

From Album to Archive: Context, Meaning, and Two Photographic Albums from an India Mission



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RÉSUMÉ Ce texte compare deux albums de photographies du dix-neuvième siècle : le premier a été rassemblé par M^{lle} Amanda Jefferson et il se trouve maintenant dans une collection privée; le second a été produit par Sir William James Wanless et il est conservé dans un centre d'archives publiques. Jefferson et Wanless ont tous les deux servi l'Église presbytérienne des États-Unis comme missionnaires aux Indes occidentales. Jefferson s'était proposée de créer un album à diffusion publique qui montre surtout les populations locales, les habitations et le domaine des femmes. Dans son album, Wanless fait état de l'infrastructure et des efforts « civilisateurs » de son travail, même si son album était personnel et destiné à servir d'aide-mémoire. Ces deux albums existent en contraste l'un de l'autre, chacun ayant besoin de la cohérence apparente et de l'exclusivité de l'autre, tout en étant éclipsé en même temps par lui. La lecture des deux albums de façon parallèle, cependant, peut servir à combler les vides, les silences et les omissions qui se produisent lorsque nous déplaçons ces objets d'un espace à l'autre (soit l'espace personnel ou public), tant à leur époque qu'à la nôtre.

ABSTRACT This article compares two nineteenth-century photographic albums: one compiled by Miss Amanda Jefferson that is now held in a private collection, and the other produced by Sir William James Wanless that is housed in a public archive. Both Jefferson and Wanless served as missionaries to Western India for the Presbyterian Church of the United States. Jefferson intended her album for public circulation and it mainly depicts the local people, compound, and women's domain. In his album, Wanless forwards the infrastructure and *civilizing* efforts of their work although his is a private album intended as an *aide-mémoire*. These albums exist in silent contrast to one another, each dependent on, yet obscured by, the apparent coherence and exclusivity of the other. Reading these albums together, however, can illuminate the shadows cast by each, the gaps, silences, and exclusions that result from shifting these objects between public and private spaces, both within their time and in ours.

In the summer of 2006, I visited the archives of the Presbyterian Historical Society (PHS) in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. My interest was in finding textual documents that might help me analyze a photographic album compiled by my distant relative, Miss Amanda Jefferson (1860–1947), who served in India as a missionary for the Presbyterian Church of the United States of America (PCUSA). The album, which is in my possession, was assembled during

Jefferson's first years on the mission field and depicts scenes in and around Western India (southwest of Bombay in the state of Maharashtra).¹ While searching through documents pertaining to the mission, I came across another photographic album that was strikingly similar to Jefferson's. It was compiled by Dr. William James Wanless (1865–1933), the primary medical missionary and doctor on the Western India mission and Jefferson's colleague.² Discovering this album answered a number of questions I had about Jefferson's album (namely, the author of the photographs: Wanless), but raised yet more. Despite the similarities in the books themselves, the size and quality of the photographs, even a few identical images, the two albums present different visions of the same mission field: Wanless's principally focuses on the mission's infrastructure – the hospitals, dispensary, boarding school, missionary bungalows – whereas Jefferson's primary concern is for the local people – her fellow missionaries, converted Christians, local tradespeople, labourers, and the poor. Wanless's album appears to be for private consumption, a personal record of his life and work in Miraj, an *aide-mémoire*. Jefferson, however, compiled hers with a more public viewer in mind: as her 1892 letter states, she intended to send the album home to New York in hopes that it would “be of service in interesting others in the needs of this great field.”³

It is difficult to say whether the photographs in Jefferson's and Wanless's albums reflect any kind of norm for overseas-missionary photography during the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries.⁴ Most missionary photographs are preserved in church archives' and private collections. Furthermore, mission photography has only recently been adopted as a topic of scholarly interest, with articles and monographs written by scholars across many disciplines.⁵ These studies have appeared in mission journals like the *International*

- 1 The Western India mission was established first in Kolhapur by Rev. R.G. Wilder and his family in 1852, under the direction of the American Board of Commissioners of Foreign Missions. In 1870 it was adopted by PCUSA, and in time, and with the addition of new missionaries to the station – many of them single women – the mission expanded to include surrounding villages and towns: Panhala, Sangli, Ratnagiri, and Miraj. This was known as the Western India mission with Kolhapur as its core.
- 2 The Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia, PA [hereafter PHS], RG 92, box 4, folder 1, Dr. William James Wanless, “Photo Album Miraj, India, 1890-1915.”
- 3 Amanda Jefferson, letter to Mr. and Mrs. Parker, 15 April 1892; this letter is attached to the last page of Jefferson's album.
- 4 I recognize that both home and foreign-mission photography could be considered as a whole because the use of photography by missionaries to the First Nations of North America has many connections to the use of photography on foreign fields. Here I will distinguish between the two based on their circulation. In Jefferson's and Wanless's time, overseas mission photographs could not circulate as easily as those from this continent, thereby reinforcing the distinction between private and public photography.
- 5 The most recent writings include: Marianne Gullestad, *Picturing Pity: Pitfalls, and Pleasures in Cross-Cultural Communication. Image and Word in a North Cameroon Mission* (New

Bulletin of Missionary Research and a number of journals on African arts and culture. Many of these texts revolve around mission photographs from Africa, particularly those connected with the Basel Mission to West Africa. The British Methodist missionary, Rev. George Brown (1835–1917), has been afforded much attention for his photographs of the Pacific Islands during the mid-nineteenth century.⁶ Most who have written on the subject agree that photography served as a tool for missionaries to communicate their agenda, reinforce stereotypes, and establish a false dichotomy between the missionary and the *missionized*. Photographs were also used to recruit fellow Christians to join the cause or offer support.

