COSMOPOLITANISM AND PHILANTHROPY IN THE EARLY AMERICAN REPUBLIC

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In 1795, the Humane Society of Philadelphia credited its supporters with helping to save the lives of people across half the globe. “It must afford exalted satisfaction to every member [of the Society] to find that so many are organized with the same plan, in Europe, the East & West Indies under whose care many thousands have already been restored to the general family of mankind,” the managers opined. “Every subscriber and donor, [sic] has in part contributed to reanimate Society with so many trophies of humanity.” Did the Humane Society of Philadelphia (PHS), a charitable organization devoted to promoting the rescue and resuscitation of victims of drowning and certain other accidents, really mean to say that its supporters had an impact on such a grand scale? In its reports, the London-based Royal Humane Society (RHS) struck a similar chord: it told supporters they were benefactors of the human race and explained that the charity aimed at nothing less than “the deliverance of the whole human race from sudden calamities.” Likewise, the speaker at the 1805 anniversary festival of the Merrimack Humane Society in Newburyport, Massachusetts, noted that the group extended the benefits of other humane societies by acting in concert with them, and he lauded the impartiality of the society, which, he explained, aided sufferers regardless of political leanings or national background. Cosmopolitanism was evidently the order of the day.

This emphasis on moral responsibility to strangers marks an important change in Anglo-American philanthropy from the early eighteenth century. Earlier, acting on universal benevolence had been seen as impractical, British and American involvement in transatlantic philanthropic projects had been geared to strengthening international Protestantism and the British Empire, and charities, especially in America, generally confined the provision of aid to certain religious or ethnic groups.¹ In the late eighteenth century, by contrast, Anglo-American philanthropists embraced a cosmopolitan conception of charitable obligation and reached for a global practice.

This essay asks what the activities of humane societies reveal about that transformation and about understandings of philanthropy in the early republic, a time of great growth in humanitarian activity. Historians have not devoted much attention to the rescue and resuscitation cause in the United States, and discussions of it tend to provoke puzzlement. It is
significant, however, for facilitating lifesaving and contributing to workplace safety. Of greater importance for the history of philanthropy were several features of humane societies that made the movement an ideal outlet for universalist impulses. These included the ease of participating in an international project, the emphasis on cooperation with fellow humane societies, and impartiality in regard to beneficiaries of the societies’ aid, which made the movement a microcosm of the direction of Anglo-American beneficence in the late eighteenth century. Americans built the urban charitable infrastructure of the early republic within this context of the development of cosmopolitan philanthropy.²

To explore this topic, I analyze the Philadelphia and Massachusetts humane societies, with attention also to the Royal Humane Society in London. In this essay, I first give a short history of the beginnings of the lifesaving cause. Then I examine the three traits of the movement that abetted activists’ efforts to work beyond the local realm and aid suffering strangers. Finally, I will discuss why cosmopolitan philanthropy burgeoned in the late eighteenth century. By cosmopolitan philanthropy, I mean charitable activity that was not confined operationally, or in terms of beneficiaries within a particular community, but that looked outward. More generally, I understand cosmopolitanism to mean participating in various and diverse communities (local, national, international, religious, professional) and rising above prejudices or partial sympathies. That definition dovetails with transnationalism, a concept more commonly associated with the modern nation-state since the late eighteenth century. Early-modern people lived in a world of empires and used the term “nation” to refer to a people, such as the “Scottish nation,” rather than a political entity. The anachronistic term “transnational,” then, can connote for the earlier period the interactions among peoples. But the use of the term here also reminds us that American-British philanthropic cooperation in that era took place as the two states were redefining their ties after their political bonds had been broken.³

