

*Examining and Understanding the Emotional Bond of Sisterhood:  
The Dobbs Sisters from Upper Canada to India*

Victoria Seta Cosby, Queen's University, [17vsc1@queenusu.ca](mailto:17vsc1@queenusu.ca)

Paper presented at the 2021 ASN World Convention, 5-8 May 2021

Do not Cite without the permission of the Author

Introduction:

The purpose of this paper is to examine the emotional bond between the Dobbs sister, Jane, Maria and Harriet, and how this was intertwined with their experiences of empire and the ways their lives in many ways mirrored each other. Thanks to Dr. David Webster I have learned that this project is known as 'prosopography' which is a form of collective biography of people linked in some way.<sup>1</sup> In this case my subjects are bound by blood. These sisters lived separate and unique lives in the broader colonial world, and yet there were so many similarities between their experiences.

It is important to first understand the context of the Dobbs family in nineteenth century Ireland. Conway Dobbs and Maria Dobbs, a nineteenth century upper-class Anglican Irish couple, had eight children, five of them daughters. The eldest three daughters, Jane, Maria and Harriet were all married around the same time and scattered throughout the British Empire, whereas the younger two sisters, Kate and Madeline, remained at home in Dublin in part due to their age. These sisters, despite distance, difficulty and tragedy, remained in close contact. This is in part due to the efforts of their mother, Maria, who clearly was the centre of this letter exchange.<sup>2</sup> Emma Rothschild's book, *The Inner Life of Empires*, covers a similar letter exchange between an extended family, the Johnstone's. Though this book is focused on the mid to late eighteenth century, the mobility of people within the British world. The Johnstone family and the Dobbs family were quite similar, as they both were families located on the periphery of the British Isles – The Johnstone's in Scotland and the Dobbs in Ireland.<sup>3</sup> Both families were upper middle class but not titled. Both families were large, with a mixture of sons and daughters in a range of ages. All of the children were educated, and the majority of these children spread out from their homeland to the corners of the empire, from North America to India in search of opportunity and prosperity.<sup>4</sup> Barbara Johnstone, the mother of the Johnstone family, maintained the familial connections as the centre of a complex imperial letter exchange.<sup>5</sup> Mother Maria is also the only reason I can write this paper, as she carefully copied and preserved the letters from her daughters into what is now known as the 'Cartwright Letter Book'. This book, according to Mother Maria's forward, was intended first to allow Jane's

---

<sup>1</sup> Merriam-Webster definition of 'Prosopography': A study that identifies and relates a group of persons or characters within a particular historical or literary context.

<sup>2</sup> Original Cartwright Letterbook, Forward by Maria Sophia Dobbs, page 1-2.

<sup>3</sup> Emma Rothschild, *The Inner Life of Empires : An Eighteenth-Century History*, (Princeton University Press, 2011), 10-23.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 24.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 192-193.

children to know their mother. Mother Maria then expanded her scope to preserving the letters of her other international girls, Harriet and daughter Maria, so that the family could know and understand each other even after death.<sup>6</sup> Originally, I set out to explore the relationship between the sisters from Harriet's perspective, but upon going through my sources I realized that I have way more than can be included in one short conference presentation.

### Point 1: Jane

The first group of letters in the Cartwright letterbook was also the from the first sister to wed, Jane, whose marriage happened sometime in the late-1820s. She married fellow Irishman Col. Alick Lawe who was a member of the royal engineers.<sup>7</sup> Alick was stationed in India for over 10 years before he and Jane wed, though the wedding (and their initial meeting) took place in the U.K. Alick and Jane remained in Ireland with Alick's family long enough after their wedding to have their first child, Alexander. After this Alick's work called him back to India. The couple decided to leave the baby with the Dobbs family rather than transport him to another climate.<sup>8</sup> It is clear from Jane's letters how much pain leaving her son behind caused. She wrote to her family constantly for news about him, from his developmental milestones to his expanding vocabulary. But Jane trusted her family to keep her son safe, and to teach him and raise him as she would have. Leonore Davidoff, in her study of family relationships, explored sibling relationships in childhood and adulthood. In the case of the Dobbs family, as many others, the elder sisters were very dominant over the other siblings. This appears to be the case with Harriet, Jane and Maria in their letters to the other siblings in the family.<sup>9</sup> Older siblings, like the Dobbs sisters discussed here, often acted as 'go-betweens' for younger siblings and adults in the household. This created a special bond, and older sisters often had a near parental role. Older sisters were impactful on the younger siblings social and familial development. As young adults it was not unusual for middle- and upper-class children to remain in the familial home well into their twenties, Particularly, women, who were expected to remain in the home until their marriage. Maria was obviously broke from this norm, though remaining in the (semi-mobile) household of her sister and brother-in-law was still respectable.<sup>10</sup> In fact, Maria's journey to India with her sister was not unusual. Often an unmarried sister would join the newlyweds on their post-wedding journeys to help the couple settle into their new home and new life. Maria was there in part to help Jane run her new household, and to keep Jane company when Alick was away from the home for long periods of time.<sup>11</sup> Shared social circles of friends of the family, and friends of siblings, were where the usual marital pool.<sup>12</sup> This is evident with the marriages of all three sisters in this paper, as they all wed acquaintances of the family. Davidoff also argues that the patterns of behaviour established in childhood often

---

<sup>6</sup> Original Cartwright Letterbook, Forward by Maria Sophia Dobbs, page 1-2.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Leonore Davidoff, *Thicker than Water: Siblings and their Relationships, 1780-1920* (Oxford Press, 2011): 109.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 134.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 154-155.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 134.

continued into adulthood.<sup>13</sup> This can be seen with Harriet and Jane's behaviour in particular, as they gave advice and took on leadership roles even amongst their adult siblings.<sup>14</sup>

Upon her arrival to India one thing is clear in Jane's letters— she hated it there. She hated the heat, the lack of proper society, the housing, the government corruption, and of course the 'native people'. She hated being away from her son, and she missed her friends and family in Ireland. She also hated how ill and weak she became, as both the food and the climate did not agree with her.<sup>15</sup> The distance from 'home' became ever more painful when Jane received the news that her son Alexander had passed away in her absence. In these heart wrenching letters Jane assures her sisters that she in no way blames them for his death, and that they were all aware that it was a possibility.

