

Orangeburgh German-Swiss Genealogical Society

Oktoberfest 2014

October 10th and 11th, 2014

Program Schedule

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 10, 2014

A. S. Salley Archives open for research	9:00 AM – 2:00 PM
Registration – Family Life Center	4:00 – 6:15 PM
Exhibit Area open – Family Tables, Vendors, Other Societies	4:00 – 6:15 PM
President's Dinner (advance purchase required).....	6:30 PM
Speaker: Dr. Michael Byrd, <i>White Poverty and Poor Relief in St. Philips and St. Matthews Parishes, 1725-1775</i>	

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 11, 2014

Exhibit Area open – Family Tables, Vendors, Other Societies	8:30 AM – 3:00 PM
Registration (coffee, juice, pastries, and fruit available)	8:30 AM
Annual Business Meeting	9:00 AM
<i>Ya'll Come: Early Marketing of South Carolina in Europe</i> , William Delk.....	9:30 AM
<i>Westward Ho: Outmigration via the Federal Road</i> , video by Larry Holman	10:00 AM
Break	10:45 AM
<i>DNA Basics: yDNA and Beyond</i> , Lynn Teague	11:00 AM
Lunch (advance purchase required)	12:00 – 1:00 PM
<i>Progress at the Salley Archives</i> , Eric Powell	1:00 PM
<i>Working with Your Autosomal DNA Test Results</i>	1:15 – 2:00 PM
Individual DNA Consultations*	2:00 – 3:00 PM
Lynn Teague, Margaret Waters (*or small group discussions as participants desire)	

Some family tables, vendors, and other societies may not be available the entire time.
Meal purchase deadline is October 3, 2014.

Revised 11 October 2014

CURRICULUM VITAE

Michael D. Byrd, PhD

CONTACT INFORMATION

Address 2717 Wheat Street, Columbia, SC, 29205 Telephone 803-799-6202

Email byrdmd01@mailbox.sc.edu

Education History

<u>College/University</u>	<u>Major</u>	<u>Dates</u>	<u>Degree</u>
The Citadel	Modern Languages	1970	BA
University of SC	Social Work	1973	MSW
University of SC	Public Health Administration	1977	MPH
University of Minnesota	RWJ Balancing Long Term Care Fellow	2001-05	
University of SC	Social Work	2005	PhD
University of SC	Studio Art (Ceramics)	2011	

Employment History (Reverse chronological listing starting with present position)

<u>Dates</u>	<u>Firm/Institution</u>	<u>Rank/Position</u>
08/2010 - Present	Clinical Assistant Professor, University of South Carolina, Health Services Policy and Management, Columbia, SC. MHA Program Director, MPH Program Director, 2010-2013	Board Chair, Palmetto SeniorCare; Policy Board SC Center for Gerontology; Board Member, SC Chapter, American College of Healthcare Executives; Advisory Board, DHEC Home Health; South Carolina Cancer Alliance Coordinating Council, Treasurer, Executive Committee ; Member Cancer Control, Advisory Committee; Member National Association of Chronic Disease Directors; Board Member, SC Tuberculosis Society
09/1985-08/2010	Director, Bureau of Community Health and Chronic Disease Prevention, Bureau of Home Health and Long Term Care Services, South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control, Columbia, SC	Responsible for management, quality, financing and clinical operations for

large home health agency and associated services and the direction of nine divisions of the Department's health promotion and injury and chronic disease prevention programs including 13 licensed home health agencies. Chronic Disease Director for South Carolina. Board Member at large, National Association of Chronic Disease Directors. 2010 NACDD Leadership Award. Principal Investigator for 15 CDC grants. Adjunct clinical instructor in Medicine, Public Health and Social Work at University of South Carolina. Robert Wood Johnson Common Ground grant team member.

- 1979-1985 Assistant to Bureau Director and Administrative Program Analyst, South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control, Bureau of Home Health and Chronic Disease, Columbia, SC
- Responsible for planning and evaluation and financial management of large statewide set of programs related to home care and chronic disease. Developed with inter-Agency team the Medicaid Community Long Term Care waiver and implemented program within Agency.
- 1976-1979 Clinical Social Worker I and II, South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control, Division of Home Health, Columbia, SC
- Responsible for social work services as member of multi-disciplinary team in 7 regional home health agencies. Interim program manager in Upper Savannah District
- 1975-1976 Social Work Consultant, South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control, Division of Certification, Columbia, SC
- Responsible for social work and patient activity certification survey for hospitals and skilled nursing facilities. Completed Health Facility Training Center Basic Course, Tulane University.
- 1973-1975 Clinical Social Worker, South Carolina Department of Mental Health, South Carolina State Hospital, Columbia, SC
- Responsible for social work services for caseload of 500 chronically ill patients. Supervised three bachelor level workers.

Honors and Awards

National Association of Chronic Disease Directors 2010 Leadership Award
Delta Omega National Public Health Honor Society
Beta Gamma Sigma, International Honor Society for the Study of Business
ASTHO Vision Award 2001
First Honor Graduate, The Citadel 1970

List of Articles in Print

- Brown, T., Byrd, M. & Baskins, J. (1995). Managed care for persons needing long term care: Implications for home health care. *Home Health Care Practice*, 7 (4), 45-52.
- Byrd, M. (2001). Back to the future for higher education: Medieval universities. *Internet and Higher Education*, 4, 1-7.
- Byrd, M. (2007). Poor relief of lewd, wanton, and idle women in colonial Charles Town. *Arete*, 31, 5-23.
- Byrd, M. (2008). Back to the future for home care: roots of Social Work and Nursing in America. *Home Health Care Management and Practice*, 20, 6, 487-48.
- Byrd, M. (2009). The first Charles Town workhouse, 1738-1775: A deterrent to white pauperism? *South Carolina Historical Magazine*, 110, 1-2, 35-52.
- Bowen, S. & Byrd, M. (2009). The epidemiological profile of SC women who do not receive regular Pap-test: Improving access to care. *Journal of the South Carolina Medical Association Symposium Issue*, 105, 7, 246-253.
- Duffus, W.A., Davis, H., Byrd, M.D., Heidari, K., Stephens, T., Gibson, J. J. (2011). HIV testing in women: Missed opportunities. *Journal of Women's Health*, 00, 00, 1-9.
- Bowen, S.A., Williams, E. A., Glover, S.A., Byrd, M. D. (2013). Effects of Social Injustice on Breast Health Seeking Behaviors of Low Income Women, *American Journal of Health Promotion*, March/April, vol.27, No. 4, 222-230.

Research Support -2005-2011

5U58DP001482

(PI: Michael D. Byrd)

06/30/2008 – 06/29/2013

US DHHS Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Obesity Program

Physical Activity and Obesity Program

CDC Cooperative Agreement – CFDA number: 93.283

The goal of this study is provide a coordinated statewide nutrition, physical activity, and obesity prevention approach in South Carolina. Major objectives of this project include: providing infrastructure in order to provide subject matter expertise, trainings, and technical assistance on policy and systems oriented approaches to healthy eating and active living; to conduct evaluation of state partnerships, and implementation of the obesity state plan; establish surveillance related activities.

Role: Oversight of grant and required deliverable. Provide technical assistance as needed.

5U17CE424805

(Byrd, PI)

08/01/05 – 07/31/11

US DHHS Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control

Public Health Injury Surveillance and Prevention Program

CDC Cooperative Agreement – CFDA number: 93.136

The goals of this study are:

Part A: Integrated Core Injury Prevention and Control program. The goal of this program is to increase the capacity and enhance existing infrastructure of South Carolina's Injury Prevention and Control Program to effectively address the prevention injuries and violence. The program will collect, analyze and use injury data.

Part C: Traumatic Brain Injury Emergency Department Surveillance program. Goal of this program is to continue providing high quality data on TBI events in the ED. Data will be useful to state injury control programs and other agencies for prevention and control of TBI of lower severity.

Part D: Traumatic Brain Injury Service Linkage Program. The goal of this program is to use surveillance data obtained by the SCDHEC and the DDSN to link persons with traumatic brain injury and their families to information about TBI and appropriate services within the community.

Role: PI (2008-2010) Oversight of grant and required deliverable. Provide technical assistance as needed.

CDC-RFA-DP07-703

(PI: Byrd)

06/30/2008 – 06/29/2013

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

The National Cancer Prevention and Control Program

The goal of this project is/was to ...increase the number of low income women screened for breast and cervical cancer and to implement the state cancer plan to reduce the burden of cancer in SC.

Role: 2008-2010-Oversight of grant and required deliverable. Provide technical assistance as needed.

CDC-RFA-DP08-804

(PI: Byrd)

06/30/2008 – 06/29/2013

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

WISEWOMAN

The goal of this project is/was to provide cardiovascular health services to women eligible for the breast and cervical cancer screening program. Services include screening for cholesterol vels, blood sugcar levels, tobacco use and provision of lifestyle interventions to reduce those risks. ...

Role: Oversight of grant and required deliverable. Provide technical assistance as needed.

DP000735

(Byrd,:PI)

06/30/2009 – 06/29/2010

CDC, Funding Agency

Heart Disease and Stroke Prevention Program

The goal of this program is to continue address performance measures and priority areas of work: increase control of high blood pressure and high blood cholesterol, increase knowledge of signs and symptoms for heart attack and stroke and the importance of calling 9-1-1; improve emergency response, improve quality of heart disease and stroke care; eliminate health disparities in term of race, ethnicity, gender, geography, or socioeconomic status.

Role: Oversight of grant and required deliverable. Provide technical assistance as needed.

5U58DP001989

(PI: Byrd, until 9/2010)

03/29/2009 – 03/28/2014

SC Division of Tobacco Prevention and Control, Diabetes Prevention and Control Program
Healthy Communities Program, and Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System

The goal of this project is/was to reduce the morbidity and premature mortality associated with chronic disease and to eliminate associated health disparities by supporting capacity building, program planning, development, implementation, evaluation, and surveillance for chronic disease conditions and chronic disease related risk factors.

Role: Oversight of grant and required deliverable. Provide technical assistance as needed.

3U58DP001989-01S2

(PI:Byrd, until 8, 2010)

03/15/2010 – 03/15/2012

US DHHS Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

901ARRA Comp 1 – SC Div of Tobacco Prev and Control, Diabetes Prev and Control PR

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA)-ABC Grow Healthy Project: CFDA#:
93.723

The goal of this project was to create local smokefree coalitions in Horry and Florence County SC and to enact smokefree ordinances in incorporated jurisdictions of these counties.

Role: Oversight of grant and required deliverable. Provide technical assistance as needed.

WHITE POOR AND POOR RELIEF IN CHARLES TOWN, 1725-1775:
A PROSOPOGRAPHY

by

Michael Dane Byrd

Bachelor of Arts
The Citadel, 1970

Master of Social Work
University of South Carolina, 1973

Master of Public Health
University of South Carolina, 1977

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the
College of Social Work
University of South Carolina
2005

Major Professor
Chairman, Examining Committee

Committee Member

Committee Member

Committee Member

Dean of the Graduate School

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I thank all of the many scholars who have cared deeply enough about this topic to directly or indirectly help me. Dr. Howard Goldstein and Dr. Frank Raymond were the faculty advisors for my 1973 master's thesis and encouraged me to continue this project. For Dr. Raymond, this support spanned thirty-five years. Dr. Robert Weinbach recognized the contribution that this thesis made to social work research in his 1991 textbook in which he lavishly praised my use of the method which others later dubbed "prosopography." Since I have no formal training in historiography, the help of Dr. Daniel Littlefield of the University of South Carolina Department of History and Dr. Timothy Lockley of Warwick University's American Studies Program has been invaluable. Dr. Leon Ginsberg suggested that I pursue my thesis topic as a dissertation and offered to chair my committee. Dr. Julie Miller-Cribbs and Dr. Naomi Farber have reviewed drafts and offered many helpful suggestions and counsel. Without the help and support of these eight, I would have pursued an easier, shorter, but less satisfying path. The many dissertators and historians that have over the years cited my now thirty year old unpublished work have sustained my energy and efforts, but I would have never been in the position to do the research to find these citations without these eight social workers, historians and writers who helped me continue this work.

I also gratefully acknowledge the assistance of Dr. Charles Lesser and the staff at the South Carolina Department of Archives and History, Ross Taylor of the Thomas Cooper Map Library, Mr. Whitman Page and the staff at the South Carolina State

Library, Dr. George Terry and the staff of the South Caroliniana Library, and Mrs. Dorothy Anderson of St. Philip's Episcopal Church in Charleston. Additionally, I was helped in the preparation of this manuscript by Ms. Lee Monk, Ms. Dinah Williams, and Ms. Caroline Byrd. I also appreciate the support and encouragement of my co-workers at the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control, especially Ms. Christine Phillips and Mr. Richard Hatfield.

I dedicate this dissertation to my wife Sherilyn and to Hannah Ceasar, Sarah Murray, Sarah Cook, Mary Hogg and all the poor whites in Charles Town who would have been astounded to learn that after 250 years historians would assert that there was no white poverty in colonial America.

ABSTRACT

WHITE POOR AND POOR RELIEF IN CHARLES TOWN, 1725-1775: A PROSOPOGRAPHY

Michael Dane Byrd

Data from over 2,000 St. Philip's Parish poor relief cases from 1725-1775 are analyzed revealing that while English Poor Laws were the basis for colonial South Carolina statutes, these laws were not implemented in Charles Town as they were in England. These data also show that poverty was a significant problem in colonial Charles Town and that a complex system of public and private services provided poor relief. The historiographical method of prosopography is employed to create vignettes of the lives of over forty poor whites, a free Negro girl, and two slave schoolmasters.

Expenditures for public assistance grew by 1,800 percent during the period 1725-1775. Alarmed at the rising costs, the wealthy gentry established a workhouse and passed additional laws to limit poor relief expenses. Despite these measures, public outcry over the increasing poor tax, and Assembly studies finding that laws were not enforced, costs increased each year. Each year new relief officials were elected from among the white male gentry and each year laws were ignored that required all orphans to be bound out, that ordered all poor persons to be housed in the workhouse and not otherwise, and that denied relief to non-residents and able-bodied paupers. Poor persons housed in the workhouse performed no work and received the best medical care available. Officials administering poor relief were closely insinuated with the poor. There was no expansion

and contraction of benefits nor was the threat of the asylum employed to control the poor. Many poor families were headed by widowed, abandoned, or never married women and rates of illegitimacy were high; yet gender, marital status, and adherence to patriarchal or religious standards of conduct were not reasons to deny assistance. These findings are inconsistent with almost every social welfare history of colonial America and with the conclusions of noted social welfare theorists.

This research also examines the relationship between poverty, poor relief, and social support. The social and environmental determinants of human behavior, the public health theories of the social gradient and the epidemiologic transition of disease, and the role of kinship networks and private charity are explored.

Major Professor: Leon Ginsberg, Ph.D.

PREFACE

“Every society needs its myths, and the great myth of early American history is that scarce labor in a land-rich environment eliminated poverty.”¹

Exploring the white poor in early America seems a somewhat misplaced activity...when a much larger group of truly impoverished people should garner most attention.²

History is considered to by many to be more akin to the humanities than to the social sciences. Among the social sciences, history is thought of as being the least scientific of the lot. This study was originally conceptualized as a set of qualitative stories without the “hard data” usually associated with science. As it has progressed, I have learned that history can be pursued as scientifically as studies of contemporary humans.

In 1973, I wrote a master’s thesis on social welfare in colonial Charles Town. The work was about rich, powerful and historically significant white men in a city that depended upon slavery to thrive.³ A lot has changed in social welfare history since 1973.

¹Gary B. Nash, “Poverty and Politics in Early American History,” In Billy G. Smith, ed., *Down and Out in Early America* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University, 2004), 1.

² Philip D. Morgan, “Slaves and Poverty,” In Billy G. Smith, ed., *Down and Out in Early America* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University, 2004), 94-95. Morgan argues that white poverty in early America was “on a small scale” when compared to poverty in Europe. According to Morgan, while white poverty has garnered most historians’ attention, it has been at the expense of ignoring the poverty of black slaves. Writing about white poverty in early America is a “misplaced activity.”

³ The following is a description of the findings from the researcher’s 1973 unpublished master’s thesis, cited in Bonnie Yegedis and Robert Weinbach, *Research Methods for Social Workers* (New York: Longman, 1991), 107, 108.

The focus has moved from white male America toward a new social history from the bottom-up to include stories of women, people of color and the poor themselves. This new history of social welfare challenges the benevolent nature of policy-makers and institutions and emphasizes the social control functions of social welfare policy.

One thing has not changed. While the biblical text asserts that the poor may be always with every society, the existence of indigents in colonial America has not only been denied by most Americans, but also by some historians. In a 1992 Pulitzer Prize winning tome historian Gordon Wood asserted that poverty and deprivation simply were not present in colonial America.⁴ Yet the simple fact is that poverty predated industrial America, and was endemic in the provinces, especially South Carolina and Georgia. Perhaps as many as ninety percent of those disembarking in Charles Town arrived impoverished, and a large proportion of these lived in destitution throughout their lives.⁵

The researcher's findings helped to paint a picture of assistance to the poor that bore little resemblance to that usually portrayed in history books. His findings indicated that the poor were treated humanely and with dignity; no assumptions about their laziness or moral impoverishment were in evidence; they did not represent a distinct, stigmatized segment of colonial society; and a community effort was made to provide the opportunity for them to achieve financial independence.

⁴ Gordon Wood, *The Radicalism of the American Revolution* (New York: A.A. Knopf, 1992), 4. In fairness, the eminent historian Carl Bridenbaugh in two studies published in 1738 and 1755 found poverty to be a serious problem in colonial America. He cited the St. Philip's vestry minutes extensively. He failed to quantify his findings, and focused his reports on the benevolence of the vestrymen and the parish elites. Carl Bridenbaugh, *Cities in the Wilderness: The First Century of Urban Life in America, 1625-1742*. (New York: A.A. Knopf, 1938); Carl Bridenbaugh, *Cities in Revolt: Urban Life in America, 1743-1776* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1955)

⁵ Included in this estimate are African slaves, indentured servants, convicts, orphans and paupers, poor Protestants, and others fleeing religious persecution and economic deprivation in Europe.

The belief that poverty has never been a serious problem contributes no doubt to the fact that social welfare history is a rather obscure branch of the study of history.⁶ The colonial period of American social welfare has been characterized as one of “benign near-neglect” of the poor.⁷ Moreover, the study of American colonial history has only recently attracted much attention from historians, and very few have studied the southern provinces.⁸ Another problem posed by writing about white poverty is that the poorest persons in society were black slaves, not whites.⁹ This was especially true in the South. Also, even if poverty was more acute in urban settings, no more than five percent of the colonists lived in cities, and even fewer in southern towns.

Despite the fact that there were many more poor whites than elites in the southern colonies of North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia, the lives of poor whites living in this era have never appeared in any significant way in literature or in history.¹⁰ The

⁶ Clarke Chambers, “Uphill All the Way: Reflections on the Course and Study of Social Welfare History,” *Social Service Review* 66 (1992): 492-504; Robert Fischer, Speaking for the Contribution of History: Context and the Origins of the Social Welfare History Group”. *Social Service Review* 73 (1999): 191-221.

⁷ P.N. Reid, “Social Welfare History,” In *The Encyclopedia of Social Work*, 19th ed. (Washington, D.C.:NASW Press, 1995), 2208.

⁸ Jack P. Greene, “Colonial South Carolina,” In Jack P. Greene, Rosemary Brana-Shute, and Randy J. Sparks, eds. *Money , Trade, and Power: The Evolution of Colonial South Carolina’s Plantation Society* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press), vii-viii. While published works about South Carolina lag, there is a recent increase in the numbers of dissertators interested in South Carolina.

⁹ Morgan, “Slaves and Poverty,” 94.

¹⁰ William Byrd was the first to write about southern white poor. In his fictional “Lubberland,” resided “indolent wretches” who “find more pleasure in Laziness than Luxury” and who “Loiter away their lives like Solomon’s Sluggard.” In William K. Boyd, ed., *William Byrd’s Histories of the Dividing Line between Virginia and North Carolina* (Raleigh: North Carolina Historical Commission, 1929), 54, 102, 90, 91. Eliza

term “poor southern white” is itself a pejorative. Regardless of period, poor whites in the South have been characterized but rarely studied. Hillbillies, lintheads, tarheels, crackers, sandhillers, rednecks, and white trash have been the subject of fiction and unflattering characterizations. Poor southern whites deserve a place in the historiography of colonial America.

Since they leave few letters or journals and have no estates, wills, or inventories, and they are not the subject of newspaper accounts, few devices are available for a social historian. Time and nature have erased whatever scarce records existed in the first place. Early Charles Town was visited by seven plagues of destruction: war, flood, hurricane, fire, disease, pirate and Indian. Why, given the reported lack of significance and paucity of evidence, would one want to write a dissertation on this topic? One reason is that current scholarship has misrepresented this important area of American history by judging it based upon present standards of conduct. Slavery and wanton oppression of vulnerable populations are wrong whenever they occur. However, it is unfair to remove history from the context in which it occurs. Single factor explanations such as the notion that social welfare was intended to control the poor may fit popular thinking but subordinate the past to the present.

Lucas Pinckney wrote that “the poorer sort [are] the most indolent people in the world, or they could never be wretched in so plentiful a country as this.” In Elise Pinckney, ed., *Letterbook of Eliza Pinckney 1739-1762* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1997). Finally, Charles Woodmason, an itinerant Anglican minister, found them to be poor people, “almost starving,” and just a “degree removed from Common Savages.” In Richard Hooker, ed., *The Carolina Backcountry on the Eve of the Revolution: The Journal of Charles Woodmason, Anglican Itinerant* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1953), 35, 53. These contemporary references are among the very few works about the earliest southern poor. Most social welfare histories are written from the perspective of poor relief and do not undertake the study of white poverty or the poor themselves. Lockley’s work (in press) is the exception. Timothy Lockley, “Rural White Poverty in Colonial South Carolina” (in press, *American Studies*).

Despite their disappearance from histories and texts, the challenge is not to find the poor in eighteenth century Charles Town. The thousands of names, accounts and snippets of data on the poor in the ledgers and minute books of St. Philip's Parish can be counted, categorized, and measured. When they died, these early poor left with us few possessions, few records, and fewer words, yet we know they were there. Deaths were witnessed by everyone, by men, women, and children, by rich and by poor. These early poor residents were not hidden away, out of sight, and their deaths were recorded in the St. Philip's registry. When they died, they were placed in pine coffins purchased in bulk by the parish and buried on a marsh encircled knoll in Potter's Field at the end of Magazine Street. No, the real test is not to prove the existence of the poor. The real test is to authenticate them and their existence, to give their lives depth and color.

A prosopography is a collection of biographical sketches used by social and political historians to convey larger patterns in a historical period, or literally from modern Latin, "writing about somebody." The research method called prosopography uses statistics and computers, to identify, list, sort, and draw relationships between various characters or people within a specific historical, social, or economic context. This technique is employed to organize the entries in the St. Philip's vestry minute books (1732-1775) and the St. Philip's church warden's accounts (1725-1751). The birth, baptism, marriage and burial registers are recently published with indexes, so there was no need to enter this data. Once combined in a single database, hundreds of natural experiments are possible. Time series, pretest-posttest designs, and comparison and experimental groups occur naturally. The humanities and the sciences are met.

I have tried to follow the path where it leads by a verbatim presentation of much of the primary record. While some readers may find this tiresome, it is the best way to present the past on its own terms. My aim is to focus attention away from the elite white males and onto the *stories* of the paupers themselves. These stories are meant to be in the tradition of Liebow and Dash, and are as real and factual as they can be from a distance of 250 years.¹¹

¹¹ Elliot Liebow, *Tell Them Who I Am: The Lives Of Homeless Women* (New York: Free Press, 1993); Leon Dash, *Rosa Lee: A Mother and Her Family in Urban America* (New York: Basic Books, 1996).

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List of Abbreviations and Symbols

CWA	St Phillip's Church Warden's Account Book
FY	fiscal year (Monday after Easter to Easter)
SCG	South Carolina Gazette
SCL	South Caroliniana Library
SCDH	South Carolina Department of Archives and History
SCHGM.....	South Carolina Historical and Genealogical Magazine
SCHM	South Carolina Historical Magazine
SES	socioeconomic status
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences, Version 12.0
VM	St. Philip's Vestry Minutes
£	pound in Carolina currency, valued at @ one-seventh of one pound sterling (£ sterling) throughout the colonial period)

CHAPTER I- INTRODUCTION

“Though it is true that the past is never dead there (in Charleston), it is rather death than time that lingers, a vague but oppressive gloom, timeless, encompassing all to come, all that has passed.”¹

Widowed in 1747 at age 27, Hannah Ceaser supported two children: seven-year-old Sarah Ann (Hannah, Jr.) and William. For a while she managed to eke by as a wet nurse and foster parent for orphaned children. Her services were paid for by the vestry and she also received “present” relief at the discretion of the church wardens. In 1748, the Kilpatrick infant she was nursing died, leaving Hannah and her family dependent upon a bi-monthly allowance from the church wardens. Serving as a wetnurse for orphaned infants “on the parish” was one of the few means of employment for poor women. Most widows were younger than Hannah. Wars, drowning, and violent deaths from work-related injuries widowed many, and most remarried quickly. But Hannah was sickly from consumption and had no prospects.

With no fuel even in Charles Town’s mild climate she could not take the early March chill from her tiny one room hovel. Hannah had asked the gruff warden John Crockatt, wealthy owner of Crockatt’s bridge, for relief, but was only granted money for Sarah Ann’s schooling. Then in 1750, weakened by bouts with malaria, she was admitted “in distress” with a terrible fever to the hospital/workhouse on Logan Street with her two children in tow, having no relatives to care for her. Despite the bleeding,

¹ Peter A. Coclanis, *The Shadow of a Dream: Economic Life and Death in the South Carolina Low Country-1670-1920* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 27.

salivations, and medicines administered by Dr. Gaultier, Hannah died shortly thereafter. William was bound out and Sarah Ann was placed in foster care at Mrs. Richardson's. Both children were sent to school at parish charge. In 1753, Sarah Ann was bound until age 18 to Mrs. Hoyland, a seamstress who worked in the fashionable Broad Street shop of the tailor Darby Pendergrass.

Suddenly in 1758, the church wardens were ordered "to take all precautions to "Indemnifye the Parish Concerning a Bastard Child got on the body of Hannah Ceasar, Jr." (V.M. October 16, 1758). While Darby Pendergrass denied Sarah Ann's claim, he was taken to court and forced to reimburse the parish for its expenses and to support the mother and bastard child (V.M., April 2, 1759).

Hannah Ceasar and her children were typical of recipients of public assistance in Charles Town. Her case is also illustrative of the deep disagreement among historians of American colonial social welfare. Hannah Ceasar was cited by Bridenbaugh in his acclaimed 1955 work *Cities in Revolt*. Bridenbaugh's comprehensive review of the Charles Town vestry minutes as well as similar records in Philadelphia, Boston, New York, and Providence led him to conclude that "The Charles Town Vestry cared for its poor both generously and decently".² Almost 50 years later, Abramovitz, in *Regulating the Lives of Women*, refers to the Ceasar case almost verbatim as it appeared in Bridenbaugh's work but without citing his work. Abramovitz, writing about all colonial poor relief uses the case of Hannah Ceasar and

² Carl Bridenbaugh, *Cities in Revolt: Urban Life in America, 1743-1776* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1955), 124.

her family as support for her argument that social welfare in eighteenth century America was harsh, punitive and sexist.³

Problem Statement

The study of social welfare in the colonial period is believed to have little or no relevance, since there was no significant poverty in America until the Industrial Revolution approximately one hundred years after the end of the colonial period.⁴ It is for this reason, perhaps, that the literature on the topic of social welfare in colonial America has never been reviewed critically. Even more problematic, social welfare in eighteenth century America has been portrayed in textbooks and journals as a valley between the twin peaks of the Elizabethan Poor Laws and the Industrial Revolution. As will be detailed in the subsequent review of the literature, the harsh and repressive English poor laws have been reported by historians to have been employed wholesale without modification in all the colonies. In the 250 years between the earliest settlers and the Industrial Revolution, little of interest to social welfare history scholars is believed to have occurred. Also, despite the fact that Charles Town was one of only four American cities existing during the colonial period, there have been no comprehensive studies of Charles Town's social welfare services and policies during the period 1670-1776. Philadelphia, New York, and Boston's poor relief systems have been extensively documented.⁵ Writing about the status of historiography of colonial

³ Abramovitz, *Regulating the Lives of Women: Social Welfare Policy from Colonial Times to the Present* (Boston: South End Press, 1996), 85.

⁴ Reid, Social Welfare, 2208-2209; Harold L. Wilensky and Charles N. Lebeaux, *Industrial Society and Social Welfare* (New York: The Free Press, 1958).

⁵ Raymond A. Mohl, "Poverty in Early America, a Reappraisal: The Case of Eighteenth-century New York," *New York History, L* (1969): 5-29; David M.

South Carolina, Greene asserts that “the past generation has witnessed a profound revolution in the study of colonial British American History.” Notwithstanding this burgeoning scholarship, Greene finds that the study of the lower southern provinces has “elicited little interest.” Charles Town was the economic and cultural center of the region, but its rich history, especially its social welfare history, continues to be neglected when compared to that of other colonial cities and regions.⁶

A major theme in the study of American history is the search for meaning, or a search for the roots of American thinking and values. The starting point for this pursuit is usually the colonial period in rural New England. Most scholars ignore the southern colonies in this search, since there was no “champion” or noted philosopher along the lines of Roger Williams, William Penn, John Smith, or Benjamin Franklin. Also, the extreme southern colonies were about one hundred years late to the development of such thinking. Most importantly, South Carolina with its reliance on slavery, has been considered as backward in any discourse on the roots of American liberty, justice and freedom. Perhaps for some of these same reasons white poverty in the southern

Schneider, “The Patchwork of Relief in Provincial New York, 1664-1776,” *Social Service Review* 19 (1938); David M. Schneider, *The History of Public Welfare in New York State, 1609-1866* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1938): 467-494; Robert W. Kelso, *History of Public Poor Relief in Massachusetts* (Boston, 1922); Gary B. Nash, “Poverty and Poor Relief in Pre-Revolutionary Philadelphia,” *William and Mary Quarterly* 33 (1976): 3-30; John K. Alexander, “The Function of Public Welfare in Eighteenth-Century Philadelphia: Regulating the Poor?” in *Social Welfare or Social Control?* ed. W. I. Trattner (Knoxville, Tennessee: University of Tennessee Press, 1983); Billy G. Smith, *Life in Early Philadelphia: Documents from the Revolutionary and Early National Periods* (University Park, Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995); Billy G. Smith, *The “Lower Sort”: Philadelphia’s Laboring People, 1750-1800* (Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1990).

⁶ Jack P. Greene, “An Introduction,” In Jack P. Greene, Rosemary Brana-Shute, and Randy J. Sparks, eds. *Money, Trade, and Power: The Evolution of Colonial South Carolina’s Plantation Society*. (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press), vii-viii.

provinces has been overlooked. The lower strata of white common laborers, tenant farmers, sailors, immigrants, and squatters has been dismissed as an inconsequential appendage of the elite plantation owners.

Background of the Problem

Harsh and punitive colonial poor relief practices are traced to the repressive English Poor Law of 1601.⁷ Some historians paint a grim picture of colonial policies and attitudes that were biased against women, children, and strangers and that expressed a Puritanical and patriarchal set of values. The paupers who were the recipients of poor relief were kept in their places by policies designed for social control. Institutions such as orphanages, asylums, and poorhouses destroyed the well-being of many poor citizens and to some historians were dumping bins for a dependent and hopeless underclass. Colonial leaders believed that poverty was caused by moral deficits and few of the poor could be rehabilitated. Most studies of colonial social welfare neglect the roles of the family, kinship networks, ethnic mutual aid societies and organized religion. More importantly, almost all social welfare histories ignore the special role of the southern colonies in British social welfare policy and philanthropy. English policymakers were convinced that the state should take steps to convert the useless poor in Europe into productive members of the Empire. Setting the idle poor to work benefited the Empire as well as the poor. James Edward Oglethorpe wrote in his *New and Accurate Account of the Provinces of South Carolina and Georgia* that

⁷ References will be detailed in the bibliographic essay after Chapter IX.

“persons reduced to poverty are not wealth to the Nation,” and that “We are bound in Humanity and Charity to send them [the poor]abroad.”⁸

It is curious that many historians have accepted the New England village as the model for the development of social welfare policies in colonial America, neglecting southern provinces and larger urban areas. Charles Town in the eighteenth century was America’s wealthiest and most cosmopolitan city. Attracted by its prosperity and the religious tolerance of its citizenry, settlers flocked to the Carolina port. Charles Town became the South’s only city and one of America’s largest urban communities. Some historians believe that, given the wealth of Charles Town, there was no serious poverty. However, Charles Town never knew a time without poverty. Infection and disease nearly destroyed the early settlement. Attacks by the Yamassee and Creeks, pirates, and the Spanish Armadas were only a few of the random but dramatic forces visited on the inhabitants. As Charles Town grew it was beset with many urban problems including fires, famine, pestilence, and though not an urban problem, hurricanes. The relief of the poor became a major concern. Dependent women and children constituted a majority of the more than 2,000 social welfare cases recorded in an extraordinarily complete account preserved in the St. Philip’s Parish vestry minutes, 1732-1775. The account of

⁸ In Rodney M. Baine, ed., *The Publications of James Edward Oglethorpe* (Athens, Ga.: University of Georgia Press, 1994), 218, 221. Georgia and to a lesser extent South Carolina were an escape from the literal imprisonment of the poor in English workhouses and debtors prisons. In Ready Milton, “The Georgia Trustees and the Malcontents: The Politics of Philanthropy,” *Georgia Historical Quarterly*, 60 (1976), 264-281. South Carolina was the destination for many political prisoners. As a result of the Stuart Rebellion in Scotland, twenty-two prisoners were banished to South Carolina plantations as convicts and the Jacobite rising sent 81 rebel prisoners as indentured servants to South Carolina in 1715. In John Donald Duncan, “Servitude and Salves in Colonial South Carolina, 1670-1776” (Ph.D. diss., Emory University, 1972), 52, 57.

poor relief policies and practices in Charles Town deserves at least comparable attention to that accorded small rural New England communities.

The church wardens who administered the system of poor relief in Charles Town were the nearest social class to English nobility that America could boast at the time. They included members of the Stamp Act Congress, the Continental Congresses, presidents and vice-presidents of South Carolina, United States presidential candidates, a United States Supreme Court Justice, and three Constitutional Convention delegates. The church wardens of St. Philip's Church performed typical social welfare duties- checking eligibility; distributing food, supplies, clothing, and money; intake at orphanages and hospices; and administering indoor and outdoor relief. The pages of the vestry minutes afford a unique look at the founders of this country engaged in the occupation of social welfare, early attitudes toward poor relief and the heretofore hidden lives of the poor in colonial Charles Town. The social welfare history of Charles Town juxtaposes many contrasting and sometimes contradictory images: the extreme wealth of the vestrymen providing for the dependent poor, the cruel institution of slavery co-existing with models of religious and ethnic tolerance, and the entwined roles of the founders of America and society's outcasts. It is problematic that this rich social welfare history has been ignored.

Research Questions

Charles Town's wealthy and powerful gentry subjugated and exploited African and native slaves and indentured servants and exterminated native tribes. Concurrently these same elites financed and administered an extensive system of public and private social services for the poor. Did this poor relief exist to elaborate on and perpetuate the

social control of women, children, poor immigrants, and transients or did public and private charity function to ameliorate the harsh and cruel social, economic and natural environment? Did the complex and expensive services provide a means of avoiding class conflict and controlling the poor or to provide charity and even treatment? Is the truth somewhere between these extremes? Can what is learned about Charles Town be applied to the experience in other colonies, or is it unique to the South Carolina low country? By writing this history from the bottom up, and by including stories of poor women, children and transients, is it possible to augment or even alter the current understanding of colonial American social welfare history? Will a focus on the lives of poor people and poor relief recipients and their roles in contribute to the knowledge of larger historical and social processes? As a much broader and more ambitious question, can a focus on the stresses and strengths of ordinary people, albeit people living 250 years ago, deepen the current understanding of normal family structure and the roles of women, families and social supports in our society?

A Brief Review of Literature ⁹

A single paragraph in *The Encyclopedia of Social Work* captures the current thinking and teaching on this topic¹⁰. First, colonial America was described by Benjamin Franklin, among others, as a land of opportunity with no beggars, no poor,

⁹ A more comprehensive review and critique of the literature may be found in the Bibliographic Essay after Chapter IX.

¹⁰ Reid, *Encyclopedia*, 2208.

and without a lower class.¹¹ The *Encyclopedia* says there was no significant need for social welfare until the 1820s and that policies and provisions that were needed were imported from England in the form of the 1601 Poor Laws. It characterizes colonial social welfare policies as “an attitude of benign near-neglect”.¹² Reid accepts without question Rothman’s acclaimed conceptualization of the development of institutions for social control.¹³ Rothman’s 1971 work is perhaps the single most important work in American social welfare history. Wilensky and Lebeaux’s thesis that capitalism and the Industrial Revolution created the need for social welfare in America and therefore nothing of import occurred prior to 1820 is recited in a subsequent paragraph of the *Encyclopedia* and linked to Rothman’s theory.¹⁴

Notable in its absence in Reid’s brief review is the popular theory of Piven and Cloward which posits that social welfare and its occupations exist for the purpose of maintaining the power of the ruling elite.¹⁵ There are two viewpoints on colonial attitudes toward relief of the poor. The dominant theoretical stance, that colonial poor

¹¹ Raymond A. Mohl, “Poverty in Early America, a Reappraisal: The Case of Eighteenth-century New York,” *New York History, L* (1969): 5.

¹² Reid, *Encyclopedia*, 2208.

¹³ Reid, *Encyclopedia*, 2209; David J. Rothman, *The Discovery of the Asylum* (Boston: Little, Brown & Company, 1971). Rothman asserted that the central purpose of institutions was to control the poor and deviant members of society.

¹⁴ Harold L. Wilensky and Charles N. Lebeaux, *Industrial Society and Social Welfare* (New York: The Free Press, 1958). Actually, Rothman placed the “discovery” of the asylum and its use as an instrument of social control in the nineteenth century, shortly before the Industrial Revolution created real poverty in America, according to Wilensky and Lebeaux.

¹⁵ Frances Fox Piven and Richard Cloward, *Regulating the Poor: The Functions of Public Welfare* (New York: Pantheon, 1971).

relief was harsh, repressive, sexist and existed for control of the poor has been articulated in the previous paragraphs and is carried to the extreme by recent works by Abramovitz and Day.¹⁶ Curiously, the alternative point of view, that colonial social welfare policies were progressive and even benevolent, is almost as prevalent in the literature as the dominant view, or the stance almost exclusively adopted by textbooks, summative publications on American social welfare, and seminal works. These two standpoints rarely meet. In “The Great Fire of 1740 and the Politics of Disaster Relief in Colonial Charleston,” Mulcahy is one of the few authors to recognize the dichotomy in colonial social welfare historical research:¹⁷

... there is considerable debate about the nature of this aid in Charleston and other cities. Some scholars have argued that relief reflected a genuine concern for the poor, while others have seen it as a form of social control. Relief efforts following the 1740 fire do not fit neatly in either category.

Mulcahy’s observation about considerable debate and arguments notwithstanding, his paper is one of the few published works about colonial poor relief that articulates the two opposing aspects.

Organization and Purpose of Chapters

Chapter II, “The Social Epidemiology of Poverty in Eighteenth Century Charles Town,” considers the question of whether there was significant poverty in eighteenth century Charles Town. This chapter measures the proportion of the population that was

¹⁶ Abramovitz, *Regulating the Lives of Women: Social Welfare Policy from Colonial Times to the Present* (Boston: South End Press, 1996), 85; Phillis J. Day, *A New History of Social Welfare* (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1989), 143-148.

¹⁷ Matthew Mulcahy, “The ‘Great Fire’ of 1740 and the Politics of Disaster Relief in Charleston, S. C.,” *South Carolina Historical Magazine* 99 (1996): 136.

near the poverty level, as well as the proportion receiving public poor relief during the period 1725-1775. (In the next chapter the closely related issue of the cost of subsistence is be examined.) Additionally, Chapter II defines poverty, begins to describe the multiple causes of poverty and to answer the following question: Why were some of the townspeople wealthy, while many more led marginal existences in poverty and need? This question will continue to be considered in subsequent chapters. The chapter also investigates social class in Charles Town, and data on eighteenth century demography and epidemiology are presented. The concepts of the epidemiological transition and the social gradient are introduced and applied to Charles Town. The social determinants of health and wellbeing are discussed.

The aim of Chapter III, “Form, Function, and Philosophy of Poor Relief” is to address the research question of whether relief payments were utilized by the elite for social control of poor whites. This issue is further examined in subsequent chapters. Chapter III also chronicles relationships between the parish relief officials and the poor whites. Were the poor treated with benign near neglect as some historians assert? What was the attitude of the elite toward the poor? The amounts allowed for relief will be examined and compared to subsistence. Did vestrymen allow only the bare minimum outdoor relief in order to deter paupers from seeking assistance, thereby reducing the tax burden? The purposes and motives for poor relief are analyzed as well as the administration, financing, and accounting processes employed in Charles Town’s public system. The process of disaster relief is explored from the perspectives of the so called “Great Fire of 1740” and the terrible hurricane in 1751.

Chapter IV, “Relief of Poor Women, Children, and Orphans,” considers the research question of whether poor women and children were treated harshly and punitively by the parish, and whether poor women who violated the “family ethic” were denied services. What did the parish do about education and apprenticeship of pauper children? Were poor women who violated the “family ethic” treated differently from other poor women? Were able-bodied poor women relieved? A continuation of the epidemiological and demographic data in Chapter II focusing on gender are presented. The brief and rudimentary antecedents of feminism among elite Charles Town women are explored and compared to the lot of poor white women.

Chapter V, “The Workhouse,” explores the research question regarding the establishment of the workhouse and its purpose. Why was the workhouse created? What was its function? Was the workhouse created to control the poor, to treat them as deviants, and to remove them from social relationships with other citizens? Were poor in the workhouse treated harshly or punitively? Did the workhouse discourage the poor from applying for relief or result in reduced costs for poor relief. What effect did the large slave population have on the workhouse? The use of outdoor relief is compared to the use of the workhouse, and the cost of outdoor relief is compared with workhouse costs. Who were the residents and what work did they perform?

The purpose of Chapter VI, “The Hospital, Medical Care of the Poor, and Care of Persons Disordered in Their Senses,” is to examine whether poor persons received adequate medical care and reviews the function and purpose of the hospital. How were the sick poor treated in Charles Town’s hospital/workhouse? Were mentally ill poor

“...being chained ...until they died, ” or that “demented or maimed persons were deported or sold?” Were they treated as deviant?

Chapter VII, “Families, Kinship Networks, Ethnic Mutual Aid, and Ethnic and Private Societies,” considers the role of the informal efforts of families, kinship networks, ethnic mutual aid and formal private giving, and private charitable societies in Charles Town. Was it true, as Day asserts, that private philanthropy was insignificant in colonial America (as far as Charles Town is concerned)? How did private relief efforts compare with public poor relief? What were the purposes of the private societies? How did families and kinship networks relate to poverty in eighteenth century Charles Town? Data on family structure in Charles Town are presented and compared with the family structure of early New England. The family structure of recipients of poor relief is compared with the general population, and “normal” family structure.

Finally, Chapter VIII, “Relief of Non-resident Poor,” studies the response of the parish to non-resident poor and compares services to non-residents and residents. The research question regarding the social control of non-resident poor is explored. Were the attitudes of Charles Town’s public welfare officials hostile toward strangers? Were the poor laws regarding transients enforced? Were sick and indigent persons in need sent back to their home parish without relief? Data comparing services for resident poor and non-resident poor are presented and analyzed.

The concluding chapter summarizes the findings. A bibliographic essay follows. Appendix A contains reconstructed workhouse expense ledgers. Appendix B describes the use of the social history method of prosopography in this research and the

application of data modeling techniques using computers. Other appendices address methodological problems encountered in this research. The final appendices discuss the 1736 Act to establish the workhouse and provide the basis for a walking tour of social welfare sites in eighteenth century Charles Town.

CHAPTER II- THE SOCIAL EPIDEMIOLOGY OF POVERTY IN EIGHTEENTH CENTURY CHARLES TOWN

“Nature, in the attainment of her great purpose, seems always to seize upon the weakest part.” -- T. R. Malthus, *Essay on Population*

Sarah grew up in a London poor house, never knowing her parents. In 1750 at age 16 she was “sold” along with other paupers to Captain Philip Payne, the owner of the Billander Stephen & Mary bound for Charles Town. Many of her fellow paupers died on board the ship in terrible misery. When the horror of the trip ended on a Bay Street bridge (wharf), Sarah was barely alive. Payne advertised the sale of “several English servants... and a Girl about 15 or 16 years of age” in the Gazette on December 3, 1750. Her passage was paid for at dockside by William Buchanan, a backcountry storekeeper and farmer. She rode in the back of a cart to Canady’s crossing on the Edisto River, a swampy, malarial outpost in the newly-formed St. Bartholomew’s parish.¹

Sarah had known only hardship and toil in England, but life in Carolina was harsh even beyond her experience. Clad in a rude cotton shift with no shoes no matter what the weather, she worked in the field from dawn to dusk. Her diet of Indian corn and deer meat left her always hungry. At night she collapsed on a pile of rags, sleeping in the rude one-room cabin with the Buchanan family and passersby on the way to Purrysburg or Charles Town. In 1754, John Cook, a local subsistence farmer, purchased

¹ *S. C. Gazette*, Dec. 3, 1750; V.M., 6 April, 1756. While there were only two entries in the vestry minutes and the Gazette advertisement gives no names, this hypothetical beginning to the vignette of Sarah Cook is unlikely to be far from the truth. At any rate, this is an example of a prosopography.

her indenture from Buchanan and married Sarah. Within three months she was widowed. Neither slave nor servant, with no kin and no husband, she fell back on Buchanan for support.

In 1756, “sick, faint, and expecting to be delivered within a month” Sarah fled to Charles Town. She “made out an oath before a magistrate that she was with child by William Buchanan and that the child would be illegitimate.” “In no condition to be sent back,” Sarah Cook and her baby were relieved by the churchwardens (V.M., 6 April, 1756).

The story of Sarah Cook stands in stark contrast to the view of Charles Town as a city with no poor in a land where nearly everyone was wealthy. The spectacular riches of low country rice and indigo planters and slave-importing merchants has influenced scholars to assert that there were few poor persons in eighteenth century Charles Town. At the eve of the revolution, nine of the ten wealthiest persons in British North America lived in the city or on nearby plantations.² Weir asserts that by the late eighteenth century South Carolina with Charles Town at its epicenter was a kind of El Dorado with the highest economic growth rate in the world.³

² Walter Edgar, *South Carolina: A History* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1999), 153.

³ Robert M. Weir, *Colonial South Carolina: A History* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1997), 141.

Table II-1 Wealth by Cluster, All Regions, 1774⁴

Sample Cluster County/Area	Net Worth 1774 £ Sterling	Slaves and Servants in 1774 £ Sterling
Litchfield, Conn.	131.9	0.0
New Haven, Conn.	139.7	1.8
Essex, Mass.	271.4	0.7
Hampshire, Mass.	178.2	0.6
Plymouth, Mass	206.4	0.0
Suffolk County, Mass.	312.3	4.3
Worcester, Mass.	202.3	0.2
New York (hybrid)	425.5	11.5
Northampton, Pa.	246.6	0.8
Philadelphia, Pa.	396.7	7.3
Sample Cluster County/Area	Net Worth 1774 £ Sterling	Slaves and Servants in 1774 £ Sterling
Westmoreland, Pa.	158.6	0.0
Burlington, N.J.	341.5	18.7
Kent, Del.	247.8	19.5
Queen Anne's, Md.	522.2	112.7
Anne Arundel County, Md.	660.4	169.2
Charlotte-Halifax, Va.	546.5	214.8
Southhampton, Va.	311.3	92.6
Spotsylvania, Va.	527.2	196.0
Halifax, N.C.	468.5	265.0
Orange, N.C.	227.5	89.6
Charles Town District, S.C.	2337.7	1325.0

Measuring and Defining Poverty

Definitions of poverty are by nature imprecise. Simply put, poverty is a term used to describe a condition of having to rely on outside help, or having to work hard each day or starve. A thin margin distinguished those who required help from those

⁴ Comparative Private Wealth in Colonial America-Average Value of Estate Inventories per Probate –Type Wealthholder (In £ Sterling). Source: Alice Hanson Jones, *Wealth of a Nation to Be: The American Colonies on the Eve of the Revolution* (New York:Columbia University Press, 1980),10,170-171, 377-79; cited in Edgar, *South Carolina: A History*, 152

who could manage independently. Not all who required help were eligible for relief, only those with no family, friends, or kin to assist them were aided.

What a rich vestryman might consider to be a deprivation may in actuality have been quite comfortable to a poor person, and conversely, an indigent living hand to mouth, subsisting day by day, may not be counted as poor, but by the constant toil and stress of her life may think herself poor indeed. The most basic needs of early residents were food, fuel, and clothing. The person who by his own efforts could not provide these necessities was deemed to be poor. Likewise, those on the verge of starvation and death from exposure if they missed a single day's wages were also considered to be poor. Nowhere in these definitions does the receipt of help from someone else determine poverty. On the other hand, many were poor who were never helped. Poverty was not only accounted for in the giving of alms or the accounting of charity in ledgers or notes in minute books. Poverty was rather the ordinary day by day hunger, cold, and sickness that many more persons than those on relief experienced in their daily lives. Poverty is not just low income, but it is malnourishment, poor health, illiteracy, lack of adequate shelter and clothing, and the lack of an opportunity to improve one's lot.

Two myths about poverty in colonial America have combined with the storied wealth of Charles Town to create the perception that poverty there was the exception rather than the rule. These myths also gave rise to the contemporary assertion that when poverty did exist, it was due to sloth and indolence. The first of these false perceptions arose from the intentional portrayal by developers and promoters of South Carolina as a "terrestrial paradise." Merrens and Terry found that tracts promoting South Carolina

focused on the physical environment and the “health” of the climate.⁵ Accounts written by those attempting to encourage immigration stated “there are very few poor people in the province, except the idle or unfortunate” and “that our poor or middling sort of people, if there any who may be called so, live better here than those in Europe.”⁶ Purry, a Swiss developer wrote home to Switzerland that “there will never be poor folk or beggars” in South Carolina since even the laziest migrant only had to work for a couple of hours per day to enjoy a comfortable standard of living.⁷

The second myth has evolved in histories of American social welfare. These commonly assert that the turmoil of immigration and industrialization emerging around the middle of the nineteenth century caused the first real poverty in America.⁸ Of the first 200 or so settlers in 1670 there were only about 20 that were not indentured

⁵ H. Roy Merrens and George Terry, “Dying in Paradise: Malaria, Mortality, and the Perceptual Environment in Colonial South Carolina,” *The Journal of Southern History*, Vol. L, No. 4 (November, 1984): 534.

⁶ Alexander Hewatt, *An Historical Account of the Rise & Progress of the Colonies of South Carolina and Georgia* (London, 1779), II, 294.

⁷ Paul Phillipe Purry, “Mr Purry’s Account of Carolina,” *Gentleman’s Magazine*, 2 (Sept, 1732): 969. Of Purrysburgh, the settlement established by Purry, only an inconspicuous historical marker near the town of Hardeeville remains. The settlement on the bank of the Savannah River grew to about 900 souls before the unhealthy and poorly situated village quickly dissolved. Ironically, the Swiss immigrants relocated when it became clear that the advertised prosperity of the community was not to be. The Salzburger town of Ebenezer, across the river in the colony of Georgia, survived.

⁸ Raymond A. Mohl, “Poverty in Early America: A Reappraisal,” *New York History*, L, (1969): 5,6. Robert Bremner, *From the Depths: the Discovery of Poverty in the United States* (New York:1956). Bremner along with Wilensky and Lebeaux were not the first to assert that significant poverty began with the industrial revolution, but perhaps they were the most influential (See Marcus W. Jernegan, *Laboring and Dependent Classes in Colonial America,1607-1783* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1931).

servants or slaves.⁹The truth is that in 1732 most inhabitants of the town were paupers living in “clumsy and miserable huts ... of clap boards, plastered with lime within, made from oyster shells.”¹⁰ Life was full of danger and deprivation and almost all early settlers were poor or nearly poor. Since most had only their physical labor as a source of livelihood, their existence was precarious. Any injury that compromised their ability to perform the exhaustive labor demanded of them could result in starvation. Few lived past the age of forty. By some accounts only one in five reached their twentieth birthday and many who did suffered multiple disabilities.¹¹

High mortality rates from epidemic diseases decimated the early settlement, carrying away the strong as well as those weakened by dysentery, endemic infectious diseases, and the harsh near-tropical climate. Smallpox, yellow fever, and malaria routinely ravaged the town during its first seventy years, sparing few families.

⁹ Most early settlers were on the bottom of the seventeenth century social hierarchy. By January, 1672, 470 persons had arrived in Charles Town and were living across the Ashley River from the eighteenth century site. Of these, only 396 still lived, including 268 men, 69 women, and 59 children. In Converse D. Clowse, *Economic Beginnings in Colonial South Carolina, 1670-1730* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1971), 51-54. While most early arrivals were poor, the fabulous wealth associated with Charles Town was accumulated by these early arrivals and their descendants. Persons arriving after the first twenty years were much less likely to accumulate wealth and to remain in poverty. Waterhouse states that of 4,443 inventories made between 1736 and 1775 valued at more than £1000 sterling, 43.8 percent were of estates belonging to families arriving in the first twenty years. In Richard Waterhouse, “England, the Caribbean, and the Settlement of Carolina,” *Journal of American Studies*, 9 (Dec 1975): 259-81.

¹⁰ Joseph Ioor Waring, “St. Philip’s Hospital in Charlestown in Carolina,” *Annals of Medical History, New Series* 4 (1932): 283.

¹¹ H. Roy Merrens and George Terry, “Dying in Paradise: Malaria, Mortality, and the Perceptual Environment in Colonial South Carolina,” *The Journal of Southern History*, Vol. L, No. 4 (November, 1984): 533,34.

European immigrants, lacking immunity and unaccustomed to the new world's insects and germs along with the heat and humidity in which these pests thrived, were hardest hit. Chief among the many maladies that plagued Charles Town was malaria or "the fever and ague" that in its mild form caused general weakness and lack of energy. More commonly, its affects were profound and deadly.¹² The unpredictable but seemingly annual visitation of hurricanes washed away the simple wooden dwellings occupied by most of the residents and caused havoc to the port's shipping interests. Arneman compares crude death rates of Charles Town (calculated from St. Philip's birth and death registry) with those of contemporary cities and towns. Early Charlestonians died at rates double those of other cities.

Table II-2 Crude Death Rates-- Comparisons¹³

Location	Deaths /1000 Population
Charles Town	
1720-1750	78.14
1726-1750	87.20
Dedham , Massachusetts	
1648-1700	27.00
1724-1738	20-23
Boston	
1720-1724	46.80
1730-1734	38.80
1740-1744	34.60
1750-1754	40.20

¹² St. Julien Ravenel Childs, Notes on the History of Public Health in South Carolina," *Proceedings of the South Carolina Historical Association*, (1932): 13-22.

¹³ Dana P. Arneman, "The Medical History of Colonial South Carolina," Ph.D.diss. (University of South Carolina, 1996), 370. A crude death rate is calculated by dividing the number of deaths among residents in a calendar year by the average population in the area in that year. Usually it is expressed as per 1000 residents and when available, the mid-year population estimate is used.

Location	Deaths /1000 Population
Philadelphia	
1722	32.90
1730	32.10
1740-1744	39.90
1745-1749	47.50
1750-1754	47.20
Nottingham, England	
1720-1724	37.20
1730-1734	44.40
1740-1744	48.30
1750-1754	34.30

Table II-3 Coclanis' Estimates (Adjusted for Unregistered Deaths) of Charles Town's Crude Death rate per 1000 Residents¹⁴

Year	Adjusted Population	St. Philip's Burials	Adjusted St. Philip's Burials (+ 40%)	Plus 30% Other Churches	Crude Death Rate Per 1000
1722	1623	40	56	73	45
1723	1653	34	48	62	37
1724	1683	26	36	47	28
1725	1714	40	56	73	42
1726	1744	30	42	55	31
1727	1774	53	74	96	54
1728	1804	68	95	124	69
1729	1834	56	78	102	56
1730	1865	40	56	73	39
1731	1895	69	97	126	66
1732	1925	149	209	271	141
	19,514	605	847	1101	56

¹⁴ Coclanis used various reports of under registration of deaths in colonial towns and cities and the fact that there were three other churches during this period where burials were registered and for which records exist. He presents a range of three sets of estimates, from which the central one was chosen. The problem with the comparison of the Charles Town estimate in Table II-2(a) to table II-2(b) is that the data in Table II-2(b) probably suffered from the same or greater under reporting, yet no adjustment occurred.

Table II-4 Colcanis' Comparisons of Crude Death Rates

Place	Period	Crude Death Rate/ 1000
St. Botolph's, London	1591-1603	29.3
Cogenhoe, England	1618-1628	13.4-17.9
Dedham, Massachusetts	1648-1700	24-27
Clayworth, England	1676-1688	41.25
England and Wales	1701-1750	28-36
Philadelphia	1722	32.9
Philadelphia	1730	32.1
Philadelphia	1731	62.5
Philadelphia	1732	31.5
Finland	1722-1800	27.4
Denmark	1735-1800	28.1
Norway	1735-1800	26.2
Iceland	1735-1800	28.2
Sweden	1736-1800	28.1
England	1541-1871	25.9

Table II-5 St. Philip's Parish Register –Burials, Baptisms, and Births¹⁵

Year	Burials	Baptisms	Births
1720	40	12	25
1721	39	13	10
1722	40	17	28
1723	34	35	28
1724	26	28	25
1725	40	25	24
1726	30	33	29
1727	53	30	22
1728	68	33	24
1729	56	19	34
1730	40	29	34
1731	69	25	27
1732	149	29	32
1733	61	29	30
1734	60	27	30
1735	105	19	31

¹⁵ Colcanis, *Shadow*, 228. From D.E. Huger Smith and A. S. Salley, Jr. *Register for St. Philip's Parish Charles Town, 1754-1810* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1971). If the number of births was not sufficient to replace but one third of the deaths, then how did the city grow instead of shrink during this period? The answer is found in the number of immigrants and transients (including soldiers and sailors). This influx not only more than replaced those who expired, it contributed greatly to the number of deaths, since many died within weeks of their arrival.

1736	93	25	37
1737	135	36	51
1738	213	33	34
1739	198	30	28
1740	136	29	33
1741	91	23	21
1742	106	41	45
1743	96	40	34
1744	92	35	42
1745	186	26	35
1746	101	38	43
1747	136	47	65
1748	138	33	29
1749	137	8	19
1750	<u>115</u>	<u>16</u>	<u>23</u>
Total	2883	863	965

It was, however, the man-made threats that inhabitants feared most. Despite the manifest dangers of fire, suicide, drowning, lightning, hurricane, fall from horses, and occupational injury, most deaths not attributable to illness were caused by other people. The Yemassee War of 1715 was the climax of decades of loss of life and resulted in an increased burden of widows, orphans, and homeless back-country settlers. Skirmishes with pirates, lawless bands of criminals who pillaged remote regions of the province, and the ever-present Spanish who threatened wholesale invasion added to the peril.

Even great fortunes could be quickly lost. The Lowndes family found itself “on the parish” after Charles Lowndes, once a well-to-do planter, committed suicide while in jail for bankruptcy. In 1738, Lowndes’ wife Ruth, sick with smallpox and unable to care for her three children, received £73 from the parish over a year’s period for “subsistence” until her eldest son arranged for her to be sent to Barbados (V.M., 1

April, 1738; C.W., 4 September, 1738).¹⁶ A fictional parable of two merchants appearing in 1735 in the *South Carolina Gazette*, illustrates low country residents' beliefs in the transitory nature of prosperity. The first rich merchant lost three ships to French privateers. His remaining two vessels were lost in a fierce storm. Next, his business, warehouses, and home were destroyed by fire. Unable to manage such loss, the once wealthy merchant went mad and soon expired. A second merchant and his wife on a trading voyage were taken by Turkish pirates and sold into slavery.¹⁷

In 1751 Governor James Glen estimated that five or six thousand of the 25,000 people in South Carolina lived on just a groat (a coin worth four pence) a day (£6.1.0 per year), affording them only a bare subsistence. Glen went further to explain that these persons in the bottom twenty percent included some small planters with no slaves, less industrious artisans, a few single women with children, seamstresses and tailors, free laborers, and beggars. All of these lived at a level of "bare subsistence" which, according to Glen, was probably not enough to properly house, feed and clothe

¹⁶ Carl Vipperman, *The Rise of Rawlins Lowndes* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1979), 14-19. Virtually orphaned and on the parish charge, Charles Lowndes son Rawlins was educated at the expense of the Provincial Provost Marshall Hall, with whom he was placed as an apprentice (see Chapter VI for the "first chapter" of Lowndes' story and the irony of his placement with Provost Marshall Hall). Rawlins Lowndes rose to a high rank within the Crown's provincial government, later became a Revolutionary leader and was elected the first President of South Carolina. He was also an elected vestryman of St. Philip's. As far as can be determined, Lowndes was the only vestryman in the colonial period to also have received poor relief from St. Philip's parish.

¹⁷ *South Carolina Gazette*, 5 July, 1735, cited in Wiberley, "Four Cities," 3. Wiberley's find from *The Gazette* illustrates not only the fleeting nature of wealth, but the instability of society for persons of all ranks.

themselves.¹⁸ Citing Glen's assessment, Lockley makes the following point: "If one in five of the white population existed on the breadline, owning neither land nor slaves, it would not take much – such as unemployment, war, sickness or infirmity – for them to experience real hardship."¹⁹ When contemporary accounts are combined with the work of Bridenbaugh and Bellows, it is safe to say that approximately one of every five whites in Charles Town was poor.²⁰ Bellows states unequivocally that Charles Town "never knew a time without poverty".²¹ The disease, death, and disability resulting from the unrelentingly hostile environment made poverty a fact of life in the early village. The idea that Charles Town had few poor is the product of the extensive historical record documenting the lives of the city's elite. The fact remains that we know very little about the lives of the many poor; while the lives of elite vestrymen and wardens are well-chronicled. Table II-6 is constructed using several sources of population data and the estimate that from 1710 onward, slaves comprised about half of the city's inhabitants. If Newport, Rhode Island, were included, Charles Town would be the fourth most populous urban area in the colonies.

¹⁸ W. Stitt Robinson, *James Glen: From Scottish Provost to Royal Governor of South Carolina* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1996).

¹⁹ Timothy Lockley, "Rural Poor Relief in Colonial South Carolina," (Accepted, *WMQ*): 6.

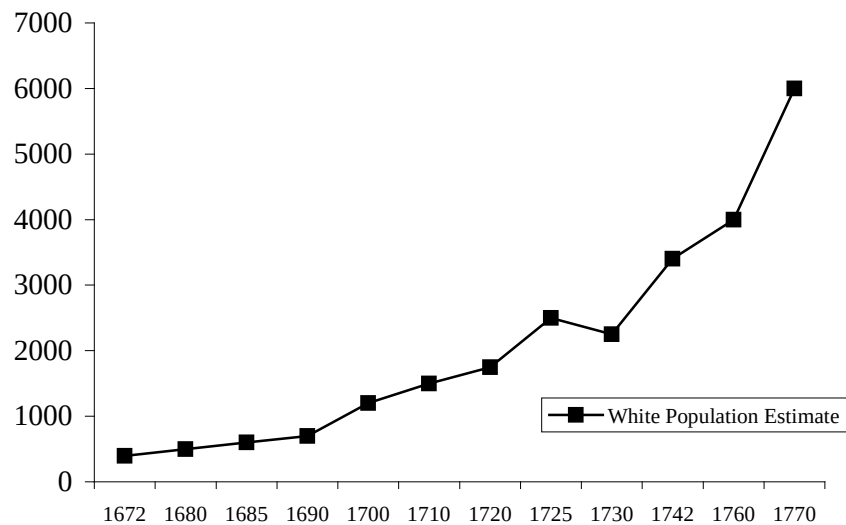
²⁰ Bellows, *Benevolence*, 2-8.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p.2

Table II-6 Population Estimates of Charles Town, White, Poor White²²

Year	Total Population Estimate	White Population Estimate	Poor White Population Estimate (20%)
1672	396 ^a	396	79
1680	700 ^b	500	100
1685	900 ^b	600	120
1690	1100 ^b	700	140
1700	2000 ^b	1200	240
1710	3000 ^c	1500 ^d	300
1720	3500 ^c	1750	350
1725	5000 ^e	2500 ^e	500
1730	4500 ^f	2250	450
1742/43	6800 ^{f/g}	3400	680
1760	8000 ^{g/h}	4000	800
1770	12,000 ⁱ	6000 ⁱ	1200 ⁱ

Figure II-1 Population Estimates of Charles Town, White²³



²² Source: a- Fraser, *Charleston*, p.4 (no mention of slaves); b- Bridenbaugh, *Wilderness*, p. 6 (from Greene & Harrington); c-Bridenbaugh, *Wilderness*, p. 143; d- Fraser, p. 28; e- Fraser, p. 42; f- Bridenbaugh, *Wilderness*, p. 303; g- Bridenbaugh, *Revolt*, p. 5; h- Fraser, p.93; i-Fraser, p. 135.

²³ From Table II-2

Table II-7 Coclanis' Estimate of Population²⁴

Year	Population Estimate	
	Percentage Growth Rate	
1690	800	4.1
1700	1200	6.2
1710	2200	3.0
1720	2950	2.1
1730	3650	5.6
1740	6300	2.7
1750	8200	1.9
1755	9000	1.5
1760	9700	1.4
1765	10400	2.0
1770	11500	1.8
1776	12800	
1690-1776		3.3

Charles Town, with its transient and immigrant problem, must have had at least a fifth of its population at subsistence level. Lockley correctly observes that this same proportion “clearly did not receive parish relief.”²⁵ Table II-2 uses the data in Table II-1 along with the CWA and VM data to compute a percent of the total white poor provided relief.

²⁴ Coclanis developed an ingenious method for estimating the white population of Charles Town based on taxpayer records and a multiplier of 4.5 family members per white male taxpayer. Additionally, Coclanis calculated transients and sailors from the entry and departure records of ships in the harbor. The slave population was approximately 50% of the total throughout the period.

²⁵ James Glen to the Board of Trade March 1750-1, “An attempt towards an estimate of the value of South Carolina,” Records in the British Public Record Office relating to South Carolina, [microfilm, SCDAH], v.24, 303-330. See also W. Stitt Robinson, *James Glen: From Scottish Provost to Royal Governor of South Carolina* (Westport, Conn., 1996), 77-8. Russell R. Menard, “Slavery, Economic Growth and Revolutionary Ideology in the South Carolina Lowcountry,” in Ronald Hoffman, John J. McCusker, Russell R. Menard, & Peter J. Albert, eds., *The Economy of Early America* (Charlottesville, 1988), 263-4.

Table II-8 Estimate of Percent of Poor Whites Relieved by Parish²⁶

Year	Poor White Population Estimate (20%)	Church Warden Accounts 1725-1751, Count of Persons Served	Per Cent of Poor Served (of Estimate)
1720	350	No records available	
1725	500	10	2%
1730	450	22	5%
1742/43	680	32	5%
1760	800	200	25%
1770	1200	229	19%

If Glen's estimate that a fifth of the population was merely getting by, why did so few of them receive public poor relief? Lockley posits that a significant number of paupers were cared for by family as the 1712 Law required or by private funds or ethnic societies. Many who might have become burdens to the parish may have been assisted with food, clothing and other necessities that enabled them to stay in their own homes.²⁷ The label "poor" is by its very nature imprecise. Elite vestrymen may have considered some to be poor who enjoyed a reasonably comfortable existence. On the other hand, many persons who successfully "just got by" may have thought themselves to be impoverished. Finally, as will be detailed later in this study, not all poor were eligible for relief.

Another way to ascertain the proportion of poor whites is to review probate records. Coclanis conducted such a study of two periods: 1722-1732 and 1763-1788.

²⁶ This estimate utilizes population data in Table II-2, CWA records from 1725-1751, and Glen's estimate of the proportion of whites in poverty (20%). Counts of persons served in 1760 and 1770 are projections from Appendix D.

²⁷ Walter L. Robbins, ed., "John Tobler's description of South Carolina (1753)," *South Carolina Historical Magazine*, 71 (1970): 258.

If one assumes that all deceased whites had an estate that was probated (and we know that few paupers' "estates" were probated), then we might conclude that more than half of those dying between 1722 and 1732 in Charles Town had little or no property. By 1763-1788, that proportion had decreased to about one-fourth. Meanwhile, by the last quarter century, the very wealthiest increased almost ten-fold. It should be emphasized that the analyses of estate inventories can only inform the historian of the wealthy and middling classes, since significant numbers of poor whites never left an estate.

Table II-9 Distribution of Personal Wealth, Charles Town, 1722-1732 and 1763-1788

	Percentage of Estates in Each Category	Percentage of Estates in Each Category
Estate Value £ Sterling	<u>1722-1732</u>	<u>1763-1788</u>
0-99	52	26
100-199	9	13
200-499	19	23
500-999	14	10
1,000-2,000	4	9
Over 2,000	2	19

Source: Peter A. Coclanis, *The Shadow of a Dream: Economic Life and Death in the South Carolina Low Country-1670-1920* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 6. Books A-1 and Charleston County Inventories 1732-1736. South Carolina Department of Archives and History.

Another index of poverty may be found in the St. Philip's Church register of births, baptisms, marriages and deaths. For the years 1725-1751 during which period the church wardens' account books survive, each fiscal year's accounting ends with expenses for coffins and funerals for paupers. The following tables were constructed from the register's line by line listing of the names and a brief classification of those who died each parish fiscal year. None of the names shown as "on the parish poor" or in the workhouse in the register for 1741 match either the accounting of expenses by

name and the list of workhouse residents in the account book nor the vestry minutes for 1741; nor do any of the names in the registry for 1761 match any names in the vestry minutes for 1761. This is an extraordinary finding. What it means is this: there were many, many poor who died without an estate or family able to pay for even a coffin or a funeral. These were clearly poor; however, none received poor relief from the same parish that paid to bury them except for those workhouse residents in 1741. The workhouse residents were not alive at the end of the accounting period, so they were not included in the list of workhouse residents at the end of the accounting period. This means there were far more poor persons in the workhouse than those few listed in the account book. In 1761, as many as 40% of those dying (excluding transients) were so poor that the parish bore the expense of their burial, but few actually received poor relief (the account books don't survive). In 1741, 23% were too poor to pay for their own burial (again excluding transients), but at least half of these were in the workhouse when they expired. There are two important findings from the register books: there were many poor persons who received help in the workhouse but were not listed (see Chapter V) and there were always many poor persons who subsisted without help from the parish.