The Emergence of the Humane Society Movement

In 1767, a group of wealthy men in Amsterdam launched the humane society movement when they founded the Society for the Recovery of the Drowned to cope with the common problem of people perishing in the city’s canals. Although physicians had already been interested in how to restore apparently dead people to life for decades, resuscitation was a novel technique, greeted with skepticism, in the late 1760s and early 1770s. Likewise, associations to promote the recovery of drowned persons were a new type of eleemosynary undertaking. By 1815, however, dozens of communities around the Atlantic and beyond had similar programs.⁴
The Amsterdam Society for the Recovery of the Drowned had a two-fold agenda: to publicize its methods of resuscitation (which replaced older methods that had been rejected by elite medical practitioners), and to offer rewards to encourage lifesaving. The society’s lifesaving techniques were broadcast throughout the United Provinces—“distributed amongst all the hospitals and public charities, coffee-houses, taverns, &c. to the smallest ale-houses, and also to surgeons and physicians.” Soon a number of the United Provinces “enjoin[ed] an observance of the Society’s directions through their respective districts.”5 Cities across the European continent quickly followed suit. By the early 1770s, Hamburg, Milan, Padua, Paris, Venice, Vienna, and other cities had set up lifesaving programs, and the sovereigns of Hungary and Russia had encouraged the new methods. In typical fashion for the European medical fraternity, leaders of the cause of resuscitation corresponded about their progress. In contrast to what would be the common (but not universal) practice in the Anglophone world, governments often directed the programs in Continental Europe, and in some cases magistrates prescribed “punishing those who shall obstinately refuse to lend their assistance.”6

In 1774, a group of doctors and laymen in London founded the Society for the Recovery of the Apparently Drowned in imitation of the Amsterdam group. The London organization soon became known as the Humane Society of London, and in 1784, it received royal patronage and became the Royal Humane Society (RHS).7 Its mission was “to restore such as have in an instant been numbered amongst the dead, by some dreadful disaster, or by some sudden impulse of phrensy.” In addition to people drowning from accidents or suicide attempts, the RHS’s beneficiaries included people apparently dead from hanging, noxious vapors, freezing, and other causes of sudden death. To accomplish its mission, the RHS offered rewards to people who retrieved drowned bodies, who took the apparently dead bodies into their houses, who followed its resuscitation procedures, and who fetched the RHS medical assistants to the scene of emergencies. Publicizing those rewards, the resuscitation methods, and its achievements formed a large part of the charity’s activities. At the outset, the RHS had a national vision for its mission but only gave rewards for lifesaving efforts in defined, but changing, boundaries. To spread knowledge of resuscitation and to spur the formation of humane societies in places “too remote to be intimately connected” with the RHS, however, the society dispatched broadsides and pamphlets to sea captains, owners of public houses, residents of waterside communities, medical men, and other people far and wide. By the late 1780s, the RHS was the center of a transnational, though primarily Anglophone, network of fellow organizations, medical practitioners, and other gentlemen interested in the cause. Funds for its activities came from members’ dues; the RHS was a typical
eighteenth-century public subscription charity. Members, known as directors, paid annual or life dues and were recognized accordingly in the society’s reports.8

The RHS’s program functioned by enlisting passersby, usually ordinary laborers, through the proffered rewards to undertake the dangerous, messy, time-consuming, and generally unappealing task of rescuing and reviving apparently dead people. Rewards were necessary, the well-off RHS founders believed, because the lower sorts (to use eighteenth-century parlance) lacked the benevolence to attempt rescues and resuscitation of their own volition. Engaging in lifesaving, however, would increase their humanity, the RHS claimed, and thus make the society doubly worthwhile. At the end of 1784, the RHS trumpeted that seven hundred ninety-nine human beings had been restored from apparent death over the first decade of its existence in Britain.9

In 1780, a group of doctors and laymen in Philadelphia founded the first American rescue and resuscitation charity, the Humane Society of Philadelphia (PHS), on the basic model of the Amsterdam and London groups. In mid-1781, after receiving vital details about resuscitation from the top French army physician then in America, the PHS began to pursue its mission by publicizing resuscitation techniques and by equipping riverfronts with rescue devices. Its first reward, in 1782, went to a man who had rescued a six-year-old boy who had fallen into the Delaware River. In 1784, however, the society faded and ceased functioning for two and a half years, although members revived it in 1787.10 Meanwhile, in 1785, the Humane Society of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts (MHS) was founded at the instigation of a visiting celebrity, Dr. Henry Moyes, a blind Scotsman who gave popular lectures on chemistry and, additionally, advocated the cause of resuscitation to Americans.11 While all humane societies shared a common mission, each added different programs to meet local conditions: the Royal Humane Society ministered to people who attempted suicide by drowning; the Philadelphia humane society emphasized the problem of death from drinking cold water; and the Massachusetts humane society, like some provincial British humane societies, focused on helping shipwrecked mariners.12

