CHAPTER 1

Rescuing and Sheltering
The Wartime Colonies

Alma A. Clarke tucked the little orphans in bed and kissed them goodnight before rejoining the nuns in the dining room of the Presles colony (Val d'Oise). Everywhere, parcels were piling up. The clothing, garments, books, toys, and other gifts shipped from the United States were signs of the American mobilization to save France's orphans. As she closed the dormitory door, Clarke thought about the upcoming commemorations for July 4. Along with telling stories to the children, Clarke had inspired the celebration of American national days such as George Washington's birthday and the Fourth of July.

As did hundreds of wealthy American women, Clarke had traveled to France to support the war effort. At the outbreak of the war, she had joined the American Red Cross and worked as a nurse, caring for wounded soldiers in the American Ambulance Hospital in Paris.[1] She stayed until October 1914, when she returned to the United States. However, when she heard of an American organization dedicated to the protection of French and Belgian orphans, she sent a letter of intent. Reading the letter, Mrs. C. P. Howland,[2] secretary of the Committee Franco-American for the Protection of the Children of the Frontier in New York, was convinced that Alma Clarke would be of great value to the children.[3] As soon as she arrived in France, Clarke presented herself in order to obtain a resident permit, a document that would allow her to travel without restrictions. A few days later, she arrived in Presles, where she was greeted by another

[1] Michelle Moravec, "'Till I Have Done All That I Can': An Auxiliary Nurse's Memories of World War I," *Historical Reflections* 42, no. 3 (2016): 71–90, at 72.

[2] Much of my research comes from archival materials such as meeting minutes and reports, newspaper articles, and correspondences, both personal and official. Consistent with their time and function, these sources often omit the first name of a person (especially of a woman). Where I have been unable to discover reliably a given or fuller name, I use the form in which it appeared in the source.

[3] Letter from Mrs. C. P. Howland to Alma Clarke, November 17, 1917, Alma A. Clarke Papers, 1914–1946, Series I. War Work, 1917–1919, Committee for the Protection of the Children of the Frontier, Box 1, Folder 2, BMC-M84, Bryn Mawr College.

American, Erica Thorp; the nuns; and the boys.[4] As was usual for Americans who normally stayed exclusively in a particular colony, Clarke became a permanent member of the Presles colony.

Throughout World War I, American women like Clarke traveled to France to work in the Franco-American colonies that gave refuge to children from the devastated and occupied regions, shielding them from the violence of war, destitution, and even death. In addition to caring for the children, they taught children about their friendly nation whose people were helping to ensure their survival.

America in French Imaginary: France in American Imaginary

By the turn of the twentieth century, both France and the United States enjoyed strong diplomatic, cultural, and economic bonds. The story of Lafayette's timely and unwavering support of the colonists' cause and France's military and diplomatic role during the American War of Independence (1775–1783) was anchored in the minds of Americans. The two nations shared similar destinies in their opposition to oppressive monarchies. Acquaintances and networks between American and French élites fed the revolution. Thomas Jefferson served as minister plenipotentiary for France (1785–1789) and regularly met prominent intellectuals such as Condorcet and Mirabeau.[5] French observers often viewed the United States "as a laboratory for the forging of new practices of *liberté* and *égalité*."[6] When charting new legislative frameworks and drafting new constitutions in the aftermath of 1789, constitutionalists consistently relied upon the New World's political order, in which a revolutionary vision of power demanded that the legislative power centralize the political decision-making process. Concepts such as checks and balances on governmental power captured the attention of successive thinkers and constitutionalists. In its Preamble, the American Constitution heralded ideals of

[4] Letter from Erica Thorp to her family, January 29, 1918, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow Family Papers (1768–1975), Section 2, Correspondence, Series IV, Erica Thorp de Berry (1890–1943), LONG29030, Longfellow House, Washington's Headquarters National Historic Site, Cambridge, MA. Thorp, who navigated between Grandbourg (Essonne) and Presles (Val d'Oise) to assist the nuns who cared for school children, belonged to the influential and renowned Longfellow family and was the granddaughter of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (1807–1882), a Harvard professor and towering figure in nineteenth-century American literature.

[5] Nicole Fouché, *Benjamin Franklin et Thomas Jefferson. Aux sources de l'amitié franco-américaine, 1776–1808* (Paris: Michel Houdiard, 2000), 63–64.

[6] Diana R. Hallman and César A. Leal, introduction to *America in the French Imaginary, 1789–1914: Music, Revolution and Race*, ed. Diana R. Hallman and Césard A. Leal (New York: Boydell Press, 2022), 2.

justice, domestic tranquility, general welfare, blessings of liberty, and prosperity – ideals that resonated in Paris.[7] Alexis de Tocqueville's *De la démocratie en Amérique*, published in 1835, confirmed in French political thought the image of the United States as a beacon of freedom.[8] In 1886, the erection of the Statue of Liberty on Liberty Island in New York spoke publicly of the mutual respect and affection of the two countries.

Connections between France and the United States were not limited to the political sphere. Writers, artists, musicians, and painters helped "shape and reshape French visions and myths of America" during the long nineteenth century.[9] Americans moved to Paris during the nineteenth century and gradually established a lasting influential community.[10] In 1887, journalist Albert Sutliffe's *The Americans in Paris* provided names and addresses of prominent members of American society and gave more visibility to American expatriates living in the French capital.[11] That same year, Scotland-born James Gordon Bennett Jr. founded the Paris edition of his newspaper, the *New York Herald*. Soon, the *Paris Herald* became the reference point for anglophone citizens there.[12] With the creation of the American Chamber of Commerce in Paris in 1894, the American presence in the capital became even more influential. At the turn of the century, wealthy American expatriates in Paris thus formed a strong community.[13] As their numbers grew, Americans began to call themselves the "American colony" in Paris.[14] Bankers, financiers, industrialists, entrepreneurs, and what were once called *society women* (women of wealth and leisure) spread the American dream.[15] Trade, development, investment, and private free enterprise were the creed of this generation. Through their actions,

[7] Jonathan Israel, *Radical Enlightenment: Philosophy and the Making of Modernity, 1650–1750* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 714–20; Marisa Linton, "The Intellectual Origins of the French Revolution," in *The Origins of the French Revolution*, ed. Peter R. Campbell (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2006), 139–59; R. R. Palmer, *The Age of Democratic Revolution: A Political History of Europe and America, 1760–1800*, 2 vols. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014), 1:177–213.

[8] Hallman and Leal, introduction, 1.

[9] Ibid., 6.

[10] Harvey Levenstein, *Seductive Journey: American Tourists in France from Jefferson to the Jazz Age* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 1–84.

[11] Albert Sutliffe, *The Americans in Paris: With Names and Addresses, Sketch of American Art* (Paris: T. Symonds, 1887), 1.

[12] Al Laney, *Paris "Herald": The Incredible Newspaper* (New York: Appleton-Century, 1947).

[13] Nancy L. Green, *The Other Americans in Paris: Businessmen, Countesses, Wayward Youth, 1881–1941* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014), 143–82.

[14] Nancy L. Green, "(Neither) Expatriates (n)or Immigrants? The American Colony in Paris, 1880–1949," *Transatlantica* no. 1 (2014): paras. 1–2, https://doi.org/10.4000/transatlantica.6893.

[15] Emilie Rosenberg, *Spreading the American Dream: American Economic and Cultural Expansion, 1890–1945* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1982), 38–62.

investments, cultural exchanges, they paved the way for the "American Century" and the unequaled influence of American culture in Europe.[16] In short, as Nancy Green explains, "this precocious transnational elite formed part of the first period of contemporary globalization and set the stage for the expansion of the latter part of the twentieth century."[17] For entrepreneurs, Paris was often the first entry to the European continent. The attraction of the city equally touched artistic circles.

Paris was the literary and cultural stage for generations of American expatriates, among them Henry James, Mark Twain, Gertrude Stein, and Edith Wharton.[18] American artists were influenced by cultural encounters there.[19] American women worked as writers, publishers, booksellers, and *salonières* and formed a tiny and invisible community of the Left Bank.[20] African American writers and leaders also visited Paris and enjoyed the Parisian lifestyle. They found that they could live free of the prejudices that plagued them in the United States.[21] During the 1900 Paris International Exhibit, for instance, W. E. B. Du Bois organized a display of hundreds of images to trace the advancement of African Americans' rights. Called the "Exhibition of American Negroes," it featured pamphlets, books, photographs of Americans lynching African Americans, and translations of US laws related to civil liberties.[22]

The majority of American expatriates belonged to the moneyed class that could afford the crossing of the Atlantic. By 1914, the concept of "leisure tourism" was well established in the minds of well-off Americans.[23] "All life in Paris during these years was influenced by this

[16] Brooke L. Blower, *Becoming Americans in Paris: Transatlantic Politics and Culture between the World Wars* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 17–92; Victoria De Grazia, *Irresistible Empire: America's Advance through Twentieth-Century Europe* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005), 75–129; Walter Lafeber, *The New Empire: An Interpretation of American Expansion, 1860–1898* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998), 161.