Table II-10 St. Philip's Register Burials, 1761, by Age, Gender & Category

	N	Category %	% of Total
Resident	78	100.0%	45.3%
Male	42	53.8%	
Female	23	29.5%	
Child	13	16.7%	
Non-Resident/Transient	42	100.0%	24.4%
Male	33	78.6%	
Female	0	0.0%	
Child	9	21.4%	

On the Parish (Poor)	52	100.0%	30.2%
Male	14	26.9%	
Female	19	36.5%	
Child	19	36.5%	
Total	172		100.0%

Source: D.E. Huger Smith and A. S. Salley, Jr. *Register for St. Philip's Parish Charles Town, 1754-1810* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1971).

Table II-11 St. Philip's Register Burials, 1741, by Age, Gender & Category

	N	Category %	% of Total
Resident	60	100.0%	60.0%
Male	24	40.0%	
Female	15	25.0%	
Child	21	35.0%	
Non-Resident/Transient	22	100.0%	22.0%
Male	22	100.0%	
Female	0	0.0%	
Child	0	0.0%	
On the Parish (Poor)	9	100.0%	9.0%
Male	4	44.4%	
Female	4	44.4%	
Child	1	11.1%	
From the Workhouse	9	100.0%	9.0%
Male	6	66.7%	
Female	3	33.3%	
Child	0	0.0%	
Total	100	100%	100.0%

Source: D.E. Huger Smith and A. S. Salley, Jr., *Register for St. Philip's Parish Charles Town, 1754-1810* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1971).

Social Structure in Colonial Charles Town

Charles Town was a city of inequality. Its domination of the intellectual and commercial life of the deep South produced extremes of wealth and poverty, ranging from an upper class of planters and merchants to the most miserable enslaved field hand.

If aristocracy is not altogether appropriate in describing the upper class Carolinian, perhaps "squirearchy" would be more accurate. Untitled landowners,

residing on their plantations with their families and servants, and deriving their incomes from the labor of others, the upper class dominated Carolina society, just as they dominated its politics.²⁸

The social structure of Charles Town society differed in several important ways from European cities of the time as well as other provincial port cities. At the top of the pyramid were two large groups, the merchants and the planters. If they survived the epidemiologic disaster that was the Carolina lowcountry, the very earliest wave of settlers from the 1670s until the beginning of the eighteenth century experienced a true land of opportunity.²⁹ According to quit rents and tax rolls, the wealthiest ten percent of the planters owned more than half the land and slaves. Yet the merchant class was even richer than these planters and wealthier than their northern contemporaries.³⁰ Gradually these two groups merged until by 1760 it was difficult to distinguish the planters who took an interest in business from the merchants who invested in plantations. The Middletons, Savages, Manigaults, and Pinckneys maintained town houses in the capital where they could tend to their commercial interests while their families enjoyed the city life.

Beneath the merchants and planters, a growing category of men in colonial Charles Town were of the “mechanic” class, or those who worked with their hands.

²⁸ B.D. Bargar, *Royal South Carolina* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press (1970), 53.

²⁹ Aaron Mark Shatzman, “Servants into Planters, The Origin of the American Image: Land Acquisition and Status Mobility in Seventeenth Century South Carolina” PhD Diss. (Stanford University, 1981), 307.

³⁰ Jackson Turner Main, *The Social Structure of Revolutionary America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1965), 63.

These artisans, silversmiths, house and shipbuilders, watchmakers and clockmakers, and some tailors and blacksmiths were not as powerful a force in parish politics as the upper classes. Yet the various levels of Charles Town society were still permeable in the eighteenth century and it was highly possible for these individuals, if they were enterprising enough, “to amass tremendous fortunes in commerce and trade.”³¹ Thomas Heyward, for example, one signer of the Declaration of Independence, began his political career while still a hatter. “This tendency of the Charles Town elite to admit new members prevented it from withdrawing from power and adopting a fixed, exclusive attitude toward others.”³²

Free unskilled laborers formed the next rank of society. Eighteenth century laboring people included porters, dock workers, merchant seamen, tailors, cordwainers, tinkers, potters, carpenters, bricklayers, and coopers. This group might also include apprentices and recently-arrived immigrants. Opportunities for employment in this group were limited, mainly because these roles were customarily filled by those in the next two levels: indentured servants and slaves. For poor, unskilled white males there was little work. A Swiss immigrant complained that poor Protestants subsisted on “Indian corn and lived in shacks.”³³ Poor whites suffered from the common practice of hiring out slaves who competed with white laborers for jobs. A 1722 law on the books prohibiting the use of cheap slave labor to supplant white workers was poorly enforced until a Grand Jury

³¹ Bargar, *Royal*, 54.

³² George C. Rogers, *Charleston in the age of the Pinckneys* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1969), 24.

³³ Gilbert P. Voight, “Swiss Notes on South Carolina,” *South Carolina Historical and Genealogical Magazine*, 21 (July, 1920), 99-103.

resolved to do something about it. On March 30, 1734, the Gazette reported that “It is a common practice by several Persons in Charles Town to suffer their Negroes to work out by the week ... which is not only contrary to Law, but a great Inlet to Idleness, Drunkenness and other Enormities...”³⁴ The limited prospects for employment coupled with the eligibility rules prohibiting help for able-bodied paupers created a category of poor who were ineligible for relief, or were on and off the relief roles, never escaping poverty. This class also included those who were pushed into illegitimate economy, stealing, prostitution, and other “vice and immorality.” By 1773 there were 115 licensed dram shops in town, along with numerous unlicensed bawdy and tippling houses. Fraser reports that over a five year period there were over twenty-five poor whites sentenced for murder, arson, theft, and receiving stolen goods.³⁵

Injured by a falling tree and unable to support his blind wife Barbara and three children, George Audley was among the few men receiving assistance from the parish in 1766. Despite the severity of his injuries, Audley was pressed hard by the church wardens to quit his tiny shack with paper thin walls at the end of Bedon’s Alley and take his family into the country. The vestry had only recently completed its report to the General Assembly on the cases for the growth of the poor tax burden and extreme measures were authorized to reduce expenses. The dramatic increase in the number of transients left the

³⁴ *SC Gazette*, 30 March, 1734. In Harlan Greene and Haim S. Hutchins, Jr., *Slave Badges and the Slave Hire System in Charleston, SC, 1783-1865* (Jefferson, N.C.: Mcfarland Company, 2004), 16-20. Fraser comments on the hire system as fueled by the elite who, while on one hand were alarmed by the rise of poor whites, profited on the other hand by the hire of their slaves, so that “they failed to ease one of the problems causing the high rates of unemployment among the poor whites.” In Fraser, *Charleston!*, 106.

³⁵ Walter J. Fraser, Jr. *Charleston!, Charleston!* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1989)122.

parish with little choice. In September, Audley had been told he would be given a blanket and £5 to take his family across the Cooper River into Christ Church Parish. Refusing to leave, he was told in November that his meager allowance was discontinued, since he was able to maintain himself. From that time forward, the children were put to board at the parish school and Barbara was allowed a regular stipend, but George was allotted only occasional temporary relief.³⁶ Peter Rybolt, disabled as the result of a serious beating and with a sick wife and three children, was given medical care in the form of a visit by the parish doctor and legal help to press charges against his attacker. Presumably the parish would be reimbursed the cost of care had Rybolt prevailed in his lawsuit.³⁷ Thomas Tucker was reported to be incurable by the parish doctor. When he requested passage to Bristol, the vestry gladly approved.³⁸ For eleven years the parish assisted Colin (Cotton) Sharpe, his rheumatic wife Ann, and their two children. Sharpe, a shoemaker, experienced periods of sickness and disability alternating with plying his trade. Given leather, rent money and “present relief,” the family managed to scrape by, but Alexander, age 9, was bound to William Robinson the blockmaker and David, age 7, was apprenticed to John Scott the shipwright.³⁹ Audley, Rybolt, Tucker, Sharpe, and their families would be astounded to know that two-hundred fifty years later historians would write that poverty was not a serious problem in eighteenth century America. They lived Spartan lives, even though some might classify them as laboring people, not paupers. They lived sparingly, doubled and tripled up in houses, dining little better than prisoners,

³⁶ V.M. September 2, 1766- February 8, 1775.

³⁷ V. M., April 18 and May 9, 1757.

³⁸ V.M., July 21, 1773.

³⁹ V.M., November 12, 1746 – June 27, 1757.

and dressed in the same fashion as workhouse residents. Poverty and deprivation haunted their lives.

Before the tremendous expansion of slavery in the latter half of the eighteenth century, the chief dependence for a steady supply of labor was on the large body of unemployed in England. These paupers, vagabonds, and convicts were transported to Charles Town by way of the indentured servant system. Poor and unemployed to begin with, many died on board the ships in “terrible misery, stench, fume, horror ...”⁴⁰ “A period of indentured servitude provided one of the easier social ladders to the next higher class.”⁴¹ It was the usual way of paying for passage to the new world. After the specified period of years, usually five to seven, the servant was free and legally the equal of his master. Since the competition among Charles Town tradesmen was fierce, any came upon hard times and found themselves applying to the vestry for relief. Bellows estimates that fewer than half escaped poverty and became propertied.⁴²

The growth of the white population was also augmented by the influx of Protestant immigrants in the latter half of the century. Poor Protestants were wooed from Europe to colonize the back country by promises of free tools, land and money. Terrified over possible slave uprisings, the white colonists attempted to equalize the ratio of blacks and whites. These Protestant immigrants from Scotland, Ireland, Germany, Switzerland and the Lowlands often entered the port at Charles Town in a state of abject poverty. All passed through Charles Town. French Huguenots went to Long Canes Creek; the Swiss

⁴⁰ Cited in Abramovitz, *Regulating*, 47; Rhea Dulles Foster, *Labor in America* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Co., 1966), 6.

⁴¹ Bargar, *Royal*, 63.

⁴² Bellows, *Benevolence*, 8.

to Purrysburg; the Germans to New Windsor -- all on the Savannah River. Other German settlements were Orangeburg on the Edisto River, Amelia on the Santee River, or Saxe-Gotha on the Congaree. Scotch-Irish settled in Williamsburg on the Black River and along the North Carolina border. Many of these immigrants landed on a Charles Town wharf along Bay Street. At their first taste of backcountry life, many returned to the city.

At times bankruptcy, pestilence, fire, an attack by the native Creek or Yemassee, or a similar disaster would throw even the richest Charlestonian on the mercy of the vestry of St. Philip's. However, it was more likely that the aforementioned freeholders and immigrants, along with soldiers, transients, and mariners, made the system of poor relief necessary in colonial Charles Town. At an early date there were complaints of "drunken, idle, and swearing people" in the streets of the city. The servant class and the freed servant often fathered "bastard" children by both free white women and white servant women. Men frequently "absconded," leaving mother and child at the mercy of the vestrymen. Death and sickness among this class was common, further burdening the parish with dependent women and children. The poor resident Charlestonians comprised scarcely one-seventh of its population when slaves were included; however, their numbers were augmented by influxes of immigrants and transients who regularly enlarged the relief roles.⁴³ Henry Laurens in his *Letter Book* wrote that these poor immigrants were packed tighter than slaves on the ships that brought them over.

In one instance a captain jammed 450 passengers into a ship designed to carry less than two hundred. They spent the trip lying on berths seven inches wide. When the

⁴³ Jackson Turner Main, *The Social Structure of Revolutionary America* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1965), 227.

master cut provisions to three-quarters of the normal allowance, half died before the ship arrived in port. Small pox and malaria awaited those who had not perished on the trip.⁴⁴ In the 1760's, it was a common sight to see the city filled with beggars who slept on Charles Town's streets at night. One might wonder how these diverse ethnic groups fared when seeking relief from the vestrymen. Eliza Pinckney, daughter of a vestryman, believed them to be "the most indolent people in the world, or they could never be so poor in such a plentiful a country."⁴⁵

Poor as these white peasants might have been, there was yet a class whose status was less enviable - the black slave. "Between 1719 and 1760 there were always more blacks than whites in the colony, though this imbalance was frequently deplored."⁴⁶ Manumission was an infrequent occurrence, and fewer still, free or slave, received relief of any kind in Charles Town. The poorest of Charles Town's populace were neglected in the minutes of St. Philip's vestry. This fact should be considered in any evaluation of Charles Town's treatment of the poor. Enslaved blacks, at the bottom of South Carolina's semi-feudal social order, were significant in the history of poor relief in Charles Town only in their exclusion from the system. The first Africans to arrive in South Carolina were treated no differently from white indentured servants.⁴⁷ Since slaves were a better

⁴⁴ Henry Laurens, *The Papers of Henry Laurens*, ed. Philip M. Hamer (Columbia: University of South Carolina, 1968), 178.

⁴⁵ Harriot Horry Ravenel, *Eliza Pinckney* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1896), 5.

⁴⁶ Bargar, *Royal*, 63.

⁴⁷ Alphonso Pinckney, *Black Americans* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1969), 8.

investment than servants, within decades this situation changed dramatically.

Charlestonians profited from, propagated, or at least condoned the institution of slavery which grew to monstrous proportions under their auspices. George Austin, Henry Laurens, and John Crockatt, all vestrymen, were among the leading importers of blacks to the colonies.

Dr. Francis Lejau, chief of the society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts in South Carolina and a leader in the effort to convert and educate slaves, Indians and settlers, writes concerning the treatment of slaves in the Charles Town area:

I have had of late an opportunity to oppose with all my might the putting of a very Inhumane Law and in my Judmt. very injust it is in Execution, in relation to run Away Negroes, by a Law Enacted in this province some years before I came; such as an Negroe must be mutilated by amputation of Testicals if it be a man and of Ears if it be a woman. I have openly declared against such punishment grounded Upon the Law of God, which Setts a Slave at Liberty if he shood loose an Eye or a Tooth when he is corrected, *Exod.21*, and some good planters are of my opinion. I must informe you of a most Cruel contrivance a man has invented to punish small faults in slaves. He puts them in a coffin where they are crushed almost to death and keeps them in that hellish machine for 24 hours commonly with their feet chained out and a lid pressing upon their stomach, this is a matter of fact universally known, when I look upon the ordinary cause that pushes these poor souls to run away and almost despaire, I find it is immoderate Labour and wont of victuals and Rest.⁴⁸

If vestrymen, who were responsible for upholding and protecting the rights and dignity of the poor of Charles Town condoned and practiced such inhumanity toward slaves, and spearheaded the decimation of native Americans, would such callousness not be reflected in their dealings with other classes of dependents?

⁴⁸ Dr. Francis Lejau, *The Carolina Chronicle of Dr. Francis Lejau, 1706-1717*, edited by Frank J. Klingberg (Berkeley: University of Chicago Press, 1956), 105.

The Social Epidemiology of Poverty in Charles Town

I cannot quit the Indians without mentioning an observation that has raised my wonder. That in this Province, settled in 1670 then swarming with Tribes of Indians, there remains now nothing of them but their names.”⁴⁹—Lt. Governor William Bull, 1770

In explaining the causes of poverty in eighteenth century Charles Town it is necessary to introduce two concepts from the science of epidemiology. First, the notion of epidemiologic and demographic transition will be discussed as it pertains to mortality in colonial Charles Town. The demographic transition is quite simply a shift in the cause of death that occurs in populations over time. Causes of death can be classified in three major categories: 1) violent death from wars, injury, accidents such as drowning (common in Charles Town), homicide and suicide; 2) death from infectious diseases -smallpox, malaria, yellow fever, pneumonia, hookworm, influenza, syphilis, dysentery and a host of other causes; and 3) death from chronic diseases associated with aging and affluence. Rarely in the course of history has there been such a dramatic transition in such a short period as Charles Town experienced between 1670 and 1800. In the New World the demographic transition was literally a change in populations. Native Americans died of diseases and violent death and their places in the ecologic niche were taken by Europeans and African slaves. Old world diseases introduced by the Europeans had a devastating impact on the aboriginal population. But more to the point of this paper, the introduction of African diseases such as hookworm,

⁴⁹ Robert M. Weir, *Colonial South Carolina: A History* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1997), 24. On the demise of the native tribes of the South Carolina low country, see J. Leitch Wright, Jr., *The Only Land They Knew: The Tragic Story of the American Indians in the Old South* (New York: The Free Press, 1981), 27-52 and Gene Waddell, *Indians of the South Carolina LowCountry* (Spartanburg, S.C.: The Reprint Company, 1980), 7-15.

yellow fever, and malaria into tropical America impacted the Europeans who had no acquired immunity. For most of the colonial period, Charles Town “bred broken health and death that created an atmosphere of apprehension.”⁵⁰ “They who want to die quickly, go to Carolina”, ran a proverb in eighteenth century England.⁵¹ Only nineteen percent of those persons born in Charles Town before 1754 reached their 20th birthday.⁵²

Quite a few of the biographical sketches that will be introduced in later chapters involve violent death. Mary Gloud, her husband, a guest, and two children were murdered by Savannah Indians in 1751(Chapter VIII). Charity Johnson’s body was found in a ditch behind the new market in 1772 (Chapter III). Kate (Chapter VI) murdered a slave child in 1745. Charles Lowndes (Chapter VI) committed suicide in 1736. In 1766 Mary Bonnell was murdered by Lucretia Nowland (Chapter VI). Ann Sturgeon was paid £3 for nursing a poor woman who was “murdered on King Street.”⁵³

⁵⁰Peter H. Adler & William Wills, “The History of Arthropod-Borne Diseases in South Carolina,” *American Entomologist* (Winter, 2003): 217.

⁵¹ Harold R. Merrens & George D. Terry, “Dying in Paradise: Malaria, Mortality, and the Perceptual Environment in Colonial South Carolina,” *Journal of Southern History*, 50 (1984): 533.

⁵² Dana P. Arneman, “The Medical History of Colonial South Carolina,” Ph.D. diss. (University of South Carolina, 1996), 383-385. That the South Carolina low country white population could not sustain itself without being augmented by immigration, see George D. Terry, “Champaign Country: A Social History of an Eighteenth Century Lowcountry Parish in South Carolina,” (Ph. D. diss., University of South Carolina, 1981), 90-142.

⁵³ V.M., May 7, 1771. Another common cause of violent death was accidental or occupationally related drowning. *The Register* rarely listed cause of death; however, there were many deaths by drowning were noted so apparently drowning was an exception.

Death by violent causes was, following death from infectious disease, the most common reason for the demise of poor Charlestonians in the early eighteenth Century.

Table II-12 Comparison: Life Expectancy Charles Town/Virginia/Massachusetts
Percent of Individuals Surviving to Age Twenty⁵⁴

Age	Charles Town M&F 1720- 1750	Maryland M- Native 1652- 1699	Plymouth Males 17 th Century	Andover Males 1670- 1699
20	19.5	26.0	48.2	44.8
30	17.2	20.4	40.0	38.7
40	16.7	15.6	31.2	31.4
50	11.1	12.0	23.7	23.5
60	8.9	9.3	16.3	15.2
70	5.5	7.0	9.9	10.2

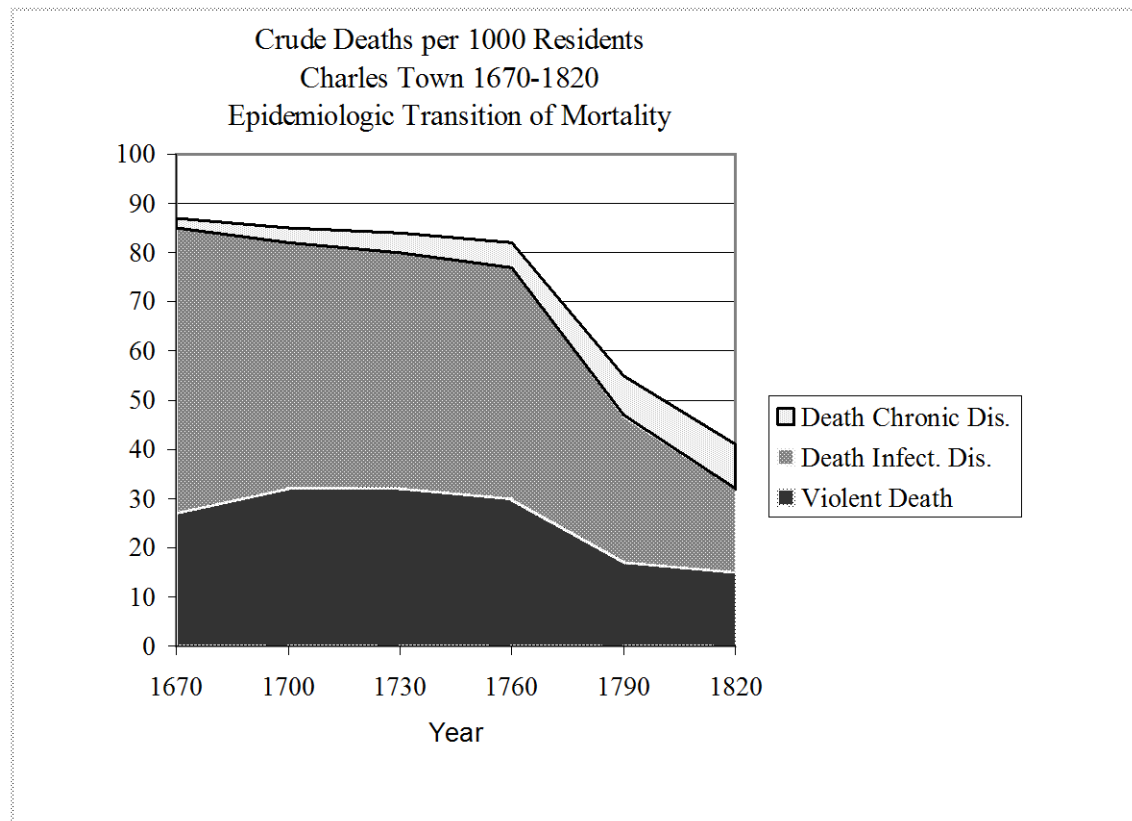
For the purpose of this dissertation, the remainder of the discussion focuses upon the white population of Charles Town.⁵⁵ Diseases tend to cluster together, and are associated by common etiologies, such as poverty. Most of the epidemiologic transition is driven by socioeconomic status (SES). As SES improves over time, there is

⁵⁴ Arneman, 385.

⁵⁵ For a complete historical discussion of the epidemiologic transition applied to European conquests, see Jared Diamond, *Guns, Germs, and Steel: The Fates of Human Societies* (New York: WW Norton & Company, 1999). Diamond posits that a set of “ultimate factors” driven by the orientation of the continents placed Eurasians conquerors in position to subdue African and American indigenous peoples. These ultimate factors resulted in the evolution of germs characteristic of dense European populations, the development of steel, and the invention of guns that resulted in the destruction of many civilizations, including those of Native Americans. Taken down to a more “proximate” level, or to colonial Charles Town, these same factors created a social environment that differentially affected poor whites as detailed in this dissertation. Poor whites were more vulnerable to mortality and morbidity from violence and communicable and vector borne diseases. *The human behavior lesson in Diamond’s theory is that striking differences among groups of peoples are not the result of innate differences in the peoples themselves, but are due to differences in their social and natural environments.*

a reduction in mortality from infectious disease and violence. Even more pertinent to this study, at any point in time there is a differential mortality rate from the three general causes mentioned earlier among the poor and persons who are well-off economically. In eighteenth century Charles Town, was in the midst of a stage in the epidemiologic transition where there were multiple pestilences, famines, and wars. Overall crude white deaths were extremely high for Charles Town when compared to other colonial cities. But poor persons were at higher risk for violent death and death from infectious diseases than were the elite. In early Charles Town poverty and sickness were almost inseparable conditions of need. The lack of life's necessities abbreviated the existences of many poor, both directly and indirectly. As rates of death from infectious disease and violence crept lower toward the end of the eighteenth century and residents lived longer, degenerative and man-made chronic diseases began to slowly appear among the affluent whites.

Figure II-2 The Epidemiologic Transition Applied to Charles Town⁵⁶

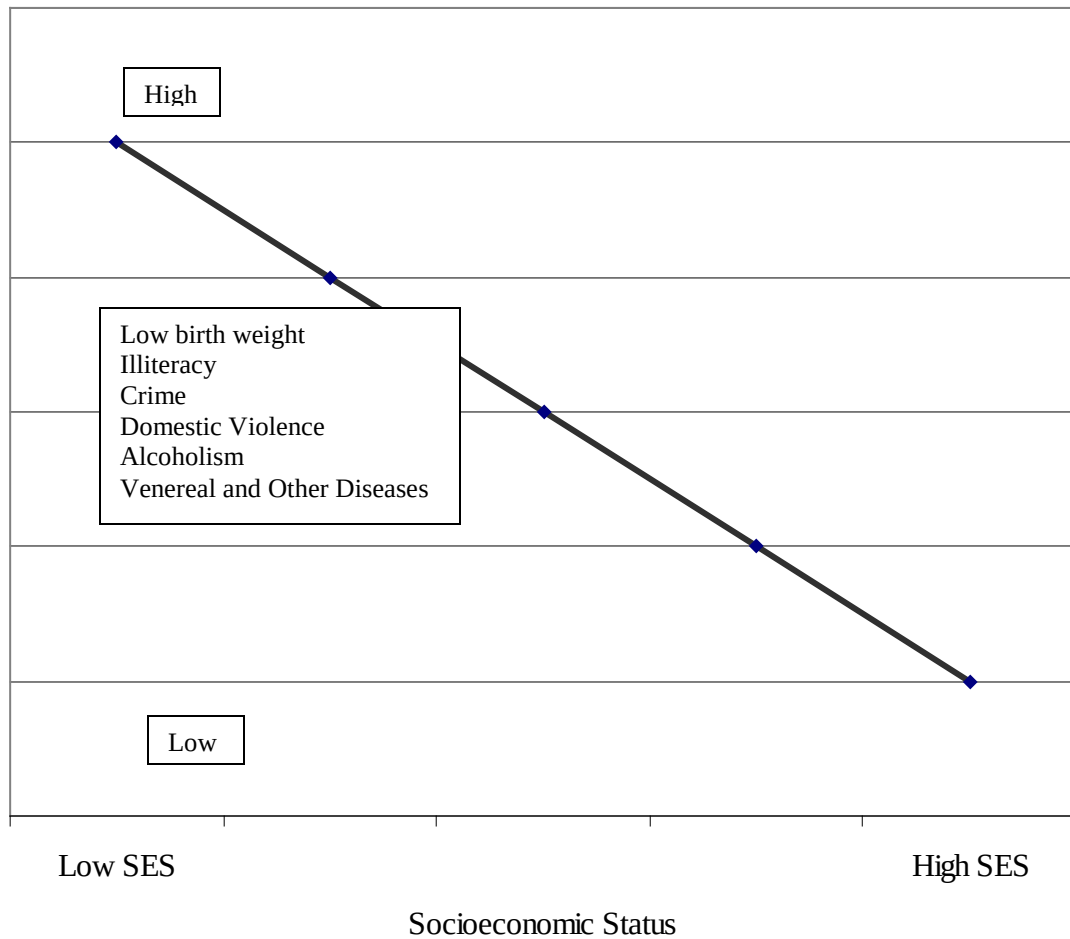


Now it is time to introduce the second concept in this discussion of eighteenth century white epidemiology: the social gradient. While the notion of the epidemiologic transition pertains to mortality, the social gradient influences morbidity. The term social gradient means that people's social and economic circumstances strongly affect their health and well-being throughout life. Graphically displayed, in a population there is an inverse relationship between SES and disease, alcoholism, criminal behavior, illiteracy,

⁵⁶ This graph is an estimate of a graph of crude death rates for chronic diseases, infectious disease, and violent death and accidental injury for the period 1670-1820. Actual data to support this chart does not exist: therefore this is only an approximation. Nevertheless, it faithfully illustrates that few people in the eighteenth century died of "old age." As time passed, the crude mortality rate diminished, and violent deaths and deaths from infectious diseases began to subside. Extending the graph into the late twentieth century would result in a chart with a markedly lower crude death rate, with most deaths from chronic disease.

violence and mortality. People on lower rungs of the economic ladder usually run twice the risk of developing diseases and serious social problems. Many poor Charlestonians lived lives of continual insecurity created by a myriad of reasons: health problems and disabilities from the harsh and injurious environment, alcoholism, mental illness, large pools of immigrant and slave labor competing for low wages, low or no pay for women, high mortality creating many widows and orphans, absconded or missing fathers, and unavailability of help in rural parishes forcing indigents into the city. The social gradient reflects material disadvantage, and is related to stress, insecurity, and lack of social integration. In the simple graphical illustration below, for illiteracy, individual cases in Charles Town or any other diverse population would cluster along the negative slope of the line. Low rates of illiteracy would tend to be found among those with high SES, while Charles Town's poor would suffer disproportionately from an inability to read and write.

Figure II-3 The Social Gradient



In spite of their hidden lives, it can be determined that the poor were far more likely to experience poor health and early death than the rich. Lacking food, fuel, shelter, clothing, and medical care, it can surely be expected that the poor were at greater risk of death than the rich. The social gradient has a gendered aspect to it as well. While risk of death from infectious disease is more or less equal for men and women, many women, especially poor women, died from childbirth. Affluent residents of Charles Town could afford to summon physicians such as John Moultrie, a vestryman and among the “fathers” of modern obstetrics to the bedsides of their wives

to attend them in birth. Poor women were not afforded such medical care. Table II-10 estimates the differential crude mortality rates for poor and non-poor in Charles Town for two years, 1741 and 1761. This data are consistent with both the concept of the epidemiological transition and the socioeconomic gradient. As the SES gap between non-poor and poor widened between 1741 and 1761 the mortality gap increased. This gap also increased the risk of morbidity.⁵⁷

Table II-13 St. Philip's *Register*- Estimate of Poor/Non-Poor & Crude Death Rate Estimates

	1741	1761
White Population Estimate	3400	4000
Poor Population Estimate	680	800
Non-Poor Population Estimate	2720	3200
Non-Poor Deaths	60	78
Non-Poor Population Estimate	2720	3200
<i>Crude Rate/1000</i>	22.1	24.4
Poor Deaths	18	52
Poor Population Estimate	680	800
<i>Crude Rate/1000</i>	26.5	65.0
All Deaths	100	172
White Population Estimate	3400	4000
<i>Crude Rate/1000</i>	29.4	43.0

⁵⁷ The above two years were selected because of the greater details present in the *Register*, allowing for a more precise determination of those listed as “on the Parish” or “poor” or “in the Workhouse.” This distinction in detail comes from idiosyncrasies in practices of different registrars. In actuality, these two years (1741 and 1761) were somewhat atypical and do not follow the expected trend line of the epidemiological transition. Coclanis’ work on eighteenth century Charles Town would support a finding that overall mortality levels should drop in the second half-century, while the mortality gap between the poor and those not labeled poor should increase. The reasons for the drop would be the acquisition of greater immunity of the towns residents (which more recently arrived, poorer immigrants would not have); improvements in drainage and sanitation (which poorer areas would be the last to obtain); and reductions in risky behavioral patterns (such as sexually transmitted diseases, workplace injuries, violence, and alcoholism to which the poor would have greater exposure).

One of the significant findings in modern research is that medical care contributes only marginally to the health of a population. Even if poor women in Charles Town had received better care during childbirth, the difference in female mortality would have been negligible. The female deaths were more than offset by male war-related deaths and by seafaring accidents, drowning, and lost ships. Poor men, especially poor young men, had much greater exposure to accidental and violent deaths than did elite men. In many societies widowhood is associated with advanced age. This was not so in eighteenth century Charles Town. Even the notion of the dependency of widows was defined differently in Charles Town's history. The widow in Charles Town was almost never an old woman. War widowhood was a factor from the Yemassee War in 1715 throughout the colonial period. This demographic oddity will be discussed in more detail in Chapter IV.

Summary

Why were some of the townspeople wealthy, while many more led marginal existences in poverty and need? Race, gender, and the socioeconomic status of residents' families had a lot to do with who was rich and who was poor. However, for many early Charlestonians, there was a fourth factor. For eighteenth century residents of Charles Town acts of violence and infectious disease were omnipresent facts of life and death. It is not true that there were no poor whites in the fabulously wealthy colonial city of Charles Town. Even without counting slaves, there were proportionately as many poor in Charles Town as in any other colonial city. The presence of indentured servants and poor immigrants coupled with the harsh environment resulted in at least twenty percent of the white population being below the

poverty level. In the very early years of the colony there was little difference between the wealthiest and the poorest members of Charles Town society. The gap had widened considerably by the middle of the eighteenth century. By 1770, Charles Town's elite were the wealthiest persons in British North America, while about one fourth of the poor whites were on relief roles. The white poor at the bottom of the social ladder in Charles Town ran at least twice the risk of serious illness and premature death. Between the top and bottom, there is a continuous social gradient. The disadvantages faced by Charles Town's white poor were more than just having few or no family assets. Living in tightly packed, poor housing, greater exposure to environmental and work hazards, managing the stress of trying to survive in a hostile climate with poor diets, and little opportunity to better one's circumstance made poor families more vulnerable. Variations in health and wellbeing cannot be explained only by the income gap between the rich and poor. Additionally, the personal characteristics and behaviors of the elite and of paupers are not the only influences on these variations. The neighborhood where one lives, the workplace, and the type of labor are also important for one's health. Health and wellbeing have multi-factorial determinants.

CHAPTER III- FORM, FUNCTION, AND PHILOSOPHY OF POOR RELIEF

The best way of measuring the success of any society is not to examine the attainments of those at the top but to assay the quality of life for those at the bottom.¹

On Monday, August 31, 1772, the humid air of the musty old vestry room was filled with the smoke of clay pipes and Scottish brogues, French and English accents, and quasi-African dialects. In later years these sounds would mesh to form high Gullah, the aristocratic speech of Charles Town. On this day the vestrymen were assembled for a meeting of the vestry, just as they met on Thursdays in the House of Commons and on other days to serve on grand and petit juries, to elect delegates to the Stamp Act Congress, or to consider petitions for charity from the St. Andrews Society. The administration of the affairs of the city was a duty that time after time fell upon the same elite individuals.

A mass of human beings thronged under this merchant oligarchy. Despite their wealth, the vestrymen were not far removed from the violence, hunger, and poverty of the day. Some of the paupers had been boyhood friends or more recent neighbors. While the poor who sought help from the church wardens were people with whom the vestry had personal contact and knowledge of the circumstances causing their need, this

¹ Gary B. Nash, *The Urban Crucible* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1979), xi. Of course, this dissertation is about poor whites on the next rung up from the bottom, not about the slaves on the bottom.

factor alone does not explain the fact that the work of the vestrymen was such serious business—the most important function of local government.

On another humid morning in September, 1772, the Reverend Mr. Purcell, the assistant rector of St. Philips, addressed the vestry on a matter occurring the day before. The funeral of Charity Johnson, a former camp-follower turned barmaid, had been interrupted by cat-calls and cursing from a trio of vagrants as the small procession exited the walled city at Carteret Bastion on the way to the burying ground. The four paid pall-bearers, the pine box, the rented pall, the swampy plot of ground at the end of Mazyck Street outside the city walls and the services of Mr. Purcell were all at public expense. Mr. Purcell told the vestry that even the “lewd woman” Charity Johnson deserved a proper service, not one interrupted by the drunks the likes of Robert Larry, George Jackson, and John Kesson. Larry, Jackson, and Kesson were just three of the many “idle and vitiously-inclined’ homeless from the back alleys of Charles Town. The social and economic detritus of colonial America, these “sturdy beggars” were the bane of the provincial authorities. Charity Johnson and “her kind” were tolerated by Charles Town merchants, who recognized that taverns and brothels were crucial to the port city economy; however, the names of Larry, Kesson, and Jackson can not be found in the church wardens’ accounts as recipients of any assistance.

Bess Gandy, a poor, sick woman and her two children, having been on the parish expense for at least seven years, were ordered “put out to board at least expense” in one of the earliest surviving sets of vestry minutes (V.M., 17 April, 1732). This reference, reminiscent of the New England practice of auctioning off poor persons to the lowest bidder, was the sole reference to cost of care being a determinant in over

fifty years of Charles Town relief records. Mrs. Gandy survived for only one day. By April 18, 1732, Mrs. Gardiner was compensated for her expense in caring for Mrs. Gandy and for arranging for her burial (V.M. & C.W.A., July 17, 1726- 18 April, 1732). Peg Parr, a contemporary of Mrs. Gandy, was somewhat more fortunate. On February 11, 1733, Mrs. Taylor, was paid her bill for nursing Margaret (Peg) Parr, who was ordered to be discharged, "being now well in health." Back on the parish charge in 1736, a bill for Parr's maintenance, "a rugg," and her burial was paid by the church wardens (V.M. & C.W.A., March 5, 1732- 25 May, 1736). Amy Thornton, a "very old woman," was paid a monthly allowance by the parish for over thirteen years (C.W.A., 23 August, 1725- November 28, 1738). "Patrick Conyers, a disabled mariner, was nursed by Margaret Askins and boarded at parish expense at Mrs. Wyatt's rooming house next to the Bear Inn and Tavern on Bay Street. Conyers died in 1740 after nine years on the parish charge (C.W.A., 1 April, 1731- 26 October, 1740.

The records of Gandy, Parr, Thornton and Conyers and their nurses and caretakers were among the earliest cases found in the St. Philip's parish vestry minutes. The mechanism for administering poor relief was the English parish system which had been reproduced in Barbados and transported to Charles Town in 1706 with the creation of St. Philip's parish by the South Carolina Assembly. Carl Bridenbaugh, the historian of colonial America's urban problems, speaks of the parish system as an "inadequate provision," and "misgovernment" and claimed that this government functioned awkwardly from the beginning."¹

¹ Carl Bridenbaugh, *Cities in the Wilderness; The First Century of Urban Life in America, 1625-1742* (New York: A. A. Knopf, 1938), 145.

In 1695, five commissioners were chosen to receive and apply gifts for charity, bind out poor children as apprentices, and “not to draw above Tenn pounds a yeare out of the hands of the Treasurer for the use of the poore.”² In 1704, the Assembly merged all political and judicial functions with the parishes, following the English custom. Two years later public health and poor relief functions were placed clearly under the Anglican vestries. Under an “Act for the Better Relief of the Poore” in 1712, the parish vestry cared for the poor of Charles Town, employing the outdoor relief method until 1738. The 1712 Act imposed the structure of the Elizabethan Poor Law of 1601 and the Settlement Act of 1662 and carefully prescribed the roles of the vestry and church wardens and the general policy framework of the system of poor relief.³ The 1712 Act was among over 40 English laws copied in full or in part by the newly appointed governing body of the province. These laws contained over 200 separate statutes.⁴

The English Law defined the duty of the parish, emphasizing local responsibility and family support. Families, neighbors, and the church were the basis for the early system. The helpless (impotent), the sick, the elderly, the orphaned, and the disabled were defined as “worthy”. Parish relief was the last resort. In Charles Town as in other

² Thomas Cooper and David J. McCord, eds., *The Statutes at Large of South Carolina* (Columbia, S.C., 1836-1841) II, 116.

³ Bellows, *Benevolence*, 4-5; Sirmans, *Colonial*, 96-100; Robert M. Weir, *Colonial South Carolina* (Millwood, N.Y.: KTO Press, 1983), 71.

⁴ M. Eugene Sirmans, *Colonial South Carolina: A Political History, 1663-1763* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: The University of North Carolina Press, 1966), 90. Walter Edgar, *South Carolina: A History*, (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press), 96. The wholesale copying of the 1601 Poor Law and the Settlement Act of 1662 were common in the colonies. In addition to the 1712 Laws, Sirmans states that a 1706 law establishing the vestries as the only real seat of local power in South Carolina made the parish the authority prior to the Revolution. Sirmans, *Political*, 91.

colonial towns families were held legally liable for immediate relatives. The law required adult children to support their elderly parents:

Nicolas Mattyson made Application to the Vestry for relief from the Parish as a Poor Person. Order'd that David Mattyson his son have Notice Given him That the said Son is Obliged by a law of this Parish to support his father and that in Case of his refusal the Vestry will take such measures as to compell him thereto as the law directs (VM 31, July, 1749).

The local government assumed responsibility only when these family members could not. From 1695 until 1738 the only method of aiding the poor was “outdoor relief,” the provision of aid to people in their own or in a neighbor’s home. Most relief consisted of cash given directly by the church warden to the recipient. The deserving poor consisted of the “ancient or infirm,” the disabled, widows, and sometimes women and their children seen as involuntarily lacking a male breadwinner.

The governing body of the parish was the vestry, a group of men elected by the free-holders whose duty it was to collect parish tithes, rent pews, appoint clergymen, investigate cases of immorality and disorder, administer the poor laws, and in general, supervise the charitable, moral, and religious aspects of parish life. The executive arm of the vestry was the church warden, whose office kept him occupied with the business of the vestry and the presentation of cases requiring the attention of the vestry.

Every year at Easter seven vestrymen and two church wardens were elected, as well as five commissioners to oversee the workhouse and the markets. In addition there were about twenty other elected officials who administered regulations concerning fires, highways, weights and measures, firewood, and the packing of goods.

Lest these annual elections seem democratic, as has been maintained, it should be noted that between 1745 and 1759 only those resident Anglicans who owned a town house and land valued at sixty pounds exercised the parish franchise.

Newspaper accounts of the elections frequently announced the presence of inhabitants and freeholders of the Parish and of such parishioners as thought proper to attend, but only qualified Charlestonians could actually participate in the written vote. There was little democracy in this dispensation.⁵

Owning property also qualified the voter to pay poor taxes, the single largest source of revenue for poor relief. In the early 1700s Charles Town's population numbered in the several thousands. A combination of citizenry was necessary to provide the watches, to protect the city from the imminent danger of fire, an attack by Creeks or Yemasseees, and the forays of pirates who infested the waterways off the coast. The spread of disease was a municipal concern requiring the efforts of many to provide adequate waste disposal, water systems, and health care. The building of streets and houses, standardizing weights and measures, and checking on conditions at the workhouse were some of the many functions which necessitated community action and bound townsmen together. These traditional ideas of cooperation, mutual interests, and obligations of citizens toward public office survived intact into the latter decades. In addition, for the Charlestonian these common interests predominated over individual rights. Public officials, acting under the auspices of this obligation to their fellow townsmen, were given wide responsibilities. The care of the poor was one of these wide spheres of authority in which officials, without finely detailed legislation, or much concern over individual rights, proceeded according to what they determined as the well being and interest of the entire community. Moreover, the disinterest of the provincial assemblymen in the town's affairs gave officials even broader powers. It

⁵ Bridenbaugh, *Revolt*, 10. Charles Pinckney, a vestryman and the Speaker of the House of Commons, advocated for and passed legislation extending the vote to non-Anglican men.

might be expected that this attitude of intervention for the good of the community would be displayed in the disposition of cases by the vestrymen.

Administration of Disaster Relief

The violence of the early eighteenth century life kept Charles Town society in flux. Diseases, fires, hurricanes, and wars kept the people from settling down to a long term routine. A visitor to Charleston wrote of one of the town's fires: "Many who, a few hours before, retired to their beds in affluence, were now reduced, by the all devouring element, to indigence."⁶ Many times the vestrymen were faced with petitioners who, only several days before, had been as wealthy and prosperous as themselves. By upholding the dignity of these supplicants the vestrymen insured that they themselves, if reduced to poor circumstances, would receive equal treatment.

Calamities and natural disasters resulted in a series of rebuilding efforts following destructive hurricanes and fires. Seasonal visitations of powerful hurricanes destroyed parts of the town in 1690, 1700, 1713, and 1728. In 1698, a fire consumed half the town and the remainder fell in an earthquake two days later. Fires struck again in 1699, 1700 and 1730; but none could compare with the so-called "Great Fire" of 1740, when the vestry administered what was perhaps the earliest American large-scale disaster relief.⁷

⁶ George C. Rogers, *Charleston in the Age of the Pinckneys* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press), 28- 29.

⁷ Matthew Mulcahy, "The 'Great Fire' of 1740 and the Politics of Disaster Relief in Colonial Charleston," *South Carolina Historical Magazine* 99, No. 2 (April, 1998), 198. Mulcahy's article is quite comprehensive. For more on the so-called "Great Fire," see Walter J. Fraser, Jr., *Charleston!, Charleston! The History of a Southern City* (Columbia, University of South Carolina Press, 1989), 67-69.

In 1740, a conflagration destroyed the most valuable section of town, leaving more than three hundred buildings in ashes. Hundreds of families were relieved at St. Philip's. After the immediacy of feeding, clothing, and housing the victims had passed, the vestry was able to give attention to specific sufferers. The large amounts of money given suggest that the aid was given to rebuild homes or replace articles lost in the fire. Barrels of that Charles Town staple, rice, were passed out to needy families. On the November 26, 1740, the citizens who applied to the vestry for fire relief had formerly lived in the most fashionable section of town:

Table III-1 –Temporary Relief for Victims of Late Fire

Vestry Minutes, 26 Nov., 1740	
To Samuel Axtell, his wife and 7 children burnt out	£20.00.0
To Mr. William Pollard burnt out and very sick	20.00.0
To Joan LeBray and child	5.00.0
To Mrs. Fley widow and 4 children burnt out	25.00.0
To Charles Warharsen and Family burnt out	20.00.0
To John Miller and Family burnt out	10.00.0
To John Ballentine Junior burnt out	40.00.0
To Jacob Axtell and Family burnt out	20.00.0
To Elizabeth Hutchings and Family burnt out	20.00.0

Agreed and Ordered That One Hundred and Fifty Pounds out of the Fire money be given to Mrs. Elizabeth Lassierre Widow to relieve her in her present necessity, she having been a great sufferer by the Fire (V.M., 4 Jan., 1741).

This day was given to Relieve Joel Poinsett who was burnt out by the fire £100 (V.M., 18 Feb., 1741).

Likewise that 50 pounds more be given to Mrs. Gates to enable her to furnish a little shop to give her a maintenance, her husband having been sufferer by the said fire (V.M., 23 Nov., 1741).

William Osborn waited on the vestry for Relief for the Loss of his Pilot Boat in the time of the Fire, the Gentlemen of the Vestry promised they would give 100 pounds toward buying half a Pilot Boat, in case he can purchase the remainder of his half part on his own credit (V.M., 12 April, 1741).

Starting at two in the afternoon in a hatter's shop, the conflagration raced through small shopkeepers, homes and taverns in the business district, destroyed many of the homes of Charles Town's wealthiest citizens, and settled in the wharf and warehouses along the Cooper River. Fueled by piles of deer hides and stores of rum, turpentine, pitch and timber, the disaster was not stopped until it consumed over three hundred buildings, leaving over half the town homeless.

Matthew Blundell, a shoemaker, was working in his tiny shop in a back alley near the intersection of Broad and Church Streets when the conflagration began. Fanned by the wind from the harbor, in minutes his wooden-shingled home, shop and all he owned was in flames. His hands were badly burnt trying to save the leather hides and tools, but he was unable to salvage much. Since he lived in the rear of his shop, all of his clothing and personal belongings went up in flames. His neighbor Joseph Bee, a carpenter, suffered a similar fate. He "labored as much as in his Power to extinguish the ...Fire" raging through the shops and tenements in the narrow alley. Sailors from the British naval vessels the *Phenix*, *Tartar*, and *Spencer* doused him with buckets of water as he worked feverishly to stem the flames. Afterwards, in a petition to the General Assembly, Bee claimed that as a result of his efforts he developed a "Distemper" and "Convulsions" that "cost him the Use of his Limbs and Sight" and resulting in "great expense and Loss of Business." The story was similar for William Osborn, who lost his pilot boat, and for Mary Bedon, whose tavern on Broad Street was "burnt out." Bedon advertised in the *South Carolina Gazette* the week after the fire that she "hath taken the house where Mr. Carr lately kept tavern," and she would entertain her customers there.

Bedon received £170 of the £1500 authorized by the General Assembly for fire relief.⁸ A grant of this size was intended to reimburse the victim for a loss of property and enable them to return to tax-paying self-sufficiency. Taverns like Bedon's were critical to the bustling seaport. Most of the funds for relief of individuals, their families, and small businesses were from donations by citizens, some wealthy and some of ordinary means. These relief funds were separate from and in addition to the funds for poor relief which operated the workhouse and provided for outdoor relief of parish poor. None of the fire expenses appear in the church wardens' account book—the ledger from which the wardens were reimbursed for their expenses.

Blundell and Bee never recovered from their injuries. After receiving £20 from the vestry, Blundell next appears in the minutes in 1747 when the church wardens gave him £8, being “disabled and in want.” The work of a shoemaker, or cordwainer, involved hard manual labor, involving hours pounding tough sole leather into something workable, cutting the leather into the approximate shape with a sole knife, stretching the leather with pliers, and pulling upper leather to the shape of the last. It was months before Blundell was able to work at his trade. In June 1747, the church wardens were ordered by the vestry to buy £5 worth of leather so Blundell could “ply his trade and support himself.” Blundell appears again in 1749. After almost nine years he had received £36, substantially less than most poor “on the parish” received in a single year. Indications are that he had long periods of self-sufficiency and was able to finally overcome his disability. Bee received £125 (£100 from the General assembly

⁸ Mulcahy, “Great Fire,” 136-157.

fund) and a barrel of rice from the vestry, and later £19 from the General Assembly. About Bee nothing further is recorded after early 1741.

Osborn was granted £100, or half the cost of replacing his pilot boat, providing he could come up with the other half. Like Bee, Bedon, Blundell, and others helped by the vestry, Mulcahy observes that Osborn, having property and an occupation, appears to come from the “middling ranks” of society.⁹ Having lost everything, they were reduced to poverty and forced to accept help. Many appear later in the minutes as paupers, some as successful businesspersons, and some as both supplicant and businessperson. For example, John Scott, the gunsmith, regularly accepted apprentices placed in his shop by the parish. The widow Legare served as a wet nurse and was given funds to start a small business. Legare was in and out of poverty over the next decade. For these and other poor relief recipients, the parish acted as a safety net. The assistance provided them was not a dole or a subsistence allowance, but rather a form of social insurance. They had been property owners and had contributed to the relief of others while they were able to pay taxes. The parish was their support in times of need. The vagaries of fires, hurricanes, epidemics, and other calamities could be visited on anyone. The parish goal was for these recipients to return to tax-payer status, not to create dependents or to “control” them.

Parliament appropriated £20,000 Sterling, or £140,000 currency to re-build Charles Town, the only such funds to go to disaster relief in any province. These funds were distributed by the Royal Council to businesses and wealthy persons to compensate for losses. It should be noted that the Parliament funds were almost one hundred times

⁹ Mulcahey, “Great Fire,” 136-157.

more than the Assembly funds. Very little of this money was distributed to the small businesspersons or to the “middling sort.” Scott lists 171 recipients and amounts. Many familiar vestrymen received sizable sums. Several other names from the church wardens’ accounts and vestry minutes also appear on the list: Peter Calvert (Chapter VI), John Scott (the gunsmith and master of apprentices in Chapter IV), Mary Maine, and Peter Legare (Chapter IV).¹⁰ Aside from the £1500 appropriated by the General Assembly for the relief of the “sufferers from the fire” all of the funds disbursed by the vestry were donations from individuals, other parishes, and other colonies. Table III-2 contains a listing of donations from individuals detailed in the vestry minutes.¹¹

¹⁰ Kenneth Scott, “Sufferers in the Charleston Fire of 1740,” *South Carolina Historical Magazine*, 64, no. 4 (Oct., 1963): 203-211.

¹¹ This table is constructed from vestry minutes from November, 1740 to April, 1741. Among the donors were Governor William Bull, vestrymen John Laurens, Charles Pinckney, Gabriel Manigault, Samuel Wragg, and “a Woman on the Path.”

Table III-2 Donations to Victims of Great Fire of 1740

Donors for Relief of Victims of Great Fire of 1740	Amount in Carolina currency
William Bull, Esq.	£100.0.0
Captain Fanshaw	100.0.0
Benjamin Whitaker, Esq.	50.0.0
Thomas Gadsden	100.0.0
Charles Pinckney, Esq.	50.0.0
Gabriel Manigault	100.0.0
Thomas Bolton	50.0.0
Samuel Wragg	140.0.0
Unknown	30.10
Benjamin DeHarriette	25.0.0
Unknown	25.2.6
Lady of Free Masons	50.0.0
Cash collected at Church Door	683.12.6
James Kinloch	50.0.0
William Saxby, Esq.	10.0.0
Sacrament money	65.6.0
Cash collected at Church Door	147.3.6
Lewis Lormier	50.0.0
Unknown	50.0.0
Gentlemen of Christ Church Parish	14.1.0
Gentlemen of St. George's Parish	60.0.1
Ditto	61.1.0
Sir Richard Everard	140.0.0
A Woman on the Path	10.10
St Thomas Parish	15.3.0
Edward Trusler	2.10.0
St George's Parish	19 barrels rice
John Laurens	5.0.0
Goose Creek Parish	142.6.0
Mr. Baxter	12.10.0
St Andrews Parish	363.14.6
Total	2705.08.1

Ordinarily all expenditures of tax money or “sacrament money” (donations to the church for the poor), including legacies and fines to be used for poor relief, were accounted for to the pence by the church warden in the account book. Revenue was recorded in the account book in a “Contra” account, or an account to offset (counter) the expenses. No such accounting methods were employed by the parish in the fire

relief efforts. Since fire relief funds were kept separate from poor relief (expenses for outdoor relief and the workhouse) and were disbursed by the vestry, no stringent accounting was needed. The money was disbursed as it came in, not by the wardens who were repaid by taxes after the funds came in and the money was expended.

Which Money was put into the Hands of Capt. Adam Beauchamp, and for the disposal thereof the Gentlemen of the Vestry have agreed that one or two of them will meet daily at 10 o'clock in the morning to distribute the same. (V.M., 20 November, 1740)

Table III-3 details the number of persons relieved by gender and the average amount each received. These disbursements appear in the minutes listing the name of the recipient and whether it was for the family or an individual. Many persons were relieved multiple times, and some received barrels of rice donated by plantation owners living in other parishes.

Table III-3 Number, Gender, and Average Amount of Fire Relief, 1740-1741

Gender	<u>N</u>	Amount Disbursed	Mean Amount
Men	35	£1682	£48
Women	34	£1397	£41
Total	69	£3079	£45

Source: VM: November, 1740- April, 1741

In September of 1752 a terrible hurricane wasted the city. People “up to their necks in water began now to think of nothing but certain death.” Suddenly the wind shifted, leaving the church wardens and vestry to deal with the devastation.¹² Sarah Murray and her children were typical of the terrible storm’s victims. She and her three girls lived in a rude clapboard tenement plastered within with lime made from oyster

¹² Ibid., 29.

shells. The hut was near White Point, a narrow oyster shell-covered sand bar where the brunt of the hurricane hit.¹³ Six years earlier Sarah had petitioned the vestry “praying passage to Jamaica” for herself and her three children. She planned to join her husband who had “gone and left her in low circumstances,” but the plan fell through (VM, Sept. 1, 1746). Unable to support herself and her three girls by taking in sewing, she again requested help in March 1748. Her request for funds to support herself was denied, but the vestry agreed to bind out her oldest child, to take care of the second at the workhouse, and she was “directed to make her own provision for the youngest” (VM, March 1, 1748). Determined to keep her family together, Sarah continued to manage without help. Elizabeth Hutchins, the wife of the warden of the workhouse, would send her small jobs and she made clothing for parish children cared for at Richardson’s.¹⁴ The church wardens purchased the cloth, thread, and buttons and contracted with Sarah to make the garments.¹⁵

When the “greatest and most destructive hurricane ever to hit South Carolina” came ashore at the point of the peninsula, her rude home and all her belongings were

¹³ The area near the site of Sarah Murray’s house is now White Point Gardens and the tourist attraction “the Battery.” From the piazzas of mansions on the Battery Charleston’s wealthy families witnessed the bombardment of Fort Sumter at the beginning of the Civil War.

¹⁴ Mrs. Richardson was a foster parent who cared for many children during the period before the parish “orphanage” was constructed (see Chapter IV). The parish financially sustained poor women such as Mrs. Richardson who cared for orphaned and abandoned in their own homes. Owing to the high rates of mortality, the chances of a child in Charles Town being orphaned were considerable,

¹⁵ Since there were no “ready-to-wear” garments, the church wardens’ account book contains hundreds of entries detailing thread, cloth, shoes, and stockings purchased for individual parish children. Appendix A contains many examples of the procedures employed to clothe paupers in the workhouse.

swept away.¹⁶ Sarah and her family survived with only the clothing they had on. The oldest child was bound out “to learn to sew” and the other two were sent to school at the expense of the parish. Sarah was given £5 and some clothing from funds donated for victims, but was never put “on the parish.” Since she and her children do not appear later in the minutes or church wardens’ accounts, perhaps she continued to eke out a living without parish help (V.M., 2 October, 1752).

Hurricane-To Elizabeth Widow of Smith the Pilot £5 and ordered that the Church Wardens supply her with a gown 2 shifts 2 aprons 1 pr shoes 1 pr stockens 1 flannen Petty Coat 2 Caps and a handkerchief and £5 (V.M., 2 Oct. 1752).

Hurricane-Agreed that the Church Wardens relieve the poor people that have been distressed at White Point by the Late Hurricane out of the Sacrament Cash (V.M., 2 Oct., 1752).

Hurricane-Hannah Hext came from Wadmalaw in distress received £3 to help her home (V.M., 2 Oct., 1752).

The Work of Poor Relief

In 1732 most of those receiving relief were “ancient” and “infirm” men and women. They were neighbors rather than alien immigrants. By the early 1740s the numbers and characteristics of the poor applying for relief began to change. Increasingly, the poor were women and children, “wives, widows, and orphans” of the transient soldiers discharged by units which were stationed briefly in Charles Town, injured or sick sailors left by their captains, “poor, lame, and impotent persons” who were sent down from upcountry settlements, or runaway servants and convicts from nearby Georgia. Shiploads of immigrant English, Scotch-Irish, Germans, and Swiss arrived in Charles Town without means of support and often with only the clothing on

¹⁶ Fraser, Jr., *Charleston!, Charleston! The History of a Southern City*, 85.

their backs. While some were sick or disabled, many were able-bodied but unemployed. Poor strangers placed a greater burden on the port because it was the only city of any size in the Southern colonies and offered the only adequate relief in the province of South Carolina. Among these poor, who were especially vulnerable to disease, there were outbreaks of smallpox, whooping cough, mumps, diphtheria, scarlet fever, and measles. “The deserving poor” comprised of the “ancient” and the “infirm” were outnumbered by the “disorderly poor” made up of crippled soldiers and sailors, immigrants, and their wives, widows, prostitutes, children, and orphans.

The burden of the increasing numbers of poor fell not only on the taxpayers, but especially upon the church wardens. The wardens determined the amount and type of relief using their discretion.¹⁷ Indoor relief with other families was usually the choice for the “deserving poor” and for younger orphan children. Older children were bound out as apprentices. Outsiders were given cash and kind, or occasionally, nothing at all, and had to go begging from door to door or perish in the streets. Money and transportation were offered to strangers who were willing to leave the city.

As the chief civil officers of the community, the vestry managed a wide range of social services, hired physicians for the poor, and oversaw public health, sanitation, and quarantine. The church wardens checked eligibility; distributed food, supplies, clothing, and money; and administered indoor and outdoor relief. Of course, the major qualification consisted of having enough cash on hand to advance the parish the year’s

¹⁷ The phrase “be relieved at the discretion of the church wardens” appears so frequently and there are so many more recipients in the wardens’ accounts than in the minutes, that church wardens must have routinely decided on relief cases without obtaining approval of the vestry. See also pages 84, 99-102, Table III-9, Figure III-3, and note 151.

expenses for poor relief. Only wealthy citizens could afford to have the parish in arrears to them for thousands of pounds:

The Vestry having Occasion for Money to reimburse the Church wardens – Wrote a Letter to the Public Treasurer to Lend the Chh Ws. Fifteen Hundred Pounds which with fifteen hundred pounds already reced will Make Three Thousand Pounds to be repaid at the Collecting the Poor Tax. (October 8, 1764).

The Chh Ws Representing to the Vestry their want of Money for the use of the Parish And that ye Public was largely indebted for the Use of the Transient Poor...Agreed that an Order be Drawn on the Public Treasr. for £3000 Currency payable to Messrs Danl Cannon & John Poag CWs... (June 8, 1769)

The following transcription of page nine of the oldest surviving vestry minute book illustrates the policy and administrative role of the vestry. All records and transactions are organized by parish fiscal year (Easter to Easter). Among the vestry and wardens in attendance at this particular meeting were John Lawrans (Laurens), a French Huguenot immigrant saddler and father of the fabulously wealthy Henry Laurens, the second President of the Continental Congress and a member of the United States Constitutional Convention; Gabriel Manigault, a vestryman or church warden for over 30 years, a future speaker of the provincial Assembly, and the wealthiest person in British North America; Captain Robert Brewton, keeper of the royal powder magazine and father of the wealthy slave importer Miles Brewton; Thomas Fairchild and William McKenzie, merchants; and the Reverend Alexander Garden, the Commissary of the Anglican Church in South Carolina.

Figure III-1 Sample Vestry Minute Book Entry

At a Vestry Met on Monday the 11 th March 1733/4.	
	the Rever ^d . Mr. Alexander Garden
	Coll. Moses Wilson
	Mr. Thomas Fairchild.
Mr. William McKenzie} Church wardens	Mr. Gabriel Manigault
Mr. John Lawrans}	Cap ^{tn} . Robert Brewton
Ordered, that Peg Parr. Being now well in health be discharged from having any further Allowance from the Parish.	
And That John Croft the Clark of y ^e Vestry do put up an advertisement to Require all people to Pay the Tax assessed them for the relief of the Poor of this Parish, between this & the first of March next ensuing.	
And then the Church Wardens & Vestry Signed an Execution against Richard Salter for Refusing to Pay 22: ^s & 6 ^d . Being the Sum assessed him towards y ^e Reliefe of the Poor of this Parish this present year 1733-	

Table III-4 Noteworthy Vestrymen & Church Wardens 1732-1775

Name	# Terms	FY Years	
		Served	Brief Biographical Summary
Gabriel Manigault	16	32-75	Speaker, House of Commons; wealthiest person in British NA
Dr. John Moultrie	7	42-49	First obstetrician in colonies
Robert Pringle	9	38-46	Wealthy merchant; <i>Diary of Robert Pringle</i>
Benjamin Smith	28	42-70	One of 3 wealthiest persons in North America; importer of slaves
Henry Laurens	8	51-58	President, Continental Congress; Delegate US Constitutional Convention
Christopher Gadsden	4	55-58	Revolutionary leader & general; Stamp Act Congress
Rawlins Lowndes	1	65	President of South Carolina during Revolution
Charles Cotesworth Pinckney	8	62-74	General; Federalist US Presidential Candidate 1802/1806; Minister to Spain

Note: From 1732-1775 there were 96 individuals serving 396 terms –average 4 terms per person. Source: Vestry Minutes, 1732-1775; Fraser, *Charleston!*; Edgar, *South Carolina*.

The responsibility for the maintenance of the poor fell on all segments of Charles Town society. Payment of the poor tax was made in proportion to the general tax levied on the inhabitants. In 1737, three shillings were paid for relief of the poor per pound paid for maintenance of roads, public health, police and watch, fire-marshals, and other municipal concerns.¹⁸ A two and one half percent fee was allowed the tax collector, who contracted annually with the vestry:

Agreed That the sum of Three Thousand Pounds be raised by an Assessment on the Taxable Inhabitants of the Parish of St Philips & St Michaels for the Maintenance of the Poor & Payment of the salary of the warden of the workhouse for the Year 1756 & for as much as the Charge of the Parish become very burthensome on the Inhabitants & the Summ to be raised is large, it was proposed that only 2 ½ pr Ct of Paying the poor tax be for the future given, and if the person who has Collected for several years past will Collect for that Sum, he may be Continued, but he declining to Collect for less than 5 pr Ct the Sum hereto fore Allowed ... the Church Wardens put up an Advertisement in the *Gazette* (V.M., January 17, 1757).

Apparently this tax was also proportional to either income or property value. Executions were signed against those who failed to pay. Experience Howard neglected to pay his £2/13/09 in 1733, and in 1736, Francis LeBrasseur obviously had strong feelings about paying his £12/12/5, for the vestry minutes state that he “positively refused to pay” it (V.M., 5 April, 1733; 26 April, 1736). Those who most frequently defaulted were the poorer sort. In 1735 an execution was signed against Lewis Tabier, Paul Amatis, Margaret Partridge, Sabina Rouse, and ten others for a total of only 18 pounds (V.M., 25 April, 1735). “The vestry taking into consideration the backwardness of the inhabitants of the Parishes of St. Philips and St. Michaels in not paying the Poor

¹⁸ In eighteenth century American colonies and in England one pound equaled 20 shillings and one shilling equaled 12 pence (currently an English shilling is worth 16 pence). Unless otherwise stated, monetary values are in Carolina Currency.

Tax” in 1772 ordered advertisements published in three gazettes and placed in “publick places” (V.M., 10 Aug., 1772).

During the forty-two years covered by the vestry minutes the taxes paid by the parish for the support of the poor rose from £1,000 in 1734 to £16,500 levied in 1775. The amount collected doubled every six or seven years, as it did between 1756 and 1762 and 1770 and 1775. These dramatic increases in poor taxes were usually tied directly to increased numbers of poor, as in 1738 when the smallpox epidemic raged through Carolina. The economy floundered and the numbers of poor markedly increased; yet the poor tax also rose from £1000 in 1737 to £1500 in 1738. In times of hardship the poor were not abandoned. When the fire struck in 1740, a tax of £1825 pounds was levied and numerous private donations swelled funds available for the victims. When times were good economically with fewer poor to support the tax fell to £1,000 in 1741 and £800 in 1744 (V.M., 1732-75).

Table III-5 Expenditures for Poor Relief

Fiscal Year	Assessment in Carolina Currency	Expended Church Wardens	Total Expended Vestry Minutes
32	£625	£942	£143
33	1000	339	52
34	1000	855	0
35	1500	1182	0
36	1600	802	52
37	1000	920	104
38	1500	2087	286
39	1529	1199	52
40	1825	1631	3071
41	1600	1262	436
42	1000	1176	90
43	900	1176	109
44	800	1244	157
45	1000	1579	62
46	1000	1390	211

Fiscal Year	Assessment in Carolina Currency	Total Expended Church Wardens	Total Expended Vestry Minutes
47	1200	1934	366
48	1200	1856	72
49	1500	2009	264
50	1500	2361	494
51	1500	2264	198
52	1500		246
53	2000		277
54	3000		139
56	3000		309
57	3000		558
58	4000		1201
59	5000		716
60	6000		387
61	5000		113
62	5500		228
63	6000		518
64	6000		286
65	8000		946
66	11000		936
67	10300		595
68	9000		1471
69	8000		358
70	8000		1334
71	9000		1920
72	9000		1719
73	10400		1160
74	11000		1787
75	14000		797

Source: Assessment & Vestry Minutes Expenses: VM-1732-1775 Church Wardens
Account Expenses: CW- 1732-1751

Piven and Cloward related the increase in relief expenses in poor economic times to the elites' desire to keep social unrest of the underclass in check, not merely to the increased needs and numbers of poor persons. While the social control of slaves was a motivating factor in rising relief expenditures, the expenditures in Charles Town steadily increased throughout the period according to need. In fact, relief expenditures

increased in times of economic growth. The pattern of intentional expansion and contraction theorized by some is not seen in Charles Town, nor did the minutes, newspaper accounts, nor laws indicate any concern about an insurrection among poor whites.

Figure III-2 Graph of Poor Relief Expenditures, V.M & C.W.A

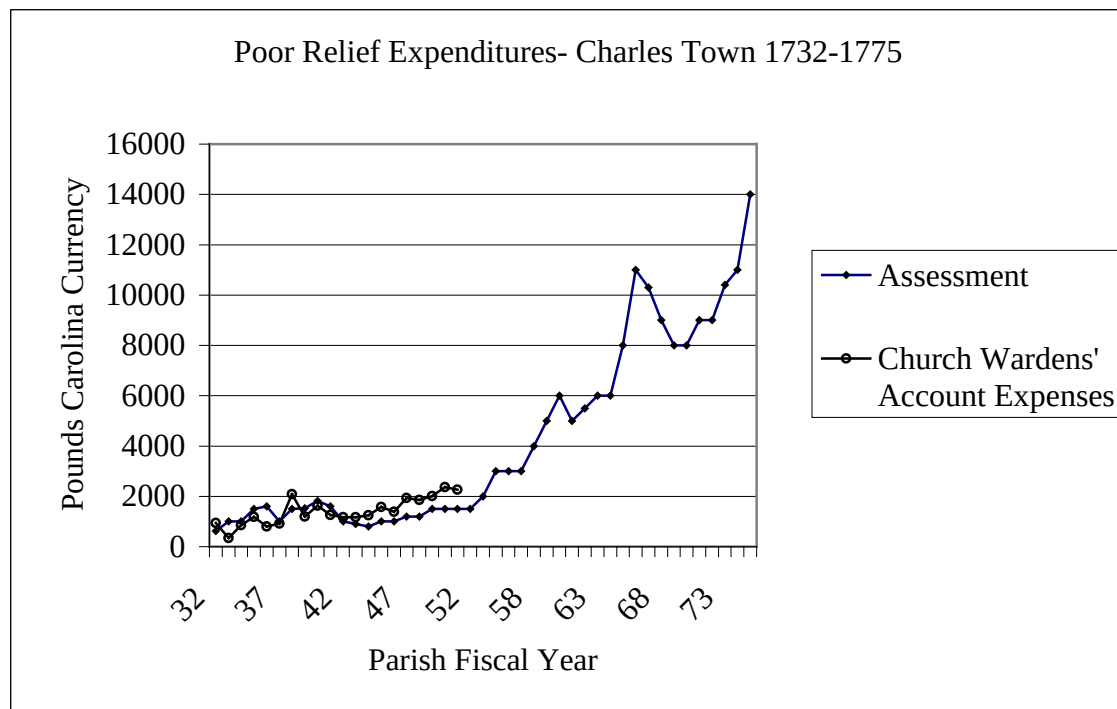


Table III-5 illustrates the folly of relying upon the vestry minutes, as Fraser does, for a count of poor persons relieved. For example, the vestry minutes document that a poor tax of £14,000 was assessed in FY 1774-75; however, adding all the expenses authorized in the minutes only documents a total expenditure of £797 for that year. Fraser determined that “over 880” individuals were served between 1751 and 1773 using entries in the vestry minutes.¹⁹ A projection using the assessment and average

¹⁹ Fraser, *Charleston!*, 102.

expenditures per recipient from the church wardens' accounts (Appendix D), results in a conservative estimate of 3954 persons served between 1751 and 1773 (unduplicated by fiscal year). This figure does not include transients relieved at the workhouse but not recorded.²⁰ By comparing the names of persons provided relief between 1732 and 1751 (the period of overlap of VM and CWA), it is clear that less than 40 percent of the names appearing in the CWA are also in the VM for the same year.