Cooperation and Cosmopolitanism

As mentioned above, three features made humane societies ideal organizations for putting the cosmopolitanism developing in late eighteenth-century Anglo-American philanthropy into practice. The first was the facility of joining an international movement that humane societies’ easily replicable model offered. For centuries, the founders of charitable institutions in Europe had borrowed ideas and sought information from
colleagues in other countries. Leaders of American humane societies followed that pattern and, even as American nationalism was emerging, explicitly acknowledged their participation in international trends. The PHS, in its first published statement, explained that it had been inspired by the examples of organizations in London, Amsterdam, and Paris; and speakers at the MHS annual meetings repeatedly noted European precedents. Likewise, when the Merrimack Humane Society based in Newburyport, Massachusetts, was founded in 1803, it paid homage to humane societies “both in Europe and America.” The lifesaving groups were not unique in that regard. A newspaper announcement about the 1791 founding of the New York Dispensary—a free outpatient clinic for the poor—observed that the value of dispensaries had, by that point, “been proved for upwards of twenty years in most of the large cities of Europe, and in our neighbouring city of Philadelphia.” And the entry in the Philadelphia Directory for 1813 about the Association of Friends for the Instruction of Poor Children explained that this group relied on educational systems from Madras and London.

The flip side of such emulation was providing models, and humane societies, like many other philanthropic organizations of the day, did so both in response to requests for information and on their own initiative. This practice typified the outward and expansive nature of later eighteenth-century philanthropy. Over the years, the Humane Society of Philadelphia gave information to fledgling humane societies in Baltimore, Wilmington, Cincinnati, and St. Petersburg, Russia. In addition, the PHS disseminated lifesaving directions and pamphlets not only locally, but also to all the delegates of the Constitutional Convention in an effort to promote its mission to Americans outside Pennsylvania. For its part, the Massachusetts humane society instigated the founding of a humane society in Halifax, Nova Scotia, in the mid-1790s by making a Halifax clergyman (who had visited Boston and mingled with men involved in the MHS) an honorary member of the MHS. Several years later, the MHS served as a model for the Merrimack Humane Society.

What made humane societies so well suited to cosmopolitan aims, however, was not that the societies built on foreign models. Rather, it was the remarkable ease of spreading the cause of resuscitation and participating in it. The Royal Humane Society dispatched thousands of copies of its publications and also sent lifesaving equipment to organizers of new societies; other humane societies and individuals sent pamphlets and broadsides to medical practitioners and other gentlemen, sea captains, local officials, and clergymen, too; newspapers, almanacs, and other books published the societies’ directions. With this wide availability of information, men interested in joining the cause could do so in large or small communities or even on their own. Starting in 1789, the Royal Humane...
Society printed a list of places where it claimed to have spawned humane societies. In 1794, the list included Lisbon, Vienna, Copenhagen, Algiers, British settlements in the East Indies, Jamaica, Barbados, Hudson’s Bay, Boston, Philadelphia, several Irish cities, a few communities in Scotland, almost twenty English communities, Ostend, and Prague. The breadth of this list reflects not only excitement about the cause among gentlemen, but also the ease of replicating the humane society program. At the most basic level, a few people could start a venture without much more than printing and distributing lifesaving instructions and, usually, offering rewards. In the late 1780s, for instance, Charles Murray, the British Consul in Madeira, began a resuscitation program in Portugal with information and equipment provided by the RHS, assistance translating materials into Portuguese from a Portuguese friend, and publicity materials he printed from his own funds. Thanks to the efforts of self-selected individuals such as Murray, humane societies could claim to have a worldwide reach: the RHS boasted in its reports, year after year, that its philanthropic labors had been extended far and wide, and the PHS, as the quotation at the beginning of this article shows, could cast itself as part of a global network.