Much like missionary writing, photography was part of a mission's promotional material to be disseminated in the West. It was a tool that served in shaping understandings of the people the missions aimed to reform. But photography also provided a means for missionaries to document their everyday lives on the mission field, to create records of what they found memorable and meaningful. The lack of attention to preserving this aspect of Western visual culture has resulted in a fragmented visual history, especially that which predates 1900, though there are exceptions. Efforts like those of Paul Jenkins⁷ and the Basel Mission and their online Picture Archive of over twenty-eight thousand mission photographs of Africa, India, China, and Hong Kong have resulted in a more accessible and visible archive of this piece of

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- York, 2007); Elizabeth Edwards, "Thinking Materially/Thinking Relationally," in *Getting Pictures Right: Context and Interpretation (Topics in African Studies 3)*, eds. Michael Albrecht, Veit Arlt, Barbara Müller, and Jürgen Schneider (Köln, Germany, 2004), pp. 11–23; Christraud Geary, "Portraiture, Authorship, and the Inscription of History: Photographic Practice in the Bamum Kingdom, Cameroon (1902–1980)," in *Getting Pictures Right*, pp. 141–63; Kim Greenwell, "Picturing 'Civilization': Missionary Narratives and the Margins of Mimicry," *BC Studies* 135 (Autumn 2002), pp. 3–45; Phyllis M. Martin, "Life and Death, Power and Vulnerability: Everyday Contradictions at the Loango Mission, 1883–1904," *Journal of African Cultural Studies*, vol. 15, no. 1 (June 2002), pp. 61–78; Kathryn T. Long, "'Cameras Never Lie': The Role of Photography in Telling the Story American Evangelical Missions," *Church History*, vol. 72, no. 4 (December 2003), pp. 820–51.
- 6 For further reading on Brown and his mission photographs see: Prue Ahrens, "Reading the Reverend George Brown's Samoan Photographs," *History of Photography*, vol. 27, no. 2 (Summer 2003), pp. 188–91; Richard Eves, "'Black and White, a Significant Contrast': Race, Humanism and Missionary Photography in the Pacific," *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, vol. 29, no. 4 (2006), pp. 725–48; Helen Gardner and Jude Philp, "Photography and Christian Mission: George Brown's Images of the New Britain Mission 1875–80," *The Journal of Pacific History*, vol. 41, no. 2 (2006), pp. 175–90; Virginia-Lee Webb, "Missionary Photographers in the Pacific Islands: Divine Light," *History of Photography*, vol. 21, no. 1 (1997), pp. 12–22.
- 7 Paul Jenkins, the retired chief archivist of the Basel Mission House, is a leading authority on the subject of mission photography. He has written a number of articles on the subject with the aim of drawing attention to the fact that mission photographs are more than just data or supporting documentation for a text. For further reading, see Paul Jenkins: "Camera Evangelistica – Camera Lucida? Trans-border Experiences with Historical Photographs from

photographic history.⁸ It also attests to the number of photographs produced by foreign missionaries and to the significance of the medium to missions. The PHS archives has more than eight cubic feet of catalogued foreign mission photographs, the bulk of which are from the twentieth century. Archives such as this one are largely reliant on donations, meaning that their holdings are by no means a full spectrum of historical documents, nor does the collection account for all of the Presbyterian-mission photographs. There are still photographs in private collections (Jefferson's, for example), those that are unrecognized as related to missionary work, and those that have been destroyed. Sheer numbers notwithstanding, as scholarship on missionary photography is still emerging and evolving, little can be said definitively about the role of photography in overseas missions. What I offer here is a case study of two missionaries' uses of photography and, specifically, photographic albums in recording their *missionizing* efforts and daily lives on the field.

Albums can offer in microcosm what archives also contain, though in vast and incomprehensible quantities: photographic context. Close examination of a personal collection reveals what the photographer or collector invested in his or her photographs, and hoped to communicate. It is my contention that, much like many ethnographic photographs, mission photographs are inherently ambiguous, their meanings often dictated by a context of intended function, rather than by the images themselves. By reading Jefferson's and Wanless's albums, and uncovering their intended narratives – their orality, according to Martha Langford⁹ – we are provided with a view of what these missionaries believed their photographs from the field could communicate, what they believed their compilations would mean to the albums' viewers. That said, each of these albums could allow for a multiplicity of pertinent inquiries addressing the evident imperial, ethnographic, gendered, or cultural content of the photographs and compilations. My reading of these albums is not meant to

a Mission Archive," in *Getting Pictures Right*, pp. 117–40; "The Enigmatic Patriarch of the Kingdom of Bamum," *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, vol. 19, no. 3 (1995), pp. 107–09; "Everyday Life Encapsulated? Two Photographs Concerning Women and the Basel Mission in West Africa, c. 1900," *Journal of African Cultural Studies*, vol. 15, no. 1 (June 2002), pp. 45–60; "Much More Than Illustrations of What We Already Know: Experiences in the Rediscovery of Mission Photography," *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, vol. 26, no. 4 (October 2002), pp. 157–63.