Shortly after her eldest son's death Jane birthed another son – also named Alexander. She became quite ill and weak afterwards. Alick's career forced them to relocate to a new city, and on the journey the baby became quite unwell. According to Jane's letters the nurse, an Indian woman, neglected Alexander and started feeding him opium to keep him quiet when he became fussy. This made him even sicker, eventually he lost the use of his lower limbs.<sup>16</sup> Though several doctors came to attend to the baby, he showed no signs of improvement. Alick and Jane were forced to make another difficult decision. They sent Alexander to Ireland to live with the Dobbs family so that he could get access to better medical care and a friendlier climate.

This decision was also influenced by the volatile nature of India's political climate in the 1830s, as Jane frequently records riots and general unrest under the colonial regime. Alick was actually facing a court martial, which occupied a large section of letters for months and months. This was a complicated story of religious and colonial principals. Some Christians in Bangalore hung a pig up outside a mosque in an obvious gesture of disrespect. In response, some 'Mohammedians' burned down a Christian Church. Tensions continued to rise in between the British occupants and Bangalore and the indigenous Indian population. Local leadership recongized that something needed to be done, and Alick was instructed to build a Mosque. He immediately refused. Jane supported Alick's decision as a matter of Christian principal. The case against Alick was eventually dismissed due to other more pressing issues and a change in local command.<sup>17</sup> Needless to say 1832/3 was a terribly stressful time for Jane, not to mention during all this she was once again pregnant and gave birth to another child. A baby boy named Conway after her father. This child only survived a few months. In 1834 Alick Lawe mentions

---

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 115-121.

<sup>15</sup> Letter, From Jane Dobbs Lawe to Mrs. C Dobbs, Jan 31<sup>st</sup> 1832, Original Cartwright Letterbook, page 5-8.

<sup>16</sup> Letter, From Jane Dobbs Lawe to Conway Dobbs Esq. Camp 17 miles from Bangalore, March the 3<sup>rd</sup> 1832, Original Cartwright Letterbook, 8-11.

<sup>17</sup> Letter, From Jane Dobbs Lawe to Conway Dobbs Esq. Camp 17 miles from Bangalore, March the 3<sup>rd</sup> 1832, Original Cartwright Letterbook, 8-11. See also an article in the India Times :

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/politics-and-nation/date-with-history-thatched-roof-church-that-saved-people-of-all-faiths-from-plague/articleshow/56114619.cms>

that “out of four boys but one is left alive,” which suggests that Jane gave birth to another son that didn’t survive.<sup>18</sup>

1835 was another tough year for Jane. She wrote to her family in Ireland constantly for news of little Alexander, who was thankfully thriving in his new environment. She was happy for his health but terrified she would never see him again.<sup>19</sup> This fear actually was very well founded. She never did see her son again. Jane became pregnant yet again, this time with a daughter, Maria Rosalind, named after her mother and sister. At this time Jane was much grieved to hear of the loss of her sister Harriet’s firstborn son, also named Conway, and she noted that she was suspicious of the name ‘Conway’ as the children bearing that name all passed in infancy. Sharing the loss of their children seemed to bring a new bond between Jane and Harriet, despite the years apart at this point. Jane wrote constantly of her desire to return to home to Ireland and for the family to be reunited. Her hatred of India grew with each year and with the loss of each child. Her own health continued to deteriorate following every pregnancy. 1837 brought yet another child, a little girl named Fanny who was strong and healthy. During this period Jane and Harriet keep in anxious contact as their pregnancies, and the risks involved left them afraid for their offspring, their own lives, and that they might not see each other again.

This fear was realized in 1838 when Jane died. The letters from Alick to the Dobbs family in Ireland, and to Harriet in Upper Canada, were heart wrenching. Alick laid out the details of Jane’s last days, from her lingering illness and weakness during her final pregnancy, to finally breathing her last after giving birth prematurely to her youngest child, a boy named Henry.<sup>20</sup> This was complicated by the fact that Alick was not actually there when she died, he had travelled to another city for work and while he was away she perished. He didn’t even make it back in time for her burial. Alick’s letters are tainted by guilt both from leaving her in her time of need, and for forcing her to stay in India in the first place even when her health deteriorated. Harriet had written to Alick begging him to send Jane home to Ireland just a few months before Jane’s death for the sake of her health. Harriet even offered to pay for the journey. This knowledge did not help Alick’s guilt. It does show that through their lengthy separation and loss after loss, Jane and Harriet maintained a close, loving and supportive relationship.<sup>21</sup>

## Point 2: Maria

---

<sup>18</sup> Letter, From Jane Dobbs Lawe to Mrs. C. Dobbs, Cannanore Dec. 18<sup>th</sup> 1835. Original Cartwright Letterbook, 30-31. This child was possibly named Richard, though this is difficult to tease out from the letters. Richard was a commonly used name in the Dobbs family, so it was likely that Jane would have chosen this name.

<sup>19</sup> Letter, From Alick Lawe to Mrs. C. Dobbs, Cannanore, 12<sup>th</sup> Oct. –34, Original Cartwright Letterbook, 25-26.

<sup>20</sup> Letter, From Alick Lawe to Mr. Dobbs, In the June, March 10<sup>th</sup> 1838, Original Cartwright Letterbook, 38-39; Letter, From Alick Lawe to Mrs. Harriet Cartwright, Feb. 24 1838, Original Cartwright Letterbook, 39-40; Letter, From Alick Lawe to Mrs. C. Dobbs, March 1838, Original Cartwright Letterbook, 40-42. This series of heartbreaking letters from Alick Lawe to various members of Jane’s family are very revealing about Jane’s last days on earth. She suffered greatly, the weakness that came with her final pregnancy took a horrific toll on her body and mind. It is also revealing of the guilt that Alick felt for causing his wife’s pain and suffering. Despite this, Alick remarried fairly quickly after Jane’s death and sent his living children to live in Ireland with the Dobbs family.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

The second sister, Maria also ended up in India. She actually decided to join Jane and Alick in 1830 when they left Ireland.<sup>22</sup> Maria's letters maddeningly hint towards a scandal/sin which drove her to leave Ireland and relocate to India without any solid plan other than being with her sister, though she never outright states what this scandal was. Obviously, her family was already well aware of the issue, so it never needed to be explained in her letters. There were certain letter conventions which were followed in by correspondents all over the empire at this point, as this was the primary form of communication in this period. Politeness dictated that certain unpleasantries be coded and not stated outright. Which leads to absences in letters which historians can only speculate upon.<sup>23</sup>

