

“The Example of our Heroine”: Deborah Sampson and the Legacy of Herman Mann’s *The Female Review*

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Since its first publication in 1797, Herman Mann’s *The Female Review* has been the primary source for information about the childhood and military career of Deborah Sampson, who served for eighteen months in the Continental Army during the American Revolution disguised as a male. Bolstered in part by Mann’s publication of her career, Sampson won some recognition in her lifetime as a pioneering female soldier and public speaker, and has been honored in the twentieth century as namesake for a Liberty Ship (1944), and as Massachusetts State Heroine (1982). But the most substantial legacy of Mann’s appropriation of Sampson’s career has been its generation of a two-hundred-year Deborah Sampson print industry. Edited and reprinted repeatedly in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in lieu of any definitive account of her life, Mann’s 1797 “memoirs,” along with his and his nineteenth-century editors’ subsequent revisions of her story, have been tapped, selectively and frequently, to tailor a Sampson designed to accommodate a range of competing cultural projects.¹

This essay traces Mann’s initial project to make of Deborah Sampson a chaste Minerva—a “genteel” and nonthreatening Amazon tailored to embody early national ideology. I show that his 1797 Sampson was a textual creation, with merely a contingent relation to the actual Middleboro, Massachusetts, woman who enlisted for unknown reasons near the end of the Revolutionary War. He shaped Sampson into an icon of “male” patriotism and “female” chastity, responding to his culture’s longing for a more androgynous model of early American character.² As Republican newspaper editor Mann regarded himself as a crucial cultural voice promulgating, among other agendas, the acceptable limits

for female energy. Although no advocate for Wollstonecraftian feminism, he was committed to the ideology of woman as chaste and spiritual guardian of civic values in an increasingly individualistic and competitive commercial society.

Originally a school teacher from Walpole, Massachusetts, and distant cousin of Horace Mann, Herman Mann (1771-1833) moved to Dedham, Massachusetts, in 1797 to see *The Female Review* through the press. Within months of its publication he had become editor of the town's newspaper and had established his own printing, publishing, and book selling business. He and his sons ran virtually the only printing concern in Dedham for the next thirty years, publishing textbooks, devotional literature, patriotic addresses, poetry, fiction, and the town's newspapers. His many newspaper columns on the role of print in the new nation endorse the early republican ideal of publication as a form of virtuous and disinterested participation in the commonweal. Like many republican commentators at the turn of the century, he viewed women as vital agents of social control in their "civilizing influence" upon men and children.³

Mann made of Sampson an androgynous, cross-dressing heroine in order to reinforce his patriotic republican agenda: she was a model that he could appropriate in order to contain disturbing female transgression even while helping her win a military pension. He could not have anticipated the bifurcated gender ideologies that his icon would reinforce for nineteenth- and twentieth-century commentators on her career. Recast by readers who relied upon Mann as their primary source, Sampson became, for disenfranchised or trapped women, an exemplary activist—a model for transgressing oppressive gender boundaries. But at the same time conservative cultural voices have appropriated Mann's Sampson to exemplify the sad plight of women deprived of proper domestic role models.

This legacy of the Sampson print industry confirms the formulations of contemporary gender theorists who have focused upon the figure of the transvestite, particularly upon the manner in which progressive cultural texts have appropriated, and conservative cultural texts have diffused, the powerful political implications of women assuming male garb, a trope increasingly common both in elite and popular texts since the early renaissance.⁴ Judith Butler argues that the transgendered figure has functioned as a threat to social norms because the transvestite challenges essentialist notions of gender by implying that sexual orientation is performative rather than innate. If a woman dressed as a man could "pass" as a soldier and win heroic honors, then "masculinity" is not biologically determined. Terry Castle has observed that in late-eighteenth-century texts, "the woman sporting male attire was a symbolic figure . . . inevitably projecting more radical aspirations after power, sexual prestige and masculine authority;" political conservatives "explicitly linked masquerade disguise with social revolution." In her commentary upon eighteenth-century narratives of the female transvestite, Felicity Nussbaum similarly documents subversive effects of the trope of cross-dressing: the transvestite "undercut the ideology of the gendered subject that . . . theorists of character were attempting so desperately to preserve."⁵

Despite the revolutionary energy that has charged the trope of the transvestite, however, Marjorie Garber forces us to recognize how frequently female gender transgression has been absorbed within a conservative ideology that reinforces conventional gender assumptions. She outlines a narrative formula which she calls the "transvestite's progress," the typical story that desexualizes the transvestite's experience by normalizing cross-dressing within an acceptable *temporary* rationale that explains away threatening instances of transgression:

Whatever discomfort is felt by the reader or audience . . . is smoothed over and narrativized by a story that recuperates social and sexual norms, not only reinstating the binary (male/female) but also retaining, and encoding, a progress narrative: she did this [cross-dressed] in order to a) get a job, b) find a place in a man's world, c) realize or fulfill some deep or acceptable need in terms of personal destiny.

Other cultural studies of cross-dressing also reveal strategies for containing the socially subversive potential of the transvestite. In her analysis of cross-dressing in eighteenth-century fictions by women, Catherine Craft-Fairchild observes that even though it often is theorized as sexually enabling, transvestitism depicted in literary texts frequently fails to challenge accepted gender hierarchies. Cross-dressing women characters often are reduced to the status of spectacle, are punished for their assumption of male prerogatives, and are ridiculed as a "male *manque*." Adopting male roles and rights, she concludes, does not dismantle binary logic, but merely offers a temporary escape. Similarly, in her analysis of the narratives of twenty-five women who crossed-dressed in order to serve in the military since the late-seventeenth-century—some of them, such as *The Female Review*, male-authored texts—Julie Wheelwright notes that often the women are depicted as trapped rather than liberated by their disguise.⁶

Because Mann's treatment of Sampson has been tapped for the past two hundred years to reinforce both conservative and counter-cultural arguments regarding women's social role, an analysis of its appropriation provides a fascinating case study of "the transvestite's progress" in American culture since the early republic. This essay first examines Mann's use of fictional sources to fashion for his 1797 readers a Republican "Minerva," whose patriotic virtues and unyielding chastity are foregrounded to obscure her troubling violation of gender norms. It then surveys competing nineteenth-century appropriations of his text for "subliterary" and genteel readership: Sampson alternately serves as chapbook inspiration for oppressed women and, in "highbrow" accounts, as pathetic exemplum of domestic dysfunction. Finally, the discussion documents how nineteenth-century revisions of Mann's text supplied material for twentieth-century cultural projects designed, either to reconstruct the gender boundaries that Sampson's story dissolves, or to legitimize her transgression. The legacy of

Herman Mann's *Female Review* reinforces Butler's analysis of the cross-dressing woman's power to destabilize conventional gender norms. It also has engendered a remarkable series of narratives containing one "tranvestite's progress," narratives designed, as Garber observes, to recuperate traditional gender assumptions.