[17] Green, "(Neither) Expatriates (n)or Immigrants?" para. 9.

[18] Philip Rahu, ed., *Discovery of Europe: The Story of American Experience in the Old World* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1947), 259–93; Peter Brooks, *Henry James Goes to Paris* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007), 7–54; Jean Méral, *Paris in American Literature* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011), 1.

[19] Robert O. Mead, *The Atlantic Legacy: Essays in American-European Cultural History* (New York: New York University Press, 1969), 192–93.

[20] Shari Benstock, *Women of the Left Bank: Paris, 1900–1940* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1986), ix.

[21] Michel Fabre, *From Harlem to Paris: Black American Writers in France, 1840–1980* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1993), 31.

[22] W. E. B. Du Bois, *Black Lives 1900: W. E B. Du Bois and the Paris Exposition* (London: Redstone Press, 2019).

[23] Harvey Levenstein, *Seductive Tourism: American Tourists in France from Jefferson to the Jazz Age* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 139–56.

influx of expatriates who appropriated the city as their own" and contributed to the expansion of the American presence in France.[24] But even Americans who could not afford to cross the Atlantic had contact with French culture. Before World War I, French films dominated the American market, and Pathé-Frères was America's primary source for moving pictures.[25] With its headquarters in Paris, the company sold its productions across the Atlantic and made moviegoing popular. It promoted a new form of popular culture and entertainment in the United States that in time became part of American life. Pathé paved the way for the emergence of the nickelodeon, and early twentieth-century Americans grew up with the French trademark.

However, save for the intellectual, cultural, literary élite and wealthy entrepreneurs, "the American people did not know much about France in August 1914."[26] Before the global war broke out, the United States had been consistent in asserting political neutrality in European affairs.[27] Envisioned in 1823 as a barrier to European interference or attempts at colonization, the Monroe Doctrine primed the United States for a position of neutrality in the event of European war. In short, the Europeans had to keep out of US affairs because the United States opted not to get involved in Europe's business. A series of diplomatic crises involving France and Germany at the turn of the century revealed that the United States consented to support France morally, without frustrating Germany. Following the 1905 Tangier Incident and 1911 Agadir Crisis in 1911, the United States asserted its moral and tepid diplomatic support for France.[28] Once in the White House, President Wilson strictly followed the ideals of the Monroe Doctrine while keeping an eye on European affairs. Thus, when European armies mobilized for war, Wilson unambiguously declared the neutrality of his country.

Even though the vast majority of Americans knew absolutely nothing about France, and Wilson strictly adhered to the policy of nonintervention,

[24] Benstock, *Women of the Left Bank*, 5.
[25] Richard Abel, *The Red Rooster Scare: Making Cinema American, 1900–1910* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1999), xi.
[26] Yves-Henri Nouailhat, "Franco-American Relations: French Perspectives," *Reviews in American History* 14, no. 4 (1986): 653–68, at 656.
[27] Henry Blumenthal, *France and the United States: Their Diplomatic Relations, 1789–1914* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1970), 233–58.
[28] Ima Christina Barlow, *The Agadir Crisis* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1940), 46–206; Geoffrey Barraclough, *From Agadir to Armageddon: Anatomy of a Crisis* (New York: Holmes and Mier, 1982), 5–15; Christopher Clark, *Sleepwalkers: How Europe Went to War in 1914* (London: Allen Lane, 2012), 204–14; Keith Wilson, "The Agadir Crisis, the Mansion House Speech, and the Double-Edgedness of Agreements," *Historical Journal* 15, no. 3, (1972): 513–32.

the cultural, monetary, and political élites living in France mobilized. Although these expatriates represented but a tiny minority of Americans, one of them, Frederic Coudert, envisioned the creation of Franco-American colonies to rescue France's youngest war victims from starvation and misery throughout the war.

Rescuing Children of the Frontier

In August 1914, in the course of a single month, German armies dashed through Belgium, entered Brussels, and marched south toward Paris until they were finally stopped on the Somme by a Franco-British ironclad.[29] Germany's violation of Belgium's neutrality – envisioned as part of the Schlieffen Plan to hasten the invasion of France – transgressed accepted norms of *jus ad bellum* and *jus in bellum* and inflamed public opinion across the globe.[30] Across the Atlantic Ocean, Belgium's invasion and the reports of atrocities committed on civilians, including children, did not suffice to drag the United States into the European imbroglio. President Wilson declared his intention to ensure US neutrality to the US Senate on April 4, 1914. Despite passionate calls from the London and Paris embassies, in accordance with the Monroe Doctrine, the United States opted to stay out of the war.

As British and French troops strove to contain the march of German armies and as panic gripped Paris, a small group of American citizens, long-time residents of France, gathered to make a plan to save France's children. In founding the Committee Franco-American for the Protection of the Children of the Frontier (CFAPCF), they vowed to care for refugee children from the invaded areas of Belgium, France, and Alsace-Lorraine.[31] The intention of Frederic Coudert, one of its founders, was that the CFAPCF, as a humanitarian organization, would provide assistance to Belgian and French children from the occupied zones.

As a result, from November 1914 until the end of 1918, some 1,557 children were given refuge in twenty-nine colonies throughout France (see Map 1.1). Generally small, these safe heavens were specifically for children

[29] Bruno Cabanes, *August 1914: France, the Great War, and a Month That Changed the World* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2016), 1–32.

[30] David Stevenson, *1914–1918: The History of the First World War* (London: Penguin, 2004), 45.

[31] Committee Franco-American for the Protection of the Children of the Frontier, *Fatherless Children of France: Report of the Committee Franco-American for the Protection of the Children of the Frontier* (New York: Committee Franco-American for the Protection of the Children of the Frontier, 1916), 1. Hereafter this source is cited as the *1916 Report*.

Map 1.1 The twenty-nine colonies for orphans and displaced children opened across France by the Committee Franco-American for the Protection of the Children of the Frontier during World War I.
Courtesy of Emilie Gallet-Moron.

who had suffered the trauma of war. In November 1914, the first colony for girls opened at Perreux-Nazelles (Touraine). By June 1916, fifteen other colonies had been established across the country, providing shelter to 853 children.[32] By December 1917, the CFAPCF had under its care 1,365 children among twenty-seven colonies.[33]

The children who were given refuge in the colonies had experienced various physical and emotional traumas – the bodies and lives broken by the war. For example, two little girls who arrived in October 1917 had been taken prisoner in Germany at the beginning of the war and held in a camp for civilians near Berlin. Nine children, including an infant, had been found in a cellar, stunned and frightened since seeing their mother killed by shrapnel. Two of the boys were also injured by shrapnel – one had lost a leg, the other a foot: They were fitted with prostheses and in time were able to play with the other children. Raymond Fournier was one of many thousands whose lives had been shattered by the war. He had already lost his mother before the war broke out. His father had disappeared in battle during the first months of the war, and there had been no news of him since. Raymond's uncle and aunt took care of him and his two brothers. When they eventually found themselves in a perilous financial situation, they contacted the CFAPCF to look after Raymond. When the boy arrived in the colony, he was emaciated and anemic.[34]

Almost all of the colonies were situated outside Paris, though some were sufficiently close to the city to be within earshot of the German shelling. Grandbourg (Essonne) was one of the CFAPCF's colonies. A convent of the Sisters of Notre-Dame de Sion before World War I, it was turned into a hospital and colony for young girls.[35] Among the colonies, Lacaune-les-Bains (Tarn, southwest France) was opened with the assistance of Mademoiselle de Rose. Situated in the mountains, boys residing there received special training in agricultural work. In northern France, the generosity of Mrs. J. Low Harriman made possible the establishment of a sanatorium at Berck-sur-Mer (Pas-de-Calais) for tubercular cases.[36]

[32] Ibid., 2.

[33] Committee Franco-American for the Protection of the Children of the Frontier, *"Children of the Frontier." Comité Franco-Américain pour la protection des Enfants de la Frontière* (New York: Committee Franco-American for the Protection of the Children of the Frontier, 1918), 9.