Her writing has a very different tone than Jane's. Though she also does not particularly enjoy the Indian climate she treats the journey as more of an adventure. Or at least that is what her letters portray. Jane's letters say that Maria was sickly and moody, whereas Maria's letters say that Jane is actually the one who is brooding and unhappy. The letters from the middle stages of their journey to India, when read back to back, really portray that sibling relationship of teasing and taunting.<sup>24</sup>

Maria wrote to her family in Ireland frequently about what kept her busy during their travels. She read, studied, practiced languages and ruminated on the meaning of her faith. She most often wrote about how deeply she loved and missed her family and their friends, and how being scattered throughout the empire did nothing to hinder that love, "it is really quite wonderful to think how completely scattered all those are who formed our intimate circle... – Sarah, Harriet, Julia – Robert, Edward all scattered, 'tis what we shall be through life, 'tis emblematic of that each will most likely pursue a different path through life,"<sup>25</sup>

Still, she confessed to frequently feeling lonely as she watched Jane and Alick, with their quiet affections.<sup>26</sup>

Within a few months of their arrival to India Maria met Mr. Waters, a man whose manners and intellect she was immediately taken with. Jane's letters paint a slightly different picture of the man, who was apparently a nice widower, but very old for their young and vibrant sister. But Jane also notes that he was religious and kind, and intended to spoil Maria with attention. Despite Jane's reservations, Maria and Mr. Waters wed that same year and went off to make their own home. The wedding, which took place in Madras, India was apparently quite pleasant, and seeing as Mr. Waters only had three years left to serve in India, the couple planned to have a house there and then move back to Ireland ASAP.<sup>27</sup> This was not meant to be though, as Maria died in November, a few months after her marriage. Maria's health was already poor, and the letters hint that Maria was possibly pregnant or had given

---

<sup>22</sup> Letter, Letter 1<sup>st</sup> to Miss M. from Maria Dobbs, July 2<sup>nd</sup> 1830, Kingstown, Original Cartwright Letterbook, page 44.

<sup>23</sup> Laura Ishiguro, *Nothing to Write Home About: British Family Correspondence and the Settler Colonial Everyday in British Columbia*, (UBC Press, 2019): 62-85.

<sup>24</sup> Letter, Letter 6<sup>th</sup>, From Maria Dobbs to Maria Sophia Dobbs (her mother), September 30<sup>th</sup> 1830, Original Cartwright Letterbook, page 49-51.

<sup>25</sup> Letter, Letter 5<sup>th</sup>, To Miss M. From Maria Dobbs, Ryde, Tuesday Evening August 24<sup>th</sup> 1830, Original Cartwright Letterbook, page 48-49.

<sup>26</sup> Letter, Letter 7<sup>th</sup>, To Miss M From Maria Dobbs, October 17<sup>th</sup> on board the Neptune, Original Cartwright Letterbook, page 51-53.

<sup>27</sup> Letter, From Maria Y Dobbs to Miss McN, Madras May 24<sup>th</sup> 1831, Original Cartwright Letterbook, 63-65; Letter To Conway Dobbs Esq. From Jane Dobbs Lawe, Madras June 14<sup>th</sup> 1831, Original Cartwright Letterbook, 2-4.

birth, and this ended her life. Mr. Waters was devastated, and when he went to inform Alick and Jane about the loss, Alick begged him to keep her death secret from Jane, who was confined with Alexander II and already in delicate health. Apparently on her death bed Maria called for her sisters, in particular Jane, though it is not clear if Mr. Waters told the family this just to comfort them. I do not know what happened to the child (if there was a child).<sup>28</sup> I do know that Mr. Waters continued to maintain a relationship with Jane and Harriet through letters after Maria's passing, going so far as to visit the family at the Dobbs family home in Ireland when his colonial service ended.

### Point 3: Harriet

The last of the 'main' sisters to marry, Harriet, was wed in 1832 to Upper Canadian clergyman Rev. Robert David Cartwright. Robert and Harriet had known each other for a while, Robert's sister Mary was married to Harriet's Uncle who served in the British military and was stationed in Kingston, Upper Canada.<sup>29</sup> Shared social circles of friends of the family, and friends of siblings, were where the usual marital pool.<sup>30</sup> This is evident with the marriages of all three sisters in this paper, as they all wed acquaintances of the family.<sup>31</sup> It was not uncommon for families to have more than one relative connected through marriage. When Harriet's Uncle died, Mary travelled to Dublin and stayed with the Dobbs family to grieve, and her brother Robert (along with his twin brother John Solomon Cartwright) accompanied her.<sup>32</sup> Robert came up with several excuses to stay in Dublin for an extended period of time. Therefore, the family was well acquainted with Robert when he proposed to Harriet, his time in Ireland had even overlapped with Jane and Alick's marriage and the birth of the first Alexander. Robert proposed in 1831, and he was initially denied by Harriet's father, as he was unsure that Robert had the finances to support a wife and family properly. Jane's letters in reaction to Harriet's engagement were also very strong. Jane really did not want Harriet to marry Robert because of finances and because moving to Canada meant that the family would probably never see Harriet again because of the distance. Of course, Jane's fear actually reflects the situation she found herself in in India, as Jane never was able to return to her beloved homeland after marrying a man in the colonial service.<sup>33</sup> Despite the cautioning from her family, Harriet and Robert wed in Dublin in 1832. It should be noted that Robert, a member of the wealthy Cartwright family, had \$10,000 and an enormous amount of land to his name at this time due to an inheritance, but he was not always the best with money so the Dobbs family's concerns were not unfounded.<sup>34</sup> In a reveling letter from John to Robert in 1838 demonstrates the issues with their finances. Robert was spending too much money on his charitable and religious endeavours, and John had made several poor investments. They both had traveled around

---

<sup>28</sup> Letter, From Mr. Waters to Mr Dobbs, Chiltoor 3<sup>rd</sup> November 1831, Original Cartwright Letterbook page 79-91.

<sup>29</sup> Margaret Angus, Cartwright Family Tree, Queen's Archives MF 2175.