Mann's *Female Review*: The Textual Construction of Deborah Sampson

The paucity of primary materials on the historical Sampson probably accounts for the lack of a definitive biography. The corpus of surviving primary material on Sampson includes town birth, marriage, and death records; state and federal military records and pension files; church membership records; two manuscript letters appealing for and deferring repayment of loans; a handwritten facsimile of a diary she kept during her 1802 public speaking tour; and contemporary periodical accounts of her pension awards and speaking engagements. Secondary sources include a wealth of undocumented anecdotal material. Primary sources reveal that Sampson was born in 1760, lost her father at an early age, and was indentured to a Middleboro, Massachusetts, farmer. Towards the end of the American Revolution, in June 1782, she enlisted in the Continental Army, disguised as a man. In 1785 she married Benjamin Gannett, a farmer, settled in Sharon, Massachusetts, and later bore three children. In 1802 she delivered on the stages of ten New England towns an address drafted by Herman Mann, narrating her military adventures. She died in 1827.

Because these scarce primary sources on Deborah Sampson do not tell a full life story, few nineteenth- and twentieth-century commentators on Sampson have relied upon them exclusively, or at all. Instead, they have drawn extensively from Mann's *Female Review*—the only detailed treatment of her career published during her lifetime—or from later sources that relied upon Mann's text. In commenting upon his composition of the book, however, Mann acknowledged that at the request of friends, he wrote it hurriedly, after accumulating a range of sources, presumably to support Sampson's initial petition for an invalid pension, presented to the U. S. House of Representatives on November 28, 1797. There is no evidence that he was personally acquainted with Sampson at the time; he appears to have undertaken the role of her biographer in hopes of profit and, as his subsequent revisions of his text confirm, because he thought he could transform her life story into a myth of the early republic. Her story could be shaped to embody the values that he promoted consistently throughout his long career as printer, bookseller, and newspaper editor during the early decades of the new republic. In compiling her story, he faithfully recorded some verifiable facts of Sampson's childhood and military career, but extensive portions of *The Female Review* were fabricated or were derived from the same fictional and historical sources that Mann

frequently tapped for his other print ventures, and that he advertised for sale in his bookstore and circulating library.⁷

In shaping the life of Sampson, Mann employed his sources to accomplish several related projects. First, he appropriated her career in order to reinforce three early republican cultural agendas which he endorsed in the newspapers that he edited between 1797 and 1809. He uses her story to argue the necessity of self education, particularly female education in support of republican motherhood; to endorse enlightened religion and to discredit both evangelical enthusiasm and orthodox Calvinism; and to reinforce his strong antiwar sentiments in 1797, when the nation was tottering on the brink of hostilities with France.⁸ Mann's youthful Sampson is a prodigious reader and a student of natural science and astronomy who gleans intuitively the principles of enlightened deism. In her struggles to educate herself in the face of dispiriting obstacles, she employs the identical strategies of the orphaned and similarly indentured Charles Worthy, the hero of Enos Hitchcock's 1793 novel, *The Farmer's Friend*, which Mann advertised in the columns of his newspaper. Charles Worthy, like the historical Sampson, lost his parents at a young age and like Sampson was indentured as a servant to a farm family. The early chapters of *The Female Review* attribute to Sampson the same childhood experiences of Hitchcock's natural genius, who, like Mann's Sampson, borrows the books of neighborhood children and struggles to circumvent the tyranny of the ignorant farmer to whom he is indentured.⁹

Her close observation of the natural world compels Mann's Sampson to embrace the tenets of deism and to resist a "contagion" of religious "agitation" spreading through small towns outside of Boston during the revolution (103), unlike the historical Sampson, who left the First Congregationalist Church in Middleboro and, in November 1780, was received as a member in the First Baptist Church, which had been gaining converts due to active evangelism.¹⁰ Finally, echoing Mann's passionate antiwar arguments in the columns of the *Columbian Minerva*, his Sampson repeatedly derides the "havoc of war" (86), the "sole object" of which is "to open the sluices of human blood" (142).

Mann's second project in drafting *The Female Review* was to "publish" his heroine's accomplishment—unparalleled for a woman, and a sacrifice meriting a federal invalid pension—even while discouraging her example as a model for respectable female conduct. To this end, he dilates her period of enlistment so that Sampson participates in battles at Yorktown; is wounded in skirmishes, involving casualties among her company, with Tories outside of New York City; and also confronts "savages" west of Saratoga and on the Ohio frontier.¹¹ After his account of each skirmish, however, Mann anxiously addresses his female readers to make it clear that he wants to discourage "the example of our heroine" (119); although female patriotism is commendable, it should not assume a military channel (118, 183, 204).

Finally, Mann's third project in the memoirs is to counter the suspicion he anticipates on the part of his readers: that Sampson enlisted to ply the trade conventionally ascribed to female camp followers. Recent historians of women

during the period of the American Revolution document that the many “women of the army,” who worked in camp communities for rations and who performed a range of indispensable services, either were ignored altogether, or were misrepresented as parasitic camp followers and prostitutes, both in popular accounts and in the work of serious historians, from the 1780s until the 1970s.¹² Mann’s literary model for transforming the suspect woman of the army into a chaste amazon was Robert Walker’s widely reprinted *Female Soldier* (1750), an account of the adventures of Hannah Snell who also disguised herself as a man and served for five years in the English military. Walker’s text represents the earliest adaptation, for “polite” readership, of the popular “subliterary” narrative of the earthy, swashbuckling, cross-dressing woman warrior. Mann incorporates into Sampson’s story several episodes from the *Female Soldier* including a detailed description of the heroine’s clandestine attempt to remove a musket ball from her own groin so that the company surgeon will not discover her sex.¹³

Throughout the *Female Soldier*, in order to validate the purity of his heroine, Walker had exploited the conventional female warrior motif, in which an unsuspecting young woman is attracted to the transvestite soldier. Hannah Snell experiences several romantic affairs with women; Walker, assuming that such intimacies by “nature” lack genital intensity and therefore are innocent (8), contrasts them to the perverted lusts of the males in Snell’s regiment. Mann similarly supplies Sampson with sublimated female intimacies in order to validate her purity and her distance from popular images of the predatory camp whore.¹⁴

Mann’s 1797 Sampson, then, was a fictional construct shaped to inculcate the early republican virtues of industry, reason, and self sufficiency, and to establish the limits for female patriotism while endorsing the popular ideology of chaste female influence. Mann revised his initial Sampson narrative three more times during his print career. In 1802 he published the text of the speech he wrote for her to deliver to “polite” audiences in New England in which she chastises her own presumption for having violated the proprieties of woman’s proper sphere. He has her conclude by affirming woman’s appropriate place “in the kitchen and the parlour.”¹⁵ In 1820 when Sampson applied for renewal of her federal pension, Mann wrote a widely reprinted article for the Dedham *Village Register* (29 December); in this version he makes her “an intimate in the families of General George Washington and other distinguished officers of the Revolution.”

Finally in 1829, two years after Sampson died, Mann published a proposal for an enlarged and revised version of *The Female Review*, which attracted nearly two hundred subscribers. His unpublished manuscript, currently on file at the Dedham Historical Society, is written entirely in the first person voice of the heroine. Mann appears liberated from any obligation of fidelity to the historical Sampson, and from any concern about her reputation. Inspired by his appreciation of Sir Walter Scott’s historical novels, Mann places his heroine at the site of all key battles in the war, and in her voice paints breath-taking vistas of the peaks

surrounding West Point. The Sampson voice is feisty and more assertive than Mann's 1797 Sampson; her spiritual virtue intact, she is more impatient with limitations imposed upon women, and resists the "marriage market." Topical references and allusions prove that significant portions of this text could not have been written until the late 1820s, after Sampson died. The first-person narration proscribes editorial anxiety and apology for her career and in occasionally striking passages, Mann has Sampson describe her feelings about combat, her frustrations with cultural assumptions regarding the role of and appropriate education for women, and her impatience with religious hypocrisy.

