Pilgrims expressed frustration that they were segregated when their foreign-born counterparts received equal treatment. One African American Pilgrim observed: “we can live among foreigners when we come into their land but when they come into our land, we must be segregated from them.”¹⁵⁹ This illustrates how rhetorics of segregation function to manifest tensions among marginalized groups as they struggle to be recognized as authentic and full citizens.

Conclusion

Five years after the final Gold Star Pilgrimage, *The Pittsburgh Courier* paid tribute to African American Gold Star mothers who boycotted the Pilgrimages. The article lauded Gold Star mothers who “not only gave their loved ones in defense of democracy, but have carried on courageously through the years with the doors of democracy slammed in their faces.”¹⁶⁰ Celebrating the “self-sacrificial strength” of these mothers, the publication described how Gold Star mothers embodied the ideals of black womanhood.¹⁶¹ The *Courier* called on the government to finally reward this wartime sacrifice: “Let the nation pay tribute to these Gold Star mothers and honor them by giving them the full citizenship and privileges for which their sons fought. That would be a REAL tribute.”¹⁶² The *Courier* highlighted a national responsibility of maternal citizenship—women earned full citizenship through sacrificing their sons for the nation.

This chapter demonstrated different ways African American women defined authentic maternal citizenship—infused with conceptions of ascriptive citizenship as they justified their decisions to accept or decline Gold Star Pilgrimage invitations. Government officials and community leaders framed this decision as choice between competing conceptions of maternal citizenship—one showed loyalty to the nation and the other protested the government’s restrictions of rights. In doing so, Gold Star mothers and widows illustrated that African American women could not embody a singular definition of maternal citizenship. This study affirms Deborah Gray White’s assertion that, even though scholarly research often presents them as unified, “[b]lack women were never a monolithic group. Race and gender united them as often as class

. . . and ideology pitted them against each other.”¹⁶³ Gold Star mother and widows’ diverse definitions of maternal responsibility were informed by a decade of conflicting rhetorics that framed African American women’s citizenship in terms of often conflicting national and racial ideals. Women who rejected the invitations defined civic authenticity in terms of racial uplift. They reconciled national and racial responsibilities by comparing their boycott to another historic battle for freedom—the American Revolution. In doing so, they were celebrated by African American leaders but labeled as “agitators” and inauthentic citizens by the War Department.

Conversely, African American Gold Star Pilgrims were celebrated by the War Department as the “most dignified, cheerful and well-mannered group we have had so far.”¹⁶⁴ Yet they were consequently labeled as disloyal by many black newspapers. Pilgrims framed their individual, maternal duty as more pressing than their collective responsibility to boycott the segregated voyages. They reconciled their racial and national responsibilities by describing how their travels in France prepared them to “return fighting” for racial equality.¹⁶⁵ Pilgrims defined authenticity in terms of maternal sacrifice and their legal citizenship status. Some African American Gold Star Pilgrims described themselves as the “most American” group of Pilgrims because they were all born in America and spoke English. While white Gold Star Pilgrims were celebrated as national maternal ideals, African American Gold Star mothers and widows had to justify their civic performances in a way that required them to reconcile racial and national loyalty.

NOTES

¹ “Aged Indian Woman Among the Gold Star Mothers,” *NYT*, May 18, 1933, 21.

² The article described how multiple women would make the Pilgrimages in wheelchairs. *Ibid.*

³ Utilizing rhetorics of the Americanization movement, President Woodrow Wilson warned that the “hyphenated American” could not be loyal to American values. In 1919, Wilson stated: “Any man who carries a hyphen about him carries a dagger that he is ready to plunge into the vitals of this Republic whenever he gets ready.” Wilson made this claim during his final public speech in support of the League of Nations in Pueblo, Colorado. Woodrow Wilson, *Addresses of Woodrow Wilson: Addresses Delivered by President Wilson During on His Western Tour, September 4 to September 21, 1919* (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 1919), 359. This “hyphen-free” ideal informed actions by government officials and white women’s organizations to educate immigrants and “impoverished” white women about the ideals of American citizenship and motherhood. See, Carol Medlicott, “Constructing Territory, Constructing Citizenship: The Daughters of the American Revolution and ‘Americanisation’ in the 1920s,” *Geopolitics* 10, no.1 (2005): 99-120. William G. Jordan asserts that this fear of the hyphenated American, while primarily targeted toward immigrants, was “antithetical to the interests of African Americans. . . . Oppressed as a group, they needed to agitate for redress as a group.” William G. Jordan, *Black Newspapers and America’s War for Democracy, 1914-1920* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001), 61.

⁴ Collins notes that “race, class, nationality, and ethnicity all rely heavily on segregation and other exclusionary practices to maintain hierarchy.” Black women, then, must confront intersecting hierarchies of power and exclusion. Patricia Hill Collins, *Fighting Words: Black Women and the Search for Justice* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998), 223.

⁵ Tillet further explains: “In the case of African Americans, civic estrangement occurs because they have been marginalized or underrepresented in the civic myths, monuments, narratives, icons, creeds, and images of the past that constitute, reproduce, and promote an American national identity.” She describes how her work “recalls and extends Rogers Smith’s influential *Civic Ideals*” and his work on ascriptive citizenship. Salamishah Tillet, *Sites of Slavery: Citizenship and Racial Democracy in the Post-Civil Rights Imagination* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2012), 3. Smith describes how ascriptive conceptions of citizenship have been used to justify why “nonwhites, women, and various others should be governed as subjects or second-class citizens, not as equals.” Smith, *Civic Ideals*, 508.

⁶ Tillet traces the history of civic estrangement from the antebellum period to the “post-civil rights era” which is the focus of her book. She notes that segregation “not only limited African American citizenship but denied African Americans access to the historical myths that constituted national identity” *Ibid.* 7. Rosalyn Terborg-Penn traces black women’s unequal treatment during the suffrage movement in the years leading up to the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment and unequal access to voting

rights during the years directly following its passage. See, Rosalyn Terborg-Penn, “Discontented Black Feminists: Prelude and Postscript to the Passage of the Nineteenth Amendment,” in *Decades of Discontent: The Women’s Movement, 1920-1940* eds. Lois Scharf and Joan M. Jensen (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1987): 261-278.

⁷ “Close Ranks,” *The Crisis*, July 1918, 111. Mark Ellis describes how this was one of the “best known and least understood prescriptions in the history of the civil rights protest.” Du Bois received significant criticism for this call. Many believed that he wrote it in order to support his application for commission in the Military Intelligence Branch (MIB). Others argue that Du Bois wrote the article to deflect increasing scrutiny from the “Negro Subversion” investigations from the MIB. For a detailed analysis of this article through the lens of the MIB context, see: Mark Ellis, “‘Closing Ranks’ and ‘Seeking Honors’: W. E. B. Du Bois in World War I,” *The Journal of American History* 79, no. 1 (1992): 96-124.

⁸ Adriane Lentz-Smith, *Freedom Struggles: African Americans and World War I*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009), 4.

⁹ R. Claire Synder argues that the “the figure of the Citizen-Soldier fuses *armed masculinity* onto republican citizenship. Being a soldier and contributing to the public good then becomes “central to what it means to be a citizen and what it means to be a man.” Synder, *Citizen-Soldiers and Manly Warriors*, 55-56.

¹⁰ As quoted in Andrew Bunie, *Robert L. Vann of the Pittsburgh Courier: Politics and Black Journalism* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1974), 102.

¹¹ Jay Winston Driskell Jr. posits that these patriotic sentiments were designed to “buttress black claims on full citizenship.” He notes that fears of “hyphenism”—while primarily focused on immigrants—also “constrained the ways in which African Americans could articulate their citizenship claims.” Jay Winston Driskell Jr., *Schooling Jim Crow: The Fight for Atlanta’s Booker T. Washington High School and the Roots of Black Protest Politics* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2014), 172. In a 1915 speech at Carnegie Hall, Roosevelt warned that “There is no such thing as a hyphenated American who is a good American. . . . The only man who is a good American is the man who is American and nothing else.” Theodore Roosevelt, *Fear God*, 362. Wilson echoed this warning during his 1915 State of the Union and throughout the 1916 election. Jordan, *Black Newspapers and America’s War for Democracy*, 60-61.

¹² “Atlanta Colored People Are Loyal to America,” *The Atlanta Independent*, April 7, 1917, 5.

¹³ Arthur Barbeau and Florette Henri, *The Unknown Soldiers: African American Troops in World War I* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1996), 36.

¹⁴ “Anxious to Give Sons,” *Washington Bee*, February 17, 1924, 7.

¹⁵ “Gives Four Sons to Army,” *Washington Bee*, May 5, 1917, 2.

¹⁶ Sarah Mercer Judson, “‘Leisure is a Foe to Any Man’: The Pleasures and Dangers of Leisure in Atlanta during World War I,” *Journal of Women’s History* 15, no. 1 (2003): 98.

¹⁷ Martha Venable, “Views and Reviews,” *New York Age*, April 26, 1917, 4.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ Brown, *Private Politics and Public Voices*, xi.

²⁰ Segregated units faced even harsher living conditions than their non-segregated counterparts. David M. Kennedy describes how some units were not “fully equipped” with proper weaponry and uniforms until after Armistice. Some troops labeled as “unruly” were “forced to sleep on cracked limestone rocks and doused every morning with an ice-cold shower.” American officials instructed French officials to not treat African American troops with equal respect and not to “overpraise” their efforts. David M. Kennedy, *Over Here: The First World War and American Society*, 2nd Edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 199-200.

²¹ Alice D. Carey, “War Work Among the Negro Women of Georgia,” *The Atlanta Constitution*, February 3, 1918, D8.

²² Victoria M. Wolcott, *Remaking Respectability: African American Women in Interwar Detroit* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001), 16. Wolcott described how Sylvia Francaz Williams articulated the ubiquity of this racist stereotype in 1904. In her article, “The Social Status of the Negro Woman,” Williams responded to a white woman who wrote to the *Independent* that she “cannot conceive of such a creation as a virtuous black woman.” Reflecting an intersectional understanding of identity, Williams argued that the “negro woman is the most pitied,” because she must negotiate the intersecting prejudices of racism and sexism. Sylvia Francaz Williams, “The Social Status of the Negro Woman,” *The Voice of the Negro* 1, no. 4 (1904): 298-300.

²³ President Woodrow Wilson created the Commission on Training Camp Activities (CTCA) to oversee the “social hygiene” of the military and promised the American public that the government would uphold high morals for members of the military. See, Nancy Bristow, *Making Men Moral: Social Engineering During the War* (New York: NYU Press, 1996).

²⁴ The *Tacoma Times* Editorial Team observed that the community was “worried about the morals of our boys going to the front . . . but the fact is there is less vice disease among the boys in France than there is among the boys at home.” “They’re All Right,” *Tacoma Times*, June 19, 1918, 4.; John Parascandola, *Sex, Sin, and Science: A History of Syphilis in America* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2008), 49.

²⁵ Lynn Dunmeil, *The Second Line of Defense: American Women and World War I* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2017) 89.

²⁶ Jordynn Jack and Lucy Massagee, “Ladies and Lynching: Southern Women, Civil Rights, and the Rhetoric of Interracial Cooperation,” *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 14, no. 3 (2011): 499.

²⁷ “A Colored Mother’s Protest,” *St. Louis Post Dispatch*, June 30, 1918, 2.

²⁸ Kimberly Wallace-Sanders, *Mammy: A Century of Race, Gender, and Southern Memory* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2008), 2. Wallace-Sanders notes that the term is used to invoke the “role of a loyal servant rather than her dual role as surrogate and biological mother.” (7)

²⁹ “A Colored Mother’s Protest,” 2.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

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- ³¹ Alice Dunbar-Nelson, “Negro Women in War Work” in *Scott’s Official History of The American Negro in War Work*, ed. Emmett J. Scott (Chicago: Homewood Press, 1919), 374-398.
- ³² Nina Mjagkij, *Loyalty in Time of Trial: The African American Experience During World War I* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2011), 137.
- ³³ Dunbar-Nelson, “Negro Women in War Work,” 375.
- ³⁴ Harris-Perry, *Sister Citizen*, 21; 48.
- ³⁵ Dunbar-Nelson, “Negro Women in War Work,” 376.
- ³⁶ *Ibid.*
- ³⁷ Harris-Perry, *Sister Citizen*, 21.
- ³⁸ Harris-Perry describes how throughout American history, black women must decide whether to “preserve their authentic selves” or “secure recognition as citizens.” *Ibid.*, 5.
- ³⁹ E. Patrick Johnson uses this phrase to describe how his grandmother, Mary, rejected the “mammy” stereotype by quitting her job. Mary quit after her employer sought to “make a public display” of her as the “ultimate possession of mammydom” at a wedding. E. Patrick Johnson, *Appropriating Blackness: Performance and the Politics of Authenticity* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2011), 157.
- ⁴⁰ Emphasis in original. “George E. Haynes Compromises the Case of the Negro Again,” *The Messenger* 2, no. 7 (1919): 7. The editorial responded to a press release from the Department of Labor that praised African American’s war work at a North Carolina tannery.
- ⁴¹ Emphasis in original. *Ibid.*
- ⁴² Voogd, *Race Riots and Resistance*, 44-47.
- ⁴³ Nancy MacLean, *Behind the Mask of Chivalry: The Making of the Second Ku Klux Klan* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 28-29.
- ⁴⁴ O. V. Davis, “What the Klan Does not Stand For,” *Watcher on the Tower*, June 23, 1923, 13.
- ⁴⁵ Phillip Dray, *At the Hands of Persons Unknown: Lynching in Black America* (New York: Modern Library, 2002), 279.
- ⁴⁶ *Ibid.*
- ⁴⁷ This was done through formal and informal networks of influence. Blee observes that “Women of the Klan drew on familial and community ties—traditions of church suppers, kin reunions, social celebrations—to circulate the Klan’s message of racial, religious, and national bigotry. They spread hatred through neighborhoods, family networks, and illusive webs of provide relationships. The Klan’s power was devastating precisely because it was so well integrated into the normal everyday lives of white Protestants.” Kathleen M. Blee, *Women of the Klan: Racism and Gender in the 1920s* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 3.
- ⁴⁸ Daisy Douglas Barr simultaneously served as the president of the Indiana War Mothers and Imperial Empress (the highest female KKK organizational title) of the WKKK in Indiana. Barr was the only woman to address the inaugural KKK Grand Dragons Meeting in 1923. The national AWM forced Barr to resign her membership due to her Klan leadership in 1923. Yet, Blee notes that was motivated by financial

concerns related to Barr's efforts to recruit AWM members for the WKKK instead of a belief in racial equality. Blee, *Women of the Klan*, 110-111.