<sup>30</sup> Davidoff, *Blood is Thicker than Water*, 134.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Letter, from Robert David Cartwright in Liverpool, Oxford, Queen's College, to Mr. Strachan in York, Upper Canada, North America, January 4<sup>th</sup> 1828, MS 186 Cartwright Letter Reel, Archives of Ontario.

<sup>33</sup> Letter, from Jane Dobbs Lawe to Mrs C. Dobbs, August 14<sup>th</sup> 1832, Original Cartwright Letterbook, page 12-13.

<sup>34</sup> Letter, John Cartwright to Robert Cartwright, August 1838, MS 1989 Archives of Ontario, page 8-11.

Europe for educational purposes in their youth as well, which had cost a significant amount of money. From their combined \$20,000, and that had now been reduced to \$13, 700, of which Robert's portion was around \$4000. Though they owned multiple properties which they collected rent on, they had overextended their developments in Kingston and Napanee, and John advised that they both sell some of their holdings so that they could pay off some of their existing debts.<sup>35</sup>

Harriet and Robert's journey to Upper Canada after their wedding took about a year, as they sailed from Liverpool and landed in New York, and then eventually arrived in Kingston.<sup>36</sup> Upon arrival in Kingston Harriet was faced with place that was so similar and yet so different than Dublin. She noted that the weather was quite familiar, not nearly as bad as people had led her to believe. The amenities were also not as lacking as she thought they would be, there was Church and society.<sup>37</sup> But Harriet also wrote to her family slightly annoyed that Robert had misled her about his housing situation. Robert had promised her a fully furnished functional household. What she actually got was an empty unfurnished house that didn't even have any plates or spoons. Because the household was not set up Robert and Harriet had to go next door to Robert's twin brother John's house and eat every meal there. Though Harriet was already acquainted with John and quickly grew to appreciate his wife Sarah, she was not pleased that Robert had misled her.<sup>38</sup> It also did look good to her family considering their already expressed concerns about Robert's financial situation. It would also take some time to set up a proper upper-class household in Upper Canada in this period, as there was a lack of access to many luxuries. It took time to import goods such as silk, china, and silverware, so an empty house was a serious setback. This was also somewhat of an embarrassing introduction to Kingston society, as it was important for the newly married couple to present a respectable front to the community.<sup>39</sup>

Luckily for Robert, one thing that becomes apparent about from her letters was Harriet's pragmatic nature. She had no interest in 'wasting' time with pleasantries or social conventions, preferring to devote her time to prayer and good works.<sup>40</sup> After the initial shock, it appears that Kingston society accepted that Harriet would not be attending balls or doing a lot of polite visiting. It was through her volunteering that Harriet really found her place in Canada. This was how she accomplished the majority of her socialization. Harriet immediately started up a Sunday School program at Robert's church, and a prayer group for young women. She also started a sewing group, selling their wares to support the 'poor' of Kingston. She volunteered at the Female Benevolent Society and the Orphan and Widow's Friend Society. Harriet was also

---

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Letter, Harriet Dobbs Cartwright to Mrs. Conway Dobbs in Summerhill Dublin, Letter 1<sup>st</sup> November 26 1832, Original Cartwright Letterbook, 91-93; Letter, Harriet Dobbs Cartwright, packet, Letter 4<sup>th</sup> On board the Britania April 29<sup>th</sup> 1833, 96-99; Letter, To Jane Dobbs from Harriet Cartwright, Letter 7<sup>th</sup> Shea Canal Boat, June 1<sup>st</sup> 1833, Original Cartwright Letterbook, page 103-106.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> Douglas McCalla, *Consumers in the Bush: Shopping in Rural Canada,* (McGill-Queen's Press, 2015): 3-6, 37-60.

<sup>40</sup> Letter, To Miss M.C. Dobbs, From Harriet Dobbs Cartwright, Letter 17<sup>th</sup>, Kingston January 2<sup>nd</sup> 1834, Original Cartwright Letterbook, page 124-125.

involved in the establishment and running of Kingston General Hospital, Rockwood Asylum for the Insane, and St. Paul's Anglican Church.

Immediately upon her arrival to Upper Canada Harriet became involved in various volunteering communities in Kingston. Her husband Robert was already involved in benevolent work on Wednesdays, teaching young people reading, writing and lessons in morality. Harriet accompanied him most of the time, and only a few months after her arrival in Kingston she was already organizing a separate group for young ladies to study scripture together. This also served as a much-needed social group for the young women in the Kingston upper-class community. She also started a women's sewing group, which sold their wares and donated the proceeds to support the 'poor' of the community.<sup>41</sup>

Robert's work greatly influenced Harriet's and if I dare say, vice versa was also true. Robert also spent Monday and Tuesday afternoons visiting the Hospitals and the jail, as the Kingston Penitentiary had just opened and required a minister for the moral guidance of the prisoners. Robert's involvement with the hospitals and prison opened the door for much of Harriet's work.

All of these commitments took Harriet away from her home and family for large periods of time each day. In 1834 Harriet wrote to her closest friend, Marianne Martley, who lived in Dublin, Ireland, about "...the apprehensions that seems to have arisen at home, that I may be doing too much and neglecting home duties. I do not wish to be misunderstood... but I know, that both by myself and by others much time is squandered on frivolous and vain pursuits or in 'shapeless idleness', that might well be redeemed for more useful occupations."<sup>42</sup> This quote is a demonstration of how Harriet viewed volunteering, religion and home duties. Her devotion to the evangelical religious movement took her away from her home and family which she found significantly less interesting than her pursuits in the community. Luckily for Harriet she had her sisters-in-law Mary and Sarah who took on most of the household and childrearing responsibilities so that she could be involved in these voluntary activities. This was a type of socially accepted (or mostly socially accepted) rebellion. She frequently used her devotion to the Lord to escape her domestic and social obligations.<sup>43</sup> Not to say that her religious devotion was fake, it just also suited her own purposes and passions in life.

There were a number of causes that were particularly important to Harriet – including the hospital, the penitentiary, and the insane asylum. All of these institutions, even in the early days of their creation, provided important – though flawed- services to the Kingston community.