A survey of almost all literature on Deborah Sampson published in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries documents that these four texts—Mann's 1797 *Female Review*, the 1802 *Address*, his 1820 *Dedham Register* piece, and the late manuscript—have been the primary sources both for popular and scholarly treatments of Sampson's career. All four texts incorporate popular fictional devices shaped for the republican compiler's specific rhetorical and cultural projects.

The Nineteenth-Century Sampson: "Subliterary" and "Establishment Interpretations"

Reinforcing Butler and Garber's accounts of the transvestite's cultural progress, early-nineteenth-century treatments of Sampson's career bifurcate the adulatory and apologetic strands of Mann's 1797 memoirs. In "subliterary" accounts of her story, the cross-dressing warrior is a courageous model whose gender transgression inspires self confidence in other women who, for a range of motives, must move beyond the "bonds of womanhood" and navigate safely in masculine realms. But in establishment publications aimed at "genteel" readers, Sampson's "misdirected" energies are lamented. As Garber would predict, she is supplied with a range of "progress narratives" that rationalize her gender transgression by attributing it her unfortunate lack of appropriate domestic ties and maternal influences.

Although Mann had urged female readers of the memoirs not to follow "the example of our heroine," a series of chapbooks designed for lowbrow readership and published between 1814 and 1850 document that his Sampson memoirs had the power to inspire fantasies of female violation of gender restrictions. In *An Affecting Narrative of Louisa Baker* (1815), the first-person speaker, having fallen into prostitution, experiences a remarkable deliverance when the lieutenant of a privateer introduces her to the "memoirs of Miss Sampson." Sampson's example persuades her that she can quit her fallen career by assuming male garb and enlisting as a marine to combat the British in the War of 1812. Although Mann might have lamented Baker's emulation of Sampson's military career, he undoubtedly would have been pleased that the example of his heroine could purify the prostitute: "From this moment," Baker tells us, "I became dissatisfied

with my situation in life . . . I felt now no other disposition than in disguise . . . to pursue a course of life less immoral and destructive to my peace and happiness in life."¹⁶

The first-person narrator of *The Friendless Orphan* (1841), also inspired by Mann's memoirs of Sampson, adopts male disguise to become a soldier in the War of 1812 in order to escape from the tyranny of an oppressive stepmother who makes her feel like "a prisoner to the house." Finally, the narrator of *The Cabin Boy Wife*, forced by her acquisitive father into a loveless marriage to an unfaithful rake who soon deserts her, taking with him their infant child, also follows the example of "Miss Deborah Sampson." Hoping to reclaim her abducted child, she assumes male disguise to procure a cabin boy job on the Mississippi steamer upon which her wayward husband has been spotted with another woman.¹⁷

Competing with "subliterary" appropriations of Sampson as "courage teacher" for trapped or exploited women was Elizabeth Ellet's profile of Sampson in her *Women of the American Revolution* (1848), an influential text frequently cited by twentieth-century chroniclers of Sampson's career. Although Ellet claims that she never read *The Female Review* and that she is basing her account on the first person testimony of the niece of a captain under whom Sampson briefly had served, her profile incorporates, in the same wording, most of Mann's 1820 *Village Register* article.¹⁸

In all of her historical writing, Ellet endorsed a model of womanhood positioned between the "idle, super refined" Victorian "true woman," and the radical woman's rights activist. She promoted the old-fashioned republican mother who sacrificed her own interests for family and polis, depicting women as "far more effective on the sidelines as witness . . . than in the fray."¹⁹ This agenda, as well as elitist malaise with her cross-dressing lower-class subject, shape Ellet's account of Sampson's career. Ellet finds something of Joan of Arc's spirit in Sampson's enthusiasm, even while lamenting "the ignorance and error" mingled with her enterprise; her energies should have been "evinced in a more becoming manner." She cites the more respectable examples of Margaret Corbin, who engaged in combat only when her husband was imperiled, and lauds other republican "matrons" who, bereft of their spouses, defended their humble homes against enemy invasion in order to preserve "the last loaf of bread" for their children (124). Sampson, unfortunately, lacked such domestic ties and "unsouled and solitary" was "restrained by no consideration that could interfere with her project. Alone in the world, there were few to inquire what had become of her, and still fewer to care for her fate" (127). Discomfited, Ellet acknowledges that Sampson's clandestine departure from Middleboro disguised as a man subjected her to "surmises of a painful nature" and speculates that she was inspired to enlist by exaggerated fantasies regarding the heroics of camp life.²⁰ Finally, as if moved to supply "the friendless and destitute girl" with parental concern and affection, Ellet enlarges the role of George Washington in Sampson's career—a role first introduced in Mann's 1820 *Village Register* account. Now, upon her discharge,

the national father supplies Sampson with money and advice and invites her to the capital after the war, introducing her to his own social circles (134-35).

Nineteenth-Century Editions of Mann’s Sampson

Two edited versions of Mann’s 1797 text published by clergymen in the second half of the nineteenth century assured the perpetuation of Sampson’s story, even while supplying further “progress” narratives that diffuse the threatening dimensions of the transvestite’s career. However, in their efforts to separate “fact from fiction” in Mann’s account, both editors supplied new information that would be appropriated by twentieth-century Sampson chroniclers attempting to incarnate a model of independent womanhood. In a series entitled “Life of Deborah Sampson,” published in the Middleboro, Massachusetts, *Gazette* between July 1857 and January 1858, minister and *Gazette* editor, Stillman Pratt printed nearly the entire text of Mann’s *Female Review* without attribution. He occasionally inserted his own editorial commentary and a few of the products of his research into Sampson’s early life in Middleboro. Consistent with the evangelical tone of the newspaper, one of Pratt’s aims in editing *The Female Review* was to wrest the young patriot from Mann’s deistical appropriation and reclaim her for the Baptists. This revision struggled to transform the eccentric gender transgression into an edifying exemplum of the more general triumph of evangelical Christianity over Unitarian liberalism by mid century in New England.²¹

Pratt’s Sampson is inspired by the revivalist activity around Middleboro that, in Mann’s account, she had resisted as a dangerous “delirium” (103). Like Ellet, Pratt begins his series by comparing his revolutionary heroine to Joan of Arc, but for Pratt the most striking similarity between the two “amazons” is their religious commitment: Joan was inspired by the Virgin, while Deborah became a courageous and “an enthusiastic soldier of the cross.” Pratt depicts her early withdrawal from the establishment church and her “public profession” before the Baptists as evidence of “that independence for which she was ever distinguished” (18 September 1857). In almost all other respects Pratt’s “Christian soldier” is identical to Mann’s Sampson except in her affairs with other women. Although the *Gazette*’s Sampson receives love letters from a young Baltimore woman who mistakes her for a man, the editor deletes his source’s exuberant description of purified physical intimacy between Sampson and her most ardent admirer.