Table III-6 Comparison of Number of Recipients, VM & CWA

FY	(a) Number of Persons Relieved (VM)	(b) Number of Persons Relieved (CWA)	VM as Percent of CWA (%)
32	3	23	13
33	2	17	11
34	0	32	0
35	0	37	0
36	1	26	4
37	8	27	30
38	7	68	10
39	2	26	8
*40	81	33	245
41	10	18	56
42	19	18	106
43	10	32	31
44	21	26	80
45	10	90	11
46	19	55	35
47	40	47	85
48	20	57	35
49	28	122	23
50	39	100	39
51	29	131	22
Total	373	967	39

* Fire of 1740 expenses were accounted for in the VM and not in CWA

When the increase in taxes was most dramatic, a committee of Assembly members was appointed in 1766 to investigate. Its report concluded that the vestrymen

²⁰ Easterby, "Public Poor Relief," 85. See Appendix D for a more complete discussion of this estimate.

and officials of the city failed to enforce settlement laws that were on the books. Were those laws enforced, the committee continued, the numbers of poor on the parish charge would have greatly decreased (see Appendix D). The vestrymen and church wardens, both taxpayers and officials of city government, were keenly aware of the existence of the settlement laws. However, they usually failed to enforce them. The vestrymen were faced with a difficult choice of priorities based on value considerations. They could have turned the poor away altogether, with no recourse for future aid; or they could “discretionally” relieve those whom they considered deserving, carefully selecting out criminals and thieves, and attempt as expeditiously as possible to remove these transients from parish charge by curing them, setting them to work, or sending them away with passage and relief. It is important to note that they chose the more humane alternative, at the expense of their own pocketbooks. The fact that the vestry ignored the 1712 poor law is confirmed by the above report to the General Assembly.

The amount of the poor tax did not nearly equal the Parish’s expenses for the relief of the poor in any one year. This tax was augmented in part by fines from the Sabbath-breaking laws and other minor violations of town ordinances. There were numerous fines for cursing, drinking, gambling, and working on Sunday. The following is an example of one of the laws designed in part to produce revenue for poor relief.

If any white person or persons above the age of sixteen shall presume or endeavor to climb or pass over any part of the said fortifications inward or outward of Charles Town or go down into the Ditch or Trench, he or the offending shall fine or forfeit the sum of 20 shillings, the one half payable to the

informers, and the other half payable to the commissioners of the poor towards the relief of the poor of the province.²¹

The office of church warden, being an unsalaried position, was part of the aristocratic citizen's responsibility to the community. However, the job being so demanding and time consuming, many declined to accept (as did John Wilson, Paul Grimke, Philip Tydiman, Isaac Mazyck, Thomas Buckle, and Alexander Chovin in 1775). Refusal to fill the office originally carried a £10 fine, which was employed for the relief of the poor. In 1757 it was increased to £50.

The Church Wardens having informed the Vestry That a great many of the Acadians are Sick and in Great Distress whom they are Obligated to relieve, Agreed that the Church Wardens continue the relief, That a humble Representation be made to the General Assembly of the Great Burden this Parish Labours under as well from the Acadians, Soldier's Wives, Widows, Orphans & That the trouble of the Church Wardens is so greatly increased & likely more to increase, That it can't be expected that any person in the future will serve the Office. (October 3, 1757)

The following is the Copy of the Report of the Committee of the Assembly on the Memorials of the Church Wardens & Vestry of St Philip's Parish

Report

That is appeared to your Committee as well as from the said Memorial and the Information of Mr. Banbury/one of the said Church wardens who attended the Committee on this Occasion/as from the Observation of some of the said Committee that the several Matters contained in the said Memorial are true in Fact, But your Committee having proceeded to inspect several Laws of this Province now in Force and hereinafter in Part recited are of Opinion that these Laws were they duly practis'd and pursued would in a great measure prevent if not Effectually obviate the Burden of Duty and the Greivance now complained of...From which it appears to Your Committee that the Disuse or Neglect of Choosing or Nominating (According to Law) two or more Persons Annually to be Overseers of the Poor ...has rendered the duty of the Church Wardens thereof very heavy and Burdensome...And That a dissenforcement of the other Paragraphs of the said Acts of the Assembly will also prevent any Impositions of Other Poor becoming Chargeable to the said Parish of St. Philip Charles Town than those which of right belong to it...

²¹ Trott, S.C. *Laws*, (mfm.)

That it is the Opinion of Your Committee that all charges which arise from the maintenance & relief of Wives & Children of Soldiers or Invalids discharged from the Independent Companies Ought to be Born by the Publick.

And as your Committee is Credibly Informed That there are now in Charles Town a Number of helpless naked and Forlorn Acadians in danger of Perishing unless they be Immediately Relieved. The Committee by Leave to recommend them to the Compassion of this Honorable House...

And Lastly Your Committee offer to the House their Opinion That the Fine or Forfeiture of Ten Pounds appointed by Law about Forty or Fifty Years ago when the Currency of this Province was Nearly in value to Proclamation Money ...is become too small to answer the purpose thereof. (December 12, 1757)

Whereas Several Objections were raised by the Vestry Against their former resolution/as pr minutes of 25th June last / of raising One Thousand Pounds more than was agreed on April 1759 when it was observed that Sacrament cash amounting to £1500 had been applied for other purposes... Agree that the former resolution of raising One Thousand Pounds more stand valid and effectual. (July 2, 1759)

Mr. Gadsden acquainted the Vestry that it would be very Inconvenient for him to Serve as a Church Warden the ensuing Year According to his Promise some tome ago as he would be obliged to be out of Town for the most part of the year & he could not in good Conscience Discharge his Duty to the Inhabitants and the Poor, but that he would act any other Year, To which the Vestry Agreed (January 22, 1759).

The Vestry taking into Consideration the great Increase of the / Parish & Transient Poor- resolved to appoint Two Persons as Overseers of the Poor to assist the Ch. Wardens... (April 23, 1770).

By 1775, almost no one would accept the office:

Mr. John Wilson who was elected Church Warden on Easter Monday Attended & refused to serve & paid his fine...Mr. John Calvert also attended as a Church Warden also refused...The Vestry proceeded to the Choice of Church Wardens and agreed Mr. John Paul Grimke & Philip Tydiman were nominated and elected. (April 29, 1775)

Mr. John Paul Grimke having this day refused to serve as Church Warden Mr. William Ancrun was nominated & chosen in his room...Thomas Buckle Chosen Church Warden in place of William Ancrum...Mr. Buckle Attended, and refused to serve..., and Alexander Chovin was Chosen in his stead...Mr. Chovin Attended & acquainted the Vestry with the fact that he did not reside in the Parish and Mr. Isaac Mazyck was chosen in his stead. (May 1, 1775)

Isaac Mazyck declined serving as Church Warden and paid his fine...Philip Tydiman declined serving as Church Warden and paid his fine...Mr. Thomas Radcliffe Jr. & Mr. John Cart are appointed Church Wardens in the stead of

Issac Mazyck & Philip Tydiman who declined serving & paid their fines. (May 23, 1775)

Contra Accounts and Eligibility

It was customary to provide for the poor in one's will. Often, considerable estates were left for the church warden's disposal. John Turner left £1,000, the interest of which accrued to the use of "such poor as are not then chargeable and supported by the Parish (V.M., 29 June, 1742)." The wills of Lewis Janvier, William McKenzie, and Edward Hext were typical:

Item: I give and devise and bequeath to the Church Wardens of St. Philips Parish Church Charles Town for the Time being all the remainder of any Estate real or personal to be disposed of to such Charitable uses as they shall think proper to the poor people of the said Parish (V.M., 22 Aug., 1748).

Ordered that the Church Wardens Receive the Legacy Left by the late Mr. William McKenzie Deceas'd for the relief of Transhons Persons, the Sum of Two Hundred Pounds Currency, and that the same may be put out to Interest for that purpose aforesaid. (May 21, 1739).

A paragraph out of the Last Will & testament of Edward Hext of Charles Town Deceased

Item, I give and Bequeath ...the Sum of One Thousand Pounds Current Money ... to the only Use and Purpose Herein After Mentioned... the Vestry Shall Annually put out the said Sum ... on Interest and the Clear Profits or Interest thereof, ... apply to the relief of such Poor & Indigent people in said Parish... (June 29, 1742)

Often the vestrymen received outright gifts for the poor. In 1769 James Reid gave £350 "for the relief of the indigent poor (V.M., 9 October, 1769)." Mr. Fenwick "applied to the use of the poor" the yearly rent of his pew which he donated to the Church (V.M., 8 Jan., 1770). In appreciation for being relieved by the wardens when he was in need, William Davis "gratefully returned" £54 in 1769, and in 1770 donated £20 more (V.M., 26 March, 1767; 8 Jan., 1770).

Figure III-3 Example of a Contra Account²²

The Parish of St. Philips Charles Town To Thomas Smith & Jn. Crockatt -C ^r			
Church Wardens for the Year 1750			
1750			
April 30	By the Total Amount of the Assessment for the year 1749 £1533.15X		
	Deduct Outstanding of Remington's Account	<u>29.0.9s</u>	1504 14 3
May 14	By Cash reced of Mr. Remington so much he reced on Acct } of money advanced for the care of Mrs. Leger }		6 - -
23	By Cash reced of Coll Ausin for a Sailor abusing a Negro		2 - -
	By d ^o reced of D ^o for Corbett abusing his Servants		2 - -
July 3	By d ^o reced of Ditto taken from a Run Away Negro (not claimed) ...		2 - -
August 8	By d ^o for 1 year's Interest of Wood's and Bullard's Bond ...	132 10	-
	By d ^o of Coll Austin for a White Man abusing a Negro		2 - -
Sept 5	By d ^o reced of Jn Crockatt He reced a fine for beating a Negro		2 - -
6	By d ^o reced of Coll Austin for a fine of the same kind		2 - -
28	By d ^o of d ^o for a seizure made by Rice the Constable		6.3 - -
Oct 12	By Cash reced of Mr. Lamboll for a fine As Judged Against Joseph Oram for Entertaining Jos. Jeffrey's Servants.....		10 - -
	By Cash of Coll Austin for Beating a Negro		2 --
Feb 16	By d ^o of d ^o for a fine reced for Beating a Negro		<u>2 - -</u>
	Carried Over		£1670.10.6

No finely detailed legislation directed the vestrymen in their relief of the poor.

²² Mr. Remington was the clerk of the vestry. Mrs. Leger was a long-term recipient; however, the cost of her care was charged to her sons. Source: Church Wardens Accounts: April-Feb. 1750/51. Appendix C contains examples of debit (expense) and contra (revenue) accounts. Note that revenues and expenses are balanced carefully by fund.

Typically they acted in accord with custom and their own discretion. The vestry minutes provide insight into how the system operated. From these minutes one can reconstruct the rudimentary eligibility requirements of the system and the manner in which relief was handled. The criteria for eligibility were rather straightforward. Ownership of substantial property disqualified one for relief. One could not be able to work, or even appear to be capable of gainful employment. Soberness and evidence of past industry helped a petitioner immensely. If a pauper could provide proper references who would swear to the poor person's indigence as well as his past diligence, his case would probably be favorably heard. A petitioner must have exhausted all other means of support, and relatives must have refused aid. One was legally obligated to support one's aged mother or father, one's spouse, or one's offspring:

Ordered that George Audley's allowance be discontinued, he being able to support Himself (V.M., 9 Sept., 1766).

Jane Holmes applied for relief but appearing able to work the vestry ordered £ 3/10 to be given to her, with orders that she does not return to the Vestry any more (V.M., 21 July, 1768).

Mrs. Reich, a relation of Thomas Lamboll, Esquied, applied for Relief, agreed that the Church Wardens wait on Mr. Lamboll and Expostulate with him about her maintenance and if Mr. Lamboll cannot be prevailed on to provide for her without being burthensome to the Parish, then the Church Warden's to pay her three pounds per month toward her support (V.M., 21 May, 1753).

Ordered that the allowance of Mrs. Gregarious be discontinued, the Vestry being Informed she has married a man able to maintain her (V.M., 29 April, 1766).

In consequence of a letter received from Mr. Davis, a poor industrious man Resident here many years setting forth his wait of Business-and great Necessity, the Church Wardens and the Vestry agreed to allow him £15 per month (V.M., 25 June, 1759).

Agreed that Mrs. Yeoman's be paid the allowance of £35 pr. Quarter until July and no longer Unless Mrs. Yoemans Choose to give a Bill of Sale of her Negroes to the Parish, by doing so she will be Intitled to a Maintenance from the parish (V.M., 6 April, 1767).

Ordered that Peter Legare pay 40 shillings per week for support of his mother (V.M., 12 March, 1747).

If there was a question about the condition of need of a recipient, occasionally the vestrymen would inquire further into the situation:

Agreed that the Church Wardens do inquire into the situation & Necessitys of Of Alexr. Johnston & If they think it proper to give him something at their discretion for present relief... (V.M., 29 Sept., 1766).

Ordered that John G. Began and family be relieved at the discretion of the Church Wardens and Vestry till next meeting by which time they were desired to enquire of his character and circumstance (V.M., 2 Oct., 1758).

It was recommended to the vestry that Mrs. Hargrave is in Great Necessity, her Goods being seized for Rent and having nothing to redeem them, or even to support her, it is referred to Mr. Garden, Mr. Caw, and Mr. Michie to Enquire into her necessity (V.M., 15 Aug., 1748).

The Petn. Of Ann Goodwin read at last meeting ... was again read & Mr. Stone reported, That he had enquired into the Facts Alleged in the Petn. & finds that her husband is incapacitated as set forth... (October 8, 1753).

The Chh Ws. Desired to inform themselves of John Rutledge Esq whither the Father of Margaret Harrison does work at his Brick Yard as she says he does, Ordered that the Chh. Ws. Do give her some Small Matter for the present relief of her & her two Children (August 7, 1769).

The above cases are infrequent. In general, relief was dispensed straightforwardly, without long elaborate investigations or qualifications. Sometimes the vestry contracted with a parishioner to board a less fortunate neighbor in his home.

Agreed to allow Mrs. Darling £15 or £20 for the care of a poor woman as they shall think most reasonable. (V.M., 28 Jan., 1762).

The usual manner of dispensing relief was to give the poor persons money with which they would be trusted to use toward arranging for their support. In this manner the recipients could avoid the ignominy of being dependent on another family and experience a minimal disruption of their life. They could live in their own home, or pay rent for their tenement. Occasionally money to be used for house rent was differentiated from money given for subsistence. In these ways the poor were not excluded. There was no reason to separate them from society as they were not seen as subversive or a threat to the order and stability of the society. Apparently the vestrymen were not afraid the poor would abuse the aid, since there was no indication of elaborate attempts to detect malingerers. The very fact that cash was given directly to the recipient by the church warden was the major method for disbursing relief attests to this lack of suspicion.

Agreed that Marget Parr should be allowed twenty shillings a week towards her support and maintenance (V.M., 13 Feb., 1734).

Agreed that Mrs. Campbell recommended by Mr. Saxby be paid fifty pounds per Ann. For House Rent and maintenance of herself (V.M., 17 April, 1752).

Agreed to allow Mary Graham £6 to pay her Rent and £6 per month (V.M., 17 April, 1772).

A parishioner could be relieved discretionally (whenever and however the church wardens felt relief necessary), periodically over time (when the petitioner was in chronic need), in one sum (when there was an acute situation of need), or in several payments. Relief in kind was rarely given. When in-kind help was allowed, the most common forms were board and clothing.

Agreed (as the Vestry does not think proper to Enter Mrs. Burwick on Monthly

Pay) that the Church Warden's do supply her at their discretion (V.M., 9 Oct., 1769).

Agreed, that the allowance to Mrs. Savey be stop'd from this day and that she only be allowed such relief as the Church Wardens shall think proper (V.M., 20 Aug., 1751).

Agreed, that the Church Wardens Supply Elizabeth Darley with some small matter at Their Discretion (V.M., 3 April, 1769).

Agreed that £20 be given to Gregory Ivers for the Discretion of the Church Wardens for the use of himself and large family of children and 15 pounds for cloathing his children (V.M., 16 June, 1774).

Agreed that Margaret Brown have given her by the Church Ws. The Sum of £10. Discretionally (V.M., 9 Oct., 1770).

Agreed that Ann O'Hara be given £10 at four different times (V.M., 9 Oct., 1770).

Agreed that the Church Wardens pay Margit Hughes ten pounds Currcy. for her Present subsistence (V.M., 14 Oct., 1740).

Agreed that the an addition of 40/ be add.d to Mrs. Newbolds Monthly Allowance (V.M., 19 April, 1773).

Agreed to allow Ann Sturgeon an additional Sum of 10/ pr. Month (V.M., 17, June, 1771).

Agreed that the Church Wardens do pay Mrs. Findley at the rate of One hundred Pounds per Annum in such payments as will be most agreeable to her.... (V.M., 27 Aug., 1770).

Reid characterized the social welfare services in colonial America as a period of "benign near neglect of the poor."²³ If this were true, then administration of poor relief services in Charles Town would have been simple and inexpensive. It would have placed few tax burdens on the citizens. Clerks or minor functionaries would have performed chores of distributing relief. There would have been no demands placed

²³ Reid, *Encyclopedia*, 2206.

upon the church wardens. The close involvement of the very rich with the very poor is a characteristic of colonial American social welfare. In no American community was this more common than in Charles Town. Elite church wardens were brought into daily direct contact with the poorest members of society. South Carolina's vestries were powerful bodies, and none was more powerful than St. Philip's. Despite the burden, few refused service until the 1770s. The South Carolina poor law of 1712 ensured that church wardens had more involvement with paupers than their counterparts elsewhere. In England, Overseers of the Poor distributed money, assessed the poor rate, determined eligibility for relief, and performed the day to day tasks requiring contact with the poor. Overseers of the Poor in Charles Town were only appointed after the Assembly complained about the failure of the vestry to drive out vagrants and ineligible transients, but they were rarely utilized. Responsibility for the poor was shared unequally between the heavily burdened churchwardens and the vestrymen, with church wardens having by far the most contact. The vestrymen and church wardens possessed two remedies to prevent the burden of lower class paupers. First, they could have denied assistance as the law required, and second, they could have appointed overseers to reduce the work. In the words of the committee of the Assembly appointed to study the growing number of paupers:

...your Committee having proceeded to inspect several Laws of this Province now in Force and hereinafter in Part recited are of Opinion that these Laws were they duly practis'd and pursued would in a great measure prevent if not Effectually obviate the Burden of Duty and the Greivance now complained of...From which it appears to Your Committee that the Disuse or Neglect of Choosing or Nominating (According to Law) two or more Persons Annually to be Overseers of the Poor ...has rendered the duty of the Church Wardens thereof very heavy and Burdensome... (V.M., December 12, 1757)

The following Table III-7 is a cross-tabulation of services provided by reason of need, covering 75 years of recorded activity. The data is unduplicated within a fiscal year, but duplicated by year, meaning that these counts are the equivalents of numbers of recipients served each year. This data demonstrated the Table III-8 contains a count of these recipients by fiscal year for the period covered by the wardens' account books (1725- 1751). After 1751, there is no reliable record of the number or types of services provided. It is known from Easterby's summary of a report to the House of Commons for 1767 that there were at least 229 individuals receiving services on the day of the list, not including "those transient poor" provided daily or "present relief" by the wardens or provided temporary food or shelter at the workhouse, and 31 children sent to school by the parish. By the end of the period studied the number of poor served per year could have approached 300 or more persons. The average expenditure per recipient during the period 1725-1751 was £26. If one assumes that the average expense per recipient for the entire period 1725-1775 was £26, then assessment amounts in the VM may be used to project a number of recipients. Without accounting for inflation, the assessment of £14,000 for fiscal year 1775 could have covered expenses for over 500 souls.²⁴ The vestry administered a workhouse, public housing apartments, a hospital, a mental hospital, an orphanage, at least two schools, and an extensive program of outdoor relief.²⁵ It is no wonder that church wardens were reluctant to serve. Far from "benign near-neglect," wardens were required to spend considerable time and money.

²⁴ See Appendix D for a more complete discussion of this topic.

²⁵ Table III-7 details the comprehensive nature of vestry relief.

Table III-7 Cross-tabulation of Reason for Service and Service Type

Service Type	Reason for Service							Total
	Sick	Disabld.	Aged	Child	Depend. Female	Other	Trans- sient	
Outdoor Relief	72	155	14	142	357	45	348	1133
Room and Board	5	17	1	5	14	1	2	45
In-kind	1	11		26	13	5	11	67
Child Care	1			125	1		19	146
Nursing	122	4	1	3	1		20	154
Physician	19	1	1	1	1		9	32
Burial	6				1	3	1	11
Transport	4	4		27	35	2	95	167
Other						1	3	4
Indenture				49			5	54
School				76			19	95
Fire Relief						61		61
Hurricane Relief						11		11
Workhouse	23	45	2	43	44	1	77	235
Total	253	237	19	497	470	133	606	2215

Source- Unduplicated File from VM & CWA-1725-1775

Table III-8 Unduplicated Number of Recipients by Fiscal Year

Fiscal Year	Count
1725	10
1726	7
1727	14
1728	3
1729	12
1730	22
1731	20
1732	23
1733	17
1734	32
1735	37
1736	26
1737	27
1738	68
1739	26
1740	33
1741	18
1742	18
1743	32
1744	26
1745	90
1746	55
1747	47
1748	57
1749	122
1750	100
1751	131

source: CW Accounts, 1725-1751

Figure III-4 Graph of Number of Recipients

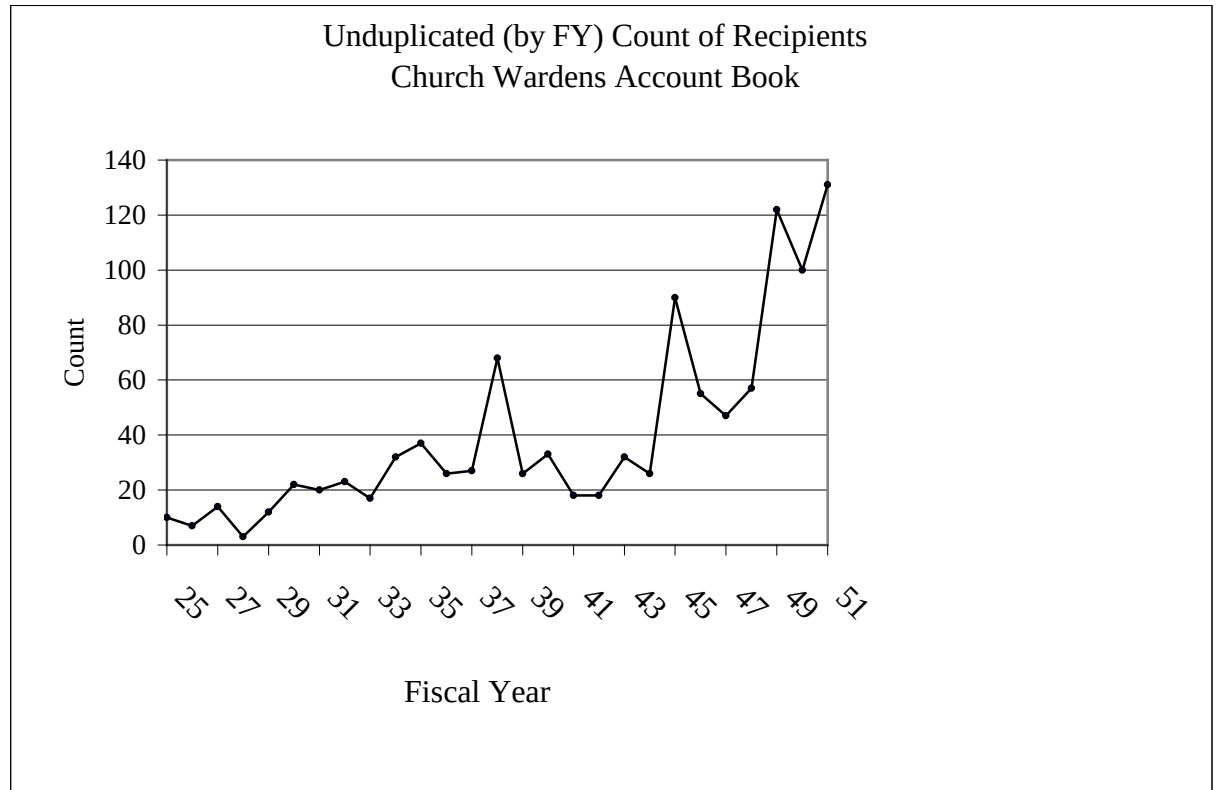


Table III-9 Comparison of Assessment & Expenditures Documented by FY²⁶

FY	Poor Tax Assessed Per FY	Poor Relief Expenses Church Wardens Accounts	Poor Relief Expenses Vestry Minutes
32	£625	£942	£143
33	1000	339	52
34	1000	855	
35	1500	1182	
36	1600	802	52
37	1000	920	104
38	1500	2087	286
39	1529	1199	52
40	1825	1631	3071*
41	1600	1262	436
42	1000	1176	90
43	900	1176	109

²⁶ *Great Fire of 1740-recorded in VM. The total amount of £28208 expended 1725-1751 divided by 1073 recipient-years (Table XX) yields £26 per recipient per year.

44	800	1244	157
45	1000	1579	62
46	1000	1390	211
47	1200	1934	366
48	1200	1856	72
49	1500	2009	264
50	1500	2361	494
51	1500	2264	198
Total	24779	28208	6219

Contrary to the philosophy of social welfare expressed by the private societies (see Chapter VIII), the function of the public relief given by the parish of St. Philip's was most often to attend to emergency needs or "maintain" a pauper. Usually relief was not designed to enable the poor to become productive members of society. Notable exceptions to this principal are the efforts in times of disaster and the education of poor children. The following instances are exceptions in which the vestrymen underwrote some measure of private enterprise by the poor. However, in only a very few cases was public relief more than a dole.

Richard Weston applied for relief and prayed he might have sufficient funds to buy a Rosen Ship to set him up in business and he would be no further trouble to the Parish.... (V.M., 20 June, 1757).

Mr. Blundel, a shoemaker applied for Relief Ordered, That the Church Wardens Give him five pounds, to buy leather (V.M., 1 June, 1742).

The St. Philip's vestry minutes have been the main focus of studies of poor relief in colonial Charles Town; however, the study of these rich and detailed minutes can mislead scholars, not for what they contain but for what they do not contain. In Maryland poor relief was administered by the courts. Paupers had to petition the court for relief in writing, leaving a detailed record of petitions that were approved as well as those not approved. In contrast, rarely did poor petitioners present themselves to St.

Philip's vestry in person, and if there were written petitions, none survive. In most cases there was no formal application. The following rare examples mentioning an application stand out:

Whereas David Duncan an Industrious man was much hurt by a trunk being thrown out of a house near to a place where a fire was some time ago & left no prospect of being cured in this province *has made application* to the Vestry to assist him in going to Edinburgh & in getting into the infirmary in that place (V.M., 14 August, 1758).

In Consequence of a letter received from Mr. Davis, a poor industrious man resident here many years setting forth his want of business- and great Necessity, the Church Wardens and the Vestry agreed to allow him £15 per month (V.M., 25 June, 1759).

Mrs. Reich, a relation of Thomas Lamboll, Esquire, *applied for Relief*, agreed that the Church Wardens wait on Mr. Lamboll and Expostulate with him about her maintenance and if Mr. Lamboll cannot be prevailed on to provide for her without being burthensome to the Parish, the Church Wardens to pay her three pounds per month toward her support (V.M., 21 May, 1753).

Hundreds of cases were handled by the wardens without being presented to the vestry. The circumstances of fewer than one in ten persons who must have been allowed relief are documented in the vestry minutes. In many instances those recipients who do appear in the minutes are granted relief "at the discretion of the wardens." The accounts only record expenses for those poor persons granted relief. No record is kept of denials.²⁷

²⁷ It is likely that only those cases where there was some controversy, where there was no clear policy, or where providing relief would violate provincial laws were presented to the vestry. For example, in Chapter VIII it will be demonstrated that a substantial number of persons whose cases were detailed in the minutes were transients, and provincial law prohibited relief to non-residents. If the proportion of transients mentioned in the VM is used to project the number of transients (which is done in Appendix D), then the projection might be higher than the actual number of transients. This over-projection of transients would occur if all non-resident relief had to be approved by the vestry, but only unusual cases involving residents came before the vestry.

Agreed , that the allowance to Mrs. Savey be stop'd from this day and that she only be allowed such relief *as the Church Wardens Shall think proper* (20 August, 1751).

Agreed that Margaret Brown have given her by the Church Ws. The Sum of 10 pounds *Discretionally* (9 October, 1770).

Agreed (as the Vestry does not think it proper to Enter Mrs. Burwick on Monthly Pay) *that the Church Wardens do supply her at their discretion* [9 October, 1769].

In Charles Town, the most common surviving record is a church warden's account of relief given. This record was kept in order to reimburse the warden for his expenses. There were no written applications. Relief could be requested in at least four ways. First, and least common, the applicants could appear in person before the vestry at a regularly scheduled meeting and plead their cases. The clerk of the vestry employed the following terms to indicate an applicant's attendance: "appeared before," "waited on," and "At a meeting of the vestry..." Attendance in person was impractical for most applicants. Circumstances creating need were usually unpredictable and crisis-oriented. Since the vestry rarely met more than 6 times a year (see Table XIV), a supplicant could be without food, clothing or shelter for weeks if initiation of aid required attendance at a formal meeting of the vestry.

Table III-10 Number of Vestry Meetings with Business Transacted per FY

FY	# days met
32	6
33	9
34	6
35	3
36	5
37	4
38	7
39	4
40	49
41	10
42	13

43	7
44	13
45	7
46	5
47	6
48	10
49	13
50	9
51	7
Mean Meetings per Fiscal Year= 9 ²⁸	
Source: VM	

A formal written petition detailing the circumstances of the case was sometimes employed. The petition would be read at the vestry meeting. Since many paupers could neither read nor write, such petitions would have normally been prepared by a clerk and presented by a vestryman or church warden. On September 1, 1746, the vestry heard the petition of Catherine Skinner, “Praying Relief for herself and two small children.” At the same meeting, Sarah Murray petitioned the vestry “praying passage for herself and three small children to Jamaica, where her husband has gone and left her in low circumstances.” No petitions survive in their entirety, since they would have had to be transcribed verbatim by a clerk into the minute book. Customarily, the minutes summarize the decision in one or two sentences.

A third and more common option was a presentation of the facts of a case at the vestry meeting usually by a church warden, or a vestryman familiar with the applicant. This was perhaps the most effective means of assuring approval, since no applicant’s

²⁸ The average is inflated from the 49 meetings in 1740 to deal with those burnt out by the Great Fire. The meeting frequency increased after 1751. Meetings at which business was transacted are shown to illustrate the fact that church wardens disbursed funds almost every day, and vestry meetings were sometimes months apart, and do not reference all recipients and all funds, as the church wardens accounts do. Therefore, most of the funds disbursed and decisions made were at the discretion of the church wardens.

case would be presented unless the warden or vestryman believed it to have merit and the applicant was “a legitimate object of charity”. Having such a champion, few supplicants were denied. Criteria for approval was based on precedent; while the method and amount of assistance varied with individual circumstances, or with the economy.

Finally, and by far the most frequently employed method, the applicant would seek out a church warden. These contacts could be made without waiting for scheduled meetings. The warden would use his discretion in the matter. No record was kept of denials; however, if any assistance was provided, it must be recorded in the church wardens’ account book in order for expenses to be reimbursed. Often the case would be presented at the next vestry meeting if it involved anything more than the granting of “present relief” which never required vestry concurrence. Almost always the vestry would retroactively approve the church warden’s discretionary expense. If disagreements occurred, they were never documented in the minutes.

Based upon case precedents learned during their year of service as the junior of the two elected church wardens or upon previous experience on the vestry, the warden assessed the circumstances of the case, determined if the applicant was an “object of charity”, and decided upon a method of assistance and an amount and duration. Discretionary relief varied widely depending upon the circumstances. Seldom did the vestry minutes reflect the range of factors involved in the warden’s decision. Almost always the relief was given directly to the applicant in cash, or less frequently, in kind.

Administration of poor relief by the vestry and wardens can be distilled into a series of questions. The first was whether the supplicant belonged to the parish or not.

As will be seen in Chapter VIII, a negative answer to this question did not mean much in Charles Town. Remarkably, over a 50-year span with hundreds of different administrators the decisions were similar. To their credit, the wardens knew that at the end of the day the need still remained, regardless of whether or not the law required them to meet it.

The next question was whether there was anyone else who could help. Because of the record-keeping practices where only positive responses are available for analysis, we can't tell how many requests were denied when there were able but not willing families and kin. As with the predicament created by question one, an immigrant was likely to have no family nearby to help, therefore a large proportion had to be assisted or they would perish.

Following the first two questions, the warden had to determine whether help was really needed, and if so, to determine how much was required for how long. Could the need be managed temporarily, as "present relief" at the discretion of the warden? Was cash needed, or would in-kind do. A load of firewood, a passage to Winyah, clothing, and money for food would always be considered before putting the person "on the Parish." Even permanently disabled men such as Blundell and Bee, injured in the fire of 1740, were given temporary help.

With paupers residing in the walled city, albeit in hovels somewhat removed from the mansions of the vestrymen, poverty and real need were not easily concealed. A petition from the pauper herself was unnecessary. Living together in tightly packed enclaves, neighbors always knew of one another's needs. It is likely that many of the

entries in the vestry minutes reported by a vestryman or warden originated with a neighbor's concern about a family's lack of fuel, food, clothing, or medical care.

Poor relief was everyone's business in Charles Town. Appendix A details purveyors and contractors for an impressive list of eighteenth century goods and services. Everything from beef to wood to medical care was bid out by the vestry. Enterprising businesspersons even capitalized on the heightened periods of mortality by digging graves and providing the parish sexton with pine coffins.

Likewise, everyone benefited from the business of poor relief, from the wealthiest to the poorest. Jacob Motte, the provincial treasurer and a vestryman, sold the parish wooden bowls for the workhouse. Robert Pringle, even wealthier than Motte, purveyed a nine hundred pound trunk for the workhouse. Henry Laurens, demonstrating how the rich get richer in times of tragedy, rented a house to the parish to care for smallpox epidemic victims. Recipients got into the act as well. Michael Shirer, a carpenter and pensioner, was paid for repairs to the church. The seamstress Sarah Murray, her home washed away by the 1751 hurricane, made clothing for poor workhouse residents and orphans. Sarah Kelly, another seamstress, was paid to make gowns for her poor daughter and grandchildren in the workhouse. Isabella Robinson was reimbursed from the House of Commons for nursing Mary Gloud; and Gloud was boarded at the home of Abigail Diamond.

Most of the contracts were with local businessmen. Abraham Bestat provided cordwood; John Stone bowls and platters; and Stephen Porter, the Chandler, made soap and candles for the workhouse. James Streeter and James Thompson supplied beef for the poor.

The high percentage of female recipients, the comparatively good care of paupers, the close contact between the very rich elite and the very poor, and the documented efforts of the elite on behalf of the poor seem to refute the notions of some social welfare historians of class conflict and social control of poor classes. Poor relief was not administered as God's punishment for sin. Anyone could fall into poverty through no fault of her own. Poor relief was administered more as social insurance than as public assistance. Affluence did not guarantee immunity from the ravages of disease and natural disasters; nor was wealth a virtue and poverty a crime. If paupers were considered deviants, if they were thought to be criminals, then that same callousness evident in the punishment of criminals would be expected to appear in the treatment of paupers. The Grand Juries of Charles Town were composed of the same men who served on the vestry. One would expect the basic philosophy and value system evident in the sentencing of thieves and murderers to be essentially the same as that directing the vestrymen in their performance of duty. The administration of justice in eighteenth century Charles Town was harsh. "The punishment was designed to fit the crime."²⁹ Justice was swift and sure, and the concept of locking someone up for a specific time as punishment was almost nonexistent. The justice of the day gives some indication of the severity with which these vestrymen could act when administering a system other than poor relief:

Elizabeth Ward was fined five pounds proclamation money for selling beef by false scale. Alexander Forbes was whipped at the cat's tail around Market Square for stealing a bridle and saddle. Dorothy Homes was burned on the left hand for stealing two silver waiters. James and Frances Scott were each burned on the left cheek and whipped at the cat's tail for stealing and killing cattle.

²⁹ Rogers, *Charleston*, 22.

Mary Stammers, who assaulted a constable in the execution of his office, was whipped at the gaol door. Forgers and counterfeiterers stood in the pillory. Sarah Chamberlain suffered death for murder of her bastard child; John Perrins, for Bestiality. Thomas Ellis, alias “Stick-in-the-Mud,” was hanged for stealing a horse.... In 1769 two slaves, Dolly and Liverpoole, were “burnt on the work-house Green” for poisoning an infant, Dolly for administering the dose and Liverpoole for supplying the poison.³⁰

Did vestrymen allow only the bare minimum outdoor relief in order to deter paupers from seeking assistance, thereby reducing the tax burden? One way to test this possibility is to determine the cost of subsistence and to compare this with mean allowances for outdoor relief. If just the bare minimum to avoid starvation was allowed, then a case could be made that vestrymen wanted to make poor relief as unappealing as possible, so that only the truly needy would apply for it (the principle of “less eligibility”).³¹ The minutes document the concern that the number of poor and the rising taxes placed an excessive burden on taxpayers, and therefore the low level of relief should act as a deterrent to applicants. If, on the other hand, more than bare subsistence was provided, then authorities were not worried about abuses of relief by the idle and vagrant. This dissertation documents the time, effort, and money spent by the elite to assist the poor. What is not known is how the vestrymen and church wardens viewed the poor. Did they sympathize with them, or only view them as idle shirkers?

Lockley suggests “a method to gauge just how generous ... poor relief was.”³² Lockley determined that the typical rural pauper received about £50 per year in relief

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ginsberg, *Policies*, 18.

³² Lockley, “Rural”, 12.

(£7 sterling). “Such a sum would have easily purchased sufficient supplies to sustain someone for a year and it was significantly more than paupers elsewhere in the Anglo-phone world received.”³³ Stephen Wiberley’s comparative study of poor relief in eighteenth century Boston, New York, Philadelphia and Charles Town concluded that levels of relief were significantly higher in Charles-Town than in the northern cities.³⁴ Then there is the aforementioned estimate from 1751 by Governor James Glen who guessed that 5,000 – 6,000 of the 25,000 people in South Carolina lived on just a goat

³³ According to John J. McCusker, *Money and Exchange in Europe and America, 1600-1775* (Chapel Hill, 1978), 220, 222-4, the value of a pound Sterling was stable throughout the period, with £7 Carolina currency worth about one pound Sterling. Lockley based his determination in part upon letters of Martin Bolzius, a Salzburger minister in the Ebenezer, Georgia settlement located across the Savannah River from the South Carolina town of Purrysburg. Klaus G. Loewald, Beverly Staricka & Paul S. Taylor, eds., “Johann Martin Bolzius Answers A Questionnaire On Carolina And Georgia, Part 2,” *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd Ser., 15 (1958): 243. Lockley also found that about the same amount as Bolzius recommended (£50) was employed by the secretary to the Georgia Trustees when budgeting for a year’s food supply. Lockley, *Rural*, 14. Additionally, Stephen Wiberley has calculated that paupers in Charles-Town could live on half that amount, in “Four Cities”, 158. Stephen Edward Wiberley, Jr., “Four Cities: Public Poor Relief in Urban America, 1700-1775” (PhD. diss. Yale, 1975). Finally, Charles Woodmason, an Anglican itinerant who spent time in Charles Town and in the Carolina back country estimated £50 per year as barely adequate for subsistence. Charles Woodmason, *The Carolina Backcountry on the Eve of the Revolution*, Richard Hooker, ed., (Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 1953), 72. One other method directly from Charles Town commodity prices and the diets of paupers may be more appropriate. If the daily expense of 2.5 shillings is used, then a pauper can be maintained at an expense of £47.5 per annum. “Agreed to allow Two Shill^s & 6p. day for each of the poor in the Workhouse From this day (V.M., 29 June, 1763).”

³⁴ According to Wiberley, pensions in mid eighteenth-century Boston and Philadelphia averaged £3-4 sterling per year and in Charles Town they averaged over £5 a year. (Table III-III shows over £7 sterling).

(a coin worth four pence) a day (£6.1.0 per year), affording them only a bare subsistence.³⁵

Table IV-11 compares average allowances for 52 weeks of outdoor relief from 1725-1775. After 1751 records are incomplete since no routine cases appear in the vestry minutes, and even then a complete accounting of expenses is lacking. However, this data confirms that outdoor relief recipients were allowed far greater amounts than bare subsistence.

Table III-11 Average “On the Parish” Outdoor Relief Expenses/ Recipient/ Year³⁶

Period	# Outdoor Relief Recipients “On Parish” for 52 Weeks	Sum Annual Outdoor Relief Expenses Carolina Currency	Average/ Recipient Year
FY 1725-1751 Church Warden’s Accounts ^a	211	£11438	£54
FY 1725- 1775 CW Accounts & Vestry Minutes ^b	319	£15565	£48

Lockley determined that inflated wages in South Carolina caused many potentially idle but able-bodied to seek work instead of relief. “According to several contemporaries, the scarcity of skilled carpenters, bricklayers and tailors meant they

³⁵ W. Stitt Robinson, *James Glen: From Scottish Provost to Royal Governor of South Carolina*. (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1996).

³⁶ a) The Church Warden Accounts provide a more complete record of all expenses. For example, clothing and schooling for boarded children were paid for separately.
b) Includes both vestry minutes, an incomplete account of selected cases and church wardens’ accounts.

commanded wages of £60 or even £70 sterling per year. Even the “common wages of a workman” were about £35 sterling per year.³⁷ Relief levels were substantially below what a worker could earn. Added to the evidence that most St. Philip’s Parish male paupers were elderly, sick or otherwise incapacitated and unable to work, the low levels of relief payments seem an unlikely way to manipulate and control the poor or to deter applicants. Furthermore, as Lockley points out, Charles Town’s elite simply had more money for taxes and poor relief than their Northern counterparts.

Wiberley and Lockley suggest that slavery was another factor that could have caused poor relief rates to be above subsistence level. Wiberley surmises that slavery corrupted the work ethic of Charles Town whites.³⁸ According to Wiberley, the presence of slaves to perform menial labor caused poor whites to believe such work was above them. Lockley perhaps comes closer to the mark when he relates the high levels to the black majority. Wood, Edgar, Menard and Fraser all agree that the wealthy planters and elite gentry sought to counterbalance the disproportionate number of slaves out of fear of an uprising of greater strength than the ill-fated Stono rebellion.³⁹ Not only would the presence of white settlers and poor whites offset the black majority,

³⁷ Jean Pierre Purry, the developer of Purrysburg, reported that “a skilful carpenter is not ashamed to demand 30s per day” equating to £7.10.0 a week, £420 a year (£60 sterling). One must use caution with Purry’s assertions, since they were in effect advertisements for his settlement. John Martin Bolzius was more circumspect, suggesting that skilled artisans could earn £24 sterling per year. “Mr. Purry’s Account of Carolina,” *Gentleman’s Magazine*, 2 (Sept, 1732), 969.

³⁸ Lockley, *Rural*, 14-15; Wiberley, “Four Cities”, iv-v.

³⁹ Wood, *Black Majority*; Edgar, *South Carolina*; Fraser, *Charleston!* Russell R. Menard, “Slavery, Economic Growth, and Revolutionary Ideology in the South Carolina Low Country,” in *The Economy of Early America*, R. Hofman, ed., (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press), 251.

offering relief to poor whites would reduce the chances of alliances between slaves and poor whites. There is no question that poor whites were recruited to South Carolina. Whether this sort of racial manipulation could be classified as a form of social control, akin to the Piven and Cloward thesis, is subject to debate. “Elites in colonial South Carolina were extremely concerned about the potential for class alliances between poor whites and their slaves, with Grand Jury presentments frequently complaining that shopkeepers traded illegally with the enslaved; corrupting them with alcohol in return for stolen goods. Anything that divided poor whites from slaves was therefore a good thing.”⁴⁰

The Philosophy of Poor Relief in Charles Town

Colonial ideas were in part a response to prevailing religious teachings, in part to secular definitions of the proper functioning of the social order, in part to English traditions, and in part to a special sense of community. It is difficult to understand the attitudes of eighteenth century Charlestonians toward poor relief without first studying the factors predisposing them to think and act as they did. Since poor relief in America has long been thought of as an unthinking duplication of the English system, and has been judged as “being cruel and vindictive” toward the poor.⁴¹ By delineating the courses of the often innovative vestry at Charles Town, both of these perceptions may

⁴⁰ Lockley, 14, cites Morgan: Philip D. Morgan, *Slave Counterpoint: Black Culture in the Eighteenth-Century Chesapeake and Low Country, 1740-1790* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell), 308, 367, 413.

⁴¹ Bridenbaugh, *Revolt*, 79; Jernegan, *Laboring*, 177; Rothman, *Asylum*, 20; and Russell E. Smith and Dorothy Zietz, *American Social Welfare Institutions* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1970), 12-15.

in part be altered. Poor relief in St. Philips's parish reveals a distinctly American character.

When in 1694 an "Act to the Maintenance of the Poor" was passed, who did the term "poor" include? Are we to assume that since there was no official cognizance of the pauper problem prior to that year, that these "poor" were a new problem for the townspeople? South Carolina's early assemblymen, in legislating for the poor, made no attempt to specify who, exactly, the term "poor" encompassed. This lack of precision is traceable to the earliest days of the colony. The first settlers relieved their needy in the households of relatives and neighbors. Homeless children lived with friends. The aged and sick were the responsibility of the community, and although no one could qualify as wealthy, everyone readily knew the condition of their neighbors in need. For these founders of the colony, a poor person was readily identified and the term poor included widows along with orphans, aged and insane, the sick and disabled, without specifically so stating. The crucial factor for eligibility was need and not the cause of the necessity. The first of the acts to care for the "poore" was more concerned with who would carry out its provisions than those who qualified for relief.

The Commissioners: Appoynted in the said act for the poore, Having power not draw above Tenn pounds a yeare out of the hands of the Treasurer for the use of the poore, it is therefore ordrd that Mr. Jonathan Amory Publick Receiver do payout of the, Publick money, the Sum of Ten Pounds to the Commissioners of the Poore, for their further Reliefe and That This ord^r be sent to the upper House for their Concurrence.⁴¹

In spite of the wide latitudes that the term poor allowed, and the lack of a clearly defined set of guidelines for determining who was poor, there were nevertheless

⁴¹ *Commons House of Assembly of South Carolina, Journal of the Year, 1694* (Columbia: South Carolina Historical Commission): 16-17.

some standards for eligibility. Not everyone who was hungry, jobless, sick, or aged qualified. A trader or farmer who had been burned out by the Creeks, or a widow whose husband died of smallpox warranted support, whereas the “idle, drunken, and swearing” people were easily identified as being undeserving.⁴² There were other qualifications. The community members, tightly knit and dependent upon each other, supported their own. Originally the poor were defined as residents of Charles Town, not outsiders. Later, as is detailed in Chapter VIII, this definition would prove impractical.

Race was not an automatic disqualification. Early in the century, it was not unusual for free Negroes or Negroes with no owner to be relieved by the parish, although such efforts usually required approval of the vestry and as time passed became increasingly rare. The earliest record is of a free Negro girl named Susannah Basset who was bound out by the vestry in 1738. In 1740 the Widow Watson, a free Negro, was given cash to buy “necessaries” and for passage to Jamaica. A free Negro servant woman was assisted in 1743 and in 1747 “A Negroe Wench with Leprosy owned by Nobody” was housed at the “pest house” (a quarantine facility for persons with communicable diseases). In the terrible smallpox epidemic of 1760, the vestry relieved “mulattos and free slaves” with the disease and provided them with medical care.

The wills of the period reflect the charity carried on by the churches of early Charles Town. In these wills the recipients were specified, often by nationality and

⁴² *South Carolina Colony Laws, Statutes, Etc., Before 1734*, compiled by Nicolas Trott, 1736 (Charleston: by author, 1736), microfilm, SCDAH, Columbia.

religion, but always as residents of Charles Town. The will of Mary de Longuemare, who died in Charles Town on October 26, 1712, is typical.⁴³

Item: In case there should be sufficient of my Personall Estate after my Decession to Satisfy all the aforesaid Legacies... Then I give and bequeath said Plantation to the Poore of the French Church of Charles Towne forever.⁴³

“Religious precepts were vitally significant in the eighteenth century. Religion defined the presence of poverty in the world as natural and just. It neither feared nor ignored the poor.”⁴⁴ The church wardens and vestry were among the wealthiest, most prominent members of the Anglican community. These men believed that their wealth and power was not accidental, but that they were part of a providential plan which also designed that others would be low, mean and poor. They distributed poor relief to all the poor in the parish, not just to Anglican paupers. These vestrymen were stewards, and they were to fulfill their role in society not by stripping themselves of their wealth, but by relieving the needy. Vestrymen were reminded of their duty by ministers such as Samuel Quincy, who told a St. Philip’s congregation that “charity was more excellent than faith and hope,” and that if they were charitable they would earn divine approbation.⁴²

Summary

The name “Charles Town” has been held as synonymous with slavery, inhumanity, and aristocratic pretensions. The importance given to poor relief by the

⁴³ *Charleston County Wills* (Charleston: Office of Public Records of Charleston County) The Will of Mary de Longuemare, 26 October, 1712.

⁴⁴ Rothman, *Asylum*, 7

⁴² Samuel Quincy, *Twenty Sermons Preached in the Parish of St. Philip, Charles-Town, South Carolina* (Boston, 1750), 262.

parish, the practices of the officials charged with the relief of the poor, and the efforts of the vestrymen and church wardens suggest that Charles Town may also be described in other, quite contrary attitudes. These are attitudes that valued dignity, human rights, and a positive view of mankind. The administrative apparatus of public poor relief in Charles Town did not assume that recipients were unmotivated, had no aspirations, were inherently lazy and stupid, or were morally impoverished. There is no evidence that the vestry believed that the recipients would be corrupted by charity. It is true that the vestrymen had to be convinced that the recipient was within reason impoverished. However, once eligibility was established, relief was dispensed straightforwardly with minimal disruption of the poor person's life. The relief was usually given in cash. There were few humiliating exhibitions of proving a pauper's indigence. To be poor was not to be socially unacceptable, tainted, nor deviant.

Relief expenditures increased throughout the period, expanding in good economic times. Since the vestry was the executive branch of local government, the fact that most of the vestry minutes dealt with poor relief indicates that social welfare services were the most important function of that local government. Wealthy elite men spent time and personal funds to assist the significant numbers of poor in need. There was daily personal contact between the elite and the poor. These social relationships take on an additional measure of significance when one understands that the parish officers were among the wealthiest and most powerful persons in North America, if not the entire world. Amounts of relief provided were well above subsistence level. Some have suggested that the well-developed and financed system of social welfare was motivated neither by benevolence nor social control but was a means of buffering the

elites against slave insurrection. An additional motive was to protect against the uncertainty of life in the eighteenth century. Services were increased in times of natural disaster and epidemic disease and funds were provided to persons of formerly modest means.

CHAPTER IV- POOR CHILDREN, AND ORPHANS, AND WOMEN

“Then equal Laws let Custom find,
And neither Sex oppress:
More Freedom give to Womankind
Or to Mankind give less.”¹

Pauper children, orphans, dependent mothers and their infants, widows, the poor sick, disabled person, and the aged—these were the usual types of petitioners who presented themselves to churchwardens or waited outside the vestrymen’s chambers at St. Philip’s on Monday mornings. Well over half the entries that the clerk was directed to make in the minute book dealt with some aspect of parish outdoor relief. Mrs. Jenkins lying ill at home with the rheumatism and Pegg Parr and her two fatherless children were among the normal types of dependents that the church wardens presented to the vestry.

Dependent women and children without kin or ethnic mutual aid constituted a majority of the parish welfare cases. Widowed, single and poor women with children in eighteenth century Charles Town were at the mercy of the vestry, as there were few opportunities to earn a living. Mortality among men was high and additionally there

¹ Ladies’ Complaint in Carl Bridenbaugh. *Myths and realities: Societies of the Colonial South*. (New York: Anthaneum, 1976), 85. From *South Carolina Gazette*, March 2, 1734. Printed by the *Gazette* on behalf of the woman who wrote and delivered it to the newspaper. Written no doubt by an elite Charles Town woman, this piece provides evidence of a nascent feminism. While modern feminist thought was unknown in Charles Town, in certain social circles and contexts there was a heightened awareness of the ills of patriarchy and gender inequality. Also, this piece documents the notably more liberal stance of Carolina on social questions such as religious tolerance and the rights of women than conditions in early New England.

was the unwilling male provider who “absconded,” leaving a mother with a child at her breast. Bastardy was not infrequent. Darby Pendergrass, a tailor, denied the claim that he was the father of Hannah Ceasar’s (Jr.) child born in 1758. The church wardens brought him to trial anyway as they did Henry Bonner for his crime of fornication with Lucy Boone (V.M., 2 Apr., 1759).

Mary Southey’s written petition to the vestry is summarized below:²

The Petition of Mary Southey setting forth she hath two small children and herself is afflicted with the Kings Evil and hath been so for a long time, whereby she is reduced to great want and prays to be put under the care of the Parish Doctor and some provision made for herself and her children as the Vestry shall think fit was read.³ And agreed, that the Petr. and her children be relieved at her discretion of the Church Wardens (V.M., 12 Feb., 1751).

Southey was put “on the parish” by the vestry at £1 per week, an average allowance for a family of three on outdoor relief. The parish doctor was ordered to attend her (V.M., March 9, 1751). Mary continued “on the parish” until 1754, when she was given the choice of £4 per month allowance and the parish would clothe her children “frugally” or £5 and she could clothe the children herself. Although the workhouse had been in existence since 1738, most families headed by sick or dependent females were maintained on outdoor relief.

No mention is made of Southey (the church wardens’ accounts which would record relief payments are missing after 1751) until in 1756 she shocked the sensibilities of even the worldly Charles Town elite. After being on the parish “for many years, Southey was now “big with child” by a youth, an apprentice. Her

² The mention of a written petition and the reading of such a petition are rare in the vestry minutes.

³ The King’s Evil, or Scrofula, is a tubercular-like condition usually manifested by a swelling of the neck.

monthly allowance was discontinued and she was ordered to be “confined to the workhouse” (V.M., June 7, July 18, 1756).

Poor Children and Orphans

Poor, sick, weakened from childbirth, and confined to the workhouse/hospital unable to provide for her children, in early November 1740, Mary Magdalen Miller’s seven children were taken from her. Beyond the age of apprenticeship, her eighteen-year-old daughter was provided employment and lodging as a domestic servant. Elisha Miller, age 16, was bound to John Scott, the gunsmith, until he reached age 21, the age of majority for a boy. David, a boy of about 13, was apprenticed to James Joliff, a joiner, until he reached the age of 21. Clement, 8, “being lame and foolish” and unable to care for himself was placed in the workhouse with his mother. Thomas, 5, was apprenticed to John Laurens, the saddler. Thomas must not have done well at the saddler’s, being unusually young, and was moved to the workhouse where he stayed for several years and attended the free school at parish expense. In 1744, Thomas was “put to James Glen a Taylor for Tryall if the boy likes.” Thomas must not have liked Mr. Glen either, because in 1745 he was bound to Robert Hamilton, another tailor. Prudence, 3, was boarded out with Elizabeth Freihart, until Mrs. Scott, the gunsmith’s wife, offered to take her. Prudence boarded with Mrs. Scott (and Elisha) for at least 3 more years. Joshua, an infant of about 10 days, was placed with Mrs. Legare, a wet nurse. At one year old, Joshua was bound out by the vestry. ⁴

⁴ Clement remained in the workhouse at least ten years, from 1740 until 1751. Because the account books after 1751 are missing, he may have remained longer. William Lancaster, another “boy lame and foolish,” remained in the facility for 10 years. He received outdoor relief for two years prior to 1738. Lancaster died in 1749 (CWA,

High rates of mortality and illegitimacy left large numbers of orphans on the parish charge. Additionally, there were child victims of neglect and abuse in need of foster care. Too young to be bound out as apprentices as the law required or sent to school, most were placed in the homes of relatives and neighbors. Most foster care placements for children were in the homes of widows and other low income citizens. The allowances received for keeping foster children augmented already meager budgets. This system may have encouraged abuse, as the homes into which the children were placed were selected on the basis of need and not suitability for foster care. Considering the watchfulness of the vestry, it is unlikely that the misuse of the system was blatant or pervasive. The following minutes describe the operation of the system of orphan care:

Agreed that Kesiah Bosier be put to school and that the church Wardens enquire into the ill usage she complains of having rec'd from Mrs. Wallace (V.M., 2 May, 1770).

Agreed that Eleanor Caton is to take the Quinn's children from Mrs. Fleming (V.M., 12 May 1774).

Agreed that the Church Wardens allow Mrs. Outridge at their discretion for maintaining a bastard child of her daughter till it is tried whether the reputed Father Wm. Scott may be obliged to support it (V.M., 7 June, 1756).

Parish-Agreed to allow Margaret Barry £4 per month for the Maintenance of George White a Poor Boy subject to fits (V.M., 14 Nov., 1774).

Ordered that the Church Wardens look out for a House proper for accommodating the poor children of the parish and for a sober discreet woman to take care of them at Parish expense (V.M., 8 Nov., 1759).

April 9, 1737- October 9, 1749). Data on child mortality and infant mortality is difficult to come by since infant deaths and especially deaths of children from immigrant and poor families were usually not reported. Prudence died October 30, 1740, and baby Joshua survived only until Dec. 1, 1740. Poor children were highly susceptible to early death. Thomas survived until age 22. He died in 1757 as a pauper on the parish charge (Salley, *St. Philip's Registry*).

Hannah Richmond, acquainted the vestry that Wm. Smith the Pilot had put his child to nurse probability of getting any pay as the Father was absconded and had left no Effects; and as she was unable to maintain it any longer without some allowance:

Agreed that the Church Wardens pay her thirty Pounds a year for two years to come and give the child some cloaths (V.M., 3 July, 1749).

Ordered that the Church Wardens do enquire into Mrs. Pring's carracter & ca. (V.M., 4 Dec., 1770).

Agreed that Mrs. Pring's two children Ann and Rebecca be taken from her & Boarded at Mrs. Nicholson's (V.M., 14 Jan., 1770).

On the same day the free school act was passed, December 12, 1712, the revised provincial poor laws were put into effect. These laws had great import for the education and care of poor children in Charles Town. As was the case with most South Carolina Laws, the new poor law was copied almost verbatim from the English law of 1601. The only differences for the care and education of poor children and orphans on the parish charge was that the length of indenture was shorter. Males could be apprenticed until age 21 and females until 18, unless otherwise set by the vestry. All poor children were to be apprenticed, so as to avoid any expense for the parish.⁵

Save for the efforts of the vestry, the South Carolina Society and the St. Andrews Society, education in colonial Charles Town was accessible only to a privileged few. By insuring that poor children on the parish charge attended school, the vestrymen extended to the poor the benefits of education that was inaccessible for many parish youth. Children whose families were not on the public charge and could not afford tuition fees did not attend school. There were many private schools, taught in the mansions of the wealthy planters and merchants living on Bay Street or in

⁵ Judith R. Joyner, *Beginnings: Education in Colonial South Carolina* (Columbia: Museum of Education, University of South Carolina, 1985), 34.

Ansonborough; however, only the sons and daughters of the upper ranks of society could afford to attend these institutions. The parish Free School was established by an act of the Assembly early in the eighteenth century. Located just outside the walled city beyond Boundary Street, the Free School was the first public school in the province. As early as 1743, Thomas Miller, a poor boy, was sent to the Free School at parish charge. Between 1732 and 1750 the vestry sent students to study with Mr. Craig, Mrs. Bennett, and Mrs. Richardson (V.M., 1732-1750). In April, 1751, the tuition of seven children was paid at "Mr. Shedd's School" (V.M., 7 May, 1743; 25 April, 1751). Eventually the practice of sending poor children to school became standardized. By 1762 references to the "Parish School" appear in the vestry minutes. Small children were sent to Mrs. Johnson's school at the poorhouse, while older children studied under Frances Nicholson, who had maintained a private school.⁶ In 1774 the vestry advertised for a schoolmaster in *The Gazette*, seeking a married man "whose character and abilities would bear scrutiny."⁷ An advertisement for his private school by John Tuke, the successful applicant, describes his background:⁸

John Tuke master of the most expedient and perfect method of teaching to write of any ever practiced in America. Purposes to teach writing, arithmetic, Navigation, algebra, astronomy and many useful branches of Mathematick, the true Italian method of Book-keeping with such short and easy rules for calculating exchanges, as he himself has had many years practice of in some of the principal houses in Europe.

⁶ Joyner, *Beginnings*, 36.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ *South Carolina Gazette*, November 27, 1762. Cited in Judith R. Joyner, *Beginnings*, 37.

The vestrymen exercised care in the supervision of the young scholars under the tutelage of the parish schoolmaster:

Agreed that the Church Wardens Quarterly visit the Children School'd at the Parish Charge at Mr. Shed's School and Judge whether they improve their learning and their master use proper care in their instruction (21 M., 23 June, 1752).

The Revd. Mr. Smith One of the committee appointed to Visit the Children at the Parish School, Reported that he had visited them and that they make a proper improvement and are all too young to be bound out.

Agreed that the said Committee do furnish what ever necessities may be wanting to the said children (V.M., 18 May, 1746).

Mr. Nicholson attended relative to the Education and care of the Parish Children under his care & it is agreed that when his Health permits, he is to attend with the above children at Church on every Sunday (V.M., 18 Oct., 1773).

The parish was committed to the concept of public education for poor children. The South Carolina Gazette reported the deliberations of the province's grand jury on the value of schools to "have a happy tendency to promote the good and welfare of the community in general."⁹ The following children were among the hundreds educated by the vestrymen of St. Philips:

Agreed that Henry Crossman (A Dum Boy) be sent to school (V.M., 11 June, 1774).

Agreed that Molly Sheetro's Daughter Elizabeth Collderday be put to Mrs. Johnston's school (V.M., 1 Aug., 1774).

Agreed that Margaret Juha be sent to school and board with Mrs. Johnson at the Poor House and that she have summer cloaths (V.M., 16 June, 1774).

Ordered that a Bastard Child of Abraham Crofts a girl called Elizabeth Burrows whose mother is dead be taken from her Grandmother/a bad woman/ be sent to the workhouse and sent to school (V.M., 5 June, 1758).

⁹ *The South Carolina Gazette*, June 8, 1765.

While the parish categorically neglected an entire class of needy—the slave, there were some Charlestonians who nevertheless believed that the church and the public system of poor relief had an obligation to the slaves. Chief among the proponents of educating slaves was Alexander Garden, Commissary of South Carolina and rector of St. Philip’s for several decades. Garden’s plan consisted of purchasing slaves and teaching them to read the *Bible*. These slaves would in turn to train other slaves. Most white residents balked at such a plan, although several vestrymen supported it, notably Charles Pinckney, Joseph Wragg, Robert Pringle, Jacob Motte, and Benjamin Smith.¹⁰ The majority of support came from the England-based Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts. In 1740, the Society donated £1,500 to Garden to conduct his noble experiment. In 1742, two slaves, Harry and Andrew, were purchased.¹¹

When purchased, Harry, age 14, and Andrew, age 15, could recite the catechism, but neither knew “one letter” of the alphabet. Garden described Harry as “an excellent genius.” Andrew experienced learning disabilities and was never as gifted academically as Harry. Garden solicited funds for the construction of a school to house 30 students and the doors were opened on September 12, 1743.¹² Later that year

Garden wrote the society that the school was a success with thirty students currently

¹⁰ Frederick Dalcho, *An Historical Account of the Protestant Episcopal Church in South Carolina* (Charleston: E. Thayer, 1820), 156. All these supporters were wealthy vestrymen. Smith, one of the richest men in the world, was a noted “Indian fighter” and slave trader. Motte was the provincial treasurer. Pinckney was the speaker of the House of Commons.

¹¹ Edward McCrady, *The History of South Carolina under the Royal Government, 1719, 1776* (London: MacMillan, 1899), p. 246.

¹² Joyner, *Beginnings*, 39-41.

reading the *Book of Common Prayer*. By 1746 there were fifty-five children in school, and eighteen adults were instructed in the evening. The vestry in 1743, after seeing that the school did indeed properly educate the young slaves, approved the school account and undertook to share the responsibility of the institution with the society.¹³ “Negroe Harry,” not one to take the responsibility of his seventy charges lightly, in 1757 petitioned the vestry for “some allowance for his labours in teaching the Negroe children.” Surprisingly he was allowed money “to cloath him in a Decent Manner, as one of the parish” (V.M., 28 March, 1757). Subsequently the vestry expended “£60 or thereabouts” toward keeping the “House where the Negroe school is kept” in repair (V.M., 17 Dec., 1759). By 1759 it appears that the concept of education for blacks was well accepted in Charles Town. The school continued for another decade. It was apparently a huge success. However, in 1768 calamity struck. Andrew died and Harry “turned profligate.”¹⁴

“Negroe Harry” showed a remarkable propensity for getting into trouble. In 1768 the Church Wardens took out a peace warrant against one Peter Johnson “for his treatment of Negroe Harry (V.M., 19 Sept., 1768).” Harry on his part must have encouraged such attacks. “For repeated transgressions” Harry was placed “into the Mad House and to be kept there ‘till orders from the vestry for taking him out” (V.M., 7 March, 1768). Whatever treatment administered to Harry evidently had little effect; for in 1774, Harry’s allowance was stopped for “misbehavior” (V.M., 16 June, 1774). Shortly after 1 August, 1774, when the school was moved to a room in the new

¹³ Dalcho, *Episcopal*, p. 156.

¹⁴ McCrady, *Royal*, p. 247.

barracks, Harry became completely unmanageable and the school was discontinued. The society had made no other investment in a teacher, hence the first attempt at education of slaves in South Carolina ended with little impact on the province's 50,000 black inhabitants.

Unlike adults, children were ineligible for long-term support from the public purse since the 1712 poor law stipulated that all orphan children should be bound out as apprentices; girls until they reached 18, boys until they reached 21.¹⁵ From the beginning, this system was modified by the vestry, who at first usually only bound orphans and then afterward only older children. Lockley points out that abuse of this system was possible, although any child could refuse to be bound out, refuse a particular master or request a new indenture.¹⁶ While masters might overwork or perhaps brutalize the children in their care, children appeared annually before the vestry and were examined on their progress in school, in learning their trade, and about their satisfaction with the master. Expectations of both master and child were spelled out. According to Lockley, only one indenture from colonial South Carolina survives.¹⁷ Recorded in the vestry minutes of St John's, Berkeley, this indenture shows what was expected from apprentices. Indentured to blacksmith David Geddy, Michael Butcher, "a poor vagabond boy," was forbidden to harm his master's business or possessions, not

¹⁵ 1712 Poor Law, Sec 8, Trott, *Laws*, 273.

¹⁶ Lockley, *Rural*, 15.

¹⁷ Lockley cites (page 15) St John's Berkeley VM, Aug. 7 1749, Oct. 3, 1750. Lockley also finds that this indenture was "strikingly" similar to those in eighteenth-century England. This should come as no surprise, given the colonist's propensity for copying English laws. In 1712, about 200 statutes were copied verbatim (Cooper and McCord, *Statutes*).

permitted to “play at cards ... absent himself day nor night from his said master’s service, nor haunt ale houses, taverns, or playhouses,” and finally “he shall not commit fornication nor contract matrimony during the said term.”¹⁸ Lockley points out that while the orphan Michael Butcher was restricted, by the end of his indenture he would be able to read, write and earn his living. Following a 1740 Act, apprentices received Bibles, clothing and livestock from their former masters when their terms of service expired.

Serving a dual purpose, the apprenticeship system in colonial Charles Town eased the burden of the parish poor tax by placing poor orphans and bastards in foster homes at no charge. More importantly, it trained poor youths for trades. In eighteenth century Charles Town the life of a tradesman was honorable to say the least, and many held prominent positions in parish government. Furthermore, a well-trained, industrious cooper, carpenter, or saddler, might have advanced considerably in the city’s open, fluid society. No one could be forced to serve beyond their majority; indeed, no one could be forced to serve at all if they were not willing. However, it is probably true that there were pressures that could insure the willingness of any recalcitrant young pauper or orphan. Nevertheless, these apprentices were not merely farmed out to the highest bidder and measures were taken to insure that the trainee was well cared for. The master had certain responsibilities in the indenture contract.

On the first Monday of August every year, all apprentices in the parish were brought together by the church wardens and examined to see “whether the covenant in their indentures are compiled with” (V.M., 23 May, 17). Particular care was given that

¹⁸ Ibid.

each of these pauper children was to be provided with the opportunity to learn to read and write.

Agreed that Thomas Miller be put to James Glenn a Taylor for a Tryall and if the boy likes he shall be bound apprentice to the said Glenn for Seven Years (V.M., 5 Feb., 1744).

Parish-agreed that John Robertson (a poor child in the work house) be allow^d to/live in/the country with John Kennedy for three years at which time his to be bound to said John Kennedy provided he produces to the vestry a certificate of his good character (V.M., 27 June, 1772).

A poor Girl from the Workhouse is to be Bound out as an Apprentice to Mrs. Meek, if she is willing (V.M., 1 Feb., 1740).

Ordered, that, Elizabeth Evans a parish child be bound out to Elizabeth Plunkett, to learn the art of mystery of a sempstress (V.M., 8 June, 1761).

Susannah Treasvant complained that Joseph Dymes late of Charles Town, Taylor, had for some time past absconded and left Theodore Treasvant his apprentice unprovided for, That she is unable to maintain him and desires he may be received on the Parish (V.M., 23 Nov., 1748).

Agreed that a Free Negroe Girle named Susannah Basset be bound to Susannah the Wife of John Lea/Turner/for Ten Years from the date of the Indenture (V.M., 11 Sept., 1738).

It was represented to the Vestry that Wm Peters a Boy bound to Jenkin Hugh in May 1744 neglected to learn his trade and was inclined to go to sea and the master was willing that he might; Where-upon it was ordered that the Church Wardens Examine the Boy, and if they can't prevail on him to mind the business to which he is Bound, but persists in his Desire for the Sea; That they destroy his old Indentures and bind him a new to Captain Ward (V.M., 17 June, 1746).