In addition, individuals unable to join or form a society for whatever reason could participate in the cause by distributing lifesaving information and publicizing cases of success in their local area. Rev. Timothy Alden in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, for instance, sent a couple of cases to the MHS. The society duly published them and made Alden an honorary member. To be sure, the humane society movement’s emphasis on spreading models of charitable institutions was not unique. But the facility with which an individual like Alden not only could join the cause but also could receive recognition for his part in an international philanthropic project was distinct.

The second feature that made humane societies so conducive to practicing cosmopolitan philanthropy was their shared mission of communicating with fellow societies. The shaky first fifteen years of Philadelphia’s humane society inadvertently reveal the importance of this common practice. As we have seen, the PHS had a slow start, fell into decline, and was then revived in 1787. It tottered along for a few more years, with signs of stability emerging in the early 1790s. The yellow fever epidemics that struck Philadelphia throughout the 1790s, however, impeded the society’s ability to stabilize for several more years. Starting in the late 1790s, the PHS took steps to root itself better in the charitable landscape. Thus, the society effectively had three founding moments: first, when it was initially founded; second, in 1787, when it was revived; and third, in the late 1790s, when it sought to put itself on sure footing. At each of those moments it established itself on both the local and transnational levels. After the PHS had got its program off the ground in 1781, it wrote to the Amsterdam
group in 1782 and to the RHS in 1783 to request their materials and solicit correspondence. In 1787, besides reorganizing and reaching out locally, the society made a point of informing the RHS of its revival and reopening communication. Third, in the late 1790s, it took a series of steps to anchor itself locally and abroad. The group’s president gave the first address in the society’s history in 1799 to better publicize its purpose and, not least, to raise funds. That same year, the society moved to strengthen ties with faraway colleagues by electing seven honorary members, two affiliated with the MHS and four leading RHS members.

Several years earlier, the Massachusetts humane society had initiated the movement’s practice of naming honorary members and thereby propelled greater integration among the societies. The MHS’s initial constitution had not provided for honorary members, but around 1792, the society amended the rules to allow the “President and Trustees … [to] admit such persons as honorary members of this Society, as will in their opinion, have a tendency to add respectability to the society, or be the means of promoting its benevolent intentions.” Honorary members could not live in Massachusetts, and three-quarters of the trustees had to vote for their admission. In August 1792, the MHS elected three top leaders of the RHS as its first honorary members. The next year, the MHS first printed correspondence with its counterparts in London and in Philadelphia in its annual report. It also published its first list of its honorary members, now including several Americans and a well-known Scottish clergyman, in the 1793 report. From its founding, the MHS had presented itself as following an international trend, had corresponded with the RHS, and had tried to correspond with the (floundering) PHS. With the new practices, however, it projected itself as allied with other humane societies and individuals in a common cause, no longer trailing European leaders. Within months of the Massachusetts body’s naming the three honorary members from the RHS, the London group responded to the example and assertiveness of the former colonials by choosing several foreign honorary life governors of its own in time to list them in its 1793 annual report. Naming honorary members changed nothing the societies did programmatically, but it gave the societies a way to publicly endorse the idea that charitable activity entailed cooperation with colleagues abroad.

Humane societies’ emphasis on communication with fellow organizations distinguished them from other medical charities. While other medical charities on occasion sent materials to distant colleagues or, more often, had access through local doctors to novel practices adopted elsewhere, the nature of the humane societies’ mission involved the exchange of knowledge about innovations in lifesaving and about progress in the cause. Such communication built on the traditions of both scientific and religious-philanthropic
networks and paralleled concurrent practices in the antislavery move-
ment. Sometimes exchanges had a practical impact on lifesaving opera-
tions, such as when the MHS built a lifeboat based on an RHS model. The
RHS, though it saw itself as the center of the resuscitation movement, bor-
rowed from American societies, too: noting that Americans had more ex-
perience than Britons with great heat and cold, the RHS printed the PHS’s
directions on restoring people to life from an array of causes but particu-
larly called attention to the directions for dealing with apparent deaths
caused by extreme temperatures. Other times, exchanges among hu-
mane societies buttressed ties and emphasized that the societies were in-
volved in a common cause of humanity. Communicating with fellow
societies furthered a sense of community, but it also allowed the groups to
extend their geographic impact, and that of their supporters, and thus en-
gage in cosmopolitan philanthropy.