8 *The Picture Archive* (Basel, Switzerland: Mision 21), <http://www.bmpix.org/index.html> (accessed 2 March 2008).

9 Martha Langford, *Suspended Conversations: The Afterlife of Memory in Photographic Albums* (Montreal, 2001), p. 21. Langford argues that an album is an "instrument of show and tell" (p. 20), its pictures emblems of the compiler's story – a story revealed only through oral presentation either by the compiler or someone who has been told the album's story. This relationship between oral presentation and the photographic album, or oral-photographic performance, according to Langford, is key to understanding an album's intended narrative.

interpret the meaning of these photographs for the objects of the Western Indian mission – for Indians. As I will demonstrate, these albums and their photographs were intended and constructed for Western viewers; therefore, I will attend to the meanings generated by , and for , this audience. I do recognize, however, that an entirely different reading can be made of these albums and their images through the lens of nineteenth-century- Western India and the peoples of Kolhapur and Ratnagiri. Perhaps, when these albums are brought to light, those different readings will emerge. My comparative reading of Jefferson's and Wanless's albums is in line with scholars like Ruth Compton Brouwer and Patricia R. Hill, and their feminist recovery projects that brought the North American, women's foreign-missionary movement back into view.¹⁰ I intend to address one way in which these albums demonstrate the evolving gender roles and a collapse of the public/private divide on the mission field in the late nineteenth century . What I see in these albums, however, is present-based – there is no evidence to suggest that Jefferson or Wanless were aware of these shifting public/private boundaries. Despite all of this, and with no small irony , history seems to have cast these albums into traditional roles: Jefferson's, intended to be public, is now held in a private, family collection, while Wanless's private album is preserved in a public, religious archive. In this way, these albums exist in silent contrast to one another – in Allan Sekula's terms, these are *shadow archives*, each dependent on yet obscured by the apparent coherence and exclusivity of the other.¹¹ Reading these albums together will illuminate the shadows cast by each: the gaps, silences, and exclusions that have resulted from shifting these objects between public and private spaces in their times, which still continue in ours.

The Albums in Context

England was the first nation to popularize foreign-missionary work in the 1790s. It was soon joined by the United States, then followed by British North America, later to be known as Canada. The impetus of this “great era” of foreign-missionary work was primarily the zeal of evangelical Protestants backed by scripture, the Gospel: Jesus Christ's command to “Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every Creature” (Matthew 28:19). Some Christians believed they were called to convert those of other faiths, that it was their duty as servants of their Lord. This zeal was at its peak between

10 See Ruth Compton Brouwer, *New Women for God: Canadian Presbyterian Women and India Missions, 1876–1914* (Toronto, 1990) and Patricia R. Hill, *The World their Household: The American Woman's Foreign Mission Movement and Cultural Transformation, 1870–1920* (Ann Arbor, 1985).

11 Allan Sekula, “The Body and the Archive,” *October* 39 (Winter 1986), p.10.

1880 and 1920, a period heralded as the “golden age of missionary expansion”; the outbreak of World War I initiated the decline.¹²

The 1890s were a liberating time for single Western women: they could lead independent, adventurous, and somewhat glamorous lives in comparison to the prior constraints of the private sphere.¹³ No longer were women restricted to the private realm of the household nor did they need to forsake their “womanhood” in order to have a public life.¹⁴ New career opportunities available to unmarried women facilitated independence from men financially and physically,¹⁵ and mission work was the most popular choice. On the mission field, women were responsible for what was called “woman’s work for woman,” which aimed to “educate” Indian women and children about the “true religion” of Christianity and “the benefits [of] our western civilization.”¹⁶ The woman’s arena (the domestic realm) thus extended well beyond the home and encompassed the domains of the women and children of the host country, their home lives, education, and the moral betterment of society. Missionaries believed that the local women were the means of true cultural reform because they had the power to “exert moral influence.”¹⁷ The domestic sphere, therefore, was understood to be the ultimate site of social reform. Furthermore, women – particularly single, Western women who did not have the responsibility of a husband and children – were believed to be the only ones who could reach women of the East who were “imprisoned” in an “uncolonized space” – the *zenana*, or the Hindu’s private, domestic life.¹⁸

Much emphasis was put on medical missions during the “great era” of overseas mission work. Medical missionaries established clinics, dispensaries, hospitals, asylums for lepers, and, in times of plague or famine, performed

- 12 Hill, p. 8, and Peter Williams, “‘The Missing Link’: The Recruitment of Women Missionaries in some English Evangelical Missionary Societies in the Nineteenth Century,” in *Women and Missions: Past and Present – Anthropological and Historical Perceptions*, eds. F. Bowie, D. Kirkwood, and S. Ardener (Rhode Island, 1993), p. 43.
- 13 R. Freeman and P. Klaus, “Blessed or Not? The New Spinster in England and the United States in the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries,” *Journal of Family History*, vol. 9, no. 4 (December 1984), p. 409.
- 14 Jean Bethke Elshtain, “Moral Women and Immoral Man: A Consideration of the Public-Private Split and Its Political Ramifications,” *Politics and Society*, vol. 4, no. 4 (January 1974), pp. 455 and 460.
- 15 Freeman and Klaus, p. 403.
- 16 *Historical Sketches of the India Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America known as the Lodianna, the Farrukhabad, and the Kolhapur Missions; From the beginning of the work, in 1834, To the time of its fiftieth Anniversary, in 1884* (Allahabad, 1886). PHS, RG 360, Miss Emily T. Minor’s personnel file.
- 17 David W. Savage, “Missionaries and the Development of a Colonial Ideology of Female Education in India,” *Gender and History*, vol. 9, no. 2 (August 1997), p. 209.
- 18 Hill, p. 5, and Savage, p. 213.