...The Masters & Mistresses of such who have Apprentices bound out by the Parish send their Apprentices on the first Monday August in every year to the Church Wardens & Vestry to be Examined whether the Covenants in Their Indentures are complied with, particularly on their being taught to read & write & a clause to this Effect be inserted in every Indenture(May 20, 1757).

Table IV-1 details expenses for “children on the parish” for 52 weeks of care 1725-51.

Table IV-1 “On the Parish” Child Care Expenses ¹⁹

Fiscal Year	Number of Children “On the Parish”	Total Expended	Expended per Child
26	2	£16	£8
27	3	52	17
28	0		
29	0		
30	0		
31	3	164	55
32	5	255	51
33	2	144	72
34	1	61	61
35	4	183	46
36	4	162	41
37	5	224	45
38	10	399	40
39	7	248	35
40	9	516	57
41	13	476	37
42	12	306	26
43	9	334	37
44	6	101	16
45	5	197	39
46	7	266	38
48	6	326	54
49	9	220	24
50	4	342	86
51	12	251	21

Given the expense of caring for children on the parish rather than apprenticing them as the law required, it is remarkable that so few children were apprenticed. As a rule, children were placed as apprentices at about age 8, although around 1740 a spate of indentures bound out children ranging from one to 6 years of age. After the parish orphanage was established in 1760, few children were apprenticed.

¹⁹ Source: CWA 1725-51.

Table IV-2 Children Apprenticed by Fiscal Year FY 38-75

FY	Number Children Apprenticed	%
38-59	57	77
60-75	17	23
Total	74	100

Source CWA and VM (combined file)

The difficulty in reconciling church wardens' account records with vestry minutes may account for some of this discrepancy. The expense accounts of the church wardens only exist for 1725-1751, and since there were no parish expenses for children bound as apprentices, none appear in the wardens' ledgers. Vestry minutes, on the other hand, would have incomplete records of all children on the parish account, but would include all children bound out in the fiscal year in which the child was apprenticed. If the apprenticeship went well, no further record of the case was likely to appear. It is estimated that fewer than 20% of all poor children were apprenticed from FY 25-59, and that between FY 60 and FY 75 fewer than ten percent of all children were apprenticed. Wiberley suggests that the decline of apprenticeships relates to the rise of slave labor in the skilled trades.²⁰ Littlefield documents the wide range of trades and occupations involving slaves in and around Charles Town, so this is a plausible explanation for fewer apprenticeships.²¹ The master of a slave trained as a craftsman or artisan would not be creating a competitor, as would be the case in an apprenticed orphan who would be free to establish his own business. In addition to Littlefield's work, Joyner examined 1,411 advertisements in the South Carolina Gazette between

²⁰ Stephen Edward Wiberley, Jr., "Four Cities: Public Poor Relief in Urban America, 1700-1775," (Yale: Ph.D. Dissertation, 1975), 137.

²¹ Daniel Littlefield, *Rice and Slaves*, 135-143.

1767 and 1771 that offered slaves for hire, advertised slaves for sale, or sought the return of runaways. Joyner found “at least 60 occupations and skills” including sailmakers, glaziers, painters, ironwrights, ropemakers, cabinetmakers, sawyers, carpenters, wheelwrights, coopers, blacksmiths, tailors, shoemakers, caulkers, spinners, butchers, boat pilots, tanners, barbers, chandlers, storekeepers, doctors, jewelers, and wet nurses.²² Littlefield and Joyner then, would support Wiberley in his assertion that apprentices were in low demand after 1750.

²² Joyner, *Beginnings*, 42.

Table IV-3 Trades of Charles Town's Poor Children Apprenticed 1725-1775

Art or Mystery	Number of Boys	Number of Girls
Housemaid		3
Saddler	2	
Gunsmith	1	
Mantua-maker (dressmaker)		4
Seamstress		2
Painter/glazier	2	
Tin plate worker	1	
Shipwright	2	
Tailor	4	
Bricklayer	2	
Seaman	2	
Carpenter	2	
Blockmaker	1	
Cordwainer	1	
Baker	1	
Shoemaker	2	
Hatter	1	
Wine merchant	1	
Merchant	2	
Looking –glass grinder	1	
Joiner	1	
Not stated	6	20
Total	74	29

Infants and very young children were boarded with wet nurses until they could be placed with other children in foster homes. After 1760, older children were placed in the parish school and orphanage. Few younger children were boarded out in foster care after 1760, and even older children were kept in the orphanage.

Paul Floyd, a one year old orphan, was boarded at Mrs. Richardson's as a foster child until age 11, when the church warden's were asked to determine if "on inspection" he was fit to be bound out (V.M., 17 May, 1748. He remained at Mrs. Richardson's attending school at parish charge until 1750, when he was bound out at

age 13 to Theodore Treasvant, a tailor. Charges to the parish averaged over £75 per annum prior to his apprenticeship.

In 1740, Robert Fisher, a six-year-old orphan, was bound to William Bullard the merchant. Young Robert must not have worked out at Bullard's shop, so in 1745 he was sent to the workhouse by the vestry. Perhaps he was difficult to manage and was placed in the workhouse for closer supervision. Two years later, he was again apprenticed, this time to William Dicks, a bricklayer. Almost immediately Dicks begged the vestry to "take him off my hands" complaining that Robert was addicted to rum and frequently ran away. So, at age 13, Robert Fisher was shipped out as an apprentice seaman aboard the fortuitously named *HMS Adventure*.

Mary Berry, like most orphan children, was in foster care at Susannah Mills' house along with another orphan, Sarah Frew. A year later, in 1745, Mary was bound to Branfield Evans, a merchant, until she reached the age of 18. Soon, however, she was back at Mrs. Mills' house, and she and Sarah were sent to the parish free school. Mary remained at Mrs. Mills for over ten years, at an annual expense averaging £72. By leaving her at Evans', the vestry could have saved over £720, not considering the "trouble" of the church wardens in paying for and monitoring the care provided by Mrs. Mills and the time to arrange for clothing (provided separately for each child). Regardless of the economics, the removal of a child from a master or mistress by the vestry was a common occurrence if the child was not progressing or was mistreated by the master.

Joyner finds that "the small province of South Carolina probably came closer to establishing and maintaining a system of public education than did any of the other

Southern colonies, and indeed closer than did most of the middle colonies, including New York and Pennsylvania.”²³ The state of education for poor children is yet another indicator of the progressiveness of the vestry of St. Philip’s. Females as well as males were educated, and despite laws requiring indenture of orphans and poor children, the majority of children were cared for by the parish, sent to school, and not apprenticed. Not only did this practice violate the law, it accounted for a significant part of the increase in taxes that could have been avoided altogether.

Relief of Poor Women²⁴

British and colonial sailors and soldiers and merchant seamen spent their liberties and their shillings in Charles Town’s dark passageways and grog shops in search of gaming, rum, and sex. In a city filled with transient men and where employment opportunities for women were restricted, prostitution flourished. Honour (Hannah) Campbell plied her trade in the streets and narrow alleyways between Meeting and Bay Streets. Having two children to support, she was in and out of the workhouse and taverns like “The Bear” on Bay Street. As early as 1745 the vestry appropriated £5 to “get her over the River.” Yet she and her family continued on the parish. While she walked the streets, her oldest child was sent to the parish school. Caught by a night watchman in an “Act of Debauchery,” Honour was warned by the warden not to “Strole about the Streets” or she would face confinement. On another occasion, the vestry noted that Mrs. Campbell, who already had two children, was

²³ Joyner, *Beginnings*, 3.

²⁴ Refer to Chapter II, “Society in Eighteenth Century Charles Town,” for a more complete discussion of poor women and their relationship to the social structure, demographics, and epidemiology of death and disease.

“lying in with a third.” Again there was the threat of confinement, but not of discontinuation of support for Honour or her children. In 1754 the oldest child was bound out.²⁵

Early poor relief cases were comprised almost entirely of assistance to children or to the aged and infirm when there was no family. Self-supporting adult children cared for their aged or infirm parents. When the poor person could not care for himself and had no relatives, the vestry had to step in:

Then agreed that Christopher Woorsted an ancient Man and Inhabitant of this Parish being infirm and incapable to get his living also being very poor Should be taken care of at the charge of the Parish (V.M., 25 Jan., 1736).

Nicholas Mattyson made Application to the Vestry for relief from the Parish as a Poor Person. Order'd that David Mattyson his son have Notice given him by the Clerk of the Vestry That the said Son is Obliged by a law of this Parish to support his father and that in Case of his refusal the Vestry will take such measures to compel him thereto as the law directs (V.M., 31 July, 1749).

After 1740, poor relief in Charles Town was increasingly defined by gender. Most public assistance was provided poor women and their children. Drawing from studies of early New England towns, modern social welfare historians contend that early American poor relief marginalized poor women and women who did not conform to a strict “family” ethic. Institutions of public welfare employed the colonial family ethic as a means of determining which poor women were aided and how much they received. Colonial poor relief supported the patriarchal family and punished husbandless women and unwed mothers.²⁶ The treatment of black slaves, Native Americans, and women was equated to that of nonpersons.²⁷

²⁵ VM and CWA, June 1745- August, 1754.

²⁶ Abramovitz, *Regulating*, 66, 99.

Charles Town was the economic and cultural center of the region, yet in examining the lives of white women in eighteenth century Charles Town, the historian is forced to rely on scant evidence. With the exception of the poor relief recipients chronicled in the parish records, poor women lived the most anonymous existence of all of Charles Town's inhabitants. Even slaves appeared in probated estate inventories, or as Littlefield and Joyner's research demonstrated, in *The Gazette* advertisements.²⁸ A quintet of recent studies of elite white women in colonial and antebellum South Carolina, their families, and their kinship networks offer fresh perspectives on the lives of women: "Family, Community, Economy: Women's Activity in South Carolina, 1670-1770," (Pruden, 1996); "The Hidden Family: Sibling Relationships and Kinship in Eighteenth Century South Carolina Low Country," (Glover, 1996); *In the Affairs of The World: Women, Patriarchy, and Power in Colonial South Carolina* (Anzilotti, 2003); "The Path Not Taken: Class, Gender, and Race in the South Carolina Backcountry, 1750-1800," (Halevi, 1995); and "Poverty and its Relief in the Antebellum South: Perceptions and Realities in Three Selected Cities Charleston, Nashville, and New Orleans," (Murray, 1991).²⁹ While these studies focus on elite

²⁷ Jansson, *Reluctant*, 30.

²⁸ Daniel Littlefield, *Rice and Slaves: Ethnicity and the Slave Trade in Colonial South Carolina* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1991); Joyner, *Beginnings*.

²⁹ Cara Anzilotti, *In the Affairs of The World: Women, Patriarchy, and Power in Colonial South Carolina* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 2004); Elizabeth M. Pruden, "Family, Community, Economy: Women's Activity in South Carolina, 1670-1770," PhD diss. (University of Minnesota, 1996); Lorri M. Glover, "The Hidden Family: Sibling Relations and Kinship in the Eighteenth Century South Carolina Lowcountry," PhD diss. (University of Kentucky, 1996); Sharon Halevi, "The Path Not Taken: Class, Gender, and Race in the South Carolina Backcountry, 1750-1800," PhD diss. (The University of Iowa, 1995); Gail S. Murray, "Poverty and its Relief in the

white women and not poor women, taken together they offer a view of the social environment of eighteenth century low country South Carolina that is distinctively different from that of seventeenth century New England. While feminism in its modern sense was unknown in colonial America, Carolina laws and customs were notably more liberal on social questions such as religious tolerance and the rights of women than those of New England.³⁰

The toleration of religious dissent was a hallmark of Carolina from the very beginning of the colony. Religions of all professions were not welcome, as the Catholic Acadians found in 1756; however, Protestant dissenters and non-Anglicans were courted by the Proprietors. So tolerant was the colony that some sects accustomed to being under attack had no reason to defend themselves and dissolved or were assimilated by the Anglicans. For example, the Quakers, who drew strength from thinking of themselves as “a people apart,” forgot, or took for granted their distinctive ways. “They were therefore ill prepared to withstand the temptations and temptations ... around them.”³¹ The religious and civil liberties offered by the colony enticed many to join their worldly neighbors and by the middle of the century Quaker and French (Huguenot) churches were almost deserted.

Anzilotti found that the Carolina proprietors plan for settlement was designed to attract poor settlers as well as younger sons of gentry for whom primogeniture made

Antebellum South: Perceptions and Realities in Three Selected Cities Charleston, Nashville, and New Orleans,” PhD diss.(Memphis State University, 1991).

³⁰ Peter A. Coclanis, *The Shadow of a Dream: Economic Life and Death in the South Carolina Low Country-1670-1920* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 24.

³¹ Jo Anne McCormick, “The Quakers of Colonial South Carolina, 1670-1807,” PhD diss. (Columbia: University of South Carolina: 1984), 200.

inheritance of land remote. The ‘poorer sort’ of English society—the cottagers, laborers, and servants – were attracted by the proprietor’s promise of land. Every free man or woman venturing to Carolina was to receive 150 acres. Under the quitrent system, those with funds could petition for larger tracts at the price of half a penny per acre. Colonists were also eligible for additional acreage for each family member or servant they carried into the region as a “headright.” Anzilotti states that making landgrants to women as well as men was “a calculated gesture on the part of the Lords Proprietors. They understood that no settlement scheme would be successful without women.” ³²

So as to widen the appeal beyond English immigrants, the Proprietors sought French Huguenots fleeing persecution following the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, as well as Irish, Welsh, Scots, Germans and Swiss. They provided a climate of religious toleration. Although the Church of England was established as the official religion of South Carolina by the Church Act of 1706, English dissenters, French Protestants, Swiss Calvinists, Scottish Presbyterians, Irish Catholics, Anabaptists, Quakers, and Jews were all welcomed. To further encourage “poor Protestants” to settle, during the 1760s the General Assembly began to offer bounties to immigrants in addition to land.³³ Thus, the colony in South Carolina was significantly more tolerant of the rights of women and of religious diversity than the New England colonies and more accepting even than the mid-Atlantic colonies.

³² Cara Anzilotti, *In the Affairs of The World: Women, Patriarchy, and Power in Colonial South Carolina* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 2004), 15-17.

³³ Ibid.

Since the majority of the early settlers were English, the major elements of society in early Charles Town were English, including the concept of patriarchal family order. However, the demographic and epidemiologic disaster caused by early and untimely mortality altered the roles and responsibilities of women. Anzilotti and Pruden found that for elite women survival when their husbands died:

“meant women attained various levels of influence and power.... By controlling family finances, women determined family legacies, plantation development, and business strategies.”... With limited economic power, women asserted legal rights, helped establish churches, invested in the plantation economy, and most important, transmitted property so their children could carry on the construction of evolving communities.”³⁴

In some ways a social structure heavily imbalanced toward males also may have favored poor women, placing them in greater demand for marriage and moderating the patriarchal system somewhat. The need for women to act as “placeholders” for their dead husbands until a son could reach majority would exist in poor families as well as the well-to-do. As both genders would have faced similar mortality from infectious diseases, the demographic effect of the harsh environment would only serve to maintain the one-sidedness. For example, Coclanis found that the sex ratio of those listed in the burial records of St. Philip’s Parish between 1720 and 1750 was 206.59 to 100 (1911

³⁴ The paragraph in the is from Pruden; however Anzilotti explored the identical relationship between the high rates of male mortality and female power among elite white women. Elizabeth M. Pruden, “Family, Community, Economy: Women’s Activity in South Carolina, 1670-1770,” PhD diss. (University of Minnesota, 1996), 280, 281; Anzilotti, *Affairs*, 3,4,5. Anzilotti calls the system of “deputizing” women to temporarily fill the gaps in the social order left when low country planters died “patriarchal bureaucracy.” On page 5 Anzilotti goes on to compare the Carolina Low Country with the rest of British North America, stating that white women in the low country successfully crossed gender barriers and for a time “gender was less of a concern than either race or class” in the social hierarchy of colonial South Carolina.

males to 925 females).³⁵ The actual sex ratio was not so imbalanced, since the St. Philip's Register includes burials of transients, especially transient soldiers and mariners who were almost entirely males. Coclanis also studied the registers for the Circular Church and the Quaker Meeting House where transients were not buried and calculated that the sex ratio was "probably around 150 to 100" for the entire period 1720-1750. After 1750 the ratio gradually became more even. The demand for wives may have placed poor widows in a favorable position to secure another husband. In 1763 the family of John Francis Gregarious, a "Switzer" ill with malaria and with a wife and three children to support, was placed on the parish charge. When he failed to recover sufficiently to work regularly, relief was extended another ten months. In 1765 John Francis died, leaving his wife and children on the parish charge. Less than four months later, the minutes noted that Mrs. Gregarious' allowance should be discontinued, she "having married a man able to maintain her" (V.M., April 29, 1766).³⁶

Table IV-4 Licensed Marriages of Spinsters and Widows, St. Philip's, 1765

Calendar Year	# Spinsters Married	# Widows Married	Total Marriages Performed	Widows as % of Total Marriages
1767	15	10	25	40%

Source : D.E. Huger Smith & A.S. Salley, Jr., eds., *Register of St. Philip's Parish, Charles Town, 1754-1810* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1971), 184-187. Note: A spinster is a woman who has never married. The *Register* rarely distinguished widowers from bachelors.

³⁵ Peter A. Coclanis, *The Shadow of a Dream: Economic Life and Death in the South Carolina Low Country-1670-1920* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 228.

³⁶ The *Register Book* varied in its detail depending upon the clerk appointed as registrar. Age was rarely mentioned, except for children, who were commonly identified as "child." The exact marital status of the woman was another item differing from year to year.

Did the distinctively different gender position held by elite women in lowcountry South Carolina trickle down to those women on lower rungs of the social ladder? This dissertation is much less about the rich and powerful elite men who made decisions about poor relief than about the poor women who received this aid. The ravages of death and disease did not visit only the wealthy plantation owner. Poor women were commonly thrust, as were elite women, into a gap resulting in a “different gender position.” There are hundreds of cases detailed in this study that describe the policies, provisions and services applied to and received by poor women. These poor women managed workshops, small businesses, and households, and were working mothers employed in a variety of tasks. While tradition and in some cases laws circumscribed their choices and commonly limited their options to activities that were extensions of housekeeping skills, poor women could ply their domestic skills in the public marketplace as cooks, laundresses, seamstresses, tavern keepers, nurses, foster mothers, and midwives.³⁷ For a brief time until the early nineteenth century when society was less fluid, the social construction of gender in Charles Town was less restrictive than has been supposed. There is no evidence that these poor women were marginalized by society or by the public system of relief.. The demographic imbalance previously discussed has significant implications for the numbers of women helped compared to the numbers of men provided assistance. There were many fewer women to start with, yet many more women than men were helped. Since both genders

³⁷ Elizabeth M. Pruden, “Investing Widows: Autonomy in a Nascent Capitalist Society,” In Jack P. Greene, Rosemary Brana-Shute, and Randy J. Sparks, eds. *Money, Trade, and Power: The Evolution of Colonial South Carolina’s Plantation Society* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press), 345-362.

probably became ill and disabled at the same rate, it stands to reason that many poor women helped by the parish were able-bodied. Some of these able-bodied women were assisted to join or return to the workforce. The following are some examples from the pages of the vestry minutes referencing work or employment of poor women:

Hannah Richmond, acquainted with the Vestry that Wm. Smith the Pilot had put his child to nurse her & that she kept it three years & without probability of getting any pay as the Father was absconded & had left no Effects; & as she was unable to maintain it any longer without some Allowance: Agreed that the church Wardens pay her 30 Pounds per year for two years to come & give the Child some cloaths (V.M., 3 July 1749).

Agreed that the Church Wardens pay Mrs. Leger 10 £ in advance of her weekly Allowance of £20 per week to help keep a little shop (V.M., 8 Oct., 1750).

Agreed that the Church Wardens do give Mrs. Adams £25 to help her get into away of Business (V.M., 20 Aug., 1768).

Agreed to allow Mrs. Darling £15 or £20 for the care of a poor woman as they shall think most reasonable. (V.M., 28 Jan., 1762).

Likewise that 50 pounds more be given to Mrs. Gates to enable her to furnish a little shop to give her a maintenance, her husband having been sufferer by the said fire (V.M., 23 Nov., 1741).

Agreed that Molly Sheetro's Daughter Elizabeth Collderday be put to Mrs. Johnston's school (V.M., 1 Aug., 1774).

Agreed That the Church Wardens pay Mary Woodward five pounds currency on account of nursing George Torster who was buried at the charge of the Parish (V.M., 17 Nov., 1746).

A petition from Susannah Treasvant setting forth, she hath three small children and herself frequently afflicted with illness, her children almost naked and in want of Necessary's Mr. John Guerard recommended her to have been an honest, industrious woman but now an object of charity. Agreed, That the Church Wardens relieve her at their Discretion and give her children some Cloaths and put them to school (V.M., 25 April, 1751).

Agreed, that the Church Wardens should give One Hundred Pounds to the Widow Hall, to relieve her want and to put her into some way of supporting her self and children (V.M., 3 May, 1742).

Agreed that Mrs. Kelly and old woman that is in the alms House be allowed three pounds per month being past her labor and of good character (V.M., 7 Aug. 1758).

Poor women on the parish were given stipends that were more or less equal in value to those allowed men. The slight differences observed may be the result of payments for maintenance of wives and children given to poor men, while poor women would only have to provide for themselves and their children. At any rate women were much more likely than men to receive a pension. As stated earlier, since there were many fewer women to begin with, female paupers were significantly more likely to be helped than males.

Table IV-5 Mean Expense per Pensioner by Gender/Age and Residency-Vestry Minutes 1732-1775³⁸

Gender/Age	N	Mean Annual Expense (currency)
Resident	272 (83.3%)	£ 49.0
Female	175	51.0
Male	37	49.5
Child	60	43.1
Non-Resident/Transient	55 (16.7%)	44.3
Female	31	45.8
Male	10	46.9
Child	14	39.1
Total "On the Parish"	329 (100%)	48.3
Female	206 (62.6%)	50.2
Male	47 (14.3%)	50.0
Child	76 (23.1%)	42.8

The following are typical cases of aid given to parish women and children:

³⁸ The source is the vestry minutes, not the church wardens' accounts which are more complete but only exist until 1751. Non-residents are included to illustrate that women in double jeopardy of being discriminated against are treated similarly to males. Also, among residents, females are more than 5 times more likely than males to receive a "pension" (receive outdoor or indoor relief on the parish expense for more than 40 weeks per year as opposed to temporary relief).

Mr. James Michie represented to the vestry that a certain widow is in very great necessity That he has advanced money to supply her urgent occasions, and was of the opinion she is an Object of the Vestry's Notice and Assistance and desired some relief might be granted her. It was thereupon, Ordered that the Church Wardens pay the said Mr. Michie £66 10 shillings out of the sacrament money for that purpose (V.M., 28 Sept., 1747).³⁹

Mrs. Pope with her two small children in distress was represented by the Church Wardens as an object of charity. Agreed that the children be cloathed and that Mrs. Pope be allowed six pounds per month (V.M., 28 March, 1757).

Agreed to allow the widow of Robert Austin Esquire one Hundred Pounds per Annum to commence from this Instant and pay Quarterly (V.M., 4 June, 1768).

Henry Beekman, a bricklayer by trade, was disabled more often than he was fit to work. In his line of work injuries from overturned wagons and wheelbarrows were commonplace. When he was not working, he was drinking up his meager wages at The Bear and other Bay Street taverns. Domestic violence and alcoholism were commonplace occurrences in Charles Town's closely packed ghettos of rented one room shacks, but even the male-oriented vestry could not tolerate sending Elizabeth Beekman and her newborn daughter Mary back to live with Beekman. The amount allowed for their support was among the highest awards by the vestry over the period:

It being represented to the vestry, That Henry Beekman had turned his wife out of Doors with a Young Infant at her breast, and refused her support and application being made on her behalf for subsistence. It was agreed and ordered that the said Henry Beekman shall allow his said wife and Child a maintenance of £8 per month (V.M., 28, March, 1753).

³⁹ Formerly well-to-do female parishioners who had fallen on hard times were accorded preferential treatment and were handled with discretion by the elite vestrymen. Note the amount of £100 provided the widow Hall, and the use of the term "a certain widow" in lieu of the name of the person being relieved on September 28, 1747. The amount of £100 was substantially higher than the customary amount provided. Without a doubt the vestry looked after the interests of previously well off applicants, even to the extent of keeping their identity out of the public eye.

Defaulting on his support payments, Beekman watched as the constable seized the only piece of furniture he owned, a bed, to help pay the maintenance for his wife and child. All of his clothing and belongings were sold and his wages garnished to raise £44, but that amount was insufficient. Thrown into jail, Henry Beekman died within days. Elizabeth and Mary were supported by the parish for a while, until Elizabeth remarried widower John Brathewaite, a cordwainer. Brathewaite died in the smallpox epidemic of 1760, leaving Mary and Elizabeth once more at the mercy of the parish. At the time of the last entry in the minute book in 1773, Elizabeth and her daughter had been “On the Parish” for over twenty years.

Throughout the eighteenth century in Charles Town, poverty was increasingly a feminine experience. Gender assumptions about dependency are part of the historical basis of all welfare provisions. Was it the patriarchal social system or the social welfare policies that kept women in subordinate position? Society demanded that women were economically dependent upon men; men were economically dependent on wages; and men were personally dependent on women for child-rearing, and for domestic functions. The traditional distinction between deserving and undeserving women was developed based upon the relationship of men and women: widows were usually found to be deserving, while deserted or unwed mothers were scrutinized more closely.

There were two major eighteenth century reasons for this “feminization of poverty.” First, women were child-bearers and child-rearers, but also family caregivers and nurturers. Perhaps because of this, law and custom placed poor women in a different circumstance than poor men. Another undeniable influence on female poverty was the female-headed household. Unmarried women and women with children but

without husbands (unmarried mothers, widows, or married women whose husbands absconded or never returned from sea or a war) were especially vulnerable to poverty. Systemic and life-cycle developments particular to women such as pregnancy, caregiving responsibilities for their own children as well as orphaned kin and sick neighbors, and limited employment opportunities added to their exposure. For these reasons, the causes of women's poverty may have been quite different than for men. Women on relief were much more likely to be "able-bodied" and not disabled, sick, or aged than were men. As the eighteenth century progressed in Charles Town, the age-old victims of impoverishment— foundlings and orphans, the sick, aged, and disabled— were joined increasingly by able-bodied women.

Table IV-6 demonstrates that vestrymen and church wardens increasingly throughout the period found women to be more needy and deserving of relief than men, and that their child-rearing and caregiving circumstances were taken into account. While twenty-first century historians find these beliefs to be sexist and discriminatory, in the context of eighteenth century Charles Town women were dependent by social design. Moreover, almost all Charlestonians believed women to be dependent by their very nature. Thus, it is no surprise that the parish poor relief administration emphasized the dependency of able-bodied women as well as the sick, the disabled, the old, and the young.

Table IV-6 Count of Females, Males Provided Relief by FY

Fiscal Year	Female	% Total	Male	% Total	Total Male & Female
25	2	33%	4	67%	6
26	3				3
27	4	50%	4	50%	8
28	1				1
29	3	38%	5	63%	8
30	6	43%	8	57%	14
31	4	50%	4	50%	8
32	7	70%	3	30%	10
33	7	50%	7	50%	14
34	5	21%	19	79%	24
35	7	39%	11	61%	18
36	4	27%	11	73%	15
37	7	64%	4	36%	11
38	28	68%	13	32%	41
39	8	50%	8	50%	16
40	43	57%	32	43%	75
41	2	33%	4	67%	6
42	6	50%	6	50%	12
43	12	86%	2	14%	14
44	7	37%	12	63%	19
45	31	66%	16	34%	47
46	23	58%	17	43%	40
47	26	70%	11	30%	37
48	19	54%	16	46%	35
49	55	66%	28	34%	83
50	38	69%	17	31%	55
51	57	58%	41	42%	98
52	10	63%	6	38%	16
53	11	79%	3	21%	14
54	26	76%	8	24%	34
56	49	56%	39	44%	88
57	21	75%	7	25%	28
58	23	70%	10	30%	33
59	31	76%	10	24%	41
60	11	58%	8	42%	19

61	5	83%	1	17%	6	
62	12	80%	3	20%	15	
63	8	67%	4	33%	12	
64	2	40%	3	60%	5	
65	24	60%	16	40%	40	
66	43	61%	27	39%	70	
67	10	83%	2	17%	12	
68	38	78%	11	22%	49	
69	22	76%	7	24%	29	
70	24	75%	8	25%	32	
71	30	60%	20	40%	50	
72	35	71%	14	29%	49	
73	17	85%	3	15%	20	
74	28	72%	11	28%	39	
75	18	75%	6	25%	24	
Sub-Total (FY25-37)		60	43%	80	57%	140
Sub-Total (FY38-75)		853	65%	450	35%	1303
Total (FY 25-75)		913	63%	530	37%	1443

Source: combined VM and CWA files

The assertion that women's impoverishment dates back to colonial America suggests that patriarchal poor relief policies caused female poverty.⁴⁰ As stated earlier, in Charles Town there were limited employment options for single and widowed poor women. Despite a more relaxed attitude toward sexuality and religion, the vestry punished those poor women who strayed outside the bounds of what Abramovitz calls the "family ethic." However, to characterize Charles Town's social welfare policies as harsh, punitive, paternalistic and sexist is at worst unfair and at best an oversimplification. Even if one accepts that the treatment of Mary Hogg, Honor Campbell, Mary Southey and Joanna Kelly and their children was biased and punitive,

⁴⁰ Abramovitz, *Regulating*, 1.

they were but four of 891 poor women for whom records exist. These cases were unusual; indeed, to make it into the vestry minutes there must have been something remarkable requiring the deliberation of the vestry. This is not to say that other poor women who violated the vestrymen's sensibilities were not turned away altogether with no record kept. The litany of reasons for female poverty in colonial Charles Town resemble lists in contemporary texts of causes of "the feminization of poverty"⁴¹

First, women's wages were always lower than men. Trades that women could enter were limited to spinning, weaving, sewing, dressmaking, and maidservant. Women were believed to be incapable of learning or performing many of the tasks performed by men. These manufacturing and serving occupations were the lowest paying trades and in Northern cities comprised work relegated to inmates and residents of workhouses.

Next, the dominant patriarchal viewpoint of elite males was that women were dependent and incapable of work outside the home. Women who violated this ethic, were the subject of harsh and discriminatory treatment.⁴²

The family ethic has, throughout history, placed women in the home, subordinate to men. It has made them the guardians of family and community morality, expected them to remain pious and chaste and to tame male sexuality, and defined them as weak and in need of protection and control.

The ravages of wars, the dangers of travel and manual labor, the tendency of male breadwinners to abscond and the disproportionate exposure of working men to

⁴¹ Diana DiNitto, *Social Welfare: Politics and Public Policy*. (Boston: A. B. Longman, 2003), 360-362.

⁴² Abramovitz, *Regulating*. 3.

pests and germs resulted in female-headed households with dependent children. Women were expected to first meet the unpaid demands of home and child care. Many petitions for relief emphasized the presence of small children without a male head of household. Without exception relief was granted in all such cases, since the woman's role as child care provider took precedent over work. Employment outside the home was rare, unless the woman was married and worked with her husband at a trade or art. Charles Town's bustling port provided more lucrative work for women as barmaids and prostitutes than in manufacturing, trade, or servant work. However, poor women who sought these jobs and later needed help were punished by confinement in the workhouse, or by being sent away.

Few poor women were educated formally beyond rudimentary reading and writing skills, and none were trained as apprentice tradespersons or artisans. Pauper girls were sent to the parish school and had a greater opportunity for an education than their better-off peers. Nevertheless, the education they received did not enable them to compete outside of "women's work."

In Charles Town slaves and indentured servants competed for job classes that in Northern cities would have been available to women. Wiberley surmised that Charles Town's poor white women believed such work to be for slaves only and to be beneath them, but there is no evidence for this exact position on female labor.⁴³ Nevertheless, the superabundance of domestic slaves in Charles Town surely limited employment opportunities for women. While there was no evidence that certain tasks were reserved for slaves alone, it was believed to be inappropriate for most women to work outside

⁴³ Wiberley, Jr., "Four Cities," 137.

the home. Cooking, cleaning, and child-rearing comprised women's work. This form of domestic employment was proper for women in the back country or for indentured servants or immigrants. However, it was not expected of females who were born or married into Charles Town's gentry.

All of the above multiple disadvantages and discriminations resulted in many more able-bodied women receiving assistance than able-bodied men:

Table IV-7 Unduplicated Count Adult Recipients by Gender and Ability to Work			
Gender/Reason for Assistance/Ability to Work	Number of Persons	Gender Category Percent	Percent of Total
<u>Male</u>	<u>530</u>	100	37
Sick	89		
Disabled	204		
Aged	8		
<u>Sub-Total Aged & Disabled</u>	301	57	
Transient (Able-bodied)	156		
Other (Able-Bodied)	73		
<u>Sub- Total Able-Bodied</u>	229	43	
<u>Female</u>	<u>913</u>	100	63
Sick	129		
Disabled	20		
Aged	11		
<u>Sub-Total Aged & Disabled</u>	160	18	
Transient (Able-bodied)	207		
Other (Able-Bodied)	546		
<u>Sub- Total Able-Bodied</u>	753	82	
<u>Total Male & Female</u>	<u>1443</u>		100

Source: Unduplicated file containing VM & CWA-1725-75⁴⁴

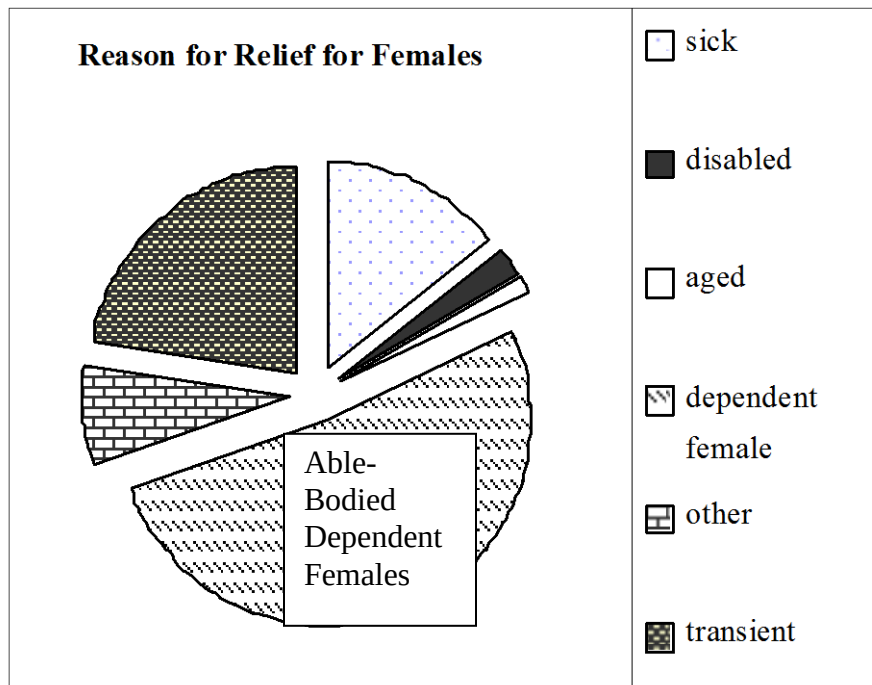
⁴⁴ This data involves the use of judgment in classification and coding. The "Reason for Assistance" was not always detailed in the minutes, and was more often omitted, especially in the CWA. Based upon a knowledge of policies followed by the church wardens, when "Reason" was missing or unclear and the recipient was male, I coded the reason as "disabled"; when "Reason" was missing or unclear and the recipient was female, I coded the reason as "dependent female". This decision stems from the knowledge that few able-bodied males were granted assistance; while many women were able-bodied, but could not be expected to provide for themselves or for dependents because of social and cultural norms. See Table IV-7 and pages 131-133 for further discussion.

Table IV-8 Service Type * Reason Cross-tabulation for Female Recipients⁴⁵

Service Type	Reason	Reason					Total
		sick	disabled	aged	dependent female	other	
outdoor relief		46	15	7	353	25	568
room and board		4	5	3	51		88
in kind		1			14		22
nursing		58			3	1	69
doctor		15		1	1		18
burial		2			1	3	7
transport		3			36		80
other					1	5	6
fire						29	29
hurricane						4	4
Total		129	20	11	460	67	891

Source: Unduplicated File, CWA & VM

Figure IV-1- Reason for Relief for Females



⁴⁵ The “reason” for relief for well over half of the females provided services was “missing” from the vestry minutes and church wardens accounts. Relief official “presumed” them to be dependent. Many had dependent children to care for, or were widowed and left with no means of support.

Summary

Poor children in St. Philip's parish received what was arguably the best public educations in the colonies. Females as well as males were educated, and despite laws requiring indenture of all orphans and poor children, the majority of children were cared for by the parish-sponsored network of wet-nurses, foster care placements, and later, an orphanage.

Gainful employment for women was scarce and since mortality among breadwinners was high, dependent women and children made up a great percentage of the total dependents. Many of the women helped by the vestry were assisted in clear violation of the poor law of 1712 that prohibited aid to able-bodied persons. Had the vestry followed the letter of the law and not relieved able-bodied women, bound out all poor children, and only relieved paupers in the workhouse, rapidly growing relief expenses would have been substantially reduced and perhaps eliminated entirely for some groups.

Those families reduced to poverty were not necessarily consigned to remain in a dependent state. It is true that much parish poor relief was designed for mere subsistence; yet some aid was intended to lift the pauper out of the dependent state. Educated poor children who had learned a skill or trade would find many opportunities to become self-supporting as an adult.

There is no evidence that poor women who violated the "family ethic" were treated differently from other poor women. Even those few women who challenged the sensibilities of the vestrymen were not denied assistance, although some were punished by confinement in the workhouse. The poor relief system in Charles Town did not

augment the oppression and discrimination of women extant in eighteenth century society.

For a brief time in the eighteenth century, the social construction of gender in Charles Town was far less restrictive than has been previously supposed. While poor white women could not aspire to the social levels of elite women, they were significantly higher on the social ladder than slaves and Native Americans. High rates of desertion and mortality left poor women at higher risk than elite women of becoming a single female head of household. The pages of the vestry minutes and as will be seen in Chapters VI and VIII, the Commons House Journal, tell the stories of these poor women, acknowledging that their struggles in a harsh environment merited a respectful and sympathetic response. As will be seen, even an acknowledged murderer, and a black female slave murderer at that, received a measure of humanity from the elites.

CHAPTER V- THE WORKHOUSE

Agreed that the Church allow the Warden of the Workhouse 20 Shillings per week to be laid out once a week in Bread and Beer for the use of the Poor belonging to the Parish over and above their former allowance (V.M., 13 May, 1754).

In 1739, Thomas Hogg, a bricklayer, died in one of the regular visitations of smallpox to the port town, survived by his wife Mary, three-year old William, and John, just weaned. Hogg left his family without any means of support. Shortly after the death of her husband Mary found employment as a barmaid.¹ The young city's wharfs along Bay Street were the site of tens of drinking establishments where seamen and laborers gathered to drink West Indian rum and to gamble on cards, dice, cockfights, and boxing matches. Such ordinaries also were the places where sailors could meet "notorious bawds and strumpets." The vestry must have had some concerns about Mary's parenting or her place of work, since both children were taken from their mother and placed in the newly established workhouse. Children were rarely removed from their mother by the vestry. Those who were removed were usually boarded out in foster care, and not in the workhouse. Three years later Mary Hogg herself was ordered to the workhouse by the vestry to "be kept at hard labor" (V.M., 20 December, 1742). Of the thousands of entries in the vestry minutes over 43 years during the colonial period, no other note referenced work. Indeed, few of the workhouse residents in the

¹ The taverns along the Cooper River were routinely charged by grand juries "for harboring loose and idle women." Cited in Walter Fraser, Jr., *Charleston! Charleston!* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1989), 104.

period 1738-1751 for which records survive appeared capable of any labor at all, much less ‘hard labor’.

An “Honest and Industrious Man,” fifty-year-old Cornelius Dargan had lived longer than most residents of Charles Town when the effects of a ten year long bout with venereal disease and the mercury cure administered left him unable to care for himself. With no family, and unable to care for himself, this former shipwright was dependent on the parish for outdoor relief, room, board, and nursing. The heavy expense of Dargan’s care as an outdoor relief recipient (£156 in 1737) might have provided some justification for the parish request to construct the workhouse. Dargan was among the first residents of the new workhouse, where he remained for over ten years in a demented state until he died in 1748. “A lame man always in bed,” Dargan’s care cost the parish well over £1000. To survive as long as he did in as such a dependent he must have received at least adequate care. Many workhouse entries over the years detail expenses for his clothing or care. On March 6, 1746, the church wardens purchased 10 yards of flannel and paid to have it made into gowns for Dargan (see Appendix A).

Joanna Kelly, “a poor woman almost blind,” and her two children first appear in the vestry minutes on September 2, 1749. Several weeks later, Joanna Kelly, “afflicted with blindness and in want, ...apply’d for relief.” She was to be allowed £3 per week, or over £150 per year. Suddenly, in April, 1751, the vestry agreed, “That the Church Wardens may pay to the value of £5 Sterling for Joanna Kelly’s passage to New York, and thence to Albany, ...having behaved very badly in the workhouse.” While no evidence remains of workhouse residents after 1751, the 1751 -1775 accounts being

lost, Kelly was, despite her blindness, among the most able-bodied of the workhouse residents. Presumably she was allowed until 1751 to come and go as she pleased, and was not confined. Perhaps she was picked up by the night watchman for prostitution. Furthermore, the vestry ordered that if she “Appears about town begging that the church wardens take her up and keep her in close confinement in the workhouse.” Apparently she refused to go to New York, because in May 1753, the vestry ordered her allowance to be discontinued. As far as can be determined, this measure also failed, since in 1754 she is ordered “to be relieved at the workhouse and not otherwise.” Kelly must have violated the vestrymen’s sensibilities with respect to what Abramovitz calls “the family ethic;” nevertheless, Kelly’s relief was never totally discontinued. The several warnings about the workhouse seemed to have little effect, although in Kelly’s case the threat of confinement clearly was punitive. Without the lost church warden’s accounts, it is impossible to reconstruct her story, but the snippets available from the workhouse accounts of FY50/51 for Kelly and her daughters reflect regular clothing expenditures:

Table V-1-Clothing Expenses for Joanna Kelly and Daughters

The Parish of St. Phillips Charles Town – Sundry Accounts of the Workhouse-1750/51 Thomas Smith & John Crockatt, Church Wardens		
Date	Item	Amount
May 21	15 yds Garlix, 15 yds checks, thread, 1 hankerchief for Mrs. Kelly and 2 Children	£12.06.3
June 1	Sarah Kelly for making cloths for Joanna Kelly & daughters	2.17.6
Sept 4	Joanna Kelly & Daughters 61/2 yds Shallon, 1pr shoes, I pr stockings, oznabrig, cash to buy sundries	15.17.6
Dec 7	Mrs Hutchins 1 pr of shoes , 1 pr stockings, 7 yds Garlix 1 oz thread, 2 prs stockings, for Kelly, Murray , and Lamb	5.17.6

From 1694 until 1738, publicly financed care of colonial Charles Town's sick poor consisted of outdoor relief cash payments to recipients or board and care in neighbors' homes. After local officials became alarmed at the rising costs of caring for the dependent poor, a petition was submitted to the House of Commons to develop "a Publick workhouse and hospital." The burden of the poor in Charles Town increased rapidly after 1730. Annual parish poor assessments (VM) rose from £625 in 1732/33 to £1,935 in 1735/6. Actual expenditures recorded in the church wardens' account books tripled in seven years.

Table V-2 St. Philips Parish Charles Town, 1732-1742, Public Poor-Relief Assessments and Expenditures, Amounts in Pounds (Carolina Currency)

Fiscal Year	Assessment (Vestry Minutes)	Expended (Church Wardens' Accounts)
1732	£625	£766.06.3
1733	1000	1291.16.0
1734	1000	1466.16.0
1735	1500	1934.13.6
1736	1600	1664.18.6
1737	1000	1492.16.6
1738 ^a	1500	2507.09.2
1739 ^a	1529	2211.07.6
1740 ^{ab}	1825	2481.10.8
1741 ^{abc}	1000	1585.00.9
1742 ^a	1000	1899.11.0

Source: St. Philip's Vestry Minutes and Church Wardens' Account Books

^a £1000 Annual Appropriation from Assembly for Maintenance of Workhouse not included in Assessment

^b £1500 Appropriation from Assembly for Fire not included in Assessment or Expenditure

^c £3766 Donated for Victims of 1740 Fire and Expended in 1740/41 not included in Assessment or Expenditure

Desperate to control expenses, the Vestry turned to a legacy of their English heritage-the workhouse:

The Petition of The Vestry, Church Wardens and other Inhabitants of the Parish of St. Philips Charles Town, 6 January, 1734.

Humbly Sheweth.

That whereas a Number of Idle Vagrant and Vitiously Inclined People, either Brought in by Shipping, or on various Pretences, resorting hither from divers Parts of the Provinces and by Drinking and other Sorts of Debauchery Speedily reducing them-selves to Poverty and Diseases, have of late years become a great and dayly increasing Burthen on this parish (The Present Charge amounting to Near fifteen Hundred Pounds Per Annum and which if not prevented by some proper means will soon become very-Greivous and insupportable./).

And whereas the Parish Officers are now often obliged to take up with very poor Accomodation of Lodgeing & c. for Sick Persons, and at very extravagant Prices, to the great trouble of the said officers, Suffering of the Sick Persons, and Enhancement of the Parish Charge. And Yr. petitionrs. humbly Conceiving that a Publick workhouse and hospital under proper Regulations will prove most effectual remedies for these Evills. Do Therefore Humbly Pray Ye Excellcy. & Honor That you would be pleased to bring in a Bill for..... to Erect Proper Building for use as a Public Workhouse and Hospital (V.M., 6 Jan., 1734).

The Assembly quickly took up the petition and by May of 1736 passed “An Act for the Better Relief of and Employment of the Poor of the Parish of St. Philip’s Charles Town and for the Suppressing and Punishing Rogues, Vagabonds, and other Lewd, Idle, and Disorderly Persons”.² The vestry was permitted to raise the sum of £1,000 currency per year to maintain and operate the workhouse. The name of the Act made it clear that the intent of this facility was to deter able-bodied and transient poor from seeking relief. In addition to the dual function of workhouse and hospital, the

² Microfilm of original in SC Archives and History; Nicholas Trott, *South Carolina Laws* (mfm.). See Appendix F for a transcription of selected statutes in the Act.

workhouse was also used to house runaway slaves and servants and provide for their correction until they could be returned to their master. Among the first expenses were the installation of stocks and a whipping post.³ The act further authorized the use of “fettters” or “shackles” and “moderate whipping” of the inmates and instructed the warden to “abridge” paupers of food as punishment.

Suddenly on November 27, 1738, the vestrymen issued the decree that wrested the poor from within the community and placed them in an institution segregated from the non-dependent population (V.M., 27 Nov., 1730). This order did not discriminate among deserving and non-deserving poor transients and parishioners, well and sick: “Ordered that all the Poor that are at present on the Parish, be removed from there several lodgings to the workhouse immediately.” Why this hasty institutionalization of poor relief in Charles Town? The wealthy merchants who ran the parish did not consider all poor to be deviants or dangerous felons who should be isolated from society. The vestrymen, good businessmen and taxpayers all, were merely responding to matters of economy. In 1732 the poor rate stood at £625. By 1740 it had tripled (V.M., 27 March, 1740). Additionally parishioners had been taxed heavily for the erection of the poorhouse, and more indigent newcomers entered the city every day. When faced with paying the bill for the parish poor to be maintained in private homes the vestry was forced to discard the luxury of outdoor relief in favor of the more easily

³ See Appendix A for reconstructed workhouse expense ledgers. On April 4, 1739 and August 7, 1740, payments were made to carpenters to construct stocks and a “whipping post.”

administered workhouse system, where part of the costs could be defrayed by the labor of the inmates.⁴

And whereas the inhabitants of the Parish have lately had several extraordinary Assessments (besides £1600 for the Poor) levied on the Parish this last year as well as the Great Damage Sustained thro the Calamity of the Small Pox... (V.M., 24 Jan., 1738)

Meanwhile, the numbers of poor grew unabated, undeterred by the harsh Act. In the span of eight years lawmakers passed acts to prevent ship captains from dumping “impotent, lame, or infirm Persons”; to mandate that the warden maintain and punish deserting seamen; to require that runaway slaves be taken to the workhouse and kept at hard labor and be whipped on the bare back; and to send runaway servants to the workhouse and keep them at hard labor.⁵ In each case the warden was paid the cost of maintaining the runaway or fugitive. In the case of seamen or slaves, unclaimed fugitives could be sold by the warden to new masters. Nevertheless, the numbers of poor and the overall expense to the parish continued to rise. In an attempt to further manage burgeoning expenses for the workhouse, the vestry ordered that the warden of the workhouse “do for the future render a Weekly Account of all such Persons ... taken in and victualled ... & what Number of Persons shall die or be discharged with a particular account of all such meat or other Provisions...” (CW 22 May, 1740). If these

⁴ According to Guest, the fact that poor were commonly boarded in colonial America was not, as some have suggested, out of concern for and sympathy toward the poor and a desire to provide a more humane method of relief. Guest also argues that a change toward institutional care did not indicate a change in the way the poor were viewed or an attempt at social control, as Katz and Rothman have argued. Geoffrey Guest, “The Boarding of the Dependent Poor in Colonial America,” *Social Service Review* (March, 1989): 93. In fairness to Katz and Rothman, they never suggested that *colonial asylums* were constructed for the social control of deviants. The social control function appeared in the nineteenth century.

⁵ Thomas Cooper & McCord, VII, 406, 568, 625.

accounts had survived, a more complete comparison of costs prior to and after the introduction of the workhouse would be possible. All disbursements from the wardens to the poor and for workhouse expenses are captured in the warden's accounts, but only sporadic entries listing workhouse occupants survive. Therefore, the numbers of poor and the services provided by the workhouse cannot be ascertained. The Registry of the parish lists many poor persons buried at public expense as being "in the workhouse," but no mention is made of most of these persons in the account books. Therefore, there were many more persons relieved in the workhouse than those accounted for. The building's original capacity seems to have been limited to nine or ten occupants. Some outdoor relief could have been provided poor persons by the workhouse in the form of "victuals," temporary shelter, or outpatient medical care. Nevertheless, it is safe to say that the workhouse neither slowed the absolute growth of expenditures nor improved the efficiency as measured in costs per poor person. It is important to note that mean workhouse costs per recipient per year were on the average more than four times greater than mean outdoor relief costs (see Appendix A).

Table V-3 Comparison Outdoor Relief-Workhouse Costs per Recipient per Year

Fiscal Year	<u>Mean Payment for Outdoor relief</u>			<u>Mean Cost of Workhouse</u>		
	a	b	c	d	e	f
32	23	£ 942	£41			
33	17	342	20			
34	32	855	27			
35	37	1184	32			
36	26	803	31			
37	27	920	34			
38	59	1451	25	9	£638	£71
39	26	380	15	9	746	83
40	33	888	27	9	715	79
41	10	487	49	8	777	97
42	10	335	34	8	843	105
43	27	464	17	5	710	142
44	18	532	30	8	705	88

45	86	809	9	4	716	179
46	55	623	11	7	778	111
47	24	574	24	17	708	42
48	42	1001	27	15	628	42
49	113	1093	10	9	819	91
50	90	1438	16	10	932	93
51	105	1427	14	14	872	69
Total	860	16552	19	132	10686	81

a- Number of outdoor relief recipients, CWA; b- Total outdoor relief expenditures (Total Pounds) CWA; c-Mean outdoor relief (b/a); d-Number workhouse residents from CWA; d- Workhouse expenses from Appendix Table D-3 (from CWA); e-Mean (e/d). This computation is internally consistent since all of the data originated in CWA.

Since no registry of workhouse residents survives, only the church wardens' accounts from 1738 to 1751 remain to allow a partial view of life in the workhouse.⁶ Based on these accounts, it can be concluded that care was at least adequate to allow survival of very frail residents for years. The diet was probably superior to that of many of Charles Town's residents and certainly better than slave fare. Beef and rice were staples, but from time to time such luxuries as sugar and beer were provided.

The workhouse was also referred to as the hospital, and not without reason. Rather than have sick poor scattered about town, it was much more efficient to have them receive medical care in one place. The petition of the vestry at Charles Town to the Assembly requesting the construction of the workhouse reveals two functions that the vestrymen foresaw for the facility. The most expedient way of enforcing settlement laws was to threaten the vagrant and idle who would come to the town to take advantage of the charity of its citizens, with incarceration, labor and punishment. Petty thieves would take their chances with the watch and drunken seamen would pay no

⁶ See Appendix A for reconstructed ledgers of workhouse expenses. Save FY1740, all these accounts were put together using entries in the CWA. All expenses were interspersed with outdoor relief accounts.

heed to the remonstrance of the vestrymen; however, if the possibility of confinement in the workhouse rather than a cash payment for outdoor relief loomed large, beggars, rogues, vagabonds, pickpockets, and drunkards would never apply for relief in the first place. This simple eligibility screen has been called the “workhouse test.”⁷ Passing through its busy port Charles Town always had more than its share of those who would take advantage of the inhabitants’ benevolence, and the construction of a workhouse was a solution to the problem. A second purpose of the workhouse was the care of the sick poor. There were at least two reasons for this interest: first, to reduce the number of impositions the sick placed on the vestrymen and churchwardens themselves; and second, to improve the medical care for the poor. The text of the petition promotes the above stated dual purpose; the vestrymen make no mention of setting the inmates to work. It is not likely that they considered work to be a primary function of the proposed almshouse. Indeed, a list of the occupants at the end of the first fiscal year reveal that none were capable of any work.

⁷ Phyllis J. Day, *A New History of Social Welfare* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1989), 116. Day states that colonial poor laws required that able-bodied persons seeking public relief were required to leave their family and live in the workhouse. This is called “the workhouse test,” since only the truly needy would agree to it. Piven & Cloward, *Regulating*, 3-39, provide a thorough analysis of the origins of the “workhouse test.” Tying their explanation to their theory on the expansion and contraction of poor relief, they believe that the workhouse is the “shell” that remains when relief is contracted. The workhouse is intended to deter all poor except “residual” persons or the impotent who are left when social order is restored and it is no longer necessary to prevent civil disorder. To effectively deter, the workhouse must consist of “foul quarters...with strict penal regimens and starvation diets.”

Figure V-1 List of Poor in the Workhouse

A List of Poor in the Workhouse the 28th day of April=1739

- 1 = William Hogg a boy ab.^t 3 years Old
- 2 = John Hogg a Child just weaned
- 3 = William Lancaster a Young Man Lane & Foolish
- 4 = James Houston a Man has Dropsy
- 5 = Cornelius Dargan a Lane Man always in bed
- 6 = Amey Thornton a very old Woman
- 7 = Margaret Heseigar a Lane Dutch Woman
- 8 = Heseigar her Child ab.^t 4 yrs Old
- 9 = Ann Dean a Soldier's Wife /from Georgia big with Child

All the above are in the Workhouse

The Assembly in its 1736 Act embodied a different spirit than that of the original vestry petition. The vestrymen were wealthy businessmen, while the Assembly was made up mainly of planter aristocracy from plantations outside of Charles Town. The Assembly intended the structure as a combination “Hospital, Workhouse, and House of Corrections.” The punitive aspect of this proposed structure was explicit. A warden was authorized to take his salary from the labor and fines of the runaways and empowered to employ “fettters or shackles,” “moderate whipping,” or “abridge them of their food” at his discretion. Whereas the idea of punishment was only implied in the vestrymen’s proposal, the assemblymen’s interest in the correction of inmates is evident. These members of the House of Commons were reluctant to deal constructively with Charles Town’s urban problem by reason of their remoteness and their power struggle with the merchants. They favored harsh measures for dealing with the dependent population. However, it must be reiterated that the punitive attitudes

revealed in this Act are directed against the “Idle Vagrant and Vitiously Inclined People” and not the parish poor.

The use of the facility for correctional purposes might prove confusing to many unfamiliar with Charles Town’s history. The legislators considered the threat of labor as an effective deterrent for petty thieves and hoodlums (those who weren’t put in stocks, whipped severely or hanged). Charles Town’s lack of adequate correctional facilities was a source of great concern to the populace. The workhouse was the first official correctional institution in the province. A brick “watch house” had been in use since 1701; however, repeated escapes by felons and murderers detained therein constantly endangered the populace. After escaping in 1717, Stede Bonnett’s pirates ravaged the town. Finally around 1750, a jail of sorts was erected. Since it was only one brick thick “few criminals stay, ‘til the times appointed to make their Trials.”⁸ Hence, the corrective aspect of the workhouse was primarily aimed at recognized criminals confined there, not the poor.

There was no publicly financed building constructed as a jail until 1769. Before then, the suffering of prisoners was denounced as revolting and inhuman, as they were housed in a small building provided at the expense of the Provost Marshall.⁹ The itinerant Anglican minister Woodmason called the conditions crowded beyond belief and stated that “a person would be better off in the French King’s galleys, or in the prisons of Barbary or Turkey than this dismal place.” Thieves, murderers, debtors, men,

⁸ *South Carolina Gazette*, (Charleston: Lewis Timothy, publisher), 1 December, 1758.

⁹ David Duncan Wallace. *The History of South Carolina* (New York: The American Historical Society, 1934), 268-269.

and women were herded into five or six rooms of about twelve feet square each.. As many as sixteen prisoners, both male and female, were crowded in one room and “had to meet the calls of nature before one another” and take turns lying down for want of space. When one inmate suffocated from the intolerable heat, there was no room to admit the coffin, “until some of the wretches lay down and permitted the coffin to be set upon them.”¹⁰

The disposition of Mrs. Hogg’s case leads one to believe that some of the work was at least in part performed as punishment. To generalize from the existence of this single reference to the assumption that all work performed at the workhouse was correctional is unwarranted. It is probable that the majority of inmates, because of illness, disability, or age did not work at all. As late as the 1790s, the traveler Duke de la Rochefoucauld-Liancourt noticed that the workhouse in Charles Town was “an asylum for idleness,” and could find no work being done there.¹¹

Thus it can be assumed that work performed at the workhouse by paupers was rare and was incidental to the function for which the institution was designed—relief of the poor. There were, however, several entries in the minute book which attested to the fact that inmates of the workhouse did undergo correction there for “misbehavior.” This misbehavior took the form of prostitution, drunkenness, debauchery or gambling. The punishment resulted from the behavior of the poor person after he was put on public charge or into the workhouse; the poor were not confined in the workhouse as the result of some crime or immoral act. The vestrymen, as guardians of the morality

¹⁰ Richard James Hooker, ed. *The Carolina Backcountry on the Eve of the Revolution: the Journal of Charles Woodmason, Anglican Itinerant* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 1953).

¹¹ Klebaner, “Public Poor Relief,” 211.

of the community, were doubly responsible for the behavior of the inmates at the workhouse.

Confinement was the usual punishment; however, to be sent away without relief at all was to be dealt with harshly indeed, for a place in the workhouse was in general a privilege, not punishment.

Honour Campbell with 3 children again applies for relief, ordered that she with her Children be maintained at the Workhouse and if she refuses to go there That the Warden take her up and confine her and not permit her to strole about the streets (V.M., 8 Oct., 1750).

That Mrs. Cowsher be put out of her room at the poor house as she is not worthy of Charity.... (V.M., 29 Oct., 1757).

Agreed that Mrs. Evans (for her misbehavior in the poor house) be ordered by the warden to leave the same in a fortnight from this date (V.M., 9 Oct., 1770).

Those Two women having behaved very disorderly in the workhouse; It's ordered that If they hereafter appear about town begging, that the Ward take them up, and keep them in close confinement till they be sent away (V.M., 22 April, 1751).

The establishment of the workhouse in Charles Town introduces a crucial issue of eighteenth century poor relief: indoor relief versus outdoor relief. Outdoor relief was best administered in a system where suspicion was absent, where relief could be given straightforwardly without long investigations concerning eligibility. Yet the presence of the stranger, and an often "undeserving" stranger at that, made a program based entirely on outdoor relief impractical. Throughout the colonial period Charles Town's balance of welfare payments swung first to outdoor relief, then to institutional relief, then partially back again to relieving the needy in private homes. Why did the policy shift back and forth? Were such decisions of priority purely economical? Did they

involve eligibility factors or an attempt to separate the “deserving” from the “non-deserving poor?” Did the vestrymen see the institution as a cure for paupers?

As noted above, the workhouse was initially constructed to fulfill a very special function. The vestrymen saw it as a means of dealing with the very ill, the disabled, and those so burdensome as to be an impractical responsibility for a neighbor. It was to be a last resort. The practice of keeping dependents who were not distrusted or feared living within the St. Philip’s parish community in the homes of their relatives and neighbors, where they would be a visible element of the parish, was intended to continue after the erection of the workhouse. Poor, sick, or disabled strangers who were viewed with suspicion and could not easily be boarded in a private home were to be kept in the workhouse until they could be cured and set to work, or in a few cases, sent out of town. It is one thing to board an elderly neighbor; boarding transient strangers was quite another.

The terms of the edict issued in 1738 were not easily complied with. In the ensuing two decades many parishioners removed to the workhouse were forced to reside there by the vestrymen as a contingency for eligibility.

Agreed, That Mrs. Dumond have one of the rooms built at the Workhouse if she can’t procure a room otherwise Gratis as she expects (V.M., 23 June, 1752).

Agreed, that the Church Wardens Pay Mrs. Dumond’s House Rent due from her some time past but not to pay any future house rent as She may be supplied with a room built near the workhouse (V.M., 15 July, 1752).

Mrs. Burrows having applied to the Church Wardens for relief, Agreed that unless she will consent to be maintained at the workhouse, they do not give her any further support (V.M., 19 July, 1754).

Agreed that Joanna Kelly be relieved at the workhouse and not otherways (V.M., 12 August, 1754).

Agreed that Mrs. Wilson (who has been for sometime at the Charge of the Parish) be sent to the Workhouse, and if she refuses to go there, then she shall only be relieved at the discretion of the Church Wardens (V.M., 14 November, 1745).

It is important to dispel the images of the dreadful poorhouse dens and debtors' prisons of Elizabethan England and eighteenth century England as typical of the workhouse in colonial Charles Town. The images of bug-infested pallets of rags in a room crammed with sleeping bodies, open sewers, foul streams of stench, wormy bread and green salt pork may have been true of the early nineteenth century England of Charles Dickens and the later America of Dorothea Dix, but not of Charles Town.¹² The vestry minutes present a very different picture, one that in no way can be reconciled with this usual conception of the poorhouse:

Agreed that the poor in the workhouse be allowed summer cloathing and Oznabrig sheets (V.M., 30 April, 1759).

The above gentlemen being mett were waited upon by the commissioners of the Workhouse & C^a. Representing that y^e poor of the Parish complain'd that the Allowance of 2/pr. Day is too inconsiderable which they humbly recomm.^d to Consideration.

¹² The words of Ebenezer Scrooge from *A Christmas Carol* are recalled: "I don't make merry myself at Christmas, and I can't afford to make idle people merry. I help to support the prisons and the workhouses, -- they cost enough, -- and those who are badly off must go there."... "Many can't go there; and many would rather die."... "If they would rather die, they had better do it, and decrease the surplus population" (Charles Dickens, p.5). As Dorothea Dix observed, "the poor suffer and die in want or painfully endure privations rather than to appeal to the public asylum." In Joan E. Marshall, "Shaping Poor Relief for the Sick Poor in Indiana's Pioneering Era, 1826-1847," *Social Service Review* 74 (Dec. 2000): 570. Neither Charles Dickens nor Dorothea Dix were referring to the Charles Town Workhouse one hundred years earlier. In an account from the CWA, 1751, Mrs. Hutchins is given £5 to spend "for the Poor on Christmas Day" (See Appendix A-12, Dec. 23).

Agreed to allow Two Shill^s & 6p. day for each of the poor in the Workhouse
From this day (V.M., 29 June, 1763).

Order^d that the Church Wardens to go to the Work House and Examine into
The Sheets & bedding and Supply the Warden with that what may be necessary
(V.M., 10 May, 1763).

Agreed that the Church allow the Warden of the Workhouse 20 Shillings per
week to be laid out once a week in Bread and Beer for the use of the Poor
belonging to the Parish over and above their former allowance (V.M., 13 May,
1754).

Mr Hutchens Proposed to the Vestry to have Molasses and Lignum Vitae to
make a Small Beer Which was Agreed to not Exceed one Gallon of
Molasses a week and Lignum Vitae in Proportion (V.M., July 2, 1744).

Ordered that the Church Wardens forthwith provide one Piece Striped duffel
Blankets and bedding sufficient for the Poor in the Work House (V.M., 19
Nov., 1739).

I do hereby Bind and Oblige myself, as fully as by any authentick Obligation
whatever, to furnish and supply the Workhouse of the Parish aforesaid, with
Good and wholesome Beef from this Date, until Easter next ensuing....
Edward Trusler (V.M., 4 May, 1741).

Whereas a Misunderstanding hath arose about the Prices or allowances
Charged by Mr. Hutchins for the People at the Workhouse, It is agreed that
no person shall be at a greater expense than was agreed upon the 3rd July,
1749, Unless Mr. Hutchins produces a Certificate under the Doctor's hand
that the person was sick and that the house allowance was not fit for the
person to eat (V.M., October 8, 1750).

The Warden of the Workhouse having acquainted the Vestry that Provisions
of all kinds being so advanced in Price & in Particular the Article of Beef
Selling from 3/6 to 5/ pr Pound desired to have a further allowance for the
maintenance of the poor at the Work House.

...Agreed to allow him an Addition of One Shilling/ pr Day each/ to for the
Poor under his Care ...which allowance as now fixed is 3/6 pr Day each
(V.M., May 10, 1773).

The Warden of the Work House complaining for Want of Blankets ...to
desire that he will order 50 of the Public Blanketts to be given out ...Agreed
that Grates be put in all the Chimneys in the Poor House (V.M., January 11,
1774).

. Agreed, That the poor at the Workhouse be allowed each a Pound of Sugar
pr Week (V.M., June 3, 1751).

Although the conditions at the Workhouse were far from ideal the inmates did feel free to petition the vestry for improved circumstances. The inmates presented the Commissioners of the workhouse the following remonstrance or complaint about conditions there:

Sheweth,

That the Workhouse or Hospital erected for the use of the Poor of this Parish is not at present properly applied for the use intended; and that in Great measure owing to the opinion of the poor people have contracted of The bad Accomony and ill treatment of the present Warden to such degree That they choose rather to beg about the streets than take relief there. The remonstrants therefore request, That you will please to advertise for A proper person to take care of the said house, and poor therein, that the same may be of the Service intended to the said Parish (V.M., 12 Feb., 1750).

The Commissioners promptly answered, remedying the complaints, one would hope, to the satisfaction of the inmates. The reply of the Commissioners, “the most humble servants” of the poor, attests both to the vestryman’s conception of themselves as public servants, responsible to all classes of Charles town society, and their conception of the poor as having rights and dignity despite their condition of need (V.M., 18 March, 1750).

Initially, the salary of the warden of the workhouse was to include whatever profits the labor of the inmates earned. Apparently this must have been considerable, for, in 1748, “as the profits of that place have now increased very largely,” the vestrymen recommended that the commissioners of the workhouse cut off the warden’s salary altogether. There must have been so many fugitive servants, seamen, and slaves in the building that the warden’s post had become profitable. This is not to imply that

the poor relief aspect of the institution was self-supporting. The parish tax money paid for the daily allowances for the residents who could not support themselves with their work. The warden's profit derived from the facility's correctional purpose:

-Gent'n. As the salary allowed the Warden of the Workhouse was intended for his Trouble & Care, & at that time, Little or no other Visible Benefit was Likely to accrue to him. ... Whether that Salary should not now be taken off. As the Profits of that place have now increased very largely... whereby perquisites of great Sums Yearly Accrue to the Warden, fully sufficient for anyone in that Office without a Salary...(V.M., May 17, 1748)

While the whipping post and stocks undeniably added to the deterrent power of the facility, they were probably employed by the warden in the correction of slaves and servants. The 1736 law specified the number of "stripes" to be administered. There is no record of corporal punishment for any pauper, despite the tenor of the 1736 law.

By 1766 the folly of confining the "deserving" poor of the parish with the "non-deserving" paupers, transients, and vagabonds, was evident to the vestrymen. From this time on efforts were made to allow as many poor parishioners as possible to reside in town rather than in the poor-house:

.... That by Subsequent Laws, Seamen & Slaves are directed to be committed to the said house, and as there is constantly in it, a great number of these, it is impossible that the poor, who are become very numerous can be accommo-dated there-That, even Suposing there was room for the reception of part of the poor, your memorialists submit it to the conpious & well disposed person in a place where now become intolerable----

Your memorialist therefore intreat your Honours, to take the premises under consideration & to grant such relief as you shall Judge proper..... (V.M., 7 Dec., 1766).

One result of the use of the workhouse as a house of correction was that there was probably little room in the facility for poor persons, so was it with seamen, runaway servants and slaves. The original 1738 workhouse was replaced by a

poorhouse that housed only paupers. Built in 1768 “to better accommodate the poor and to relieve them of the company of disorderly offenders”, there were no runaway slaves and disorderly persons since they remained in the old facility.¹³

It is entirely plausible that no work would have been done by the poor, even if they had been able-bodied (which they were not), since until 1768 many able-bodied slaves who could have performed any needed work were housed in the workhouse undergoing “correction”. Littlefield reconstructed the annual numbers of runaways for the province as well as estimates of the numbers recaptured (and housed in the workhouse until claimed or sold.) Littlefield’s data allows an estimate of the number that might have been “corrected” in the workhouse on an annual basis. Allowing 30 days per slave to be sold or reclaimed, it is reasonable to think there would always be at least a half dozen or so housed there at any particular time.

Table V-4 Estimate of Runaway Slaves Housed in Workhouse/Per Year¹⁴

Year	Annual Number of Runaways	Estimated Number Recaptured and Housed in WH, per year (40%)
1739	64	26
1749	62	25
1759	85	34
1769	104	42

¹³ David J. McCord, *The Statutes at Large of South Carolina* (Columbia, S.C., 1840, VII), 90.

¹⁴ Daniel Littlefield, *Rice and Slaves: Ethnicity and the Slave Trade in Colonial South Carolina* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1991).