⁴⁹ "To the American Women of Washington," *Watcher on the Tower*, August 23, 1923, 11.

⁵⁰ For example, Blee notes that Klan parades celebrating patriotic values and veterans would feature young women on floats deemed "Miss 100 percent America." Blee, *Women of the Klan*, 161. The WKKK also prioritized teaching young white women the so-called superiority of white, Protestant motherhood. The WKKK created a junior section for the "future Klanswomen of America," describing its purpose "to bring the young women of today who will become mothers of tomorrow into a sense of responsibility of their duties. There are vital things that they should know if the womanhood of America is to be kept clean." Major Kleagle Leah J. Bell explained this connection between morality, motherhood, and whiteness during a 1925 Mother's Day speech in New Jersey. *Ibid.*, 60.

⁵¹ Shannon King describes how white mob violence and police brutality during this era "both mobilized and politicized blacks individually and collectively to defend their community." Shannon King, "'Ready to Shoot and Do Shoot': Black Working-Class Self-Defense and Community Politics in Harlem, New York, during the 1920s," *Journal of Urban History* 37, no. 5 (2011): 748.

⁵² "The Rights of a Black Man," *Washington Bee*, August 2, 1919.

⁵³ "Returning Soldiers," *The Crisis*, May 1919, 13-14. Emphasis in original article.

⁵⁴ Scholars have analyzed how "Red Scare" rhetoric framed and impacted post-war African American activism. Theodore Kornweibel recounts how the Postmaster General's office deemed Du Bois's "Returning Soldiers" commentary to be "radical" and the New York postmaster temporary withheld 100,000 copies of *The Crisis* until the Post Office legal department could review the commentary as "seditious" speech under the Espionage Act. The Post Office Solicitor found that "Returning Soldiers" did not violate the Espionage Act, but the FBI and Post Office continued to frame black newspapers as "advocat[ing] for Bolshevik rule." Theodore Kornweibel Jr., *Seeing Red: Federal Campaigns Against Black Militancy, 1919-1925* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999), 57-58 David S. Foglesong explores how some government officials attributed growing movements to end Jim Crow era segregation to "Bolshevik propaganda." Foglesong asserts that President Woodrow Wilson framed returned African American soldiers as the greatest threat in terms of "conveying in bolshevism to America" in private correspondences and cabinet meetings. Foglesong described how the Military Intelligence Unit reported that the Soviet Union was "actively financing plans for an uprising" among returned African American soldiers. David S. Foglesong, *America's Secret War against Bolshevism: U.S. Intervention in the Russian Civil War, 1917-1920* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995), 40.

⁵⁵ "Race War in Washington," *NYT*, July 23, 1919, 8.

⁵⁶ Warren G. Harding, *Address of the President of the United States at the Celebration of the Semicentennial of the Founding of the City of the Birmingham, Alabama, October 21, 1921* (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 1921), 7. Harding continued by cautioning the audience to recognize "the menace of which lies

in forcing upon the black race an attitude of political solidarity.” Ibid. 10. Barbara Foley analyzes how Harding encouraged the audience to read Lothrop Stoddard’s *The Rising Tide of Color Against White World Supremacy* during this speech, which described the inferiority of the African race. Barbara Foley, *Spectres of 1919: Class and Nation in the Making of the New Negro* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2003), 139.

⁵⁷ Hohle, *Black Citizenship and Authenticity*, 10.

⁵⁸ The term “New Negro” and ideals of “racial uplift” were not coined during the post-war era. The Great War “supplied a new theater for Americans to wage old battles over nation and state, color and access, power and rights.” Adriane Lentz-Smith, *Freedom Struggles: African-Americans and World War I* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009), 208. Eric King Watts traces the term back to an 1887 essay by W. E. B. Du Bois. According to Watts, the New Negro movement took place between the Great Migration and the Great Depression. Eric King Watts, *Hearing the Hurt: Rhetoric, Aesthetics, and Politics of the New Negro Movement* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2012), 9; 3.

⁵⁹ Hallie Q. Brown, *Homespun Heroines and Other Women of Distinction* (Xenia, OH: Aldine Publishing, 1926), 224.

⁶⁰ Knupfer argues that the NACW founding in 1895 articulated republican motherhood ideology by asserting that “the future of the race was moored to African American mothers’ moral guardianship.” However, she notes that there were many differences between how white and black women’s club viewed republican motherhood. For example, African American women often articulated motherhood in a way that focused on the community instead of individual children. Anne Meis Knupfer, *Toward a Tenderer Humanity and a Nobler Womanhood: African American Women’s Clubs in Turn-of-the-Century Chicago* (New York: New York University Press, 1996) 19; 12-13.

⁶¹ Elise Johnson McDougald, “The Double Task: The Struggle of Negro Women for Sex and Race Emancipation,” *Survey Graphic* 6, no. 6 (1925): 691.

⁶² E. Azalia Hackley, *The Colored Girl Beautiful* (Kansas City: Burton Publishing Company Publishers, 1916), 182.

⁶³ Patricia Hill Collins, *From Black Power to Hip Hop: Racism, Nationalism, and Feminism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 2006), 110.

⁶⁴ Charles H. Williams, *Sidelights on Negro Soldiers* (Boston: B.J. Brimmer Company, 1923), 246.

⁶⁵ Mark Whalan, “‘How did they pick John Doe’: Race, Memorialization, and Modernism,” in *Modernism and Mourning* ed. Patricia Rae (Cranbury: Bucknell University Press, 2007), 89-90.

⁶⁶ Ross J. Wilson describes how these exclusions impacted post-war commemoration in New York. Wilson explains how Gold Star Mother and American Legion posts “sponsored a third of the memorials on public property” and excluded African American servicemembers from all of these commemorations. Ross J. Wilson, *New York and the First World War: Shaping an American City* (New York: Routledge, 2016), 214.

⁶⁷ Piehler, "The War Dead and the Gold Star," 77. The American Gold Star Mother Association allowed African American women to create segregated chapters after WWII but did not open membership to non-citizens until 2005, 83 years after its founding. This rule was only changed after the organization received national attention for initially denying the application of Ligaya Langman, a Gold Star Mother from the Philippines. Jennifer Medina, "Gold Star Mothers to Let Noncitizens Join," *NYT*, June 28, 2005, <https://www.nytimes.com/2005/06/28/nyregion/gold-star-mothers-to-let-noncitizens-join.html>.

⁶⁸ Budreau notes that during the first national AWM convention, the AWM President told members not to bring up the issue of race because "Southern women" were present and that African American women "have not asked to be organized." Similar to the American Legion, the AWM let states and individual chapters create membership rules based on race. Budreau, "The Politics of Remembrance," 410.

⁶⁹ Ebel notes that African American veterans established 154 Legion chapters by 1931. Jonathan H. Ebel, *Faith in the Fight: Religion and the American Soldier in the Great War* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), 172.

⁷⁰ The names of these African American soldiers were not added until 2011. Lindsey Shelton, "WWI War Plaque is a Wrong Righted," *Natchez Democrat*, November 11, 2011, <https://www.natchezdemocrat.com/2011/11/11/wwi-plaque-is-a-wrong-righted/>

⁷¹ Mark Whalan's analyzes the different ways African Americans sought challenge the "whiteness of institutional mourning" and war commemorative practices throughout the interwar years and the beginning of WWII. See, Mark Whalan, *The Great War and the Culture of the New Negro* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 2008), 191-240.

⁷² For example, David A. Davis explains that "in the social and artistic context" of the Harlem Renaissance, "African American writers [and artists] invoked the trope of the African American soldier, the person who incontrovertibly deserves equal citizenship, in juxtaposition with images of lynching, the radical denial of human rights, to make a case for civil rights." David A. Davis, "Not Only War is Hell: World War I and African American Lynching Narratives," *African American Review* 42, no. 3 (2008): 477.

⁷³ "Organizing Wives and Mothers," *Chicago Defender*, December 7, 1918, 5.

⁷⁴ The Society focused on advocating for veterans' equal treatment and ensuring that African American soldiers who died in battle received proper burials. *Ibid.*

⁷⁵ The memorial features "three bronze relief panels, depicting an African-American soldier, an African-American woman representing motherhood, and a female allegorical personification of Columbia holding a tablet with the names of the regiment's battles." Some believed that this memorial did not properly honor the "fighting soldier" so a "bronze sculpture" of an African American soldier was added to the memorial in 1936. Wingate, *Sculpting Doughboys*, 49.

⁷⁶ "Monuments to Black Soldiers," *Pittsburgh Courier*, June 11, 1927, A8.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

⁷⁸ "'Old Mammies' Statue favored in D.C., Favored in Bill," *Evening Star*, January 30, 1923, 1.

⁷⁹ McElya elaborates that the UDC sought to “recast the gendered dichotomy of the public and private space—with public life traditionally reserved for men and women confined to the domestic sphere—into a bifurcated, racial division. For the black people’s labors could enable a new white public, composed of men and women unified through racial homogeneity.” Micki McElya, “Commemorating the Color Line: The National Mammy Controversy of the 1920s,” in *Monuments to the Lost Cause: Women, Art, and the Landscapes of Southern Memory* ed. Cynthia Mills, Pamela H. Simpson (Knoxville; The University of Tennessee Press, 2003), 211.

⁸⁰ For an overview of the multiple ways African American clubwomen mobilized to oppose the legislation, see: Joan Marie Johnson, “‘Ye Gave Them a Stone’: African American Women’s Clubs, the Frederick Douglass Home, and the Black Mammy Monument,” *Journal of Women’s History* 17, no. 1 (2005): 69-79.

⁸¹ Mary Church Terrell, “The Black Mammy Monument,” *The Evening Star*, February 10, 1923, 6.

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ “The Mammy Monument,” *Afro-American*, December 28, 1923, 1.

⁸⁴ “1500 Gold Star Mothers May Get Trip to France,” *Afro-American*, May 18, 1929, 3.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ “War Mothers to Get Trip ‘Over There,’” *Chicago Defender*, November 16, 1929, 13.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ “ATTENTION, WAR MOTHERS!,” *Chicago Defender*, November 16, 1929, 14.

⁸⁹ Williams, *Torchbearers of Democracy*, 206.

⁹⁰ Williams argues that “lost in the black press’s romantic portrayal of France was the nation’s contradictory history with peoples of African descent.” Ibid., 150.

⁹¹ “ATTENTION, WAR MOTHERS!,” 14.

⁹² U.S. War Department, *Pilgrimage Regulations* (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 1930), 4.

⁹³ One Gold Star Pilgrim described how she traveled with women from “Georgia, Alabama, Texas Arkansas, North and South Carolina, Florida, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, New York, New Jersey, Virginia, Illinois, and the District of Columbia.” “Gold Star Mother Writes Farewell to Companions,” *Atlanta Daily World*, August 4, 1932, 6.

⁹⁴ “The Last Straw,” *The Pittsburgh Courier*, March 29, 1930, 10.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ “‘Equal Treatment’ for Gold Star Mothers Assured by the War Department,” *The Pittsburgh Courier*, April 12, 1930, 5.

⁹⁷ “Secretary of War Makes Weak Denial,” *The Pittsburgh Courier*, July 19, 1930, 1.

⁹⁸ Celeste Michelle Condit and John Louis Lucaites describe how the *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896) Supreme Court decision legitimized and formalized the “separate but equal” doctrine. They explain that white supremacists used this decision as the “jumping-off ground for eventually effecting a separate but *unequal* doctrine.” Celeste Michelle Condit and John Louis Lucaites, *Crafting Equality: American’s Anglo-American Word* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 11.

⁹⁹ “Secretary of War Makes Weak Denial,” 1.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid. 2.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² The War Department argued that the steamliners would not accommodate a racially integrated group of women. The *Afro-American* sent inquiries to the six steamliners the War Department claimed refused to accommodate African American women. All six denied these charges and stated that they did not refuse to accept passengers on the basis of race. See “MANY GOLD STAR MOTHERS CANCEL JIM CROW TRIP: But 58 of First Group Leave on Freight-Passenger Vessel,” *Afro-American*, July 19, 1930, 13. John Graham describes how African American Pilgrims also received “unequal” hotel accommodations. Before the voyages departed from New York, non-segregated Pilgrims stayed in luxury hotels, while segregated Pilgrims stayed at a YWCA. Graham, *Gold Star Mother Pilgrimages of the 1930s*, 118.

¹⁰³ Ben Emerson, “Gold Star Pilgrimage,” *Chicago Defender*, June 7, 1930, 14.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ “MANY GOLD STAR MOTHERS CANCEL JIM CROW TRIP,” 13. Similar to rhetoric utilized during the Pilgrimage debate the terms “mother” or “Gold Star mother” were often used to describe all prospective or current Gold Star Pilgrims in black newspapers.

¹⁰⁶ Collins, *Fighting Words*, 29.

¹⁰⁷ “Discrimination,” *The Chicago Defender*, April 30, 1930, 14.

¹⁰⁸ “Elks’ Grand Exalted Ruler Urges Gold Star Mothers Not to Make the Pilgrimages,” *New York Amsterdam News*, July 2, 1930, 5.

¹⁰⁹ “Jim Crowing the Dead,” *Afro-American*, March 8, 1930, 6.

¹¹⁰ Lawrie Balfour, “Representative Women: Slavery, Citizenship, and Feminist Theory in Du Bois’s ‘Damnation of Women,’” *Hypatia* 20, no. 3 (2005): 127-128; Shklar argues that “the enduring impact of slavery” can be seen “not merely on black Americans and on the Civil War generation generally, but also on the imagination and fears of those neither threatened by enslavement nor deeply and actively opposed to it. The word *slavery* used to express fears of oppression in a country where slaves are constantly before one’s eyes or at least are a living presence has a different meaning from its use as merely a figure of speech. Rebellious Europeans might cry out that they were enslaved, but they had never seen the real thing. . . . [Slavery] put its mark on the most basic institution of our public life, American citizenship.” Shklar, *American Citizenship*, 22-23.

¹¹¹ “More Than Shame,” *Afro-American*, July 19, 1930, 6.

¹¹² “Discrimination,” *The Chicago Defender*, April 30, 1930, 14.

¹¹³ “This Year I See Millions of Negroes Turning The Picture Of Abraham Lincoln To The Wall,” *The Pittsburgh Courier*, September 17, 1932, 12.