Pratt’s Middleboro research, however, did prompt him to append an intriguing new anecdote to Mann’s account of Sampson’s enlistment. The story has supplied twentieth-century commentators with a source of humor, evidence of Sampson’s admirable “spunk,” and confirmation of her defiance both of conventional gender and racial boundaries. In his installment of 25 September 1857, Pratt tells us that before her actual enlistment under the pseudonym of “Robert Shurtliff,” Sampson fraudulently procured an enlistment bounty award by impersonating a man. In need of money and abetted by Jennie, the daughter of an

African American slave with whom she shared quarters in the home where she was boarding, Sampson donned men's clothes, enlisted one afternoon as "Timothy Thayer," and proceeded to spend some of the bounty money at the local tavern. Excited by her drams, she "talked and swaggered" into the night, eventually making her way home, where she "crept to bed with the negro." Although he clearly had access to Middleboro church records, Pratt does not report that several Baptist "brethren" visited with her after this episode, and having "labored" with her "without obtaining satisfaction . . . concluded it was the church's duty to withdraw fellowship."²²

The most widely appropriated source for modern treatments of Sampson is John Adams Vinton's 1866 edition of Mann's *The Female Review*, which incorporates Pratt's Middleboro research. In a concluding note to his edition Vinton explains that since his Boston publishers wanted to issue an exact reprint of the 1797 text he was forced to "reproduce every sentence . . . however faulty . . . and objectionable in moral sentiment" (232). Information he had acquired from Pratt and also from the Massachusetts State Archives confirming Sampson's actual 1782 enlistment date forced Vinton to realize that Mann was not a reliable biographer; Sampson had not served at Yorktown, and her later adventures scouting Indians on the frontier were dubious. Consequently he is compelled to insert in his 1866 edition voluminous notes providing his readers with evidence discrediting selective episodes in Mann's text. But he reproduces without any skeptical commentary Mann's accounts of Sampson's engagements in Tarrytown and East Chester, New York, including the episode Mann borrowed from Walker's *Female Soldier*, where the wounded recruit removes a musket ball from her groin.

The antiquarian and "scholarly" tone of Vinton's extensive notes seems to have enforced his credibility among the many modern chroniclers of Sampson who have relied upon his edition for biographical dictionary entries or magazine pieces; frequently episodes that Vinton discredited are omitted from their own accounts, while the rest of Mann's narrative is presented uncritically as fact. However, although he incorporates in his notes evidence from Sampson's military files and Pratt's Middleboro research, Vinton's most widely quoted "authority" for correcting details in Mann's 1797 text is Mann's later unpublished manuscript revision which Vinton had acquired and appropriated for his 1866 edition. While modern chroniclers of Sampson are persuaded by the detached and scholarly tone of Vinton's notes, Vinton himself was persuaded of the manuscript's reliability because of the occasionally convincing first person Sampson voice that Mann had assumed in the late [1830] text. As if he believes that the author transcribed his now deceased subject's testimony verbatim, Vinton corrects or enlarges upon what Mann had told readers in the 1797 text by quoting in his notes "what the heroine herself asserted" in the later manuscript.²³

Vinton's notes in the 1866 edition, reprinted in 1916 and 1972, have influenced many modern accounts of Mann's Deborah Sampson. His notes include Pratt's "Timothy Thayer/Black Jennie" anecdote. But Vinton, albeit

reluctantly, also supplies the Baptist church record that documents Sampson’s removal from membership due to her “undignified” conduct and lack of appropriate remorse. The component of Vinton’s notes that has exerted the strongest influence on twentieth-century accounts of Sampson, however, is his extensive quotation from Mann’s manuscript where a feisty, assertive voice challenges the “marriage market” and, particularly, where she ridicules the drunken “baboon” her mother wants her to marry. In a significant revision of his 1797 account, where Sampson respects the young man and would consider marrying him were it not for her patriotic imperative to enlist, Mann’s 1830 Sampson enlists in part to evade marriage to a fool. Vinton also quotes extensively from a highly theatrical scene which Mann included in a chapter near the end of his manuscript, after Sampson’s officers are informed that she is a woman. At the command of General Paterson, Sampson dons a dress, which “magically” transforms her into a captivating specimen of female enchantment. A particularly vivid version of the “transvestite’s progress” narrative as Garber describes it, Sampson’s conventional gender identity is restored and social and sexual norms are safely recuperated.

In his introduction to this edition of *The Female Review*, Vinton, echoing Ellet’s establishment interpretation, insists that Sampson’s transvestite enlistment cannot be commended; readers are instructed to admire only the “self control that enabled her to endure the experience with her virtue intact.”²⁴ Like Ellet’s rootless recruit, Vinton’s Sampson was inspired to enlist not from patriotic ardor but from restless, unchecked energies that were misdirected into the military (113-14). Nonetheless, his edition became the primary source for honorific modern accounts of Sampson’s resistance to marriage, her daring enlistment scam, her Baptist “excommunication,” her friendship with an African American woman, and her same sex intimacies. Ironically and unwittingly the conservative editor of Mann’s memoirs supplied the material for the late-twentieth-century “feminist” Sampson. Vinton’s 1866 edition reprinted the story of Mann’s 1797 Sampson in the main text, while evoking Mann’s 1830 heroine and Pratt’s Middleboro prodigal in his extensive footnotes: twentieth-century chroniclers alternately would weave and unravel these two threads.

The Twentieth-Century Sampson: Male Fantasy, Adolescent Role Model

Scores of Sampson profiles have been published in the twentieth century in formats ranging from brief biographical dictionary entries, from articles in local historical magazines, and from novellas for young adult women, to teaching materials for units on Sampson, to popular accounts of little known American heroes, and to chapters in academic monographs dealing with women and the military, American women lecturers, and studies of female intimacy. They have relied upon Mann, Vinton, and Ellet as their primary sources, despite the historical inaccuracies and they vary in the episodes they include and highlight.

Some, following Mann exclusively, continue anachronistically to place Sampson at Yorktown and on the Ohio frontier; some focus upon, while others delete entirely, her alleged romances with other women; and only a few mention George Washington. Notably absent is authorial disapproval of her disguised enlistment, although a subtext in a significant proportion of these pieces implies that Sampson found her “true self” only when she married and experienced motherhood. Chroniclers rarely express anxiety regarding Sampson’s chastity, although in some of the popular novellas, the psycho-sexual dimensions of her experience are explored in detail. But even accounts that endorse Sampson’s gender transgression incorporate their own versions of the “transvestite’s progress” narrative identified by Garber, supplying explanations for deviancy that function to restore conventional binary gender distinctions.

Contrasts and recurring tropes in popular accounts of Sampson’s career can be documented by focusing briefly upon two typical genres: male-authored profiles of the “forgotten hero” type published between the 1920s and the 1950s, and primarily female-authored narratives of Sampson’s life written for children and young adult readers, published since the 1960s. In the former, the heroine is treated with patronizing deference, as the writers relish the fascinating and “eccentric” features of her career; in the latter, Sampson, no longer “eccentric,” becomes a representative figure who suffers the biological and social obstacles all women confront and who provides a role model for surmounting them.