The third feature that rendered humane societies particularly well-
suited to the cosmopolitan thrust in Anglo-American philanthropy was
that they did provide aid on an impartial basis. As the speaker at the MHS
anniversary festival in 1800 put it, “No improper prejudices or partial in-
terested views are admitted.” Other charitable organizations were “con-
fined by a religious creed, by local situation, or by circumstances of
personal convenience to the donors.” By contrast, the MHS extended its
munificence “to him who is ready to perish, and to him who saves a soul
alive, of whatever nation or climate he may be.” As the speaker pointed
out, this impartiality arose from the peculiar nature of humane societies’
mission: they encouraged passersby to save the lives of drowning people.
The nationality, religion, color, gender, age, political views, and status of
beneficiaries and rescuers were, of course, beyond the societies’ control.
But as a result, perhaps uniquely among philanthropic causes, the humane
society movement could claim credit for encompassing all of humankind
in its mission.

Humane societies lauded their cosmopolitanism in that regard and,
indeed, people of all backgrounds could and did both drown and partici-
pate in rescues and recoveries. Workingmen and boys, however, predomi-
nated both as drowning victims and as rescuers, so the societies’ claims
did not really reflect the populations of people they aided. American hu-
mane societies’ unbiased treatment of African-American rescuers and vic-
tims, however, lends credence to their claims of impartiality. Admittedly,
the number of cases in which either party was black is tiny, but there is no
apparent pattern of discrimination in them. Humane societies followed
the principle that the greater the effort and risk by the rescuer, the greater
the reward. The leaders of the PHS and MHS applied this principle re-
gardless of the race of the rescuer or the person rescued. For instance, in
Philadelphia in 1809, a white sailmaker named George Muschert rescued
13-year-old Robert Anderson, a black boy, from drowning in the Delaware River. When he heard the alarm that someone was drowning, Muschert had been at a distance and had run to the scene and dived fully clothed into the water, diving down twice to rescue the boy. These dramatic factors weighed strongly in humane society leaders’ decisions about reward amounts: Muschert received a $10 reward, at the top of the range for PHS rewards that year.26

When the rescuer was African American, the same criteria applied. Dolphin Garler, a black man, received the MHS’s highest reward to an individual in 1794–95 for rescuing a boy in Plymouth, Massachusetts. In this case, a small child had cried out that someone was drowning, but no one could see the drowning person or the bottom of the water. It was nearly high tide when suddenly the onlookers saw an air bubble in the water. Garler dived in immediately. At first he had trouble grabbing the child but then managed to save the boy. Four respectable men in Plymouth wrote to the MHS to nominate Garler for a reward, and the society gave him one just as it would have done for a white rescuer. The society noted that Garler was black and thus different, but it recognized and publicized that people of all backgrounds participated in the philanthropic cause of lifesaving. Humane societies had no choice in who drowned or who rescued drowning victims, so cosmopolitanism was in a way foisted upon them. Yet they chose to embrace the idea that their mission encompassed all humankind and accepted that everyone, even those people most marginalized, could contribute to the cause.27