¹¹⁴ “Gold Star Mothers to Face Second Jim Crow,” *The Chicago Defender*, April 1, 1931, 4.

¹¹⁵ “Brave Mothers,” *The New York Amsterdam News*, June 11, 1920, 24.

¹¹⁶ “The Last Straw,” *The Pittsburgh Courier*, March 29, 1930, 10.

¹¹⁷ “Jim Crowing the Dead,” *Afro-American*, March 8, 1930, 6.

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- ¹¹⁸ “The Gold Star Turns to Be One of Brass,” *Chicago Defender*, July 19, 1930, 13.
- ¹¹⁹ “MANY GOLD STAR MOTHERS CANCEL JIM CROW TRIP: But 58 of First Group Leave on Freight-Passenger Vessel,” *Afro-American*, July 19, 1930, 19.
- ¹²⁰ Frank Crosswaith, “Gold and Dross,” *New Journal and Guide*, August 2, 1930, 10.
- ¹²¹ “Gold Star Mothers’ Segregation Creates Furor in New York,” *Negro Star*, July 25, 1930, 1.
- ¹²² The Department of War representatives who escorted the voyages sent telegrams to major news publications recounting the positive experiences of African American Gold Star Pilgrims. “Negro Gold Star Program,” *NYT*, July 30, 1930, 17.
- ¹²³ “Negro Gold Star Mothers in France,” *NYT*, June 20, 1932, 7.; “Negro Mothers Welcomed in Paris: Pershing Addresses Group of 40 at a Tea Attended by Ambassador Edge,” *NYT*, June 9, 1930, 13; “Band Meets War Mothers,” *NYT*, August 26, 1930, 11.
- ¹²⁴ Rebecca Jo Plant and Frances M. Clarke, “‘The Crowning Insult’: Federal Segregation and the Gold Star Mother and Widow Pilgrimage of the Early 1930s,” *Journal of American History* 102, no. 2 (2015): 420. Plant and Clarke describe how the final group of Pilgrims was “by far the largest of the black parties” with 76 women.
- ¹²⁵ “Davis Will Escort Colored Mothers,” *The Washington Post*, July 6, 1930, 7.
- ¹²⁶ “COLORED GOLD STAR MOTHERS ON OCEAN,” *The Washington Post*, July 13, 1930, M9.
- ¹²⁷ Plant and Clarke analyzed the RSVP cards, passenger lists, and letters to the Department of War to discern an accurate number of African American Pilgrims. They found that 305 women originally accepted the invitation but 26 cancelled and did not reschedule their voyage. However, not all of these cancellations can be understood as protests. Some women cancelled due to illness that prevented overseas travel. Plant and Clarke, “‘The Crowning Insult,’” 407. There are 1,268 African American soldiers from the Great War were buried in the overseas cemeteries. The War Department extended only 600 invitations after determining a “large number of deaths among the mothers of heroes, while their widows were disqualified by remarriage in many instances.” “Topeka Gold Star Mother to Receive Invitation to Europe,” *Plaindealer*, January 24, 1930, 1.
- ¹²⁸ The NAACP sent the petition to 151 women eligible for the Pilgrimages. Fifty-five women responded from 21 different states. The national NAACP sent the signed petitions to the President. They did not receive an official response from the President or the War Department. “Capital Rebuffs Gold Star Negros,” *NYT*, May 30, 1930, 12.
- ¹²⁹ *Ibid.*
- ¹³⁰ Pennsylvania businessman John Dewey sent a letter to all eligible African American mothers and widows urging them to refuse the trip. He asked women to send a letter of protest to the Secretary of War or President Truman and then send him a copy of their protest letter so that it could be published in the *Tribune*. “Gold Star Mothers’ Bitterly Attack Uncle Sam’s Segregation,” *Philadelphia Tribune*, January 22, 1931, 15. The following letters that I analyze were all re-reprinted in this *Philadelphia Tribune* article. I identify the different letters by the Gold Star mothers or widow’s name, intended recipient of the letter, and date sent below.

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² Ibid.

¹³³ Ibid., Mrs. Carrie J. Brown to Secretary of War, May 27, 1930.

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ Before ending his speech with the famous phrase, Henry stated: “For my own part, I consider it as nothing less than a question of freedom or slavery. . . .The war is actually begun! The next gale that sweeps from the north will bring to our ears the clash of resounding arms! Our brethren are already in the field! Why stand we here idle? What is it that gentlemen wish? What would they have? Is life so dear, or peace so sweet, as to be purchased at the price of chains and slavery? Forbid it, Almighty God!” Patrick Henry, “Liberty or Death (1775),” in *American Rhetorical Discourse, Third Edition* ed. Ronald F. Reid and James F. Klumpp (Long Grove: Waveland Press, 2005), 111. Reid and Klumpp note that Henry’s speech was reconstructed by his biographer, William Wirt, over thirty years after he gave the speech. For a thorough discussion of this reconstruction process and the debate about the authenticity of Henry’s speech, see Judy Hample, “The Textual and Cultural Authenticity of Patrick Henry’s ‘Liberty or Death’ Speech,” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 63, no. 3 (1977): 298-310.

¹³⁶ Williams, *Torchbearers of Democracy*, 207.

¹³⁷ C.E. Askew, “Pittsburgh Ministers Laud Mothers Who Refused Jim Crow Transportation,” *Afro-American*, July 19, 1930, 6.

¹³⁸ “Gold Star Mothers’ Bitterly Attack,” 15. Mrs. Emma Houston to President Herbert Hoover, July 27, 1930.

¹³⁹ Ibid. Mrs. Ciara B. Taylor to Secretary of War, July 9, 1930.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid. Margaret King to Secretary of War, July 27, 1930.

¹⁴¹ Ibid. Mabel Johnson to Secretary of War, April 24, 1930.

¹⁴² Ibid.

¹⁴³ Pauline Terrelonge, “Feminist Consciousness and Black Women,” in *Women: A Feminist Perspective, 5th Edition*, ed. Jo Freeman (Mountain View: Mayfield, 1995), 557.

¹⁴⁴ Eversley argues that “the concept of black authenticity is important in the configuration of racial identity that extends well beyond a clear articulation of what it means to be ‘truly’ black.” She notes that the rhetorics of black authenticity during the era of the New Negro movement sought to distinguish between performances of “authentic” blackness and “imitation” whiteness. Eversley argues that someone deemed as “‘fake’ black is trying to be ‘white.’” Shelly Eversley, *The Real Negro: Questions of Authenticity in Twentieth Century Literature* (New York: Routledge, 2004), xiv.

¹⁴⁵ “Gold Star Mothers Talk For the Afro,” *Afro-American*, August 9, 1930, 17.

¹⁴⁶ J. A. Rogers, “Second Group of Gold Star Mothers Will Sail for France August 16,” *Afro-American*, August 16, 1930, 7.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

¹⁴⁸ “60 Negro Mothers on Way to France,” *Washington Post*, July 12, 1930, 3.

¹⁴⁹ Collins, *Fighting Words*, 29.

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- ¹⁵⁰ J.A. Rogers, "War Mothers in France Got First Taste of Liberty," *Afro-American* August 23, 1930, 8.
- ¹⁵¹ "Gold Star Mothers," *Wyandandotte Echo* (Kansas City, KS), April 11, 1930, 1.
- ¹⁵² Rogers, "War Mothers in France Got First Taste of Liberty," 8.
- ¹⁵³ "No End to Negro Demands," *Negro Star*, July 11, 1930, 1.
- ¹⁵⁴ "Gold Star Mothers," 1.
- ¹⁵⁵ "Gold Star Mothers Talk for the Afro," 17.
- ¹⁵⁶ J.A. Rogers, "Mothers End 'Fairy Tale' Trip Abroad," *Philadelphia Tribune*, August 14, 1930, 1.
- ¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁵⁸ "Gold Star Mothers' Segregation Creates Furor in New York," *Negro Star*, July 25, 1930, 1.
- ¹⁵⁹ Rogers, "Mothers End 'Fairy Tale' Trip Abroad," 3.
- ¹⁶⁰ "The Jim Crow Metropolitan Life," *The Pittsburgh Courier*, September 24, 1938, 10.
- ¹⁶¹ Harris-Perry, *Sister Citizen*, 21.
- ¹⁶² "The Jim Crow Metropolitan Life," 10.
- ¹⁶³ Deborah Gray White, *Too Heavy a Load: Black Women in Defense of Themselves, 1894-1994* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1999), 16-17.
- ¹⁶⁴ Colonel Richard T. Ellis used this phrase to describe the first segregated group of Gold Star Pilgrims. Ellis was in charge of organizing all of the Pilgrimages. Rogers, "Mothers End 'Fairy Tale' Trip Abroad," 3.
- ¹⁶⁵ "Returning Soldiers," 14.

Conclusion:

The Continuing Legacy of Gold Star Rhetoric

On the first night of the 2016 Republican National Convention, Gold Star mother Karen Vaughn, whose Navy SEAL son was killed in Afghanistan, justified her inclusion as a convention speaker: “I’m here because I remember when America was strong and proud, when our work meant something. I’m here because I raised a son who believed in this country enough to give his life for it.”¹ Vaughn treated her speech as part of her maternal responsibility to keep her son’s memory alive. In order to honor her son’s sacrifice, Vaughn implored the public to “elect leaders who will give our soldiers every possible tool to win [the war]. Leaders we can trust to stand strong against the enemies. Leaders like Donald Trump.”² Vaughn later explained that the “heart” of her work was to “remember Aaron”—to remember her son in a way that reflected a soldier’s commitment to rise above politics in their self-less service: “When it comes to an American soldier, no one fights with an R or D on their shoulder, they fight with an American flag.”³

Vaughn’s three-minute speech received very little media attention, in part, I argue, because her speech conformed to expectations of Gold Star mother rhetoric.⁴ Vaughn foregrounded her role as a mother, urged the crowd to honor her son’s sacrifice through a specific action, and framed this political action as a form of apolitical commemoration. Like the first Gold Star mothers after the Great War, Vann

articulated a clear responsibility of maternal citizenship—raising their son to sacrifice for the nation and serving as a living embodiment of that patriotic sacrifice.

The nation's relationship to war and civic responsibility has changed in innumerable ways since the first World War. The rationale behind public calls to “support our troops” has shifted throughout the decades, reflecting changes in “public deliberation” about war.⁵ The Great War was not the “war to end all wars.” Over 550,000 American soldiers have been killed in subsequent military conflicts across the globe.⁶ In 1948, a presidential order mandated “equality of treatment and opportunity for all persons in the Armed Forces without regard to race, color, religion, or national origin,” effectively ending the practice of racial segregation in military units.⁷ Since the end of the Vietnam draft in 1973, the military has been composed of an all-volunteer force.⁸ In 2015, Secretary of Defense Ashton Carter announced that every branch of the military must open all “remaining occupations and positions to women. There will be no exceptions,” ending a 67-year-old policy that allowed women to be banned from combat zone roles.⁹ The avenues for women's service to the nation expanded since the Great War, increasing the possible performances of women's citizenship during wartime.

Commemorative practices have also changed, reflecting a range of public sentiments about subsequent wars. The National Mall in Washington, D.C., commemorates American soldiers from all world wars from the twentieth century, except for the first World War.¹⁰ This omission led some public officials to describe World War I as “the forgotten war.”¹¹ Yet, Great War commemorations continue to circulate throughout contemporary American life. I posit that the Great War rhetoric

functions much like what Andreas Huyssen describes as a “palimpsest” where “representations of the visible” in war commemorations “show residues or traces of the invisible” or so-called forgotten war.¹² The Tomb of the Unknown Soldier and Armistice Day (known now as Veteran’s Day) now honor soldiers from all American wars.¹³ Knowingly or not, many of us encounter Great War era memorials in our daily lives.¹⁴ Although the government never funded another post-war Pilgrimage after 1933, Gold Star rhetoric still informs contemporary political discourse. As I bring this study to a close, I explore how Gold Star rhetoric continues to uplift and discipline performances of maternal citizenship.

In this closing chapter, I analyze contemporary discourse surrounding two Gold Star mothers to illustrate the enduring legacies of the maternal citizenship rhetorics analyzed in this study. During the Great War era, women defined and challenged what it meant to be newly enfranchised citizens through the lens of motherhood, race, and war commemoration. Almost a century after the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment, women continue to struggle for equal access to the rights and responsibilities of citizenship. Holly J. McCammon and Lee Ann Banaszak describe how women’s citizenship throughout the almost century since women’s enfranchisement “has simultaneously been characterized by progress and setbacks, opportunities and limits, increases in activism and demobilization.”¹⁵ The contemporary rhetoric of Cindy Sheehan and Ghazala Khan illustrate how women must continue to navigate ascriptive, maternal ideals codified during the first World War era.

In the following analysis, I first examine how Gold Star rhetoric continues to broaden and constrain performances of maternal citizenship. I begin by analyzing Cindy Sheehan's rhetoric and public reactions following the 2004 death of her son during the War in Iraq. This brief analysis illustrates how (white) maternal grief remains a powerful form of political rhetoric. Yet the analysis also reveals how public opinion turned when she began to challenge the meaning of Gold Star motherhood and American patriotism. I then examine discourse surrounding Ghazala Khan after her appearance at the 2016 Democratic National Convention. This analysis illustrates how a mother can embody the patriotic sacrifice of her son, yet still must justify her rhetorical choices due to the ascriptive elements of American citizenship reflected in Gold Star rhetoric. Finally, I discuss the implications of this project for extending our rhetorical and historical understandings of maternal citizenship.

Cindy Sheehan: Performing Peace, Disciplining Maternal Citizenship

Cindy Sheehan co-founded Gold Star Families for Peace (GSFP), one of the first official Gold Star organizations to take an anti-war stance while explicitly criticizing the President.¹⁶ After her son, Casey, was killed in action, Sheehan demanded an in-person meeting with President George W. Bush to dispute Bush's claim that the U.S.-Iraq war was a "Noble Cause."¹⁷ During summer 2005, Sheehan garnered national attention after establishing "Camp Casey" for 25 days outside of President George W. Bush's Texas ranch, engaging in a nationwide bus-tour, and mobilizing over 1,500 anti-war "candlelight vigils" around the nation.¹⁸ Originally, Sheehan's whiteness and maternal grief helped blunt the animosity surrounding her protests; yet, public opinion shifted when she began to broaden her anti-war

arguments to indict capitalism, the military-industrial complex, and the entire American political system.¹⁹ Like Gold Stars mothers who testified before Congress that claimed their advocacy was driven by their “hearts” instead of partisanship (Chapter 2), Sheehan described maternal civic action as apolitical while advocating for specific political policies.²⁰ Sheehan’s maternal rhetoric and the subsequent press reactions illustrate how debates over the authentic performances of peace and sacrifice continue to permeate contemporary rhetorics of maternal citizenship.