Forgotten Hero

Accounts of Sampson in male-authored profiles of unsung heroes, such as Richardson Wright’s *Forgotten Ladies* (Philadelphia, 1928), Stewart Holbrook’s *Lost Men of American History* (New York, 1947), and Fred Cook’s *What Manner of Men: Forgotten Heroes of the American Revolution* (New York, 1959), display a range of strategies for trivializing Sampson’s career, even while expressing bemused fascination with her departure from conventional gender norms.²⁵ The authors neutralize the gender-threatening dimensions of the heroine and tailor her to fit male fantasies of the camp woman. Their efforts reinforce traditional, essentialist assumptions regarding “natural” gender distinctions.

These authors introduce their accounts by announcing that they have unearthed a curious anomaly: Wright’s rare “collector’s piece” or Holbrook’s “blown in the bottle veteran.” Wright asserts that the modern chronicler must debunk the “plaster saint” sketched by Sampson’s early biographers and mocks Mann’s depiction of the prodigious scholar and virtuous paragon. In an adaptation of Pratt’s account of her foiled bounty scheme, Wright’s Sampson, bored with life in Middleboro, dons male clothes in order to drink at the local tavern, a lark which shocks the Baptist elders whose castigation provokes her determination to escape from the community by enlisting. Wright insists that she saw less action than is commonly alleged although he records her participation in the two New York skirmishes seemingly validated by Vinton.

Most of these profiles insinuate that her assumption of a uniform essentially changed Sampson’s gender identity; she temporarily *becomes* a man, enabling the chronicler to evade threatening complexities of the transvestite. Cook notes that as a woman Sampson was merely a “household drudge,” but in donning man’s attire she became a heroic “soldier twice wounded in action.” Lacking vital feminine credentials, including beauty and delicacy, that would have attracted men and secured the traditional mode of female advancement, she “crossed over into the man’s world.” Attired in a man’s outfit, her nature changes completely; the once saintly scholar visits the local tavern to “hoist a few” and shocks the Baptists. Consistent with his project of gender conversion, Cook introduces a variation upon all earlier accounts of the Tarrytown skirmish by showing his hero in “close, hand to hand” combat. He reinforces the notion that only men belong in the military when the physician, who in Mann’s account was the first to discover Sampson’s true sex, finds under her shirt “what no doctor should ever find in any army.”

Reinforcing the illusion of an essential gender shift, these authors revise significantly Mann’s accounts of Sampson’s affection for women, reflecting the cultural resistance to adult female intimacy that social historians have tied to the early-twentieth century, specifically to modern socialization rituals that terminate at adolescence the homosocial ties of girlhood.²⁶ The 1797 Sampson responded warmly to chaste female affection, but in Cook and Wright she has become thoroughly socialized into a male fraternity where no hint of same sex intimacy can be tolerated. Like an adolescent boy, she cavalierly mocks the women infatuated with her charms and struggles to keep a straight face when they express their affections. Wright observes that she evades them by promising to “look them up” when next in town, and Cook delivers Sampson from a love sick admirer by having her rejoin her company “surrounded by the protective ranks of her comrades.”

Finally, in all of these accounts Sampson must be restored indubitably to her female gender and, predictably, they exploit the episode that Vinton appropriated from Mann’s manuscript where, upon her discharge, she dons a dress at her general’s command and is magically transformed into a captivating beauty. Holbrook speculates that upon seeing the radiant Sampson, her comrades must have engaged in barracks lamentations over “wasted opportunities,” reinforcing his earlier assertion that every recruit fantasizes about a female soldier in camp. Wright assures readers that she never again assumed male garb, except for veterans’ parades, and Cook has her “quietly inter the wartime cut-up” in the soil of her idyllic farm where “in due course she become mother of three.”

Adolescent Role Model

The proliferation of Sampson narratives authored for children and young adult readers since the late 1960s reflects her cultural re-emergence around the time of the national bicentennial as a revolutionary war hero. Representative of

this class are Cora Cheney's *The Incredible Deborah* (New York, 1967), Ann McGovern's *The Secret Soldier* (New York, 1975), Harold Felton's *Deborah Sampson: Soldier of the Revolution* (New York, 1976), Patricia Clapp's "*I'm Deborah Sampson, A Soldier of the Revolution*" (New York, 1977), Byrna Steven's *Deborah Sampson Goes to War* (Minneapolis, 1984), and Lucy Freeman and Alma Bond's *The First Woman Warrior: The Courage of Deborah Sampson* (New York, 1992). These narratives are longer than the earlier male-authored anthology accounts, and although they rely almost exclusively upon Vinton's edition of Mann's memoirs for their episodes, they supplement the Sampson story with details garnered from town records, genealogies, and historical sources covering life in the Continental Army and social conditions of the period. Although several purport to be actual "biographies" and include a bibliography of sources (Cheney, Freeman), like most "docudramas" based on real-life figures, they all assert without documentation the decisive influences upon Sampson and her presumed motivations, thoughts, feelings, and reactions to her experiences. Despite their common project to endorse Sampson as a model of female self reliance, independence, and courage, however, most of these texts, at least in some respects, reinforce a notably conservative ideology regarding womanhood not substantially different from that endorsed by the earlier "forgotten hero" accounts.

All of these accounts appropriate Mann's depiction of Sampson's hunger for learning in order to impress upon young audiences the liberating effects of reading. In several cases Sampson's grandmother and her great aunt, who encourage her curiosity and who tell her stories of Joan of Arc and the biblical Deborah, which she later recalls in moments when her courage is sagging, become decisive influences upon the young girl (Cheney, Clapp, Freeman). In a legacy that would have pleased Herman Mann, Sampson is depicted consistently as a religious liberal, despite her flirtation with the Baptists.

Sampson's motive for transgressing gender boundaries, dressing as a male, and enlisting in the military is tied to the dominant pedagogic or persuasive project of the narrative but in each case a "rationale" is supplied that mitigates the disturbing rupture of conventional gender assumptions. Clapp, whose narrative is the most patently fictionalized account of the group, uses Sampson's girlhood to explore adolescent sexual awakening; in her account Sampson enlists because, in an original episode, her first love, a son of the farmer to whom she is indentured, is killed at Yorktown and Sampson feels compelled to complete his work, and to share his experience, since she cannot share his life. Other Sampsons enlist for a combination of reasons that typically include a desire to evade her mother's plans for her marriage, frustration with limited options in Middleboro, and a strong desire to "find out who I am and what I can do" before she settles down and marries (McGovern, Cheney). Only in the single male-authored narrative in this class is her enlistment ascribed exclusively to patriotism (Felton).

In a modern departure from nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century accounts, all of these stories address, with varying degrees of detail, the awkward

physical problems that Sampson confronted in attempting to conceal her sex in an all-male regiment. We learn that she urinated in the woods, took showers in a farmer’s shed outside of camp, and traded her liquor allowance for linen cloth to use for menstrual blood. The message conveyed is that biological differences make a life of action more difficult for women but present a surmountable impediment. This is the one substantial challenge to essentialist gender ideology in modern accounts of Sampson’s career: the young adult narratives assert that behaviors traditionally associated with masculinity are not necessarily biologically contingent.