On the question of whether work was required of the residents, there were over the 26 year period covered by the church wardens' account books exactly two references to work, both in 1743. On August 1, 1743, the entry "By cash, for 25 lb oakum sold Hopton and Smith @ 2/6 pr. -£3.2.6." Hopton and Smith was the firm owned by Richard Hopton and Benjamin Smith who were vestrymen operating slave trading and merchant vessels. Oakum was made of the loose fibers obtained by unpicking old ropes which were sold to shipbuilders. The fibers were mixed with pine tar and used for caulking the hulls of ships. Before wire ropes, all rigging on ships was made of hemp rope. As old ropes aged and weakened and were replaced, they were cut into lengths and recycled. "Picking oakum" was the term used for the work required to untwist by hand the old rope until it was reduced to fibers. A continuous oakum caulk strip was then twisted back together in a loose strand. This work was very hard on the fingers and was typically performed by slaves, prisoners, or by poor in asylums and workhouses. The second entry was on September 15, 1743: "Paid 500 ft. Cable for the Workhouse to be picked into Oakum-- £17.10.0." While these transactions suggest that additional records are missing (the purchase of cable followed the sale of oakum), the amounts were only a fraction of the poor relief expenses for 1743.

Guest examined the colonial records of outdoor relief in Somerset County, Maryland, and concluded that the poor in that county posed no threat to the community as proponents of social control theorists have argued. Outdoor relief was simply more efficient than building poorhouses and staffing them in a small rural community. Guest concluded that any change in poor relief practices was not due to any great social transformation of attitudes toward the poor, but rather to the economics of poor relief.

Nash found that the Philadelphia, Boston, and New York almshouses did effectively reduce expenses when first erected, but these institutions were devoted to long-term care, not to serving able-bodied paupers. Nash reports that the Philadelphia hospital, a facility adjacent to but separate from the workhouse, effectively reduced workhouse expenses by reducing disability and dependency due to treatable illness.¹⁵

If the workhouse did not slow the growth of expenses, save money on a per case basis, nor provide better, more effective care, then why did the vestry continue to fund it?

Moreover, why call it a “workhouse” when few occupants were able to work? Charles Town in the eighteenth century was a city of paradox: the splendor of its mansions and squalor of its narrow streets, back alleys and slave quarters; its cruel slavery and its unequaled religious tolerance and freedoms; its grinding poverty and extreme wealth.

The preamble to the 1736 Act mirrors this contradiction. It expresses the desire to reduce the suffering of the sick and the poor, “ a most laudable work which should be encouraged.”¹⁶ However, following that aim, the remainder of the legislation instructs wardens of the workhouse in limiting the number of “stripes” to be given on the bare back to nineteen per day. In the same manner that prisons are thought to deter criminals from crime, the workhouse was designed to deter the poor from its use. All paupers who had formerly received cash payments directly from the church wardens were directed to the workhouse. In theory, by housing, feeding, and sheltering the poor

¹⁵ Gary B. Nash, “Poverty and Poor relief in Pre-Revolutionary Philadelphia,” *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 33, (1976): 8. By curing the sick workers and mariners, expenses for maintaining sick poor were avoided. Cases from Charles Town being sent to the workhouse/hospital were rare.

¹⁶ Microfilm of original in SCDH; Nicholas Trott, *South Carolina Laws* (mfm.). See Appendix F for selected sections of the Act.

together and by offsetting the facility costs by the earnings of the occupants, labor, the parish would save. The most important feature of this plan was the concept that the poor would pay for their own maintenance out of the earnings from their labor. By its adoption of an official, if not universal, policy of institutional bias by funding only care at the workhouse, the vestry knew that only those with no choice in the matter would accept care. Some would rather die in the streets and many probably did.

In Charles Town, transients, immigrants and soldiers' widows were more likely to be separated from the community by being placed in the workhouse. Non-resident poor were five times more likely to be relieved in the workhouse than resident poor in the period covered by the church wardens accounts.

The Several Parish & Transient poor & the Widows of Soldiers & their childⁿ. being turned out both of the Barracks it was agreed that the Church Wardens do hire Rooms in order to accommodate them not exceeding the rate of forty Shillings Pr. Month... (V.M., 2 Jan., 1769).

.... The case of John Fryer late of Christ Church Parish who has been maintained in our Workhouse Ever since 28 June, 1756.... Has applied for Relieve out of the Worke House and that a Doctor may be employed who he thinks can cure him.... (V.M., 7 August, 1758).

The petition of Mary Pope Setting forth That she is a stranger in this place without friends or Money with three children to maintain and praying relief was read. And agreed That she have the Liberty to reside at one of the Tenements at the Workhouse and the Church Wardens relieve her at their discretion (V.M., 6 August, 1753).

Table V-5 Residency Status and the Workhouse

Residency Type Relief	<u>N</u>	Category %
<u>Resident Poor</u>		
On Parish	216	23.5
Present Relief	668	70
Workhouse	72	7.5
Total Resident	956	100
<u>Non-Resident Poor</u>		
On Parish	4	3
Present Relief	73	60
Workhouse	45	37
Total Non-Resident	122	100
Total All	1078	

Source: Church Wardens' Account Books-1725-1751

In the absence of surviving correspondence or debate on these matters, the distinction between outdoor relief and indoor relief in Charles Town is probably the result of differences in the residency status, age, and ability to work of those in need. Neighbors, friends, and relatives burnt out by the fire were entitled to a different status from that of immigrants, seamen, and soldiers. Outdoor relief was provided to the “worthy;” the workhouse was offered to others. Impacted by population growth, immigration, and mobility, the former methods of relief consisting of cash payments to the poor and/or boarding the poor in the homes of neighbors were less acceptable. Giving cash to or boarding neighbors was acceptable, but giving money to itinerant poor or boarding aliens or strangers was looked on entirely differently. Despite the 1738 order to remove all the poor to the workhouse, Charles Town’s vestrymen continued to rely overwhelmingly on outdoor relief throughout the period:

Table V-6 Annual Number of Recipients of Outdoor Relief Compared to
Workhouse Residents¹⁷

Fiscal Year	N Outdoor Relief Recipients	N Workhouse Residents	Total
38	45	5	50
39	20		20
40	95		95
41	9	4	13
42	8	12	20
43	22	2	24
44	18	3	21
45	69		69
46	52	1	53
47	28	24	52
48	39	12	51
49	111	1	112
50	79	3	82
51	103	33	136
52	22	5	27
53	15	5	20
54	44	10	54
56	175	2	177
57	55	1	56
58	46	10	56
59	60	2	62
60	16	9	25
61	14	2	16
62	16	18	34
63	26		26
64	13		13
65	50	6	56
66	78	31	124
67	25		25
68	85	1	88
69	27	21	48
70	56	1	57
71	70	4	74
72	61	2	63
73	29	1	30
74	75	2	77
75	55	2	57

¹⁷ The source of this Table is the file of unduplicated recipients listed in the vestry minutes and the church wardens' accounts. It is incomplete after 1751 because of the missing account books. Residents of the "barracks" are shown as workhouse residents.

The term “workhouse” evokes visions of foreboding, monolithic and menacing asylums designed to isolate poor unfortunates. This chapter instead finds a distinction between poor relief policy and laws and practice. In spite of the use of the term “confined to the workhouse,” for most residents the boundaries were quite porous and unless the inmates were runaways, the facility was not designed to control or establish the moral authority of the elite. A constant stream of purveyors, merchants, physicians, workers, and residents flowed through the doors of the facility. It is significant that the workhouse neither discouraged the poor from applying for relief nor resulted in reduced costs for poor relief. Both numbers of poor relieved and annual expenditures increased throughout the period. The workhouse did not do what it was intended to do. The vestry overwhelmingly continued to rely on outdoor relief throughout the period in clear violation of the 1736 Act. The large slave population in Charles Town decidedly influenced decisions to institutionalize the poor. Because of the correctional role and the housing of fugitives, there was little room for the poor. Slaves, seamen, and runaway servants filled the workhouse. Moreover, there was continual disruption from the correction of these runaways. It is noteworthy therefore, that, at least until 1751, poor residents received adequate care. There is little evidence that poor persons housed in the facility performed much work, a distinct departure from workhouse practices in Philadelphia, Boston and New York.¹⁸

¹⁸ Wiberley, “Four Cities,” 199.

CHAPTER VI- MEDICAL, PUBLIC HEALTH, AND MENTAL HEALTH CARE OF THE POOR

The following account is based upon entries in the church wardens' account book. This case pre-dated the construction of the hospital. Isaac Codner, age 19, a rigger working on board HMS Flamborough in the mainmast rigging had fallen, badly fracturing his leg. After two weeks Codner's leg became "Mortified." Single and with no immediate family, Codner could not afford the expense of medical care. The church wardens "provided a house and procured his leg...to be cutt off." Arneman provides an account of such a surgical nightmare experienced by a woman undergoing a mastectomy in this pre-anesthesia period.¹

A cambric handkerchief was placed over her face. Through its thin transparency she was able to observe the physician make his initial incision. She screamed out with excruciating pain and from that time until the seventeen-minute procedure was over, she kept her eyelids closed so tightly that she thought her eyelids would be indented into her cheeks. During the procedure she felt the surgeon's knife cutting into her flesh, followed by the scalpel scraping the bones of her chest...

¹ Gordon W. Jones, ed., *The Angel of Bethesda by Cotton Mather* (Barre, Massachusetts: American Antiquarian Society and Barre Publishers, 1972), xxv-xxix. From Dana Arneman, "The Medical History of Colonial South Carolina," (Ph.D. diss., University of South Carolina, 1996), 14-15.

Figure VI-1 The Case of Isaac Codner²

The Case of Isaac Codner, Outdoor relief 1734/35 Reconstructed from Church Wardens' Accounts		
The Parish of St. Philips Charlestown- Jo ⁿ Laurens and James Osmond		
Church Wardens		
1734		
Jan 20	to Atterlony and Codner ~~~~~~	£4:0:0
27	to Isaac Codner ~~~~~~	£3:0:0
	to linnen for cutting his legg off ~ ~	~£3:15:0
Feb 3	to wine at Cutting Codner's legg ~	£1:0:0
4	to Isaac Codner ~~~~~~	£3:0:0
	to Eggs and Vineigre to Drefs	
	his legg at Sundry Times ~~~~	~£1:0:0
March 3	to Isaac Codner ~~~~~~	£3:0:0
10	to Isaac Codner ~~~~~~	£3:0:0
17	to Isaac Codner ~~~~~~	£3:0:0
	to a pair of Crutches for Codner ~	£0:10:0
24	to Isaac Codner ~~~~~~	£3:0:0
1735		
28	to Doc ^t Turner for his year's Salary ~	£100:0:0
	to D ^o for his Extraordinary troubles	£15:0:0
	about Codner's legg	
James Fowler and James Osmond, Church Wardens		
April 7 th	To Issac Codner from 7 th April to 19 th May,	
	1735 is 6 weeks @ 40/ ~~~~~~	£12:0:0
May 19 th	To Cash for making a Wooden Legg for ditto	£2:10:0

² This ledger was constructed by the researcher from the CWA, using the method described in Appendix B. £3 per week was paid by the church warden directly to Codner. In turn, Codner paid for room and board from this amount.

Early in the history of the colony, Charlestonians were faced with the problem of caring for their poor neighbors, victims of a myriad of calamities. The accounts of the time graphically described the year 1699.

“The swelling sea rushed in with amazing impetuosity, and obliged the inhabitants to fly for shelter to the second stories of their houses. A great fire laid most of the town in ashes. Few families escaped a share of the public calamities. Almost all were lamenting the loss, either of their habitations by the devouring flames or of friends or relations by the infectious and loathsome maladies. Discouragement and despair sat on every countenance. Many of the survivors could think of nothing but abandoning a country on which the judgments of heaven seemed to fall so heavy, and in which there was so little prospect of success, health or happiness.”³

A letter of the time describes the smallpox epidemic:

“..... the whole country is full of trouble and sickness, ‘tis the Small pox which has been mortal to all sorts of the inhabitants and especially the Indians who ‘tis said to have swept away a whole neighboring nation, all to 5 or 6 which ran away and left their dead unburied, lying upon the ground for the vultures to devour; beside the want of shipping this fall winter and the spring is the cause another trouble, and has been followed by an earthquake and burning of equal value with what remains, besides the great loss of cattle which I know by what has been found dead of mine and being over stocked, what all these things put together makes the place look with a terrible aspect and none knows what will be the end of it,”⁴

The vestry found themselves responsible for the medical care of poor from the entire province. “An act for the Better Relief of the Poor (1712),” provided that pauper sick were to have the “assistance of Physicians and Medicines proper for their

³ Alexander Hewatt, *An Historical Account of the Rise and Progress of South Carolina and Georgia* (London, 1722) in B.R. Carroll, *Historical Collections of South Carolina* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1836), 82.

⁴ Edward McCrady, *The History of South Carolina under the Proprietary Government, 1670-1719* (London: MacMillan, 1897), 308.

recovery.”⁵ The first provision for a temporary hospital to care for poor afflicted citizens was provided for during the Yemassee War of 1715:⁶

“Capt. Henry Quintyne reported from the Committee appointed to view the Hospital; That they had (according to order) viewed the same, and were of Opinion that the persons now there should be allowed three months provisions in corn and beef, and that after the expiration thereof, they be discharged from the Hospital, and provide for themselves, at such places as the Government shall direct; and that those persons who are sick there should be provided with all convenient necessities...”

Church wardens accounts as early as 1725 indicate that medical care of the poor was administered through the vestry. Various doctors received payment for treatment of cases; however, all of the sick were cared for on an outpatient basis in private homes.⁷ Owners were contracted with by the vestry for lodging, feeding, and nursing the sick poor.

“Frederick Hoffman who has lost the use of his hands,” “Richard Smith, a poor man without legs,” and “Mary Dubberly...being lame with rheumatism” were among the many sufferers with a permanent disability that petitioned the vestrymen for assistance (V.M., 6 April, 1767; 3 July, 1749; 3 June, 1751). Michael Shirer was typical of these dependents:

The vestry agreed to allow a poor Lame man/named Michael Shirrer Twenty five pounds currency (V.M., 23 June, 1764).

Agreed to allow Michael Shirer Ten Pounds for his Mother in Law to be paid him by the Church Wardens (V.M., 6 Aug., 1769).

⁵ Cooper and McCord, *Statutes*, 1712.

⁶ *Commons House Journal*, Wednesday, 24 August, 1715, 4:448.

⁷ St. Philip’s Church, Charleston, M^s Church Warden’s Accounts, 1725-1750 (In possession of Church, Charleston), 1725.

Agreed to allow Michael Shirer to the Amount of Ten Pounds for the relief at the discretion of the Church Wardens (V.M., 15 April, 1765).

Agreed to allow Michael Shirer 40/per month from this Instant (V.M., 15 July, 1765).

Agreed to augment Michael Shirers allowance to £4 per month to commence from this date & to give his wife £10 to buy necessarys (V.M., 26 Aug., 1765).

Because there was no form of insurance to guard against debilitating sickness, many parish members were thrown upon the vestry for support in time of illness. Aid to the sick poor was one of the most common forms of poor relief in Charles Town. Even after the workhouse/hospital was opened in 1738, outdoor relief of the sick poor continued. Nurses and room and board were contracted for by the church wardens:

Agreed the Mulattos and free slaves at present sick of the small pox be relieved at the discretion of the Church Wardens (V.M., 22 March, 1760).

Whereas David Duncan an industrious man was much hurt by a trunk being thrown upon him out of a house near to a place where a fire was some time ago & (*words here not legible*) left no prospect of being cured in this province has made application to the vestry to assist him in going to Edinburgh & in getting into the Infirmary in that place (V.M., 14 Aug., 1758).

Duncan's case is remarkable in that while many of the Charles Town physicians trained in Europe's best universities, in some cases the skills of the local physician was insufficient to effect a cure.

Outpatient care was deemed inadequate and the need for hospital care of Charles Town's sick poor was petitioned for in 1734 (V.M., 6 Jan., 1734). A combined institution was opened in 1738 to serve as a public hospital and workhouse to care for the poor. Now the parish officers were no longer obliged "to take up with very poor. Accommodation of Lodging & etc for Sick Persons, and at very extravagant Price, to the great Trouble of said officers, suffering of the Sick Persons, and the enhancement of the Parish Charge (V.M., 6 Jan., 1734)." At least the wardens considered the suffering

of the sick as well as the problems they caused for the administration of relief.

Regardless of the Assembly's plans for the workhouse, in 1738 when it opened its doors Charles Town's citizens saw the facility as primarily a hospital. In the midst of a terrible epidemic of small pox, the following announcement appeared in the Gazette: ⁸

Whereas the number of Poor and Sick daily increases, and thedifficulty ... of providing nurses is very extraordinary. This is to give notice that the Church Wardens have hired an House and provided proper Attendance for the Reception of those...

On a list of inmates of the Workhouse in 1739, there appeared nine patients: a man with dropsy, a young man lame and foolish, a child just weaned, a pregnant woman, a lame man always in bed, a boy three years old, a lame woman and her child, and a very old woman (V.M., 13 Jan., 1739). The vestrymen admittedly had reservations about sending patients to the workhouse for hospital treatment, because of the "continual Noise and Disturbance, Cursing and Swearing," which went on in the institution (V.M., 1 June, 1749). In one instance the church wardens were directed to make room in the hospital for two ill parishioners, "if they be inclined to go there (V.M., 12 June, 1747)." Garrisons' *History of Medicine* describes a typical hospital of the time:

Acute contagious diseases were often in close relation to mild cases, vermin and filth abounded, and the ventilation was often so abominable that the attendants and inspectors would not enter in the morning without a sponge dipped in vinegar held to their faces . Septic fever and other infections were the rule. The average mortality was about 20 percent, and recovery from surgical operations was, in the nature of things, a rarity.⁹

⁸ South Carolina Gazette, 3 August 1738.

⁹ F.H. Garrison, *An Introduction to the History of Medicine*, 4th edition (Philadelphia: W.B. Sauders and Company, 1929), 400.

The Charles Town Hospital was probably not very unlike the one described above. There are some instances where the vestrymen made efforts to improve conditions of the sickly poor. On July 13, 1761 a pound of sugar was ordered to be sent weekly to the workhouse for use by the sick, and periodically sheets, bedding, and clothing were sent over (V.M., 13 July, 1761). In addition to the workhouse, Waring mentions several private hospitals in existence at the time, one a hospital for “sick Negroes opened by apothecaries.”¹⁰

In spite of the dangers, patients were regularly referred for hospital care. John Fleming, “afflicted with Scorbutic Diseases”; Ephriam Rice, “being weak and low;” Sarah Hill, a woman with diseased toes; and John McDougall, who was “cutt on” by the parish doctor, were all typical cases (V.M., 9 March, 1752; 23 July, 1766; 14 Jan., 1773; 15 Oct., 1759).

It can be said of the medical care of the poor afforded by the vestrymen, that it was not much, if any, worse than the best care that was available at the time. One might assume that, given the vestrymen’s community-mindedness, often parishioners were sent to the hospital as a precaution to prevent the spread of disease and to preserve public health, rather than to receive individual treatment. In consideration of prevailing practices and advancement of medical science of the time, the vestrymen were humanitarian in their treatment of the poor requiring hospitalization. Nash maintains that the hospital in Philadelphia was “an uncommon success” since it benefited the pauper and the taxpayer alike by curing the sick poor and keeping them off relief roles.

¹⁰ Joseph Ioor Waring, *A History of Medicine in South Carolina, 1670-1825* (Charleston: South Carolina Medical Association, 1964), 57.

There is no evidence in Charles Town for the sort of effectiveness claimed by Nash for the Philadelphia facility. Most of the patients in Philadelphia were “restored to the labor force.”¹¹ In contrast, the conditions in the Charles Town facility deteriorated over time. By the 1760s the original workhouse was replaced, but a private society made plans to construct its own hospital for the sick poor because of the “poor accommodations”.¹²

Waring, the historian of South Carolina’s physicians and medical care, stated that “a number of reputable names are associated with the post of Physician and Surgeon to the Parish and Transient Poor.”¹³ These physicians were contracted for by the vestry annually.¹⁴ The following agreements are typical:

This serves to acknowledge that I Doctor Joseph Gaultier of Charlestown Surgeon have agreed and contracted with Robert Pringle and John Guerard Chruch Wardens of the Parish of St. Philip’s Charlestown aforesaid, that I do Hereby Bind and Oblige myself as fully as by Authentick Obligation whatever, to visit, attend, take proper care of, and supply with good and proper medicines, the poor of the Said Parish at the workhouse of St. Philip’s Parish. And in Case there are any Persons that their Distempers require extra-ordinary attendance and expensive medicines, such as Salivations &c and if I should be obliged to visit or attend sick Persons that are upon the Parish, and not at the Workhouse, in both such cases, I expect to be allowed for the same, as to the vestry shall seem reasonable (V.M., 15 June, 1741).

¹¹ Nash, “Poverty and Poor Relief in Philadelphia,” 7-8.

¹² The Fellowship Society, *Rules of the Fellowship Society* (Charleston, S.C., 1859), VII.

¹³ Joseph Ioor Waring, “Medical Care of the Poor in Colonial South Carolina,” *Annals of Medical History*, New Series, Vol. IV, No. 3: 285.

¹⁴ The parish physician attended sick at the workhouse, probably providing outpatient care to many sick poor who were not workhouse residents. As the contract with Dr. Gaultier indicates, the physician also made house calls. In Appendix A, physician costs are included as workhouse expenses, in part because the CWA usually accounted for them as being for the poor at the workhouse.

Doctr. Milligan having applied to be appointed Parish Doctr. It is Agreed ... to take care of the Poor & Sick in and Out of the Workhouse on the Parish Charge , as is directed by the Church Wardens for which he shall be allowed One Hundred & Eighty Pounds pr Ann. If he shall be at Extraordinary Trouble in Fractures or using Expensive medicines such as in Salivations he shall be allowed for the same (V.M., May 3, 1750).

The Vestry taking into Consideration the burdensomeness of the poor to the Inhabitants of the parish proposed that the Church Wardens should wait on Dr. Garden to know if he would not abate something off his Salary as Parish Doctor as they imagined that his great practice otherwise would induce him to lay down such troublesome Office and that some young Practitioner would undertake it on more moderate terms (V.M., July 2, 1759).¹⁵

The vestry felt the need to prescribe treatment themselves in certain cases where the physician's art was not sufficient to effect cure:

It have been represented that Andrew Physick, Carpenter, was almost cured by the Doctor, but by his drinking his sore leg was grown something worse, The Gentlemen of the Vestry sent for him, and ordered that he should refrain From drinking for the future, and go back to the workhouse and be perfectly Cured (V.M., 13 June, 1743).

Apparently the vestrymen hadn't much confidence in the doctors or were reticent to pay doctor bills. A poor widow begged "their charity to pay the Doctors and to pay for a Coffin &c." The church wardens were "directed to give her Five Pounds Currency to pay Mr. Claypoole for the Coffin (V.M., 6 Dec., 1760). On September 29, 1766, the vestrymen were evidently in a rare mood of humor. The minutes include the following pun: "Agreed, that Richard Elliott (a young man subject to fitts) be sent to the workhouse, and that Mr. Holson be desired to inspect into the Nature of his fitts, in order to discover if they be real or Counterfitt (V.M., 29 Sept., 1766)."

¹⁵ Alexander Garden was among the pre-eminent scientists and physicians of his time. He was among the first to vaccinate for smallpox and was expert in treating infectious diseases. Garden was also a noted botanist. Linnaeus named the *Gardenia* after Garden.

Public Health and the Poor

The death and misery caused by widespread contagions and vectors was made even more frightening since their causes were unknown. The association with the seasons, with bad air, bad water, and bad food, and the arrival of immigrant loaded ships was noted, but preventive measures were erratic. Some of the first actions by the Assembly addressed sanitation and quarantine, two basic public health interventions. In 1692, the Assembly prohibited swine from running loose in the streets. Pigs were an effective remedy for the problem of garbage and wastes thrown in the streets, but they added to the filth of the town's environment. In 1698 an ordinance required the inspection of incoming vessels to assure there was no contagious disease on board.

The first public care for diseased immigrants and seamen was confined to the hot, mosquito-infested sands of Sullivan's Island where the poor sick with communicable diseases were often left to die. The large numbers of sailors and transients and the threat of epidemic disease led the Assembly to establish the Sullivan's Island facility in 1744.¹⁶ The brick facility on Sullivan's Island was aptly labeled the "Pest House;" for it was above all a public health measure, not a humanitarian treatment center.

That the church wardens pay Mr. Motte his expense of twenty shillings for Sending down a Negroe Wench who has the Leprosye to the Pest House and Also pay the charges of keeping her there which is 15 shillings per week and provide a gown for her (V.M., 1 June, 1747).

Merchant ships and ships of His Majesty's Fleet crowded the Charles Town port, at times leaving many sick and diseased mariners at the mercy of the vestry. For a time such cases as the 'mariner with a venereal disorder,' and the "poor sailor who lost

¹⁶ Fraser, *Charleston!*, 78.

an arm and a leg” were taken care of at the workhouse hospital. However, by the year 1750 another hospital had been built by the vestrymen to accommodate distressed seamen.

“Whereas, the harbouring and entertaining of great numbers of sick sailors others, sent on shore either from his Majesty’s ships of war or from merchant ships, in the several little punch houses, in the most crowded and confined parts of Charlestown, hath proved very offensive and injurious to many of the inhabitants of the said town, who either dwell in the neighborhood or are obliged to pass that way on their proper business, by reason of the noisome smells emitted from the nursing, provisions and accommodations those miserable objects generally find in such sort of lodgings, and the great mortality amongst them consequent thereupon, must necessarily tend to propagate and increase all infectious, contagious, and malignant diseases as well such as may be may arise from a particular constitution of the air in this place, which epidemic distempers have often proved greatly detrimental to the trade and commerce of this Province, as well as highly destructive of the lives of its inhabitants and the generality of new comers;....”

“.... Churchwardens and vestry of the parish of St. Philip, Charlestown, shall procure or hire some convenient house, in an open and airy place Charlestown, which house shall be deemed and taken to be a public hospital for all sick sailors and other transient persons... And that the same be committed to the care and management of some sober, prudent, and discreet matron, who shall have under her such assistant nurses, servants, and others, as the necessity of the times may require....”¹⁷

More people died than there were births to replace them (Table II-3). This remarkable statistic, grim as it may seem, combined with the knowledge that Charles Town’s population continued to grow, reveals a frightening fact: deaths among poor immigrants were the higher than any other category. The effects of the harsh passage killed many before they disembarked in Charles Town. Then, in a weakened condition, the survivors were exposed to a variety of ailments for which they had no immunity. Sick immigrants fed the mosquitoes thriving in the nearby marshes, enabling yellow

¹⁷ Cooper and McCord, *Statutes*, Vol. III, 720.

fever and malaria to spread. Yellow fever was a dreadful disease. A sudden onset of fever, chills, muscle pain, and nausea rendered the victim unable to care for himself. Jaundice gave the patient a yellow hue to his skin. By the fourth day hemorrhagic symptoms emerged, including bleeding from the mouth and nose and vomiting blood. The only good thing about yellow fever was that death was quick.¹⁸

Another fearsome disease was the extremely contagious viral affliction smallpox, which almost always killed or seriously disfigured its victims, but caused a lingering and excruciating demise. While the initial victim suffered, the virulent disease was passed to others. Because the population was not large to sustain endemic disease, Charles Town “only” suffered major epidemics in 1711, 1738, and 1760.¹⁹ Most outbreaks occurred when a ship with infected passengers arrived. Charles Town physician James Kilpatrick was among the first to employ variolation, where a healthy person was injected with fluid from an infected person. Only about 5% of the cases undergoing variolation expired.²⁰

Malaria, on the other hand, was endemic, that is, it was present in the population always. Endemic diseases killed poor newcomers because they were not “seasoned” or had no developed immunity. Other endemic diseases common to new immigrants that were almost always poor were dysentery, and pneumonia. Endemic diseases, though not as terrifying as smallpox and yellow fever, killed more poor in colonial Charles Town.

¹⁸ John Duffy, *Epidemics in Colonial America* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1953), 138-163.

¹⁹ Duffy, *Epidemics*. 295 died of 1,675 infected in 1738.

²⁰ Ibid.

Twelve year-old Susannah headed out of the stifling heat of the pottery on a dead run, not minding the chafing of the heavy basket against her knees.²¹ July in Charles Town was hot enough without being cooped up in Mr. Lea's shop while the kiln was being fired. As she negotiated the maze of alleys on her way to the market, she was almost overcome by the swarms of flies and the stench of the nearby necessities and horse stables at the rear of the city lots. Once on Church Street, she slowed to a brisk walk. Going to the market was the best part of her usually drudgery filled day and now she was in no hurry. The market was at the corner of Broad and Meeting Streets and to get there she hopped a ditch running behind the vendors' stalls. At low tide the ditch was nothing but stagnant sludge with a rivulet of green water. The same slow-moving Vanderhorst Creek ran by her master's pottery shop, across Church Street, and turned into a culvert behind the market. At night in the loft where Susannah slept the windows were always shut tightly against the swarms of mosquitoes that seemed to be everywhere this time of year but especially around tidal creeks and marshes with standing water.

Outside the market stalls she dodged a cart pushed by a black oysterman. Slave vendors were everywhere in and about the market, manning stalls with fish, shrimp, crabs and vegetables. A single city dwelling slave could earn more for his owner hawking wares near the market than a gang of plantation workers in a rice field. Some slaves who could write could make their own "tickets" virtually becoming small businessmen, much to the dismay of local merchants. The meat hanging in the stalls was covered with black flies. Butchers slaughtered animals on the spot and vendors

²¹ Susannah Basset was a "free negroe girle" apprenticed to John Lea, turner, and his wife. See Appendix B.

tossed offal, waste, and rancid meat into the ditch. High tide flushed garbage, excrement, and wastes down the rude drain and into the Vanderhorst Creek. Neither Susannah nor other Charlestonians recognized that bacteria from these creeks polluted the drinking water causing the “bloody flux,” dysentery, and a myriad of troubles. Nevertheless, some Charlestonians observed the remarkable correlation of disease and weather. Lionel Chalmers’ research includes a six page long fold-out section containing monthly average temperature and rainfall for a ten year period: “For as I have observed, the ftated Epidemic Distempers of this climate are generally pretty fimilar in the corresponding feasons.”²²

A greater exposure to communicable and vector borne diseases were not the only risks that poor persons faced. Living in overcrowded, deplorable sanitary conditions and drinking contaminated water were other hazards. The health perils associated with the unending toil, malnutrition, inferior clothing and shelter and exposure to contaminated water and food killed more of Charles Town’s lower sort than mosquitoes and smallpox germs. The demise of immigrants doubtlessly greatly inflated the Charles Town death rate, but it is impossible to estimate the number of transients and non-residents and the proportion of the total population these groups comprised. While the denominator is unknown, it is clear from the St. Philip’s register that almost half of all deaths were non-residents and poor. When combined with the high death rates of poor, the excessive mortality of immigrants and transients (Tables

²² Lionel Chalmers, *Account of the Weather and Diseases of South Carolina* (London: 1776). Chalmers was also the surgeon who removed Mary Gloud’s leg detailed in the next chapter.

II-7, II-8, and II-10) makes it possible that poor were three or four times more likely to die than the well-to-do.

Care of Persons Disordered in Their Senses²³

For nearly a year Kate's bizarre behavior had concerned her fellow slaves and her owners living in a tiny rice plantation along the banks of the Santee River. When in June, 1745 she murdered a slave child belonging to Jonah Collins, Esq., no one was shocked:

Read the Petition of William Whiteside and Paul Trapier, two of his Majesty's Justices appointed to preserve the Peace in Craven County (setting forth) that on the eighth day of June last a Negro Wench, the property of Robert Fullwood of Craven County, was committed to Gaol by Precept under the hands and Seals of Petitioners in order to be brought to her Tryal for the Murder of a Negro Child...²⁴

When the day of her trial came, she appeared to be "out of her senses."

Rather than stand trial, Kate was remanded back to the local gaol. The case was further complicated in that:

Robert Fullwood , Ownerwas a very poor Man with a large family not able... to bear the cost of maintaining her in so long a confinement....That the Petitioners are at a Loss how to Act in this unprecedented Case, as it did not appear ...that any Law had provided for poor creatures under such miserable Circumstances, nor could the said justices discharge the said Negro Wench without manifest Danger to some of his Majesty's subjects...

²³ The general outline and some of the detail of this chapter is based upon *Moonlight, Magnolias and Madness* by Peter McCandless. Peter McCandless, *Moonlight, Magnolias, and Madness: Insanity in South Carolina from the Colonial Period to the Progressive Era* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1996).

²⁴ J. H. Easterby, ed., *The Journal of the Commons House of Assembly, September 10, 1745-June 17, 1746* (Columbia South Carolina Archives Department, 1956), 43-45.

The House recommended that “a Sum not exceeding forty Pounds” be provided for Kate’s maintenance. If Kate had been white, and there had been no family to care for her, Whiteside and Trapier would not have had to petition for her care—she would have been the responsibility of her local parish vestry and the poor tax would have paid for the expenses. Unlike many poor sick residents of the backcountry without family who were sent to Charles Town for medical care, as far as is known, Kate never received care outside Craven County. As it was, the absence of specific authority to remedy the suffering of poor creatures like Kate prompted the very first South Carolina law (1745) dealing with the care of the insane.²⁵ The fact that it was the response to the plight of a poor black slave woman is significant. While the Act addressed the impractical assumption that masters would be able to provide for mentally ill slaves, it did nothing to remedy the greater need for provisions for persons disordered in their senses. Like other provincial poor persons cared for by a local parish, the family situation dictated governmental care and intervention. If a family or in Kate’s case, an owner, had the means to care for the person, they were expected to do so. The recognition that special care was warranted even for a female slave who admitted to murder is also noteworthy.

On January 22, 1759, Doctor Hall, “A Poor Man that Mr. Roper has Relieved which was brought here by Capt. Carpenter from Rhode Island and left here” appeared before the vestry. The vestry “thought he was not in his Senses” and ordered the church wardens to relieve him. On January 29, 1759, the vestry ordered the church wardens to “provide and pay for the passage to Bristol of Doctr Hall, a poor man out of

²⁵ Thomas Cooper and David J. McCord, eds., *The South Carolina Statutes At Large*, 10 vols. (Columbia, SC 1836-41), 3: 647.

his Senses who desires to be sent thither where is his home.” In the meantime, the vestry ordered that “he may be maintained in the Workhouse in a Decent manner & allow him five Shillings pr day and Cloath him as they see Necessary”(V.M., January 22, 29, 1759).

According to Garrison, the treatment of the insane in the eighteenth century was less advanced than the management of surgical and medical cases.²⁶ Gamwell and Tomes recount the medieval origin of many medical treatments common in the eighteenth century that were based on the four bodily humors: blood, phlegm, choler, and black bile.²⁷ An imbalance in the four humors might result in a person being overly sanguine, phlegmatic, choleric, or melancholic. In contrast, a belief in spirit possession also influenced popular thinking about mental states. The Church taught that demons could take possession of a person’s mind and body. Cotton Mather, in his early writings on the subject of madness, emphasized demonic possession. Later, Mather dwelt on physical means of cure: bleeding, purges, and herbal remedies.²⁸ Therefore, the prevailing viewpoint in the colonies was a mixture of natural and supernatural explanations and treatments.

Charles Town, as other colonial cities, has been described largely in Anglo-American historical terms. This perspective has absolutely ignored the rich contributions to the low country regional culture coming from native American

²⁶ Garrison, *Medicine*, 401.

²⁷ Lynn Gamwell and Nancy Tomes, *Madness in America: Cultural and Medical Perceptions of Mental Illness before 1914* (Binghamton: Cornell University Press, 1998), 15.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 17.

populations and Africa. If the culture of present day Charleston can best be understood as a blend of English, Huguenot, African, and native America, then why would these diverse influences not be stronger in the mid-eighteenth century? It is likely that the understanding of mental illness in Charles Town in 1750 was a tapestry depicting the influence of God, the devil, the supernatural, native shaman, Anglo-American medicine and voodoo root doctor. By 1750 blacks from Africa outnumbered Europeans, and Indian traders criss-crossed the interior trading kettles, rum, pipes, and beads for hogsheads of deerskins valued in excess of the total exports of all of the rice, timber, indigo, and naval stores leaving Charles Town.²⁹ The prosperity of Charles Town at mid-century had been achieved from trade with native tribes rather than on the backs of African slaves. Of course, that circumstance changed dramatically by 1760; nevertheless, there was a heavy native influence in Charles Town culture that persists even today entwined with African traditions.³⁰

McCandless reports that early South Carolina had two methods adopted from English Law to provide for insane persons whose families were unable to provide for them.³¹ First, a commission on lunacy would be initiated through a petition to the court. The destructiveness of some lunatics prompted the vestry to intervene in the interests of safety and economy:

²⁹ Verner Winslow Crane, *The Southern Frontier: 1670-1732*. (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1981), 110.

³⁰ In 1973 as a student intern in the Department of Psychiatry at the Medical University of South Carolina, I witnessed the work of the noted “root doctors” Crow, Buzzard, and Eagle—all on retainer to provide sundry potions and incantations designed to counteract the spells of other traditional medical practitioners.

³¹ Peter McCandless, *Moonlight, Magnolias, and Madness: Insanity in South Carolina from the Colonial Period to the Progressive Era* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 18-20.

That Peter Calvert an Inhabitant and shopkeeper in this Town for some years past has appeared for a long time to be much disordered in his senses altogether incapable of taking proper care either of his own Person or his Effects, and by various instances of his Behavior and extravagant action such as firing Pistols out of his window at night to the Danger of Peoples lives, is become a terror to the neighborhood where he resides.

And whereupon the said Peter Calvert is now possessed of Sufficient Effects for his maintenance under proper care and management, but which is his present condition he may squander away and so become burthensome to this Parish. We therefore humbly Pray that your Excellency and Honours will be pleased to issue a writ of inquest and that a proper jury may be summoned to Enquire into the present State and Condition of the said Peter Calvert to whom it shall appear on the report of said inquest That you will also please to appoint a Guardian or Guardians to take Proper care and management as well of the person of the said Peter Calvert as his estate and Effects (V.M., 9 Oct., 1749).

The first mechanism was designed for propertied or dangerous lunatics. The commission on lunacy was of little help in cases where there was no property or funds to provide for the insane person. In these cases the poor laws as described in earlier chapters provided for the care of white paupers with no family. After 1738 most lunatics were sent to the workhouse, which as Chapter VI details, was designed to deter and care simultaneously and to serve as workhouse, almshouse, gaol, and hospital. After adding the function of insane asylum and considering the list of potential residents (see Appendix F, Act 9), no one should have been surprised by the fact that by 1750 the poor chose to beg about the streets rather than seek indoor relief.³² In 1754, the church wardens applied for “Building an apartment distant from the Workhouse for

³² Among those to be committed were: “all Rogues, Vagabonds, lewd and idle perfons and Beggars, ftubborn and obftinate Apprentices and Servants, and Children (on complaint of their Parents) common Drunkards, , common Night-walkers, Pilferers, lewd, wanton , and lafcivious perfons, common scolds and Brawlers, Tradefmen and Laborers neglecting their callings and leading idle and diffolute Lives and who do not provide for the Support of their Families...” (From Timothy’s published Acts of Commons House of Assembly, mfm., SCAH, see Appendix F).

reception of people disordered in their senses” (V.M., 12 August, 1754). There is no record of any action taken, so one might assume that the insane and developmentally disabled were kept in the workhouse among the sick and poor, as were Doctor Hall, and John Smith “an Ideot.”

In 1762 a group of artisans formed the Fellowship Society (see Chapter VII) to raise funds for the erection of a hospital dedicated to the care of “lunaticks, and other distempered and sick poor.”³³

To fulfill which Christian doctrines, and embrace one of the various methods which offer for the relief of an infirmary or hospital is that which lay claim to our present intention; for we have had frequent opportunities of observing the distress of such distempered poor, as from time to time, come to Charles Town seeking relief and observing how difficult it was for them to procure suitable lodgings, cases for want whereof many have suffered greatly, and some, probable have perished, that might otherwise have been restored to health and comfort, and public; and considering moreover, that even the poor yet are badly accommodated in sickness, and cannot be so well and so easily taken care of in their house under proper inspection, and in the hands of skillful physicians and surgeons: Therefore, to remedy the above inconveniences, and to promote the Fellowship Society, held at Charles Town, South Carolina; who have, by small Contributions from in fund, which, they intend shall be applied towards founding an infirmary or Hospital, for the reception of and relief of distempered and sick poor in this State, and for moderate relief of such of their members as may be in want of assistance.

The vision of the Fellowship Society was never realized; however, in 1775, Charles Brown was ordered sent to the “mad house” so evidently there was a separate

³³ The Fellowship Society, *Rules of the Fellowship Society* (Charleston, S.C., 1859), VII. See also Richard Walsh, *Charleston's Son's of Liberty* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1959), for a discussion of the role of the Fellowship Society as a precursor to the Mechanic's Party and other pre-Revolutionary activities. Poverty was on the increase in the 1760s in Charles Town; yet the activities of the Fellowship Society were not directed at the social control of the poor as Piven and Cloward would suggest. The seeds of discontent leading to the American Revolution were found in the working classes, shopkeepers, small merchants and artisans, not in the poor, according to Nash. It is important to note that the *Rules* express a desire to restore the persons relieved to “useful members of the community.”

institution in existence by that time (V.M., 12 Feb., 1775). McCandless asserts that the attention brought by the Fellowship Society spurred the vestry to action. Other encouragement could have come from the 1765 grand jury report and the 1766 petition of the vestry (see Chapter V). In 1768 a new workhouse replaced the old and, according to McCandless, a small brick building behind the nearby arsenal was used as a madhouse.³⁴

One manifestation of mental illness that from anecdotes appeared to be common in colonial Charles Town was suicide. In 1736 Ruth Lowndes, alarmed at the increasingly brooding and depressed mind of her husband Charles and fearing for the safety of herself and her children, petitioned the Governor for a separation and for what amounted to a restraint order against her husband. Depressed over his bankruptcy and the loss of his plantation, Lowndes had threatened to commit “the Crime of Self Murder” and to kill all his children. The court ordered Provost Marshall Robert Hall to imprison him. A gentleman’s agreement between Lowndes and Hall allowed the prisoner to keep a brace of pistols while in jail. On May 22, Lowndes “laid down on the Ground, with a loaden Pistol in each Hand, he put one close to his temple and blew out his Brains...”³⁵

At a meeting of the vestry of Prince Frederick Parish, Craven County on July 17th, 1766, it was agreed that Mary Bonnell of Black Mingo Creek who was found wandering naked in the swamp should be taken on the parish as an “Object of Charity.” With no family and being unable to care for herself, the wardens were ordered to

³⁴ McCandless, *Moonlight*, 23.

³⁵ Carl Vipperman, *The Rise of Rawlins Lowndes* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1979), 14-19.

“Apply to a Doc^t to Prescibe Toward the Retreavend of her Sencess.” William Wilson agreed to provide room and board and find suitable clothing.

By April, 1767, after Doctor William Fyfe had treated her with medicines, the vestry contracted with John Godfrey to board her for a year for £100. Reminiscent of the New England practice of boarding paupers with the lowest bidder, by 1769 Bonnell was boarded with Charles Wilson who agreed to take her for £69. In 1770, Thomas Nowland and his wife offered to take both Bonnell and Michael Carey, “an infirm and poor Person, an Object of Charity, and incapable of his Labour having lost his Eye Sight.” The vestry contracted for Bonnell and Carey’s board at £94 and later Thomas and Lucretia Nowland secured the contract to care for Margaret Spencer for an additional £55 per year.³⁶

In early November, parish officials arranged an inquest into the sudden death of Mary Bonnell. Justice of the Peace Samuel Nesmith deposed Carey, and neighbors Mary Williams, Cornelius Nelson, Hannah Nelson, and Judith Pains and Benjamin Williams. Three of those examined heard Bonnell crying out “Oh Lord, oh Lord, murder, murder,” and Lucretia Nowland loudly “Daming and Cursing,” but no one witnessed Bonnell’s sudden demise.³⁷ Nelson the coffin-maker and his wife testified that Mary had appeared healthy and cheerful just a day earlier, and that when her body was placed in the coffin there were bruises upon her arms and a black spot on her chest.

³⁶ George C. Rogers, *The History of Georgetown County, South Carolina* (Columbia, University of south Carolina Press, 1970); Prince Frederick Parish Vestry Minutes, May 10, 1770, In Elizabeth Alstn Pringle, ed., *The Register Book for Prince Frederick, Winyaw* (Baltimore: Williams and Wilkins Company, 1916).

³⁷ *Ibid.*, November 6, 1770.

The depositions were recorded in the vestry minute book and were enough to cause Nesmith to order Bonnell's body to be exhumed after thirty-six days in the grave. The body was in such state of decomposition that the jury could not determine a cause of death "Other ways than by the Hand of God."³⁸ Nevertheless, Carey and Spencer were removed from the Nowlands and placed in more expensive quarters.

The case of Mary Bonnell is instructive for many reasons, and it is relevant to the study of Charles Town though there is no direct connection. First, the practice of farming out the poor to the lowest bidder, while never documented as practiced by the St. Philip's vestry, was common sixty miles to the north in Prince Frederick Parish. Secondly, outdoor relief was without a doubt subject to abuse; however, nothing on the order of the Bonnell case appears in the St. Philip's minutes. Poor relief records rarely reveal much about the treatment of insane paupers. It is also worthy of note that none of the neighbors testifying took abuse of the insane for granted. Finally, backcountry outposts such as Black Mingo Creek were places one might expect the ancient viewpoint that the insane were possessed by demons or animals would hold sway. That insanity, or distemper, was a physical disease to be treated by physicians and medicines was indeed progressive. None of the community members seemed to fear Mary or to consider her derangement a threat.

Summary

Four considerations motivated the citizenry of Charles Town to support a public hospital for the relief of the poor. The hospital existed in order to:

1. Preserve public health,
2. Make curing the sick poor more economical,

³⁸ Ibid., November 10, 1770.

3. Save vestrymen the trouble of providing outpatient care by making house calls,
4. Provide improved care for the sick.

These findings are in accordance with the principle that the public interest always predominated over the concerns of the individual citizen. With plague and pestilence rampant in the eighteenth century, the interest in public health always took precedence over the needs of the individual. This was not an attitude of callous disregard of the needs of the poor. Every Charlestonian had been touched in some way by the ravages of smallpox, typhus, or malaria. Considering the fear of communicable disease and the advancement of medical science at the time, one may conclude that the poor were treated humanely in Charles Town's hospital/workhouse.

The volatile and shifting epidemiological environment coupled with heavy immigration gave rise to the remarkable statistic: despite the fact that more people died in Charles Town than were born there, the population continued to grow. Lower class whites succumbed to illness and death at much higher rates than the well-off. Living in crowded unsanitary quarters at near proximity to newly arrived immigrants with their lice and infections, drinking bacteria laden water and eating bad food, poor people got sick and died at greater rates.

Compared to the physically sick poor, we know little about the treatment of insane paupers in eighteenth century Charles Town. While it is impossible to generalize from cases such as Kate, Peter Calvert, or Mary Bonnell, from the few surviving records it appears highly unlikely that care of the impotent poor in Charles Town included "...being chained ...until they died," or that "demented or maimed persons

were deported or sold” as Day asserts.³⁹ The case of Negroe Harry (Chapter IV) indicates that slaves were sent to “the Madhouse” as early as 1768. If McCandless is accurate in his account (and the vestry minutes confirm his report), then Harry was one of the earliest inmates (V.M., 7 March, 1768). Whatever treatment administered to Harry evidently produced no permanent cure; for in 1774, Harry was out of the madhouse and his allowance was stopped for “misbehavior” (V.M., 16 June, 1774). We can surmise that medical treatment of the insane prevailed over theories of demonic possession and that paupers received no worse care than that administered to wealthy or elite persons labeled as lunatics. However, by the end of the colonial period the treatment began to include removal of the insane from communities and even from the poorhouse and separate confinement. Thus began the story of the “discovery” of the asylum as well as the abuses attendant with institutional care.⁴⁰

³⁹ Day, *New*, 146, 147.

⁴⁰ Rothman, *Asylum*, xix.

CHAPTER VII- FAMILIES, KINSHIP NETWORKS, ETHNIC MUTUAL AID, AND PRIVATE SOCIETIES

In early South Carolina, as elsewhere in the colonies, family provided not only the basis for emotional life, but shaped settlement patterns, day-to-day activities, political and economic behavior, and the overall nature of society.¹

Pestilence, fire, and economic disasters could throw even elite Charlestonian on the mercy of the vestry of St. Philip's. The Lowndes family found itself "on the parish" after Charles Lowndes, once a well-to-do planter, committed suicide while in jail for bankruptcy. In 1738, Lowndes' wife Ruth, sick with smallpox and unable to care for her children, received £73 from the parish over a year's period for "subsistence" until her eldest son arranged for her to be sent to Barbados (V.M., 1 April, 1738; C.W., 4 September, 1738). Orphaned and on the parish charge, Charles Lowndes' son Rawlins was educated in England at the expense of the Provincial Provost Marshall Hall (whose family shared English and Barbadian roots with Lowndes) and with whom he was placed as an apprentice. Rawlins Lowndes rose to a high rank within the Crown's provincial government, later became a Revolutionary leader and was elected the first President of South Carolina. He was also an elected vestryman of St. Philip's. As far as

¹ Lorri M. Glover, "The Hidden Family: Sibling Relations and Kinship in the Eighteenth Century South Carolina Lowcountry." PhD diss. (University of Kentucky, 1996), 227.

can be determined, Lowndes was the only vestryman in the colonial period to also have received poor relief from the parish.²

In the case of the Lowndes family, the existence of familial, kinship, and ethnic networks made the difference between a life of poverty and a life of wealth and power. Documented cases of formerly elite families on relief are rare, as are examples such supportive networks among the poor. It stands to reason that the greater resources and possibly lower exposure to risk of elite families would buffer them from poverty. However, other factors offer a more reasonable explanation for their economic and social success: family, kinship networks, and ethnic networks. Huguenots formed an estimated twenty percent of the early lowcountry white population, yet the distinctive surnames of Huguenot families are rare in the St. Philip's minute book and account book.³ In the absence of detailed records that illuminate the 'why' of a question, the historian is often challenged to ask what factors distinguished a person or a group. In the case of the Huguenots, Van Ruymdyke reports that over forty percent emigrated with several family members other than their spouse or children and that most came to

² Carl Vipperman, *The Rise of Rawlins Lowndes* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1979), 14-19. The story of Lowndes is laced with irony. In Chapter VI, Lowndes father is arrested and imprisoned for bankruptcy by Provost Marshall Hall, a close friend. Hall allows Lowndes to keep "a brace of pistols" while in jail. Lowndes' father commits suicide using the pistols.(Chapter VI). The younger Lowndes is befriended and taken in as an apprentice by Hall. Lowndes' legal education in London is paid for by Hall. Lowndes returns, and becomes Provost Marshall. Dozens of citizens file for bankruptcy after the terrible hurricane of 1752 (Chapter III). "The tragedies increased the already considerable wealth of Provost Marshall Lowndes, who was receiving more and more fees for seizing debtors' property." Cited in Walter Fraser, *Charleston!*, 85.

³ Bertrand Van Ruymdyke, In Jack P. Greene, Rosemary Brana-Shute, and Randy J. Sparks, eds., *Money , Trade , and Power: The Evolution of Colonial South Carolina's Plantation Society* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2001), 29.

Carolina in clusters of families.⁴ These familial, and kinship networks were then transplanted to Charles Town and other settlements providing social and economic supports that aided the acquisition of wealth and poverty, but more importantly for this study, provided assistance in times of need. Van Ruymdyke finds that while these emigrants were soon absorbed by the Anglo cultural and religious model, they preserved an identity that was neither Calvinist nor French but familial and social.⁵

The “English Poor Law” perspective on this issue of family, kinship and ethnicity would be a focus upon the legality of entitlement for aid: those with families would not be offered help. In contrast, a broader perspective would emphasize that these sanguine and kinship relationships are the means of preventing poverty and need in any society. The reason that no Manigaults, Savages, Ravenels, St. Juliens or Mazycks appear as paupers was the preservation of Old World family ties in the New World. To a lesser extent this was true of all Charlestonians. Social networks and family provide the distinction between poor relief and being poor, but getting by. Poor persons with family were never as vulnerable as those with no social and economic supports. Family, kin, and large measure of luck were the keys to avoiding Charles Town’s disasters. There is a reason that there were many more poor persons in Charles Town than those whose names appear on the relief roles. A significant number of paupers were taken in by family, friends, and neighbors, not because the poor law obligated them to do so, but because that is what families and kin do. This hidden form of charity is nevertheless real and can be documented by comparing the estimates of the

⁴ Ibid., 37.

⁵ Ibid., 41.

numbers of poor with the numbers relieved.⁶ The network of services were intended only as a safety net, not as a permanent and omnipresent solution to the problem of poverty. Early Charlestonians appreciated the concept of family preservation and sought to maintain and support these familial ties rather than permanently supplant them.

For eighteenth century South Carolinians, siblings, fictive and real kin, and households headed by single women comprised an integral part of the definition of family. The poor living in the first part of the century in Charles Town depended on kin and ethnic networks for survival. Family members financed the voyages of early Charlestonians, supported their business ventures, and willingly offered logistical aid to their Carolina kin. As the epidemiologic disaster that was early Charles Town began to stabilize in the latter half of the century, elite families began to employ these family networks as a means of extending their wealth and power. For the poor however, the earlier needs for kin networks never changed. Generally speaking, those finding themselves “on the Parish” were without the support of these networks. For a white person in eighteenth century Charles Town being vulnerable was not being female, being ethnically or religiously different or even being poor. Being vulnerable was being without a family.

Little or nothing is known about these networks. Unlike those white persons on poor relief, poor persons that received no help from the Parish lived an undocumented and shadowy existence on a rung on the social ladder above the lowest occupied by slaves and the next highest level populated by paupers. The gentry left wills, journals,

⁶ Chapter II, “Defining and Measuring Poverty” beginning on page 16 discusses various methods of estimating the numbers of poor.

letters, and probate records and those on relief appear in the minute book. How then, can it be surmised that there were many poor persons who did not receive help, and moreover, that their family and kinship networks made the difference? One way to know is to simply imagine that family caregiving arrangements operated in Charles Town as they had for thousands of years on earth. As the primary nurturers and sustainers of family life, women entrusted extended kin or friends with the influential guardianship of their minor children. In other cases, women ensured that food and shelter were available to kin and friends on a daily basis. We cannot know how many of the arrangements were altruistic or how they were based on mutual need.

The flawed assumption that poor relief could be completely understood through the pages of the vestry minutes was introduced in earlier chapters. No records remain of those denied relief and demographic and social data reveal the fact that there were greater numbers of poor than those who were helped. Yet there is one recorded instant in the lives of these otherwise anonymous persons that they shared with the wealthiest and most powerful members of the Charles Town Gentry: a line item in the St. Philip's Parish register book of burials.

Table VII-1 St. Philip's Parish Register Burials, Calendar Year 1741, by Age, Gender & Category⁷

	N	Category %	% of Total
Resident	60	100.0%	60.0%
Male	24	40.0%	
Female	15	25.0%	

⁷ D.E. Huger Smith and A. S. Salley, Jr., *Register for St. Philip's Parish Charles Town, 1754-1810* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1971), 267, 268. This table is also used to illustrate the estimates of the numbers of poor in Chapter II, page 27, Table II-8. Most transients were sailors or soldiers or their wives and children. Nearly all transients associated with mariners were male.

Child	21	35.0%	
Non-Resident/Transient	22	100.0%	22.0%
Male	22	100.0%	
Female	0	0.0%	
Child	0	0.0%	
On the Parish (Poor)	9	100.0%	9.0%
Male	4	44.4%	
Female	4	44.4%	
Child	1	11.1%	
From the Workhouse	9	100.0%	9.0%
Male	6	66.7%	
Female	3	33.3%	
Child	0	0.0%	
Total	100	100%	100.0%

Table VII-1 confirms that there were many more poor persons living in St. Philip's Parish than those aided by the vestry. *None* of the names of the eighteen persons whose names appear in the register labeled as "on the Parish" or "in the Workhouse" appear in the church wardens' accounts or in the vestry minutes. Who were these persons? The nine listed from the workhouse are John Evance, Elizabeth Fraisland, Nataniel Cox, Elizabeth Davis, George Ellsmore, Andrew Charnock, Thomas Liston, John Marmour, and Margaret Grey. Since these burials are not listed as transient persons, one might surmise that they were in the workhouse receiving medical care when they expired. Permanent residents of the facility would have been listed in the account book at the end of each fiscal year. The other nine shown as poor were also likely to be parish residents and not transients. Since at the end of each fiscal year the St. Philip's sexton was reimbursed for the expense of coffins and burial services for parishioners whose estates or families were unable to cover the cost, it can be imagined

that these eighteen persons were so poor that they must be buried on parish charge, but while they lived they were not so impoverished as to require the documented help of the parish that would appear on a line in the account book. How did they manage to lead such a marginal existence? Writing about the antebellum period, about fifty years after the Revolution, Frederick Law Olmstead describes a Charleston slum occupied by Irish immigrants:⁸

I saw as much close-packing filth, and squalor, in certain blocks, as I have witnessed in any Northern town of its size The lots...are almost always in a slough, and in warm weather, emit the most disgusting and offensive odors; upon these are crowded small, ill ventilated, filthy dilapidated hovels..

Just as the poor of mid-nineteenth century New York and Chicago subsisted in marginal environmental and economic conditions, those poor persons in Charles Town were able to exist with the help of families, kin, and ethnically similar friends and neighbors.⁹ Many were working poor, just scraping by. Their story is similar to the stories of the resilience and the strength of human spirit where the insults of the

⁸ Frederick Law Olmstead. as quoted in Christopher Silver, “A New Look at Old South Urbanization: The Irish Workers in Charleston,” *South Atlantic Urban Studies* 3(1979):151. See Chapter VIII for a description of the condition of hundreds of Irish immigrants disembarked in 1767 and 1772. It is not difficult to imagine such an Irish ghetto existing in the eighteenth century.

⁹ To a large degree the emphasis in this dissertation upon public poor relief misrepresents the significance of the numbers of “hidden poor” and the informal efforts of families to keep them out of poverty. No one knows how significant this effort was. As a way of *estimating* the significance of this informal system, the following diagram is offered:

	Public Relief	Informal/Private	Total
Documented in VM, CWA	25%	0%	25%
No Record Kept	25%	50%	75%
Total	50%	50%	100%

physical, social and economic environment are overcome. The material possessions of these families were Spartan. They probably dined and clothed themselves no more lavishly than workhouse inmates. They doubled up and even tripled up in cramped quarters, and shivered through Charles Town's mild winters without adequate fuel. The threat of starvation, sickness, and death hung over them. Those who could read would be astonished to learn that gentrified writers in the *Gazette* idealized their lives:

"The peasant forms no expectations further than of his meal at noon; his sound rest, and his Sabbath. He wishes for cloaths to be warm...His course of life has taught him to wish for nothing more than this; ...He desires nothing more and enjoys all this."¹⁰

"The poor child clothed only in a few rags and fed at his mother's breast grew healthy and strong, and was soon able to shift for itself; while the puny insect, the heir and hope of a rich family, lies languishing under a load of finery that overpowers his limbs, abhorring and rejecting the dainties he is crammed with."¹¹

Often in human history the concept of a "normal" family has been advanced. This myth and misconception is founded on a belief that in this and other nations' histories flourishing families always followed a specific patriarchal form and structure.¹² In this vein it is surmised that successful colonial families were patriarchal and male-headed. America's founding "fathers" were male heads of intact families with

¹⁰ *SC Gazette*, 8-11 August, 1759 as cited in Wiberley, "Four Cities,"4,5. Readers of the South Carolina Gazette were treated to idyllic views of poor persons' lives. Wiberley cites several passages from the journal extolling the virtues of poverty over wealth.

¹¹ *SC Gazette*, 1-6 March, 1749, as cited in Wiberley, "Four Cities,"4,5.

¹² Lorri M.Glover, "The Hidden Family: Sibling Relations and Kinship in the Eighteenth Century South Carolina Lowcountry," PhD diss.(University of Kentucky, 1996), 216.

a non-working wife and numerous children. Perhaps, as advanced by Abramovitz, female-headed families were considered deviant in New England and were punished by colonial poor relief authorities, but this was not the case in Charles Town. Colcanis compared white family structure in Charles Town to that of the small coastal New England village of Bristol, Rhode Island. Colcanis' data is from diverse sources and periods but reveals striking differences. Almost half of Charles Town's households were comprised of families with a headed by a single male or single female. In many of these households children were also present. In contrast, 97% of Bristol households were comprised of married couples.

Table VII-2 Comparison of White Family Structure in Charles Town-1720-1732 and Bristol, Rhode Island, 1689 Census¹³

	Charles Town	Wills	Bristol, R.I	Census
	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>
Households	152	100	70	100
Married Couples	83	54.6	68	97.1
Widows/Widowers	23	15.1	2	2.9
Single Households	46	30.3	0	0
Children Mentioned	206		226	

Table VII-4 contrasts and compares the data in Table VII-3 to poor relief recipient family structure. Further compressing the data in VII-4 reveals that if one assumes that families with married couples are "headed" by males, then 62% of all families receiving assistance were female-headed and 38% were male-headed. This assumption about families with married couples is flawed, since in nearly all cases the

¹³ Peter A. Coclanis, *The Shadow of a Dream: Economic Life and Death in the South Carolina Low Country-1670-1920*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 165. Records of the Secretary of State, South Carolina, Miscellaneous Records, Main Series, 1671-1973, South Carolina Department of Archives and History; John Demos, "Families in Colonial Bristol, Rhode Island: An Exercise in Historical Demography," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd Series, 25 (January, 1968): 40-57.

male “head-of-household” was sick or disabled and the female was probably the acting “head”. This data does not corroborate accounts of discrimination against females who were not part of a patriarchal family structure. This data also confirms the vestrymen’s policies about eligibility and female dependency. While family structure arguably determined the need for relief (no able-bodied male), the chain of causation should extend further to allow for the facts of high mortality and morbidity and high rates of illegitimacy and desertion among already poor families (the social gradient).

Additionally, the ideal of social acceptability associated with married couples in male-headed families does not seem to be the measure of eligibility used by the vestry. Said another way, in eighteenth century Charles Town, female-headed families were considered as “normal” and not as being deviant. Such families were certainly not unusual. Seventy-five percent of these families had no children. In Table VIII-2, Charles Town families had fewer than half the number of children as Bristol families. Table VII-2 (from Coclanis) reveals that 52% of Charles Town families had no children, while only 10% of Bristol families had no children. In contrast, 15% of Charles Town families had four or more children, while 42% of Bristol families had four or more children. These data from Charles Town are a blow to the idyllic picture of the early American family on which this nation was supposedly founded.

Table VII-3 Comparison of Number of Children in Family, Bristol (1689) and Charles Town (1720-32)¹⁴

TOWN (1720-32)												
	Number of Children											
	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>10</u>	
<u>Number of Families</u>												<u>All</u>
Charles Town	78	21	19	10	7	5	7	2	1			150
Bristol , R.I.	7	10	11	12	9	8	6	4	1		1	69

Table VII-4 Family Structure of Poor Relief Recipients, St. Philip's Parish Charles Town 1725-1775¹⁵

"Household" Structure Category	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>
Single Females and Widows	487	44%
Single Females and Widows with Children	201	18%
Single Males and Widowers	322	29%
Males and Widowers with Children	13	1%
Married Couples w/o Children	26	2%
Married Couples w Children	56	5%
Total	1105	100%

To summarize, it is conceivable that in Charles Town families and kinship and ethnic networks exerted an even more powerful influence upon who was relieved and who was not than the laws, policies, and provisions of the parish. There were many poor persons who managed to survive outside the organized system of parish social services. Additionally, the myth that successful families must follow a certain form and

¹⁴ Coclanis, *Shadow*, 166. These data combined with the previous table point to the fact that while policies about enforcement of poor law were different in New England and in Charles Town, family structure was also markedly different. These distinctions provide a clue to the reasons that histories of social welfare based on early New England villages and towns focus on harsh and punitive policies. The considerably more relaxed attitudes of Charles Town's vestry may in part result from the reality of the harsh life facing low country colonists.

¹⁵ This data was abstracted from the unduplicated file of combined VN and CWA. As stated in the discussion about the research method prosopography, careful planning is required before data collection to set up the proper categories. When setting up SPSS fields, I failed to recognize that marital status and number of dependents were important elements. I had to go back over more than 2000 records and tally this by hand to produce this chart.

structure, and specifically that families headed by single, widowed, or never-married females are deviant and unnatural, did not apply in Charles Town and was not used to determine eligibility for poor relief. Michael Foucault wrote in 1980 that theories of family normality have been constructed throughout history and used by dominant groups to oppress those who deviate from ideal standards.¹⁶ Foucault recognized that times of turbulent social and economic changes altered definitions of family normality. Eighteenth century Charles Town was a tumultuous time of flux.

Ethnic and Private Charitable Societies

The following petitions to the St. Andrew's Society are the most colorful surviving documents of Charles Town's poor relief practices. While some appear to be dictated to a clerk or submitted on behalf of the supplicant, they are clearly written from the perspective of the poor person:¹⁷

The Oumbel ptison of Gean Stewart born in the Parish of Loughhunish in the Shier of eare Crisened in Killbargen Church to the onarabel Sicity since I came to this town I have ben most partly sick and has had nobody To help me.
I have ben very much in want & is now I have ben teaken prisener By the

¹⁶ Michael Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings* (New York: Pantheon, 1980), cited in Froma Walsh, *Normal Family Processes: Growing Complexity and Diversity* (New York: The Guilford Press, 1980), 4.

¹⁷ J.H. Easterby, *The History of the St. Andrews Society* (Charleston, S.C.: Walker, Evans and Cogswell Company, 1929), 32-42. The colorful language and vivid descriptions contained in these petitions make the summaries in the vestry minutes seem drab by comparison; however, despite their brevity, the minutes often convey more useful information about the amount and type of assistance authorized and the disposition of the case. One cannot determine whether any of these petitions were acted upon by the Society.

endiens and keep a long time and my husband was killed by them & I have had nobody to help me but the onarabel Sicity onarabel Gentlemen I hope youre pitey for lon woman for I am neaked and in great want and not eabel to pay my Reant.

Gean Stewart

To the Honble the President, and other members of the St. Andrew's Society
the Petition of James Smith

Humbly Sheweth

That your Petitioner who was born in the Shire of Aberdeen, arrived here near forty years ago, Yr. Petnr. traded with the Creek Indians almost Thirty Years; by which Traffick he acquired what he hoped was competent for his subsistence in his old Age. When he was about to settle his Affairs & retire from among those barbarous People, he was in one Night deprived of his all. By this Misfortune he was reduced to Beggary, when he is old & infirm, & no longer able to struggle for a Lively-hood-he therefore prays your Honours, to grant him such Relief, as in Your Wisdom may be thought meet-And your Petitioner as in Duty Bound will ever Pray & c-Charles Town 30th Novem. 1772.

James Smith

Subscription, Humbly Soliciting the assistance of the Charitable Inhabitants of Charles Town in behalf of Mrs. Ann Gray-widow of Henry Gray- a person who from a variety of Changes in Life unknown to many of the principal inhabitants of this town is now reduc'd to the greatest Necessity-with a number of Children to provide for. Her present purpose is to keep a school and take Children from theCountry as boarders- Therefore to Enable her to do this the tent of this as will purchase her a wench, without wch her present intention must Cease.

Charles Town 30 Nov-1772

The Memoreall of Hugh Rose to the Honored John Cleland Esq.
President of the Saint Andrews Cloub & to all the Honored Members of the said society.

Most humbly Sheweth that I have been suplyed by your Honoures this two years byon & was Resolved not give your Honorr's any more trouble but having the misfortune after making as great a Crop as Manie in the Provance in preportion to what Land I labored to have it Distroyed by Bears & stolen by Niggro's I am in my Seventy on yoars of my age & lives in a Hut & labors for my living as a Niggro & has not neathour clothes nor liquer byt the vegatives of the ground to live by & am satisfied with the same until it pleas God to make m living beter.

Your Honorr's Memorealst most Humbly beggs you may take in to Consideration the Primessess of this my memoriall & order for me what

charity your Honors my judge Proper for to supply my necessities & ever
prays as in duty to God to bless & Prosper your Honors & the Members of
the Society & am in sincerity & Humility

Yours Honors
Most Humble
Most Obedant
& most faithful Sert
Hugh Rose

Charlestown, November 30th, 1758

“To the Hon’ble President and Members of Saint Andrews Club

The Petition of Elizabeth Russell

Humbly Sheweth

That your Petitioner is a native of Scotland and has resided in this province
upwards of fifteen years-That she married with Alex Chisolm who dyed in
above two years & a half, leaving your Petitioner with Son-That your
Petitioner afterwards Intermarried with James Russell, by whom your
Petitioner had three children-That her husband by his Dilligence in his trade
of Shoemaker, had earned so much money as enabled him to purchase a
Negro Wench & Boy-That the said wench poisoned your Petitioner’s
husband, herself, and four children-of which poison, her husband and two of
the children dyed-and your Petitioner being now in great want & distress-

Humbly Entreats Your Charitable Assistance & Relief and Your
Petitioner shall pray, etc.

To the Hon’ble the President, and the rest of the Hon’ble Members of St.
Andrews Club, to meet Charlestown, S. Carolina the 30th of November 1754.

The Petition of John Cuming most humbly Sheweth That your
Petitioner has been above 36 years in this Province, that he is poor, and has a
small Family. That he has no Negro to work for him, or plant his Provisions
now in his old age, he being above 60 years old.

That it is your Petitioner’s misfortune and unhappiness to live near a Rich
Neighbour who (like Ahab King of Israel to Naboth) has oppressed,
persecuted, Tyranniz’d and Domineer’d over yr: Petitioner and his poor
family for above 7 years past, by unjust, unnecessary Litigations & vexatious
Law Suits; bringing 17 warrants and two actions at Court agt: yr: Petitioner.
The effects of which were dismal and ruinous to yr: Petitioner & his poor
Family and has reduc’d him and them to beggary.

Your Petitioner having the warrents generally decided agt: him, and being
cost at Court in the several actions brought agt: him by his adversary: This

occasion'd yr: Petitioner to confin'd 5 several times in Prison: and the effect & Consequence of that was, that yr: Petitioner was oblig'd to Mortgage all he is worth Real & Personal for money to Pay the Law charges.