One of the most lasting effects of Harriet's volunteering is the foundation of the Kingston General Hospital. I would also like to note that so many other women were central to this and their labor should in no way be diminished. Because of that I would like to take a minute to rewind and provide some background information about the hospital before Harriet's arrival to Upper Canada. I also would like to acknowledge my debt to Dr. Margaret

---

<sup>41</sup> Letter 11<sup>th</sup>, York Upper Canada, Aug. 19<sup>th</sup>, 1833, To Miss McNaghten, From Harriet Cartwright, Cartwright Letterbook.

<sup>42</sup> Letter, To Miss Marianne Martley, 8 July 1834, From Harriet Cartwright.

<sup>43</sup> Katherine M. J. McKenna, "'The Union Between Faith and Good Works': The Life of Harriet Dobbs Cartwright, 1808-1887" in *Changing Roles of Women within the Christian Church in Canada* edited by Elizabeth Gillian Muir and Marilyn Fargid Whiteley. 290-293.



Angus, a former archivist at Queen's whose work on the history of the Kingston General Hospital has been invaluable to directing my work for this paper and more generally for my thesis.<sup>44</sup>

In 1827 the women of the Female Benevolent Society were running out of funds as donations from the community dried up. They were forced to restrict the number of people admitted. By 1829 some of the prominent men of Kingston applied for a government grant on behalf of the FBS because they could not do so themselves, and in 1831 there was an agreement in a public meeting that a public hospital was a necessity. The FBS petitioned the legislature for funds, and it also collected subscriptions from the Kingston community to provide additional support. In Jan 1832, the Assembly awarded the FBS 3000 pounds to aid in the building of a hospital. But the cholera epidemic that summer halted any progress as the city scrambled to deal with the immediate emergency. This is when Harriet arrived in Upper Canada and became involved in the Female Benevolent Society. The Female Benevolent Society had already been operating a hospital for a while out of a blockhouse. Harriet was impressed by the upper-class women running the institution, though she was less of a fan of the hospital's lower-class clientele. "there has been a Female Benevolent Hospital in Operation for some time, which will give place to the larger one next year, at present a Block House is used...for all the villains in the province being built at the expense of the Government, it is to be modelled I believe after a celebrated one at Auburn in the States..."<sup>45</sup>

As an upper-class woman, it was not unusual for Harriet to be involved with such voluntary activities. In 1835 Kingston finally built its hospital, unfortunately that same year the hospital burnt down in a massive fire that destroyed a significant part of Kingston. This fire,

---

<sup>44</sup> Ibid. 288. The quest for a local hospital begins in 1817 when the Kingston Compassionate Society was established to provide aid privately to the immigrant sick and poor. Middle- and Upper-Class women who had free time were not permitted to work for monetary gain in the public sphere, but they were allowed to work for free if it was 'good works'. Women's charitable activities were widespread in the nineteenth century. It was one of the ways women could subvert the gendered expectations of propriety. Margaret Angus, *Kingston General Hospital: A Social and Institutional History*, McGill-Queen's University Press (1973): 3. The Kingston Compassionate Society was loosely based on the Montreal Ladies Benevolent Society which was already running a 'House of Recovery' at this time. Edwin E. Horsey, *Care of Sick and Hospitalization at Kingston, Ontario, 1783-1938*. Kingston: Self-Published. (1939): 14-23. Within six months the Kingston Compassionate Society was already overwhelmed by the amount of people needing aid, and they quickly recognized that it was not just new arrivals who were sick but many Kingston residents as well. In 1818 the magistrates granted several lots of land for the building of a hospital, but a year later (1819) the government discontinued providing funds for aiding the poor, which once again put the onus on private groups. The Compassionate Society opened a single room as a temporary hospital which was operated seasonally. In (late 1820) early 1821 the Kingston Compassionate Society was reformed into the Female Benevolent Society, whose mandate was "to visit the sick poor, enquire into their circumstances, administer necessary relief and endeavor to stir them up to industry, method, neatness and economy." Angus, "Kingston General Hospital," 4. The purpose of this new organization went far beyond healing just the physical body. It was concerned about total self-improvement and reformation of character. Morality and health went hand in hand. The women of the Female Benevolent Society were responsible for founding, funding, and running the hospital in Kingston for more than twenty years. Over the years, the physical location changed, from an old blockhouse, to an empty brewery warehouse, to an actual building built with the intention of operating as a hospital so it came from rather humble roots. At first the hospital operated seasonally and relied on retired and half-pay military surgeons who donated their time and expertise free of charge. This included Dr. James Sampson, one of the most well-known surgeons in nineteenth century Kingston.

<sup>45</sup> Letter 16<sup>th</sup>, January 6<sup>th</sup> 1834, To Miss M, From Harriet Cartwright, Cartwright Letterbook

where one person in the hospital died, also took with it all of the FBS materials and supplies, as well as most of their funds.<sup>46</sup> Harriet was involved in the revitalization project that followed, particularly with fundraising and organizational management. She was also one of the visitors who went to actually meet the poor families to learn about their housing, finances and most importantly their religious affiliations. Though the hospital was open to all denomination, there was a heavy favoring of Protestants, in particular Anglicans, as the women of the Female Benevolent Society were all Protestants and were mostly Anglican. "All that we have yet done has been to call together the members of the Female Benevolent Society there was an Hospital to attend to but which has been in a manner extinct since the Hospital was burnt to reorganize the Society collect funds appoint visitors purchase material & give our work and as Mrs Wilson our secretary and myself have undertaken to superintend this attribution of work the chief part of the practical details will be in our management but though all this is the ostensible objection [we] view the far more important part of the work to be done is the visiting of the families of the poor and thus obtaining a general knowledge of their habits wants and attendance on religious ordinances it will in fact be a general district visiting society carried into effect with this difference from those at home that members of all the Protestant denominations here are united I hope in objections & difficulties may here arise in carrying on the works for we have need here as well as in other regions to forget our dissensions and disputes and unite against the formidable increasing power of Popery & infidelity."<sup>47</sup>