key roles in organizing relief.¹⁹ Through benevolent medical work, missionaries believed they could reach the unconverted in their most vulnerable state, making them more susceptible to the mission's aims: "The heart, softened by disease was often the most impressionable to the stamp of love."²⁰ Medical missionaries were most often male, certified doctors trained in the West. Their work hinged on the belief that Western medicine – "modern science" – brought progress to the Eastern world.²¹ Indeed, their efforts did alleviate much suffering and raised the level of medical care available to the local population, regardless of class. But their medical services were part of a civilizing campaign and were therefore accompanied by a set of values superfluous to the physical health of the patients.

The popularization of foreign-mission work coincided with the introduction in 1888 of the roll-film camera – the Kodak – and therefore the rise of amateur photography. It is no surprise that missionaries, like tourists, chose to employ the camera as a means to document their adventures on foreign and native soil.²² The portability of this small-box camera made the medium accessible to many who did not want to develop the skills needed to operate large view cameras and develop film. Rather, the Kodak ushered in the "snapshot," which gave amateur photographers the opportunity to document their daily lives and activities no matter where in the world they were. It also increased the exchange of pictorial depictions of everyday life in vehicles such as the photograph album and lantern slide show, which, in the case of travellers, brought the world home. What this "world" looked like, however, was largely determined by the perspective of the photographer. Furthermore, prior to 1900, intercontinental circulation of photographs was limited, meaning that few of the photographs taken by overseas missionaries in the latter part of the nineteenth century would have been seen by Western eyes. Foreign missionaries did send photographs home to be published in denominational, mission, and anthropological journals, even some newspapers and local publications, but this practice was not popularized until after the turn of the twentieth century. It follows that photographic prints were not being made in multiples; therefore, people were looking at missionary photographs in reproduction more than at photographs themselves. If Jefferson did send her album to North America, the photographs in this book might have provided some

19 Sushil Madhava Pathak, *American Missionaries and Hinduism (A Study of their Contacts from 1813 to 1910)* (Delhi, 1967), p. 179.

20 Ibid.

21 Ibid., p. 182.

22 Wanless's photographs do not appear to be a product of a Kodak; rather, they were taken by a view camera. That said, the rise of amateur photography and therefore the increased proliferation of personal photographs is key to understanding how Wanless and Jefferson might have viewed everyday photographs of the mission field and personal album.

Westerners with the first photographs of the foreign world as well as their first comprehensive view of everyday life in an Indian village.

In the late-nineteenth century, compiling photographic albums was a relatively common practice, particularly for women.²³ Bound albums came in many forms, housing collections of material culture like postcards, prints, drawings, memoirs, and keepsakes. Personal photographic albums followed suit, displaying accumulated photographs that, according to Martha Langford, “reflect[ed] the predilections and experiences of the compilers.”²⁴ This type of album is, therefore, often heavily “coded”: its visual narrative is intended for private consumption in the private realm, where meanings that are not understood through a shared history between the maker and the viewer can be explained directly by the album’s maker. Some albums meant as public or semi-public documents include a key to help crack the code – captions or supporting textual information intended to guide the viewer to an understanding of the narrative. When an album is removed from its intended context, private or not, meanings change, meanings are lost; in the words of Langford, its orality is *suspended*.²⁵

The Albums as Context

On at least two occasions, Wanless published a few of his photographs of the Miraj hospital in mission journals from the United States. The first article marked the occasion of the opening of the Miraj hospital on 4 July 1894, and then nearly a year later a second was published as an update on the hospital’s successes and needs.²⁶ This suggests that Wanless created this body of photographs of the Western India mission with the promotion of the mission in mind. Whether or not this was his aim – because he used the photographs for political ends – they can be categorized as what David Morgan calls *missive imagery*, or “those [images] used to mobilize and instruct domestic efforts to

23 Marilyn F. Motz, “Visual Autobiography: Photograph Albums of Turn-of-the-Century Midwestern Women,” *American Quarterly*, vol. 41, no. 1 (1989), p. 72.

24 Langford, p. 6.

25 Ibid, p. 19. According to Langford, an album is a kind of conversation between the maker and the viewer. If an album is removed from its original, private context, its story is fragmented. Reading the visual evidence (the photographs) alone cannot fill in the gaps left by the silenced narrative.