Cosmopolitanism inLate Eighteenth-Century Philanthropy

If humane societies were not unique in the breadth of their sense of charitable obligation, they were unusual. That said, humane societies were part of a more general development. British and American activists had long borrowed charitable models from abroad and participated in transnational religious-philanthropic projects. Late eighteenth-century philanthropy built on these traditions but differed in the expanding scale of urban charitable activity and in embracing moral responsibility to strangers. Before the American Revolution, British and American involvement in transnational beneficence had been geared to bolstering international Protestantism and the British Empire. In the decades after the Revolution, however, Anglo-American philanthropy espoused cosmopolitan understandings: the antislavery movement developed in earnest, and organizations, such as New York Hospital and the Society of Universal Goodwill of Norwich, England, disavowed parochialism in the provision of charity.28
The global scope of late eighteenth-century philanthropy grew from individuals’ experiences of living in a mobile, interconnected world. James Cook and Louis-Antoine de Bougainville circumnavigated the globe in that era, and many Britons and Americans participated in quests for useful knowledge, especially of natural history, from around the world. Knowledge meant power—to treat diseases better, to grow new crops, to settle and exploit new lands—and the apparent onward march of knowledge fostered people’s confidence in their ability to effect change, both at home and abroad. Moreover, both the new voyages of discovery and regular travels and migrations brought faraway places closer. Commerce, too, was making the world smaller, and an eighteenth-century commonplace held that trade created bonds of sociability among peoples.29

But cosmopolitan philanthropy in both Britain and the United States thrived in the wake of the American Revolution. Historian Donna Andrew has argued that London charities in the 1770s and 1780s lacked the direction that the pursuit of national policy goals provided them in earlier and later decades. Rather than lacking a sense of direction in the 1770s and 1780s, however, a global vision gave British philanthropists a purpose as Britain came to terms with the loss of the Thirteen Colonies.30 Likewise, after the Revolution, Americans had to define their place in the world as citizens of an independent but weak nation. Philanthropic cooperation gave Americans a way to remain simultaneously engaged in a transnational community and assert themselves on the world stage. Wealthy Boston merchant Thomas Russell, president of the MHS, for example, made a bid for international influence by sending his “mite”—£100—to the Royal Humane Society in 1793. Russell made this donation, he explained, because he felt “particularly interested in the encouragement of HUMANE SOCIETIES throughout the world, which may be productive of so much usefulness to individuals, and benefit to mankind.” Russell, a citizen of an “infant country,” could cast himself as a benefactor to a prominent London charity by invoking a cosmopolitan understanding of philanthropy.31

Philanthropy in the early republic has to be understood in this worldly context. Nationalism, civic pride, sympathy, anxiety about the poor, and sociability, among other factors, all played a role in prompting beneficence in the early United States. Humane societies highlight something else, too—that Americans self-consciously joined transnational charitable movements, shared ideas and news about causes with colleagues abroad, and embraced a universal vision of philanthropy. The humane society movement lent itself especially well to these trends but was not unique in this regard. As Americans built the new republic’s charitable infrastructure, they did so as both citizens of a new nation and as citizens of the world.
Notes


3 On the burgeoning sense of moral responsibility for strangers and the essentials of the debate over the rise of humanitarianism, see David Brion Davis, The Problem of Slavery in the Age of Revolution, 1770–1823 (Ithaca and Cornell, 1975); Thomas L. Haskell, “Capitalism and the Origins of the Humanitarian Sensibility, Parts 1 & 2,” American Historical Review 90 (1985): 339–61, 547–66; for the Davis-Haskell debate including contributions by John Ashworth, see also Thomas Bender, ed., The Antislavery Debate: Capitalism and Abolitionism as a Problem in Historical Interpretation (Berkeley, 1992). Martha Nussbaum’s view that a sense of world citizenship should trump narrower identities has been criticized by scholars who understand cosmopolitanism as balancing plural communal memberships. This perspective has informed my understanding of cosmopolitanism as it accords with my subjects’ practice of it: they belonged to various communities and both affirmed partial communal identities and eschewed parochialism. In his essay on a cosmopolitan international legal structure, Immanuel Kant maintained that strangers should have rights to hospitality in foreign countries. This also implies that strangers are rooted somewhere and cosmopolitanism should take this into account. Kant’s conception contrasts with the idea of a citizen of the world who is rooted nowhere. Martha Nussbaum and Joshua Cohen, For Love of Country: Debating the Limits of Patriotism (Boston, 1996). On Kant, see Immanuel Kant, To Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Sketch, trans. with an introduction by Ted Humphrey (Indianapolis, 2003), 15–18, and Robert Fine and Robin Cohen, “Four Cosmopolitan Moments,” in Conceiving Cosmopolitanism: History, Context, and Practice, ed. Steven Vertovec and Robin Cohen (Oxford, 2002), 139–45. For a study of the cosmopolitan ideal among eighteenth-century philosophers, see Thomas J. Schlereth, The Cosmopolitan Ideal in Enlightenment Thought (Notre Dame, 1977). For different types of cosmopolitanism, see Pauline Kleingeld, “Six Varieties of Cosmopolitanism in Late Eighteenth-Century Germany,” journal of the History of Ideas 60 (1999): 505–24, and Vertovec and Cohen, eds., Conceiving Cosmopolitanism.