Even before the fire the block house hospital had already been overcrowded, as there were so many emigrants who were in desperate need of any type of aid. Harriet notes that most of these emigrants were Irish Roman Catholics who were impoverished and subjected to typical racial and religious profiling of the time. "The place was full before the burning that occurrence in ethril and then became crowded & now it is overflowing scarcely a spot to be had for either love or money and as most of the emigrants to that have tarried here either are or pretend to be utterly destitute you may imagine their difficulties. After some delay the use of the Hospital was obtained in which 57 sick emigrants were sheltered the last time I visited it, a number of families are crowded into a Block House near this and others have tents pitched in the common or a few boards fastened together for a shelter on the tarps where many of them have laid for days & nights without any protection at all from the noon day Sun or the evening dews not one in ten have ever bonnets on their heads or shoes to their feet it is little marvel that they suffer from the change of climate and severe hardships they endure They are almost all Roman Catholics from the West & South unable to read and half barbareus in appearance and manner although a Roman Catholic Lady talking of them yesterday said they were nothing like the savages from the North."<sup>48</sup>

Now it is important to remember that Harriet's identity as an upper-class Anglican Irish woman definitely had an influence on how she viewed poverty and illness and the people who she was committed to 'help'. She was extremely bigoted against Catholicism and associated it with poverty and the 'lower classes'. The comment about these impoverished people being "half barbarous in appearance and manner" indicates her low opinion of the people she was

---

<sup>46</sup> Angus, "Kingston General Hospital," 11-12.

<sup>47</sup> Letter, Dec. 20<sup>th</sup> finished 26<sup>th</sup>, To Mother and Sister, From Harriet Cartwright, Original Cartwright Letterbook.

<sup>48</sup> Letter, Kingston July 25<sup>th</sup> 1840, To My Dearest Sisters, From Harriet Cartwright, Original Cartwright Letterbook.

serving at the Hospital. She was probably not the only one with this opinion in the FBS, considering it was an organization run by upper-class women of similar class standing.

In the late 1830s Harriet also explained in her letters home to Ireland how the FBS planned on funding, rebuilding and running the hospital. Instead of collecting funds from the community the FBS the women managed to take the issue to the legislature/house of assembly which voted and agreed to pay the rent for the hospital under the care of the women of the FBS. Harriet herself took on the role Secretary of the hospital, which was a continuation of her management and visitation role which she began much earlier. "We have been busy all day reorganizing the Female Benevolent Society to Superintend the arrangements of the Hospital & dispose to the best advantage of funds entrusted to our care there will not be any collection needed as we have a vote of the Legislature for rent for our Hospital which has been turned into a house of Assembly I have undertaken the Office of Secretary and shall also have a share of visiting which with the management of the affairs of our own Church of England District visiting will occupy much of my time this winter. But I hope we may do some good if we only carry out our plans more fully I am trying to form little visiting circles to consist together & promote useful plans but I know not yet how I shall get on when I make a commencement."<sup>49</sup> Here again it is clear that it was women involved in every aspect of running and funding the hospital.

Finally, in 1845 the Kingston General Hospital was opened officially as a charity hospital. This was an amazing feat, largely thanks to the women of the FBS who once again appealed for government aid.<sup>50</sup> The same year the Sisters of the Hotel Dieu opened up the Hotel Dieu hospital, which was a catholic charity hospital only a few blocks away from the protestant run Kingston General Hospital, so it is important to remember that there was a whole other group of charity driven women operating in the small space of Kingston also at this time taking care of the sick and poor.<sup>51</sup> The general management of KGH was in the hands of the Directress of the FBS and the day to day work was done by various volunteer visitors. Harriet was listed as the number one visitor of the Hospital at this time.<sup>52</sup> The women of the FBS continued to run the hospital full time for several years. This was increasingly difficult during the typhus epidemic of 1847, when waves and waves of deathly ill immigrants (particularly from Ireland) arrived on Kingston's shores. It is important to note that throughout the entire three-decades that it took to establish the Kingston General Hospital it was women who were primarily responding to the needs of the poor and sick during health care emergencies. Officially in 1849 the FBS stepped down from the daily affairs of the hospital and an official committee of men were appointed to take their place. Once the state took over running the hospital the efforts of these women were largely obscured and overlooked, similar to what was happening in Carmen Neilson's book about women's voluntary labour in Hamilton, Ontario.

If you look at the Kingston General Hospital Website, you will see a brief mention of the Female Benevolent Society's role in the history of the hospital, but it is just a cursory nod which

---

<sup>49</sup> Letter, Kingston Nov. 19<sup>th</sup> 1841, To My Dearest Mother, From Harriet Cartwright, Cartwright Letterbook.

<sup>50</sup> Angus, "Kingston General Hospital," 21.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid. 22.

<sup>52</sup> Kingston Chronicle and Gazette, 12 Nov. 1845.

does not do justice to the amount of labour and lobbying that occurred to make the hospital happen.

The Cartwright family, as mentioned earlier in this paper, was also very close to Dr. James Sampson, one of the main physicians involved with the hospital. In 1835 he was also appointed to work in the new Provincial Penitentiary. Between Robert's volunteering at the penitentiary, which he did on a weekly basis, and Dr. Sampson's role as the primary surgeon there, Harriet was drawn into this world of punishment and rehabilitation. Like in the case of the hospital, there is important background information on the penitentiary and the asylum which informs Harriet's involvement and the impact that these people and places had on the Kingston community.<sup>53</sup>

The Kingston Penitentiary was built in 1833-34 and opened in the summer of 1835. The foundational philosophy was heavily influenced by prisons in the United States. Shortly after opening, there were already issues with the prison.<sup>54</sup>

One of the major issues with nineteenth century penitentiaries, including the Kingston Penitentiary, was funding. Prison labour became important, and also in some cases controversial. Prisoners were expected to provide productive labour in this period, and through this labour the prisoners were expected to become morally reformed, like good Protestants. There were non-working prisoners though - the sick (both physically and mentally) and the disabled (both physically and intellectually). In many cases this prison labor caused serious mental and physical injury, disability, and even death.<sup>55</sup>

Mentally ill patients were originally in the West Wing of the Kingston prison, but they were moved temporarily to the basement in 1856. This 'temporary measure' lasted 8 years, until the Rockwood Asylum was opened in 1864.<sup>56</sup>

The focus in this period was on Moral therapy, but both the prison and the asylum frequently failed to provide the fresh air and exercise space required for these treatments. This 'moral therapy' also was a good excuse to force prisoners to provide prison labor in order to reform them into "good" citizens.<sup>57</sup>

---

<sup>53</sup> McKenna, "The Union Between Faith and Good Works,"

<sup>54</sup> Margaret Angus, "Dr. James Sampson: A Brief Biography." *Historic Kingston*, vol. 31 (1983): 14.