26 I found the first published article in Wanless’s personal scrapbook at the Presbyterian Historical Society’s archives. No provenance is given for the article and no date is provided other than the hospital’s opening date of 4 July 1894. However, the following article in *The Church At Home and Abroad* from April 1895 suggests that the 1894 article may have been taken from the November 1894 issue of that same journal (PHS, RG 92, box 1, folder 33, scrapbook of Dr. W.J. Wanless; W.J. Wanless, “Medical Missions in Western India,” *The Church At Home and Abroad* 17 [April 1895], pp. 312–15).

undertake missions.”²⁷ Morgan’s text does not address photography specifically – his studies/work concentrates on published illustrations, posters, and religious works of art – although his analysis of the role of images for missions applies here. He continues:

Missive imagery ... provided a powerful way of shaping the understanding of religious and racial otherness, the international stature of the United States, and the cultural burden of Christianity. Missive images are especially important as domestic representations of foreign cultures. Encoded in them is a worldview and a national mission, a vision that regards national purpose in explicitly religious terms.²⁸

It is equally possible that Wanless did not intend the bulk of his photographs to “mobilize and instruct,” yet they were all created in an age of imperialism and must be understood accordingly. Based on the similarities in size, print, and paper quality, as well as some overlapping images between the Wanless and Jefferson albums, I have deduced that she obtained the 1892 photographs in her album from Wanless. Wanless’s photographs, therefore, provided the basis for these two albums with different, if not opposing, agendas: Jefferson’s political and Wanless’s personal.

Jefferson was raised in Berwick, Nova Scotia, trained to be a teacher at the Truro Normal College, and then attended the Northfield Seminary in Massachusetts. In 1891, she was appointed to Western India, arriving in Kolhapur later that fall. In the first months of 1892, she moved to Ratnagiri, India, her permanent station and “home.”²⁹ In the years of Jefferson’s stay, the missionaries at Ratnagiri established a church, Sunday schools, many small schools for local girls and boys, and an orphanage. She and her fellow missionary and companion, Miss Emily Minor (1857–1938), were also known for their visits with women and children in surrounding villages and homes, the home for widows, and the leper asylum.

Wanless, a native of Charleston, Ontario, was posted to the Western India station in 1889 after graduating from University Medical College in New York City. His first years were spent in Sangli, but in 1892, he relocated his practice to Miraj where he established the region’s first hospital in 1894, followed by the country’s first medical school in 1897, and a leper asylum in 1900. To this day, the Wanless Hospital in Miraj is considered the most reputable medical institution in India. Wanless was an important figure in Western India: he was three times decorated by the Indian government and

27 David Morgan, *The Sacred Gaze: Religious Visual Culture in Theory and Practice* (Berkeley, 2005), p. 151.

28 *Ibid.*, p. 154.

29 Amanda Jefferson, “Emily Minor of Ratnagiri,” *Western India Notes*, vol. 19, no. 2 (1938), p. 31 (PHS, RG 360, Miss Emily T. Minor’s Personnel File).

was knighted by the British government in India for his service to the people of that country. His skill as an evangelist was equally recognized by PCUSA and he continues to be written up in the history books for his service to India and the Western India mission. It is not surprising that PCUSA's archives preserve many of his personal documents and those pertaining to his work.

Jefferson's album is a hardcover book with a gold-coloured cover and red trim. It measures 19 x 25 centimetres and contains fifty-one albumen photographs, one to a page, fifty of which are roughly the same size (11 x 16 centimetres), and one considerably larger (25 x 19 centimetres). Each image has been carefully centred on the page and captioned with one or two descriptive lines. Jefferson inscribed the album: "To My Dear Friends Mr. and Mrs. Parker, from Amanda M. Jefferson Ratnagiri India." The second page of Jefferson's album contains the first 1892 photograph, which pictures twenty missionaries, including Jefferson and Miss Emily Minor, on the Kolhapur compound (Figure 1). The neatly written caption at the bottom of the page reads, "Group of Missionaries in the Kolhapur Mi[ssion] India Jan. 1892." This photograph establishes the subject position of the album's compiler – these missionaries are the viewer's gateway into the album, into India. The following forty-three photographs are dated 1892 and mainly depict Kolhapur, India, where Jefferson was posted for her first three months of service. These photographs can be categorized under three successive themes: first are portraits of Indian-Christians, or "Native Christians" according to the captions, at the Kolhapur station (pp. 2–6) (Figure 2). The subsequent group of nineteen photographs (pp. 7–25) picture domestic scenes in and around the compound: tradespeople at work and servants performing domestic tasks, such as sewing, carrying water, sawing wood, carrying firewood, carpentry, and so on (Figure 3). In addition, most of these photographs have, in brackets, an English transliteration of the equivalent descriptors in Marathi – the principal language of that region.³⁰ The last group of nineteen photographs (pp. 27–48, with some blank pages, some of which appear to be intentional) mainly depict the Western India mission's infrastructure: various bungalows, hospitals, schools, and sites mostly in Kolhapur, plus some from Sangli and Panhala – nearby towns. The last eight photographs in Jefferson's album (likely not taken by Wanless) are not part of the 1892 series. These range in dates from 1893–1898 and are quite unlike the descriptive images of the 1892 group. The captions continue to explain the photographs, though the narrative is obscure. These images picture more groups of missionaries, Jefferson and Minor outside their bungalow and school for Hindu girls, the gardener's

30 I suspect Jefferson added these bracketed words at a later date. Not only is the ink slightly darker than that of the descriptive captions, but records suggest that Jefferson was only beginning to learn Marathi in 1892 when she arrived at Ratnagiri.

wedding, famine victims who worked on the compound, the children of fellow missionaries, and two Indian girls who were “adopted” by Jefferson and Minor. Attached to the last page of the album is Jefferson’s letter of 1892 explaining that she intended to send the album to the United States to her friends, Mr. and Mrs. Parker of New York so that it could serve in recruiting and soliciting support for the mission.