[34] Ibid., 6.

[35] Letter from Sister Marie Gonzales to the Ministry of Interior, July 3, 1916, Correspondence related to the Committee Franco-American, Gen 3H2, Archives of the Sisters of Notre-Dame de Sion, Paris.

[36] Committee Franco-American for the Protection of the Children of the Frontier, *Children of the Frontier*, 10.

By Christmas 1917, fourteen children suffering from tuberculosis were being treated in the hospital close to the seaside, where they could enjoy open-air activities in an atmosphere that, it was hoped, was conductive to health and tranquility. Another colony for boys was established in Chateau de la Cour at Cheillé (Indre-et-Loire). In April 1918, a new colony opened in Biarritz (Pyrénées-Atlantiques), at 6 rue de la Fontaine. It was established in a small house, Villa Roi Alexandre, given to the Sisters of Notre-Dame de Sion by Queen Nathalie of Serbia. On April 20, after several weeks of construction, the first twelve girls arrived.[37] Ultimately, Biarritz housed some twenty girls during the war, mostly the youngest of the orphans from Grandbourg who, it was thought, would benefit from a sunnier climate.[38]

The CFAPCF networked with individuals and charities. In response, it received offers not only of people's time and service but also for the use of buildings and furnishings.[39] Colonies were thus situated in privately owned buildings on loan to the CFAPCF for the duration of the war. "Les Ombrages" (Versailles) was the property of the Protestant deaconesses of Paris. "Les Clarisses" (Versailles) belonged to the bishop of Versailles. The Château de La Cour (Indre-et-Loire) had once been the residence of the baroness of Dijon. Monsieur and Madame Albert Thomas opened their property in Perreux-Nazelles (Touraine). When Monsieur and Madame Potron, an aged couple, put their splendid property in Presles (Val d'Oise) at the disposal of the committee, it was used as a colony for boys. Military officers of the French Republic offered their properties too. For example, General Peaucellier allowed his residence in Oulins (Eure-et-Loire) to be transformed into a refuge for displaced orphans. Other colonies occupied properties made available by various religious congregations and charities, such as the Sisters of St. Vincent de Paul and Sisters of St. Joseph de Cluny. The Sisters of Saint Vincent de Paul ran a colony for boys in Cabourg (Calvados), a well-known seaside resort where wealthy American families had villas and spent the summer bathing,

[37] Journal de la Maison de Biarritz (April 1918–February 1922), April 1, 1918, FR-B21, Archives of the Sisters of Notre-Dame de Sion.

[38] Report by Mrs. C. P. Howland, June 19, 1918, Alma A. Clarke Papers, 1914–1946, Series I. War Work, 1917–1919, Committee for the Protection of the Children of the Frontier, BMC-M84, Box 1, Box 3, Bryn Mawr College; Notre-Dame de Sion, *Notre-Dame de Sion pendant la guerre de 1914–1918* (Paris: Notre-Dame de Sion, 1937), 64; Journal de la Maison de Grandbourg (November 1915–November 1918), April 19, 1918, FR-E.Gg5, Archives of the Sisters of Notre-Dame de Sion.

[39] Committee Franco-American for the Protection of the Children of the Frontier, *Children of the Frontier*, 5.

walking the promenade and the sandy beach, and meeting their social peers in French society.[40] The CFAPCF was also successful in its search for shelter for Parisian refugee children. By the summer of 1918, a colony whose founders were residents in the eighth arrondissement in Paris had opened at Azay-le-Rideau (Touraine).[41]

A much-needed sanatorium was established at the Château de la Jonchère, near Paris. Madame Philippe Bénard, whose three sons – all officers in the newly established French air force – were serving at the front, placed the estate at the disposal of the committee.[42] The estate was adapted for use as a sanatorium. With its elevation, its excellent air, and an extensive terrace that ran the full length of the building, children could lie in the sun and look over the whole valley to the north of Paris. They could gaze down to the Seine. In spring and summer, they could take their supper under the shade of large trees. A benefactor from the town even lent the colony a phonograph, which greatly contributed to raising the morale of children in residence.

Stories of resilience abounded at La Jonchère. One Belgian boy, traumatized by the death of his little brother, had remained silent after his arrival in October 1917. A few weeks later, he was reported as being among the merriest of those in the colony. Little Madeline Gosse-Servotte had arrived from Soissons in a critical condition. As she recovered, she found her place within the colony, ready for all kinds of mischief.

Americans contributed $72 a year for the support of each child living in a colony (about $1,900 in today's dollars). Many benefactors also sent an additional $25 to supply for clothing.[43] The exception was the colony of Grosfy (Normandy), founded by Coudert before the establishment of the CFAPCF, which remained a separate entity throughout the war, managed by Madame Piettre, wife of the sous-préfet of Yvetot. Along with donations from private individuals, the Grosfy colony received funds from the *département* (the local territorial government structure). Other than

[40] "Seekers of Rest by the Sea Are Happy in Villas of Deauville, Cabourg and the Neighboring Resorts," *New York Herald*, July 22, 1916.

[41] Letter from August F. Jaccaci (Chairman of the Executive Committee in Paris) to Miss Alma Clark, August 22, 1918, Alma A. Clarke Papers, 1914–1946, Series I. War Work, 1917–1919, Committee for the Protection of the Children of the Frontier, Box 1, Folder 2, BMC-M84, Bryn Mawr College.

[42] Report from Mrs. C. P. Howland, August 1, 1917, Alma A. Clarke Papers, 1914–1946, Series I. War Work, 1917–1919, Committee for the Protection of the Children of the Frontier, Box 1, Folder 2, BMC-M84, Bryn Mawr College.

[43] Committee Franco-American for the Protection of the Children of the Frontier, *Children of the Frontier*, 15.

Grosfy, the CFAPCF never solicited or availed itself of the 50 centimes per day per child the French government offered.[44]

Although most colonies were maintained with the CFAPCF's general funds, several were entirely supported by individual donors, most of them American. Five colonies were largely supplied by individual members of the CFAPCF with the help of their personal friends. For example, Mrs. Robert Woods Bliss, vice president of the CFAPCF's executive committee in Paris, entirely supported La Jonchère. In her capacity as wife of the counselor of the American ambassador, she used her personal wealth to cover the costs of maintaining the colony.[45] Comtesse Pierre de Viel Castel, an officer of the CFAPCF executive committee in Paris, supported the colonies "Les Clarisses" and "Les Ombrages," along with Mrs. Walter Gay and the Comtesse d'Ursel.[46] "Oulins" and "Rosay" received financial support from Mrs. William H. Hill. The colony in Nemours, already an orphanage for fatherless girls as established through an 1847 rescript of Pope Pius IX, was supported by Mrs. Frances G. Shaw.[47] Under the protection of the Daughters of Charity of Saint Vincent de Paul, eighty girls rescued from the devastated regions of France and Belgium spent the duration of war there; they were educated and placed into apprenticeships. Miss Emily Cross, another officer of the executive committee in Paris, supported a colony for girls in Grandbourg (Essonne) and later another colony for boys that had recently been opened in Issy-les-Moulineux (Seine).[48] Maisons-Alfort (Seine) was funded by Mrs. Oliver Roosevelt. Mrs. Richard P. Strong supported the colony at Cabourg. Miss Marjory Cheney supported the colony at Presles.

Along with the CFAPCF colonies, similar refuges founded and maintained by private individuals sprang up across France. For example, Mrs. William Warren Card from Pittsburg, Pennsylvania, volunteered as a nurse with the American Ambulance at Neuilly-sur-Seine (Hauts-de-Seine) in 1916. After four months of caring for injured soldiers, she met an American doctor who owned a property in Saint-Pierre-en-Port (Normandy), housing fifty children whose fathers had been in the Paris

[44] *1916 Report*, 2.

[45] Letter from August Jaccaci to the French Ministry of the Interior, July 8, 1915, August Jaccaci Papers (1889–1935), Box 1, Folder 58, French Service Organizations (1914–1918), Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC.

[46] *1916 Report*, 4.

[47] Hospice and Orphanage of Nemours (1818–1934), 388/10, Archives of the Daughters of Charity of Saint Vincent de Paul, Paris.