Sheehan challenged traditional Gold Star rhetoric of patriotic sacrifice by positing herself as a “Peace Mom” who refused to glorify the death of her son. Sheehan’s challenge to government narratives of maternal citizenship echoed *Four Lights* editorials that questioned the “blind patriotism” of wartime and called on mothers to resist propaganda that glamorized military sacrifice (Chapter 1). Sheehan recalled the disgust she felt the moment she received her Gold Star pin: “The Gold Star mom who pinned me lost two sons in Vietnam—she acted as if I should be thrilled with the honor of having that badge pinned on me.”²¹ Invoking the social contract, she contested the idea that a Gold Star “honor” could in any way fulfill the loss she experienced from her son’s death: “I was going to fight the idea that dying for a piece of cloth with stripes on it to spread a failed idea of freedom and democracy was worth it. A Gold Star is not a fair trade for a son’s life.”²² Sheehan sought to redefine the 70-year tradition of what it meant to be a Gold Star mother by aligning the civic role with anti-war activism.

The death of her son, Sheehan posited, forced her to recognize that a Gold Star mother’s real calling was in preventing future sons from giving their lives for the

nation. Sheehan explained in her memoir that her authentic political voice did not emerge until her son died, describing it as the moment she became politicized. She wrote: “When Casey died in that back alley of Baghdad . . . he gave spiritual birth to his real mom. The real mom who was hiding behind her ignorance, faith, family and comfort” began to emerge after she found out her son was killed in action.²³

Challenging the rhetorics of patriotic sacrifice, Sheehan argued that her son’s death led to her “symbolic” rebirth as an anti-war activist. She became a “real mom,” Sheehan implied, when she committed her life to saving future children from an untimely death due to war. Women, she posited, still must navigate competing conceptions of authentic maternal citizenship—one that sacrifices their sons for the nation through military service versus one that prevents their sons and all sons from dying for an “immoral” war.

Sheehan named her anti-war Gold Star mother stance as a sense of “Matriotism.” Janis L. Edwards and Amanda Leigh Brozana explain that Sheehan named this “ideological paradigm for action” in order to fuse “the performative tradition of Symbolic Motherhood, in its root terminology with . . . ‘patriotism.’”²⁴ Like WPP members highlighted in Chapter 1, Sheehan argued that all women as natural “life-givers” must oppose policies that perpetuate the loss of life. Utilizing the rhetoric of symbolic motherhood, she urged all women to identify as matriots:

Not everyone is a mother, but there is one universal truth that no one can dispute no matter how hard they try (and believe me, some will try): Everyone has a mother! Mothers give life, and if the child is lucky, mothers nurture life. . . . A true Matriot would never drop an atomic bomb or bombs filled with white phosphorous, carpet bomb cities and villages, or control drones from thousands of miles away to kill innocent men, women and children. There is one most important thing that matriots would never do, however, and this is

the key to stopping killing to solve problems: a patriot would never send her child or another mother's child to fight nonsense wars.²⁵

Sheehan described how women's natural maternal instincts compelled her to protect all of the world's children. Echoing the rhetoric of the WPP and Kate Richards O'Hare (Chapter 1), Sheehan argued that war would only cease to exist when mothers refuse to sacrifice their sons to the nation. Sheehan called on all women of America to stop their biological and symbolic sons from enlisting: "War will end forever when we patriots stand up and say: 'No, I am not giving my child to the fake patriotism of the war machine which chews up my flesh and blood to spit out obscene profits.'"²⁶

Sheehan not only targeted President Bush but his own mother and former first lady when writing an open letter to Barbara Bush in 2005. Sheehan appealed to her maternal responsibility to promote peace. She called on Barbara Bush to "encourage your son to have some honesty and courage and to finally do the right thing," linking her civic responsibility to the actions of her son. With echoes of republican motherhood ideology, Sheehan framed President Bush's policy decisions as a direct result of Barbara Bush's failings as a mother. Sheehan wrote:

Did you teach George to use his words and not violence to solve his problems? It doesn't appear so. Did you teach him that killing other people for power and oil is always wrong? Obviously you did not. . . . On August 3rd, 2005, your son said that he killed my son and other brave and honorable Americans for a 'noble cause.' Well, Barbara, mother to mother, that angered me.²⁷

Sheehan accused Barbara of raising her son to glorify war, resulting in policies that created the War on Terror. She implied that all "real" mothers raised their sons to oppose war, reflecting the rhetorical legacy of peace advocates from the Great War-era and their calls for "civic citizenship" (Chapter 1).²⁸ Sheehan charged that Barbara

Bush's pro-war mothering style was motivated by greed: "I don't think invading a country, killing its innocent citizens, and ruining the infrastructure to make your family and other merchants of death even richer is a noble cause."²⁹

Sheehan came back to her ultimate conclusion that authentic performances of motherhood must be motivated by peace work. In response to Barbara Bush's death in 2018, Sheehan expanded on her 2005 open letter in order to argue that society should not collectively mourn a mother who perpetuated war: "Maybe the death of such a one [Barbara Bush] should not be celebrated, but neither should we weep," arguing that a mother who raises her son to continue a "political oligarchy" and start wars "should be resented, not worshiped."³⁰ Sheehan posited that mothers should only be celebrated if they fought to end war.

Some political commentators questioned if Sheehan authentically honored her son's sacrifice given that her war commentary became increasingly "political." A *Seattle-Post Intelligencer* editorial asserted that Sheehan's anti-war rhetoric betrayed "real" Gold Star mothers who "choose to deal with their feelings in a way that doesn't cheapen the memory of their loved ones or turn a grave matter into a media circus standoff that generates more heat than light."³¹ Unlike "patriotic" Gold Star mothers, conservative political commentator Mike Rosen observed that Sheehan's "grief has metastasized into bitterness and rage as she turns her son's coffin into her own soapbox. Is that what Casey would have wanted? Or is this all about her?"³² Rosen made clear he did not consider Sheehan a "real" Gold Star mother, returning to the Great War era to justify his condemnation. As Rosen explained, the term arose from "President Woodrow Wilson's authorization, in 1918, of the display of gold stars on

the service flags and armbands of family members to honor soldiers who died during World War I.”³³ Rosen’s condemnation of Sheehan mirrors the condemnations that members of the WPP and specifically Jane Addams faced in their own promotions of peace by preparedness advocates in the *Ladies’ Home Journal* and *New York Times* (Chapter 1). Rosen illustrates how at least some members of the contemporary public still expect a Gold Star mother to embody the patriotic sacrifice of her son and live to honor his memory in very specific ways.

Coverage of Sheehan also illustrates how some media outlets continue to appropriate peace advocates’ maternal arguments to garner support for war. Their use of peace arguments paralleled how *Ladies’ Home Journal* Editor Edward Bok used the language of the Woman’s Peace Party as a means to encourage mothers to support the war (Chapter 1). Some publications posited that Sheehan’s pain illustrated why the U.S.- Iraq War must continue, appropriating her grief and anti-war arguments. *Time* columnist Joe Klein, for example, described how Sheehan’s “awkward anguish” as a Gold Star mother illustrated why the nation must continue with war. “[D]espite her naïve politics,” Klein concluded, Sheehan’s “public acknowledgment of the unutterable agony of this war” illustrated “why we should recommit the entire nation to the struggle.”³⁴ Like preparedness advocates who claimed that the Great War would prevent the next generation from dying for the nation, Klein argued that the nation must persevere through the current war so that future sons would not have to sacrifice. Sheehan, many political commentators claimed, should not engage in overtly political activism but instead serve as a symbol of patriotic, maternal mourning for the nation.

The Bush administration also condemned Sheehan. As the Wilson administration had done 88 years before, administration officials continued to discipline maternal performances that failed to align with the administration's visions of patriotism or war readiness (Chapter 1).³⁵ Unlike war dissenters during the Great War era, Sheehan and other anti-war activists did not have to negotiate the Espionage and Sedition Acts, legislation that hindered free speech. Yet, Bush implied that mothers who advocated for a lasting peace actually thwarted the country's longer-term peace efforts, echoing the Committee on Public Information's "Peace Through War" framing of the Great War (Chapter 1). As Sheehan camped in front of his ranch, Bush told reporters: "This is America. She has a right to her position. And I've thought long and hard about her position. And it would be a mistake . . . [and limit our] ability to lay the foundations for peace in the long run if we were to [withdraw]" American troops from Iraq.³⁶

While Bush implied that Sheehan did not represent a true "peace mother," scholars note that his administration used conservative media commentators to explicitly attack Sheehan's maternal credibility.³⁷ During a 2005 episode of *The O'Reilly Factor*, host Bill O'Reilly portrayed Sheehan as responsible for "the grief of American families who have lost sons and daughters in Iraq, who feel that this kind of behavior borders on treasonous."³⁸ O'Reilly described how Gold Star families viewed Sheehan's action as a betrayal to the memory of her son because she advocated for ending her son's war before victory. Glenn Beck and his radio show producer described Sheehan as a "tragedy pimp" who spent time "prostituting [her] son's death" in an effort to become famous.³⁹ And conservative pundit Ann Coulter

questioned the authenticity of Sheehan's mourning: "Call me old-fashioned, but a grief-stricken war mother shouldn't have her own full-time PR flack. After your third profile on 'Entertainment Tonight,' you're no longer a grieving mom; you're a C-list celebrity trolling for a book deal or a reality show."⁴⁰ Coulter's criticism reflected an increasingly common attack on Sheehan's character. As Coulter's logic implied—"real" grieving mothers should uphold their son's honor and not stain it by suggesting they died in vain.

Some Gold Star families who supported the war publicly depicted Sheehan as an inauthentic Gold Star mother. Many were unable to reconcile her intersectional critiques of war with her Gold Star status. Dozens of Gold Star families objected to Sheehan's anti-war rhetoric and embarked on a "You Don't Speak for Me, Cindy" bus-tour around the nation in order to assert what they described as "true" Gold Star values.⁴¹ The families on the tour posited that Sheehan appropriated the Gold Star in order to make a political statement instead of properly honoring her son. One columnist, Kathleen Parker, posited that the public would turn against Sheehan as more "patriotic" Gold Star mothers and families spoke out against her: "people lost in their emotions get a pass from the usual standards of debate and fair play, as Sheehan has. That's about to change. As others arrive in Crawford who share Sheehan's grief and her moral authority—but not her politics—her free pass expires."⁴²

Media figures across the political spectrum also began to question the authenticity of Sheehan's maternal rhetoric as she began to make more explicit anti-war statements. Conservative commentator Patrick J. Buchanan conceded in 2005 that Sheehan had "authenticity and moral authority" due to being a Gold Star mother,

but argued that the “purity of Sheehan's protest has lately been diluted by her association with the far Left, the extravagance of her language and the arrival of political operatives to manipulate and manage her.”⁴³ In an interview with *The Nation*, feminist scholar Cynthia Enloe observed that the nation was largely sympathetic toward Sheehan when she seemingly embodied a Gold Star mother’s traditional grief, yet “if we hear that she is really politically conscious we start to doubt the authenticity of her maternal message.”⁴⁴ In a 2006 *Chicago Sun-Times* column, Jennifer Hunter described how she originally conceptualized Sheehan as “the symbol of mothers everywhere who have lost children to war and wives who have lost husbands” when she began her protest at Bush’s Texas ranch.⁴⁵ However, Hunter ultimately argued that even liberal Americans became disillusioned with Sheehan’s increasingly “radical” anti-war rhetoric: “Her whole anti-war shtick—which I heartily supported in the beginning—is becoming a lesson on how one initially well-intentioned woman, given a microphone and some airtime, can become immune to good sense.”⁴⁶ Similarly, Meghan Gibbons suggested in a *Washington Post* editorial that “[i]f Sheehan could speak simply as Casey's mother, she might provoke serious thought in those still on the fence about the war.” However, Gibbons argued that if Sheehan continued “her preaching on issues on which she's no expert” then she would “distract from her real qualification to speak out in public: being a mother who has lost a son in the war.”⁴⁷ Gibbons explained that Sheehan derived her political power through her status as a Gold Star mother. The backlash grew in intensity because she politicized the maternal performances of peace and grief. Such criticisms of Sheehan assumed that she could publicly grieve her son’s death in front of Bush’s Texas

ranch, but could not challenge the war effort itself—topics seemingly outside a mother’s expertise.⁴⁸ This illustrates another historical commonplace of Gold Star maternal rhetoric—Gold Star mothers can access a national platform to advocate for political issues but are restricted in what society deems appropriate activism for a grieving mother.

Due to the increasingly vitriolic backlash, Sheehan publicly resigned from the peace movement in May 2007. She described how she “sacrificed” everything for the peace cause and could no longer “us[e] all my energy trying to stop this country from slaughtering innocent human beings.⁴⁹ Her open letter described the return to a more traditional maternal role: “I am going to go home and be a mother to my surviving children and try to regain some of what I have lost.”⁵⁰ DeDe Miller, Sheehan’s sister announced that GSFP “would continue working for humanitarian causes, but drop its involvement in the anti-war movement.”⁵¹ This re-framing allowed Gold Star families and peace advocates to work toward lessening the negative impacts of war without the explicit politics of anti-war rhetoric. Similarly, WPP President Jane Addams reframed her activism as “war relief” and toured with the Food Administration in order to partially end the federal investigation into the WPP (Chapter 1). At the same time, the terms “war relief” and “humanitarian causes” continue to frame maternal discourse as apolitical—limiting women’s ability to engage in foreign policy debate. Ninety-three years after the first World War began, Sheehan’s resignation illustrates how public and government pressures can still coerce peace advocates to rhetorically reframe their political efforts. Her resignation also illustrates that Great War-era definitions of authentic maternal citizenship continue to circulate; their authenticity

blends symbols of peace with support for war. Sheehan's maternal grief was not accepted by some as authentic because she channeled it to challenge American foreign policy and the notion that patriotism is synonymous with war support.