Figure 2: “Radhabai, Ruckmabai, Daniel One of our Christian Families. Kohapur.” Miss Amanda Jefferson’s photograph album, 1892–1898, private collection.



Figure 1: “Group of Missionaries in the Kohapur Mission] India Jan. 1892.” Miss Amanda Jefferson’s photograph album, 1892–1898, private collection.





Figure 3: “Indian Mode of Sawing Wood (lohar).” Miss Amanda Jefferson’s photograph album, 1892–1898, private collection.



Figure 4: “1894. Dr. Wanless Office Miraj Hospital.” William James Wanless, *Photo Album Miraj, India, 1890–1915*, PHS, RG 92, box 4, folder 1.

Wanless's album is physically similar to Jefferson's – the books themselves are obviously from the same supplier, the only difference being that Wanless's cover is red whereas Jefferson's is gold. The Wanless album contains fifty-five photographs, one to a page, all of which are roughly the same size as those from Jefferson's album (11 x 16 centimetres). The inscription on the inside front cover of Wanless's album reads, "Miraj 1890–1900." The photographs, all captioned but most without dates, primarily depict the life of the local hospitals and dispensaries, along with a handful of scenes of Wanless's mission home life and a few views from the Western India mission. Many of the photographs of Kolhapur are also found in Jefferson's album. Wanless's album appears to be a private, family album intended to keep memories of his life, work, and accomplishments on the field. The presentation is not as orderly as Jefferson's album. The album opens with a portrait of the young doctor in profile sitting at his wooden desk (Figure 4). It is captioned "1894. Dr. Wanless Office Miraj Hospital." Following this are six images of two hospitals and one dispensary at Miraj, some exterior and some interior views, many of which contain patients (pp. 4–9) (Figure 5). Next is a series of six, chronologically disordered photographs of Wanless's mission bungalow at Miraj: they begin with an exterior and interior view, and end with images of its construction. We are then brought back to the Miraj dispensary but immediately thereafter are whisked away to a scene of an Indian man seated on a wooden cart filled with what looks like large bricks and pulled by two dark bullocks. The photograph is captioned "Native Bullock Cart." This pattern continues for the next twenty-five pages – successive photographs of mission and hospital buildings are punctuated by images of local tradespeople at work or Indian-Christians. On page forty-two, the pattern reverses and photographs of local people dominate the selection. The album ends with a photograph of Wanless, his wife, and daughter sitting on the porch of the "Clifton Cottage" and on the opposite page, a picture of the Panhala dispensary. The mission's infrastructure has the last word. The album's patterns of organization are not easily discernable, nor are the photographs' captions sufficiently detailed to offer any amount of information to a viewer who was not already aware of the circumstances of Wanless's life in Miraj; the captions appear to function as personal *aides-mémoire*. The album's orality is thus muted, leaving behind only coded messages.

There are fourteen images that appear in both Jefferson's and Wanless's albums, and two that are similar – the same scene but from different angles. Of these sixteen intersecting images, two depict Indian-Christians (Figure 2), some in and around the hospital(s), and others are more formal portraits; four are ethnographic-style photographs of local (and presumably Hindu) Indians at work (Figure 3); and the other nine picture sites in Kolhapur, Sangli, and Panhala. The different albums give these sixteen overlapping photographs different meanings. Jefferson's patterns of organization allude to a narrative



Figure 5: “Presbyterian Hospital” and “Female Ward, Miraj Hospital.” William James Wanless, *Photo Album Miraj, India, 1890–1915*, PHS, RG 92, box 4, folder 1.

about conversion: the album opens with the missionaries then moves to the converted Indians or “Native Christians” (a wonderfully ironic double entendre), most of whom are named, and then to the sizeable series of ethnographic photographs of local Indians, presumably Hindu, identified by their trades – they are like anthropological *types*. Within Jefferson’s narrative the “Native Christians” are given importance by proxy – they are associated with the missionaries’s group portrait on page two of the album (Figure 1) in both position and style. However, these five photographs of “Native Christians” force an appearance of order, of benevolence upon what is in fact a kind of imperial violence. According to Laura Wexler, certain women of the nineteenth century used photography in order to promulgate an imperialist vision of race and class relations.³¹ However, this was all done within the private, domestic realm, so that their images appeared to communicate a softer, more human side to these hierarchical dynamics. Indeed, Jefferson seems to have created, in the words of Allan Sekula, a “social and moral hierarchy”³² within her album where the subjects of each portrait appear to either “look up, at [their] ‘betters’, [or] look down, at [their] ‘inferiors’.”³³ Within this visual order, the “Native Christians” “look down” to the following images of local tradespeople or *types* who lack subjectivity by comparison. This visual hierarchy appears to validate Jefferson’s work as a missionary and therefore gives her authority over these Indians.