[48] Journal de la Maison de Grandbourg (November 1915–November 1918), FR-E.Gg5, Archives of the Sisters of Notre-Dame de Sion, Paris.

police force. Subsequent to her transfer there to help, by 1917 she had purchased Château de Langeron (Indre-et-Loire) located on a 125-acre estate, where she opened an "agricultural school" for boys aged ten and up selected from the devastated districts of France. The boys learned how to cultivate grain, vines, vegetables, and flowers and raise cattle and poultry. Instruction was given to ensure all of them would sit for and pass the elementary examination. The bishop of Tours visited the colony, as did the chaplain of the American Forces at the Front, the bishop of Erie, Pennsylvania.[49]

Humanitarian Mobilization and Transatlantic Cooperation

In addition to the generosity of the individuals who supported specific colonies, the CFAPCF relied on funds sent from the United States by various humanitarian organizations such as the American Relief Clearing House, the American Service of Distribution in Paris, the American Red Cross, the Vocation War Relief Committee in New York City, the Daughters of the American Revolution, and the Belgian War Relief Committee of Washington.[50]

Thanks to Mr. Carl Taylor, a Red Cross official, and Mrs. William H. Hill, who was in charge of one department of the new Children's Bureau, the CFAPCF enjoyed a close and harmonious relationship with the Red Cross in France. In addition, in his capacity as advisor for the Children's Bureau of the Red Cross, Auguste Jaccaci (1857–1930), president of the CFAPCF, offered significant help to the Red Cross and was ideally positioned to liaise with the two organizations. Born in Saint Paul, Minnesota, in the years before World War I, Jaccaci spent several months a year in France, enjoying the Parisian lifestyle and doing historical research. In 1914, he returned to Europe and participated in philanthropic work, notably as a member of the American Relief Clearing House.[51] In 1917 alone, a sum equaling 257,500 francs was collected in the United

[49] "A Brief Record of the Work Accomplished for France by Mrs. William Warren Card (1915–1921)," 1922, Archives d'origine privée entrées par don, achat ou dépôt (séries F et J), Pièces isolées et séquestrées (série J), Pièces isolées (série 1 J), 1 J326/7, Card Fondation, Archives départementales du Loir-et-Cher, Blois.

[50] Report of the Committee Franco-American for the Protection of the Children of the Frontier (New York, 1916), 7, Fatherless Children of France, Hoover Institution, Library and Archives, Stanford University.

[51] Letter from the Chief Police of Paris to the Minister of the Interior, July 22, 1915, National Security Register, Auguste Jaccaci (1915), 19940455/13/1104, Ministry of the Interior, National Archives of France.

States in support of colonies in France. By January 1918, the total outlay of the American Committee since its establishment in August 1914 amounted to $202,000.[52] Thanks to Jaccaci, in 1918 alone, the Red Cross in France and America, through their combined efforts, donated $5,000 to the CFAPCF.[53]

Clothing, food, and supplies of all kinds were shipped in large quantities from the United States. Sewing centers opened in Ann Arbor, Michigan; Montclair, New Jersey; Athens, Vermont; Greenwich, Connecticut; Jackson and Ypsilante, Michigan. From Ann Arbor, under the direction of Mrs. Louis P. Hall, many affiliated groups regularly shipped large quantities of supplies for French children. When Mrs. Calhoun of Saint Louis, Missouri, established a large center for humanitarian work, bringing together several groups, she organized the shipment of supplies and clothing for French children.[54] By the end of 1916, 42,570 articles of clothing had been distributed to children through the CFAPCF.[55] In July 1917, Miss Irene Seiberling, working from New York, organized a group that made 1,800 garments during the summer and shipped them to France: 8,000 garments were received from the New York Clearing Office.[56] By the end of 1917, the number of articles of clothing shipped to France totaled 85,000.[57] The total number of articles of clothing sent to France during the six months from December 1917 to June 1918 was 45,566.[58]

Indeed, by the end of 1917, the CFAPCF had extended its reach to new groups and individuals all over the United States. In Cambridge, Massachusetts, the New England Clothing Committee for the Children of the Frontier, chaired by Constance H. Hall, supplied the CFAPCF with large quantities of items. Soliciting women in the area between July 1917 and February 1918, the committee received $1,786 specifically to purchase cloth for making garments for children. In addition, the New England

[52] Committee Franco-American for the Protection of the Children of the Frontier, *Children of the Frontier*, 26.
[53] Ibid., 5. [54] Ibid., 22.
[55] Report of the Committee Franco-American for the Protection of the Children of the Frontier (New York, 1916), 7, Fatherless Children of France, Hoover Institution Library and Archives, Stanford University.
[56] Report from Mrs. Howland, August 1, 1917, Alma A. Clarke Papers, 1914–1946, Series I. War Work, 1917–1919, Committee for the Protection of the Children of the Frontier, Box 1, Folder 2, BMC-M84, Bryn Mawr College.
[57] Committee Franco-American for the Protection of the Children of the Frontier, *Children of the Frontier*, 16.
[58] Report by Mrs. C. P. Howland, June 19, 1918, Alma A. Clarke Papers, 1914–1946, Series I. War Work, 1917–1919, Committee for the Protection of the Children of the Frontier, Box 1, Box 3, BMC-M84, Bryn Mawr College.

Committee received more than 3,000 articles, from children's garments to quilts and afghans for infants, handkerchiefs, and other accessories. Hundreds of garments were being made by kind American women for shipment to France.[59] In February 1918, Constance Hall purchased fifty-four chemises, twenty-two pairs of drawers, eighteen petticoats, and six waists,[60] thanks to a generous donation of $25 from the Bee, a women's organization founded in 1861 to assist soldiers during the American Civil War.[61] The story of the Bee epitomized how humanitarian organizations channeled the work of women's associations during World War I. At its founding, the group named itself the Banks Brigade in honor of General Banks, who at that time led the Massachusetts forces posted at the front during the Civil War. Schoolgirls of fourteen and sixteen met every Friday afternoon, knitting while they studied or recited their lessons, or knitting while they walked, talked, or played. When the Civil War ended, the organization was not disbanded. Its women continued to meet every fortnight. The club grew larger in Cambridge. In 1914, after a long pause, the Bee was again busy with sewing for soldiers. They met more frequently. Several morning meetings were devoted to making dresses, aprons, and underclothing for Belgian orphans. A Cambridge branch of the Special Aid to the War Relief was organized by Lilian Farlow, to which the Bee devoted much of its members' energy. Similarly, a few blocks away, another sewing club, founded in 1873 to sew clothing for the sick and homeless, devoted its activities to Belgian children when the war broke out. Women of the Basket Club began their work immediately and spent four years sewing clothes and other items for Belgium.[62] Miss Elizabeth Simmons and Mrs. Palmer, both from Boston, were among those who regularly provided the two organizations with petticoats, stockings, and other items. When one member of the Bee, Annie Morrison, died, leaving $100 in the hands of the club, the women's organization decided to send the entire sum to France for the benefit of orphans.[63]

[59] Letter from Constance H. Hall to Ms. Simmons, February 25, 1918, The Bee Collection (1861–1931), Box 1, File 16, Cambridge Historical Society, Cambridge, MA.

[60] Letter from Constance H. Hall to Ms. Simmons, June 21, 1918, The Bee Collection (1861–1931), Box 1, File 16, Cambridge Historical Society.

[61] Mary Towle Palmer, *The Story of the Bee* (Cambridge, MA: Riverside Press, 1924), 3, in The Bee Collection (1861–1931), Box 1, File 37, Cambridge Historical Society.

[62] Report dated November 11, 1914, The Basket Club Records (1873–1963), Vol. 3, Box 1, Folder 4, Cambridge Historical Society.

[63] Palmer, *The Story of the Bee*, 53, in The Bee Collection (1861–1931), Box 1, File 37, Cambridge Historical Society.