Your Petitioner has at several times Collected small Sums of Money from his Charitable Christian Neighbours, well wishers, Friends Y acquaintances, and has us'd his best endeavours otherwise to free and clear sd: mortgage, and yet after the best and last endeavours; there remains due on sd: Mortgage the sum of one hundred and Fifty pounds Currancy. And there being no human probability, that yr: Petitioner will ever be able to pay this Sum, and Redeem his Mortgage.

Your Petitioner therefore most humbly Supplicates this Hon'ble Society, to take yr: Petitioner's case and Circumstances into yr: Serious & Christian consideration, and relieve him out of his present straits, distress & difficulties in assisting him to Redeem his Mortgage.

An your Petitioner as in duty bound Shall ever Pray

John Cuming

P.S. If it be objected, that yr: Petitioner gave cause or reason for these roubles, hardships & difficulties yr: Petitioner can appear to God to the contrary: And that the Original of all was without any just cause or reason. I beg leave to give one instance as a Specimen of the contrary viz: My adversary wrot a letter to Judge Dale, and the Judge sent a Mittimus, and yr: Petitioner was confin'd in Prison above 4 months, without Oaths, Evidence, or a hearing; this I can prove.

Honourable Gentlemen

The Humble petition of a poor disdistrefses Country man presents it Self before You. Beging for Gods Sake, and your Country's that you would be pleased to Bestow a Small Matter upon me to afsist me in My Miseries and want. I have been here about Town this four months trying all pofsible means to get a School, but by reason of my Poverty I am not able to pay for my Board or to get my place to make a begining. I have Teached between the Two Gates a Considerable time for my Victuals, having No thing Coming in I was Obliged the Other Day to Dispose of one of my Jackets to get me a pair of Shoes. I was Brought up to the Seas and have Lives in good Credit in that Service in Several Stations. But by the Defects of Old Age and being disabled Before, and rendered incapable for that Service, I have the Character of all Persons who knows me to be a Very diligent Schoolmaster, have I but any Encouragement I am known to bring on Scholars as fast as any in the Province, Pray Gentlemen take my distrefsded State to

Consideration, who in Duty Bound shall pray for your Happefnefs and
Prosperity While

Thomas Anderson

Day writes that “in the colonies private charities played an insignificant role until the end of the eighteenth century.”¹⁸ Chambers, on the other hand, recognized that significant private relief as well as kinship and ethnic mutual aid networks existed in the urban areas, but that little had been written by historians about these efforts.¹⁹ Private benefactions in colonial Charles Town exceeded those of any other city in eighteenth century America, according to Carl Bridenbaugh.²⁰ Philanthropy was common with gifts of hundreds of pounds frequently bestowed by the Broad Street elite. Charles Town was the seat of nearly a dozen private benevolent societies, most of them organized along ethnic lines targeting poor immigrants. Among the membership of these organizations were the same vestrymen who met weekly to dispense relief to the poor on the public charge. The Fellowship Society, The South Carolina Society, The St. George’s Society, the German Friendly Society and the St. Andrew’s Society were the largest and best known of these clubs.

The Fellowship Society

Rules of the Fellowship Society,
Preface, April 4, 1762.

¹⁸ Day, *New History*, 143.

¹⁹ Chambers, “Redefinition,” 407-433.

²⁰ Carl Bridenbaugh, *Cities in Revolt: Urban Life in America, 1743-1776* (London: Oxford Press, 1955), 127.

“The Poor shall never cease out of the land; therefore I command thee, saying, thou shalt open thy hand wide unto thy Brother, to thy Poor and to thy needy, in thy land.”

Deuteronomy, chapter XV, verse 11

The excellence of the Christian Religion appears most conspicuous in these social duties, and beneficent actions, which the whole tenor of its doctrine as well as the example of its Divine Author, so frequently and powerful recommend.

No system of religion or philosophy ever abounded with so many amiable precepts of benevolence and charity. And the tendency of its maxims to promote justice and humanity, is unparalleled in any other institution ever extant among mankind.

By the bountiful hand of charity, many have been reasonably relieved and preserved from misery, and it may be remarked, in behalf of institutions of this sort, that they are confessedly of public utility, humanity. But some men will say, “we do good separately, by relieving the sick poor,” which certainly is commendable; but use must beg leave to observe that such kind of charity is but small, when compared with what may be done collectively; hence the erection of Hospitals and infirmaries has been found exceedingly beneficial, as they annually discharge a great number of patients, perfectly cured, who might otherwise be lost to their families and to society, and experience shows us that our fortunes in this world, let them be ever so considerable, are constantly fluctuating, and in a few years may reduce the present wealthy to want and misery, and then they may cheerfully partake of that charity which their own piety assisted to raise. Since then, our present state, how prosperous soever, hath no stability but what depends on the kind Providence of God, how careful should we be, freely to contribute a small portion of our stewardship towards the distress of our fellow creatures, when objects of charity and opportunities of relieving present themselves.

May all, therefore, heartily join in this necessary work, by which great numbers of distressed objects may be relieved; many of whom may, possibly, one day, become useful members of the community, and, by the piety and regularity of their lives, prove to the world the excellence and utility of that Society, which, under God, restored them to health and their friends.²¹

²¹ The Fellowship Society, *Rules of the Fellowship Society* (Charleston, S.C., 1859), VII. See also Richard Walsh, *Charleston's Sons of Liberty* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1959), for a discussion of the role of the Fellowship Society as a precursor to the Mechanic's Party and other pre-Revolutionary activities. Poverty was on the increase in the 1760s in Charles Town; yet the activities of the Fellowship Society were not directed at the social control of the poor as Piven and Cloward would

The Fellowship Society, established in 1762, never came any closer to accomplishing its grandiose aim of erecting a hospital than purchasing a plot of ground in 1774. Nevertheless, in the quest to identify attitudes held by a broader spectrum of Charles Town society, one can differentiate between the elite vestrymen and the membership of the Fellowship Society. The Society's membership was comprised of skilled artisans, shopkeepers, and tradesmen, as well as merchants and laborers. It represented a cross-section of society. Daniel Cannon, Samuel Prioleau, Thomas Grimball, Benjamin Legare, and Darby Pendergrass are all familiar from St. Philip's vestry, yet they arose to elite status not by birth but by trade or handiwork. Most members were tailors, coopers, shipwrights or carpenters from no one ethnic group and espousing no one religion.²²

Not having the benefit of recorded action, as in the case of the vestry minutes, one may question whether this preface contains true attitudes or merely admirable precepts. The following statements of attitude are contained in the preface to the *Rules of the Fellowship Society*:

1. The members of the Society were stewards of God by divine approbation; the relief of the poor was their duty.
2. The presence of the poor was not indicative of a defect in society--it is part of a divine plan. No ameliorative action was necessary beyond providing for these poor.
3. The members subscribed to a belief in "justice" and "humanity."
4. The relief of the poor was a community responsibility.

suggest. The seeds of discontent leading to the American Revolution were found in the working classes, shopkeepers, small merchants and artisans, not in the poor, according to Nash. It is important to note that the *Rules* express a desire to restore the persons relieved to "useful members of the community."

²² Ibid. "Membership".

5. The poor were deserving of an opportunity to become “useful.”
6. One’s place in society was variable, mainly depending upon economic factors.
7. Institutional care was better and more efficient than outdoor relief. It was considered an improvement over non-institutional care.
8. The public means of caring for the poor was at that time not adequate and private relief was necessary. It was implied that private care would be better.²³

The South Carolina Society

On Tuesday night Poinsett’s Tavern was filled with the voices of the town’s workingmen, voices heavy with French accents. Meeting once or twice a week, sometimes to transact business, sometimes to talk over a warm cup of beer, Charles Town’s Huguenots kept their countryman’s public house a busy, successful venture. As other members of their group were from time to time in need of some support, it was agreed that each was to pay fifteen pence per week toward a fund for charity. Thus began the “Two-Bit Club.”²⁴

An early edition of the rules stated that the constituency of the South Carolina society, which evolved from the “Two-Bit Club,” was not made up of “the Rich and Opulent.”²⁵ Thomas Tew, a tailor; Isiah Brunet, a carpenter; and Peter Boquet, a baker—these were among the early members.²⁶ More cosmopolitan toward mid-

²³ In 1767, the vestry petitioned the Assembly to construct a new workhouse, since the housing and correction of runaway slaves made the present one inadequate.

²⁴ The South Carolina Society, *Rules of the South Carolina Society*, 5th edition (Charleston, 1770), 1-2.

²⁵ The South Carolina Society, *Rules of the South Carolina Society*, 4th edition (Charleston, 1758), iv-v.

²⁶ J.H. Easterby, *Rules of the South Carolina Society*, 17th edition (Baltimore: The Waverly Press, 1937), 1-3.

century, the Society even adopted the English language and boasted many merchants and planters among its membership.²⁷

Unfortunately, of the activities of the Society in colonial times, few records survive. To escape Sherman's expected visit to Charleston in 1865, most documents were sent to Columbia. Ironically, while Charleston was spared, the papers were consumed in the flames of Columbia. Though most of the activities cannot be substantiated, it is known that the society functioned not only as a charitable agency, but also as the equivalent of a gentleman's club and mutual insurance company, similar to the German Friendly Society, the St. Andrews Society and the Fellowship Society. In time of distress members of any of the Charles Town societies could be assured of the assistance of his fellow club members. Thus these societies formed an indispensable function in the scheme of Charles Town's welfare system.

Preamble to the rules of 1739 states:

Holding it an essential duty of mankind to contribute all they can towards relieving the wants and miseries and promoting the welfare and happiness of one another; and observing the method of many other well-disposed persons of his majesty's dominions by entering into particular societies for this purpose, to be effectual: We therefore, whose names are underwritten, the more effectively to comply with this great and essential duty, have freely and cheerfully entered into a Society, at Charles Town in South Carolina.²⁸

The aims are more clearly stated in the preface to the *Rules of 1754*:

Charity not only desires the Happiness of all men, rejoices in their Prosperity, and grieves in their Adversity, but, being an active virtue, it prompts the mind to form with Prudence, and execute with Vigour, that Plan which bids fairest for an

²⁷ South Carolina Society, *Rules 1770*, 3.

²⁸ South Carolina Society, *Rules 1754*, 6-7.

happy attainment of the most generous and benevolent Ends. To relieve our Fellow Creatures in Distress, and to Promote their Welfare, is a most beneficial work, but few, even of the most distinguished abilities, can act, in this Respect, beyond the Limits of a narrow Sphere; numerous wants are neither readily known, nor easily supplied; Hence individuals, unequal of themselves and a-part to the noble task, combine together in Society, gain strength by their adherence, and stretch the hand of Charity to a more extended Distance.²⁹

The predominant idea is that individuals should “combine together.” As a mutual aid “combination,” the society was particularly effective in “extending the hand of Charity” in the field of public education. The society operated a school for twenty-two years between 1749 and 1770. Members’ children were educated along with the most needy children who applied from the parish.³⁰

A report appearing in the South Carolina *Gazette* reveals the care with which the school was supervised to assure that it achieved the aims of its supporters:

The committee, from Easter 1768 to Easter 1769, for taking care of the children on their bounty under the tuition of Mr. Osborn Stratton, Schoolmaster, have reported to the Society, that he has taken proper care of their morals, learning, and behavior, and every way behaved himself as an experienced and faithful teacher; and that the children for the time have made great progress: Which, by order of the Society, is made public.

.....Samuel Prioleau, Clerk³¹

The St. Andrew’s Society

Founded in 1729, the St. Andrew’s Society is the oldest, and for the purposes of this paper, the most significant of Charles Town’s private societies. It was in fact the

²⁹ Ibid., iii-iv.

³⁰ South Carolina Society, *Rules 1770*, 42-48.

³¹ *SC Gazette*, 4 May, 1769.

oldest of several similarly named societies in other colonies.³² The preamble of the society marks the first statement of South Carolina's more fortunate citizens concerning their obligation to their poorer neighbors:

As the Principle Design of a Society is to promote some Publick Good, by the Joint Endeavours of a Number of People, where particular men are well dispos'd to do Generous and Charitable Actions, but find it impracticable to carry on the same to advantage without the Assistance and Concurrence of other who are equally inclined to establish and support good Understandings; and as Rules and Orders are absolutely necessary for establishing and continuing all Designs of this Nature; we therefore whose names are underwritten, being willing to contribute our utmost to a Society at Charles Town in South Carolina.³³

"Of the strong who had learned the harsh life of the frontier," the Scottish membership of the society were among most adventuresome of Carolina's settlers.³⁴ One writer calls them "a class of merchants, unique in the South, who inevitably succeeded to the dominance of the Southern Indian trade."³⁵ Andrew Allen was a dealer in furs and other articles of the Indian frontier. His comrade John McGillivray headed a company of Indian traders. Dr. John Moultrie, father of the Revolutionary hero, General William Moultrie, was a member of the vestry of St. Philip's as well as the St. Andrew's Society. James Michie was a speaker in the South Carolina Commons

³² Samuel Alvin Lilly, "The Culture of Revolutionary Charleston," (Ph.D. diss.: Miami University, Ohio, 1972), 73.

³³ J.H. Easterby, *The History of the St. Andrews Society* (Charleston, S.C.: Walker, Evans and Cogswell Company, 1929), 20.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 29.

³⁵ Verner Winslow Crane, *The Southern Frontier, 1670-1732* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1928), 121. Before the emergence of rice and indigo as money crops, deerskins from the Indian trade and naval stores from the extensive pine forests were the basis of the provincial economy.

House of Assembly as well as a vestrymen. Not all the members were of such high social status. Hobnobbing with Cherokee Chief Ourconastatak were James Kerr, the vintner and William Holliday, a tavern keeper. At Society meetings Holliday's partner, Robert Dillon, could consort with James Glen, the governor of South Carolina.³⁶

Charity was apparently rather freely given in amounts less than twenty shillings. "The Charity of the Society shall be distributed and apply'd in the following manners, vis., the President and the Vice-President Shall have Power to draw orders... payable to such Poor Persons as they shall judge proper Objects of the Society's Charity."³⁷ If a poor person requested larger sums, he was to "petition the Society." Supplicants of many nationalities received relief; however, one might surmise that fellow countrymen were given prime consideration by the Scottish membership. These petitions reveal much about the poor and the petitioned:

1. If the supplicants were Scottish they emphasized their nationality. It was assumed that the society would be more charitable toward their countrymen.
2. The humility of the petitioner and the charity of the society were mentioned. The petitioners seemed to be aware of the attitudes of the members and framed their problems accordingly.
3. The petitioners have been working men and women. The idle and intemperate were not looked upon with favor by the membership.
4. The petitioner was a victim of fate, circumstance or the wickedness of their fellow men. They struggled unsuccessfully and were at the mercy of the society.
5. Several presented a plan by which, if they were given relief, they would be able to maintain themselves. They planned to take ameliorative actions, so that they might work and earn their bread.

³⁶ Easterby, *St. Andrews*, 35.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 19.

The petitioners naturally emphasized circumstances of need and qualities about themselves from which they believed the members determined eligibility is embodied in the petitions. Unfortunately, since the Society's records have been lost, no substantiation can be found concerning the needs that the members valued enough to act upon. However, the society expended large sums on relief. In 1748, five recipients were given a total of £257:10s. In 1765 ten received £290, and in 1770, 21 pensioners were given £35.³⁸

Other Charity and Poor Relief

Bellows, in discussing the degree of “insinuation” of the wealthy gentry into the lives of the poor, provides examples of the elites’ conduct that cannot be explained as social control nor as exploitation of the poor.³⁹ On one occasion, the commissioners of the market discovered some bakers using unfair scales. Confiscating nine hundred loaves, they distributed them to the poor.⁴⁰ When in 1767, a shipload of poor Irish “in distress” with no food or shelter was dumped on the Bay Street wharf, the church wardens raised £200 sterling by private subscription for relief.⁴¹ McCrady’s early history of the colony gives the impression that the relief of the poor by Anglican

³⁸ Ibid., 34.

³⁹ Bellows, *Benevolence*, 8.

⁴⁰ *South Carolina Gazette*, Feb. 2, 1765; cited by Bellows, *Benevolence*, 8.

⁴¹ Ibid.

vestries was overshadowed by private gifts for the benefit of the poor from individuals.⁴²

Summary

The informal efforts of families, kinship networks, ethnic mutual aid and formal private giving, and private charitable societies has been overlooked in social welfare history. Taken together, these combined social supports and charitable acts likely eclipsed even the considerable efforts toward public poor relief in Charles Town. Much of the strength of a nation is rooted not in the deeds of a few well-known elite but in the vigor of its family and kinship structures that underpin its success. There were many poor persons who managed to survive outside the organized system of parish social services with the help of families. The myth that successful families must follow a certain form and structure, and specifically that families headed by single, widowed, or never-married females are deviant and unnatural, did not apply in Charles Town and was not used to determine eligibility for poor relief. Diverse family structures were the norm, especially among the poor.

⁴² Edward McCrady, *The History of South Carolina under the Royal Government, 1719-1899* (London: The Macmillan Company, 1899), 100-101, 402-404. On page 100, McCrady details the duties of the church wardens and includes some entries from the vestry minutes as the sole mention of public poor relief. In contrast, the charitable deeds of many of the noteworthy colonial elite are detailed. For example, according to McCrady, in 1753, Gabriel Manigault donated £3500 for the use of the poor French Protestants. The public poor tax for that year for St. Philip's Parish was £2000 (402). At Manigault's death in 1781, again according to McCrady (404), he left £5000 Sterling (£35,000 currency) to the South Carolina Society for the education of poor children. In the last year covered by this dissertation, 1775, the public assessment was £14,000 currency. Based on McCrady, the private charity of a single individual, albeit the wealthiest person in the colony, may have exceeded the public poor relief effort.

The few surviving petitions from the St. Andrews Society are the gems of this social history. With the exception of these petitions, the poor left no direct literary or fiscal evidence of their lives: no letters, no diaries, no journals, no account books, no wills, and no property to probate.

At least on paper, and only for whites, the vision of America as an asylum for the enslaved, the oppressed, and the destitute who sought to escape a cruel, unjust world was the motivation for Charles Town's charitable societies. For the members of these societies America was a land where people could act on their dreams. These dreams were of equality, of tolerance and benevolence. The written words from the various preambles and rules suggest that they were charitable out of genuine humanitarianism. "An awakened social conscience is one of the outstanding characteristics of the eighteenth century."⁴³ The story of the Charles Town benevolent societies is the story of America's social conscience.

Why this sudden bloom of humanitarian impulses? First, the ideas of the Enlightenment were easily transplanted to the New World. This philosophy was put into practice by the charitable organizations. These societies were created to promote tolerance in an ethnically diverse society. They accepted (white) *men* potentially as equals. Remembering the caution in the preface to this paper about "Whiggishness" and "Whig histories," in the context of eighteenth century society, these men's treatment of women and slaves was consistent with their writings. From different social strata, their membership espoused essentially one philosophy in a world of diversity. Once nurtured, the grain of worth in a person could grow for the betterment of society.

⁴³ Michael Kraus, *The Atlantic Civilization: Eighteenth-century Origins* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1949), 123.

Secondly, in the shifting of society from the Old World to the New, people were thrown together in mutual dependence. They came to value each other as human beings. The demands of the frontier emphasized cooperation, a cooperation that bred respect for life. Finally, mundane reasons also existed for the philanthropy of these societies. The best way to ascertain that a wealthy merchant would not be without recourse to aid in the event of one of Charles Town's all too frequent disasters was to promote the success of his favorite society. The widows and children of deceased members were cared for out of the societies' funds for the relief of the poor.

The function of Charles Town's societies in the system of poor relief was essentially different from that of the vestry and public relief. While alms given by the vestrymen were doles or charity given to maintain a family in a time of crisis, the societies were concerned with something more than subsistence. The South Carolina Society educated pauper children along with their own so that all would realize their potential equally. The Fellowship Society desired that all inhabitants of Charles Town would have satisfying standards of life and health. The St. Andrews' Society attempted to enable its petitioners to not merely subsist, but to recover from disaster or misfortune and contribute to society.

There is overlap in the membership of these societies and the vestry. Unlike the vestry, these societies openly stated the purposes that they aspired to keep: 1) The poor had rights and dignity and were the equals of their more fortunate countrymen; 2) Poor relief was best accomplished by a combination of citizenry into a private organization. One man alone was insignificant; 3) All individuals had the potentiality to become contributing members of society and deserved this opportunity. It is not true, as Day

asserts, that private philanthropy was insignificant in colonial America. This was far from the case in Charles Town, and Nash reports that in Philadelphia private relief efforts surpassed public assistance.

CHAPTER VIII- RELIEF OF NON-RESIDENT POOR

Watching a coast as it slips by the ship is like thinking about an enigma. There it is before you – smiling, frowning, inviting grand, mean, insipid or savage, and always mute with an air of whispering, “come and find out.”
- Joseph Conrad¹

Mary Gloud, her husband, and two children lived on the Little Saluda River about halfway between Saxe-Gotha and New Windsor. On May 6, 1751 at about dusk, two Savannah Indians unexpectedly appeared at the Gloud cabin. “They sate down very civilly, and my Husband being able to talk their Tongue they talked a good while together.” Mrs. Gloud fed the Indians, and they asked for pipes and tobacco, which Mr. Gloud gave them. The Glouds and the Indians stayed up until midnight talking.

“When the cocks began to crow they came, as I suppose to the bed and shot my Husband through the Head.” A young male guest was also murdered, as were the Gloud’s two children. “And the Indians I suppose, thinking the Bullet had gone thro’ my Husband’s Head and my own too, struck me with a Tomahawk under my right arm and afterwards they struck me two Cuts upon the left knee.” Mrs. Gloud feigned death while the Indians plundered the cabin and went off. After lying in “that bad Condition amongst my dead for two Days, one of my Horses came to the House.” Mrs. Gloud managed to get to Martin Fridig’s house, where Daniel Shyder, a captain in the Saxe

¹ Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness and the Secret Sharer* (New York: The New American Library, 1950), 77.

Gotha Company, took her “Affidavit”, and helped her obtain transport to Charles Town.

On June 12, 1751, the Assembly approved the bills for Mary’s lodging, nursing, and medical care by the noted physician Lionel Chalmers.² John Dart, a vestryman at St. Philip’s and the Commissary General, arranged for her lodging (and that of her nurse, Isabella Robinson) at Abigail Diamond’s boarding house. Despite Mrs. Robinson’s nursing, Mrs. Gloud’s condition worsened. Dr. Chalmers amputated her leg, but even with this extreme measure she died. The Assembly allowed St. Philip’s bill of £10 for her funeral, but only paid £30 of Dr. Chalmer’s charges for attendance and surgery.³

As early as 1698 Charles Town’s officials were forced to deal with the problem of pauperized transients. Ship captains were in the habit of disembarking sick, infirm, and aged mariners and even passengers when they left with their cargoes of rice and naval stores. The Assembly accepted responsibility for these indigent and sick mariners, but only after their captains posted a bond of fifty pounds.⁴ While the 1712

² Chalmers and his partner, John Lining, were among the first American physicians to scientifically research the correlation between the environment and weather and disease. His *Account of the Weather and Diseases of South Carolina* included his and Lining’s meteorological tables and data on the incidence of various diseases. Lionel Chalmers, *Account of the Weather and Diseases of South Carolina* (London, 1776).

³ R. Nicholas, Olsberg, ed., *The Journal of the Commons House of Assembly, 23 April, 1750-31 August, 1751*. (Columbia: South Carolina Department of Archives and History, 1974). May 13 and June 12, 1751, 10 (442, 487); Terry W. Lipscomb and R. Nicholas Olsberg, eds., *The Journal of the Commons House of Assembly, November 15, 1751- October 7, 1752*. (Columbia: South Carolina Department of Archives and History, 1977). January 9, 15, 16, 23, 1752, 11 ((36, 59, 83, 89, 91).

⁴ Thomas Cooper and D.J. McCord, eds., *Statutes at Large of South Carolina* (Columbia: South Carolina Historical Commission, 1836-41), Vol. II, 1698.

poor law prohibited providing public assistance to strangers, hundreds of transient paupers were relieved by the vestry of St. Philip's Parish in Charles Town from the period 1712-1775.⁵ By virtue of its status as the only city on the Southern seaboard, Charles Town received more than its share of immigrants, transients, and soldiers and their dependents. War, disease, Yemassee, Cusabo, and Creek uprisings, and the attempt by the white Assembly to balance the growing slave population with immigrants resulted in an upward spiraling of relief roles.

In an attempt to deter paupers from coming to Charles Town, and thus ease the financial burden on city residents, in 1768 the provincial legislature increased the period of residency required to receive poor relief from three months to a year.⁶ Despite the law, which was considerably more relaxed than English settlement laws, the residency requirements for poor relief were not strictly observed.⁷ As was the case with Mary Gloud, Sarah Cook, Doctor Hall, and Isaac Codner, paupers were likely to be relieved regardless of the locality of their home parish. The parish of St. Philip's

⁵ See Table VIII-1. Of the unduplicated count (by FY) of recipients in the VM and CWA, 27% were shown as non-residents. The percentage of non-residents is probably much higher, since the 1767 report to the General Assembly admits that transients relieved temporarily in the workhouse were never counted, and the CWA accounts usually did not show residency status. Therefore, the majority of the cases shown as transient or non-residents come from the VM after 1751. Without a complete accounting such as the CWA, it is impossible to know for sure how many non-residents were relieved. However, if the regular admonitions of the General Assembly to the vestry are any indication, the cause of the soaring expenditures was "the great increase in transients."

⁶ This Act was in part a reaction to the 1767 report (see Appendix D). "An act ... for establishing further regulations respecting the poor," passed Apr. 12, 1768, Sec. V. *Acts Passed by the General Assembly of South Carolina* (Charles-Town, 1768), 39.

⁷ As noted earlier, 27% of the persons relieved were non-residents; however, of these non-residents who were relieved, only 16% were provided transportation out of the parish.

dealt with transients from back-country parishes all over the province, but sent only a minority of them back to their home parishes. Mary Gloud was unusual in that the Commons House of Assembly and not the parish reimbursed Isabella Robinson, Abigail Diamond, and Doctor Chalmers for the expenses incurred while they cared for her in Charles Town.

Agreed that Lydia Jones belonging to the Parish of St. Helen's Port Royal Shall be Taken care of till her Sores are well, and then to send her back by the first opportunity to her said Parish of St. Helen's Port Royal (V.M., 8 Aug., 1737).

According to most histories of public welfare, rogues, vagabonds, disabled servants, and immigrants did not fit into the American "take care of your own" ethic. Charles Town at first glance is typical of colonial cities and towns, its poor laws excluding non-resident dependents who had not lived in the parish for more than three months. Yet in the pages of St. Philip's vestry minutes there is evidence of a surprising divergence from the reported social welfare practices of the eighteenth century; non-resident poor were relieved and in many instances treated as well as parish poor.

Transients

Not all Charles Town's transients were the idle rogues, the thieves, the pickpockets, the chronically unemployed, and the miscellaneous vagrants that were found in England. Many were yeoman farmers and their families burned out by Indians in the back country. Some were freed indentured servants, hoping in a few years to be as wealthy as their ex-masters. Others were ancient, diseased, or disabled mariners left on shore by their captains, and some were the sons and daughters of backwoods settlers who drifted back into Charles Town, attracted by the vibrant city life. The Poor Law of

1712 entitled the church wardens to legally remove persons from the parish who they feared would become chargeable to the church wardens and vestry. This law in South Carolina was not intended to exclude the transient poor from any aid at all, for the indigent were always entitled to relief in their home parish. This act, reported a committee to study the costs of poor relief in 1757, could have “Effectively Obviated the Burden” of the transient poor on the parishioners of Charles Town”(V.M., December 13, 1757). Yet this law was never “duly practiced and pursued.” A great many more transients were given relief than were legally entitled to such aid, if one can trust the records of the vestry. The fact that the official committee reported this failure to uphold the law seems to indicate the vestrymen’s non-compliance. The following minutes of relief given to transients in violation of the settlement laws are typical. These cases occurred more than five times more often than the instances where a transient was sent away in accordance with the law:

Ordered that a poor woman with five Children from Winyah (Now in the workhouse) be provided for as usually till further ordered (V.M., 20 Dec., 1762).

Transient-Agreed to allow Margaret Miller £6 per month for two Children lately arrived on a vessel from Germany, whose parents died on the passage (V.M., 30 March, 1772).

A poor man Mr. Roper has relieved which was brought here from Rhode Island and left. The man appeared and the vestry thought he was of good character (V.M., 22 June, 1759).

Agreed that Mr. Montgomery a Back Settler be allowed £10 for Victuals and (V.M., 13 Jan., 1766).

Transient-Agreed to give Francis Hendricks- £10 to relieve him in his present distress (V.M., 7 May, 1771).

Transient-Agreed that John Burges be Allowed £10 at Two payments over and

above his monthly allowance (V.M., 26 Nov., 1771).

Transient-Agreed that Catherine Hyline who relieved Margaret Opland a poor woman who was in labour in the street be satisfied for trouble at the Discretion of the Church Wardens (V.M., 11 April, 1774).

Transient-Agreed to Allow £10 for the Support of James Tobin who is sick and his wife who is very near lying in and that the Church Wardens will further relieve them as they think proper (V.M., 8 Feb., 1775).

Transient-Agreed to allow Margaret Stevens £4 pr. Month (V.M., 25 April, 1775).

Agreed that Mr. Busby lately from England being very idle at Mrs. Patson's be relieved by the Church Wardens at their discretion (V.M., 28 June, 1756).

In strict opposition to the written code, frequently the supplicant was relieved or cured before being sent on his way. The New England practice of warning paupers off at the city gates or beating them away with sticks was never employed in Charles Town. Since Charles Town was the New World's only walled city until late in the eighteenth century, warning-off could have been effectively implemented to prevent poor from other parishes from entering. Nevertheless, there was no mention of such a process in over forty years of vestry minutes:

Order'd that a poor woman lately delievered in the street be relieved at the discretion of the Church Wardens, until she be fit to go abroad (V.M., 17 Aug., 1747).

William Davison with his wife, who has lost the use of her Limbs, from Black Creek, applying for relief, Agreed to give them not exceeding £20 and to send them back to the parish they belong to (V.M., 17 April, 1767).

Agreed that Frances Peters have 40/given her at present & £3 when she goes out of town (V.M., 19 Nov., 1766).

Ordered to give Margaret Hewes a Gown 1 pr. Shoes & Stockings & some small matter cash to carry her out of town (V.M., 19 Nov., 1766).

Agreed, that the Church Wardens pay Mrs. Pawley three pounds pr Month for the Maintenance of Jacobina Davis till such time as they can procure a passage for her to Holland (V.M., 21 May, 1753).

Approximately a fifth of the transient cases in the minutes were treated according to the letter of the law; that is, they were sent back to the parish or province from whence they came. These transients were not taken to the city gates and released with a sound beating and a warning never to return. Their passage out of town was paid by the parish. Usually, they were also provided with relief until their departure and were given money and provisions for the trip.

Agreed to give £5 to Thomas Coleman, a poor man with one leg, to enable him to Leave Charles Town (V.M., 15 Aug., 1775).

Agreed that the Church Wardens provide a passage for one Johnson, a barber, now in the workhouse, for England (V.M., 27 May, 1754).

Agreed that the Church Wardens do give Mrs. Brombey £10 to assist her to go to Winyaw, the place she came from (V.M., 12 July, 1769).

Agreed, that the Church Wardens Agree with Mr. Matthew Roche for her and Children's Passage.....and in the mean time to allow her such necessarys as they Shall think proper (V.M., 28 July, 1746).

Transient-Agreed to send John Williams a Poor Man to Mr. West at Goose Creek and that he be supplied with several small necessities (V.M., 23 April, 1775).

Agreed that the Church Wardens pay the Passage of Mary Butler who is infirm, to Cork of Bristol (V.M., 8 Oct., 1753).

The following tables show that 27% of all recipients (unduplicated by year) were non-residents. Of these non-residents, only 16.6% were transported out of the parish. Most were relieved, receiving a full range of services, and the average expense was nearly twice that of resident poor.

Table VIII-1 Count of Transients as a Percent of Unduplicated Count of Recipients

Reason Provided Service	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
sick	253	11.3	11.3
disabled	239	10.7	22.0
aged	19	.9	22.9
infant/child	497	22.2	45.1
dependent			
female	473	21.2	66.3
other	147	6.6	72.8
transient	607	27.2	100.0
Total	2235	100.0	

Source: Unduplicated file of recipients (VM & CWA-1725-1775)

Table VIII-2 Count of Recipients Provided Transportation from Charles Town

Residency Status	Frequency	Percent	All Recipients VIII-1	Number Transported as % of All
Resident	80	43.2	1628	4.9
Transient	101	55.8	607	16.6
Total	181	100.0	2235	8.1

Source: Unduplicated file of recipients (VM & CWA-1725-1775)

Table VIII-3 Primary Services Provided to Transients by Parish-1725-1775

Service Type Provided	Frequency	Percent	Cum. Percent
outrelief	356	58.6	58.6
room and board	58	9.6	68.2
in kind	12	2.0	70.2
child care	20	3.3	73.5
nursing	22	3.6	77.1
doctor	12	2.0	79.1
burial	1	.2	79.2
transport	101	16.6	95.9
indenture	5	.8	96.7
school	20	3.3	100.0
Total	607	100.0	

Source: Unduplicated file of recipients (VM & CWA-1725-1775)

Table VIII-4 Mean Expense per Recipient by Residency Status

Residency Type Relief	<u>N</u>	Total Expense	Mean Expense
<u>Resident Poor</u>			
On Parish	216	£11225	£52
Present Relief	668	6336	9.10
Workhouse	72	7156	99
Total Resident	956	24717	25.9
<u>Non-Resident Poor</u>			
On Parish	4	142	3.10
Present Relief	73	607	8.6
Workhouse	45	4714	104.12
Total Non-Resident	122	5463	44.8
Total All	1078	30180	28

Source: Church Wardens' Account Books-1725-1751

Only 35% of the non-residents were sent to other parishes. Many were provided transportation out of the province, usually at the request of the poor person, but at a considerable expense to the parish.

Table VIII-5 Destination & Number of Poor Persons Provided Passage 1725-1775

Destination	Number
<u>Europe</u>	
England	24
London	5
Liverpoole	3
Bristol	11
Cowes	1
Ireland	3
Cork	1
Scotland	
Edinburgh	1
Holland	1
Rotterdam	1
Sub-Total Europe	51 (25%)

	<u>West Indies</u>	
West Indies	3	
Jamaica	13	
Bermuda	2	
Sub-Total West Indies		18 (9%)

	<u>Other American Colonies</u>	
American Colonies (not stated)	14	
Georgia-Augusta	1	
Georgia-Savannah	1	
North Carolina	6	
North Carolina-Cape Fear	9	
Virginia	1	
Pennsylvania	1	
Philadelphia	15	
Rhode Island	6	
Providence	3	
New York	2	
Boston	3	
Sub-Total American Colonies		62 (31%)

Table VIII-5 (Continued)

Destination	Number	
<u>South Carolina Parishes & Districts</u>		
Prince William	2	
Christ Church	1	
St James Goose Creek	4	
St James Santee	1	
St Helena Port Royal	1	
St Andrews	4	
St Bartholomew	2	
Prince George Winyah	6	
Prince Frederick	10	
Winyah/Black Creek	1	
Waterees	3	
Congarees	4	
South Carolina Back-Country	30	
Sub-Total South Carolina Parishes & Districts		69 (35%)
Total		200 (100%)

Immigrants

A 1730 scheme to settle the Carolina back country resulted in the additional burden of dependents flooding Charles Town's streets in the latter half of the eighteenth century. Intent on defending against the raids of Creeks, offsetting a growing majority of slaves, and providing customers for Charles Town's businesses, assemblymen offered "Poor Protestants" land in nine undeveloped townships upriver from Charles Town.⁸ Lockley cites Laurens' description of the treatment of poor Irish lured by empty promises: "Laurens wrote that he 'never saw an instance of Cruelty in Ten or Twelve years experience in that branch (the slave trade) equal to the cruelty exercised upon those poor Irish.'" ⁹

The vestry had the responsibility for immigrants after 1747, being able to disperse them by law to various parishes. Those who came into the town seeking the only adequate form of medical care or poor relief available in the province were to be dealt with in one of two ways. Their expense was to be charged to the parish from whence they came or they were to be sent away without charity. The former practice was not feasible because of the difficulty of collecting from distant parishes and colonies. The second alternative, were it practiced, would have released the parish from the burden of caring for the immigrant poor. Nevertheless, this choice was at best an inhumane manner of treating the alien poor. It was used so infrequently that the

⁸ *Public Records of South Carolina*, transcripts from the British Public Record Office by Noel Sainsbury, Vol. XXVI, p. 315 (in MSS, S.C. Department of Archives and History).

⁹ Laurens, *Papers*, p. 298. Cited in Lockley, "White Poverty",

committee to study the increases of the poor rates in 1767 commented that most immigrant poor were allowed to remain in the city. “The many poor German, Irish, French, Huguenot and other Protestants who have either remained in Charles Town after being set on Shoar or returned to it from their lands laid out in the country” were responsible for “the vast increase in Poor’s rates.”¹⁰

The indigent aliens were treated in much the same manner as the parish poor. In 1753 numbers of “poor, lame and impotent persons” were sent down from the Congarees by wagon in 1753 without any funds to provide for them. The vestrymen hospitalized and relieved the back settlers lest they be forced to “go begging from door to door” or “perish in the streets” (V.M., 15 Oct., 1753).

The pages of the vestry minutes refer to recipients of all nationalities who passed through the port city.

Agreed that John Bowyer who hath traveled from Nova Scotia and is lame to be sent to the hospital and that the Parish Doctor take care of his leg (V.M., 14 May, 1750).

A poor German woman waited on the Vestry desiring they would be pleased to pay her passage from hence to Philadelphia, they agreed to allow Eighteen or Twenty pounds towards paying their passage (V.M., 23 Aug., 1742).

Ordered that a Dutch woman with a sore leg be relieved at the workhouse and the parish doctor to take care of her (V.M., 17 Aug., 1747).

Ordered that Mrs. Welch have 10 pounds out of the Sacrament money and a poor Swiss Woman have another 10 pounds (V.M., 6 Dec., 1742).

Ordered that Mrs. Miller lately from England to be allowed a Blanket and some small matters as she wants (V.M., 19 Nov., 1766).

Agreed that Mrs. Mary Tower a French Woman be allowed £3/15 per month (V.M., 4 Dec., 1770).

¹⁰ Easterby, “Public Poor Relief,” 86.

Boatloads of poor Irish immigrants became a particular problem in the last half-century. In 1767, 300 immigrants were disembarked from a “ship from Ireland.”Housed temporarily in the dilapidated “old barracks” near the workhouse on Magazine street, they suffered from a “cruel flux and fever.”¹¹ The churchwardens reported that many were lying naked and dying, with sick children intermingled with the corpses of their parents. Notices requesting help were posted in the Gazette and about town, but the Gazette reported that the money raised was “insufficient.”¹² Often in the interest of economy, settlers were helped on their way to the interior by the vestrymen, who were eager to hold down parish expenses. In 1772, 184 Irish immigrants were stranded in town because 123 of them could not pay wagon fare northward. The obliging vestrymen quickly arranged for their assistance (V.M., 4 Dec., 1772).

Expelled from Nova Scotia during the French and Indian War, over nine hundred French Acadian immigrants were sent without advance notice to South Carolina. When they arrived at the dock on Bay Street they were received with hostility by the people of Charles Town. A committee of the House reported that the Acadians were a menace, that they had fought against the English, and above all that they were “papists,” the Catholic religion being outlawed in the province:

There is ample reason to dread from the pernicious influence of these Transients, if they should be permitted to reside among us, all the Mischiefs which an inveterate hatred to the Protestant Religion, and a stiff bigotry to their own tenents, heightened by a Spirit of Resentment, and a Notion of their having been grievously injured could bring upon us.

¹¹ SC Gazette, June 29, 1767.

¹² Ibid.

The committee members feared that these intruders would perhaps lead a slave insurrection, ally themselves with the hostile Creeks, or assist a French invasion force. Seldom have a more feared people been received as immigrants anywhere.¹³

The governor, while doubting the legality of accepting the Acadians, ordered them removed from the crowded, unhealthy ships. Governor James Glen told the Commons House of Assembly, "It would be cruelty to keep these people on board the vessels till they perish."¹⁴ Begrudgingly, the House undertook to employ the men building fortifications and lodging the families at public expense, while providing ten shillings per week for each person's maintenance.¹⁵ However, when an additional shipload arrived the town became violently threatening.

This House having been informed that very few of the French, now in Charles Town who were brought from Nova Scotia, do work or take the least pains to procure any Thing for their support; and considering what a greivous Burden the maintaining of so great a number of them must be to the Public: We have resolved that we will not provide for the subsistence of any of them after the 25th of this Instant. And we desire that your Excellency will please give orders for having the aid French acquainted with this resolution: which we are hopeful will set them upon measures for subsisting themselves by their own labor.¹⁶

The planter-dominated Assembly was considerably more harsh in their treatment of the poor than the St. Philip's vestry. Disinterested in public welfare, they

¹³ *Commons House Journal*, Vol. 5, 20-26 November, 1755, 472 to May 4, 1756, 13.

¹⁴ *Ibid.* The Acadians were to be quarantined on Sullivan's Island for five days. Those of "turbulent and seditious disposition were to be quartered in the workhouse. A sum not exceeding 10 shillings per week was voted for the maintenance of each person. Glen continued to advocate for the Acadians, "In the Depth of Distress." In Chapman, J. Milling, *Exile Without End* (Columbia: Bostick & Thornley, Inc., 1943), 22,23.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, November 29, 1755.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, December 3, 1755.

jealously guarded the provincial pocketbook. Nevertheless, reneging on their former resolution on January 22, they voted 15 shillings per head for subsistence. An appeal by the governor, who cited the Acadians' aid to the Englishmen in Nova Scotia, and their cruel expulsion from their native land moved the House to act humanely.¹⁷ Hence by 1756, the colony was supporting over one thousand Acadians in Charles Town, two hundred more having arrived from Georgia. Frances Moses, sick and "past labor," and Chas Ignace Caree, "Lunatick and sick" were two of the many sick that were cared for by Dr. George Milligan and Dr. Lionel Chalmers. The first bill for maintenance came to £5868 and the next to £8126.¹⁸ While paid by the Commons House, to place this expense in perspective the entire annual assessment for 1756 for St. Philip's parish poor relief was £3000.

The Assembly provided that the immigrants should be distributed among the various parishes of the colony and bound out as indentured servants. St. Philip's and St. Michael's, the dual parishes of Charles Town, were to receive 137 for indenture. Advertisements were circulated and the aliens were put on display at the old school house. The vestry insured that all were bound out as quickly as possible, viewing the free Acadian as potentially dangerous (V.M., 5 Aug., 1756). By late 1757, many of the indigent Acadians sent to other parishes had returned to Charles Town. The vestry admonished the church wardens of other parishes who had neglected their duty and requested permission to charge all wandering Acadians to their home parishes (V.M., 27 Sept., 1756).

¹⁷ Ibid., January 22, 1756.

¹⁸ In Milling, *Exile Without End*, 32, 33.

Despite both the consideration of the Acadians as dreaded enemies and the Acadians' ineligibility for relief under the settlement laws, they were continued on the parish charge. By the middle of 1757 the church wardens had been driven to distraction by the duties of their office; yet at the same time, impressed with the need of the Acadians, the vestry petitioned the House for their relief:

The Church Wardens having informed the Vestry that a great number of the Acadians are sick and in great distress whom they have been obliged to relieve, agreed that the Church Wardens continue the relief, that an humble representation be made to the General Assembly of the Great Burden this Parish labours under as well as from the Acadians, Soliders' wives, widows, orphans, and that the trouble of the Church Wardens is so greatly increased that it can't be expected that any person in the future will serve in the office (V.M., 3 Oct., 1757).

The story of the French Catholics is the saddest chapter of the vestry book. By 1760, through famine, disease and flight the number of immigrants had dwindled to one-fourth their original number, and more still were to die or leave. South Carolina had proven at best inhospitable. The vestrymen, while their efforts could in some instances be called humane, had allowed fear to mar their respect for human life and dignity.

Mariners, Soldiers, and Soldiers' Wives and Dependents

In colonial times hundreds of masts outlined the banks of Charles Town's Cooper River as sailing vessels, *pariaguas* (canoes), and rafts offloaded their goods onto East Bay Street wharves. Gangs of slaves clambered over the ships replacing the Chippendale furniture in the holds with barrels of rice and naval stores. These merchant ships and the men of war of His Majesty's navy that patrolled the seas in search of pirates, Spanish merchantmen, and French privateers were not equipped to

administer to their sick, ancient, or disabled mariners. Charles Town taverns, bawdy houses, and the workhouse green were convenient dumping places for diseased and indigent seamen. As early as 1698 captains were required to post a bond upon entering the harbor of fifty pounds toward the care of any of their charges they might have left behind. It became a common practice to disembark some poor unfortunate out of range of the harbor and without the knowledge of town officials, thus avoiding the cost of the bond or care. Subsequent laws formalized the responsibilities of the ship captains; however it was not until 1747 that the vestry became obligated to care for dependent sailors. Before the above date the vestrymen could only intervene to encourage recalcitrant masters to provide for their own seamen. When these captains refused the parish bore the charge.

.... Ordered that a minute be made of the sum of Forty-Two pounds Ten shillings which was paid for the cure and maintenance of Three men belonging to the Loo Man of Warr, which Charge was promised by Captain Utting should be paid by Captain Hamer Commander of HMS the Flamborough who now refuses to pay the above said charge (V.M., 23 April, 1744).

After 1747 the vestrymen handled the following typical cases:

James Hand, lately pressed on board the Aldborough and discharged being sick and dropsical applied for relief, agreed that the Church Wardens give him a Coat and breeches and Stockens and such things as his Necessity requires at their discretion (V.M., 26 Dec., 1748).

A sailor belonging to Captain John Wadham having about a month or three weeks since, broke his leg, was kept on ship without proper assistance, till within a few days past Captain Wadham acquainted Mr. Laurens of the Distress of the Sailor and told him if the Sailor was not taken on shore he must Die; That he could not afford to be at any expence about him. That the Church Wardens had provided a House for him and for saving his life had procured his leg, which was mortified, to be cut off.... (V.M., 20 July, 1734).

Agreed to allow Andrew Campbell, a poor disabled Seaman £3.5 for present relief (V.M., 11 April, 1774).

James Butler, late mariner belonging to the Elizabeth's Captain Hunt, made application to the Vestry for relief labouring under a very bad Veneral Disorder which renders him unable to go to sea without manifest Danger of his life the said Captain Hunt having discharged him knowing of his disorder. Agreed that the said James Butler be sent to the Hospital and put under the care of the Parish Doctor... (V.M., 16 Oct., 1754).

Agreed that a Sailor belonging to Mr. Gadsden's vessel be sent to the hospital at Mr. Gadsden's charge of 5 shillings per day (V.M., 28 June, 1756).

Soldiers and their wives, widows, and dependent children became eligible for aid from the vestry in 1747, resulting from the trouble of such petitioners as Thomas Fuller who was "disabled and reduced to great necessity," yet had not obtained a "proper settlement" (V.M., 1 June, 1747). A remonstrance was made to Governor James Glen on behalf of Fuller and other soldiers who "dye leaving their women and children who want relief and no provision by law is made for them." The Assembly responded by allowing money in 1747 for orphans and widows of men who died in "His Majesty's Service".

Additionally, Thomas Fuller was relieved by act of the Assembly until such time as employment could be found "in the Public Service on board the Provincial Galley or in some other manner" (V.M., 19 May, 1747). Subsequently hundreds of soldiers and their dependents dotted the relief roles. The following minutes are a sampling of these cases:

Agreed that the Church Wardens pay the expences of a Poor Solider's Widow a Dutch woman with her two children to the Congree she going there to settle (V.M., 13 June, 1798).

Ordered that the Church Wardens care for a woman belonging to one of the Highland Regiments ready to lye in and allowance to made for her (V.M., 3 Oct., 1757).

Ordered that Rachel McGuire, a soldiers widow, instead of the meat allowed her to have £6/10/0 per month for her self and two children and an allowance of rice to continue as before (V.M., 25 April, 1759).

A soldier discharged by Captain Fusier applied for relief from the parish but the vestry finding him to be in health & able to work being a taylor, did advise him to go to work (V.M., 11 July, 1768).

Mr. Laurens acquainted the Vestry that there were ten or twelve women belonging to the soldiers sent to Virginia, who with their children are almost naked and in very distressed condition and desired the direction of the Vestry about giving them proper relief. Agreed that the Church Wardens provide Cloaths and necessarys for them, at the most reasonable rates; according to their discretion (V.M., 16 Oct., 1754).

Agreed to allow Margaret Wilmott/a soldier's Wife in Distress/ £10 for the present month... (V.M., 13 Jan., 1766).

The vestrymen's feelings about the support of these soldiers were probably mixed at best. Most soldiers were foreign citizens and should have been the responsibility of the British government. Nevertheless, during the entire colonial period the British Army seemed to provide very little care for its own. Doubtlessly many soldiers on the welfare rolls at Charles Town were deserters from the regiments stationed in Savannah to the south. Among the entourage of the detachments in Charles Town were not only wives and dependent children but also camp followers and illegitimate children. Toward the end of the colonial period one would expect that British soldiers would have become especially unwelcome. The Stamp Act aroused considerable hostility among Charles Town merchants. Yet there is no evidence in the orders issued by the vestry to the church wardens of any discriminatory practices toward the hundreds of soldiers and their dependents who applied for relief, even as late as 1775 when British soldiers were feared and hated by the town's populace.

Often the vestry found creative ways around the restrictions on using parish tax funds for the relief of non-residents. Mary Solar, the wife of a soldier stationed at Fort Loudon, and her two daughters were provided with sacrament money “not got from the publick” in 1758. The annuity left to the vestry for the poor by the late vestryman Edaward Hext was spent to offset costs of “Sundry Transient Poor at the Workhouse” in 1749.

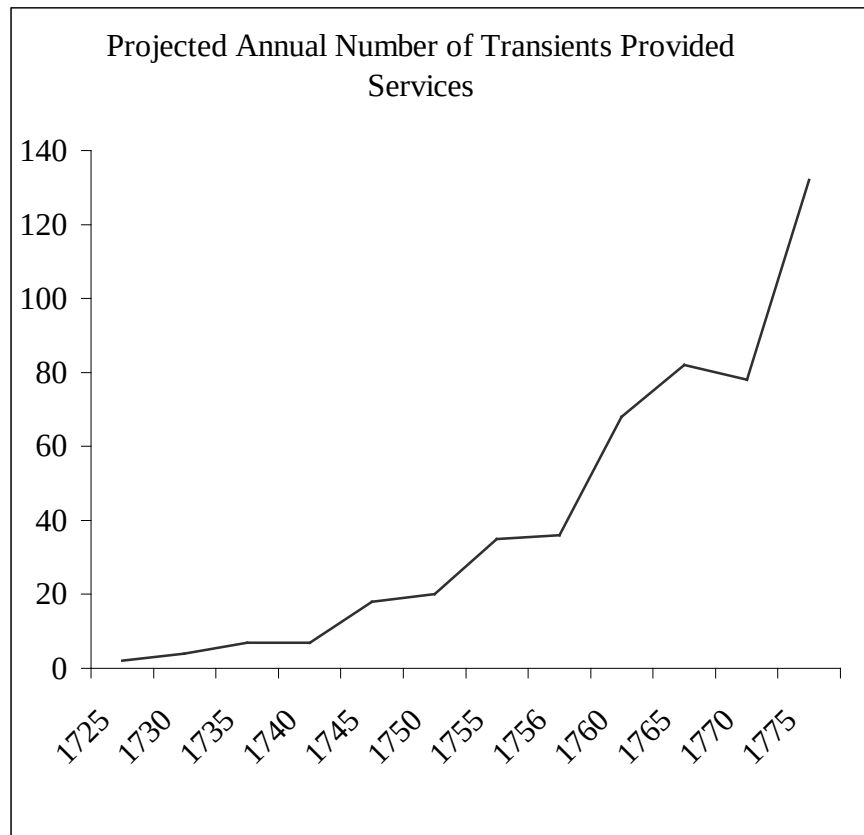
Summary

The 1712 Poor Law forbade any relief whatsoever financed by public funds to non-residents.¹⁹ Figure VIII-1 is developed from the projection in Appendix D, using ratios of transients provided services reflected in the vestry minutes. This graph depicts the steep rise that prompted the 1767 report of the General Assembly and the numerous “admonitions” to the vestry about the expense resulting from their failure to heed the law.²⁰

¹⁹ Cooper and McCord, *Statutes*, 593-598.

²⁰ Appendix D was used as a basis for projecting recipients.

Figure VIII-1



Source: Appendix D and CWA, VM

The findings of this chapter are highly inconsistent with those of other historians who described the attitudes of colonial public welfare officials as hostile toward strangers. According to these writers pervasive distrust of outsiders was translated into settlement laws designed to protect honest, hard-working citizens from the burden of idle and intemperate strangers.²¹ Some indication of this distrust was detailed in the Chapter V findings that non-residents were five times more likely to be relieved in the workhouse than residents. Another concern is found in the fact that more

²¹ Abramovitz, *Regulating*, 79; Day, *New History*, 144; Jones, "Strolling", 49; Schneider, "Patchwork", 464.

women were sent away than men. This can be explained in that women comprised about 65 percent of all indigents and many were able-bodied, being fit to travel. Since women were much more likely to receive pensions, the expense of sending them away saved money for the parish in the long run.

Table VIII-6 Gender/Age of Indigents Transported from Charles Town, 1725-1775

Gender/Age	Frequency	Percent	Cum. Percent
female	84	46.4	46.4
male	36	19.9	66.3
child	61	33.7	100.0
Total	181	100.0	

Yet colonial Charles Town's poor relief practices were not harsh or punitive toward the non-resident poor. Settlement laws were frequently circumvented by the vestrymen in order that care might be provided for needy transients, immigrants, soldiers, and mariners. Finally, many strangers in eighteenth century Charles Town were cared for as well as parish poor. Despite laws to the contrary, in some years almost half of the individuals provided relief did not meet residency requirements, only 17% of those who could legally be sent away were transported out of the parish, and the average expenditures per recipient were greater for non-residents than for residents.

CHAPTER IX- CONCLUSION

It is widely accepted among social welfare historians that poverty in America was not a serious problem until the middle of the nineteenth century. In the colonial period, social welfare laws, policies and attitudes were imported wholesale from England and employed in America without substantial modification. Some historians paint a grim picture of colonial policies and attitudes that were biased against women, children and strangers and that expressed a Puritanical and patriarchal set of values. These historians say that the paupers who were the recipients of poor relief were kept in their places by policies designed for social control and that institutions such as orphanages, asylums, and poorhouses destroyed the well-being of many poor citizens and were dumping bins for a dependent and hopeless underclass.

Reisch and Andrews accuse social welfare historians of having “historical amnesia” by focusing on the dominant culture and ignoring the influence of radical ideas of writers such as Wilensky and Lebeaux, Piven and Cloward, Day, and Abramovitz.¹ These radical writers contend that public welfare programs have not been benevolent in nature; rather, they are intended to maintain the positions of both the elite and the underclass in society and to force the poor into the labor market. Poor relief is designed to manipulate the poor and keep them under control. Furthermore, Abramovitz and Day take the social control theme a step further into a Marxian or

¹ Reisch and Andrews, *Road Not Taken*, 3.

conflict model of social welfare. They suggest that earlier social welfare historians were blinded to the plight of women and minorities and wrote from a racist and patriarchal perspective. Day goes further to proclaim that earlier social welfare histories were part of the dominant male effort to rob women and minorities of their true identity.

American social welfare, according to Day, was “without historical traditions of care for the poor” and was “stuck in its harsh, anti-poor, worker-exploitation past.”²

“Ironically, the term social control originally had a benign rather than a sinister connotation.”³ Trattner points out that originally it was the “primary objective” of those we now call social workers and of social welfare institutions “to enable the helpless and needy to function within the social order.”⁴ Trattner believes that the simplistic and mechanical explanations of social control offered by the so-called radical writers present serious historical problems. For example, the Piven and Cloward thesis of expansion and contraction of poor relief to control the underclass has never been tested against colonial American poor relief policy.

The history of social welfare in colonial America does not fit neatly along the continuum from benevolence to social control. Single, unchanging models and facile explanations do not do such a complex topic justice. Moreover, there is ample evidence from Philadelphia, rural South Carolina parishes, and Charles Town that, contrary to the writings of Abramovitz and Day, some American social welfare policies may have regressed since colonial America.

² Day, *New History*, 133.

³ Trattner, *Social Control*, 4.

⁴ Ibid.

To summarize the findings from the review of the literature, a considerable body of work indicates that poverty was widespread and endemic in colonial America; social welfare was a significant part of colonial American society; ethnic and mutual aid societies were well-developed in urban areas and private philanthropy and religion were well-organized and important to poor relief efforts; the manifest functions of social welfare institutions were neither primarily humane and nor designed for social control, but to deter able-bodied poor from seeking relief and to reduce costs; those persons involved in the provision of social welfare services were respected and prominent members of society; and finally, social welfare was a form of social insurance in volatile and dangerous times and was designed to return the poor to productivity. The support of families, kinship and ethnic self-help, mutual aid societies, private philanthropy and organized religion have been ignored or diminished by mainstream historians and social welfare texts. No one has assembled the evidence into one set of findings about poor relief in colonial America. There has been no published review of the literature on this topic and important contributions (e.g., Alexander, 1983; Trattner, 1983; Guest, 1989) have not been synthesized. The “progressive vs. social control dichotomy” continues unchecked with the radical perspective trumping all other views. Modern histories “redress” past sins by re-writing history from a modern socialist and feminist perspective, and meanwhile accusing others of writing “Whig histories,” that focus on the elite and the good works of those persons of historical significance.

Findings

There is ample evidence that significant poverty existed among Charles Town's white population. There may be no means to compare the poverty of colonial Charles Town with that of late nineteenth century urban areas where poverty was "discovered" in America. However, at least 20 percent of Charles Town's white residents were poor and any misfortune could (and often did) plunge any one of them into poverty. For most residents, there was no cushion for unexpected injury or illness, job loss, or disaster. Poor laws, proportionately large relief expenditures, institutional facilities, and extensive private charity would not have existed if there were no poor. A large proportion of Charles Town's residents were penniless immigrants. Some accounts claim that infectious and communicable diseases resulted in only 20% of the white population surviving beyond age 20. The crude death rate exceeded that of Boston, Philadelphia, and probably most other American towns and cities and helped explain why some of the townspeople were wealthy, while many more led marginal existences in poverty and need. Race, gender, and the socioeconomic status of residents' families had a lot to do with who was rich and who was poor. For many early Charlestonians, however, there was another factor. For eighteenth century residents of Charles Town acts of violence and infectious disease were omnipresent facts of life and death. Poor persons were exposed to greater risks of disease and death. In the very early years of the colony there was little difference between the wealthiest and the poorest members of Charles Town society. By the middle of the eighteenth century the gap resulting from the differential risk had widened considerably. Charles Town's elite were the

wealthiest persons in British North America, while about one fourth of the poor whites were on relief roles.

Public poor relief expenditures per 1,000 population increased 1800% from 1725 to 1775, and exceeded expenditures per 1,000 persons in New York, Boston, and Philadelphia for the same period. There were no expansions and contractions designed to control the poor. Relief expenditures increased throughout the period, expanding in good economic times as well as in bad times. According to a published report from the House of Commons, in 1765 at a point in time six percent of Charles Town's white population received public poor relief pensions or institutional care. This does not include those receiving temporary assistance or private relief figures.

The administrative apparatus of public poor relief in Charles Town did not assume that recipients were unmotivated, had no aspirations, were inherently lazy and stupid, or were morally impoverished. There is no evidence that the vestry believed that the recipients would be corrupted by charity. It is true that the vestrymen had to be convinced that the recipient was within reason impoverished. However, once eligibility was established, relief was dispensed straightforwardly with minimal disruption of the poor person's life. The relief was usually given in cash. There were few humiliating exhibitions of proving a pauper's indigence. To be poor was not to be socially unacceptable, tainted, nor deviant. Since the vestry was the executive branch of local government, the fact that most of the vestry minutes dealt with poor relief indicates that social welfare services were the most important function of that local government. Wealthy elite men spent time and personal funds to assist the significant numbers of poor in need. There was daily personal contact between the elite and the poor. These

social relationships take on an additional measure of significance when one understands that the parish officers were among the wealthiest and most powerful persons in North America. Amounts of relief provided were well above subsistence level. Services were increased in times of natural disaster and epidemic disease and funds were provided to persons of formerly modest means.

Outdoor relief pensions and “present relief” were provided at levels that exceeded subsistence. In most cases, cash payments were made directly to the pauper by the church warden out of the warden’s own pocket. At times the parish was in arrears to wardens for over £1,000 currency. Few adults were boarded out, and none were auctioned off to the lowest bidder. The poor law of 1736 required all poor to be relieved at the workhouse, and in 1738 when the facility was opened all poor were to be removed there forthwith. This forced suspension of outdoor relief never occurred. Outdoor relief continued to be the dominant mode of relief throughout the colonial period.

In spite of restrictive laws prohibiting expenditures on poor children and orphans, they were well educated and well cared for by the vestry and church wardens. Females as well as males were educated. Pauper children were never “sold” to lowest bidder or forced to stay with cruel masters or mistresses. Seventy-seven percent of all apprenticeships occurred prior to 1760, when the parish boarding school was established. Between 1760 and 1775, fewer than 10% of poor children receiving services were indentured as apprentices. After 1760, most children were boarded at parish expense rather than being indentured at no expense to the parish as required by law.

The law required able-bodied paupers who did not work to be confined to the workhouse, whipped, and have meals abridged. Many able-bodied women could not find work, yet were provided outdoor relief at greater than subsistence level. Eighty-two percent of females relieved by the parish between 1725 and 1775 were not sick, aged, or disabled. Even women with illegitimate children or women employed in brothels or as streetwalkers were provided assistance. Since records of “present relief” provided after 1751 are missing along with the church wardens’ account books, it is not possible to determine the number of able-bodied persons helped between 1752 and 1775. As the 1766 Report to the Assembly states, numerous other persons received temporary help such as meals at the workhouse and were never documented as receiving relief.

Gainful employment for women was scarce and since mortality among breadwinners was high, dependent women and children made up a great percentage of the total dependents. Had the vestry followed the letter of the law and not relieved able-bodied women, bound out all poor children, and only relieved paupers in the workhouse, expenses would have been substantially reduced and perhaps eliminated entirely for some groups. On several occasions the House of Commons issued “remonstrances” against the vestry for its failure to uphold laws on the books; however, the vestry never wavered in its provisions.

In a like manner the poor relief system served as insurance for families in need suffering from permanent disability, sickness, or old age. The public system of relief functioned largely as a form of life and health insurance for all needy persons in

colonial Charles Town. Those families reduced to poverty were not necessarily consigned to remain in a dependent state. It is true that much parish poor relief was designed for mere subsistence; yet some aid was intended to lift the pauper out of the dependent state. Educated poor children who had learned a skill or trade would find many opportunities to become self-supporting as an adult.

There is no evidence that poor women who violated the “family ethic” were treated differently from other poor women. Even those few women who challenged the sensibilities of the vestrymen were not denied assistance, although some were punished by confinement in the workhouse. The poor relief system in Charles Town did not augment the oppression and discrimination of women extant in eighteenth century society. Some evidence exists that for a brief time before the antebellum period, the social construction of gender in Charles Town was far less restrictive than during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. While poor white women could not aspire to the social levels of elite women, they were significantly higher on the social ladder than slaves and Native Americans.

Immediately upon opening its doors in 1738, and continuing until 1751 when there are no further accounts, the workhouse proved to be more expensive than outdoor relief on a per recipient per year basis. While the deterrent quality of the workhouse might have initially functioned to ward off some able-bodied sturdy beggars, in the long run it neither saved money nor prevented poverty. Unlike Boston, New York and Philadelphia, where there were large “manufactories”, there was little or no work performed by the poor at Charles Town’s workhouse by the poor housed there. As far as can be determined, most residents were incapable of work. Some sick and disabled

survived in the workhouse for years. Residents of the workhouse were well-clothed and their diet included “luxury” items such as beer, sugar and beef. Sick paupers received the best medical care available at the time. Dr. John Moultrie, a vestryman and parish physician, was a pioneer of modern obstetrical practice. Dr. Alexander Garden, a world-renowned scientist, developed effective techniques for smallpox vaccination.

Perhaps it was the dual purpose of deterrence and supposed cost-efficiency and not social control that has fueled the discovery of the asylum in America. This study of institutional poor relief in Charles Town during the eighteenth century fails to reveal either that the poor were treated harshly and punitively or that work and punishment were more than incidentally related to the policies of poor relief.

The large slave population in Charles Town decidedly influenced decisions to institutionalize the poor. Because of the correctional role and the housing of fugitives, there was little room for the poor. Slaves, seamen, and runaway servants filled the workhouse. Moreover, there was continual disruption from the correction of these runaways.

The hospital operated by the vestry existed in order to preserve public health, to make curing the sick poor more economical, to save vestrymen the trouble of providing outpatient care by making house calls, and to provide improved care for the sick. There is no evidence that it achieved all these goals, a similar facility Philadelphia was found to provide both savings and improved care. With plague and pestilence rampant in the eighteenth century, every Charlestonian had been touched in some way by the ravages of smallpox, typhus, or malaria. A public hospital benefited everyone. Considering the fear of communicable disease and the advancement of medical science at the time, one

may conclude that the poor were treated humanely in Charles Town's hospital/workhouse.

Compared to the physically sick poor, we know little about the treatment of insane paupers in eighteenth century Charles Town. While it is impossible to generalize from the few recorded cases it appears highly unlikely that care of the impotent poor in Charles Town included "...being chained ...until they died, " or that "demented or maimed persons were deported or sold" as Day asserts.⁵ The case of Negroe Harry indicates that slaves were sent to "the Madhouse" as early as 1768. Medical treatment of the insane prevailed over theories of demonic possession and that paupers received no worse care than that administered to wealthy or elite persons labeled as lunatics. By the end of the colonial period the treatment began to include removal of the insane from communities and even from the poorhouse and separate confinement. Thus began the story of "the discovery" of the asylum as told by Rothman as well as the abuses attendant with institutional care.⁶

Social networks and family make the difference between being a recipient of poor relief and simply being poor. Poor persons with family were not as vulnerable as those with none. Family, kin, and large measure of luck were the keys to avoiding Charles Town's disasters. There is a reason that there were many more poor persons in Charles Town than those receiving poor relief. A significant number of paupers were taken in by family, friends, and neighbors. This hidden form of charity is nevertheless

⁵ Day, *New*, 146, 147.

⁶ Rothman, *Asylum*, xix.

real and can be documented by comparing the estimates of the numbers of poor with the numbers relieved.

For eighteenth century South Carolinians, siblings, fictive and real kin, and households headed by single women comprised an integral part of the definition of family. The poor living in the first part of the century in Charles Town depended on kin and ethnic networks for survival. Family members financed the voyages of early Charlestonians, supported their business ventures, and willingly offered logistical aid to their Carolina kin. Generally speaking, those finding themselves “on the Parish” were without the support of these networks. For a white person in eighteenth century Charles Town being vulnerable was not being female, being ethnically or religiously different or even being poor. Being vulnerable was being without a family.

The informal efforts of families, kinship networks, ethnic mutual aid and formal private giving, and private charitable societies has been overlooked in social welfare history. Likewise, some historians have assumed that there was a single, “normal” patriarchal family form that was rewarded by relief authorities while non-male headed families were punished and viewed as deviant. In this vein it is surmised that successful colonial families were patriarchal and male-headed, but this was not the case in Charles Town. Many families were female-headed. While most widows, single women, and never-married mothers were poor, many avoided relief roles through social supports and family and kinship networks.

In the shifting of society from the Old World to the New, people were thrown together in mutual dependence. Charles Town’s private charitable societies emphasized this mutual cooperation and assured that surviving widows and children of

deceased members were cared for out of the societies' funds for the relief of the poor. The function of Charles Town's societies in the system of poor relief was essentially different from that of the vestry and public relief. While alms given by the vestrymen were doles or charity given to maintain a family in a time of crisis, the societies were concerned with something more than subsistence. It is not true, as Day asserts, that private philanthropy was insignificant in colonial America. This was far from the case in Charles Town, where private donations and philanthropy may have surpassed public poor relief expenses.

Soldiers, soldiers' widows and children, mariners, immigrants, and transients were relieved at public expense despite laws requiring that they establish residency before receiving aid and repeated admonitions from the Assembly to enforce laws on the books. There was no "warning-out" and no punishment. Most certainly, there was no flogging, tarring and feathering, or hanging of transients, as Day contends. While the Poor Law of 1712 prohibits providing aid to anyone with less than three months residence, 27% of all recipients of poor relief appearing in the church wardens' accounts and the vestry minutes failed to meet this settlement test. Only 17% of all transients were sent away at parish expense, as required by law. Most of these were provided other forms of relief in addition to the cost of transport and many left at their own request, not at the requirement of the parish. Dr. Hall, John Bowyer and Sarah Cook were all non-residents who were treated as well or better than legal residents of Charles Town. These findings are highly inconsistent with those of other historians (e.g., Day and Abramovitz) who described the attitudes of colonial public welfare officials as hostile toward all strangers. According to these writers pervasive distrust of

outsiders was translated into settlement laws designed to protect honest, hard-working citizens from the burden of idle and intemperate strangers. Settlement laws were frequently circumvented by the vestrymen in order that care might be provided for needy transients, immigrants, soldiers, and mariners. Finally, many strangers in eighteenth century Charles Town were cared for as well as parish poor. The average expenditures per recipient were greater for non-residents than for residents.

Free blacks and slaves with no owner needing relief were treated as parish poor, although few were boarded out in local homes and relief payments were less than the customary amounts. There were very few non-white recipients. However, in open conflict with the popular belief that an educated slave bred insurrection, the vestry purchased slave schoolmasters Harry and Andrew and for 26 years operated a school for slave children and some adult slaves at a time when most non-poor white children residing in rural parishes may not have been educated at all.

Out of the extensive and complex system of social welfare services in Charles Town may have emerged an additional legacy. The fact that the United States Constitution assumed local and state governments and not the federal government would organize social welfare services can be traced to this system of social welfare services in St. Philip's Parish.⁷ Three Constitutional Convention committee chairs had close ties to St. Philip's, and a fourth member of the convention was a church warden and vestrymen for many years. These framers of the Constitution believed that social

⁷ Jansson, *Reluctant*, 38.

welfare services work best when local citizens become directly involved.⁸ The omission from the United States Constitution of social welfare as a federal responsibility was no oversight, nor was it an indication that social welfare was unimportant.