But some of these narratives echo the earlier male-authored chapters on Sampson in their treatment of the amorous episodes depicted by Mann. All of them censor the warmth and pleasure that Mann’s Sampson experienced with her female admirer from Baltimore and downplay or omit his other references to her attractiveness to women. In these stories she generally is shocked to realize that a woman is attracted to her, sometimes giggles at the deception, and usually feels obliged to terminate the affair before the admirer’s feelings get hurt. Only in one case does “Betsy,” Sampson’s Baltimore admirer, kiss her impulsively on the cheek after learning her true gender, inviting her to come visit whenever she longs to escape a man’s world and to engage in real conversation (Clapp). This treatment of the affair is the only young adult narrative that re-appropriates Mann’s late-eighteenth-century ideological commitment to the cultural value of affectionate female bonds.

All of the narratives in this class address the political issue of woman’s proper role. Occasionally, the writers insert details suggesting that engaging in male prerogatives is liberating—“it felt good to order stout”; “she was surprised how free her legs felt without skirts”—and none of them overtly criticize Sampson’s decision to enlist. Most of them, however, convey her deep satisfaction upon reassuming female attire and finding a husband to father her children. In Clapp she at first experiences self-consciousness when her breasts once again are uplifted by a bodice, but soon feels “a strong desire for children and a man to love her,” and, embraced by her future husband, succumbs to that “wonderful womanly weakness deep within.”

Freeman’s book, co-authored by a free-lance psychoanalyst, is exceptional in that it is the only modern account of Sampson that draws upon the whole of Mann’s revised Dedham manuscript instead of merely the portions quoted by Vinton, and because of its use of manuscript material fabricated by Mann to support a disturbing psychoanalytical interpretation of Sampson’s career in what purports to be a well-researched biography. In the 1797 text Mann includes a dream, narrated with more detail in the later manuscript, that Sampson has for three consecutive nights before the battle of Lexington. It is cast in the “visionary allegorical” mode widely employed both for political satire and religious fiction in the early republic.²⁷ A serpent emerges from the Atlantic, accompanied by storms and darkness, and announcing its intent to destroy the rights of man,

pursues the frightened Sampson until she musters the courage to slay it and reduce it to jelly.

After briefly summarizing for lay readers their understanding of Freud's theory of dreams, the authors interpret Sampson's "recurring" dream as proof of her deep anger at men—her father for abandoning her family and her Uncle Simeon Sampson, a merchant marine captain, for allegedly ridiculing her request to be his cabin boy, an experience which the authors ascribe to a four-year-old Sampson, without any source. The phallic imagery of the dream also is cited to document speculation that she was the victim of early childhood sexual abuse. Her deviant career can be attributed to her need to purge her rage at men in order to regain psychic balance, fall in love, and become the affectionate mother she never knew. Each time she plunges her bayonet in a Tory, she is killing the father she hates. In their implication that female transgression of conventional gender boundaries is the product of domestic dysfunction, Freeman and Bond revive with a vengeance Ellet's Victorian era "progress" narrative of Sampson's transvestite career.

Historical Periodicals and Academic Monographs

A substantial amount of literature published on Sampson since the national bicentennial has appeared in publications for academic audiences; *Historical Abstracts* and other on-line bibliographies list dozens of articles and chapters on Sampson published in historical society magazines and academic journals and monographs since the 1970s. Episodes of her "memoirs" are recapitulated as example or evidence in academic discussions of issues in women's history: women's role in the military, the obstacles confronted by women warriors throughout history, overlooked contributions by women to the American Revolution, and historical studies of female intimacy and lesbianism. Most of these studies rely primarily upon the 1972 reprint of Vinton's 1866 edition of Mann's *The Female Review*, and assume the credibility of episodes unchallenged by the editor's extensive notes to the text.²⁸ Representative examples reveal that Mann's fabricated Sampson has supplied potent historical "evidence" for a range of cultural voices attempting to legitimize her gender transgression. These texts fully exploit the potential that Butler has documented in the transvestite's challenge to conventional gender assumptions. But, not surprisingly, Mann's Sampson also has served as exemplum for social historians delineating cultural strategies for containing threats to traditional norms.

Representative of studies appropriating Mann's fictional Sampson to bolster socially subversive arguments endorsing combat roles for women in the military is John and Maria Deever's account of her army career in *Women and the Military* (Jefferson, North Carolina, and London, 1995), which includes biographies of over one hundred women who have performed key roles in armed forces throughout history. According to the preface, the compilers believe that "women will not be entirely accepted by their male counterparts until they are 'allowed'

into combat and put their lives on the line for their country as every male soldier must"(16). Their account of Sampson is drawn from *The Female Review*, which they claim was written by Sampson herself in third person, "as was the custom," and also from Ann McGovern's adaptation of Mann for young adult readers, both of which are listed in their bibliography. Consistent with their argument, the account emphasizes Sampson's able performance under the rigorous pressures of life in the Continental Army. Although the compilers acknowledge Sampson's 1782 enlistment date, they quote long passages that Mann had borrowed from other sources describing cannonades and artillery fire at the 1781 Yorktown campaign, without noting which engagement "Sampson" is referring to in these descriptions. Her role in the two encounters against Tories in New York and her musket ball extraction are described in passages borrowed from *The Female Review*, although the compilers, whose research was conducted at the military library at West Point, do not record the date or location of either of these engagements. The Deevers find in Mann's version of Sampson's career concrete validation for altering gender assumptions.

In *Surpassing the Love of Man* (New York, 1981), an examination of the history of female same-sex intimacy since the sixteenth century, Lillian Faderman appropriates Mann's Sampson to exemplify cultural strategies to contain the subversive effects of lesbian love. She describes Sampson as a "roaring girl" and "flamboyant personality" who won public approbation only because she had given up her transvestite habits and had married by the time she publicly revealed her identity to obtain a veteran's pension. Faderman observes that Mann, her "biographer," compiled his account from her own memoir notes, perhaps referring to Mann's later manuscript written in her first-person voice. Faderman argues persuasively that Vinton's edition of *The Female Review* proves that Sampson's transvestitism was inspired, not by patriotic passion, but by her frustration with woman's limited role. She quotes Vinton's excerpt from Mann's revised manuscript, where Sampson expresses her disgust with the man her mother wants her to marry and narrates the episode in which Sampson drinks too much at the Middleboro Tavern, "creeps into bed with the negro woman," and is subsequently censured by the Baptists. In Faderman's account, Sampson married—a decision, we are told, which is "anomalous to everything known of her"—because as a poor and uneducated woman she had no other choice. Faderman speculates that her appeal to other women may have been fading under her "wrinkles and flaccidity," although the historical Sampson was only twenty-three at the time of her engagement. For Faderman, Sampson is one example of the many women throughout history who would have preferred to remain lovers of women but who were forced for economic reasons to marry men. She also represents those transvestites who were "the first feminists . . . mute, without an articulated ideology," and who longed to expand woman's limited role, a desire which they could satisfy only by becoming men.