In Wanless’s album, the treatment of these local Indians is not as apparently harsh. The image on page twelve of Jefferson’s album, for example, “Indian Mode of Sawing Wood” (Figure 3) pictures two Indian men in white *dhotis* (waistcloths) posing mid-cut. This image is part of the ethnographic series of photographs and is therefore part of the “hierarchy” Jefferson lays out in her groupings. The same image is also found on page fifty-two of Wanless’s album, yet here, these “Native Sawyers, [sic]” according to Wanless’s caption, are slotted between a portrait of a “Brahman Teacher” on the previous page and the “Entrance to Mission Compound Sangli” on the facing page – an open, white gate at the “Y” in a dirt road. Although, as previously stated, the narrative of Wanless’s album is somewhat obscure and the organization of the photographs is seemingly random, his tendency to juxtapose images of people with the mission’s infrastructure communicates something even to the contemporary, public viewer: although the people of India were the reason for Wanless’s efforts, his sense of accomplishment seems to take the face of buildings, facilities, *progress*. Images of the local Indians

31 Laura Wexler, *Tender Violence: Domestic Visions in an Age of U.S. Imperialism* (Chapel Hill, 2000), p. 7.

32 Sekula, p. 10.

33 Ibid.

seem to act as accents in his albums, like subjects posed against a mammoth backdrop in order to demonstrate scale. Because his album was not intended for public viewing, Wanless did not need to prove anything through his compilation. Furthermore, as the medical missionary on the Western India field, his subjectivity and authority was fully intact; therefore, he did not need to demonstrate the “social and moral hierarchy”³⁴ that separated him from the local Indians. He and his work already had considerable validity.

Jefferson’s selection and ordering of the photographs in her album indicates that the people of the mission were of paramount concern to this single-woman missionary. The irony is that despite Jefferson’s call to woman’s work, few of the native subjects in the album’s photographs are female. This is despite the fact that records show there was an equal number of male and female converts in the Western India mission.³⁵ Jefferson’s lack of inclusion of images of Indian women might have been a result of the photographs available to her. Regardless, the majority of the women pictured in her album are “Native Christians”; they are in four of the five photographs from that grouping. Within the ethnographic series, however, women are seen in only four photographs (“Traveling Jugglers” on page fifteen, “Woman carrying Fuel” on page twenty-one, “Brahmin Family in a cart” on page twenty-two, and “Carrying Wood to the Bazaar” on page twenty-five); they are pictured less often than the bullocks. The only woman pictured alone in Jefferson’s album is “Woman carrying Fuel” (Figure 6), which is fifth from last of the series of ethnographic photographs. The woman carries a large bundle of what appears to be sticks on top of her head. Her face is in complete shadow, obscured; of all the *types* pictured in the album, her individuality is the most obscured or objectified. The exclusion of unconverted women in Jefferson’s album, whether intentional or not, seems to connote their inaccessibility even to women missionaries.

34 Sekula, p. 10.

35 *Historical Sketches of the India Missions*, p. 157.



Woman carrying Fuel. (lakood valee)

Figure 6: “Woman carrying Fuel (lakood valee).” Miss Amanda Jefferson’s photograph album, 1892–1898, private collection.

In Wanless's album, the lack of Indian women is even more apparent. They are discernable in five photographs: on page five we see the women's ward of the Miraj Hospital (seen in Figure 5); on pages thirty-five, forty-three, and fifty they are amongst groups of Indian-Christians; and on page forty-six they are two of six of the "Native Servants" pictured. All but one photograph – the women's ward on page five – depict women with male counterparts, presumably their husbands. Furthermore, just like in Jefferson's album, the majority of the women pictured are converts. Moreover, the photograph "Female Ward, Miraj Hospital" (Figure 5), which pictures some of the only women not indicated as converts, is likely not meant to depict the women so much as the institution. What this implies is that Jefferson intentionally included images of Indian women, whereas to Wanless, Indian women (particularly Hindu women) were incidental to his life in Western India. Although this may not have been Wanless's outlook, it is indicative of the way in which the mission field was divided along gender lines: the women missionaries were concerned with the Indian women and children, whereas the male missionaries attended to expanding the mission and its infrastructure. Images of Indian women, converted or not, therefore had the power to bolster Jefferson's cause, which was not the case for Wanless. That said, across both albums local women seem to be at the bottom of the hierarchical scale that divided men from women, Christians from heathens.

Unlike the official visual documents from the mission, the bulk of which were created and circulated by men who were the chief correspondents, Jefferson's album provides a window on how single-women missionaries visually constructed their world. What is unique here is that Jefferson has managed to maintain this domestic view of the field, while using images created by a man and therefore within the male domains of the field. Whereas writing and correspondence was required of all missionaries regardless of their gender and marital status, photography on the Western India mission, especially that predating 1900, appears to have been a male-dominated activity. Wanless's photographs have, to date, been the most recognized from that mission. This may also have been the case of other overseas missions, as indicated by the scholarly attention given to the photographs of Rev. George Brown. There are exceptions – the photographs of Anna Wurhmann are an excellent example³⁶ – but the general lack of scholarly attention to mission photography means that only provisional conclusions can be drawn about the number of male versus female photographers on foreign fields. That said, if Western society was the model for foreign missions, there were likely more

36 Anna Wurhmann served for the Basel mission to the Bamum kingdom from 1911–1915. Christraud Geary has written about her photographs on a number of occasions, the first and most in depth analysis being in the 1988 exhibition catalogue, *Images of Bamum: German Colonial Photography at the Court of King Najoya* (Washington, DC, 1988).

male missionaries photographing than women. This is not to say that male missionaries did not photograph private life and indigenous women; rather that official records de-emphasized the domesticity of the mission field in late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth- century publications (as, until recently, did the history books), despite the fact that by the time Jefferson arrived in Kolhapur, more than half of the missionaries were women (Figure 1 is evidence of this).³⁷ The exceptions to this were publications specifically targeting Western women, which tended to advance a domestic view of the mission field.³⁸ So while Wanless prioritized the infrastructure of the mission in his album – the hospital, churches, bungalows, schools, wells, roads, and so forth – Jefferson’s patterns of organization emphasize that which was not as commonly seen: the woman’s sphere. She therefore used Wanless’s photographs and album compilation as a means to validate her work and herself, thereby politicizing the domestic realm.