The above findings taken together still do not satisfactorily address the question of whether or not poor relief in Charles Town was used as an instrument of social control, in spite of Wiberley's assertion that there was no class conflict. The following is quoted from Wiberley's 1975 dissertation abstract:

The relatively small poor population, the high percentage of women among it, the comparatively good care of the needy, and the close contact between the very rich and the poorest, suggest that historians looking for class conflict in early America should search among those above the lowest rung on the economic ladder.⁹

Using Lockley's method (see Chapter II) for determining the adequacy of outdoor relief payments, it has been determined that Charles Town's average annual outdoor relief pensions were above subsistence level but substantially below amounts that the average day laborer could earn. This finding is consistent with the oft-cited "principle of less eligibility" originating in the 1349 "Statute of Laborers". The Statute

⁸ "Constitution Charlie" Charles Pinckney is generally credited with authoring the first draft. While the original draft in his hand no longer exists as proof of his authorship, he did chair an influential committee. His uncle and his cousin C. C. Pinckney were vestrymen. Charles Pinckney never served on the St. Philip's vestry, but he is buried in the churchyard of St. Philip's and was a member of the church. C.C. Pinckney, a vestryman for 8 years during the colonial period, chaired a second influential committee. A third member of St. Philip's Parish, John Rutledge, chaired the important Committee on Detail. He was never a St. Philip's vestryman, but he may have served in that capacity in Christ Church Parish. Rutledge's father and brother were vestrymen at St. Philip's. Henry Laurens, a fourth delegate who also served for eight terms on the vestry, was unable to travel to the Convention because of illness.

⁹ Wiberley, "Four Cities", abstract.

of Laborers, enacted in England in 1349, is usually considered the first legislation on welfare—the start of “Social Security.”¹⁰

Because that many valiant beggars, as long as they may live of begging, do refuse to labor, giving themselves to idleness and vice, and sometimes to theft and other abominations; none upon said pain of imprisonment, shall under the color of pity or alms, give anything to such, which may labor, or presume to favor them to their desires, so that they may be compelled to labor for their necessary living.

As long as conditions in the poorhouse or on outdoor relief were sufficiently miserable, that is, “less eligible than any other mode of life, only the truly destitute would enter.”¹¹ This level is called “the workhouse test.” Under the “ Doctrine of Less Eligibility” relief should not be denied the poor, but life should be made so miserable for them that they would rather work than accept public aid in a workhouse or the low levels of subsistence allowances under outdoor relief. As Katz puts it, the poor were held hostage to deter the able-bodied. Still, did poor relief policies in Charles Town meet Rocheforte’s definition of social control, i.e., did they serve to keep the poor in their places?

Table IX-1 shows that over a period of fifty years average public relief expenditures increased by 1800 percent.

¹⁰ Karl de Schweinitz, *England’s Road to Social Security, 1349-1947* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1947). Cited by Joel F. Handler, *The Poverty of Welfare Reform* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 10.

¹¹ Handler, *Welfare Reform*, 14,15.

Table IX-1 Average Annual Expenses for Poor Relief
Per 1,000 Poor White Population-Charles Town

Year	White Population Estimate ^a	Avg. Annual Expenditure for Poor Relief in £Sterling ^b	Average Annual Expense Per 1,000 Pop.
1700-10	1200		
1711-20	1750		
1721-30	2500	£36	£14
1731-40	2250	119	53
1741-50	3400	117	35
1751-60	3600	460	127
1761-70	4000	765	191
1771-75	6000	1526	254

a- Table II-1 was used to obtain population estimates. Only white population is included, since slaves received no relief and there is no estimate of free Blacks.

b- No expenditure data exists prior to 1725. Until 1751, church wardens accounts were used to obtain average annual expenses, divided by 7 (McCusker) to obtain £ Sterling. After 1751, vestry minutes

Wiberley's comparative study of poor relief in eighteenth century Boston, New York, Philadelphia and Charles-Town concluded that levels of relief were significantly higher in Charles Town than in the Northern cities. Wiberley's data is in agreement with Nash who compared New York, Philadelphia, and Boston and who showed similar increases to those in Charles Town, though not as steep.¹²

Table IX-2 Poor Relief Expenses per 1,000 Pop.in Four Colonial Seaports

	BOSTON			PHILADELPHIA		
	Population	Av. Ann. Expend. £ Sterling	Expend./ 1,000 pop.	Population	Av. Ann. Expend. £ Sterling	Expend/ 1,000 pop.
1700-10	7,500	£173	£23	2,450	£119	£48
1711-20	9,830	181	18	3,800		
1721-30	11,840	273	23	6,600		
1731-40	15,850	498	31	8,800	471	49
1741-50	16,240	806	50	12,00		
1751-60	15,600	1204	77	15,700	1083	67

¹² Wiberley, "Four Cities," 158. Nash, "Urban Wealth and Poverty", 557.

1761-70	15,520	1909	123	22,100	2842	129
1771-75	15,520	2478	158	27,900	3785	136

Source for New York, Boston and Philadelphia data: Gary Nash, "Urban Wealth and Poverty," 557.

Table IX-2 (Continued)

	NEW YORK			CHARLES TOWN		
	Population	Av. Ann. Expend. £ Sterling	Expend. Per 1,000 pop.	Population (White)	Av. Ann. Expend. £ Sterling	Expend/ 1,000 pop.
1700-10	4,500			1,200		
1711-20	5,900	£249	£32	1,750		
1721-30	7,600	276	25	2,500	£36	£14
1731-40	10,100	351	21	2,250	119	53
1741-50	12,900	389	21	3,400	117	35
1751-60	13,200	667	39	3,600	460	127
1761-70	18,100	1667	92	4,000	765	191
1771-75	22,600	2778	123	6,000	1526	254

Source: Gary Nash, "Urban Wealth and Poverty," 557.

As best as can be determined, average outdoor relief payments in Charles Town per recipient remained relatively stable over the entire fifty-year period (Table III-10). The increase in the number of recipients causes the steep increase in expense. Wiberley found that Charles Town's per recipient payments exceeded those of Boston, New York, and Philadelphia. Steadily climbing increases in relief expenses of 1800 per cent over a fifty-year period, with per recipient payments above subsistence level, and a workhouse where no work occurs are facts that seem inconsistent with social control theories.

If not social control, then was it pure "benevolence" that resulted in increased expenditures? Both Wiberley and Lockley suggest that slavery was a factor that could have caused poor relief rates to be above subsistence level. Wiberley surmises that

slavery corrupted the work ethic of Charles Town whites.¹³ Lockley perhaps comes closer to the mark when he relates the high levels of relief to the black majority. Wood, Edgar, and Fraser all agree that the wealthy planters and elite gentry sought to counterbalance the disproportionate number of slaves out of fear of an uprising of greater strength than the ill-fated Stono rebellion.¹⁴ Not only would the presence of white settlers and poor whites offset the black majority, offering relief to poor whites would reduce the chances of alliances between slaves and poor whites.

The Charles Town elite cultivated a white laboring class to lessen the threat of slave rebellion (Bellows, Edgar, Wood, Bridenbaugh).¹⁵ This fact in itself could be interpreted as validating the Piven and Cloward argument that relief was designed to reduce the chances of underclass revolt. In 1751, the Assembly directed that a percentage of this import duty be used to increase the flow of poor Protestants to South Carolina. The planter-dominated Assembly knew that this would increase the poor rates in Charles Town, since these immigrants flowed into Charles Town. Bellows points out that Charles Town's elite as well as the planters in the Assembly understood the linkage between slaves and poor whites.¹⁶ The poor relief system in Charles Town was hostage to the planters desire to counterbalance the black majority. By maintaining a class of

¹³ Wiberley, "Four Cities," iii.

¹⁴ Wood, *Black Majority*, 308-326; Fraser, *Charleston!*, 66,67.

¹⁵ Barbara L. Bellows, *Benevolence Among Slaveholders: Assisting the Poor in Charleston, 1670-1860* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1993); Walter Edgar, *South Carolina: A History* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1998); Peter H. Wood, *Black Majority: Negroes in Colonial South Carolina from 1670 Through the Stono Rebellion* (New York: WW Norton & Company, 1975).

¹⁶ Barbara Bellows, *Benevolence*.

poor whites at or near subsistence the elite were able to suppress both slave and pauper. However, increasing poor relief expenses to poor Irish, German, and French Protestants was not what Rocheforte had in mind when he defined the term “social control.”

Charles Town’s elite were hardly puritanical in their beliefs; however, “religious precepts were vitally significant in the eighteenth century. Religion defined the presence of poverty in the world as natural and just. It neither feared nor ignored the poor.”⁴⁴ The church wardens and vestry were among the wealthiest, most prominent members of the Anglican community. These men believed that their wealth and power was not accidental, but that they were part of a providential plan which also designed that others would be low, mean, and poor. These vestrymen were stewards, and they were to fulfill their role in society not by stripping themselves of their wealth but by relieving the needy.

Sufferers from the fire, Bee, Bedon, Blundell, and Osborne, having owned property and having a means of earning a living, came from the “middling ranks” of society. After losing everything, these citizens were reduced to poverty and forced to accept help. For these and other poor relief recipients, the parish acted as a safety net. The assistance provided them was not a dole or a subsistence allowance, but rather a form of social insurance. They had been property owners and had contributed to the relief of others while they were able to pay taxes. The parish was their support in times of need, which because of the vagaries of fires, hurricanes, epidemics, and other calamities could be visited on anyone. The parish goal was for these recipients to return to taxpayer status, not to make them dependents or to “control” them. The pestilence,

⁴⁴ Rothman, *Asylum*, 7.

fire, hurricanes, and violence of eighteenth century life made poor relief an even more vital function of the community government. Public poor relief served in a broad sense as insurance; for even the wealthy planters and merchants were subject to being reduced overnight to indigence.

Why were some Charlestonians poor, while others became the wealthiest persons in British North America? While case examples of wealthy persons who became poor as the result of sickness or injury are hard to come by, the vagaries of life in Charles Town doubtless caused much poverty. Whether it was David Duncan walking under a falling trunk or Ruth Lowndes and the smallpox epidemic, “reverse causality” was an important cause of poverty. The term “reverse causality” is used to distinguish a readily understandable cause from a set of reasons that are difficult to measure and comprehend. It is not hard to see how poverty results from illness or injury. The pages of the vestry minutes teach a hard lesson: well-being derives from social, economic, and cultural circumstances. It comes from ones ability to adapt and a faith in the future developed as a child, as well as supportive networks of family and friends. Being well-off also stems from a sense of having control over one’s life, and not being subject to abrupt life changes. The gap in this sense of stability and support in life is greatest between the rich and the poor. The lower one is in the social hierarchy, the more vulnerable one is. Stated in public health terms, there is a differential susceptibility and poor persons are more vulnerable. The differential susceptibility is caused by four factors: individual life styles and behaviors that tend to be more prevalent among the poor; a greater exposure to a harmful physical environment among poor persons; social environments of poor families that tend to be more stressful and

less supportive; and finally, and almost insignificant in the early part of the eighteenth century, the poor have less access to medical care. These factors taken together explain the effect of the social gradient. In human history, there is nearly always a direct relationship between the health and well-being and income, wealth or social status of a population.

A “Whiggish” view of social welfare history would be one of a gradual and conflict-free progress, with the agents being wise and sympathetic elite white men. This dissertation is not intended to idealize the elites for their benevolence or religious convictions, although these factors could have played a part in the decisions to dispense relief in violation of provincial laws. There were other classes of much poorer persons who were not helped by these same men, notably the slaves and Native Americans. Benjamin Smith, Miles Brewton, Henry Laurens and their like created a hundred-fold more misery than they relieved. Calling attention to the benevolence of the vestrymen trivializes the lives of those who we too often ignore when we write of poverty in the eighteenth century: the slaves and Native Americans. This dissertation is entitled “White Poor” because the poorest of the poor, black slaves, were never relieved. Additionally, some among the white poor helped by these men were pushed headlong into lives of poverty by them in the first place. Notables in this category were women, and immigrants. Also, life in early America was harsh and cruel to begin with. Even granting poor relief did not remove the poor from existences marked by hunger, cold, sickness, injury, and premature loss of life. No, this dissertation is not a Whig history that celebrates the small amount of charity given by the elites in their pursuit of personal wealth. We can allow them only some measure of acknowledgment: the poor

relief system they presided over did not match in any way the picture of colonial practices presented by Abramovitz, Day, and Rothman.

Place names often associated in our minds with characteristic imagery: Rome, Venice, Paris, Geneva, London, Rio de Janeiro, Tokyo and New York City. Charleston, though not as well known as these other places, has its own distinctive personality derived from the slave market, from Fort Sumter, and from the opulence of the Battery. In stark contrast to the perhaps deserved infamy derived from its reputation for inhumanity are other metaphors. Its “charnel house” ambience bred a sense of community and mutual aide which rested on three legs: family and kinship networks, private mutual aide societies, and a public form of poor relief that redefined the harsh and punitive poor laws that were its English legacy. The effects of the unstable environment were overcome by building secure cooperative kin networks, mutual aid groups, and a close insinuation of the lives of the poor and the gentry. Women were a key element in holding this society together in the volatile eighteenth century. Despite the uncertainties of eighteenth century life and the fact that poor families faced double and triple jeopardy, the stories of Charles Town’s poor are stories of resilience and strength.

Additional research is needed to answer the question that should have been posed by Abramovitz and Day about colonial poor relief practices, but was not. That is, was there a so-called “culture of poverty?” Did the children of the poor grow up to be poor? There are several anecdotes in this study, notably Hannah Ceasar, Jr. It is clear that historians understated the existence of poverty, and overstated the opportunity that existed in the New World. To study this question, one would have to follow the birth

and baptism and death registers, and review probate records and recorded wills. A good place to start would be with the names of the children apprenticed by the vestry.

Related to this question, what about those who were laboring class poor? What were their lives like?

Humankind has cared for weak and vulnerable members of society since the time of the hunters and gatherers. The history of social welfare is the history of the struggles and triumphs of humans on the earth. Social welfare history is an important aspect of American social history; however, current scholarship ignores or misinterprets the rich contributions of the colonial period. Today's social welfare problems, policies and institutions have their roots in the eighteenth century. Just as some Americans are unaware of the contributions of African Americans to American culture and society, many historians and social welfare practitioners are unaware that poverty and early American responses to it were at the heart of the colonial experience.

BIBLIOGRAPHIC ESSAY AND REFERENCES

Major Primary and Secondary Sources

The manuscript records of the vestry and church wardens are by far the most important documents for this study. I have known of the existence of the St. Philip's vestry minutes since 1971. My master's thesis, completed in 1973, was based upon a 1938 WPA manuscript of the St. Philip's vestry minutes in the South Caroliniana Library. I found these typed minutes after seeing a reference to them in Bridenbaugh's *Cities in the Wilderness*. Bellows, Fraser, and Wiberley all used the vestry minutes in their research. The minutes have been acknowledged as an exemplary set of early American social welfare documents. However, as stated in the preface, one is limited in the conclusions that can rightfully be drawn from such an incomplete record.

The researcher had seen references to the existence of the church wardens' account books in Waring's 1932 *Annals of Medical History* article and in Fraser's and Wiberley's works; however, Mrs. Dorothy Anderson, the volunteer church historian at St. Philip's, was not sure whether these documents existed. The church has been in continuous renovation and no one has access to the manuscript collection. An archivist at South Carolina Department of Archives and History, Charles Lesser, located a microfilm copy of the accounts from 1725-1751 on a reel with the vestry minutes. Mr. Lesser has stated he believes account books after 1751 have been lost and that all extant

records have been microfilmed.¹⁷ This is consistent with an entry in the 1760 vestry minutes “admonishing” Mrs. Woolford, the secretary, for the loss of the vestry minute book prior to 1732. The wardens’ account books after 1751 and the vestry minutes for the year 1755 are also missing. Mrs. Woolford was threatened with prosecution if the missing books were not found. Since Charleston was occupied by British forces in the Revolution, and was partially destroyed by Union naval bombardments, it should not be remarkable that such documents are missing now even if they had been in existence in 1760. I hope she was never punished for the loss; since, if these journals had been found, this work quite possibly would never have been completed, or at best it would have been a partial review.

As it is, finding the missing 1756-1760 vestry minutes (on the same microfilm reel as the church wardens’ accounts) and the twenty-five years of wardens’ accounts has greatly increased the work of this dissertation. The “found” journals were not typed by the WPA typist (Mrs. Mary Frances Elfe), but rather were written in the original quill pen and ink by the wardens and vestry clerks. While penmanship of some was exceptional, the scrawl of others, and the barriers of language, spelling, style, as well as the ravages of over two hundred years made most hard to make out and even more

¹⁷ The following text is from an electronic mail message from Charles Lesser, SCDAH, 8/6/02: “Dear Mr. Byrd, I talked to Mrs. Anderson over the phone about your earlier inquiry to staff in the Reference Room. She clearly had no detailed memory or notes about the matter and the original records are in storage during building renovation. I was in charge of preparing these records for filming and can assure you that no post 1752 Church Warden’s Accounts were delivered to us for filming. Sharon Bennett is a fine archivist, and I would be very surprised if they had been overlooked when her thorough archival work and our filming took place. My own interests are along the social history line, and I found at the time that these accounts were the great find (hitherto unknown?), not available on earlier transcription, filming, and microfiche efforts. I fear that we do have to assume that these accounts, 1752-1776, have not survived. Sincerely, Chuck Lesser.”

time-consuming to transcribe. Nevertheless, the process of working with even a photocopy of the microfilmed original has been spellbinding for me, tedious though the act of reading and transcribing was.

The other important primary documents are the *South Carolina Gazette*, also on microfilm in SCDAH, and the edited and reprinted *Commons House Journals*, and the *Registers of St. Philip's* which are at the South Caroliniana Library and SCDAH. The original work of reviewing the *Gazette* was not something I can take credit for. Fraser, Bridenbaugh, and especially Wiberley did an admirable job of this and I have tried to credit them wherever possible. The works of these three historians as well as that of Lockley (in print), have been the most valuable secondary sources, closely followed by Coclanis' *The Shadow of a Dream: Economic Life and Death in the South Carolina Low Country-1670-1920*, Waring's "Medical Care of the Poor in Colonial South Carolina," Easterby's "Public Poor Relief in Colonial Charleston," McCandless' *Moonlight, Magnolias, and Madness: Insanity in South Carolina from the Colonial Period to the Progressive Era*, and Joyner's *Beginnings: Education in Colonial South Carolina*. These secondary sources will be discussed in detail in the following sections.

Literature on Colonial American Social Welfare History

Colonial America has been portrayed by some authors as a land of boundless opportunity where no poverty existed. Jansson identified a prevalent "American social welfare mythology" of a utopian society.¹⁸ Early American leaders' denial of the existence of poverty retarded the growth of public welfare. If America were a utopia,

¹⁸ Bruce S. Jansson, *The Reluctant Welfare State: A History of American Social Welfare Policies* (Belmont, California: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1988), 38.

social welfare programs would be unnecessary. Conversely, the widespread existence of well-developed programs must validate that there was real poverty in early America. Such programs simply would not have existed otherwise. Regardless, some historians have accepted the thesis that there was no colonial poverty. Historians' denial of the existence of poverty in colonial America is illustrated by the title of Bremner's 1956 work *From the Depths: The Discovery of Poverty in the United States*. Bremner and other well-regarded social welfare historians (e.g., Katz 1986; Wilensky and Lebeaux, 1958; Rothman, 1971) insinuate that a significant poor relief problem did not appear until the early 1800s with the emergence of industrialization.¹⁹ "The problems the social worker deals with would not be matters for organized public attention if it were not for industrialization."²⁰

Beginning in the mid-seventeenth century, as villages such as Boston, New York, Newport, Philadelphia, and Charleston grew into towns, colonial poverty became more acute, widespread, and problematic. The growth of poverty and its attendant problems led colonial towns to formalize their relief systems. The colonists turned to the manners and customs that were a part of their culture: the English Poor Laws. Almost all texts recognize that English law supplied the framework for colonial public aid legislation (e.g., Brown, 1928; Jernegan, 1931; Trattner, 1974; Wisner, 1945; Axinn & Levin, 1982; Federico, 1976; Jansson, 1988; Ginsberg, 1996). The colonial laws of settlement, outdoor relief, and child welfare emphasized local responsibility and family

¹⁹ Robert W. Bremner, *From the Depths: The Discovery of Poverty in the United States* (New York : New York University Press, 1956); Michael Katz *In the Shadow of the Poorhouse: A Social History of Welfare in America*.(New York: Basic Books, 1986).

²⁰ Wilensky and Lebeaux, *Industrial*, 14.

support. The settlement laws reduced the number of poor white persons qualified to receive public aid, but towns still had to provide for their indigenous poor. Initially the patterns were familial and neighborly. As the first line of defense against poverty, colonial poor laws held families legally liable for supporting immediate relatives. The law required parents and grandparents to provide for indigent offspring and adult children to support their elderly parents. The local government assumed responsibility only when these family members could not. The most common method of aiding the poor was “outdoor relief,” the provision of aid (outside of a workhouse) to people in their own or in a neighbor’s home. Prior to the establishment of workhouses, all poor relief in America was outdoor relief. Outdoor relief went to “deserving” paupers whom officials preferred to aid in a private manner. Deserving poor included widows, sick, disabled, or temporarily unproductive men and their families, and women and their children seen as involuntarily lacking a male breadwinner.²¹ Most studies of this early social welfare center in small New England villages.

As the colonial population increased, the problem of dependency became more complex. Some (e.g., Parkhurst, 1937; Jones, 1975; Lee, 1978) report the existence of

²¹ Histories of social welfare and social welfare policy agree on the English Poor Law roots of Colonial America: June Axinn and Herman Levin, *Social Welfare: A history of the American Response to Need*, 2nd ed. (New York: Harper & Row, 1982); Robert H. Brown, *Public Poor relief in North Carolina* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 1928); Ronald C. Federico, *The Social Welfare Institution*, 2nd ed. (Lexington, Massachusetts: D.C. Heath & Company, 1976); Leon Ginsberg, *Understanding Social Problems, Policies, and Programs* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1996); Marcus W. Jernegan, *Laboring and Dependent Classes in Colonial America, 1607-1783* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1931); Walter I. Trattner, *From Poor Law to Welfare state: A History of Social Welfare in America* (New York: The Free Press, 1974); Elizabeth Wisner, “The Puritan Background of the New England Poor Laws,” *Social Service Review* 19 (1945): 381-390.

a harsh set of laws designed to follow the economic doctrine of laissez-faire stressing limited government and private involvement.²² The prevailing belief was that poverty was caused by moral and personal failure and formal relief would only perpetuate the problem.²³ Americans distrusted landless wage-earners and tended to ignore this underclass. There was, according to Jansson, an attitude of disinterest toward social welfare.²⁴ Heffernan, Shuttlesworth, and Ambrosino state that during the colonial period “no formal government network for providing poor relief existed on any significant basis.” Katz, in a well-known work entitled *In the Shadow of the Poor House: A History of Social Welfare in America*, states “Few formal, specialized institutions existed in colonial America.”²⁵ According to Katz, institutions were “invented” in the early nineteenth century. Without examining eighteenth century policies and provisions, Katz stated that welfare in America had always been aimed at distinguishing the worthy from the unworthy and the able-bodied from the disabled.

The review of early township records by Schneider, Jones, and Parkhurst offered support for the position that early American social welfare practices were harsh

²² Eleanor Parkhurst, “Poor Relief in a Massachusetts Village in the Eighteenth-century,” *Social Service Review* 11 (1937): 446-464; Douglas Lamar Jones, “The Strolling Poor: Transiency in Eighteenth-century Massachusetts,” *Journal of Social History* 8(1971): 8-54; Charles R. Lee, “*This Poor People*”: *Poverty, Relief, and Correction in Massachusetts, 1620-1715*. Ph.D. diss. (SUNY Buffalo, 1978)

²³ Wilensky & Lebeaux, *Industrial Revolution*, 35.

²⁴ Jansson, *Reluctant*, 39.

²⁵ John Heffernan, George Shuttlesworth & Rudolf Ambrosino, *Social Work and Social Welfare*, 2nd ed. (St.Paul: West Publishing Company, 1992), 31; Michael Katz, *In the shadow of the Poorhouse: A History of Social Welfare in America* (New York: Basic Books, 1986), 10.

and punitive. Schneider found “a patchwork of relief” in an analysis of case records from the province of New York. “The principal concern was in preventing non-resident indigents from gaining settlement in the province”. Schneider characterized poor relief in the colonial period as being “repressive.” In some parts of provincial New York, paupers were required to wear a red or blue cloth badge with a large letter “P.”²⁶ Jones proposed two explanations for the desire of eighteenth century Massachusetts towns to control transients. First, communities monitored the “quality” of potential townspeople to prevent thieves and vagabonds from gaining a foothold. Second, townships minimized transients within their borders in order to avoid the expense of poor relief. Jones also found fault with Rothman’s assertion that an abrupt change occurred in colonial attitudes between the colonial period and the nineteenth century.²⁷ Parkhurst describes the colonial town records of Chelmsford, Massachusetts, where for the first one hundred years of its incorporation there were no applicants for poor relief. Parkhurst attributes the century-long dearth of paupers to the practice of “warning out,” or driving off poor transients at the gates of the town, imported from the Elizabethan Poor Law of Settlement and Removal. Chelmsford was also the recipient of several French Acadians (Catholics), expelled by the English from Nova Scotia during the French and Indian War in 1757. The adult Acadians were bound out by indenture to hard taskmasters while many of the Acadians’ children were taken from them and apprenticed to other residents. The early studies of Parkhurst and Schneider as well as

²⁶ David M. Schneider, “The Patchwork of Relief in Provincial New York, 1664-1776,” *Social Service Review* 19 (1938): 467, 494.

²⁷ Jones, “Strolling,” 43, 49.

more recent works by Jones provided evidence for the harsh and punitive reputation of colonial poor relief, especially in the northern colonies.²⁸

In the acclaimed work entitled *The Discovery of the Asylum*, Rothman (1971) explains America's use of institutions for the care of deviant members of society as rooted in an attempt at social control:²⁹

The intent of this book is to place America's discovery of the asylum in a social context. The response in the Jacksonian period to the deviant and the dependent was first and foremost a vigorous attempt to promote the stability of the society at a moment when traditional ideas and practices appeared outmoded, constricted, and ineffective. The almshouse, and the orphan asylum, the penitentiary, the reformatory and the insane asylum all represented an effort to insure the cohesion of the community in new and changing circumstances...

Rothman wrote that legislators, local officials, philanthropists and those who studied poverty, insanity, and crime were convinced that the nation was endangered by an unstable social balance. In the Jacksonian period after the Revolution, communities saw these traditional methods of out-relief as ineffectual and inefficient. Confinement of dependent and deviant members of society in almshouses, asylums, orphanages, and prisons maintained the stability of society. Whatever the intent of the founders, in time almost all institutions became custodial, inhumane and repressive.

²⁸ Eleanor Parkhurst, "Poor Relief in a Massachusetts Village in the Eighteenth-century," *Social Service Review* 11 (1937): 446-464. It is of interest to note that Charles Town received over 1,000 poor Acadian immigrants. See Chapter VIII.

²⁹ Rothman, *Asylum*, xix. Rothman's work was the genesis of this researcher's interest in this topic. In 1971, this researcher was a first year social work student in Howard Goldstein's practice class when he wrote a paper about field placement at a Veteran's Administration mental hospital. He came upon Rothman's newly published text. Rothman referred to Bridenbaugh, who cited the vestry minutes. Across the "Horseshoe" from his dorm he found the WPA transcripts of the vestry minutes that were referred to in Bridenbaugh in Caroliniana Library.

Rothman's focus was on the sociology of institutions in the nineteenth-century. He believed that the pre-revolutionary practice of outdoor relief which relied on the boarding of "deserving" paupers in private homes was seen as a humane and benevolent means of dealing with the problem of poor relief. According to Rothman, colonial officials distinguished between poor persons who were victims of circumstance or acts of God and rogues and vagabonds who should be punished by placing them in an institution. The sick, insane, widowed, orphaned, old, and disabled were provided with out-relief. According to Rothman, the use of the asylum as a deterrent was a nineteenth-century development. Rothman's work can be faulted for its heightened contrast between the colonial period and the Jacksonian period, for the idea that the asylum was a nineteenth century discovery, and that it was founded for social control purposes.

The most significant early work on colonial social welfare history is Jernegan's (1931) *Laboring and Dependent Classes in Colonial America, 1607-1783*. Jernegan, who was a historian and not a social worker, set the tone for later studies. Most notably, the thesis connecting the Industrial Revolution and professional social work attributed to the acclaimed *Industrial Society and Social Welfare* by Wilensky and Lebeaux was clearly articulated by Jernegan: "It is well known that the humanitarian movement in the second quarter of the nineteenth century was one of the important social effects of the Industrial Revolution".³⁰ Moreover, Jernegan connects "modern developments" in social welfare to colonial poor relief and to the English economic and social changes in the sixteenth century. Punishment for those who would not work and "the desire to find

³⁰ Jernegan, *Laboring*, 175.

someone to maintain the child rather than teach him a trade was the important feature” of the English Poor Law Act of 1601.³¹ Jernegan closely relates the conditions in England to poor relief in the colonies, especially Virginia. Also, the social and economic factors of indentured servitude are contrasted with the slave trade.

A more recent reinterpretation of the prevailing theme of harsh and punitive social welfare practices connected to the English Poor Laws is Abramovitz’s (1988) *Regulating the Lives of Women*. Abramovitz links oppressive and punitive treatment of colonial pauper women and children to the male-dominated patriarchal society, sexist “family ethic,” an inflexible work ethic and harsh settlement laws. Abramovitz believes the current marginal treatment of unmarried women, women of color, and widows is rooted in America’s colonial heritage. Abramovitz’s work is a variation on the theme of social control by “regulating” the poor. Basing her assertions upon early New England townships, Abramovitz has interpreted colonial American poor relief as being harsh, punitive, patriarchal, and sexist.³² Abramovitz, as the title *Regulating the Lives of Women: Social Welfare Policy from Colonial Times to the Present* suggests, focuses upon women and children. She writes as if the following practices were universal in colonial American towns and cities:

1. Colonies enforced strict settlement laws that focused on the removal of undesirable persons, “warning-out,” denial of assistance to transient paupers,

³¹ Ibid., 177.

³² Abramovitz in *Regulating the Lives of Women* includes the case of Hannah Ceasare and her two children of “Charleston, South Carolina” (page 78 and 85) in her examples in a section that seems to be derived from Bridenbaugh’s *Cities in the Wilderness* wherein the same facts about Hannah Ceasar are cited and referenced.

discouraging the settlement of husbandless women, and removing abandoned women from the settlement.³³

2. Outdoor relief was denied anyone with parents, grandparents, or adult children residing in the township or city. No able-bodied poor person (except for some able-bodied widows) could be assisted. In some cases even “deserving poor” were auctioned off to the lowest bidder (“farmed-out”). Unmarried women were especially susceptible to farming-out. In larger towns the poor were contracted out “en-masse.” Some paupers were forced to wear badges identifying them as receiving assistance.³⁴
3. In many communities outdoor relief was denied in all cases, forcing paupers, especially husbandless women, into workhouses or manufactories. All able-bodied but non-self-supporting persons were sent to work or to jail.³⁵
4. The practices of separating children from destitute parents, indenturing and apprenticing children of indigents, and binding-out illegitimate children are presented as if they were employed in all colonial cities and towns.

Day’s work amplifies the thesis of Abramovitz. In the section of *A New History of Social Welfare* entitled “Social Welfare in the Colonies,” Day makes the following assertions:

1. There were few private charities, religion did not support relief for the poor, and paupers were more likely to be punished than relieved:

In the colonies, private charities played an insignificant role until the end of the eighteenth century. Finally, religion, historically the bastion of last resort for the poor, now insisted upon individual effort and decried poor relief as contributing to the spiritual degradation of the poor. People who did not abide by the work ethic were punished, driven out, deported, or even hanged.³⁶

2. Harsh and punitive poor laws were designed to limit the numbers of poor receiving relief:

³³ Abramovitz, *Regulating*, 76-83.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 84-86.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 87-89.

³⁶ Phillis J. Day, *A New History of Social Welfare* (Inglewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1989), 143-148.

Paupers were treated as morally deficient, and were required to take paupers' oaths ...The numbers of "worthy poor" were very slim...(few were considered worthy of governmental help)."³⁷

3. Outdoor relief consisted mainly of auctioning off the poor to the lowest bidder or indenture:

The poor – unemployed men and women, widows, and their dependent children, and children who were orphaned, illegitimate, unwanted, or removed from their parents by order of the court, were auctioned off to the person who would charge the town the least for their care; indentured, ... or apprenticed.³⁸

4. Care of the impotent poor by families "ranged from that provided by loving relatives to ...being chained ...until they died... Widows were unlikely to be considered worthy poor." The able-bodied poor were warned-out, auctioned off, branded, flogged, or jailed. "Demented or maimed persons were deported or sold."³⁹

Another acclaimed work with a social control theme is Katz's *In the Shadow of the Poorhouse*. While Abramovitz recognized the significance of colonial social welfare by devoting an entire chapter to the topic, Katz dismisses it in two sentences. Although workhouses and poorhouses existed in almost every colony and city in eighteenth century America, Katz follows the lead of Rothman and others by stating that American social welfare history began in the nineteenth century.

Wilensky and Lebeaux present a widely-accepted theory of the relationship between the social work profession and the Industrial Revolution. While the authors gained both praise and notoriety from their thesis, Jernegan and others have advanced the same theory. Wilensky and Lebeaux argue that industrialization has determined the need for, the supply of, and the organization of social welfare services and workers. In

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid., 145, 148.

³⁹ Ibid., 146, 147.

other words, industrialization causes dependency and dependency results in the profession of social work and its bureaucratic processes. The authors theorize that Americans' attitudes toward relief of the poor are governed by "the doctrine of American individualism." Briefly stated, this doctrine, which the authors believe to be the foundation of capitalism, states: (1) Those who work hard will be successful; (2) Success also is the reward of virtue, so that failure reveals a lack of virtue; (3) If lazy and incompetent or un-virtuous persons are successful, it is purely a matter of luck and this happens very infrequently.⁴⁰

The thesis of Piven and Cloward's acclaimed text *Regulating the Poor: The Functions of Public Welfare* is that public welfare programs and institutions never have been philanthropic or benevolent in purpose or function. Social welfare programs, according to Piven and Cloward, exist to maintain social order and to force the poor into the labor market, keeping them under control and doing necessary menial work to maintain the power of the elite. Poor relief provisions are cyclical and expand in bad times or contract in good times in order to manipulate the poor and to maintain the ruling class in power. The level of welfare benefits is determined not by need but by the level of social unrest in times of economic troubles. Social control of the poor by society's elite has always been the purpose of welfare. This, of course, is the classical social control theory that Rothman also elaborated on in 1971. Piven and Cloward's work also describes the origin of the deterrent function of the workhouse in America.⁴¹

⁴⁰ Wilensky and Lebeaux, *Industrial*, 34.

⁴¹ Piven and Cloward, *Regulating*, 3-39.

The Encyclopedia of Social Work finding of benign neglect cited in the preface could serve as an accurate summation of this section; however, the themes in the *Encyclopedia* are repeated in almost every social welfare policy textbook (e.g., Federico, 1976; Heffernan, Shuttlesworth & Ambrosino, 1992; Jansson, 1988).⁴² These same textbooks devote more space to the English Poor Laws than to the “insignificant” colonial period, characterizing colonial attitudes as harsh, punitive, and neglectful. Some social welfare texts state that these attitudes changed over time from benevolence to punishment as the American colonies became more populous. There was no significant need for social welfare “until the 1820s” and when employed, the policies and provisions were those imported from England. The manifest purpose of social welfare was the control of deviant members of society by the elite (e.g., Rothman, 1971; Piven & Cloward, 1971; Katz, 1986). There is little or no mention of private or religious efforts at poor relief, and even fewer citations of the role of mutual aid or ethnic societies.

The above referenced works notwithstanding, many researchers have found well-developed public and private poor relief efforts in colonial America, especially in urban areas. Mohl cites “abundant evidence” of poverty in his study of New York City.⁴³ Mohl observes that colonial poor laws, restrictive immigration policies, large

⁴² Reid, *Encyclopedia*, 2208; Ronald C. Federico, *Institution*; Heffernan, Shuttlesworth and Ambrosino, *Social Work and Social Welfare*; Jansson, *Reluctant*. A notable exception to this “theme” is the June Axinn and Herman Levin text cited earlier. In a far more balanced view, Axinn and Levin recognize that social, political, and economic difference in the Southern colonies resulted in “a greater tolerance for human misfortune” (p.29).

⁴³ Raymond A. Mohl, “Poverty in Early America: A Reappraisal,” *New York History* L (1969): 5,6.

relief expenses, institutional facilities, and extensive private charity would not have existed if there were no poor. Studies of Philadelphia, Boston, and New York reveal that the poor made up as much as one third of the population of these cities on the eve of the Revolution.⁴⁴ These studies chronicle the work of poor relief as an important aspect of colonial American society and are a stark contrast to the prevailing view of an undeveloped set of policies and provisions and an attitude of laissez-faire.

Philadelphia boasted a flourishing system of public and private poor relief. Furthermore, Philadelphians underwrote a private system of poor relief that outstripped public provisions. Alexander, in a critique of Piven and Cloward, advanced the theory that colonial America's charity functioned as an insurance program underpinning the private system. Alexander believed that "simple humanitarian attitudes of concern for the poor" were a major factor in Philadelphia's extensive provisions. Alexander theorized that a private fund to aid the poor in the severe winter of 1761-1762 helped one in ten Philadelphians.⁴⁵ By far the best work on Philadelphia's extensively

⁴⁴ David M. Schneider, *The History of Public Welfare in New York State, 1609-1866*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1938); Robert W. Kelso, *History of Public Poor Relief in Massachusetts*. (Boston, 1922); Gary B. Nash, *Poverty and Poor Relief in Pre-Revolutionary Philadelphia*. *William and Mary Quarterly* 33 (1976): 3-30; John K. Alexander, "The Function of Public Welfare in Eighteenth-Century Philadelphia: Regulating the Poor?" in *Social Welfare or Social Control?* ed. W. I. Trattner (Knoxville, Tennessee: University of Tennessee Press, 1983); Billy G. Smith, *Life in Early Philadelphia: Documents from the Revolutionary and Early National Periods* (University Park, Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995); Gary B. Nash, "Poverty and Politics in Early American History," In Billy G. Smith, ed., *Down and Out in Early America* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University, 2004); Billy G. Smith, *The "Lower Sort:" Philadelphia's Laboring People, 1750-1800* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990).

⁴⁵ Alexander, *Function*, 19.

documented poor relief practices is that of Smith, who also has covered the working poor and laborers in a remarkable set of social histories.

The province of North Carolina had no poor law at all until 1766 when the ire of the Assembly was directed at “divers idle and disorderly Persons, having no visible Estate or Employments”.⁴⁶ Most of the considerable time, effort, and money spent on poor relief was directed at the deserving poor and non-residents. In the only recent study of colonial poor relief in North Carolina, Watson found that the poor were not neglected and were treated with compassion. Although structurally the system of Anglican parishes resembled the English system, there were private and religious efforts. A much earlier work on North Carolina by Brown (1928) follows the dominant themes of English Poor Laws and attitudes of near neglect.⁴⁷

Nash (1976) noted the rapid period of social change near the eve of the American Revolution in Boston, Philadelphia, and New York. The rich increased in number and wealth and urban poverty grew rapidly. Far from the social control of the poor by the threatened “haves,” Nash theorizes that the social unrest of the underclass may have been a root cause of the American Revolution. Nash provides data to refute the Utopian view of America. In the crucible of growing urban discontent and poverty, Nash theorizes that those who suffered most were the first to rise against the British Empire. Nash provides data that calls into question both “the legend of Benjamin

⁴⁶ A. D. Watson, “Public Poor Relief in North Carolina,” *North Carolina Historical Review* 54 (1977): 348.

⁴⁷ Brown, *Public*.

Franklin” and the unlimited opportunity in America. He also contradicts Bridenbaugh’s portrayal of Quaker humanitarianism.⁴⁸

Pumphrey and Pumphrey begin their text entitled *The Heritage of American Social Work* with a chapter on early mutual aid. The authors state that mutual aid is a “fundamental” to modern social welfare and is based on four concepts.⁴⁹ First, everyone should do all they can to provide for themselves and their immediate families. Next, the welfare of the entire group is everyone’s concern, especially the welfare of dependent persons and children. Third, the power of government is properly employed to support the group in helping provide for dependent members. Finally, this attitude of protection of and obligation to dependents extends to all persons in trouble, even strangers. Societies have tended to provide those in need with resources that will help them physically survive, forming the basis for social welfare.⁵⁰

Ginsberg identifies “persistent” themes in social welfare that have held true throughout history. These themes are found in some form in the most important laws governing social policy in history -the Elizabethan Poor Law of 1601:⁵¹

- (1) Defined the duty of the parish (which was the local government, comparable to today’s counties) to provide relief to the poor.
- (2) Established overseers of the poor to relieve poverty. These were among the earliest social workers.

⁴⁸ Gary B. Nash, “Poverty and Poor Relief in Pre-Revolutionary Philadelphia,” *William and Mary Quarterly* 33 (1976): 3-30.

⁴⁹ Robert E. Pumphrey and Muriel Pumphrey, *The Heritage of American Social Work* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1961): 11.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Leon Ginsberg, *Understanding Social Problems, Policies, and Programs* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1996), 18.

- (3) Gave the overseers the power to raise funds and use them in their poverty relief.
- (4) Affirmed that government relief was the last resort, after family and friends assisted the poor.
- (5) Defined helpless (or worthy people), whose problems included illness, the feebleness of old age, being orphaned and disability.
- (6) Established workhouses and other solutions, such as deporting to the colonies “sturdy beggars,” often as indentured servants, who asked for help but appeared capable of providing for themselves.

A close examination of these themes and a comparison with the literature reveals that colonial American policies and provisions did not always follow English precedent. Axinn and Levin in a survey of American social welfare history offer the most thorough analysis of values and attitudes toward colonial poor in social welfare texts. Additionally they examine the political and economic forces of the time. Although Axinn and Levin focus on the Northern colonies, they acknowledge the more relaxed attitudes of the Southern colonies. Axinn and Levin add depth to the analysis of colonial poor laws by noting that the Elizabethan Poor Laws, as a response to rampant unemployment and urbanization, do not fit the more agrarian rural society of America. They also note that poor relief in America’s fledgling cities was administered quite differently than in the typical village, where the harsh vestiges of the poor laws were most often seen.⁵²

Wisner asserts that while New England’s poor laws were designed after those of England, they were administered with a distinctly colonial flavor. While Wisner’s account lacks the harsh characterization of colonial practices common in other writings

⁵² Axinn and Levin, *Social Welfare History*.

of the period, it should be noted that Boston and Providence were substantially larger and wealthier than the other communities studied. Additionally, Wisner's work is secondary and did not depend upon the analysis of case records. Both Wisner and Axinn and Levin offer possible explanations for some of the contradictory findings in the study of colonial American social welfare. They report that rural and agrarian communities were more likely to adopt restrictive and punitive policies and that American colonial social welfare practices were different in the more urban centers.

The concept of a case record was unknown to colonial social welfare agencies; however, Creech constructed from town council records from early Providence social histories of numerous recipients. These records allow a case study view of the administration of poor relief policies. Creech believes these records show "genuine sympathy" for the elderly poor. In one case services continued for over thirty years.⁵³

The colonial practice of outdoor relief, or boarding the poor in the homes of residents, accounts for some of the interpretations of colonists' attitudes toward poor relief and the poor as one of concern about and sympathy toward dependents. Guest offers a critique of the thesis that the move from outdoor relief to institutional services was the result of a change in this attitude. The poor had come to be perceived as a threat to society. Guest examined the records of out-relief in Somerset County, Maryland, and concluded that the poor in that county posed no threat to the community as Rothman and others (e.g., Katz, 1986; Bernhard, 1977) supposed. Outdoor relief was simply more efficient than building poorhouses and staffing them in a small rural

⁵³ Margaret D. Creech, "Some Colonial Case Histories," *Social Service Review*, 9 (1935): 699-730.

community. Wherever the number of poor increased, colonists abandoned outdoor relief in favor of the more cost-efficient institutions. Therefore, any change in poor-relief practices was not due to any great social transformation of attitudes toward the poor, but rather to the economics of poor relief.⁵⁴

Trattner's landmark text notes positive aspects of poor relief in early America: colonists "attacked the problem of poverty with seriousness;" the "colonists willingly accepted responsibility for the indigent;" "the colonists were more interested in providing good treatment for the poor than in economizing on welfare costs;" and "by and large the poor were dealt with humanely."⁵⁵ Reisch and Andrews in *The Road Not Taken: A History of Radical Social Work in the United States* rail against what they call "historical amnesia" of social welfare historians who focus upon the dominant culture and its organizations as the major forces shaping social welfare. Trattner's work could be classified as a "Whig history" that ignores the underclass, according to Reisch and Andrews.⁵⁶

In somewhat more recent research, Bernhard (1977) interprets poor relief in the Southern colony of Virginia as being less restrictive than practices in Northern

⁵⁴ Goeffrey Guest, "The Boarding of the Dependent poor in Colonial America. *Social Service Review* 63 (1989): 2-111.

⁵⁵ Trattner, *From Poor Law to Welfare State: A History of Social Welfare in America*. (New York: The Free Press, 1974), 24-25.

⁵⁶ Trattner, *Poor Law*, 24-25; Michael Reisch and Janice Andrews, *The Road Not Taken* (New York: Brunner-Routledge, 2001). A Whig history is a derogatory term for a history written from a present and progressive point of view, that is, one that focuses on the accomplishments of historical characters who through their efforts gradually caused history to progress. Whig historians tend to look for and emphasize similarities between past and present.

colonies. Bernhard's work has received little attention; yet it is the seminal research defining the alternative viewpoints of eighteenth century social welfare attitudes. The author compares and contrasts poor relief in colonial Virginia and Massachusetts. She challenges "social control" thinking in the following ways:⁵⁷

- (1) While Wilensky and Lebeaux defined economic self-interest as the driving force in American society, Bernhard describes communities that "developed a social conscience...and willingly made provisions for its destitute members."
- (2) For early Virginians, poverty was a natural part of the ordering of society. Both poor and the wealthy had roles in this ordered society.
- (3) Bernhard found that the paradoxical contrasts in the treatment of slaves and indentured servants and the benevolent care of the poor were rooted in feudal society. There was no English precedent to prevent the mistreatment of slaves in contrast to the obligation to provide for dependent serfs.
- (4) "From the perspective of the twentieth century it is difficult to imagine a society where the poor, the sick, and the unwanted were taken into private homes to be clothed, fed, and sheltered."
- (5) Virginia's parishes were not merely responsive to the poor, they were "generous."
- (6) The elite members of society saw poor relief as a moral, social, and religious obligation.

Bernhard contrasted Virginia's benevolence with Massachusetts's relative harshness. Lee, in a largely forgotten work, highlights the importance of context in

⁵⁷ Virginia Bernhard, "Poverty and Social Order in Seventeenth Century Virginia," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 85 no.2 (1977): 41-155.

interpreting social welfare history. Lee theorizes that social welfare “was central to” seventeenth and eighteenth century colonial life. America was settled by impoverished Europeans who believed that Europe’s social structure and values encouraged poverty. The early Americans, according to Lee, sought a society where neither poverty nor wealth “undercut” the social relationship. The relationship that a society established with the poor was a “yardstick” of the health of the society. In contrast with Rothman, Katz, Abramovitz, Jansson and Piven and Cloward, Lee’s message is far from social control. Lee also presents three reasons for a growing lack of concern about poverty as a threat. First, war and natural crises caused a growing number of poor. Second, as poverty became more widespread and expensive, it was difficult to manage by merely “warning out.” More comprehensive methods were required. Third, since poverty could strike anyone, the public attitude softened.⁵⁸

A Brief Review of the Literature on Social Control

This literature is dominated by the concept that social welfare services were created as instruments of social control to keep dependents in their place. The further extension of this theory is found in the work of the structural functionalist approach to human behavior originated by Parsons and elaborated on by Merton and Gans.⁵⁹ To summarize the essential elements of this systems theory, there are manifest (intended)

⁵⁸ Lee, “This Poor People,” iv, v, 266.

⁵⁹ Talcott Parsons, *The Social System* (Glencoe, Illinois: The Free Press, 1951); Robert K. Merton, *Social Theory and Social Structure* (New York: The Free Press, 1968); Herbert Gans, “The Positive Functions of Poverty,” *American Journal of Sociology* 78 (1972): 275-289.

and latent (unintended) by-products of society's efforts to socialize. Applied to social welfare history, the manifest (intended) functions of institutions were to provide more effective and efficient social welfare services, while the latent (unintended) functions were social control of deviance. Some authors, for example Rothman and Wilensky and Lebeaux, find that the latent functions of social welfare and of institutions have become the intended purposes. Institutions exist to control deviance and poor relief exists to provide an underclass and to keep the poor in their place (social control).

Rocheforte examines two theoretical perspectives of the historical development of social welfare policy in "Progressive and Social Control Perspectives in Social Welfare." The progressive theory, or the "liberal" viewpoint asserts that social systems tend to grow and improve incrementally over time. A progressive perspective views mutual assistance as one of humanity's fundamental drives. Since there is a gradual improvement over time, today's policies and provisions are superior to colonial policies and provisions. Originated by Karl Marx, the social control theory explains social welfare policies and services as simply a means of maintaining the class system and keeping the underclass in its place. Social welfare is the means by which the state supports the ruling class. Rocheforte believes that neither the progressive nor the social control theories adequately explain the development of social welfare policy. The progressive theory supports the manifest function of social welfare: the protection of the vulnerable. The social control theory emphasizes the latent functions of social welfare: to keep the dependent in their place.⁶⁰ Grob supports Rocheforte's thesis and further states that those who support the social control theory confuse the by-product of

⁶⁰ David A. Rocheforte, Progressive and Social Control Perspectives on Social Welfare," *Social Service Review* 55 (1981): 568-592.

an institution with the primary intention. A school clearly controls students' behavior, but its main function is education, not social control.⁶¹

In a thought-provoking analysis of social welfare policy, Trattner edits the proceeds of a session held at a 1980 meeting of the Organization of American Historians.⁶² This work has received little attention perhaps because it is critical of Piven and Cloward's thesis.⁶³ Piven and Cloward wrote that public welfare programs and institutions never have been philanthropic or benevolent in purpose or function. Social welfare programs, according to Piven and Cloward, exist to maintain social order and to force the poor into the labor market, keeping them under control and doing the menial work. Poor relief provisions are cyclical and were expanded and contracted by the elite in order to manipulate the poor and to maintain the ruling class in power. Trattner in his introduction points out that social control "originally had a benign rather than a sinister connotation." Originally social control was the means by which we become socialized by interacting with others and learning appropriate social behaviors and roles, including work roles and family roles. In fact, this sort of social control which enables the helpless and needy to exist in society creates a need for social workers. More recently, the meaning of the term has been altered to describe the regulation of the lower classes by the ruling class, or a concept quite different from social work's intended purpose. Even though it is highly critical of the aims of social

⁶¹ Gerald Grob, "Welfare and Poverty in American History," *Reviews in American History* 1 (1973): 301.

⁶² Walter I. Trattner, *Social Welfare or Social Control?* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1983), 3

⁶³ Piven and Cloward, *Regulating*.

work, Piven and Cloward's theses continues to be widely taught to students of social work.

Trattner's edited rebuttal to Piven and Cloward contains a noteworthy analysis of the functions of public welfare in eighteenth century Philadelphia. Alexander's study of expenditures indicates that there was no manipulation of the lower classes by the elite. Private poor relief was so important to public welfare in Philadelphia that public officials did not control the expansion and contraction of welfare. Furthermore, expansion occurred in good times when there was no civil unrest. Alexander concludes that Piven and Cloward did not examine evidence from colonial America in the formulation of their theory.⁶⁴

Rothman's landmark work and his social control thesis is arguably the most important influence on current thinking about colonial attitudes toward relief of the poor. Despite its prominence in American history and sociology, Rothman's thesis contains several fundamental errors:⁶⁵

1. American asylums were founded more than one hundred years before Rothman's dating of the "discovery." Though he uses the term figuratively, there are few historical facts that support his conclusions.
2. While by the nineteenth century many asylums may have become "snakepits" of maltreatment, the original intent of the founders was not social control but a humane and cost-efficient alternative to out-relief.

⁶⁴ Alexander, "Functions," 17.

⁶⁵ Rothman, *Asylum*.

3. Most inmates of asylums and poorhouses were not threats to society nor the elite.

4. As much as outdoor relief has been romanticized and institutional care vilified, neither viewpoint played a role in eighteenth century decisions to build institutions. Institutions were created to stem rising costs of poor relief and to deter the able-bodied from seeking relief.

Literature on Social Welfare in Colonial Charles Town

While Charles Town was among only four or five colonial cities, was the wealthiest and the only Southern city, there have been only four published works on the topic of social welfare services in colonial Charles Town.⁶⁶ Three other published works exist that cover Charles Town as a part of a larger subject: Bridenbaugh's twin works (*Cities in the Wilderness* and *Cities in Revolt*) and Fraser's *Charleston!* *Charleston!*. There are three additional unpublished works by Byrd, Wiberley and Lockley.⁶⁷

⁶⁶ Some historians do not include Newport in the province of Rhode Island and the smallest of the five cities. Bridenbaugh, the first and most thorough, includes Newport. Many historians and social welfare researchers ignore Charles Town.

⁶⁷ Barbara L. Bellows, *Benevolence Among Slaveholders: Assisting the Poor in Charleston, 1670-1860* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University, 1993); Carl Bridenbaugh, *Cities in the Wilderness: The First Century of Urban Life in America, 1625-1742*. (New York: A.A. Knopf, 1938); Carl Bridenbaugh, *Cities in Revolt: Urban Life in America, 1743-1776* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1955); Walter Fraser, Jr., *Charleston!, Charleston! The History of a Southern City* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1989); Walter Fraser, Jr., "The City Elite, 'Disorder', and the Poor Children of Pre Revolutionary Charleston," *South Carolina Historical Magazine* 84, no. 3 (1983):167-179; Joseph Ioor Waring, Medical Care of the Poor in Colonial South Carolina," *Annals of Medical History*, New Series, no. 3 (1932): 283-289.

The earliest published work, “Medical Care of the Poor in Colonial Charles Town” by Joseph Waring, M.D., appeared in the *Annals of Medical History* in 1932. The second, published in 1983, was a paper entitled “The City Elite, ‘Disorder’, and the Poor Children of Pre-Revolutionary Charleston” appearing in the *South Carolina Historical Magazine*. The author, Walter Frazier, wrote the paper as a part of a larger study of Charleston. Both papers cite the St. Philip’s vestry minutes liberally; however, neither is a comprehensive review. The third published work, a wonderful and insightful work entitled *Benevolence Among Slaveholders: Assisting the Poor in Charleston, 1670-1860*, contains a scant eighteen pages drawn mainly from secondary sources on the colonial period and only cites the minutes’ existence. The fourth work describes disaster relief and the great fire of 1740. While numerous, more complete works exist on poor relief in the Northern cities of Philadelphia, New York, Newport, and Boston (e.g., Trattner, Nash, Alexander, Bridenbaugh & Bridenbaugh, Smith, Mohl, Jernegan, Kelso, Wisner, and Schneider), no comprehensive published work about Charles Town’s colonial social welfare services exists.

The paper by Waring is quite remarkable in its witty and humorous, yet thorough, treatment of the medical care of the poor. Waring, an accomplished medical historian, critiqued the services rendered by physicians contracted to the parish as no better or no worse than the usual medical care. Fraser’s effort is based upon Rothman’s social control premise. He relates poor relief in Charles Town to colonial, Boston, New York and Philadelphia. Fraser echoes Bridenbaugh’s account of Charles Town’s dedicated provision of relief to growing numbers of outsiders; however, he also relates the growth in the population of poor with social control by the elite. As a book-length

follow-up, Fraser's *Charleston! Charleston!* expands on the 1983 work. As is true of Bridenbaugh, the story of poor relief as told by Fraser is the story of the city of Charleston during the colonial period. This is a reality of colonial social history that sets the period apart from other eras. After the colonial period, American social welfare history assumes less importance over time.

Bridenbaugh's cogent sections on poor relief in his landmark text on urban life in colonial America stand in stark contrast to most social welfare histories. He is the first to mention the well-developed systems of mutual aid and charity in colonial cities. Bridenbaugh sets the standard for the study of colonial social welfare with his recognition of its significance to social and economic life in America's nascent cities.

Abramovitz and Day might dismiss Bridenbaugh's work as being part of the genre of historians tainted by social control, Judeo-Christian values, the Protestant work ethic, social Darwinism, Puritan morality, patriarchy, and white Anglo-Saxon ideals. Nevertheless, Bridenbaugh examined thousands of original records of poor relief in Newport, Boston, Philadelphia, New York, and Charles Town. In comparison, Abramovitz and Day wrote the colonial sections of their texts from secondary sources, mainly about seventeenth century New England.

Lockley's "White Poverty in Rural South Carolina's Parishes" is unique in the focus on rural colonial poverty in a Southern colony. In press, this work provides depth and understanding by its contrast to Charles Town. Lockley finds that poverty was real and a significant problem in South Carolina's rural parishes, that rural parish poor relief went beyond providing a bare subsistence, and that education provided a pathway out

of poverty for pauper children.⁶⁸ Focusing on rural parishes, Lockley's work fills a gap in the study of rural southern social welfare. Wiberley's unpublished dissertation entitled "Four Cities: Public Poor Relief in Urban America, 1700-1775" provides a comparison of poor relief practices in Charles Town with Boston, Philadelphia and New York. Wiberley attributes differences in Charles Town to the large slave population that decidedly affected the care of poor whites.⁶⁹

Perhaps the first American legislative audit report of poor relief and its causes is the topic of a three-page article by Easterby.⁷⁰ Easterby describes a document discovered among nineteenth-century almshouse records. The finding contained a 1767 committee report to the General Assembly and a list of names of relief recipients. Additional comments in the margins and sketches for a new workhouse had been added to the report, which has now been lost again, according to the South Carolina Department of Archives and History. With the loss of the church wardens' accounts from 1752-1775, Easterby's work is the only way to benchmark the scope of poor relief prior to the Revolution.

Waterhouse finds that while Charles Town's vestry was controlled by wealthy merchants, this dominance grew from a sense of responsibility to the local community. They believed that it was their civic duty to provide political leadership. Waterhouse's

⁶⁸ Timothy Lockley, "Rural White Poverty," *William and Mary Quarterly*, Forthcoming.

⁶⁹ Stephen Edward Wiberly, "Four Cities: Public Poor Relief in Urban America, 1700-1775," (Ph.D. Dissertation, Yale University, 1975).

⁷⁰ James H. Easterby, " Public Poor Relief in Colonial Charleston," *The South Carolina Historical and Genealogical Magazine* XLII (1941): 83-86.

research illustrates that when details from primary sources are examined the social control position is unsupported. He finds that the elites' involvement in social welfare was a duty that was expected of the gentry, not as a means of social control of the underclass.⁷¹

Among the most insightful of these works that were not intended as social welfare studies is Mulcahy's (1996) article describing the great fire of 1740. The significance of Mulcahy's work is described in the introduction to this chapter.

Mulcahy, without any reference to Piven and Cloward, weighs in on the social control issue in the following statement: "Thus the money was intended to help control society, but it did so by supporting elites rather than *regulating the poor*" (italics supplied).⁷²

Mulcahy also chronicles the use of the relief funds as social insurance designed to return recipients to productive work.

Coclanis' *The Shadow of a Dream: Economic Life and Death in the South Carolina Low Country-1670-1920* compared white family structure in Charles Town to that of the small coastal New England village of Bristol, Rhode Island. Using the parish

⁷¹ Richard Waterhouse, "South Carolina's Colonial Elite: A Study in the Social Structure and Political Culture of a Southern Colony, 1670-1760," (Ph.D. dissertation: University of South Carolina, 1973), 180; Richard Waterhouse, "The Responsible Gentry of Colonial South Carolina," in *Town and Country: Essays on the Structure of Local Government in the American Colonies*, ed. B.C. Daniels (Middletown, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 1978), 160-185.

⁷² Matthew Mulcahy, "The Great Fire of 1740 and the Politics of Disaster Relief in Colonial Charleston," *South Carolina Historical Magazine* 99 (1996): 135-150. The quote is from page 139.

register, Coclanis calculated the gender ratio of those listed in the burial records of St. Philip's Parish between 1720 and 1750.⁷³

Four recent studies of elite white women in colonial South Carolina, their families, and their kinship networks offer new perspectives on the social history: "Family, Community, Economy: Women's Activity in South Carolina, 1670-1770," (Pruden, 1996); "The Hidden Family: Sibling Relationships and Kinship in Eighteenth Century South Carolina Low Country," (Glover, 1996); *In the Affairs of The World: Women, Patriarchy, and Power in Colonial South Carolina* (Anzilotti, 2003); and "The Path Not Taken: Class, Gender, and Race in the South Carolina Backcountry, 1750-1800," (Halevi, 1995). A fifth covers antebellum poor relief: "Poverty and its Relief in the Antebellum South: Perceptions and Realities in Three Selected Cities Charleston, Nashville, and New Orleans," (Murray, 1991).⁷⁴ While the first four studies focus on elite white women and not poor women, taken together they offer a view of the social environment of eighteenth century low country South Carolina that is distinctively different from that of seventeenth century New England.

⁷³ Peter A. Coclanis, *The Shadow of a Dream: Economic Life and Death in the South Carolina Low Country-1670-1920*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989).

⁷⁴ Cara Anzilotti, *In the Affairs of The World: Women, Patriarchy, and Power in Colonial South Carolina* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 2004); Elizabeth M. Pruden, "Family, Community, Economy: Women's Activity in South Carolina, 1670-1770, PhD diss. (University of Minnesota, 1996); Lorri M. Glover, "The Hidden Family: Sibling Relations and Kinship in the Eighteenth Century South Carolina Lowcountry." PhD diss. (University of Kentucky, 1996); Sharon Halevi, "The Path Not Taken: Class, Gender, and Race in the South Carolina Backcountry, 1750-1800," PhD diss. (The University of Iowa, 1995); Gail S. Murray, "Poverty and its Relief in the Antebellum South: Perceptions and Realities in Three Selected Cities Charleston, Nashville, and New Orleans," PhD diss. (Memphis State University, 1991).

Moonlight, Magnolias, and Madness: Insanity in South Carolina from the colonial Period to the Progressive Era by McCandless forms the basis of the section in Chapter VI on the treatment of mental illness in Charles Town. McCandless analyzes early South Carolina's treatment and laws. Joyner provides a detailed study of public education in colonial South Carolina in *Beginnings: Public Education in Colonial South Carolina*.⁷⁵ This dissertation is stronger in the areas of the colonial treatment of the mentally ill and early education in South Carolina because of these two works.

Summary of Literature Review

Surprisingly, much that is written, taught and believed to be true about social welfare in colonial America may not be so. In spite of traditional lore, a critical examination of the literature, drawn mainly from primary sources, fails to support the content found in most social welfare texts, especially the work of "radical writers", e.g., Piven and Cloward, Wilensky and Lebeaux, Rothman, Abramovitz, and Day. A critical review of social welfare policy and history of the colonial period has never been published. The most comprehensive works are Trattner & Achenbaum's 1983 annotated bibliography and Chambers' 1986 "redefinition" of social welfare history.⁷⁶ While Chambers' paper critiques the state of literature on social welfare, it does not focus on any particular period and is primarily concerned with social control theories.

To summarize the findings from this review, a considerable body of work indicates that: social welfare was a significant part of colonial American society;

⁷⁵ Judith R. Joyner, *Beginnings: Education in Colonial South Carolina* (Columbia: Museum of Education, University of South Carolina, 1985).

⁷⁶ Walter I. Trattner and Arthur Achenbaum, eds., *Social Welfare: An Annotated Bibliography* (Westport: Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1983).

poverty was widespread and endemic in colonial America; ethnic and mutual aid societies were well developed and private philanthropy and religion were well-organized and significant in urban areas; institutions existed and their manifest functions were humane as opposed to social control; those involved in the provision of social welfare services were respected and prominent members of society; and social welfare was a form of social insurance in volatile and dangerous times and was designed to return the poor to productivity. Family support, kinship and ethnic self-help, mutual aid societies, private philanthropy and organized religion have been ignored or diminished by mainstream historians and social welfare texts. As startling as these findings are, there is an even more curious conclusion: in over sixty years of writing by notable historians and sociologists no one has assembled the evidence about social welfare in colonial America into one set of findings. There has been no published review of the literature on this topic and important contributions (e.g., Alexander, 1983; Trattner, 1983; Guest, 1989) have not been synthesized. Additionally, the focus on social welfare in early Puritan New England should be expanded to include rural counties and parishes in the Mid-Atlantic provinces and in the South and to focus more on the second half of the eighteenth century.

Some authors seek to redress oversights of historians that they identify with the dominant culture. Day posits that earlier social welfare histories were part of a patriarchal and racist effort to rob women and minorities of their true histories. American social welfare, according to Day, was “without historical traditions of care for the poor” and was “stuck in its harsh, anti-poor, worker-exploitation past”.⁷⁷

⁷⁷ Day, *New*, 133.

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APPENDIX A- WORKHOUSE EXPENSE ACCOUNTS⁷⁸

Appendix A-1

The Parish of St. Philips Charles Town to James Crockatt and Thomas Cooper, Church Wardens 28 November, 1738 - 4 April, 1739		
Date	Item	Amount
April 1	To Cash pd. Mr. Garnes for use of the house for Sundry with Small Pox	£24.00.0
	To Cash pd Mr. Laurens for rent of said House	2.00.0
	To Cash pd for Stocks- 3 Large logs mahogany, 4 Planks ditto	68.00.0
	Mr. Weaver-carpenter, Mr. Randall, blacksmith	
	To Cash pd by James Crockatt to Mr. Garnes for the use of the Workhouse between 28 November, 1738 and 4 April, 1739	96.00.0
	Dr. John Linning for Medicines, Salary	257.03.4
	To Sundry Accounts paid for the Use of the Workhouse	
	To James Crockatt for sundries per account	15.10.0
	To Simmons Smith & Co. for Sundry Persons at the work house	32.00.0
	To John Stone 24 bowls & Platters	4.00.0
	To Wm. Randall blacksmith 2 pot hooks	4.10.0
	To Stephen Porter Soap & Candles	7.10.0
	To James Fowler Shirts	7.05.0
	To John Laurens Clothes	5.10.0
	To James Thompson for Beef	55.09.0
	To James Streeter for ditto	21.10.0
	To Cash pd. Duffels for use of Workhouse	38.00.0
	Total	636.17.4

⁷⁸ Only the FY 1740 account appeared in this format in the CWA. The remainder were constructed by the dissertator from single entries in the CWA interspersed with other line items. Save FY 1740 none ever existed as separate accounts.