Sheehan lamented the difficult task of re-imagining Gold Star rhetoric and American wartime discourse, explaining that she could no longer "try and change a paradigm that is now, I am afraid, carved in immovable, unbendable and rigidly mendacious marble."⁵² Like marble statues, Sheehan implied that Gold Star mothers are pressured to perpetuate the belief that their sons died for a noble cause. This Gold Star ideal became a source of debate again some 11 years later—this time by a grieving American mother of Muslim faith who lost her son in the U.S.-Iraq War. Pakistani American Ghazala Khan, like the African American Gold Star mothers of the Great War generation, had to defend her Gold Star status and the authenticity of her maternal citizenship.

Gold Star Mother Ghazala Khan: Embodying Sacrifice, Justifying Citizenship

At the 2016 Democratic National Convention, Ghazala Khan stood by her husband's side as he challenged then-presidential candidate Donald Trump's anti-immigrant rhetoric. Her son, Army Captain Humayun Khan, was killed by a suicide bomber in 2004 while he was guarding a military post in Iraq. Khizir Khan, Ghazala's husband, described their son as the embodiment of their American dream and a true American patriot. During his DNC speech, Khizir asserted that Trump did not respect the sacrifice of Muslim soldiers nor understood the American value of sacrifice. He stated: "you [Trump] have sacrificed nothing and no one."⁵³ The Khan's appearance on stage was lauded as one of the most memorable moments from the entire DNC

convention and “went viral,” widely circulating on the Internet in the days after the speech.⁵⁴ Trump and some far-right commentators, however, questioned how the Khans, a Muslim family, could embody the ideals of the nation.

Candidate Trump reacted to the Khans’s DNC speech by mockingly questioning if Ghazala was oppressed as a Muslim woman. As Trump observed: “I’d like to hear his wife say something.”⁵⁵ During a televised interview one day later, Trump embellished his claim: “If you look at his wife, she was standing there. She had nothing to say. She probably — maybe she wasn’t allowed to have anything to say. You tell me.”⁵⁶ Some conservative pundits supported Trump’s claim that Ghazala was “silenced” by her religion. Stop Islamization of America founder Pamela Geller questioned why the Khans would “attack Trump,” when “these Muslim parents were not decrying the Islamic texts and teachings behind this bloody war and the reason why their son went to war.”⁵⁷ Ann Coulter described Ghazala as “a mute, hijab wearing wife” who wanted to ““Make America Muslim”” with her husband.⁵⁸ Retired Army General Paul Vallely echoed Trump’s criticisms of Ghazala: “Well, she did stand there, as most Muslim women do and they don’t say anything, so there again, when you put yourself up into being a political pawn like that, you’ve got to take the heat.”⁵⁹ Trump, Geller, Coulter, and Valley implied that Muslim women could not embody American maternal ideals, but functioned instead as “pawns” or “victims” of their religion. These statements reflect Dana L. Cloud’s assertion that contemporary war discourse is, in part, rationalized through a “paternalistic stance” toward veiled women and narratives that the United States is ““saving brown women from brown

men.”⁶⁰ As I will show below, Ghazala countered these claims by justifying her silence as an authentic performance of maternal citizenship.

Ghazala responded to these accusations by framing her silence as the embodiment of her grief as a Gold Star mother. She gave voice to a gender difference embedded in Gold Star maternal discourse—the assumption that men cannot understand or embody the pain of a grieving war mother (Chapter 2). Khan foregrounded the authenticity of her pain in a *Washington Post* editorial: “Donald Trump has asked why I did not speak at the Democratic convention. He said he would like to hear from me. Here is my answer to Donald Trump: Because without saying a thing, all the world, all America, felt my pain. I am a Gold Star mother. Whoever saw me felt me in their heart.”⁶¹ Khan described how, as a Gold Star mother, she did not need to speak in order for the public to identify her as the embodiment of sacrifice. She explained how the depth of her grief rendered her speechless: “Walking onto the convention stage, with a huge picture of my son behind me, I could hardly control myself. What mother could? . . . Donald Trump said that maybe I wasn’t allowed to say anything. That is not true. My husband asked me if I wanted to speak, but I told him I could not.”⁶² While her husband spoke, she chose silence because of her overwhelming grief of losing her son. She also embodied the empowerment of silent protest. Women after all have long opted to use their intentional silence as political protest because of the power of placing their bodies in political spaces.⁶³ The act of standing silently on one of the biggest stages of American politics forced a nation to contend with her maternal grief and price of war that her presence symbolized.

Khan explained that she spoke out after the convention in order to defend her son's memory against Islamophobic attacks. She described how her son "loved America, where we moved when he was 2 years old. He had volunteered to help his country. . . . He didn't have to do this, but he wanted to."⁶⁴ Her son's sacrifice was even more patriotic, she implied, because he was not drafted or forced into the military—he chose to serve and then die for the nation. While Khan briefly described Trump's views on Islam as "ignorant," she foregrounded the patriotism of her family and their collective sacrifice for America in her editorial. Khan ended her editorial by asserting her moral authority over Trump: "Donald Trump said he has made a lot of sacrifices. He doesn't know what the word sacrifice means."⁶⁵

Many public officials and news outlets expressed dismay that Trump would publicly disparage a Gold Star mother. These reactions illustrate how the Gold Star mother endured as the ideal of maternal citizenship. After the Great War, Gold Star mothers were exalted as maternal ideals by patriotic organizations, the media, and Congress through local commemorative events and the Pilgrimages (Chapter 2). Trump denigrated women, immigrants, and Muslims leading up to the Khans' convention appearance, yet his critique of a Gold Star mother garnered the most widespread outcry.⁶⁶ News articles described how "Trump broke a political and societal taboo" and acted in an "utterly despicable" manner when he disparaged a Gold Star mother.⁶⁷ Hillary Clinton, the 2016 Democratic presidential candidate, remarked that Trump's "degrading comments about Muslims" revealed "a total misunderstanding of what made our country great, religious freedom, religious liberty."⁶⁸ Her spouse and former President Bill Clinton stated: "I cannot conceive

how he can say that about a Gold Star mother.”⁶⁹ United Steel Workers Association also released a statement: “We denounce Trump’s shameful response to verbally attack Captain Kahn’s Gold Star mother, who chose to not speak at the Democratic nominating convention. . . . We just find it astounding that Trump’s egotistical arrogance lets him strike back with disrespect to the soldier’s mother.”⁷⁰ Khizir Khan summarized the widespread backlash to Trump in this manner: “The way he showed disrespect towards the Gold Star mother of this country, that says it all.”⁷¹ The valorization of Ghazala reflected the rhetorical legacy of the first generation of Gold Star mothers who embodied patriotic sacrifice and lived to honor the memory of their sons.

Gold Star and veteran organizations publicly spoke out in support of the Khans, a marked difference from their reactions to Sheehan’s anti-war rhetoric. Ghazala was widely defended from criticism because she mourned her son while lauding his sacrifice as an act of patriotism. Sheehan also publicly mourned the loss of her son but used his death as evidence of the nation’s immoral foreign policies. The Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) released a statement that reflects the continued exalted position of Gold Star mothers in political discourse: “To ridicule a Gold Star Mother is out-of-bounds. . . the VFW will not tolerate anyone berating a Gold Star family member for exercising his or her right of speech or expression. . . . There are certain sacrosanct subjects that no amount of wordsmithing can repair once crossed.”⁷² However, the VFW did not speak out in favor of Sheehan’s freedom of speech in 2005 when Salt Lake City television networks banned an anti-war ad that featured Sheehan asking Bush: “How many more of our loved ones need to die in this

senseless war?”⁷³ The ad, paid for by the Gold Star Families for Peace, was pulled off the air two days before President Bush would address the national VFW Conference in Salt Lake City.⁷⁴ The American Gold Star Mothers, Inc., who publicly disavowed Sheehan, did not release an official statement about Trump’s attack but directed news outlets to their organizational press release: “American Gold Star Mothers continue to honor our sons and daughters through service — service to veterans and patriotic events. . . . No one knows how you feel like another mother who has lost a child.”⁷⁵ The organization implied that Ghazala, as a fellow Gold Star mother, had a deeper understanding of sacrifice than Trump.

Other veteran organizations, Gold Star families, and public officials questioned how a presidential candidate could disparage the civic sacrifice of a Gold Star mother. The Jewish War Veterans of the United States of America released the following statement: “Criticizing Mrs. Khan for not speaking on stage is vile beyond words. No Gold Star Mother should ever be treated like that. Mr. Trump, you owe Mrs. Khan and all Gold Star families a huge apology.”⁷⁶ Twenty-three Gold Star families, organized by a Gold Star mother affiliated with VoteVets, signed an open letter to Trump to demand an apology for the Khans and all Gold Star families. The letter highlighted that Gold Star mothers, regardless of race or religion, deserve equal respect: “When you question a mother’s pain, by implying that her religion, not her grief, kept her from addressing an arena of people, you are attacking us.”⁷⁷ The letter argued that the sacrifice of a Gold Star mother should never be disparaged, arguing that “[t]his goes beyond politics. It is about a sense of decency.”⁷⁸ Senator Lindsey Graham (R-SC) reflected this argument, framing Trump’s comments as an

unprecedented attack on a Gold Star mother: “This is going to a place where we've never gone before, to push back against the families of the fallen. There used to be some things that were sacred in American politics — that you don't do — like criticizing the parents of a fallen soldier even if they criticize you.”⁷⁹ Graham’s comment, however, did not reflect the historical treatment of Gold Star mothers who failed to embody the maternal ideal of sacrifice.

While they praised the Khan family for their patriotic sacrifice, many conservative politicians refused to explicitly condemn Trump’s anti-Muslim, anti-immigrant rhetoric or withdraw their support from his campaign. Scholar Ji-Young Um describes how fallen Muslim soldiers and their mothers are framed as “embodying both citizen and enemy simultaneously” and American politicians often oscillate between praising their sacrifice and demonizing their religion.⁸⁰ Then vice-presidential candidate Mike Pence issued a statement directly after Trump’s reaction to Khan’s speech became public: “Captain Humayun Khan is an American hero and his family, like all Gold Star families, should be cherished by every American.”⁸¹ Similarly, Speaker of the House Paul Ryan (R-WI) stated: “[The sacrifice] of Khizr and Ghazala Khan should always be honored. Period.”⁸² Some questioned if it was hypocritical for Pence and other Trump supporters to call for the Khan family to be “praised” and “cherished” while also advocating for policies designed to limit the rights of Muslims. *Daily Kos* staff writer Mark Sumner asked if “‘cherish’ also means not allowing families like the Khans to immigrate to America by casting blame on their entire religion or entire nation for the actions of a few.”⁸³

The rhetoric of conservative politicians implied that Muslim families can only be honored when they sacrifice sons for the nation. This reflected Edward E. Curtis's scholarly assertion that government officials often highlight military service to distinguish "good" Muslims from "bad" Muslims for the American public.⁸⁴ Senator Kelly Ayotte (R-NH) made the point that, "I am appalled that Donald Trump would disparage them and that he had the gall to compare his own sacrifices to those of a Gold Star family."⁸⁵ Ayotte noted that Ghazala embodied the ideals of Gold Star sacrifice but refused to withdraw her support from Trump.⁸⁶ This illustrates how Gold Star rhetoric continues to be used by government officials and leaders to express solidarity with and praise for the patriotism of minorities, while simultaneously implementing policies that further marginalize non-white Americans. For example, Secretary of War Patrick N. Hurly praised the patriotic sacrifices of African American Gold Star Pilgrims while utilizing freight-vessels instead of the luxury steamliners for their segregated voyages (Chapter 3). Similarly, some conservative politicians praised the Khan family for embodying the ideals of patriotic sacrifice while supporting policies that posited Muslims as a threat to the nation. The treatment of Ghazala Khan illuminates one way that non-white Gold Star mothers continue to be treated as "simultaneous citizens and noncitizens"—praised for sacrificing for the nation but required as persons of color to justify their status as a civic ideal.⁸⁷

Discourse created by and about Ghazala Khan illustrates how Great War era rhetoric continues to shape maternal citizenship. Khan's authenticity as a Gold Star mother provided her a national platform to encourage Muslim women to take an

active role in political organizing, assert their equality in public spaces, and challenge harmful stereotypes about the Muslim faith. In an October 2016 interview, she explained her support and involvement with the newly created American Muslim Women PAC:

We [Muslim women] have all type of activities that we participate in, why not in politics now? Our power has been challenged, that Muslim women are behind, or Muslim women don't talk, or they don't do anything. Really we are a very strong pillar of the community. . . . We have equal rights. It doesn't matter if you became a citizen today or a hundred years ago, we are all equal.⁸⁸

Yet, Khan's arguments reflect the rhetorical legacy of past Gold Star mothers who honored their son's sacrifices for the nation. One Gold Star mother who testified during a Pilgrimage hearing described how she now sought to honor her son's life through her patriotic work (Chapter 2). After the Great War, rather than exercising their individual rights as newly enfranchised citizens, Gold Star mothers instead described their actions as a performance of their maternal responsibility. According to Khan, she was not speaking out for her own individual rights, but to continue her son's legacy of patriotic sacrifice. She described her final conversation with her son in the following way: "I was keep telling him, be safe and don't become hero for me, just be my son. Come back as a son but he came back as a hero."⁸⁹ As the mother of a war hero, Khan's statement received national press attention, yet she must constantly justify why she deserves this platform as a Muslim woman.

Final Implications

While the nation has changed in innumerable ways, Gold Star rhetoric remains a constant presence in political discourse. War still requires mothers to sacrifice their sons (and now daughters) for the nation. The nation continues to

grapple with how to best commemorate the sacrifices of these soldiers in ways that do not deter future sacrifices. Gold Star mothers are still exalted and disciplined due to their performances of maternal citizenship. In the remaining pages, I elaborate takeaways from my analysis of Gold Star rhetoric involving the authenticity of maternal citizenship in the contexts of war and suffrage.

Maternal Citizenship & War

This study has demonstrated how Gold Star mothers challenged traditional war commemorative practices by arguing that women—as mothers—earned the right to be honored by the nation.⁹⁰ Utilizing rhetorics of the social contract, advocates called on the government to pay back mothers' service to the nation—sacrificing their sons for the public good. At the same time, Pilgrimage advocates framed the voyages as a responsibility of maternal citizenship and an apolitical act of patriotic mourning. As previously discussed (Introduction & Chapter 2), women have historically utilized war commemoration as a means to shape national identity and the political landscape. This study has illustrated how Pilgrimage advocates transformed the practice of wartime mourning into a federally-funded responsibility of maternal citizenship. In doing so, Gold Star rhetoric during the Great War contributed to the rhetorical boundaries of authentic and inauthentic citizenship. As the portrayals of Cindy Sheehan and Ghazala Khan demonstrate, such commitments persist today.