Wanless, however, did the opposite. In the last part of the nineteenth century, album compilation found its niche in the domestic sphere and, by extension, part of private life and the woman’s domain.³⁹ His album, therefore, collapsed these boundaries by featuring inherently public subject matter – the mission’s infrastructure – in his private album. Perhaps greater evidence of “tender violence”⁴⁰ can therefore be found in Wanless’s album: the domestic, family frame seemingly depoliticizes the inherently political subject matter of the photographs. Instead, within his album, these images appear as expressions of Wanless’s identity, as simple records of everyday life on the mission field. At the same time, Wanless’s photograph album as well as the last eight photographs in Jefferson’s album (dated from 1893–1898) suggest that some mission photographs had private and personal meanings for their makers. As Wanless’s album demonstrates, however, these meanings are difficult to access, their orality silenced. When Jefferson’s and Wanless’s albums are read together, we see the imperial power of these photographs; together they provide photographic context for each album’s images and therefore some semblance of the compiler’s intended meanings for her/his album and the photographs therein. These meanings, however, are not confined to the traditional public and private divide, but blur the boundaries of the gendered domains.

37 Brouwer, p. 5.

38 *The Women’s Missionary Magazine of the United Presbyterian Church* is a good example of this. Its articles and even photographs focus on the work of women missionaries and the conditions for both indigenous women and children, both on foreign and native soil.

39 Langford, p. 24.

40 *Tender Violence*, the title of Wexler’s book, is a term Wexler borrowed, somewhat ironically, from General Samuel Chapman Armstrong, the founder of the Hampton Institute. In his 1870 text he used the term to define the kind of “benevolent force” needed in order to have influence over ex-slaves and Native Americans who had recently acquired citizenship (Wexler, pp. 52–53).

From Album to Archive

The current contexts of Jefferson's and Wanless's albums present an ironic twist to this story. Despite Jefferson's stated intention, her album's potential was likely never fulfilled: the addition of the 1893–1898 photographs suggests she never sent her album home to her “dear friends.” Instead, her album was passed down through my family and is now in my possession. Until I began to study and publish my findings on this album, her authority was limited to the traditionally female realm, the meanings of her photographic album determined by a familial knowledge of who Jefferson was and how she chose to live out her life. Wanless's album, however, was held in a private collection until donated to the Presbyterian Historical Society's public archive. In that context, it now stands as a seemingly comprehensive example of this missionary's use of photography even though the album's orality is nearly lost on the public viewer. As Langford writes, “Ironically, the very act of preservation – the entrusting of an album to a public museum – suspends its sustaining conversation, stripping the album of its social function and meaning.”⁴¹ Without Jefferson's album as a point of comparison, Wanless's album casts a large shadow, one that perhaps obscures political readings of the same photographs. The same goes for Jefferson's album: the political intentions she had for her album have the potential to overshadow the more insidious, “tender violence” of compilations that defy public readings – the last eight photographs in her album for example. When brought together, these albums reveal a tension between the public and private spheres of the mission field, and photography's role in confirming and challenging this divide. But perhaps more importantly, we see the shadows cast by Jefferson's new-found agency as a single woman missionary and, from inside the domestic realm, her use of photography's power as a public and political voice. Jefferson represents a large number of Western women who found agency and “new modes of subjectivity” in the colonial enterprise.⁴² The challenge in reading an album like Jefferson's is in negotiating the tension between her use of photographic album compilation as a means to reproduce the imperial narrative, and as a means to simultaneously resist traditional gender boundaries and constraints. As Simon Gikandi so pointedly asks, “For how does one argue that such a terrible undertaking as imperialism could also function as the avenue for new subjectivities or that it could lead to a reconfiguration of gender relations in the nineteenth century?”⁴³ When her album is read togeth-

41 Langford, p. 5.

42 Simon Gikandi, *Maps of Englishness: Writing Identity in the Culture of Colonialism* (New York, 1996), p. 122.

43 Ibid., p. 123.

er with Wanless's, this tension is most apparent. Furthermore, the current context of the albums further complicate their readings. Little of Jefferson's new-found authority has remained in public record. Her memory lives on principally in the private realm. Wanless, however, has been memorialized in many public forms – the Hospital at Miraj and numerous books and publications, along with the substantial collection of his personal papers and documents in the PHS archives. His contribution to India and the Western India mission was significant and, accordingly, so is his legacy. When brought together, Jefferson's and Wanless's photographic albums not only illuminate the shadows cast by each – the personal/political, male/female, public/private meanings – but also the blurring of the very boundaries that keep these albums apart.