Local initiatives to provide for children, and donate to the CFAPCF, were largely due to the efforts of Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Lindon Smith. In 1916, the couple traveled to France to provide aid to people in the devastated regions in the north and east. On their return to the United States, in 1917, they visited forty-eight towns and cities to deliver public addresses in support of the CFAPCF.[64] In Lexington, Missouri, in February 1917, Mrs. Smith illustrated her talk with official French war photos showing the devastation of a poverty-stricken land. Americans heard that France's children were unable to provide for themselves and that "mothers clung to wrecked homes, starved in cellars."[65] In their speeches, the Smiths drew special attention on Coudert as the American citizen spearheading humanitarian relief for France's orphans as soon as the war broke out. On a trip to the front, he was said to have discovered a number of children, lost, frightened, without shelter or food. A father of four, Coudert was now father to hundreds of fatherless young war victims across France.[66]

Evacuating Children

Before the German invasion of Belgium, 4 million Belgian people had already left their homes. These movements of populations directly affected countries like France and, to a lesser extent, Britain. In the wake of the German invasion, thousands of Belgians fled to England. More than 200,000 Belgian refugees left the combat zones in August 1914 to find shelter in Great Britain.[67] By 1915, around 1,500 local committees had been formed across the Channel to provide assistance to Belgian civilians.[68] In France, the combined displacements of Belgian refugees and French nationals fleeing the northern districts burdened the French government. Approximately 2 million refugees from northern France settled in the rest of the country, away from occupation and certain death.[69] French civilians thus had the shocking reality the war brought to them. Along the roads of northern France, on railway platform stations and in

[64] Report from Mrs. Howland, August 1, 1917, Alma A. Clarke Papers, 1914–1946, Series I. War Work, 1917–1919, Committee for the Protection of the Children of the Frontier, Box 1, Folder 2, BMC-M84, Bryn Mawr College.

[65] "The Children of France," *Lexington Intelligencer* (Missouri), February 9, 1917.

[66] Ibid.

[67] Pierre Purseigle, "'A Wave on to Our Shores': The Exile and Resettlement of Refugees from the Western Front, 1914–1918," *Contemporary European History* 16, no. 4 (2007): 427–44, at 431.

[68] Peter Cahalan, *Belgian Refugee Relief in England during the Great War* (New York: Gartland, 1982), 170–71.

[69] Philippe Nivet, *Les Réfugiés français de la Grande Guerre, 1914–1920: Les Boches du Nord* (Paris: Economica, 2004), 1.

the national press, tales of German atrocities were told, relayed by Belgian refugees, which helped cement a stronger sense of solidarity against the enemy.[70] Children were rescued and evacuated from devastated areas in France, such as the Aisne, Marne, Somme, Meurthe-et-Moselle, and other northern districts. They were then transported by rail to Paris, usually arriving at the Gare du Nord or Gare d'Orsay. From there, they were taken to the countryside. By 1915, Jaccaci had secured free transport for the evacuation and displacement of orphaned children.[71]

From the very beginning, the CFAPCF carefully husbanded its resources focusing on looking after a relatively small number of needy, suffering children. As Erica Thorp, an American volunteer from a prominent wealthy family, recalled, there were in fact "comparatively few real orphans . . . but the majority ha[d] fathers fighting and mothers working in factories."[72] Providing a safe place, physical and emotional care, and education for these children was the CFAPCF's primary goals. As soon as the civil, religious, or military authorities from any locality brought a case to the attention of the CFAPCF, the children were conveyed to one of the Paris depots. Most of the time, children from invaded regions arrived barefoot, with only a gingham apron to protect them from the cold. Frightened, homeless, many were ill from shock, exposure, malnutrition, and trauma. Some children could not speak for several months before eventually mumbling a few words. The Le Long family at Liancourt-Fosse, near Rouge (Somme, northern France), was rescued in part by the CFAPCF. The children and their mother were living in the ruins of their stable, lacking sufficient food, clothing, or heat. The father and older brother had been taken prisoner by German forces in 1914. The CFAPCF took the three boys, while neighbors consented to look after the mother, her little girl, and her new-born baby.[73]

On their arrival to the Paris depots, children would undergo medical examinations to ensure they were physically fit and that they were not suffering from any contagious diseases like tuberculosis or health deficiencies like anemia. If healthy, the children would be supplied with a complete outfit of clothing and sent to one of the colonies established by

[70] Purseigle, "A Wave on to Our Shores," 435–37.

[71] Letter from August Jaccaci to the French Ministry of the Interior, July 8, 1915, August Jaccaci Papers (1889–1935), Box 1, Folder 58, French Service Organizations (1914–1918), Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC.

[72] Letter from Erica Thorp to her family, January 29, 1918, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow Family Papers (1768–1975), Section 2, Correspondence, Series IV, Erica Thorp de Berry (1890–1943), LONG29030, Longfellow House, Washington's Headquarters National Historic Site.

[73] Committee Franco-American for the Protection of the Children of the Frontier, *Children of the Frontier*, 4.

the American benefactors. On the trains departing from Paris, these children had no idea as to what would become of them.

Members of the CFAPCF would travel to meet, feed, and minister the needs of refugees. But even though the CFAPCF was sheltering 1,557 children in twenty-nine colonies in 1918, Erica Thorp insisted there was still an urgent "need for more colonies."[74] The ongoing flow of evacuated children could not be dealt with. In March 1918, for instance, Erica Thorp and Mrs. Hill hurriedly left Presles (Val d'Oise) for the Gare de l'Est in Paris, where 125 children from Alsace had arrived. Not knowing where to house them, the two American women frantically telephoned around and eventually found shelter for all the weary-looking Alsatian boys.[75] The ongoing waves of refugees testified to the limits of the CFAPCF's capacities. In June 1918, following the evacuation of thousands of refugees to Paris, Mrs. Hill and two nurses from the American Red Cross went to the stations in Paris to feed people and minister their needs. Mrs. Hill was tasked with meeting about fifty children who were arriving from the north to be placed in a vacation colony. As soon as the children got off the train, they found themselves caught up in an air raid and had to stay in the station's basement, along with soldiers, refugees, and other travelers. In order to quieten them, Mrs. Hill started singing songs as several bombs exploded not far away from their shelter. Helen Byrne cared for one child who was on the verge of a convulsion. During the entire evening, the American nurse comforted him, holding him close to her breast and giving him all the assistance she could. As the raid went on, a little girl pointed out the "pretty stars" on a flag. Mrs. Byrne looked up and noticed several American flags, which provided a good opportunity to tell children about America.[76] When bombings momently stopped, Mrs. Hill went to the CFAPCF to get further supplies of condensed milk, food, diapers, and socks for babies and warm coverings for the orphans and mothers. Working alongside other organizations such as the Red Cross, the members of the CFAPCF sourced food for refugees from canteens located

[74] Letter from Erica Thorp to her family, January 19, 1918, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow Family Papers (1768–1975), Section 2, Correspondence, Series IV, Erica Thorp de Berry (1890–1943), LONG29030, Longfellow House, Washington's Headquarters National Historic Site.

[75] Letter from Erica Thorp to her family, March 11, 1918, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow Family Papers (1768–1975), Section 2, Correspondence, Series IV, Erica Thorp de Berry (1890–1943), LONG29030, Longfellow House, Washington's Headquarters National Historic Site.

[76] Report from Mrs. William H. Hill, June 20, 1918, Alma A. Clarke Papers, 1914–1946, Series IV, Scrapbooks, 1917–1919, Committee for the Protection of the Children of the Frontier, BMC-M84, Bryn Mawr College.

in the station's basement. That night alone, 5,000 people had taken refuge, among them many children.[77]

As the authorities evacuated children and transferred them to the care of the CFAPCF, a colony became a temporary shelter for the refugees. Close to Paris, Presles offered what, in the context of the war, was an ideal location (Figure 1.1). The CFAPCF could easily and rapidly evacuate children to the colony. American women serving in the colony were able to travel easily to Paris, where they could move around the city and meet their compatriots. In late March 1918, however, as the perils intensified and German armies were reportedly advancing, Monsieur Jaccaci, in his capacity as president of the CFAPCF, eventually decided to evacuate Presles, as "he did not think it right to subject the children and sisters any longer to the strain of air raids and possible direct bombardments."[78] Since January of that year, the children had already experienced a series of alarms and bombardments. They had nonetheless got into the habit of curling up under the benches and going back to sleep in the basement. "They are so used to raids," Erica Thorp wrote, "that there's no panic."[79] Though they had become accustomed to the deafening sound of German bombardments, children were nonetheless evacuated to Lacaune-les-Bains (Tarn), a health resort that had been purchased during the war by a French woman for the purpose of establishing a refuge. They travelled in a big truck to Paris and the Gare d'Orsay, from where they departed by train.[80] On their arrival, the children gazed at the snow-covered peaks, waterfalls, and springs.[81] In southern France, there was nothing apart from the visits of American Red Cross personnel to suggest that the country was at war.[82] By July 1918, Jaccaci had made the decision to evacuate all colonies in the Paris region. "No one really thinks the Germans can get to Paris," Thorp

[77] Ibid.

[78] Letter from Erica Thorp to her family, April 3, 1918, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow Family Papers (1768–1975), Section 2, Correspondence, Series IV, Erica Thorp de Berry (1890–1943), LONG29030, Longfellow House, Washington's Headquarters National Historic Site.