Appendix A-2

1739/40 Workhouse Accounts- Thomas Cooper & Adam Beauchamp, Church Wardens		
Date	Item	Amount
5 May	To Cash paid Garnes	£03.00.0
14 May	To ditto paid William Garnes on Acct Workhouse	07.00.0
14 May	To ditto paid carrying a sick Spanyard to Workhouse	00.05.0
22 May	To ditto paid Dr. Paul Charron	10.00.0
23 May	To ditto paid Mr. Wragg 2 barrels rice (small) per note receipt	10.02.0
28 May	To Mrs. Fletcher laying in a woman at the Workhouse named Dean	06.05.0
2 June	To ditto paid Mrs. Ellis for Oznabrigg & Check Linnen	09.10.0
5 June	To ditto paid William Garnes in Part his Wages	50.00.0
22 June	To ditto paid Garnes on acct his Wages	14.00.0
23 July	To ditto paid Garnes on acct of Workhouse	10.00.0
23 July	To ditto paid Capt. Beauchamp for a pound of Tea for the Workhouse	02.00.0
23 July	To ditto paid Garnes in full his order to 27 th Instant	36.00.0
7 August	To Cash paid Sheppard settling Woods acct. with Mr. Lewis	01.00.0
9 August	To Cash paid Bennett for whipping post at ye. Workhouse by Order of the Commisioners	6.10.00
25 August	To Cash paid Garnes for the Workhouse	12.00.0
30 August	To ditto paid two Sailors Carrying a Man to the Workhouse	0.10.0
6 Sept	To ditto paid William Garnes for use of Workhouse	16.00.0
7 Sept	To ditto paid Garnes Warden of the Workhouse per Order from the Commissioners dated this day receipt	50.00.0
22 Sept	To ditto paid Will ^m Garnes for use of Workhouse	10.00.0
8 Oct	To ditto paid Will ^m Garnes for use of Workhouse	12.10.0
14 Oct	To cash paid Garnes at Adam Beauchamps 6 May last Omission	3.00.0
1 Nov	To Cash paid Garnes in full his acct. The disbursements to this day	8.03.0

11 Nov	To Cash paid ditto on account of Wo.house per receipt	16.05.0
21 Nov	To a purchase of Stripped Duffels	37.00.0
4 Dec	To ditto paid Garnes the balance of his account to this day	0.16.3
4 Dec	To Cash paid ditto for the use of the Workhouse	15.03.9
7 Dec	To ditto paid Garnes for years salary due 27 th Novem ^{ber} per Order and receipt	50.00.0
7 Dec	To Cash paid Adam Beauchamp 2 BB Rice per Receipt	12.01.9
1 Jan	To ditto paid Garnes	10.00.0
1 Jan	To ditto paid Abraham Bestat for Cordwood for Workhouse	15.00.0
30 Jan	To a hogg 200 lbs.	09.03.0
17 April	To ditto paid Garnes per Order the Commissioners by receipt	50.00.0
22 April	To Cash paid Will ^m Garnes the balance his Parish Acct per receipt	30.01.6
25 April	To Cash paid Bestat for wood for Workhouse per receipt	41.05.0
25 April	To cash p ^d Mr. Perronneau for a bb of Rice for the use of the Workhouse	4.03.5
25 April	To Cash p ^d Dr. Gaultier a Years Salary to Easter last	150.00.0
30 April	To Cash paid James Thompson his acct. For meat/receipt	87.15.0
Total		745.15.8

Appendix A-3

The Parish of St. Philips Charles Town to Robert Pringle and John Guerard Church Wardens 1740/41		
Date	Item	Amount
2 July	To Cash pd. Mr. Garnes his acct of disbursement for work house	£28.16.03
25 July	To Cash pd Mr. Garnes his acct of disbursement for the work house to 26 June	15.00.0
3 Sept	To Cash pd Mr. Garnes his acct of disbursement for the work house	15.00.0
"	To a barrell of bread for the workhouse	4.00.0

20 Sept	To Cash pd Mr. Garnes 1/4 salary due 28 May	50.00.0
11 Oct	To a barrell of bread for the workhouse	8.00.0
"	To Cash pd for making shirts for Children at the work house	4.02.6
"	To Cash pd Mr. Garnes for 1/4 salary due 20 Aug.	50.00.0
8 Dec	For Cloths, for Sundry Persons at the work house	6.05.0
27 Jan	To Mr. Grimke for a Quarter of Beef and a Hog for workhouse	8.06.1
31 Jan	To Thomas Head for 3 bbls small rice for the workhouse	18.13.6
9 Feb	To Mr. Bastad for 12 cord of wood for the work house	31.05.0
"	To Wm Branford for 3 bbl of small rice for the workhouse	17.14.8
23 Feb	To 2 qtrs of Pork for the workhouse	10.00.0
5 Mar	To Mr. Garnes for 1/2 years salary -due 28 Feb 1741	100.00.0
14 Mar	To 70 lb Beef and a bbl of rice for the workhouse	13.15.0
19 Mar	To Mr. Laurens for 6 bedsteads for the workhouse	10.01.0
25 Mar	To Mr. Roper for 3 Barrells rice for the workhouse	15.05.7
13 Apr	To Mr. Bastad for 3 cord of wood for the work house	9.12.6
"	To Cash pd. Garnes Acct to 30 March 1741	80.04.1
"	To Mr. Thompson for Beef for the workhouse from 11 Feb. 1739 to 7th Jan. 1740	130.00.0
13 Apr	To Cash pd. Dr. Gaultier a years salary	150.00.0
Total		775.18.9

Appendix A-4

The Parish of St. Philips Charles Town to Benjamin Smith and John Guerard Church Wardens for the Year 1742/43		
Date	Item	Amount
11 May	To Cash paid William Garnes per order of Commissioners of Work House One Quarters Salary	£50.00.0
31 May	To ditto paid Wm. Garnes per order of Commissioners of work house	50.00.0
29 Jun	To ditto paid John Scott for 2 barrells rice for the work house	23.16.0
31 Aug	To Ditto paid Wiliam Garnes the late Warden of the Work House his disbursements for the Parish poor	33.19.0
	Paid Wm Garnes by order of the Commissioners of the Work House in his favor	50.00.0

4 Sep	To Cash paid Hill and Guerard for 2 Barrells of rice	21.09.0
4 Sep	To Andrew Rutledge for 4 Cords of Wood and the Wharfidge at 1/3 per cord	23.12.0
9 Oct	To Cash for 17 yards of Check Linnen made into Shirts for Lancaster and Durgeon 5 yards Garlix for Shirts for Clement Miller thread for the shirts making Check Shirts 4 yards Garlix	10.03.0
22 Dec	To Ditto paid for Striped Duffill Blanketts for the use of the Poore at the Work House 4 pr. Blem Plains Comb for the Poore in the Work House being for Close To ditto paid Mary Ellis and Son for 3 yds Blem Plainsso that above piece not being sufficient by so much to make cloths for the people in the worke house 2 1/2 dozen buttons paid 11/2 yards Oznabriggs for Pocketts Thread for the close	20.00.0 3.04.0 4.18.0
20 Jan	To Ditto paid John Hutchens the Commissioners of the Workhouse in his favor for a quarters salary	50.00.0
	Boarding Mary Dedpha who came from George Town and was sent to the work House Ill of a Plurisye for 28 days To ditto for 9 pairs Knit Stockings sent to the Poore at the Worke House & 7 Striped Duffell Blanketts	72.12.0 23.07.0
28 Jan	To Cash paid James Matthews for 6 Casks of Rice for the Workhouse	64.15.0
9 Feb	To cash paid Mr. Webb Carting Casks of rice to the Workhouse	1.10.0
12 Mar	To Ditto paid John Hutchens the Commissioners of the Workhouse in his favor for a quarters salary	50.00.0
22 Mar	To ditto Paid Jacob Motte for Wooden Platters for the Workhouse	3.15.0
12 Apr	To Ditto paid John Hutchens by the Commissioners of the Workhouse for the Parish poor: Candles, Soap and Salt Cordwood and Carting To Cash Paid Samuel Wainwright Butcher for Beef supplied the Parish Poor one year Easter Monday 1742- Easter Monday 1743	2.16.0 12.10.0 121.02.0

To Cash pd Doctor Gaultier for 1 year service to the poore of the Parish as per agreement	150.00.0
Total	843.08.0

Appendix A-5

1743 Workhouse Accounts- John Moultrie & James Wright, Church Wardens		
Date	Item	Amount
May 14	For Lancaster & 2 boys at the workhouse 3 y ^{ds} Oznabrigs ½ lb. Brown thread.	£07.17.6
June 17	Pd. Commiss ^{rs} of the Workhouse Order to John Hutchins for a Quarters Salary to 28 th May	50.00.0
	Delivered to Tomas Miller 1 pr. Shoes, bible, 1 boys hatt	04.17.0
	Pd. John Hutchins for Soap, Candles, Salt to May last for use of the poor at the workhouse	02.17.6
Sept 15	Pd. Commiss ^{rs} of the Workhouse Order to John Hutchins for a Quarters Salary to 28 th Aug	50.00.0
	Paid for 500 ft. Cable, for the Workhouse to be picked into Oakum	17.10.0
	Pd. John Hutchins for 13 ^{doz} Candles, 26 lb. Soap & a bushel of Salt for ye Poor at the Workhouse	07.02.0
Oct 24	For the Workhouse	
	Pd for 1 pce. Hersey @ 17yds	08.10.0
	Pd for 1 pce Check @ 22 yds for frock & trousers	09.09.0
	½ lb brown thread, yarn hose	03.00.0
	3 yarn/3 wosted caps 1 pr mans shoes	02.10.0
	2 pr boys shoes 4 ^{doz} coat & 4 ^{doz} Breast buttons 2 ^{doz} shirt buttons 2 buckles	03.15.0
Dec 1	Pay'd Abram Bestat for 24 Cord Wood & Cartage to the workhouse	51.00.0
Dec 12	Pd. Commiss ^{rs} of the Workhouse Order to John Hutchins for a Quarters Salary to 28 th Nov	50.00.0
	Pd. John Hutchins for Soap, candles, & Potatoes & for making clothes for the Poor at the Workhouse	20.05.0
1744		
Jan 26	Pd for 2 Mattresses for the Workhouse	16.00.0
Mar 1	Pd John Scott for 6 bbls rice for the use of the Workhouse	31.00.0
	Pd. Commiss ^{rs} of the Workhouse Order to John Hutchins for a Quarters Salary to 28 th Feb	50.00.0
	Pd John Hutchins for 13 doz candles, 26 lbs Soap	07.10.0
Feb 18	To Mr. McHale foe one Dozen wooden bowls	03.00.0
April 23	To Hutchens per Order of the Vestry one quarters Salary	50.00.0
	To Marshall for Meat for the Workhouse	116.00.0

April 24	Paid Dr.Gaultier his years salary for attendance & for Medicine for the poor in the workhouse	150.00.0
Total		709.15.0

Appendix A-6

The Parish of St. Phillips Charles Town – Sundry Accounts of the Workhouse-1744/45 John Watson & George Seaman, Church Wardens		
Date	Item	Amount
May 4	Shoes for Thomas Miller & Lancaster	£2.15.0
May 9	1 Hatt for Thomas Miller	1.5.0
May 26	Chex, Oznabrgs, buttons, & thread for Dargan, Lancaster, and Miller	14.11.3
May 28	Candles and Soap for the Workhouse	6.10.0
May 28	Paid for making the above cloths, salt, Beef	12.0.0
June 1	Pd Hutchins salary to 28 May	50.0.0
June 26	Pd the Butcher's account	16.14.3
Aug 6	Pd Bestat for 26 cord wood	55.5.0
July 24	1 Hatt for Fisher	0.10.0
Aug 21	Cloths for Dargan, Miller, Fisher, Lancaster, and Hancock	13.10.3
Aug 27	To Cash pd the butcher's account	17.17.0
Aug 31	Pd for making the above cloths	4.00.0
Aug 31	Pd Jn Hutchins for soap, candles, and salt for the poor	7.05.0
Sept 5	5 Pewter basons & 6 spoons for the Work House	8.05.0
Sept 6	Pd Jn Hutchins Salary to 28 days	50.00.0
Sept 9	To Cash for Sundries for the Poor at the workhouse—3 pr shoes, Chex & thread, Jacket, and Britches, Shirt, boy's hose	13.06.0
Sept 9	To Cash for 2 pr shoes w/ buckels	4.03.6
Oct 29	Molassas for the Work House	8.0.0
Nov 1	8 pair blanketts	24.0.0
Nov 28	Pd Jn Hutchins for 13 weeks Potatoes	13.0.0
	Salt, Soap, & candles	7.5.0
	Making shirts	1.00.0
Dec 6	Paid butcher's account	32.19.6
	Paid Jn Hutchins salary to 28 Nov.	50.00.0
Dec 28	Pd Jn Hutchins 1 month salary	16.13.4
Feb 1	Pd. Butcher's account	22.12.6
Feb 20	1 Bbl rice	30.15.3
Feb 27	Pd Jn Hutchins for candles & salt	7.10.0
	Pd Hutchins 6 weeks potatoes	6.00.0
April 13	Pd Dr. Gaultier for attending the workhouse 1 year's salary	150.0.0
	Pd the butcher's account	15.15.0
April 15	Pd Mr. Hutchins for 1 lb beef allowed him for 365 days is 365 lbs and furnished by him is 130 lbs when the	22.10.7

	butcher had none	
April 15	Pd Mr. Pringle for 900 lb trunk	27.00.0
Total		704.18.0

Appendix A-7

1745 Workhouse Accounts- George Seaman & William Moultrie, Church Wardens		
Date	Item	Amount
April 20	For the poor in the Work House	
	31 yds. Check	£15.10.0
	Osnaburgh thread	01.00.0
	25 yds striped linnen	04.05.0
	7 yds Linnen for Shifts	03.10.0
	½ groce buttons for Jackets & Britches	00.10.9
	10 yds. Osnaburgh for Jackets	06.06.0
	10 yds. Ruffin for Britches	03.00.0
May 20	To Mrs. Matte for 12 wooden plates supplied for use of the Work House	03.00.0
31	To Hutchens	
	13 lb. Candles 2lb. Soap	06.10.0
	A bushel of Salt	01.05.0
	For making Shirts, Jackets, Breeches, & gown for Dargin,	
	Lancaster, Fisher & the woman with the lame hand	00.10.0
	To bread & sugar from Mrs. Lamb	
July 1	To cash for Sundry for the use of the Work House	59.13.0
July 1	Paid Mr. Hutchens per order of the Vestry one quarters Salary	50.00
Sept 5	For the use of the Work House	
	13 lb. Candles	03.05.0
	1 bushel of Salt & 26 lb. Soap	04.17.0
Oct 11	To Hutchens for 12 Bushel Potatoes	03.00.0
	To a quart of wine for a sick woman	00.10.0
	To 3 lbs Oatmeal 4 dozen candles Soap	02.15.0
	To ½ Bushel of Salt To two fowls	00.15.0
	To 10 days keeping James Frew	02.10.0
	To Hutchens per Order of the Vestry one quarters Salary	50.00
1746		
Jan 5	To Hutchens 39 Bushels potatoes	09.15.0
	A Bushel of Salt 2 lbs. Sugar	04.00
	13 doz candles 2 Cords of Wood	05.10
	To Hutchens per Order of the Vestry one quarters Salary	50.00

Mar 1	To 10 yd flannel for Dargan	04.10.0
	To 21 yds check for shirts for Wm.Lancaster & Fisher	10.10.0
	To 9 yds Linnen for 2 shifts for Mrs. Griffith	04.10
	To 20 yds cloth for jackets for Lancaster, Fisher, & Floyd	20.00.0
	To 6 loaves of Bread sent for the Work House	00.15.0
Apr 2	To making 3 Jackets & Breeches	01.10.0
	To making 6 shirts	01.10.0
	To making a night gown for Dargan	00.15.0
	To making two shifts and a gown	01.10.0
	To 13 doz candles & 2 lbs Soap	06.10.0
	To one bushel Salt	00.15.0
	To 11 weeks Rice	09.05.0
	To Cash Paid carting rice, sugar, & 23 Cords Wood	12.05.0
	To Hutchens for Cordwood	14.00.0
Apr 7	To 4 Loaves of bread	00.15.0
	To Mr. Crawford for 15 Cord of Wood	24.07.6
	To Dr. Gaultier for one years Salary for attending the Workhouse	150.00.0
	To a pr of shoes for a boy at the Workhouse	01.02.0
	To a pr of shoes for Fisher	01.05.0
	To 3 ½ doz. Metal buttons	00.17.0
	To 2 ½ doz. Jacket buttons	00.09.4
	To George Marshall for 222 lbs Beef	97.02.9
	To Hutchens for 60 lbs Beef	30.12.6
	To Hutchens per Order of the Vestry one quarters Salary	50.00.0
Total		716.02.5

Appendix A-8

1746 Workhouse Accounts- John Moultrie & James Wright, Church Wardens		
Date	Item	Amount
April 15	Paid Mr. Shorter for Beef for the Workhouse	£01.10.0
	To Mrs. Proctor for six yds. Oznabrigs & linnen to make Clothes for a boy at the workhouse	02.16.7
18	To ½ pound thread for the use of the Workhouse	00.12.6
May 26	To a Hatt for a boy at the Workhouse	00.12.6
July 1	Paid Mr. Hutchens per order of the Vestry one quarters Salary	50.00.0
	Pay'd ditto for Candles, Soap, & Salt per Account	13.00.0
Sept 5	Pay'd James Wright for an Amount of Beef for the	04.10.0

	use of the Workhouse, per order	
	Pay'd Mr. Hutchens Order for Wood to Mr. Scriven	43.14.0
Oct 11	To a Barrel of Rice bought of Mr. Hume & Carrying	04.00.0
	To Mrs. Bennet seven quarters schooling Fisher	07.10.0
Nov 1	To 21 yds Oznabrigs & ½ pound thread for shirts for Lancaster, Fisher & the Girle Wimbley	12.12.6
	To Mr. Kenneth Michie for Tenn Blanketts for the Workhouse	35.00.0
Dec 7	To Mr. Hutchens per order Mr. Wheeler	30.00.0
	To Making three Shirts for Lancaster & three for Floyd.	01.17.0
	To a Gown for the Woman with the Lame hand	02.15.0
	To Stockings for the boy Fisher	00.15.0
1747		
Jan 8	To cloth for two Shifts for the Woman with a Lame Hand	03.10.0
	To a Gown and a Coat for the Girle at the Workhouse	04.10.0
Jan 9	To Three barrells of Rice for the Workhouse & carting up	19.19.0
	To Mr. Hutchens Six months Salary by order of the Commissioners	100.00.0
	To Mr. Hutchens Account from September 28	104.00.0
Jan 28	To Six yards green cloth & Thread for that man & Fisher	04.15.0
Feb 18	To Mr. McHale foe one Dozen wooden bowls	03.00.0
April 23	To Hutchens per Order of the Vestry one quarters Salary	50.00.0
	To Marshall for Meat for the Workhouse	116.00.0
April 24	To Dr. Gaultier for attending the poor one quarter	37.10.0
	To Dr. David Caw for ¾ year attending the poor of the Parish	112.10.0
Total		778.07.1

Appendix A-9

1747 Workhouse Accounts-James Wright & David Caw, Church Wardens		
Date	Item	Amount
May 16	Paid for buttons for 1 boys coat at the workhouse	£00.5.0
28	Paid for 4 bbls rice for the Use of the Workhouse	40.00.0
June 6	Paid Mr. Hutchens per order of the Vestry one quarters Salary As Warden of the Workhouse	50.00.0
	Paid ditto foe 30 Cord Wood for the use of the parish & Carting	63.15.0 20.14.6

	Pay'd ditto for Candles, Soap, & Bread per Account	
Sept 28	Paid Mr. Hutchens per order of the Vestry one quarters Salary As Warden of the Workhouse	50.00.0
	Paid for a Qtr potatoes, Soap, Candles for the use of the Work house	25.02.6
Janry 7	Paid Mr. Hutchens per order of the Vestry one quarters Salary As Warden of the Workhouse	50.00.0
	Paid for a qtr candles, soap, potatoes & making clothes for the Parish Children	22.15.0
Feb 26	Paid for Tenn Blanketts for the Workhouse	45.00.0
Apr 18	Paid Mr. Hutchens per order of the Vestry one quarters Salary As Warden of the Workhouse	50.00.0
	Paid for a qtr candles, soap, potatoes & making clothes for the Parish Children	24.15.0
April 23	Paid Dr. Holzendorf years Salary as parish doctor	150.00.0
	To Marshall for Meat for the Workhouse	116.00.0
Total		708.06.0

Appendix A-10

1748 Workhouse Accounts-Kenneth Michie & David Caw, Church Wardens		
Date	Item	Amount
May 2	Pd for 2 bbls rice, casks & portorage for use of the Workhouse	£23.00.0
	Pd George Marshall his last years accot. For Beef for the Use of the Workhouse	109.00.0
July 25	Pd Mr. Hutchens per order of the Vestry one quarters Salary As Warden of the Workhouse per Comsrs Order	50.00.0
	Pd ditto foe 30 Cord Wood for the use of the parish & Carting	63.15.0
	Pd ditto for Candles, Soap, & Bread per Account	16.00.0
Oct 18	Pd Mr. Hutchens 2 qtrs Soap, Candles for the Workhouse	23.00.0
	Pd for a Making 5 shirts for the use of the Work house	1.05.0
Dec 31	Paid Mr. Hutchens per order of the Vestry one quarters Salary As Warden of the Workhouse	50.00.0
	Pd Mr Hutchens his Account for a qtr Candles, Soap, Making Clothes & Provisions for the Workhouse	61.02.0
1749		
Jan 5	Pd for 2 bbls Rice	27.10.0
Feb 18	Pd for Making a Gown for a Woman at the Workhouse	1.00.0
	Pd Geo Marshall for Beef for the Use of the	

Mar 20	Workhouse	
Mar 25	Pd Hutchens 1 Qtr Soap Candles & provisions	83.03.0
	Pd Dr. Welshuysen for attending the sick at the Workhouse	17.07.0
		100.00.0
	Pd. Geo Marshall for Beef from 23 to 25 March	
		2.03.1
Total		628.05.1

Appendix A-11

The Parish of St. Phillips Charles Town – Sundry Accounts of the Workhouse-1749/50 Richard Lampton & Robert Brewton, Church Wardens		
Date	Item	Amount
May 25	Pd. Mr. Backshell for delving into a Petition about a Hospital	£3.0.0
June 1	Pd. Mr. Hitchins for his Quarters Acct	132.07.0
July 18	Pd. Mr Welshuys 4 mos salary @L50 and L5 for Extra Attendance on Salivating Mr. Miller	55.00.0
Oct 11	Pd. Mr. Hutchins his second Account to Sept. 28 th	169.08.0
Oct 28	Pd. For 25 yds Garlix 25 ½ yds Greensplains & Chk Shirts & thread for W.H.	39.13.0
Jan 4	Pd. Mr. Hutchins his Quarterly Account	126.18.6
Apr 18	Pd. Mr. Hutchins his Quarterly Account	148.01.0
Apr 20	Pd. Dr. Lewis Caw his salary for 17 July 1749 to the 23 April 1750	115.00.0
Apr 20	Pd. Ditto for Attendance on Several poor out of the Work House and for Extraordinary Troubles	30.0.0
Total		819.07.6

Appendix A-12

The Parish of St. Phillips Charles Town – Sundry Accounts of the Workhouse-1750/51 Thomas Smith & John Crockatt, Church Wardens		
Date	Item	Amount
April 30	To Cash pd Mrs. Chamlet per order of the Vestry	£10.00.0
May 7	10 yds Irish linnen, 8yds checks, laces, thread for Marian Lamb	6.13.9
May 7	8yds Oznabrigs , check, a Hatt, buttons for William Murray	4.12.6
May 10	Mrs. Ann Bennett for Schooling Murray & Lamb	12.0.0
May 21	15 yds Garlix, 15 yds checks, thread, 1 hankerchief for Mrs. Kelly and 2 Children	12.06.3
June 1	Maria Magdalene Mulruin 7 yds Irish Linnen 7yds	5.03.9

	check 1oz thread	
June 1	Sarah Kelly for making cloths for Joanna Kelly & daughters	2.17.6
	For the Work House 32 yds Best Oznabrigs for sheets, Mattresses,	21.04.0
	1 doz pewter roons, 4 pewter porringers ½ oz thread, 7oz paper pins, 2 Iron Potts	
June 11	Sarah Kelly for making Gowns for Mulruin	1.10.0
June 28	John Hutchins quarterly account	139.14.0
July 2	Pd for Mattress, Wine for the Work House	3.15.0
July 5	Pd for another Mattress, ditto	6.00.0
Aug 27	To Cash Pd John Hutchens for Maintaining Sundry Transient persons in the Workhouse	23.08.0
Sept 4	Joanna Kelly & Daughters 61/2 yds Shallon, 1pr shoes, I pr stockings, oznabrig, cash to buy sundries	15.17.6
Oct 9	Hutchins 11 yds Check & thread for amy & a bed pan	6.06.6
Oct 18	John Hutchins Quarterly Account to 22 Sept To Cash pd John Hutchens for Maintaining Sundry Transient Persons in the Workhouse	89.06.0 35.00.0
Nov. 13	A Blankett for the Work House	2.10.0
Nov 21	Mr Hutchins for two men in the Work House 14 yds of checked linnen, thread, 2 capps, 2 pr stockings, 2 pr shoes	14.15.0
Nov 27	For the Work House, 1 pr bellows, 10 yds oznabrig, Hutchins to buy pr. Tongs and Shovel, a pr of shoes for a man at the Work house	5.19.0
Dec 4	Pd to Cash Mary Mulruin 7 yds of Garlix and thread	3.15.0
Dec 7	Mrs Hutchins 1 pr of shoes , 1 pr stockings, 7 yds Garlix 1 oz thread, 2 prs stockings, for Kelly, Murray , and Lamb	5.17.6
Dec 23	Mrs. Hutchings to spend for the Poor on Christmas Day	5.00.0
Jan 2	To Cash pd Jn. Hutchins Quarterly account to Decr. 28	126.13.0
Jan 24	The Work House 2 Close stools, Pans, Scrub Brush, 1 yd Oznabrig	5.07.6
Jan 28	Hutchins to buy 4 brushes for the Work House	1.05.0
Feb 26	For the work House, 2 Blanketts, 2 Mattreses, 6 Pewter Plates	16.07.6
Mar 18	Work House 6 Duffell Blanketts last October omitted	15.00.0
Apr 2	Jn Hutchins Quarterly Account to 28 th March	110.06.0
Apr 20	Guignard for 4 little tubs for the Work House	4.00.0
Apr 20	To Cash pd. Doctor George Milligan One Year's Salary @£180 and for extraordinary troubles @£=40	220.00.0
Total		932.10.9

Appendix A-13

The Parish of St. Phillips Charles Town – Sundry Accounts of the Workhouse-1751 David Deas & John Crockatt, Church Wardens		
Date	Item	Amount
April 25	To Sundrys delivered Mrs Hutchens for the poor in the work house	
	33 ½ yds Linnen for shirts and shifts	£10.17.9
	3 yds fine ditto	1.17.6
	6 yds Oznabrigs	1.07.0
	33 yds striped linen	9.18.0
	1 oz Cinnamon & 1 bottle wine	1.02.6
	2 oz Scots thread ½ oz Oznabrigs thread	0.17.6
	2 pr womens leather shoes	2.15.0
	1 pr boys ditto & 1 pr girls ditto	2.00.0
	7 ½ yds. Checks 1 pr lape	2.14.0
	1 pr buckles 1 Boys Hatt	1.12.0
	Pd Mrs Hutchens to buy laces	6.03.0
		35.08.4
May 28	To Cash to Mrs Hutchens for making clothes for the poor in the work house	8.18.0
June 27	To ditto pd John Hutchens his quarters account to 28 th Inst.	187.02.0
Sept 28	To ditto pd John Hutchens his quarters account from the 28 th June to 28 th Sept., Transient Persons refused	66.13.0
	To Cash Pd Mr . Hutchens acct of Transient Persons	59.00.0
Nov 1	To Sundrys delivered Mrs Hutchens at the same time for the use of the whole	
	1 oz thread 5 yds Oznabrig 1 pce tape	1.06.3
	1 Large Iron pott a parcel of yellow porringers	2.05.10
	1 doz pewter spoons ½ doz ditto plates	4.00.0
	2 duffel Blanketts 4 small bed blanketts	10.00.0
	31 yds Oznabrigs to mend beds & 4 gallons rum	4.05.0
		21.16.3
Dec 19	To Cash Pd John Hutchens Account of Transient Persons	59.00.0
1752		
Jan 9	To ditto pd John Hutchens his quarters account from the 28 th Sept to 28 th Dec.	86.14.0
March 14	To Sundrys delivered Mrs Hutchens for Mary McDowell, S Simmons & child, T Fleming, Jacob, Mary Lamb & the others in the work house for Summer clothing	2.17.6
	24 yds Oznabrigs	
	25 yds Garlix	

	@0 yds striped linnen	19.16.3
March 28	To Cash Pd John Hutchens for Transient Persons	32.15.0
March 31	To ditto pd John Hutchens his quarters account from the 28 th Dec to 28 th Inst.	99.03.0
Apr 20	To Cash pd. Doctor George Milligan One Year's Salary @ £180 and for extraordinary troubles @ £55	235.00.0
Total		972.17.5

APPENDIX B- NOTES ON THE SOCIAL HISTORY METHODOLOGY OF PROSOPOGRAPHY EMPLOYED IN THIS RESEARCH

Before going into the procedures used to record the data from these account books and minutes, it will be reiterated that this dissertation includes many of the vestry minutes as block quote examples in the text of the dissertation. While it is unusual to include so many quotes, this style has been employed to allow the reader to judge and reach conclusions for himself from detailed language contained in the minutes.

This dissertation is a prosopography, or a study, often using statistics, that identifies and draws relationships between various characters or people within a specific historical, social, or literary context. At the heart of successful prosopography is taking considerable care as to which categories of information are to be gathered, as it will be difficult in the middle or the end of a study to go back and look for information for those that were missed. For example, while writing this dissertation and well after reviewing and recording the data from the minutes and church warden's accounts, I found that I had failed to allow a field for collecting the number of dependents. Alas, I could not go over all the records again.

The minutes and the church wardens' accounts are ideal for a prosopography. There is a consistent structure in both sets, and the important information is well-defined and usually rarely missing. Both are succinct, without long textual entries, and there are units of measurement that can be easily represented in the database.

As an example of the historiographical methods employed in this dissertation, the following example is offered:

Agreed that a Free Negroe Girle named Susannah Basset be bound to Susannah the Wife of John Lea/Turner/for Ten Years from the date of the Indenture (V.M., 11 Sept., 1738).

What meaning can come from such a terse entry? To begin with, the study of the manuscripts requires that the researcher carefully analyze the entry and then take at least three additional steps. The key technique involves asking a series of questions. The researcher must first fully explore the “who, what, why, how, where, and when” of the entry. In the above concise notation, it can be learned that Susannah is a girl of about eight (the term of indentures for females was until age 18). Being bound to John Lea’s wife, she would be performing domestic work, perhaps cleaning up around the pottery shop. She was undoubtedly an orphan, since the circumstances of any living parent would be mentioned. 1738 was relatively early in the period for which minutes survive. Next, the researcher must put the note in context by categorizing, and organizing the note with similar entries. Often, the most significant part of an entry is what does not appear. In this case, in all the other entries, covering over 55 years and thousands of individuals, the entry on Susannah is the only note mentioning a “free Negroe.” There were some other free black men and women in Charles Town, but none ever appeared in the minutes.

Next, are there other entries about the same individual? This is where SPSS helps, as will be detailed later. In Susannah’s case there are none, which is not unusual. Ordinarily, there would be no more in the minutes about an indenture, unless there were problems, such as abuse by the master or incorrigibility on the part of the apprentice.

Since there was no expense to the parish in an indenture, no cash would change hands.

Are there other records from other sources? In this case there is one more. In the St. Philip's Register of births, baptisms, and burials, there is the following:

"Septr.15, 1738, Susannah Bassett, a free Negro girl born in Bermudas was baptized."⁷⁹

Not only is this entry the sole mention of a Negro in the entire register, it is the only entry with no parents noted. For illegitimate children's baptisms, the mother would be named and the child labeled illegitimate, unless the father was reputed, and in that case the "supposed" father would be named. It was not unusual for older children to be baptized, but an eight year old free Negro girl with no parents was a singular event indeed. As one might expect, no other entry mentioning Susannah ever appears again. Life in eighteenth century Charles Town was harsh indeed. That an eight-year old black girl would be well-treated as a free person of color is probably more than can reasonably be hoped for. One must admit, though, that Susannah had an auspicious start, given what we know about the general prospects facing her in 1738. This is as nearly as I can get to the heart of the matter. We cannot judge her treatment but upon standards of 1738, not upon expected conduct in 2005 American society.

Records not associated with an individual recipient could not be captured in the SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences for Windows 12.0) files; therefore, this researcher has included some of this material in the Appendices (the "contra account"/ revenue vs. expense account and the workhouse accounts) and in the block quotes and the text. The workhouse accounts (Appendix A) were modeled after the 1740 account in the wardens' account book. All, except the 1740 account, were entirely

⁷⁹ Salley, Register, 1720-1758, 126.

constructed by me from individual entries in the account book. Only the 1740 workhouse account exists separately.

In order that data might be shared between files from the vestry minutes and the church wardens' accounts, I created two identical SPSS files. One is from the church wardens' accounts (CWA), and one is from the vestry minutes (VM). The data fields contained in each file can be seen in the example of Mary Hogg's case, which follows. The 16 record SPSS report is split in two parts for display purposes:

Case Summary Report Example – From Combined VM & CWA files-Split Report
(Part 1)- Mary Hogg Case

	F Y	Last Name	First Name	Gend./ Age	Entry	Du ra- tio n	Work House/Out relief
1	38	Hogg	Child 1	child	10/23/1738	52	outrelief
2	38	Hogg	Child 2	child	10/23/1738	52	outrelief
3	42	Hogg	William	child	02/22/1742	.	outrelief
4	42	Hogg	Mary	female	12/20/1742	52	workhouse
5	43	Hogg	Son	child	06/13/1743	.	outrelief

6							
	43	Hogg	Widow	female	06/13/1743	.	outrelief
7							
	38	Hogg	Child	child	04/01/1738	20	outrelief
8							
	38	Hogg	John	child	11/28/1738	52	workhouse
9							
	38	Hogg	William	child	11/28/1738	52	workhouse
10							
	41	Hogg	Child2	child	04/15/1741	52	workhouse
11							
	41	Hogg	John	child	04/15/1741	52	workhouse
12							
	41	Hogg	Mary	female	04/15/1741	52	workhouse
13							
	42	Hogg	Child2	child	04/04/1743	52	workhouse
14							
	42	Hogg	John	child	04/04/1743	52	workhouse
15							
	42	Hogg	Mary	female	04/04/1743	52	workhouse
16							
	43	Hogg	Mary	female	07/18/1743	1	outrelief

Part 2 of Case Summary Report

	Service Type	Total Pounds	Reason	Entry/comment
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1	child care/foster care	52.0 0	infant/child	Ordered 2 children of Thomas Hogg bricklayer*
2	child care/foster care	52.0 0	infant/child	be taken care of by Parish
3	indenture	.	infant/child	warden of WH deliver boy be bound Painter/Glazier
4	room and board	.	dependent female	Order'd Mary Hogg to WH and be kept hard Labour*
5	transport	.	infant/child	ditto
6	transport	.	dependent female	Pay for Passage to Boston as soon as opportunity
7	child care/foster care	.	infant/child	
8	room and board	.	infant/child	A child just weaned
9	room and board	.	infant/child	A boy about 3 yrs. old At WH
10	room and board	.	infant/child	At WH & 2 Children
11	room and board	.	infant/child	At WH & 2 Children
12	room and board	.	dependent female	At WH & 2 Children
13	room and board	.	infant/child	At WH-sent to Rhode Island

14	room and board	.	infant/child	Mary Hogg's son, bound out
15	room and board	.	dependent female	At WH Gone to Rhode Island
16	transport	10.0 0	dependent female	Pd Capt Murray Mrs Hoggs Passage R Island

From the church wardens' account book (1725-1751) the researcher created an SPSS file with 1073 "client/fiscal year records". This means that there is only one record per fiscal year per recipient regardless of the number of entries about a single recipient per year in the account book. For example, Hannah Ceasar received "present relief" (temporary outdoor relief) for many weeks. Even if there were weekly disbursements for different services, the amounts are totaled and shown under a single service. For example, if she were provided room and board, clothing, and medical care, only the most important (expensive) service type is shown. In Mary Hogg's case, if she were given some clothing and money for "sundry items" for her passage to Rhode Island, the service would be shown as "transport" and not "in-kind" or "outrelief". While some might find this sort of summary imprecise and subject to judgment, the alternative is to have many thousands of additional records and additional details without adding to the analytical power.

A similar file was created for the vestry minutes which contained 1831 records. Since many recipients never appear in the vestry minutes, and since the minutes are most valuable as qualitative information, this file (VM) has fewer quantitative uses. It

provides general information about the years from 1752-1775, which are missing in the church wardens' accounts. These years included services to many more transients, sailors, seamen, and soldiers and their families than in the earlier period. This file is also helpful in demonstrating that the vestry minutes are but a partial picture of Charles Town's poor relief efforts from 1752-1775. By totaling expenditures on the VM file and comparing the total to the assessment, the missing count of recipients may be estimated.

A third file was created by combing both files (CWA and VM) and "unduplicating" the names of recipients appearing more than once in either (deleting records to reach an "unduplicated" list" of recipients). Finally, a fourth major file was created of the combined VM and CWA files. (Many smaller SPSS files of groups such as fire victims, barracks residents, and indentured children were also used.) This final large file was invaluable in reconstructing "case" material such as the stories about Negro Harry, Mary Southey, Hannah Ceasar, and Mary Hogg. The story of Mary Hogg was re-created (see above) from this combined file. A sort was run on last and first names. This sort created a report of all the entries in the VM and CWA about each individual.

The unduplicated file was used to draw conclusions about services to vulnerable populations such as women, children, and transients. For example, the following report was created by selecting females (adults) from the unduplicated file and creating a crosstabulation of service type received and the reason relief was given. This report shows that of 891 female service recipients, only 18% were sick, disabled, or aged. It can be assumed that 82% were able-bodied, that is, were able to work but were relieved

at parish expense. The law forbade relief to the able-bodied. Similarly, such reports were use to draw conclusion about transients relieved (the law forbade giving poor relief to transients); children provided foster care sent to school at parish charge (the law required that all orphans and poor children be indentured).

Service Type * Reason Crosstabulation

Count (of females)

		Reason						Total
		sick	disabled	aged	dependent female	other	transient	
Service Type	outdoor relief	46	15	7	353	25	122	568
	room and board	4	5	3	51		25	88
	in kind	1			14		7	22
	nursing	58			3	1	7	69
	doctor	15		1	1		1	18
	burial	2			1	3	1	7
	transport	3			36		41	80
	other				1	5		6
	fire					29		29
	hurricane					4		4
Total		129	20	11	460	67	204	891

Expenditure data contained in these files allowed conclusions to be drawn about the cost per recipient, the adequacy of relief payments, and the cost-efficiency of institutional care vs. outdoor relief.

To summarize, there were three identically structured SPSS files created. One was from the vestry minutes (VM), 1732-1775; one from the church wardens' accounts (CWA), 1725-1751; and one by unduplicating the names of recipients in both VM and CWA. Reports were created from these three files or from sub-sets. Another file combined CWA and VM, but only qualitative data in the form of case summary reports from this file were used for stories (qualitative data) about recipients. No quantitative

data was generated from this fourth file. Actual block quotes from the vestry minutes are liberally employed throughout the dissertation.

CWA
Gender/Age

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid female	474	44.2	44.2	44.2
male	295	27.5	27.5	71.7
child	304	28.3	28.3	100.0
Total	1073	100.0	100.0	

VM
Gender/Age

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid female	741	40.5	40.5	40.5
male	337	18.4	18.4	58.9
child	753	41.1	41.1	100.0
Total	1831	100.0	100.0	

UNDUP
Gender/Age

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid female	913	40.8	40.8	40.8
male	530	23.7	23.7	64.5
child	795	35.5	35.5	100.0
Total	2238	100.0	100.0	

APPENDIX C- EXAMPLES OF EXPENSE AND CONTRA ACCOUNTS

D^r The Parish of St. Philip's Charles Town To James Wright & David Caw,

<u><i>Church Wardens for the Year 1747</i></u>		
<i>(Partial List of Expenses)</i>		
1747		
May 9	To Cash paid John Moultrie Former Church Warden The Balance owed by the Parish to him	£402.15.5
May 16	Paid for buttons for 1 boys coat at the Workhouse	0.5.0
June 1	Paid Mr. Blundell by Order of the Vestry	5.00.0
June 6	Paid Mr. Hutchens per order of the Vestry one quarters Salary As Warden of the Workhouse	50.00.0
	Paid ditto foe 30 Cord Wood for the use of the parish & Carting	63.15.0
	Pay'd ditto for Candles, Soap, & Bread per Account	20.14.6
July 16	Paid Mr. Christy for 8 weeks keeping a Negro no one owns with the Yaws at the Pest House.	6.00.0
	Paid Mary Butler a poor woman to Carry her Back to the Township where she Belongs	5.00.0
	Paid Mrs. McGills 1 Mo. Board of Berry & Frew	30.00.0
1748		
Janry 7	Paid Mr. Hutchens per order of the Vestry one quarters Salary As Warden of the Workhouse	50.00.0
	Paid for a qtr candles, soap, potatoes & making clothes for the Parish Children	22.15.0
Feb 2	Pd. Hannah Ceasar 1 Qtr Board of Mrs. Kilpatrick's child	25.00.0
Feb 26	Paid for Tenn Blanketts for the Workhouse	45.00.0
April 18	Paid Mr. Watson for Parish Coffins per Account	14.00.0
April 23	Paid Dr. Holzendorf years Salary as parish doctor	150.00.0
	To Marshall for Meat for the Workhouse	116.00.0
Total	(includes £708.06.0 for Workhouse)	1797.18.1

Charles Town 17 May 1748 Then Examined the forgoing accts. of James Wright & David Caw Church Wardens for the year 1747- by which it

*Appears that the same are Justly Ballanced,
and that there is due from the Parish to these
Church Wardens One Hundred and Eighty Two
Pounds Curracy.*

*C^r The Parish of St. Philip's Charles Town To James Wright & David Caw, Church
Wardens for the Year 1747*

1747	(Partial List of Receipts)	
April 23	By Cash Reced of Mr. LoSobre agreeable to his Engagement with the Vestry	£100.00.0
May 2	By D ^o Reced of Mr. Austin for OathsPaid for buttons for 1 boys coat at the Workhouse	1.10.0
July 3	By D ^o Reced of Mr. Locton Constable	2.00.0
July 20	By D ^o Reced of the Comssrs of the Workhouse by Mr. Kenneth Michie	200.00.0
Aug 7	By D ^o Reced of Woods and Bullards for 1 year's Interest on their Bond } Being the Legacy Left by Doctr Turner }	132.10.0
1748		
April 18	By the Total Amount of the Assessment for the Poor for the Year 1747	1153.00.0
Total		1797.18.1

*D^r Moneys at Interest Being Legacys of Edward Hext and William McKenzie for the
Year 1747*

1747	(Partial List of Expenses)	
May 9	To Cash paid John Hutchins for the Maintenance of Sundry Transient Persons at the Workhouse per his Acct. Vist. >	
June 28	Fuller, Brown & Mickleburgh	£48.15.0
Sept 28	Fuller, Brown & Mickleburgh	32.15.0
Dec. 28	Brown & Mr. Larmer	30.05.0
March 28	Brown 91 Days	22.15.0
	To Cash Paid for Board of a Young Ladd who lost a Legg & Arm in the Galley	13.06.0
	To Cash given a Poor Man Travelling Away to the Northward	5.00.0
	To Cash paid Elizabeth Hawkins for Board & Attendance of John Schofield Sick & in Want	12.00.0
Total		£165.00.0

*C^r Moneys at Interest Being Legacys of Edward Hext and William McKenzie for the
Year 1747*

1747		
May 18	By Cash Received of Thomas Rose one year's Interest of Edward Hext Legacy due 29 th June, 1746	£100.00.0
June 28	Balance due the Church Wardens	65.00.0
Total		£165.00.0

*D^r A Gift of the Assembly for Maintenance of Soldiers, Widows, & Orphans for the
Year 1747*

1747	(Partial List of Expenses)	
May 6	To Cash paid for the Passage of a Soldier's Widow & Children to No. Carolina	£25.00.0
Sept 28	To d ^o paid John Hutchins for 90 days of diet & Maintenance of them	17.10.0
	To d ^o paid for 60 days diet & maintenance for a Soldier's widow Sick	17.05.0
Feb 16	To d ^o paid a Soldier's widow Mrs. Campbell	1.16.0
Total		£150.00.0

*C^r A Gift of the Assembly for Maintenance of Soldiers, Widows, & Orphans for the
Year 1747*

1747		
May 6	By Cash Reced. Of Jacob Motte Treasurer	£150.00.0

APPENDIX D- ESTIMATE OF NUMBERS OF POOR RELIEVED

The continued increase of the number of poor and therefore the expenses associated with caring for them put the vestry between the proverbial rock and a hard place by 1766. The vestry first petitioned the governor for permission to use the old barracks built to house the regiments of Indian fighters in Charles Town during the French and Indian War. After receiving permission to employ the barracks as apartments to provide housing for the homeless poor, the expenses to maintain these persons increased dramatically. A committee of vestrymen accompanied by the overseers of the poor met at the apartments on December 22, 1766, and inspected each resident and dwelling.

December 7, 1766

The Revd. Mr. Smith acquainted the Vestry, that in consequence of his being desired by them to wait on his Excellency the Govr. In Order to acquaint him, that the Workhouse was not sufficient to contain the poor on the Parish, & that would he permit them to make use of the New Barracks...His Excellency returned the answer that they might make use of them for that purpose, only that a room or two be reserved for the reception of the Indians when they come to town.....

December 15, 1766

That the Very Large Assessments that have been for some years raised on the Inhabitants ...so that the Burthen of the Poor ...is now becoming Intolerable. ...therefore Intreat your Honours to take the premises under Consideration & to grant such relief as you shall Judge proper.

December 22, 1766

It was agreed & Ordered, that those persons, who are Ordered out of the Barracks (for selling rum;- & disorderly living) do turn out by Wednesday the 24th Instant at 12 oClock at Noon. At which time the Chh Wardens, with a sufficient number of Constables will attend there, in order to see it performed,

with this Indulgence (to those that are not refractory, but promise to goe Out) to have until Monday the 29th Instant at 12 oClock, after which time they must not be found there-If any be refractory, that they be immediately turned out& the Doors & Window be nailed up.

Of the 68 residents, 27 were females. There were 19 adult males and 22 children. Thirty eight (56%) of the residents were ordered to be turned out of the barracks by Monday, December 29, 1766. Twenty three of these were continued on outrelief, and fifteen were terminated from the relief rolls for various transgressions such as selling rum or for appearing to be able to work.

Table D-1 Gender/Age of Barracks Residents Inspected
On December 22, 1766

	Number of Residents	Percent
Female Residents	27	39.7
Male Residents	19	27.9
Child Residents	22	32.4
Total Residents	68	100.0

Source VM Dec. 22, 1766

Table D-2 Decisions to Relieve Barracks Residents

Decision	<u>N</u>	Percent
Place on Outrelief	23	33.8
Remain in Workhouse	30	44.1
Discontinue Assistance	15	22.1
Total	68	100.0

Source VM Dec. 22, 1766

News of the findings of the vestry were difficult to conceal from the Assembly, since many vestrymen served in the House of Commons and since all members paid taxes to support the poor of St. Philip's. A committee of that body was appointed to review the situation, and in 1767 the following report and recommendations was issued. A copy of the report appears in the vestry minutes:

First

The too easy means of gaining a settlement in the said Parishes by poor people according to our present Laws, so as to entitle such persons to relief.

Secondly

The inattention of the vestry & Church Wardens in some instances to the Laws Now in being whereby they are directed & impowered to cause poor persons to be sent back to the Parishes from whence they came, upon reasonable apprehensions of their becoming burthensome & before they shall have surreptitiously gained a settlement.

And Lastly

To That superabundance of Licensed Taverns and tipling Houses within & near to

Charles Town wherein your Committee have reason to believe that many of the persons above described have been harboured to the Ruin of their Health until they could avail themselves of a settlement & relief at the same time, according to Law.⁸⁰

In 1941, Easterby in "Public Poor Relief in Colonial Charleston," stated that the 1767 "contains more definite information on the subject of poor relief than any other

⁸⁰ Easterby, "Public Poor Relief," 85.

single document.”⁸¹ Along with the report there was a list of 229 recipient’s names.

Presumably, these persons were “on the relief rolls” at the time of the report. The list did not include transients provided temporary relief nor those who had been served earlier in the year but had died or been discontinued or new recipients that would be added throughout the year. Conservatively, then, the annual number of recipients could be estimated at 300. In Table D-3 the projected values are italicized. The final two columns of from the VM are included to demonstrate that relying upon the vestry minutes for data on expenditures and recipients is misleading.

Table D-3 Projection of Charles Town Expenditures for Poor Relief

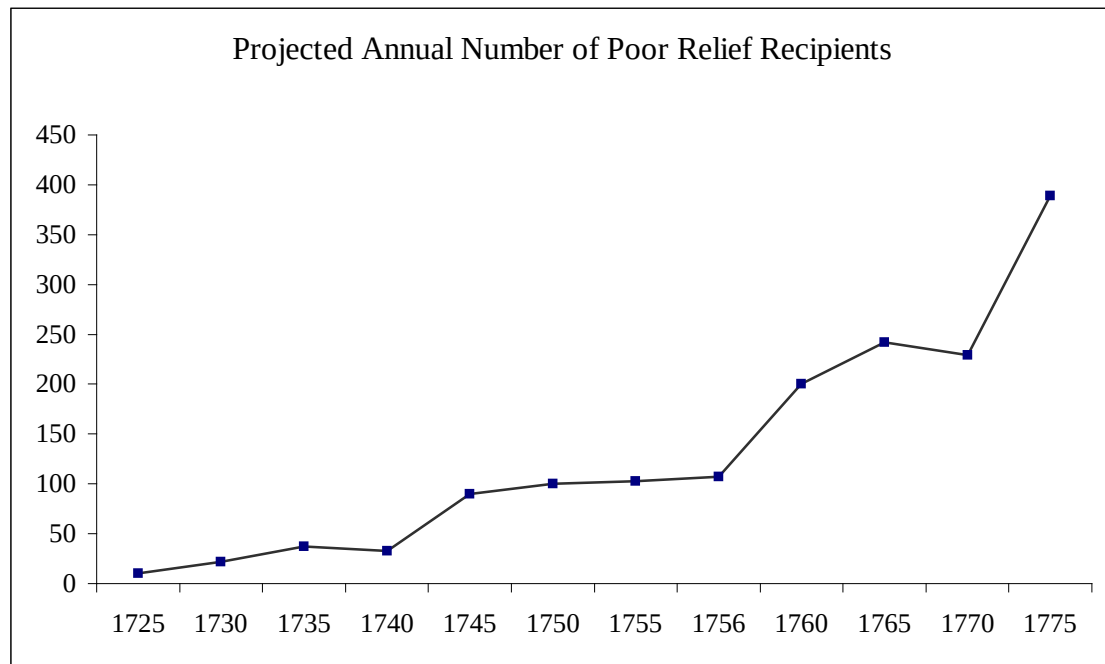
FY	Poor Tax Assessed in Carolina Currency (VM)	Total Expended (CWA)	Number of Persons Relieved (CWA)	Average Expense per Person (CWA)	Number of Persons Relieved (VM)	Total Expended Vestry Minutes
25	VM Missing	£209	10	£21		
26	“	135	7	19		
27	“	223	14	16		
28	“	17	3	6		
29	“	146	12	12		
30	“	541	22	25		
31	“	583	20	29		
32	£625	942	23	41	3	£143
33	1000	339	17	20	2	52
34	1000	855	32	27	0	0
35	1500	1182	37	32	0	0
36	1600	802	26	31	1	52
37	1000	920	27	34	8	104
38	1500	2087	68	31	7	286
39	1529	1199	26	46	2	52
40	1825	1631	33	49	81	3071
41	1600	1262	18	70	10	436
42	1000	1176	18	65	19	90
43	900	1176	32	37	10	109
44	800	1244	26	48	21	157
45	1000	1579	90	18	10	62

⁸¹ Easterby, “Public,” 83. According to staff at the SCDAH, the list has been lost again, so that it is not possible to add the names to the database.

FY	Poor Tax Assessed in Carolina Currency (VM)	Total Expended (CWA)	Number of Persons Relieved (CWA)	Average Expense per Person (CWA)	Number of Persons Relieved (VM)	Total Expended Vestry Minutes
46	1000	1390	55	25	19	211
47	1200	1934	47	41	40	366
48	1200	1856	57	33	20	72
49	1500	2009	122	16	28	264
50	1500	2361	100	24	39	494
51	1500	2264	131	17	29	198
52	1500	CWA miss.	54	28	31	246
53	2000	“	71	28	29	277
54	3000	“	107	28	62	139
55	(VM missing)	“				
56	3000	“	103	29	183	309
57	3000	“	103	29	66	558
58	4000	“	138	29	62	1201
59	5000	“	167	30	68	716
60	6000	“	200	30	28	387
61	5000	“	161	31	17	113
62	5500	“	177	31	38	228
63	6000	“	188	32	37	518
64	6000	“	188	32	29	286
65	8000	“	242	33	67	946
66	11000	“	333	33	142	936
67	10300	“	303	34	31	595
68	9000	“	265	34	99	1471
69	8000	“	235	34	58	358
70	8000	“	229	35	75	1334
71	9000	“	257	35	91	1920
72	9000	“	257	35	77	1719
73	10400	“	297	35	40	1160
74	11000	“	306	36	87	1787
75	14000	“	389	36	65	797

Source: Assessment & Vestry Minutes Expenses: VM-1732-1775 Church Wardens
Account Expenses: CW- 1732-1751. Vestry Minutes for 1755 are missing.

Figure D-1 Projected Annual Number of Poor Relief Recipients



By combining this estimate with data from Appendix E, in which it is allowed that public expenditures for poor relief were much higher than the taxes assessed to pay for these expenses, it is possible to measure Charles Town's public poor relief efforts in terms which would permit a comparison with present-day relief expenditures. Table II-2 when combined with the estimate in D-3 (above) of 229 recipients in 1770 when the white population of Charles Town was 6000 results in an estimate of about 4% of the white population on relief rolls, or 2% of the total population including slaves. Menard uses estimates from Glen and others to project that 1772 exports (domestic product) of *the entire colony* were worth £450,000 sterling annually.⁸² Converting data from Appendix E which suggests that 1772 public poor relief expenditures in Charles Town could have been about 50% higher than the poor taxes assessed, then about £13,500

⁸² Menard, *Economic Growth*, 55.

currency or £1929 sterling. Therefore public poor relief could have reached 4% of the eligible population and expenditures for only Charles Town approximated .5% of the domestic trade output of the entire colony, and a wealthy colony at that.

APPENDIX E- TOTAL POOR RELIEF EXPENDITURES

The amounts spent by the parish per year on poor relief in Charles Town from 1725 to 1775 are greater than either the amounts of assessments appearing in the vestry minutes or the totals paid by church wardens for outdoor relief in CWA and the workhouse expenses detailed in Appendix A. The tables comparing Charles Town expenditures for poor relief with Boston, Philadelphia, and New York under-represent total expenditures for Charles Town. This problem occurs as a result of 1) the loss of the church wardens accounts beyond 1751; and 2) the fact that the tax assessment reported in the vestry minutes is by no means an indication of total funds available to spend. Private donations, legacies, trust funds from legacies lent out by vestry at interest, provincial funds for the workhouse and for transients, and St. Philip's and later St. Michael's parish sacrament money (money given to the church for the poor) were all sources of funds for poor relief in addition to tax revenue (see Appendix C).

Table E-1 includes in the last column the total expended for the year by the "late" (going out of office) church wardens who handed over the account book to the newly elected wardens. Often the first expense of the new fiscal year was recorded as the amount spent to reimburse the "late" church wardens for the amount the parish was "in arrears". One might expect this to balance out, but since the ledger for the year also include all expenses accrued in the fiscal year, it never did even out. In my opinion using this amount constantly overstates a fiscal year total, so this ending amount is not used in any other table. There were always some church relate expenses co-mingled in

the account book that had nothing to do with poor relief, but these were usually negligible. Another factor is peculiar to the method I employed in CWA. All expenses were projected for a year, and sometimes because of a death or termination of enrollment, they may not have occurred. Additionally, some expenses could not be attributed to a recipient. As an example, “coffins” for the burial of paupers were purchased in bulk and therefore were not itemized back to a pauper who died and was buried at parish expense. Table E-2 shows the differences between the CWA, VM and tax assessments. Table E-3 adds workhouse expenses to CWA expenses, both from the church wardens’ account books. Table E-3 is probably the most accurate accounting of annual expenses.

Table E-1 St. Philips Parish Charles Town, 1732-1742 Public Poor-Relief Assessments and Expenditures Amounts in Pounds (Carolina Currency)

Fiscal Year	Assessment (Vestry Minutes)	Expended (Church Wardens’ Accounts)
1732	£625	£766.06.3
1733	1000	1291.16.0
1734	1000	1466.16.0
1735	1500	1934.13.6
1736	1600	1664.18.6
1737	1000	1492.16.6
1738 ^a	1500	2507.09.2
1739 ^a	1529	2211.07.6
1740 ^{ab}	1825	2481.10.8
1741 ^{abc}	1000	1585.00.9
1742 ^a	1000	1899.11.0

Source: St. Philip’s Vestry Minutes and Church Wardens’ Account Books

^a £1000 Annual Appropriation from Assembly for Maintenance of Workhouse not included in Assessment

^b£1500 Appropriation from Assembly for Fire not included in Assessment or Expenditure

^c £3766 Donated for Victims of 1740 Fire and Expended in 1740/41 not included in Assessment or Expenditure

Table E-2 (Table III-9) Comparison of Assessment & Expenditures by FY

FY	Poor Tax Assessed Per FY	Poor Relief Expenses Church Wardens Accounts	Poor Relief Expenses Vestry Minutes
32	£625	£942	£143
33	1000	339	52
34	1000	855	
35	1500	1182	
36	1600	802	52
37	1000	920	104
38	1500	2087	286
39	1529	1199	52
40	1825	1631	3071*
41	1600	1262	436
42	1000	1176	90
43	900	1176	109
44	800	1244	157
45	1000	1579	62
46	1000	1390	211
47	1200	1934	366
48	1200	1856	72
49	1500	2009	264
50	1500	2361	494
51	1500	2264	198
Total	24779	28208	6219

a). Great Fire of 1740

b). £28208 expended 1725-1751 divided by 1073 recipient-years (Table XX) yields £26 per recipient per year

Table E-3 Sum of Outdoor Relief Expenses and Workhouse Expenses from CWA

FY	CWA Out-relief (a)	CWA Workhouse (b)	Total (a+ b)
38	£1451	£637	£2088
39	380	746	1126
40	888	715	1603
41	487	777	1264
42	335	843	1178
43	464	710	1174
44	532	705	1237
45	809	716	1525
46	623	778	1401
47	574	708	1282
48	1001	628	1629
49	1093	819	1912
50	1438	932	2370
51	1427	972	2399

Source: CWA: created from table V-2

Note that the total of outdoor relief and workhouse expenditures always exceeds the tax assessment. Even without including sundry expenses for coffins, in-kind relief, and depreciation on buildings such as the workhouse, the tax revenue alone was never sufficient to fund the cost of poor relief in the parish.

APPENDIX F- THE 1736 ACT ESTABLISHING THE WORKHOUSE⁸³

It is clear from the text of this act that the General Assembly's notion of the purpose of the workhouse/hospital differed from that of the facility the vestry petitioned for in 1734. The Assembly was in agreement with the vestry's desire to deter the sturdy beggar; however, the dual function of the facility as a house of correction for criminals and slaves was never envisioned by the vestry.

Additionally, the Act establishes the mechanism for financing the workhouse, so that the parish would only be liable for the expense of the "impotent poor" housed there. Those being "corrected" would work to pay their expense, and the owners of slaves and the masters of servants were liable for that expense. The "business" of correction was accounted for separately and only costs of caring for paupers was included in the church wardens' accounts. This also explains why the vestry threatened to stop paying the salary of the warden:

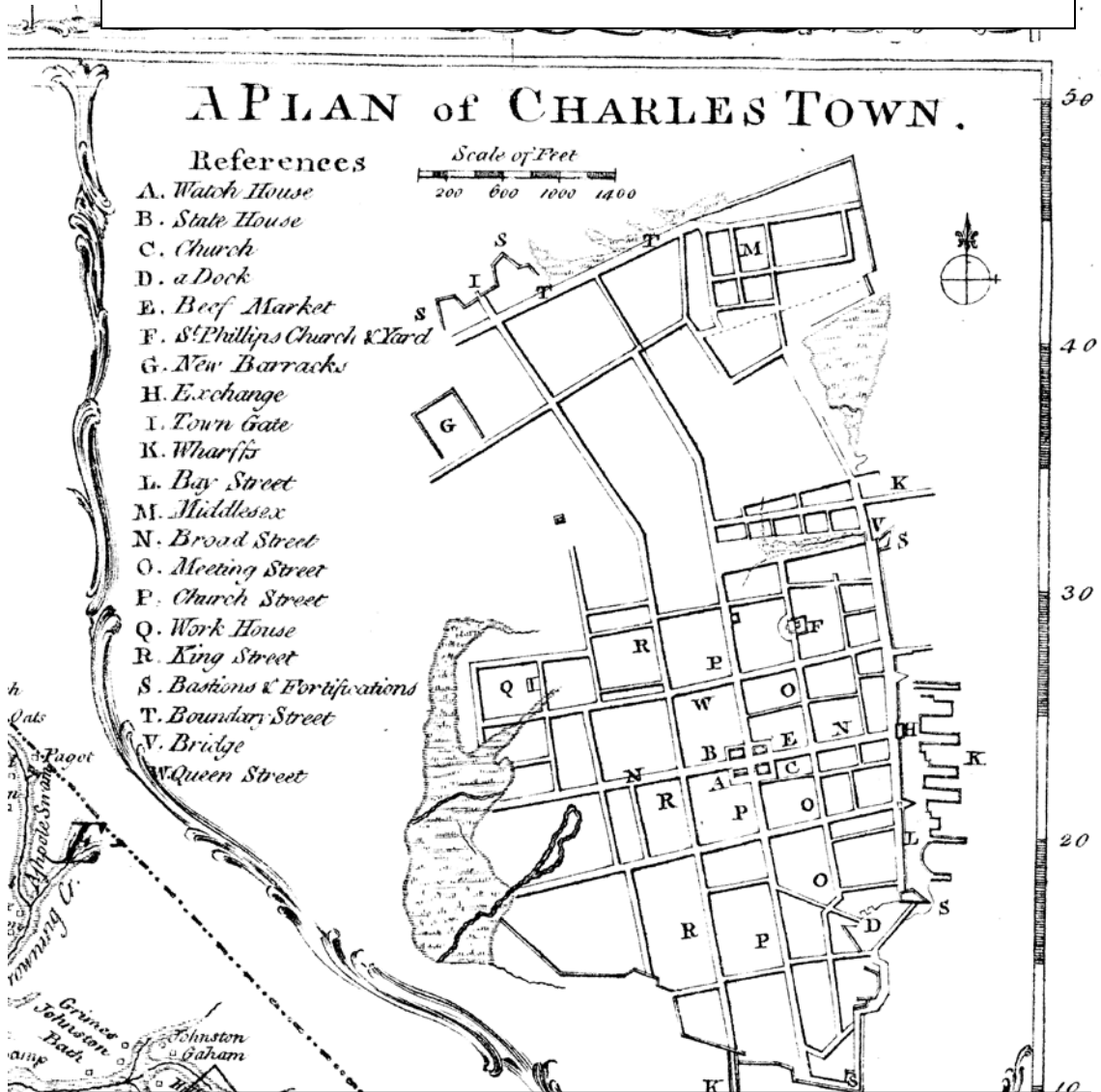
Gent'n. As the salary allowed the Warden of the Workhouse was intended for his Trouble & Care, & at that time, Little or no other Visible Benefit was Likely to accrue to him. ... Whether that Salary should not now be taken off. As the Profits of that place have now increased very largely... whereby perquisites of great Sums Yearly Accrue to the Warden, fully sufficient for anyone in that Office without a Salary...(May 17, 1748).

⁸³ The opening pages of the document copied and typeset by Trott in 1736 are transcribed in this Appendix. The original quill and ink document also exists at SCDAH on microfilm. South Carolina Colony Laws, Statutes, etc., before 1734, compiled by Nicolas Trott, 1736 (Charleston: by author, 1736), microfilm, SCDAH, Columbia, SC.

Numb. V.	GEORG II Regis. A N A C T <i>For the better Relief and Employment of the</i> Poor of the Parifh of St. Philip's Charles Town, and for Supreffifing and punifhing rogues, Vagabonds, and other lewd, Idle, and diforderly Perfons.
Preamble.	WHEREAS the Relief and Employment of the Poor is a moft Laudable and Charitable Work, and by all due Means ought to be encouraged; AND whereas the Veftry, Churchwar- dens and other Inhabitants of the Parifh of <i>St. Philip's</i> <i>Charles Town</i> have by their humble Petition to the General Affembly
The Sum of 2000 l to be Raifed by the Commiffioners, by Affeffment within two years.	Prayed Liberty to bring a Bill, to appropriate fome of the Publick Land in <i>Charles Town</i>; thereon to build and erect a publick Work- houfe and Hospital, and maintaining the fame at the proper Coft and Charge of faid Parifh,....
	V. And be it further Enacted by the Authority aforefaid, That the said Commiffioners of the Poor, or any three of them, who ...fhall ... raife.... Not exceeding <i>Two Thousand Pounds</i> current money... <i>One Thousand Pounds</i> in each year...
	<u>Work-houfe and Hospital</u> ... a good , fubfantial and convenient Hospital , work-houfe and Houfe of Correction for the Reception of the Poor of the Parife and For Keeping, Correcting, and Setting to Work therein Rogues, Vagabonds, Common-Beggars and other lewd, idle and diforderly Persons...
	VII. And be it further Enacted by the Authority aforefaid, That in Cafe any perfon or perfons shall be committed to or fent to the faid Work-houfe or Houfe of Correction, who shall not be able to work, or the Profits of whofe work and Labour fhall not be fufficient for the Maintenance of fuch person or perfons during their Stay there, or if fuch perfon or perfons fhall be weak or fick,

	and then in such café, if fuch perfon or perfons happen to be Servants, the Charge and Expençe of their Maintenance fhall be borne and paid by their Mafter or Miffrefs of fuch Servant or Servants; and if they are not Servants then the faid Charge and Expençe fhall be borne and paid by the faid Parifh of <i>St. Philip's Charles Town</i>, provided they belong to faid Parifh... Anno Regni Nono
What fort of perfons are to be Committed to faid Work-houfe	X. And be it further Enacted by the Authority aforefaid, That any two of the Juftices of the Peace (<i>Quorem unus</i>) living and refiding within faid Parifh of <i>St. Philip's Charles Town</i>, fhall have the Power and Authority to... fend and commit to the faid Houfe of Correction... all Rogues, Vagabonds, lewd and idle perfons and Beggars, ftubborn and obftinate Apprentices and Servants, and Children (on complaint of their Parents) common Drunkards, , common Night-walkers, Pilferers, lewd, wanton , and lafcivious perfons, common scolds and Brawlers, Tradefmen and Laborers neglecting their callings and leading idle and diffolute Lives and who do not provide for the Support of their Families...
The Mafter of the faid Work-houfe fhall fet to work fuch as are committed unto his cuftody.	XI. And be it further Enacted by the Authority aforefaid, That the Mafter or warden of Faid Work-houfe and Houfe of Correction,... to fet all fuch Rogues, Vagabonds, Beggars, and other lewd, idle and diforderly Perfons... to work and labour (if they be able) for fuch Time as they fhall continue and remain in faid Houfe, and to punifh them by putting Fetters or Shackles upon them, and by moderate Whipping not exceeding <i>Nineteen Stripes</i> in <i>one Day</i>... and to abridge them of their Food...that they be reduced to better Order.
Slaves to be corrected.	XIII. And be it further Enacted by the Authority aforefaid, ... And that the Faid Houfe fhall be made Ufe of and appropriated well for ... any Perfons within faid Parifh, having Ftubborn , obftinate or incorrigible Negroes or Slaves fhall and may fend and commit them to the faid Houfe of Correction... at the Expençe or Charge of the Mafter or Owner...

APPENDIX G- Figure G-1 A PLAN OF CHARLES TOWN



Source: Inset from "A Map of the Province of South Carolina" by James Cook (London, 1773). South Caroliniana Library, University of South Carolina, Columbia, S.C. Note the Workhouse (Q) -Hannah Ceasar, Mary Southey, Joanna Kelly, Mary Hogg and Cornelius Dargan; the New Barracks with the Apartments and the "house for persons disordered in their senses" and "Burying Ground"(G) -Charity Johnson and Peter Calvert ; St. Philip's Church with vestry meeting room and dependencies (F) - Negroe Harry; Bay Street and Wharves- Sarah Cook, Isaac Codner, Robert Fisher, William Osborn and William Peters (L); White Point (not shown on legend, at southernmost "K")- Sarah Murray; Broad Street and back alley near Broad and Church Streets (N & O)- Sarah Ann Ceasar, Matthew Blundell, Joseph Bee, and Mary Bedon; Parish School, Near intersection of King and Boundary Street (R & T)-William Ceasar, Mary Berry, Thomas Miller.

APPENDIX H- IMPLICATIONS FOR SOCIAL WORK RESEARCH AND EDUCATION

The following review and discussion of the implications of my 1973 thesis appears in *Research Methods for Social Workers*.⁸⁴

Historical Research: A Social Work Example. In his 1973 MSW thesis research (one advantage of conducting historical research is that findings tend not to become dated very quickly!), Michael Byrd used a historical research design to study the attitudes of persons in colonial America toward the poor. He observed that “the assumption of many historians is that the English Poor Laws were transferred from America to the Colonies without any substantial modification.” Consequently, it had been assumed that many of the harsh and punitive approaches to the poor that characterized life in England at the time were also present in the Colonies. Following an extensive review of the literature that focused on the beliefs of historians about the times, Byrd set out to collect his data. He systematically reviewed approximately two thousand carefully documented case histories of persons who sought financial aid during the years 1732 through 1775. All had requested assistance at St. Philip’s Church, the major source of help for the poor in colonial Charles Town (later Charleston, South Carolina). Charles Town was the fourth largest city in the Colonies at the time.

The researcher’s findings helped to paint a picture of assistance to the poor that bore little resemblance to that usually portrayed in history books. His findings indicated that the poor were treated humanely and with dignity; no assumptions about their laziness or moral impoverishment were in evidence; they did not represent a distinct, stigmatized segment of colonial society; and a community effort was made to provide the opportunity for them to achieve financial independence. Existing laws were far less punitive than the Elizabethan Poor Laws, which had been considerably softened to reflect the charitable attitudes toward the poor that were present at the time. Even those laws that might have limited assistance to some people who did not meet residency requirements were often circumvented in order to help those in need.

Byrd’s research (the findings of which, unfortunately, have not been widely disseminated) has the potential for providing assistance to those social workers who attempt to influence current social policy. Any contention that the conservative and

⁸⁴ Bonnie Yegedis and Robert Weinbach, *Research Methods for Social Workers* (New York: Longman, 1991), 107, 108.

even punitive federal policies of financial assistance in the United States during the 1990s were somehow just an extension of what has always been in existence in America—that is, that they are typically “American”—simply does not hold up in light of his findings. In fact, it was not until the nineteenth century that it began to be assumed that “idleness, intemperance, and improvidence” produced dependence. These beliefs and the stigmatization of the poor that is associated with them are relatively new; they certainly are not a part of the original value system on which the United States was founded.

Byrd took little-used data collected nearly two and one-half centuries earlier for a totally different purpose, and, using scientific research methods, he generated knowledge that has utility for social workers in the 1990s and beyond. Although not a commonly used method for advancing knowledge in social work practice, historical research that attempts to reconstruct the past is, nevertheless, an important one.

While I have gone well beyond the scope of the original work, Dr. Weinbach’s kind comments about the implications of the thesis apply as well to this dissertation. Among other implications for social work teaching and research are that poverty was real in early America and that social welfare services were important in pre-industrial America’s urban societies. Social welfare policies, provisions, and services are an important part of the fabric of America. Privately financed and informal efforts of family, kin, and ethnic groups exceeded public resources devoted to social welfare in Charles Town and in other colonial communities. A single model of functional family structure is not a legacy of America’s colonial heritage. Colonial American families were at least as diverse in structure as today’s families. Modern social workers need to understand that a focus on family and social and community support was the mainstay of colonial social welfare policy. Reliance on formal services was truly a safety net to be utilized after family, kinship, and private resources were used. Colonial families exhibited strengths of coping and resilience to bear up under stresses that would buckle many of today’s families. Social work educators should teach students that naturally

occurring social supports, strengths, and resilience is usually superior to formal services and assistance.

To go beyond Dr. Wienbach's comments on the research method, an implication for social work research is the use of critical thinking and the knowledge of the historical context to augment the available data about poor relief recipients. There are two major weaknesses of the parish data on poor relief. First, no written petitions in the words of the applicant survive. All that is available is the account of the elite vestry and church wardens. Additionally, no record of those turned away exists. If about twenty percent of the white population were poor, and if no more than six percent received poor relief, how did the remainder of the poor whites manage? What was distinctive about those who were not helped? To answer this question, a critical thinking technique called "problem specification" was employed. This technique is helpful to discern differences between groups in historical research where data is missing about one or more groups. The aim is to identify unique or distinctive factors about those poor that were relieved from those not relieved in terms of: 1) who was relieved and what they received, 2) where they were relieved, 3) when they were relieved, and 4) to what extent were they relieved. This research method is in its simplest form a collection of "social histories" similar to those I was taught to write as a social work student in 1971. History and social work are closely related social sciences. For historians, it is a matter of the person in context. For social workers, it is the person in the environment.