Many of the women and men in this study optimistically viewed war as an opportunity to advocate for full citizenship, reflecting the belief that military service commonly serves as a gateway to increased rights. Women's war work helped pave the way for the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment. President Wilson described

the proposed suffrage amendment as the “War Amendment,” arguing that women earned equal rights through wartime service.⁹¹ While women’s work in munitions factories, on the farms, and in other non-traditional war-work was framed as temporary shift in gender norms, the Gold Star maternal ideal endured long after the war through rhetorics of commemoration.

This study has illustrated how war commemoration was also utilized to discipline women who did not embody the government-sanctioned ideals of maternal citizenship. While the war contributed to the expansion of women’s *legal* citizenship, wartime also restricted women’s rights advancement by associating women’s roles as mothers to their roles as citizens—reinforcing traditional gender ideology. In many ways, this was done by patriotic organizations (like the American War Mothers) who sought to ensure that an expansion of rights aligned with a vision of motherhood that reified patriarchy. *The American War Mother* called on former anti-suffragists to protect traditional ideals through the vote and exalt Gold Star mothers as women’s civic ideal in a post-suffrage era (Chapter 2). Gold Star Pilgrimages illustrated how the government exalted mothers who sacrificed their sons for the nation and then sought to embody that patriotic sacrifice through their public actions. Women who attempted to rhetorically assert their maternal and thus moral authority to advocate for pacifism, child welfare policies, or racial equality were often labeled as radicals or inauthentic citizens in a post-war America (Chapter 2 & Chapter 3). While war in part expanded women’s roles, it also reified traditional performances of gendered citizenship during the years leading up to and following the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment.

Maternal Citizenship & Suffrage

Maternal citizenship during the Great War era was simultaneously shaped by suffrage rhetoric and the rhetoric of Gold Star mothers, illustrating Kristan Poirot's assertion that "discourse functions in broad contexts."⁹² The rhetorics of war and suffrage did not exist in separate arenas but were deeply intertwined. While the peace and preparedness movements advocated for specific war policies, they also staked different claims on the future of women's citizenship. Woman's Peace Party (WPP) leaders framed the vote as essential for securing peace for children around the world. The Woman's Section of the Navy League and other preparedness groups conversely framed the WPP's peace rhetoric as an inauthentic performance of maternal citizenship. They argued that women, as mothers of the nation, should not be focused on individual rights but on the safety of the entire nation. As America moved closer to entering the first World War, the lines between the two movements began to blur. Some peace leaders of the WPP chose to work in the name of preparedness in order to secure the vote for women, illustrating one of the many ways the suffrage movement shaped and was shaped by war rhetoric.

Yet as women were on the verge of expanding their rights and acquiring full citizenship, the U.S. government actively worked to control their political agency. Through propaganda and threats of arrest, the government turned to compulsory and coercive tactics to compel women to support the war and send their sons into battle as part of their civic duty. These efforts to restrict women's rights unfolded as suffragists worked to expand women's citizenship. When America entered the Great War, some suffragists chose to engage in the war-work as a means to gain support for the

suffrage amendment while others actively protested their government's wartime actions. The government accomplished their ends by trying to silence women who questioned whether women's citizenship should be synonymous with maternal sacrifice. In doing so, the government reconstituted traditional ideals of maternal citizenship even before women could achieve full enfranchisement. Such rhetoric worked to reify the "ascriptive" dimensions of women's citizenship, re-inscribing their "second-class" status.⁹³

Scholars describe the interwar years and the gap between the "first wave" and "second wave" of the women's rights movement as an "understudied time period."⁹⁴ This study fills in a piece of this gap through the analysis of Gold Star discourse during the years leading up to and following women's enfranchisement. Government officials and members of the public utilized Gold Star rhetoric to infuse women's citizenship with traditional ideologies of motherhood after the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment. Gold Star rhetoric exalted women who raised their sons to be soldiers and disciplined women who challenged government policies of war readiness or segregation. This emphasis on traditional motherhood can be understood, in part, as a response to the more progressive vision of women's citizenship heralded by suffragists and enacted through women's war-work. As the war ended, women were forced out of the factories, farms, and other public roles that challenged traditional norms of gender behavior. These wartime jobs were framed as a unique condition of the war and not the beginning of a new era of gendered action. As these less traditional roles faded from national view, Gold Star ideals endured from the war as the public voted for a "return to normalcy."⁹⁵ While Gold Star rhetoric provided an

avenue for women to name and assert their authority, it also aided in limiting women's citizenship to more traditional enactments of motherhood.

This study also extends our understanding of women's political rhetoric as newly enfranchised citizens and government responses to their new status. As newly enfranchised suffragists sought to expand women's rights, others fought to ground women's citizenship in a vision of motherhood that best served the national defense interests—the Gold Star mother. During the decade of congressional hearings that lauded Gold Star mothers as civic ideals, government officials investigated women pacifists and feminists as agents of radicalism, defunded the Sheppard-Towner Act (a child and maternal welfare program), rejected the Child Labor Amendment (a proposed constitutional amendment designed to regulate the working conditions of those under 18), and refused to vote on the Equal Rights Amendment (a proposed constitutional amendment that would prohibit discrimination based on sex).⁹⁶ In the process, government officials solidified the Gold Star mother as the most authentic form of maternal citizenship. Maternal citizenship, as defined through Gold Star rhetoric, links women's agency to their maternal value in service to the nation. This limits women's civic performances to giving birth, preparing their sons for military service, and commemorating their patriotic deaths by embodying that sacrifice publicly. While this ideal continues to allow women an avenue to reach a national platform, it also narrows the scope of their political voice and citizenship participation.

Maternal Citizenship & Authenticity

This study also highlights the rhetorical and ideological force of authenticity—a force that at once empowers and impedes political progress. Throughout the Great War era, women utilized rhetorics of authenticity to advocate for different visions of maternal citizenship. Pilgrimage advocates successfully framed Gold Star mothers as the most authentic embodiments of patriotic sacrifice and accordingly the most entitled to government-funded voyages—an entitlement not extended to fathers, some adoptive mothers, unmarried widows, other family members, and even veterans (Chapter 2). Randolph Holhe describes how rhetorics of authenticity can at once empower marginalized groups to advocate for social change but also create a “framework for exclusion” for those same groups.⁹⁷ Rhetorics of authenticity during wartime created a dichotomy between authentic citizens who were celebrated for their loyalty and inauthentic citizens who were disciplined for their insubordination. This project illustrates this tension as women struggled to define maternal citizenship while facing serious consequences when the public or government inauthenticated their maternal performances (Chapter 1 and Chapter 3). Pre-war peace advocates asserted that women, as symbolic mothers of the world, must keep America out of war to ensure future peace. And preparedness advocates claimed that loyal mothers of the nation would prepare their sons to be soldiers, ensuring a quick end to the first World War and securing peace for future generations. The CPI combined these divergent definitions to assert a woman’s civic responsibility to ensure “Peace through War.”⁹⁸ After the United States declared war on Germany, peace advocates who did not conform to this ideal of maternal citizenship were

publicly ridiculed, investigated, and prosecuted. Similarly, when the government decided to segregate the Pilgrimages, African American women were forced to choose between different visions of maternal citizenship—patriotic grief and anti-segregation outrage. As a result, African American women could never fully embody the national and racial maternal ideals. While rhetorics of authenticity can serve as a powerful rhetorical strategy for women to assert their motherhood as a form of political influence, this project demonstrates how these rhetorics can be turned against women if they do not conform to traditional or government-sanctioned ideals.

This project also reaffirms how authenticity in the context of citizenship rhetoric is often synonymous with whiteness. This study echoes Michael W. Hughey's scholarly assertion that the "conflation of whiteness and authentic citizenship" is a constant hallmark of American political discourse.⁹⁹ White women analyzed in this study rarely invoked race as they defined, challenged, and performed different conceptions of maternal citizenship. Preparedness advocates, for instance, framed Americanizing immigrant mothers as critical enactments of (white) maternal citizenship without naming race. Throughout almost a decade of Pilgrimage congressional hearings, Pilgrimage advocates and members of Congress never discussed race or the possibility of segregated voyages. An authentic Gold Star mother, for Pilgrimage advocates and members of Congress, was essentialized and normalized as white. They never mentioned race because they did not consider the possibility of black and white Gold Star mothers sailing together—segregation was an unspoken assumption within the debates. This project illustrates how what Thomas K. Nakayama and Robert L. Krizek describe as the "invisibility of whiteness" shaped

rhetorics of maternal citizenship throughout the Great War era.¹⁰⁰ Throughout the war, some African American women felt compelled to maintain the façade of this “invisibility” and work within the segregated confines of war-work on the homefront to support black troops overseas. Others, however, were quick to challenge their segregation and marginalization. When African American women challenged the Pilgrimage segregation, they were deemed inauthentic citizens by government officials. This project illustrates how some African Americans sought to redefine authentic citizenship in a way that challenged segregation and in turn the invisibility of whiteness as an ascriptive dimension of U.S. citizenship.

This study also articulates another way African American women confronted and negotiated conflicting definitions of authenticity as they advocated for political change. African American women navigated different conceptions of civic responsibility in their decision to accept or decline the segregated Pilgrimage invitation. Such efforts to restrict performances of maternal citizenship for African American women took place within and outside of formal institutions of power. Government officials utilized rhetorics of maternal authenticity to assert that women must prioritize patriotic sacrifice over the protest of segregation. Many African American community leaders called on prospective Gold Star Pilgrims to take part in collective protest at the expense of individual mourning practices. These messages suggested that African American women should always prioritize race over gender.¹⁰¹ This illustrates an intersectional tension that African American women negotiated. They were encouraged to dedicate their activist efforts toward uplifting the entire race rather than working to challenge the gender discrimination they faced as newly-

enfranchised citizens and within their own communities. As scholar Deborah K. King explains, “competing demands (each requiring its own sets of resistances to multiple forms of oppression)” are not a new phenomenon but a “primary influence” on the way black women have historically defined their relationship to the nation and to their community.¹⁰² Competing messages about the Pilgrimages helped reify African American women’s “multiple jeopardies” during a time of women’s potential political advancement.¹⁰³

In all, this study illustrates how shifting meanings of maternal citizenship throughout the Great War era simultaneously advanced and stymied women’s political action. Allison Piepmeier asserts that “rethinking . . . motherhood is a theme that connects second wave ideology and third wave ideology (and first wave too)” and can be traced through the discourse of feminist movement.¹⁰⁴ This project demonstrates the importance of also interrogating the years “between the waves” and interwar years to more fully identify how rhetorics of motherhood witnessed a resurgence in the postwar and post-suffrage eras. As women’s rights expanded with the vote, the federal government helped reify a conception of womanhood that reduced women’s contributions to their roles as mothers and supporters of the war. As evidenced by the Spider Web Chart, even women’s arguments of peace were treated as incendiary threats to traditional American values.

This project highlights the voices of women during an era when women fought for and also resisted an expansion of citizenship rights.¹⁰⁵ The diversity of women’s rhetorical arguments and experiences affirm Patricia Hill Collins’ critical assertion that “women” is not a unified category and that our research should attend

to women's diverse responses to conditions of oppression and how women may create and foster those conditions.¹⁰⁶ Throughout the Great War era, "women" did not unite around a singular ideal of maternal citizenship. Instead, they advocated for and campaigned against a diverse range of maternal actions from supporting the war effort to protesting segregation and racial injustice. Some framed maternal citizenship as synonymous with pacifism and international cooperation; others utilized Gold Star rhetoric to infuse women's citizenship after the passage of the Nineteenth with traditional ideologies of motherhood. The Gold Star ideal then cannot be understood as an apolitical symbol of patriotic sacrifice. The Gold Star mother continues to represent a contentious rhetorical struggle over the complex and often competing meanings of maternal citizenship in American political discourse.

NOTES

¹ “Karen Vaughn, Mother of Killed Navy Seal,” *C-Span*, July 18, 2016, <https://www.c-span.org/video/?c4611016/karen-vaughn-mother-killed-navy-seal-veteran&start=7526>

² Ibid.

³ Jon Shainman, “Local Gold Star Mom Reacts to President Trump’s Speech,” *WPTV*, March 1, 2017, <https://www.wptv.com/news/region-martin-county/local-gold-star-mom-reacts-to-trump-speech>

⁴ My search of the newspaper database Nexis Uni revealed that few newspaper articles mentioned any details from Karen Vaughn’s speech, besides identifying that a Gold Star mother spoke. Geoffrey Dickens, writing for the conservative Media Research Center’s *Newsbusters* website claimed that the RNC Gold Star mother speech of Karen Vaughn and a speech by Pat Smith, whose son died in the Benghazi embassy attack, received 70 seconds of news coverage on the “Big Three (ABC, CBS, NBC) network evening and morning shows” in the days after her speech. Dickens compared this to the over 50 minutes of coverage the Khan family received during the same time span after the RNC convention. Geoffrey Dickens, “DOUBLE STANDARD: Khizr Khan Receives 50x More Coverage than Pat Smith on ABC, CBS, NBC,” *Newsbusters*, August 1, 2016, <https://www.newsbusters.org/blogs/nb/geoffrey-dickens/2016/08/01/khizr-khans-trump-criticisms-receive-50x-more-time-pat-smith>

⁵ Roger Stahl traces two different forms of this rhetoric: deflection and disassociation. Deflection refers to “a process by which the rationale for war migrates from an external policy objective and toward the protection of the soldiers themselves.” Disassociation refers to “symbolic distance between citizen and soldier, doing so mainly by coding dissent and deliberation as immoral threats to the soldier body.” Roger Stahl, “Why We ‘Support The Troops’: A Rhetorical Evolution,” *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 12, no. 4 (2009): 557.

⁶ “America’s Wars,” *U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs*, May 2017, https://www.va.gov/opa/publications/factsheets/fs_americas_wars.pdf

⁷ For a thorough discussion of the impact of President Harry Truman’s Executive Order 9981, see: John E. Taylor, *Freedom to Serve: Truman, Civil Rights, and Executive Order 9981* (New York: Routledge, 2013).