[79] Letter from Erica Thorp to her family, March 11, 1918, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow Family Papers (1768–1975), Section 2, Correspondence, Series IV, Erica Thorp de Berry (1890–1943), LONG29030, Longfellow House, Washington's Headquarters National Historic Site.

[80] Photograph of children evacuating Presles, April 1, 1918, Alma A. Clarke Papers, 1914–1946, Series IV. Scrapbooks, 1917–1919. Committee for the Protection of the Children of the Frontier, BMC-M84, Bryn Mawr College.

[81] Letter from Erica Thorp to her family, April 3, 1918, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow Family Papers (1768–1975), Section 2, Correspondence, Series IV, Erica Thorp de Berry (1890–1943), LONG29030, Longfellow House, Washington's Headquarters National Historic Site.

[82] Letter from Erica Thorp to her family, July 9, 1918, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow Family Papers (1768–1975), Section 2, Correspondence, Series IV, Erica Thorp de Berry (1890–1943), LONG29030, Longfellow House, Washington's Headquarters National Historic Site.

Figure 1.1 Erica Thorp playing with orphaned children at Presles, Seine-et-Oise, 1918. Alma A. Clarke Papers.
Courtesy of Bryn Mawr College.

wrote to her parents, "but there's always the possibility of steady bombardments."[83] In parallel, Thorp was in discussion with Jaccaci as to the possibility of founding a new colony for the youngest children. It eventually opened in Bédarieux (Hérault) in September 1918. Fifty infants from the Lacaune colony were sent there.[84]

Staffing the Colonies: Religious Congregations and American Support

Following the anticlerical law of 1905, a number of convents, churches, and properties belonging to the Catholic Church in France were seized by governmental decision.[85] In order to remain open, a derogation was needed as the law clearly stipulated that any individual running a congregational establishment could be sentenced to between six days and one year of imprisonment and fined between 10 and 50,000 francs. By August 1914, a number of congregations still existed and had not yet been expelled from their domains.

As noted earlier, in 1917, the Sisters of Notre-Dame de Sion allowed the CFAPCF to use their domain in Grandbourg (Essonne) without charge. Along with a Mother House in Paris, the nuns were the owners of another estate in Essonne, not far away from Paris, large enough to house scores of children. It had been turned into an asylum and a workroom following the July 1904 law related to the suppression of schools run by Catholic congregations. Within the locality, the Sisters of Sion had nursed mentally unstable women and abandoned children and provided additional help before the outbreak of the war. In August 1914, following France's declaration of war on Germany, the Sisters of Sion were approached by the *préfecture* to provide hospital facilities and shelter for several young girls whose fathers had been mobilized. By August 2, 1914, France's minister of the interior had suspended all the anticlerical laws until the end of the war.

[83] Letter from Erica Thorp to her family, July 7, 1918, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow Family Papers (1768–1975), Section 2, Correspondence, Series IV, Erica Thorp de Berry (1890–1943), LONG29030, Longfellow House, Washington's Headquarters National Historic Site.

[84] Letter from Erica Thorp to her family, September 5, 1918, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow Family Papers (1768–1975), Section 2, Correspondence, Series IV, Erica Thorp de Berry (1890–1943), LONG29030, Longfellow House, Washington's Headquarters National Historic Site.

[85] Bernard Delpal, "L'application des lois anticongréganistes: éléments pour un bilan, 1901–1904," in *Le grand exil des congrégations religieuses françaises, 1901–1914*, ed. Patrick Cabanel and Jean-Dominique Durand (Paris: Editions du Cerf, 2005), 59–87; Miranda Sachs, "When the Republic Came for the Nuns: Laicization, Labor Law, and Female Religious Orders," *French Historical Studies* 42, no. 3 (2019): 423–51.

All elements of French society were called upon to join the war effort. From June 1915, an ambulance unit of the American Red Cross was stationed at the Mother House of the Sisters of Sion, where the nuns were caring for wounded soldiers and looking after forty children.[86]

In Plougasnou (Brittany) and Anneyron (Auvergne), the Sisters of Sion gave refuge to orphans from the devastated regions of France and Belgium.[87] In similar fashion, the Mother House of the Daughters of Charity of Saint Vincent de Paul, located at 140 rue du Bac in Paris, was turned into a military hospital in 1915. By then, the nuns had received twenty-nine rescued children.[88] When war broke out in August 1914, the Daughters of Charity of Saint Vincent de Paul already managed several orphanages for fatherless or motherless children across France. In Neuilly, the Daughters of Charity were already looking after orphans when the Germans took control of territory in France in August 1914. A government decree of 1887 had sanctioned the opening of an orphanage for boys and girls. Boys there received primary instruction and started their apprenticeship at the age of fourteen, and girls were given a primary education before teaching them basic household chores such as sewing, cooking, and cleaning. Learning skills or a trade ensured self-sufficiency in adulthood.[89]

In Élancourt (Seine-et-Oise), the Daughters of Charity assisted Abbé Bon in the running of the Orphanage of the Assumption. Commonly known as the Œuvre, this establishment had been founded in 1859 by Augustin Méquignon (1825–1890), a few years after he was ordained a priest. Eager to provide education for poor and abandoned young boys, Méquignon founded the Catholic orphanage with the intention of removing them from the risks of hunger and moral corruption.[90] Abandoned children between the ages of two and seven were rescued by the Daughters of Charity and cared for before placing them with neighboring farmers to learn agricultural skills. By twenty-one, a boy was expected to be able to support himself through labor. By decree of

[86] Letter from Sister Marie Gonzales to the Ministry of Interior, June 21, 1915, Correspondence related to the Committee Franco-American, 3H2, Archives of the Sisters of Notre-Dame de Sion.
[87] Notre-Dame de Sion, *Notre-Dame de Sion pendant la guerre de 1914–1918*, 66.
[88] Register of orphans sheltered by the Daughters of Charity during the war (1915–1917), 2162, Archives of the Daughters of Charity of Saint Vincent de Paul.
[89] See, for example, Anthony E. Rotundo, *American Manhood: Transformation in Masculinity from the Revolution to the Modern Era* (New York: Basic Books, 1993), 53; Leslie Paris, *Children's Nature: The Rise of the American Summer Camp* (New York: New York University Press, 2008), 26–30.
[90] Historique de la Maison d'Élancourt (1865–1938), 1960, Album 168, Archives of the Daughters of Charity of Saint Vincent de Paul.

Napoleon III during the Second Empire, the Œuvre was recognized in 1866 as a public utility.[91] In spite of the anticlerical laws of the Third Republic, it remained open. This was because both the local and national authorities knew how important the orphanage was even as the inhabitants of the town and neighboring villages petitioned against its closure in April 1902. By then, 300 children were living in the establishment. No matter how distrustful of the Catholic Church the government was, it could not absorb all the orphans cared for by Catholic institutions across the country.[92]

Catholic Sisters were an available labor force that could be mobilized immediately. In May 1917, following several weeks of negotiations, Jaccaci personally visited Grandbourg and the Sisters of Sion. Satisfied with the location and facilities, he invited Sister Gonzales to apply officially to the Ministry of the Interior for authorization to act as a unit of his humanitarian organization.[93] Children could not be transferred to religious congregations without governmental authorization. A few weeks later, in July 1917, the nuns officially received confirmation from France's Ministry of the Interior that the CFAPCF would send girls to Grandbourg.[94] Overall, a hundred young girls were sheltered with the Sisters of Notre-Dame de Sion. France's Ministry of the Interior insisted, however, that schooling be provided by lay personnel in strict compliance with the concept of secularism.[95] In return, the CFAPCF would rebuild the kitchen, improve the electricity system, generally maintain the place, and donate provisions. As Jaccaci explained to Sister Marie Gonzales, "all the colonies belonged to the Committee and all of them employed Sisters." "None of us," he added in stern terms, "belong to your religion."[96] In securing the help of several congregations across France, Jaccaci and the French government ensured that once a location had been found, issues of administration were to be dealt with fairly quickly and efficiently. For the Sisters of Notre-Dame de Sion, receiving orphans was regarded as a

[91] Orphanage in Élancourt (1865–1938), 387/5, Archives of the Daughters of Charity of Saint Vincent de Paul.

[92] Historique de la Maison d'Élancourt (1865–1938), 1960, Album 168, Archives of the Daughters of Charity of Saint Vincent de Paul.