Conclusion

Consistent with his mission as an early national printer committed to the cultural edification of his readership, Herman Mann first compiled his highly fictionalized account of the career of the transvestite warrior, and proceeded to “cross-dress” it as biography and revolutionary war history, producing a model of Republican Womanhood whose female virtue compensated for her social deviance. Mann’s version of Sampson’s career diligently excised, or sublimated into culturally approved passions, the problematic dimensions of her gender transgression. The legacy of his project exemplifies Garber’s thesis that in American culture, the “transvestite’s progress” easily can be appropriated to reinforce conventional gender ideology.

But just as his heroine’s “borderline” gender status has accommodated her story to a wide range of competing cultural projects, so has the “generic transvestitism” of Mann’s *Female Review* guaranteed its longevity as cultural artifact. The text has been included in studies of Early American novels since the turn of the century, frequently without any acknowledgment of the historical Sampson²⁹ and, as this discussion documents, it has supplied historians oblivious to its fictional fabric with a primary source of “data” on the life of Sampson. In the course of his story’s appropriation by purveyors of academic, middle- and lowbrow cultures, subversive components of Sampson’s *actual* experience, originally suppressed or transformed by Herman Mann, have resurfaced and some of his most sensational *fabricated* episodes have been validated by fallible but persuasive markers of historical accuracy—scholarly notes and professional reputations. Because of the historical canonization of Herman Mann’s early republican myth, the public career of Deborah Sampson, however curtailed in her own life time, has been reprised and expanded throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. And despite her biographer’s intentions, reinforced by subsequent “progress narratives” designed to neutralize her gender transgression, she has managed to accomplish some subversive cultural work. Women seeking alternatives to captivity, adolescent women struggling with the implications of their gender “difference,” military women asserting combat credentials, and advocates for same-sex intimacy all have been supplied with “the example of our heroine.”

Notes

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1. [Herman Mann], *The Female Review* (Dedham, Mass., 1797). Mann wrote a longer revised version of *The Female Review* after Sampson died in 1827, but the manuscript, currently on file in the

Dedham Historical Society, never has been published intact. The 1797 text was abridged by Stillman Pratt and printed in installments, without attribution, in the newspaper he edited, the Middleboro, Massachusetts *Namasket Gazette*, between July 31, 1857 and January 9, 1858, a series reprinted in other papers. The 1797 text also was edited by genealogist and minister John Adams Vinton and published in Boston in 1866; Vinton's edition reprints the 1797 text, but also includes copious notes with lengthy quotations from Mann's unpublished manuscript revision. The Vinton edition was reprinted in 1916 and 1972. All references to Mann's *The Female Review* will be cited from the accessible 1972 reprint (New York) of Vinton's 1866 edition.

2. In *Prodigals and Pilgrims: The American Revolution Against Patriarchal Authority, 1750-1800* (New York, 1982), Jay Fliegelman exhaustively documents the early republican cultural project, influenced both by Lockean philosophy and the Cult of Sensibility, to foster a more feminized and less authoritarian image of masculinity and paternal care. Philip Gould demonstrates the influence of this project upon popular American literature published between the Revolution and 1830. The valorization of the feminine as signifier of national virtue resulted in an increasingly androgynous ideal for national heroism. *Covenant and Republic: Historical Romance and the Politics of Puritanism* (New York, 1996), 17-18, 45-46, 58-69.

3. See, for example, *Columbian Minerva*, 16 August 1798.

4. In her impressive study of the early modern evolution and decline of the popular female warrior ballad Diane Dugaw succinctly documents the widespread fixation with cross-dressing and gender instability at all levels of society in the western world since the beginning of the early modern era. She surveys manifestations of this fixation in plays and poetry designed for both popular and genteel audiences. See *Women Warriors and Popular Balladry, 1650-1850* (New York, 1989), 163-89.

5. Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York, 1990), 24-25, 134-41 and *Bodies that Matter* (New York, 1993), 93-119; Terry Castle, *Masquerade and Civilization: The Carnavalesque in Eighteenth Century English Culture and Fiction* (Stanford, 1986), 92-93, 256; Felicity Nussbaum, *The Autobiographical Subject: Gender and Ideology in Eighteenth Century England* (Baltimore, 1989), 198-99.

6. Marjorie Garber, *Vested Interests: Cross-Dressing and Cultural Anxiety* (New York, 1992), 69; Catherine Craft-Fairchild, *Masquerade and Gender: Disguise and Female Identity in Eighteenth Century Fictions by Women* (University Park, Penn., 1993), 45; Julie Wheelwright, *Amazons and Military Maids* (London, 1989), 57-58.

7. In a manuscript, entitled "Catalog of Principle Works, Published and Unpublished, of Herman Mann. Arranged in 1827," in the Mann Family Files at the Dedham Historical Society, Mann writes that the text of *The Female Review* was put to press when "but little more than a sheet of manuscript was finished. I wanted the facts I have since attained" (6). In the preface to the 1797 "memoirs," he indicates that although he did interview Sampson the project required time consuming acquisition of other sources (39). For a detailed account of Mann's use of popular sources to compile the 1797 *Female Review*, see Judith Hiltner, "'She Bled in Secret': Deborah Sampson, Herman Mann and *The Female Review*," *Early American Literature* 34:2 (1999), 190-220.

8. Throughout his newspaper and book publishing career, Herman Mann tirelessly reiterated the crucial need for universal public education, for both men and women, as the only safeguard for democracy and political freedom. In *The Female Review*, he argues that women are "particularly calculated to shine" in "science and belles-lettres," and laments that they have not been provided with opportunities to improve their gifts (110). Mann's advocacy of female education, however, is always in support of woman's nurturing, as mother and teacher, of virtues essential to maintain republican independence and industry (*Columbian Minerva*, 27 June 1799; *Female Review* 250-51.) Criticized by Federalist readers of the *Minerva* for defending the "impiety" of Jefferson and Paine, Mann affirms his deist beliefs (14 December 1802), criticizes the Calvinist concept of Innate Depravity (23 March 1802), and, in a later newspaper that he edited, expresses concern that evangelical enthusiasm exploits the ignorant and discourages rational scrutiny (*Norfolk Repository* 25 June 1805). During the spring and summer of 1798, under his pseudonym "Seneca, the Younger," Mann writes of the immorality of war in the same issues containing proclamations by "Young Men of Boston" and "Citizens of Dedham" asserting their willingness to support their President should he declare war against France (*Minerva*, 17 May; 2, 9 August).

9. For a detailed account of Mann's borrowings from Hitchcock's *Farmer's Friend*, see Hiltner, "She Bled in Secret," 193-94.

10. Excerpts from the Baptist church records are duplicated in the 1972 edition of *The Female Review*, xx.

11. The most detailed records of engagements during the revolution reveal that had Sampson enlisted in 1781 as she does in Mann's *Female Review*, she might have been wounded in skirmishes with Tory raiders outside of New York City. But no researcher on Sampson has identified any encounters involving casualties and injuries in this region during her actual period of enlistment—

May, 1782-October, 1783—such as those in which Mann placed her at Tarrytown and East Chester. For the most inclusive list of encounters involving injuries and casualties from June 1782 until the end of the war, see Howard H. Peckham, *The Toll of Independence: Engagements and Battle Casualties of the American Revolution* (Chicago, 1974): 96-99. It is possible that Sampson was injured in a skirmish the record of which has not been preserved. Obviously her service for eighteen months in the Continental Army would have exposed her to a wide range of non-combat injuries. Her original muster papers, documenting the June, 1782 enlistment date, are on file in the Massachusetts State Archives.