<sup>55</sup> Ted McCoy, "The Unproductive Prisoner: Labor and Medicine in Canadian Penitentiaries, 1867-1900," *Labor: Studies in Working-Class History of the Americas*, vol. 6, no. 4 (2010): 95-112. There were many different types of mentally ill people in prison in this period, and many prisoners lapsed into mental illness while incarcerated. There were also prisoners who were seen as mentally unfit to stand trial. Prisons were the only place to put those who were considered the 'dangerous insane'. But these mentally ill people cause issues within the prison, as they were frequently disruptive, and unable to work in many instances. In the 1850s some of these insane were sent to the first provincial lunatic asylum, which was located in Toronto (Kingston had bid for the institution to be located in Kingston, but Toronto won out).

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid; Kathleen Kendall, "Beyond Grace: Criminal Lunatic Women in Victorian Canada," *Canadian Woman Studies* vol. 18, no. 1-2 (Spring-Summer 1999). It is also important to remember that gender was also very important to the understanding of insanity and criminality. "Convict women were perceived as either more morally corrupt than criminal men because they violated natural law, or as innocent of circumstance." Men and women were kept separate in the prison, and also in the asylum when it was eventually built. It should be noted that Dr. Sampson was accused by the matron of the penitentiary of being overly close to a possible insane woman, Charlotte

Harriet's friendship with Dr. Sampson, and Robert's volunteering at the prison, led Harriet to become the first regular visitor to the female prisoners at the penitentiary. Horrified by the conditions and treatment of these women, who were confined to tiny cells, forced to clean and do enormous amounts of laundry, mending, and women's labor, and also whipped and facing the same physical punishments as the men, Harriet used her class position to advocate for a separate space for the mentally ill rather than being relegated to prison. Harriet was not the only person advocating for this separation, but as she is the focus of my thesis, she has centrality in my own research on the topic.

The history of the asylum in Kingston is complicated and sometimes contested. This place has gone by many names and had many purposes and meanings throughout the nineteenth century. Kingston Psychiatric Hospital, Rockwood Lunatic Asylum, the Penrose were some of the names which this institution held. Though there has been some work done on the early history of this institution, it can be difficult to tease out the details and nuances, in part due to privacy concerns and the slog of going through some of the archival records. I admit my own limitations here - with the pandemic I am unable to go through some of the records. The building itself, the Rockwood estate, was originally owned by John and Sarah Cartwright. The 40-acre estate right on the shores of Lake Ontario was in a prime location, at the time it was just outside Kingston and Portsmouth (with the city boundaries at the time) to prevent people from interacting with or gawking at the patients at the asylum. The Rockwood estate was rented as a private asylum in 1854, and plans were drawn for a new "Criminal Lunatic Jail" in 1856. That same year the Rockwood estate was purchased for this purpose. The stables at the former Cartwright residence were remodelled for almost two dozen women to take up residence. These women remained in the stables until the east wing of the new asylum opened in 1868. Early on in the planning stage it was decided by Sir John A. MacDonald and several other important men that the asylum would not house the criminally insane, but the mentally ill (this was a new distinction), and that convict labour from the nearby penitentiary would be used to build the institution. Construction began in the fall of 1859. "Association with the penitentiary system ended in 1877 when ownership was transferred from the Dominion of Canada to the Province of Ontario."<sup>58</sup>

The stables at Rockwood were where the first patients were housed for the asylum. The

---

Reveille. The prison warden and his wife also backed this charge. A commission finally recommended that a separate unit for women, and for the insane, be constructed.<sup>57</sup>

<sup>58</sup> Jennifer McKendry, "An Ideal Hospital: Rockwood Lunatic Asylum, Kingston, Ontario," *SSAC Bulletin SEAC* vol. 18, no. 1, page 7. It should not be overlooked that Asylum was built with prison labour, with blocks cut by prisoners in the quarry, and materials and objects built in the prison workshops. This all cut costs. The intended occupations of Rockwood changed several times. The issues arose with in new ideas of classification of illness and criminality. There was a growing distinction between those who were incarcerated at the penitentiary that distinguished those who were mentally disturbed but had broken no laws. There was also serious concerns about the more violent and disturbing 'insane' who would disturb the peace and silence that was expected at the penitentiary. Inhumanely, these people were currently kept in the basement of the penitentiary as a temporary asylum. But the inclusion of the non-criminal insane did not mean that the atmosphere of Rockwood was not prison-like. Despite some idealist goals, the asylum was not very different than a prison. A visitor to the prison in 1864, Mr. Evans, described the place in very grim terms, "The inmates were kept each in his cell, with his prison bucket for his needs, chains for his limbs if he became too troublesome, while his food was passed to him through a great hole in the door, and his nurses were called keepers."

female patients were housed there while the plans and building were being created. At the same time, according to V.E. Appleton - but without any direct evidence pointing to his sources - "The Cartwright mansion itself was occupied by the superintendent, Dr. J. P. Litchfield and also by 'a well-to-do gentleman of the Cartwright family whose mind was unsound.' There was also a small stone cottage occupied by another member of the family. These stables were used as an asylum from 1856-1865, when the new building of the Criminal Lunatic Asylum at Rockwood was formally opened. By the end of 1867 the west wing for women was completed..." Rockwood was originally intended for the criminally insane, but this forced people to lie about the dangers which their loved ones posed to society in order for them to be committed. To avoid this, in 1862 the plan shifted to use Rockwood as a general and a criminal asylum.<sup>59</sup>

Harriet's involvement as a visitor to both the prison and the asylum, and the Cartwright family involvement is a very interesting, but small part of the history of these interconnected institutions.

This really separated Harriet from her sisters, as she was able to establish her own life and a career of sorts outside of her husband. The climate in Canada also suited Harriet, who remained quite healthy, in comparison to Jane and Maria in India.