[93] Journal de la Maison de Grandbourg (November 1915–November 1918), May 14, 1917, FR-E.Gg5, Archives of the Sisters of Notre-Dame de Sion.

[94] Letter from Sister Marie Gonzales to the Ministry of Interior, July 3, 1917, Correspondence related to the Committee Franco-American, 3H2, Archives of the Sisters of Notre-Dame de Sion.

[95] Letter from the Ministry of the Interior to Sister Marie Gonzales, June 30, 1917, Correspondence related to the Committee Franco-American, 3H2, Archives of the Sisters of Notre-Dame de Sion.

[96] Letter from Auguste Jaccaci to Sister Marie Gonzales, June 4, 1917, Correspondence related to the Committee Franco-American, 3H2, Archives of the Sisters of Notre-Dame de Sion.

"blessing,"[97] a way to assist France in its hour of need without being cast out of the national community. In addition, this helped reposition the Catholic Church as an element participating in the fight for the survival of France during the war.[98] Jaccaci's desire that school orphans should receive tuition from lay teachers was implemented in a way that took account of the critical situation of the time, notably the shortage of teachers. Consequently, the government turned a blind eye and permitted the nuns to teach the orphans provided a lay curriculum was respected. Catholic nurses delivered quality education in compliance with national curriculum and ensured children could sit and pass their examinations in public schools in Paris throughout the period of war.

In October 1917, for the first time since the opening of the colony, Jaccaci visited Grandbourg and met the girls.[99] When it was not possible to travel to more distant colonies, Jaccaci was assisted by the American Red Cross. In May 1918, Mr. Whitter traveled to Biarritz on behalf of Jaccaci to ensure that the girls had been comfortably accommodated.[100]

Eight religious congregations assisted the CFAPCF by running colonies during the war. Along with the Sisters of St. Joseph de Cluny, the Daughters of Charity of Saint Vincent de Paul, and the Fathers of Sion, the Sisters of Saint Vincent de Paul, the Sisters of Notre Dame des Anges, the Sisters of Sainte Thérèse de Jésus, the Sisters of St. Joseph d'Ypres, and the Sisters du Bon Sauveur housed children from the devastated and occupied regions. The religious congregations that ran colonies for the CFAPCF, where possible, partnered with American women in the education of the children in their care. The correspondence and diaries of these volunteers are a rich source of details about everyday life in the colonies (Figure 1.2).

Everyday Life in the Colonies

Though their primary goal was to help children recover from illness, injury, and trauma, the colonies became transformative places that equipped children with the necessary skills to become self-sufficient adults.

[97] Tenth general meeting of the congregation, 1919, Gen 1G8, Archives of the Sisters of Notre-Dame de Sion.
[98] Xavier Boniface, *L'aumônerie militaire française (1914–1962)* (Paris: Cerf, 2001), 65–158.
[99] Journal de la Maison de Grandbourg (November 1915–November 1918), October 26, 1917, FR-E.Gg5, Archives of the Sisters of Notre-Dame de Sion.
[100] Journal de la Maison de Biarritz (April 1918–February 1922), May 29, 1918, FR-B21, Archives of the Sisters of Notre-Dame de Sion.

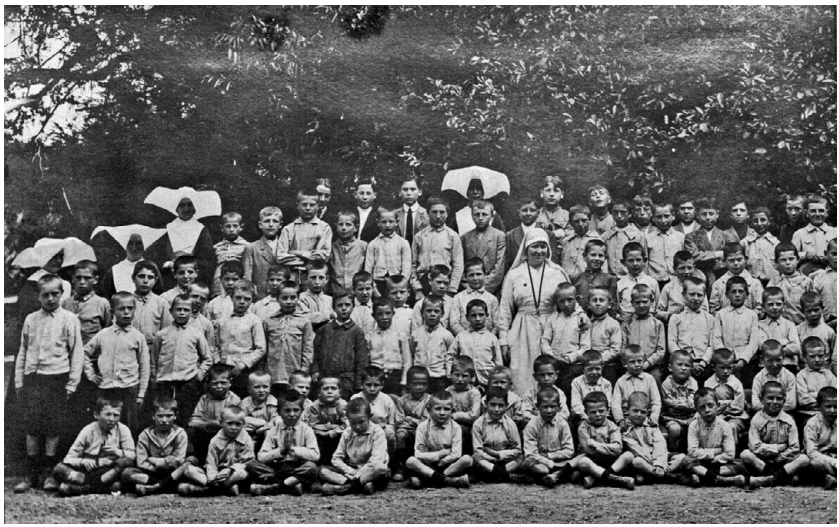

Figure 1.2 Orphaned children at Cheillé, Château de la Cour, Indre-et-Loire, 1918. Alma A. Clarke Papers.
Courtesy of Bryn Mawr College.

In designing the colonies, Coudert insisted that children acquire skills that would allow them to support themselves in the future. The children in some colonies attended local schools and received primary or secondary education; in other places, because of either lack of public schools in the vicinity or the children's poor health, the children were educated in their colony either with lay teachers or with the nuns following a secular curriculum. The CFAPCF ensured schooling for the children up to the age of thirteen. After that, girls would be trained in domestic science, sewing, lacemaking, and other occupations; boys were taught carpentry, printing, cobbling, agriculture, and other trades.[101] When boys received wages, the money went to the general fund to be redistributed for the care of each child.[102] In Presles, young boys chopped wood when not in the

[101] Memorandum from Miss Crane about the colony of Bourdigal, March 26–29, 1920, Corinna Haven Putnam and Joseph Lindon Smith WW1 Archives (1914–1958), The Children of the Frontier (1917–1921), Colony reports, 2009.038.1, Special Collection and Library Archives, McFarlin Library, University of Tulsa.

[102] Memorandum from Miss Crane about the colony of Gramont, December 9, 1919, Corinna Haven Putnam and Joseph Lindon Smith WW1 Archives (1914–1958), The Children of the Frontier (1917–1921), Colony reports, 2009.038.1, Special Collection and Library Archives, McFarlin Library, University of Tulsa.

classroom.[103] Some colonies, such as the one in Grandbourg, had beehives, and the girls learned how to harvest honey.[104]

With the goal of healing traumatized children, everything possible was done to stimulate the general spirit within the colony. Educational sessions were interspersed by recreational activities. For example, at Lacaune-Les-Bains (Tarn), 200 young children sat under the pines during the day, eating their soup and playing games under the supervision of the nuns. Chopping wood, doing gymnastics, and swimming in the nearby lake were encouraged to keep the boys physically fit.[105] Stretching out after dinner became a habit. The nuns would play the piano, and the boys and girls would sing. Even when indoors, nature was in their view: From the front window of the main building, the valley could be seen. The colony came to be regarded as a heaven of repose.[106]

Colonies were not cut off from the ordinary life around them or from other colonies. Regular walks along the beach were part of the daily routine for the girls at Biarritz. Under the maternal supervision of the Sisters of Sion, children would bathe in the sea and run along the sandy beach, splashing water on one another.[107] Brothers and sisters who had been sent to different colonies were often reunited. For instance, seven girls from Grandbourg regularly visited their older brothers at Morangis (Essonne). Under the supervision of the Fathers of Sion, the Saint Michel Colony had been established to shelter boys.[108] For children who had a parent or other family member, visits were also authorized. Children in the colonies also received visits from local officials such as the mayor and the *préfet* and even upper-level officials such as ministers.

[103] Letter from Erica Thorp to her family, January 2, 1918, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow Family Papers (1768–1975), Section 2, Correspondence, Series IV, Erica Thorp de Berry (1890–1943), LONG29030, Longfellow House, Washington's Headquarters National Historic Site.

[104] Journal de la Maison de Grandbourg (November 1915–November 1918), March 7, 1918, FR-E.Gg5, Archives of the Sisters of Notre-Dame de Sion.

[105] Family Photograph Collection, Lacaune-les-Bains, 1918, Alice Mary Longfellow Papers (1855–1965), LONG16173, Longfellow House, Washington's Headquarters National Historic Site.

[106] Report by Mrs. C. P. Howland, June 19, 1918, Alma A. Clarke Papers, 1914–1946, Series I. War Work, 1917–1919, Committee for the Protection of the Children of the Frontier, Box 1, Box 3, BMC-M84, Bryn Mawr College.

[107] Journal de la Maison de Biarritz (April 1918–February 1922), April 28, 1918, FR-B21, Archives of the Sisters of Notre-Dame de Sion.