7 For simplicity’s sake, I will refer to it as the Royal Humane Society for its whole existence.


9 Davidson, “Raising Up Humanity,” 251–304; *RHS Report* for 1784 [(London, 1784)], 164.

10 Managers’ meetings, September 5, 1780; February 5, 1781; April 2, 1781; May 7, 1781; July 20, 1781; April 3, 1782; March 2, 1787, PHS Minutes, vol. 1, PHA.


> Women, too, participated in the cause by contributing funds, especially in London, and sometimes by rescuing or, more often, by aiding in the care of half-drowned people, but the only example of a society with a woman as founder was the Barbados Humane Society, where the governor’s wife served as patroness.


> Eliphalet Porter, A Discourse before the Humane Society of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, at their Semiannual Meeting, June 8, 1802 (Boston, 1802), 24–25; Thomas Gray, The Value of Life and Charitable Institutions. A Discourse Delivered before the Humane Society of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, at their Semi-Annual Meeting, June 11th, 1805 (Boston, 1805), 23–25, 45–46.

> Managers’ meetings, October 4, 1781; December 2, 1782; May 5, 1783, PHS Minutes, vol. 1, PHA.

> Managers’ meetings, April 2, 1781; May 7, 1781; July 20, 1781; April 3, 1782; August 22, 1787, PHS Minutes, vol. 1, PHA. Benjamin Say, An Annual Oration Pronounced Before the Humane Society of Philadelphia, on the Objects & Benefits of Said Institution; the 28th day of February, 1799 (Philadelphia, 1799); Minutes of the Annual Meeting of Humane Society of Philadelphia, March 6, 1799, PHA; Managers’ meetings, March 29 and June 12, 1799, PHS Minutes, vol. 1, PHA.

> My knowledge of provincial British humane societies comes primarily from the reports of the Royal Humane Society, and I am basing this assertion on those sources.

> John Bartlett, A Discourse on the Subject of Animation (Boston, 1792), 23; Clarke, A Discourse, Delivered Before the Humane Society of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, 31, 36. The RHS had printed letters from the MHS from the establishment of the Massachusetts society: RHS Report for 1793 ([London, 1793]), 12, 28.

> On those other types of networks, see, for instance, Susan Scott Parrish, American Curiosity: Cultures of Natural History in the Colonial British Atlantic World (Chapel Hill, 2006); Hitchcock, “Paupers and Preachers”; Betty Fladeland, Men and Brothers: Anglo-American Antislavery Cooperation (Urbana, 1972).


> Thomas Thacher, A Discourse Delivered at Boston, Before the Humane Society of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, June 10th, 1800 (Boston, 1800), 12.

> Managers’ meeting, October 11, 1809, PHS Minutes, vol. 2, PHA.

> John Brooks, A Discourse Delivered Before the Humane Society of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, June 9th, 1795 (Boston, 1795), 15–16, 25.


John Warren, An Eulogy on The Honourable Thomas Russell, Esq., Late President of The Society for Propagating the Gospel Among the Indians and Others, in North America; the Humane Society of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts; the Agriculture Society; the Society for the Advice of Immigrants; the Boston Chamber of Commerce; and the National Bank in Boston (Boston, 1796), 16–17, 26–27; Thomas Russell to John Coakley Lettsom, August 1, 1792, Royal Humane Society Report for 1793, 31.