Things were not perfect in Upper Canada for Harriet though. In 1834 Harriet gave birth to her firstborn, a son she named Conway after her father. As I mentioned earlier in this presentation, this child died around the age of one. Harriet and Robert were both devastated by this loss. Robert pulled away emotionally from everyone, this was not helped by the fact that his own health was in rapid decline. Harriet bonded particularly with Jane and even her sister-in-law Sarah in this period, as they were all mothers who had lost children.<sup>60</sup>

When baby Conway passed Harriet was already pregnant with another child. Shortly afterward she gave birth to Richard (who would eventually become Sir Richard Cartwright for those of you who may have heard of Laurier's second in command).<sup>61</sup> They were happy to have a healthy child, Robert apparently looked at him and only saw the son they had already lost. Though Harriet went on to have four healthy living children, and experienced no more infant loss, the sadness of losing their first child seemed to remain with both Robert and Harriet for the remainder of their lives.<sup>62</sup>

Robert died of consumption in 1843. This left Harriet a large amount of money and complete control over her life. Harriet and her sister-in-law Sarah combined households, and Sarah took over raising the children while Harriet doubled down on her volunteering. Harriet thrived well into her seventies, residing in Canada but taking frequent trips Ireland and maintaining those ties to her family that continued to live there.

---

<sup>59</sup> V. E. Appleton, "Psychiatry in Canada a Century Ago," *Canadian Psychiatric Association Journal* vol. 12, no. 4 (August 1967): 357-358.

<sup>60</sup> Letter, To My Dearest Mother, from Harriet Cartwright, Kingston Sept. 7<sup>th</sup> 1835, Original Cartwright Letterbook, page 147-148.

<sup>61</sup> Cecilia Morgan and Robert Craig Brown, "Cartwright, Sir Richard John," in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 14, University of Toronto, 2003 [http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/cartwright\\_richard\\_john\\_14E.html](http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/cartwright_richard_john_14E.html)

<sup>62</sup> Letter, To My Dear Mother, from Harriet Cartwright, Kingston, August 18<sup>th</sup> 1835, Original Cartwright Letterbook, page 145-147; Letter, To My Dearest Mother, from Harriet Cartwright, Kingston Sept. 7<sup>th</sup> 1835, Original Cartwright Letterbook, page 147-148.

### Conclusion:

Though these are brief snapshots of the lives of these women, it is evident that their close sibling relationship played an important role in both their emotional and physical lives. Maria moved to India with Jane, Harriet and Jane relied on each other for support after the loss of their children, Jane confided in Harriet about her issues with her marriage. There was an international circle of support between these sisters that was sustained through their brief lifetimes. Each sister led a unique life, but they were similarly influenced by the empire.

There were also major differences in their experiences. One difference between Harriet, Jane and Maria was their conceptions of home. Ireland was always Jane's home, she never connected emotionally with India. Even for Jane's children born in India, their real 'home' was Ireland. And before she married Mr. Waters, Maria was planning to return to their homeland. Harriet saw Ireland as her 'home' before the birth of her children. After she became a mother her language shifted, and she began to frame Ireland as her 'early' home, and Canada as her current home, as Canada was the home of her husband and children. Part of this difference may be attributed to the temporary nature of Jane and Maria's residence in India, it was always their plan to return to Ireland Harriet planned on living in Canada with her husband permanently. Jane and Maria ended up dying and never seeing their home again. Harriet on the other hand made frequent journeys to Ireland to visit her parents and siblings, and she was even able to form a strong bond between her children and their cousins. The closeness of this next generation was accomplished, and then some, as Jane's daughter ends up marrying Harriet's son Richard.<sup>63</sup> Even though Harriet made many trips to Ireland she never saw her beloved Jane or Maria again.

The stories of these sisters demonstrate how there were so many similarities in their lives and yet also vast differences. All of their lives were directly impacted by empire and colonialism. All of their lives were full of love and pain and loss. Yet despite the distance, despair, and frustration these sisters managed to maintain a close intimacy between them.

---

<sup>63</sup> Cecilia Morgan and Robert Craig Brown, "Cartwright, Sir Richard John," in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 14, University of Toronto, 2003 [http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/cartwright\\_richard\\_john\\_14E.html](http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/cartwright_richard_john_14E.html)

## Bibliography

### Primary Sources:

Kingston Chronicle and Gazette, 12 Nov. 1845.

Original Cartwright Letterbook, Queen's University Archives, Kingston Ontario.

### Secondary Sources:

Angus, Margaret. "Dr. James Sampson: A Brief Biography." *Historic Kingston*, vol. 31 (1983).

----- . *Kingston General Hospital: A Social and Institutional History*. McGill-Queen's University Press, 1973.

Appleton, V.E. "Psychiatry in Canada a Century Ago." *Canadian Psychiatric Association Journal* vol. 12, no. 4 (August 1967).

Davidoff, Leonore. *Thicker than Water: Siblings and their Relationships*. 1780-1920. Oxford Press, 2011.

Horse, Edwin E. *Care of Sick and Hospitalization at Kingston, Ontario*. Kingston: Self-Published, 1939.

Ishiguro, Laura. *Nothing to Write Home About: British Family Correspondence and the Settler Colonial Everyday in British Columbia*. UBC Press, 2019.

Kendall, Kathleen. "Beyond Grace: Criminal Lunatic Women in Victorian Canada." *Canadian Woman Studies* vol. 18, no. 1-2 (Spring-Summer 1999).

McCalla, Douglas. *Consumers in the Bush: Shopping in Rural Canada*. McGill-Queen's Press, 2015.

McCoy, Ted. "The Unproductive Prisoner: Labor and Medicine in Canadian Penitentiaries, 1867-1900." *Labor: Studies in Working-Class History of the Americas*, vol. 6, no. 4 (2010).

McKendry, Jennifer. "An Ideal Hospital: Rockwood Lunatic Asylum, Kingston, Ontario." *SSAC Bulletin SEAC* vol. 18, no. 1.

McKenna, Katherine. "'The Union Between Faith and Good Works': The Life of Harriet Dobbs Cartwright, 1808-1887." in *Changing Roles of Women within the Christian Church in Canada* edited by Elizabeth Gillian Muir and Marilyn Fargid Whiteley.

Morgan, Cecilia and Robert Craig Brown. "Cartwright, Sir Richard John." in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 14, University of Toronto, 2003

[http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/cartwright\\_richard\\_john\\_14E.html](http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/cartwright_richard_john_14E.html)

Shekhar, Divya. *Date with history: Thatched roof church that saved people of all faiths from plague*, The Economic Times <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/politics-and-nation/date-with-history-thatched-roof-church-that-saved-people-of-all-faiths-from-plague/articleshow/56114619.cms>