⁸ For two studies on activism that contributed to the end of the draft, see: Isaac West, “Performing Resistance in/from the Kitchen: The Practice of Maternal Pacifist Policies and La WISP’s Cookbooks,” *Women’s Studies in Communication* 30, no. 3 (2007): 358-383; Michael S. Foley, *Confronting the War Machine: Draft Resistance During the Vietnam War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003).

⁹ Brenda Opperman traces this history of women’s integration into the U.S. military through five different “tipping points.” The Women’s Armed Services Integration Act in 1948 required the military to allow women to serve in permanent positions instead

of only being able to enlist during times of active war. However, this legislation also banned women from combat zones. In 2013, the Department of Defense rescinded the “Group Combat Definition and Assignment Rule,” which opened up over 28,000 positions to women in the military. All positions were opened to women by January 2016, thirty days after Secretary of Defense Carter’s announcement. Brenda Opperman, “Women and Gender in the US Military: A Slow Process of Integration,” in *Women and Gender Perspectives in the Military: An International Comparison* eds. Robert Engell and Mayesha Alam (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2019), 113-140.

¹⁰ The DC War Memorial is on the National Mall but is dedicated to Great War soldiers from DC who were killed in action. Carole Blair discusses how this can be confusing for visitors of the Mall—who often assume it is a national WWI memorial, similar to the monuments in honor of all American WWII, Korean War, and Vietnam soldiers. Carole Blair, “Reflections on Criticisms and Bodies: Parables from Public Places,” *Western Journal of Communication* 65, no. 3 (2001): 279.

¹¹ The U.S. World War I Centennial Commission, formed by Congress in 2013, asserts that “World War I remains America’s forgotten war.” “Introduction,” *The United States World War I Centennial Commission*, Winter 2015, <https://www.worldwar1centennial.org/index.php/about/2015-12-22-18-58-13/project-planning-prospectus.html>

¹² Andreas Huyssen, *Present Pasts: Urban Palimpsests and the Politics of Memory* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003), 10; Suhi Choi, “Can a Memorial Communicate Embodied Trauma?: Reenacting Civilian Bodies in the No Gun Ri Peace Park,” *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 19, no. 3 (2016): 483. Charles E. Morris uses this framework to analyze and describe how a “homosexual palimpsest” can function to “can constitute a resistive, critical form of passing because deviant material is enfolded into the dominant cultural text, narrative, or history such that it masks itself as the dominant.” Morris explains that palimpsest means “literally ‘to scrape again’” and has been used since antiquity to refer to a writing tablet. Writers would scrape off layers or later use chemicals to delete material or reuse a tablet. Through these processes, the original writings would often still be somewhat visible under the new text. Charles E. Morris III, “‘The Responsibilities of the Critic’ F.O. Matthiessen’s Homosexual Palimpsest,” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 84, no. 3 (1998): 273.

¹³ Trout further explains: “Thus while the collective memory of the first World War is no longer central to America’s best-known war monument [Tomb of the Unknown Soldier]—too many other conflicts have obscured the tomb’s origins, too many additional unknowns added to its sacred space. . . . Without knowing it, visitors to Arlington’s chief attraction gaze upon a monument to a now distant *memory* war, a war that ended with the illusion of tradition and timelessness imposed upon what had been in fact an ambiguous response to a thoroughly modern conflict.” Trout, *On the Battlefield of Memory*, 155.

¹⁴ Many states historical trusts have begun to compile lists of World War I memorials in their communities. In Maryland, there are 62 officially registered memorials, including four memorial tree groves in public parks. “Maryland World War I Military Monuments,” *Maryland Historical Trust*, n.d., <https://mht.maryland.gov/documents/>

¹⁵ Holly J. McCammon and Lee Ann Banaszak, “Epilogue: Women’s Activism from Electoral Campaigns to Protest Action: Into the Next 100 Years,” in *100 Years of the Nineteenth Amendment: An Appraisal of Women’s Political Activism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 356.

¹⁶ Individual Gold Star mothers and families have been a part of the anti-war movement but did not explicitly incorporate the “Gold Star” into an organization’s name. National Gold Star Mothers, Inc, founded during the early years of the Vietnam War, described themselves as opposed to all war, but stated “they would support the president and his military policies.” Fenelon describes how the National Gold Star Mothers “never grew large or powerful enough to pose any sort of threat to the American Gold Star Mothers, Inc.” Fenelon, *That Knock at the Door*, 197-198. Multiple Gold Star mothers did engage in and organize peace protests during the Vietnam War. Two Gold Star mothers led a processional protest over 1,000 members of Vietnam Veterans Against War toward Arlington Cemetery in 1971. Another Gold Star mother publicly returned medals presented to her from the South Vietnam government but stated she would keep medals presented to her by the United States government. Karen Slattery and Ana C. Garner, “News Coverage of U.S. Mothers of Soldiers During the Vietnam War,” *Journalism Practice* 9, no. 2 (2015): 272. In 1973, American Gold Star Mothers President summed up the stance of official Gold Star organizations during the Vietnam War: “The one thing we do not discuss, that’s politics” and focused on sending care packages to soldiers in Vietnam and providing support for returning veterans. Gloria Emerson, “Gold Star Mothers: Rather than Dwell on the Loss, They Help the Living,” *NYT*, October 22, 1973, 48.

¹⁷ Sheehan explicated the purpose of her desired meeting: “It has been one month, one week, and 4 days since I sat in a ditch in Crawford, Tx. My request was very simple: I wanted to speak to the man who has sent over a million of our young people over to fight, kill, and die in a country that was absolutely no threat to the United States of America. I wanted to ask him: “What is the Noble Cause that you keep talking about?” Cindy Sheehan, “What Noble Cause?” *Huffington Post*, September 17, 2005, https://www.huffingtonpost.com/cindy-sheehan/what-noble-cause_b_7501.html

¹⁸ Billie Murray, “For What Noble Cause: Cindy Sheehan and the Politics of Grief in Public Spheres of Argument,” *Argumentation and Advocacy* 49, no. 1 (2012): 1-15.

¹⁹ Tina Managhan observes: “It is the unmarked (and un-remarked) character of her whiteness that enabled this particular grieving mother to occupy the space of and symbolically become the grieving mother in all of ‘us’ (a symbolic mother to the nation) – constituting a particular ‘us’ nation in turn.” Tina Managhan, “Grieving Dead Soldiers, Disavowing Loss: Cindy Sheehan and The Im/possibility of the American Antiwar Movement,” *Geopolitics* 16 (2011): 446. Sheehan explained that public opinion shifted when she was “deemed a radical” for indicting the entire political system instead of a single war or political party. Cindy Sheehan, “Good Riddance Attention Whore,” *CommonDreams.org*, May 29, 2007, <https://www.commondreams.org/views/2007/05/29/good-riddance-attention-whore>

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- ²⁰ Sheehan described her politics as “not a matter of ‘right or left’, but ‘right’ and ‘wrong.’” Ibid.
- ²¹ Cindy Sheehan, *Peace Mom: A Mother's Journey through Heartache to Activism* (New York: Atria Books, 2006), 14.
- ²² Ibid.
- ²³ Ibid. x.
- ²⁴ Janis L. Edwards and Amanda Leigh Brozana, “Gendering Anti-War Rhetoric: Cindy Sheehan’s Symbolic Motherhood,” *Journal of Northwest Communication Association* 37 (2008): 88.
- ²⁵ Cindy Sheehan, “Matriotism,” *Huffington Post*, January 22, 2006, https://www.huffingtonpost.com/cindy-sheehan/matriotism_b_14283.html
- ²⁶ Ibid.
- ²⁷ Cindy Sheehan, “An Open Letter to Barbara Bush,” *Lewrockwell.com*, November 25, 2005, <https://www.lewrockwell.com/2005/11/cindy-sheehan/an-open-letter-to-barbara-bush/>
- ²⁸ See, Dabney, “The Peace Movement and Some Misconceptions.”
- ²⁹ Sheehan, “An Open Letter.”
- ³⁰ Cindy Sheehan, “Sorry, Not Sorry: Open Letter to Babs Bush (Ca 2005) by Cindy Sheehan,” *Cindy's Soapbox*, April 18, 2018, <http://cindysheehanssoapbox.blogspot.com/2018/04/sorry-not-sorry-open-letter-to-babs.html>
- ³¹ Robert L. Jamieson, “Mother's War Protest Veers onto Wrong Path,” *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, August 15, 2005, <https://www.seattlepi.com/news/article/Mother-s-war-protest-veers-onto-wrong-path-1180570.php>
- ³² Mike Rosen, “Sheehan Politicizes Grief,” *Free Republic*, August 19, 2005, <http://www.freerepublic.com/focus/f-news/1466460/posts>
- ³³ Ibid.
- ³⁴ Joe Klein, “The Dangers of Yellow Ribbon Patriotism,” *Time*, August 21, 2005, <http://content.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,1096494,00.html>
- ³⁵ The *Washington Post* reported that Bush administration officials believed that “[i]f Sheehan has lost credibility with the public, the ‘peace mom’ might turn out to be only a summer sensation.” Mike Allen, “Refusal to See Sheehan Is Second-Guessed,” *Washington Post*, August 21, 2005, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2005/08/20/AR2005082001046.html>
- ³⁶ “Cindy Sheehan’s Protest,” *PBS News Hour*, August 16, 2005, <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/show/cindy-sheehans-protest>
- ³⁷ Laura Knudson observes that the media functioned to “operate as a propaganda arm of the Bush administration” related to the Iraq War. Laura Knudson, “Cindy Sheehan and the Rhetoric of Motherhood: A Textual Analysis” *Peace & Change* 34, no. 2 (2009): 164.
- ³⁸ “The Truth About the Cindy Sheehan Situation,” *Fox News*, August 16, 2005, <https://www.foxnews.com/story/the-truth-about-the-cindy-sheehan-situation>; BillOReilly.com Staff, “NY Times issues retraction over inaccurate quote about anti-war mom Cindy Sheehan,” *BilloReilly.com*, August 13, 2005,

<https://www.billoreilly.com/b/NY-Times-issues-retraction-over-inaccurate-quote-about-anti-war-mom-Cindy-Sheehan/76.html>

³⁹ “Recent CNN Hire Beck on Cindy Sheehan: ‘That’s a pretty big prostitute,’” *Media Matters*, January 16, 2006, <https://www.mediamatters.org/video/2006/01/19/recent-cnn-hire-beck-on-cindy-sheehan-thats-a-p/134668>

⁴⁰ Ann Coulter, “Cindy Sheehan-Commander in Grief,” *AnnCoulter.com*, August 17, 2005, <http://www.anncoulter.com/columns/2005-08-17.html>

⁴¹ “War Backers Hit the Road; Anti-Sheehan Group Comes to San Diego,” *San Diego Union-Tribune*, August 25, 2005, B-1; Abby Goodnough, “In War Debate, Parents of Fallen Are United Only in Grief,” *NYT*, August 28, 2005, <https://www.nytimes.com/2005/08/28/us/in-war-debate-parents-of-fallen-are-united-only-in-grief.html>

⁴² Kathleen Parker, “The Bona Fides of Grief,” *Orlando Sentinel*, April 15, 2009, <https://www.orlandosentinel.com/news/os-xpm-2005-08-21-parker21-1-story.html>

⁴³ Patrick J. Buchanan, “Cindy Sheehan: Anti-War Catalyst,” *WND*, August 17, 2005, <https://www.wnd.com/2005/08/31837/>

⁴⁴ The article further described “Sheehan’s evolution from the darling of the press (in the early days, when she was portrayed, Rosa Parks-style, as a grief-stricken mom who simply materialized on Bush’s doorstep) to a less trustworthy spokesperson of the left’s antiwar message (once her connections to a more radical peace agenda were exposed).” Karen Houppert, “Cindy Sheehan: Mother of a Movement?,” *The Nation*, May 25, 2006, <https://www.thenation.com/article/cindy-sheehan-mother-movement/>

⁴⁵ Jennifer Hunter, “Strident Sheehan Harms Anti-War Effort,” *Chicago Sun-Times*, February 16, 2006, <https://chicago.suntimes.com/opinion/strident-sheehan-harms-anti-war-effort/>

⁴⁶ *Ibid.* Hunter described two actions she claimed turned liberal women against Sheehan: “a photo op with Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez” and “Sheehan’s misguided idea about challenging Sen. Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.) in the June primary -- she has since backed down, thank goodness. What kind of hubris led her to think she could take on the very effective Feinstein in the first place?”

⁴⁷ Meghan Gibbons, “On the Home Front: The Politics of Motherhood,” *The Washington Post*, October 16, 2005, B03. In a later letter to *The Nation*, Gibbons explicated her argument: “Mothers are powerful, but not always in ways that traditional politics are comfortable with. They blur the line between the public and the private in ways that threaten the hegemony of the state [Sheehan] asks us to acknowledge that the interests of the public, national ‘family’ can be profoundly threatened by the bonds of the private, nuclear family.” Meghan Gibbons, “Letters,” *The Nation*, June 27, 2006, <https://www.thenation.com/article/letters-139/>

⁴⁸ Gibbons argued that Sheehan’s popularity significantly diminished when she started “her finger-pointing at unrelated issues like the administration’s response to the flooding in New Orleans” and “U.S.-Israeli relations.” *Ibid.*

⁴⁹ Sheehan also partially blamed the peace movement in the United States: “I have also tried to work within a peace movement that often puts personal egos above peace and human life. This group won’t work with that group; he won’t attend an event if she is going to be there; and why does Cindy Sheehan get all the attention anyway? It

is hard to work for peace when the very movement that is named after it has so many divisions.” Sheehan, “Good Riddance Attention Whore.”

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ “Anti-War Mom Cindy Sheehan Gives Up Her Protest,” *CNN*, May 29, 2007, <http://www.cnn.com/2007/US/05/28/sheehan/index.html>. By 2008, Peace Studies scholar Lisa Leitz found that the GSFP “existed largely in name only.” Some GSFP members resented Sheehan’s expanded focus on wars around the world and other political conflicts. Often, GSFP members felt that Sheehan spoke on behalf of the organization without consulting other members of the organization. Many GSFP members left the organization to create Gold Star Families Speak Out (GSFSO). The organizational mission focused more on amplifying the voices of *all* members and providing emotional support for grieving families. In doing so, they reframed the meaning of peace. Leitz reports that the GSFO website stated: “The first place we seek peace is in our hearts, recognizing our own and our nation’s need to grieve. All of us in this group have suffered a tremendous loss and as long as we stick together, we can make a difference.” Lisa Leitz, *Fighting for Peace: Veterans and Military Families in the Anti-Iraq War Movement* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 2014), 46.