12. Holly Mayer, *Belonging to the Army: Camp Followers and Community During the American Revolution* (Columbia, South Carolina, 1996); Linda Kerber, *Women of the Republic* (Chapel Hill, 1980): 55-61; and Linda Grant De Pauw, "Women in Combat: The Revolutionary War Experience," *Armed Forces and Society* 7 (Winter 1981): 209-26. In her study of the narratives of European and American women who enlisted in the military disguised as men since the seventeenth century, Wheelwright observes that in each case, the writer assumes the subject will be suspected of working as a prostitute, and adopts strategies to emphasize her purity and innocence, *Amazons and Military Maids*, 77.

13. For a discussion of Walker's adaptation of the popular female warrior narrative for middle class readership, see Dianne Dugaw's introduction to a modern reprint of *The Female Soldier* (Los Angeles, 1989). Parenthetical citations from Walker's text refer to Dugaw's edition. Compare Walker's account of Snell's removal of a musket ball in the groin (16) to Mann's version of the same operation performed by Sampson (167-70).

14. Nancy Cott has demonstrated that Mann's depiction of Sampson's positive response to female affection reflects widespread cultural assumptions of the period regarding the wholesomeness of female intimacies. In *The Bonds of Womanhood* (New Haven, 1977): 60-96, Cott examines diaries and letters to document the frequency of intense emotional relationships among New England women, 1780-1835. Characterized by uninhibited physical affection, these bonds were encouraged by cultural ideology associating women with tender feeling, and were promoted by parents, teachers and religious institutions.

15. *An Address [sic] Delivered with Applause, at the Federal Street Theater, Boston four successive nights of the different plays, beginning March 22, 1802* (Dedham, 1802), reprinted in *Publications of the Sharon Historical Society of Sharon, Massachusetts* 2 (1905), 15-22.

16. *An Affecting Narrative of Louisa Baker* (Boston, 1815). In "The Female Marine in an Era of Good Feeling," *Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society* 103 (1993): 359-93. Daniel Cohen supplies persuasive evidence that this narrative was a hoax penned by a hack writer who worked for the Boston printer, Nathaniel Coverly, Jr. The popular story and its several sequels were reprinted nearly twenty times between 1815 and 1818. Although the account was probably fictional, the prostitute's appropriation of *The Female Review* to advance her liberation suggests that in her transvestite imposture, Sampson was regarded by purveyors of popular culture as an icon of deliverance in narratives of women trapped and exploited in gender determined roles.

17. *The Friendless Orphan, An Affecting Narrative of the Trials and Tribulations of Sophia Johnson* (New York, 1841). *The Cabin Boy Wife; or Singular and Surprising Adventures of Mrs. Ellen Stephens* (New York, 1840).

18. Elizabeth Ellet, *Women of the American Revolution*, Vol. 2 (1848; Williamstown, Mass., 1980): 122-35. Subsequent quotations from Ellet refer to this accessible 1980 edition.

19. Nina Baym, *American Women Writers and the Work of History, 1790-1860* (New Brunswick, 1995), 235-37.

20. Ellert, *Women*, 126. Perhaps the "undignified" implications of her subject's military adventures prompted Ellet to convert the musket ball wound to the groin that Sampson received in Mann's account to a shot in the shoulder (130).

21. Nathan O. Hatch, *The Democratization of American Christianity* (New Haven, 1989): 182.

22. The 3 September 1782 entry from the Middleboro First Baptist church record describing Sampson's indiscretion is duplicated in the 1972 edition of *The Female Review*, xxviii.

23. Vinton appears persuaded of the authenticity of the first person voice, even though in his introduction to the edition he acknowledges that although the heroine speaks in first person, "the words are Mr. Mann's," and also admits the possibility that Sampson may never have made some of the statements that Mann ascribes to her (Vinton edition, xiv).

24. Vinton edition, xxx. In one of his notes, Vinton includes a long manuscript passage where Sampson describes the necessity of sleeping with other soldiers when in close quarters at camp, assuring her readers that her virtue never was threatened. Despite his veneration of her "self control," Vinton adamantly insists without evidence that this passage is spurious: "all the while, she slept alone" (182).

25. See Wright, 93-120; Holbrook, 55-62; Cook, 217-28.

26. Caroll Smith-Rosenberg, "The Female World of Love and Ritual," *Signs* 1 (Autumn 1975):

27.

27. David Reynolds, *Faith in Fiction: The Emergence of Religious Literature in America* (Cambridge, Mass., 1981): 38-63.

28. Space proscribes listing all of the academic pieces published on Sampson since the 1970s that rely upon Herman Mann's versions of her career as primary source. Representative accounts of Sampson as forgotten woman veteran of the American revolution include Vera Laska, "*Remember the Ladies*": *Outstanding Women of the American Revolution* (Boston, 1976): 63-90; George Rogers, "Women's Liberation circa 1781," *New England Galaxy* 16 (1975): 3-12; and Linda Grant De Pauw, "Women in Combat: The Revolutionary War Experience," *Armed Forces and Society* 7 (Winter 1981): 209-26. Accounts of Sampson as exemplum of woman's suitability for combat include pieces by military historians John P. and Maria C. Deever, and Elizabeth Evans: see the Deevers' *Women and the Military* (Jefferson, North Carolina and London, 1995): 94-103 and Evans' *Weathering the Storm* (New York, 1975): 303-34. Also see Julie Wheelright, *Amazons and Military Maids* (London, 1989): 52-58 and *passim*. For an account of Sampson as representative of limited options for lesbians in early modern history, see Lillian Faderman, *Surpassing the Love of Man: Romantic Friendship and Love Between Women from the Renaissance to the Present* (New York, 1981): 58-61, and for Sampson as outspoken woman lecturer see Judith Anderson, ed., *Outspoken Women: Speeches by American Women Reformers, 1635-1935* (Dubuque, Iowa, 1984): xii, 135-41, Karlyn Kohrs Campbell, "Gender and Genre: Loci of Invention and Contradiction in the Earliest Speeches by U.S. Women," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 81 (November 1995): 479-95 and Jane Elmes-Crahall, "Deborah Sampson Gannett," in *Women Public Speakers in the United States, 1800-1925* (Westport, Conn., 1993): 382-92.

29. Lillie Loshe in *The Early American Novel* (New York, 1907): 65-66, Arthur Hobson Quinn in *American Fiction* (New York, 1936): 23, and Alexander Cowie in *The Rise of the American Novel* (New York, 1951): 30 all describe the book as historical fiction which merely "purports to be the account of a real person." Henri Petter in *The Early American Novel* (Columbus: 1971): 381-83 notes that the text is loosely based upon the real life of Sampson but fails to integrate effectively its historical and fictional elements. Cathy Davidson in *Revolution and the Word: The Rise of the Novel in America* (New York, 1986): 179-81, describes the book as "feminized picaresque" fiction that "masks its own fictionality by passing itself off as a proper history of the Revolution."