⁵² Sheehan, “Good Riddance Attention Whore.”

⁵³ “FULL TEXT: Khizr Khan’s Speech to the 2016 Democratic National Convention,” *ABC News*, August 1, 2016, <https://abcnews.go.com/Politics/full-text-khizr-khans-speech-2016-democratic-national/story?id=41043609>

⁵⁴ See, Kathleen E. Kendall, “Why Did Khizr Khan’s Speech at the 2016 Democratic National Convention Go Viral? Personifying Collective Values in an Epideictic Speech,” *American Behavioral Scientist* 61, no. 6 (2016): 611-623.

⁵⁵ Maureen Dowd, “Trump’s Thunderbolts,” *NYT*, July 29, 2016, <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/07/30/opinion/trumps-thunderbolts.html>

⁵⁶ Steve Turnham, “Donald Trump to Father of Fallen Soldier: ‘I’ve Made a Lot of Sacrifices,’” *ABC News*, July 30, 2016, <https://abcnews.go.com/Politics/donald-trump-father-fallen-soldier-ive-made-lot/story?id=41015051>

⁵⁷ The Southern Poverty Law Center designated Geller’s organization as a hate group. “Anti-Muslim Movement Divided Around Trump’s Attack on Khan’s Family,” *Southern Poverty Law Center*, August 2, 2016, <https://www.splcenter.org/hatewatch/2016/08/02/anti-muslim-movement-divided-around-trump%E2%80%99s-attacks-khan-family>

⁵⁸ Ann Coulter, “Wrath of Khan,” *Anncoulter.com*, August 3, 2016, <http://www.anncoulter.com/columns/2016-08-03.html>

⁵⁹ Miranda Blue, “Paul Vallely: Khizr Khan Is A ‘Muslim Brotherhood Sympathizer,’” *Right Wing Watch*, August 2, 2016, <http://www.rightwingwatch.org/post/paul-vallely-khizr-khan-is-a-muslim-brotherhood-sympathizer/>

⁶⁰ Dana L. Cloud, “‘To veil the threat of terror’: Afghan women and the <Clash of Civilizations> in the Imagery of the U.S. War on Terrorism,” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 90, no. 3 (2004): 289 “Saving the brown women from brown men” is a quote from Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. Spivak further describes how a “masculinist-imperialist ideological formation” can construct and perpetuate the “monolithic

‘third-world woman.’” Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, “Can the Subaltern Speak?” in *Colonial Discourse and Postcolonial Theory: A Reader*, ed. Patrick Williams and Laura Chrisman (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994): 92.

⁶¹ Ghazala Khan, “Trump Criticized My Silence. He Knows Nothing About True Sacrifice,” *Washington Post* July 31, 2016, https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/ghazala-khan-donald-trump-criticized-my-silence-he-knows-nothing-about-true-sacrifice/2016/07/31/c46e52ec-571c-11e6-831d-0324760ca856_story.html?noredirect=on&utm_term=.3d468b163096

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Belinda Stillon Southard analyzes the “strategic use of silence” by the National Woman’s Party (NWP) members known as the Silent Sentinels during the Great War era. Southard, “Militaly, Power, and Identity,” 404.

⁶⁴ Khan, “Trump Criticized My Silence.”

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ In discussing Trump’s comments about Ghazala Khan, a *Politico* article stated that “[t]he GOP nominee has broken nearly every conventional boundary, but he has never gone this far before.” Eli Stokols, “Trump Tests His Limits,” *Politico*, August 1, 2016, <https://www.politico.com/story/2016/08/donald-trump-khan-veterans-limits-226529>

⁶⁷ Russell Contreras, “NM Governor Hits Trump Over Remarks on Gold Star Family,” *Albuquerque Journal*, August 1, 2016, <https://www.abqjournal.com/818649/new-mexico-governor-hits-trump-over-gold-star-mother-remarks.html>; Jennifer Rubin, “Trump Insults Gold Star Mom, Freaks out U.S. Allies,” *Washington Post*, July 16, 2016, https://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/right-turn/wp/2016/07/31/trumps-temper-tantrum-freaks-out-u-s-allies/?noredirect=on&utm_term=.b0dbc6097c0f

⁶⁸ Annie Karni, “Clinton Rebukes Trump over Khan Comments,” *Politico*, July 31, 2016, <https://www.politico.com/story/2016/07/hillary-clinton-khizr-khan-trump-226482>

⁶⁹ Lisa Lerer and Jonathan Lemire, “Bipartisan Backlash for Trump after Questioning Khan Family,” *PBS*, July 30, 2016, <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/politics/donald-trump-attacks-muslim-fathers-convention-speech>

⁷⁰ “USW DENOUNCES TREATMENT OF SOLDIER’S MOTHER BY TRUMP,” *States News Service*, August 1, 2016, [https://advance-lexis-com.proxy-um.researchport.umd.edu/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5KCV-9TX1-DYTH-G06K-00000-00&context=1516831](https://advance.lexis-com.proxy-um.researchport.umd.edu/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5KCV-9TX1-DYTH-G06K-00000-00&context=1516831)

⁷¹ “Meet the Press, July 31, 2016,” *NBC News*, July 31, 2016, <https://www.nbcnews.com/meet-the-press/meet-press-july-31-2016-n620491>

⁷² “VFW Supports Gold Star Families,” *VFW*, August 1, 2016, <https://www.vfw.org/media-and-events/latest-releases/archives/2016/8/vfw-supports-gold-star-families>

⁷³ Sean Alfano, “Anti-War Mom Opposition Mounting,” *CBS News*, August 20, 2005, <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/anti-war-mom-opposition-mounting/>

⁷⁴ Local television managers defended their decision by arguing that Sheehan’s anti-war rhetoric “could very well be offensive to our community in Utah, which has

contributed more than its fair share of fighting soldiers and suffered significant loss of life in this Iraq war.” Ibid.

⁷⁵ Tom Sherwood, “A Gold Star Smudge,” *NBC Washington*, August 3 2016, <https://www.nbcwashington.com/news/local/Sherwoods-Notebook-A-Gold-Star-Smudge-389035151.html>

⁷⁶ “Jewish War Veterans Condemn Remarks of Donald Trump,” August 1, 2016, https://www.jwv.org/content/press_release/jewish_war_veterans_condemns_remarks_of_donald_trump

⁷⁷ “VoteVets releases Gold Star Family Members letter to Trump, demand apology for all Gold Star Families,” *VoteVets*, August 1, 2016,

<https://www.votevets.org/press/gold-star-letter>

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Christina Colburn, “GOP Reacts to Controversial Remarks about Khan Family,” *NBC News*, July 31, 2016, <https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/2016-election/gop-reacts-donald-trump-s-controversial-remarks-khan-family-n620481>

⁸⁰ Ji-Young Um, “Citizen and Terrorist, Citizen as Terrorist: Military, Citizenship, and Race in the Age of War on Terror,” *Postmodern Culture* 22, no. 3 (2012): 9.

⁸¹ Rebecca Morin, “Pence: ‘Captain Humayun Khan is an American hero,’” *Politico*, July 31, 2016, <https://www.politico.com/story/2016/07/mike-pence-trump-khizr-khan-226490>

⁸² “House Speaker Paul Ryan: Khan Family Sacrifice Should be Honored,” *Reuters*, July 31, 2016, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-election-ryan-idUSKCN10B0V1>

⁸³ Mark Sumner, “Pence ‘Cherishes’ the Khan Family by Supporting Muslim Ban While Trump Just Can’t Stop Tweeting,” *Daily Kos*, August 1, 2016, <https://m.dailykos.com/stories/1555209>

⁸⁴ Curtis further explains how this distinction usually plays out in political discourse: “The fallen Muslim American soldier was a Muslim who helped protect America. He was not the same as those foreign Muslims who had been killed in the Iraq and Afghanistan wars.” Edward E. Curtis IV, *Muslim Americans in the Military: Centuries of Service* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2016), 8.

⁸⁵ Alexander Burns, Maggie Haberman and Ashley Parker, “Donald Trump’s Confrontation With Muslim Soldier’s Parents Emerges as Unexpected Flash Point,” *NYT*, July 31, 2016, <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/08/01/us/politics/khizr-khan-ghazala-donald-trump-muslim-soldier.html>

⁸⁶ J. Scott Smith analyzed how Ayotte utilized an “‘support’ but not ‘endorse’” strategy throughout most of her 2016 Senate reelection campaign. Ayotte withdrew her support from Trump after the *Access Hollywood* tape became public. J. Scott Smith, “From the ‘Ayotte Evasion’ to Rejecting Trump: Senator Kelly Ayotte’s Post-Crisis Discourse of Renewal,” *Communication Quarterly* 66, no. 2 (2018): 124. Ayotte’s campaign and campaign supporters were criticized in the month before the election for using campaign mailers that tied her challenger’s last name (Hassan) to “radical Islam.” The MA Chapter of the Council on American-Islamic Relations condemned the ad and Ayotte’s silence on the ad describing how both were “obviously exploiting both the candidate’s Arab and Muslim-sounding name and the

growing Islamophobic sentiment in our nation.” Holly Ramer, “Muslim Civil Rights Organization Criticizes Anti-Hassan Flier That the Group Says Encourages Islamophobia,” *Valley News* (West Lebanon NH), October 27, 2016, <https://www.vnews.com/Group-Senate-flier-exploits-Hassan-s--Muslim-sounding-name--5641827>

⁸⁷ Tillet, *Sites of Slavery*, 3.

⁸⁸ Claire Foran, “The Political Power of Muslim Women in the Time of Trump,” *The Atlantic*, October 11, 2016, <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2016/10/trump-ghazala-khan-muslim-women/503549/>

⁸⁹ “The Last Word with Lawrence O’Donnell, Transcript, 7/29/2016,” *MSNBC*, July 29, 2016, <http://www.msnbc.com/transcripts/the-last-word/2016-07-29>

⁹⁰ Tasha N. Dubriwny and Kristan Poirot note that the “embodiment of the American identity in commemorative sites is more often than not, a white heterosexual cisgendered male.” Tasha N. Dubriwny and Kristan Poirot, “Gender and Public Memory,” *Southern Communication Journal* 82, no. 4 (2017): 199.

⁹¹ Wilson, “An Address to the Senate,” 158.

⁹² Poirot, *A Question of Sex*, 9.

⁹³ Smith, *Civic Ideals*, 508.

⁹⁴ Jennifer Keohone, “Women and Rhetoric Between the Wars (Book Review),” *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 18, no. 4 (2015): 777. Anne George, M. Elizabeth Weisner, and Janet Zepernick describe the “waves” model of women’s rights as flawed as there is a decades-long gap (encompassing the interwar years) between the first and second wave, describing the metaphor as a “terministic screen.” Ann George, M. Elizabeth Weisner, and Janet Zepernick, “Introduction,” in *Women and Rhetoric Between the Wars* eds. Ann George, M. Elizabeth Weiser, and Janet Zepernick (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2013), 3. Kristi Anderson further explains: “Historians, and following them, political scientists who have been interested in women as voters, party members, candidates, and officeholders generally ignore the aftermath of suffrage, implicitly admitting that nothing interesting happened, with regard to women and electoral politics until 1970s.” Kristi Anderson, *After Suffrage: Women in Partisan and Electoral Politics Before the New Deal* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 1.

⁹⁵ Wilson, “Harding’s Rhetoric of Normalcy,” 406.

⁹⁶ Erica J. Ryan, *Red War on the Family: Sex, Gender, and Americanism in the First Red Scare* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2015), 139-143.; Some child labor laws were passed during this era. The Child Labor Amendment was passed by Congress but not ratified by states. Plant, “Patriotic Maternalists and Their Critics in Interwar America,” 122; The ERA, written by Alice Paul and supported by the NWP, was first introduced to Congress by in 1923 but was not brought out of committee. For a thorough analysis of the ERA’s origins and early advocacy for its passage; see, Susan D. Becker, *The Origins of the Equal Rights Amendment: American Feminism Between the Wars* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1981).

⁹⁷ Hohle, *Black Citizenship and Authenticity in the Civil Rights Movement*, 93.

⁹⁸ As I discussed in Chapter 1, the CPI claimed that: “between a worthy War-patriotism and a virile-Peace patriotism there is no difference.” Committee on Public Information, *War for Peace*, 4.

⁹⁹ Matthew W. Hughey, “White Backlash in a ‘Post-Racial’ United States,” *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 37, no. 5 (2014): 723.

¹⁰⁰ Thomas K. Nakayama and Robert L. Krizek, “Whiteness: A Strategic Rhetoric,” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 81, no. 3 (1995): 293

¹⁰¹ Patricia Hill Collins explains: “Within a framework of Black women’s community work stressing racial solidarity as a response to racial segregation and the centrality of moral ethical principles such as justice and freedom to Black political struggle, African-American women learned the importance of working on behalf of Black families and communities and of seeing their own needs as secondary to the larger, more significant political struggle.” Collins, *Fighting Words*, 31-32.

¹⁰² King, “Multiple Jeopardies, Multiple Consciousness,” 51.

¹⁰³ King further describes how black women’s “history of resistance to multiple jeopardies is replete with the fierce tensions, untenable ultimatums, and bitter compromises between nationalism, feminism, and class politics.” *Ibid.*, 52.

¹⁰⁴ Alison Piepmeier, “Feminism and Zines: An Origin Story (And the Accidents that Revealed Them),” *Feminist Challenges or Feminist Rhetorics? Locations, Scholarship, Discourse* ed. Kirsti Cole (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2014) 167.

¹⁰⁵ Yet, much work still needs to be done in order to recover the voices of Gold Star Pilgrims and women during the interwar years. As Susan Zaeske and Sarah Jedd remind us, “the recovery project in women’s public address is far from complete.” Zaeske and Jedd, “From Recovering Women’s Words to Documenting Gender Constructs,” 194. While newspapers, magazines, and white women’s reminiscences describe and at times laud the inclusion of mothers of color and immigrant in their Pilgrimages, they do not include the first-hand narratives of these women. In particular, the voices of these Gold Star Pilgrims—excluded from members in American War Mothers and American Gold Star Mothers and not featured in media stories—are missing from this study. Additional archival recovery work is needed to provide a more complete picture of how women of this era (re)defined maternal citizenship.

¹⁰⁶ Collins, *Fighting Words*, 204-211.

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https://www.va.gov/opa/publications/factsheets/fs_americas_wars.pdf
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