[108] Journal de la Maison de Grandbourg (November 1918–October 1923), September 11, 1920, FR-E.Gg5, Archives of the Sisters of Notre-Dame de Sion.

Colonies were in need of paper, pencils, and books. But, above all, they needed significant supplies of food for their little charges. Chickens, rabbits, and potatoes could easily be bought from a neighboring farmer to feed the girls at Nemours (Seine-et-Marne).[109] The Sisters of Sion regularly traveled from Biarritz to Bayonne (Pyrénées-Atlantiques) to buy potatoes and other products to feed their young guests.[110] Other colonies could capitalize on local produce and animals raised for meat, eggs, or milk. At Bourdigal (Indre-et-Loire), thirty hens provided enough eggs every day to the orphans of the colony. There was, however, an acute need for milk, which was difficult to source.[111] At Lacaune-les-Bains (Tarn), rabbits and geese and other poultry were an important supply of food.[112] Immediate neighbors and surrounding communities provided assistance.

The ongoing difficulties in securing sufficient food were occasionally eased when military troops stationed in Lacaune distributed extra bread rations to the boys.[113] At times, the assistance of the American Red Cross proved essential. Americans supplied large amounts of food to Lacaune, a boon to the nuns and to the boys in their care and a great relief to Erica Thorp.[114] Girls from Grandbourg (Essonne) received additional provisions in April 1918, thanks to the American Red Cross.[115] Similarly, the American Red Cross donated 42 kilos of cheese and two cases of figs to Biarritz, the other colony owned by the Sisters of Sion.[116] A few weeks

[109] Report on the colony at Nemours made by Mrs. Smith, January 6, 1920, Corinna Haven Putnam and Joseph Lindon Smith WW1 Archives (1914–1958), The Children of the Frontier (1917–1921), Colony reports, 2009.038.1, Special Collection and Library Archives, McFarlin Library, University of Tulsa.

[110] Journal de la Maison de Biarritz (April 1918–February 1922), April 13, 1918, FR-B21, Archives of the Sisters of Notre-Dame de Sion.

[111] Memorandum from Miss Crane about the colony of Bourdigal, March 26–29, 1920, Corinna Haven Putnam and Joseph Lindon Smith WW1 Archives (1914–1958), The Children of the Frontier (1917–1921), Colony reports, 2009.038.1, Special Collection and Library Archives, McFarlin Library, University of Tulsa.

[112] Letter from Erica Thorp to her family, April 28, 1918, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow Family Papers (1768–1975), Section 2, Correspondence, Series IV, Erica Thorp de Berry (1890–1943), LONG29030, Longfellow House, Washington's Headquarters National Historic Site.

[113] Letter from Erica Thorp to her family, May 14, 1918, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow Family Papers (1768–1975), Section 2, Correspondence, Series IV, Erica Thorp de Berry (1890–1943), LONG29030, Longfellow House, Washington's Headquarters National Historic Site.

[114] Letter from Erica Thorp to her family, May 19, 1918, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow Family Papers (1768–1975), Section 2, Correspondence, Series IV, Erica Thorp de Berry (1890–1943), LONG29030, Longfellow House, Washington's Headquarters National Historic Site.

[115] Journal de la Maison de Grandbourg (November 1915–November 1918), April 29, 1918, FR-E.Gg5, Archives of the Sisters of Notre-Dame de Sion.

[116] Journal de la Maison de Biarritz (April 1918–February 1922), May 18, 1918, FR-B21, Archives of the Sisters of Notre-Dame de Sion.

later, the nuns wrote to the American Red Cross to request coal. A few days later, the American Red Cross offered 1,000 kilos of coal.[117]

Given the scarcity of basic supplies and pedagogical material, Americans often solicited packages from their families, and up to the end of the war, parcels were sent from the United States to support the needs of the orphans. Erica Thorp expressed her gratitude to her parents for sending cardboards, chalks, and books to the colony.[118] As books and pencils reached the colonies, the children were reminded that they were fed and educated thanks to American people, and notes or words of thanks were sent in return. Eight-year-old Louise Fastiory confessed that she "liked a lot the little Americans" who were kind enough to send books and toys. Amélie Minard, aged seven, rejoiced at receiving books.[119] Paulette, also seven, had been evacuated from Belfort and sent to Lyons. She sent her kind regards to all the American women who offered support for French and Belgian orphans and declared that had she not been French, she "would have chosen to be American."[120] Marcelle Dreyfus, another seven-year-old, confessed that if she had not been French she would "have liked to be an American girl."[121] Acts of appreciation and gratitude were encouraged. On September 22, 1918, the boys of La Cour (Cheillé) organized a recreational afternoon to thank their benefactors. They performed a play, sang songs, read poetry, and played games with their American benefactors.[122]

The women who volunteered at the colonies commented on the challenges of teaching. Even bilingual Americans like Erica Thorp admitted that teaching long hours in a foreign language was an exhausting

[117] Journal de la Maison de Biarritz (April 1918–February 1922), June 14, 1918, FR-B21, Archives of the Sisters of Notre-Dame de Sion.

[118] Letter from Erica Thorp to her family, January 14, 1918, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow Family Papers (1768–1975), Section 2, Correspondence, Series IV, Erica Thorp de Berry (1890–1943), LONG29030, Longfellow House, Washington's Headquarters National Historic Site.

[119] Letter from Amélie Minard to the American Red Cross, April 27, 1918, Alma A. Clarke Papers, 1914–1946, Series IV. Scrapbooks, 1917–1919. Committee for the Protection of the Children of the Frontier, BMC-M84, Bryn Mawr College.

[120] Letter from Paulette to the American Red Cross, April 11, 1918, Alma A. Clarke Papers, 1914–1946, Series IV. Scrapbooks, 1917–1919. Committee for the Protection of the Children of the Frontier, BMC-M84, Bryn Mawr College.

[121] Letter from Marcelle Dreyfus to the American Red Cross, April 27, 1918, Alma A. Clarke Papers, 1914–1946, Series IV. Scrapbooks, 1917–1919. Committee for the Protection of the Children of the Frontier, BMC-M84, Bryn Mawr College.

[122] "Recreational program, Colonie de La Cour," September 22, 1918, Alma A. Clarke Papers, 1914–1946, Series IV. Scrapbooks, 1917–1919. Committee for the Protection of the Children of the Frontier, BMC-M84, Bryn Mawr College.

experience: "I'd never dreamt that work took so much preparation and clearing-ups."[123] But the Americans also hoped to teach the children about their own land. "I tried to tell them a little about Washington and Lafayette," Thorp explained to her parents, "and France and America's long-standing friendships."[124] Alma Clarke took pleasure in telling all kinds of stories about American people and Lafayette.[125] By February 22, 1917, George Washington's birthday had become a symbolic day in the colonies. At Grandbourg, Sister Marie Gonzales invited American members of the CFAPCF and led a choir to celebrate the day and had all the children lined up with little American flags in their hands before the arrival of the guests.[126] July 4 also became a holiday for the colonies across France. Children spent their time celebrating America's national holiday, listening to stories of how Lafayette helped America break free from its chains.[127] On July 4, 1918, Erica Thorp awoke to a perfumed vision of floral bouquets wrapped with tricolor ribbons. As a token of their gratitude to her and to the Americans for their contribution to France, the mayor, along with the head of the local post office and other civilians, had sent the flowers to mark the American national holiday.[128]

As those staffing the colonies tried best to make life idyllic for their young guests (Figure 1.3 and Figure 1.4), shortages of food and fuel and encroaching warfare were real. So was disease. For example, when a severe epidemic of diphtheria hit Chateau de la Cour, Clarke traveled to Cheillé (Indre-et-Loire) and worked steadily for four weeks from early morning

[123] Letter from Erica Thorp to her family, January 14, 1918, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow Family Papers (1768–1975), Section 2, Correspondence, Series IV, Erica Thorp de Berry (1890–1943), LONG29030, Longfellow House, Washington's Headquarters National Historic Site.

[124] Letter from Erica Thorp to her family, February 20, 1918, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow Family Papers (1768–1975), Section 2, Correspondence, Series IV, Erica Thorp de Berry (1890–1943), LONG29030, Longfellow House, Washington's Headquarters National Historic Site.

[125] Letter from August F. Jaccaci (Chairman of the Executive Committee in Paris) to Miss Alma Clark, August 22, 1918, Alma A. Clarke Papers, 1914–1946, Series I. War Work, 1917–1919, Committee for the Protection of the Children of the Frontier, Box 1, Folder 2, BMC-M84, Bryn Mawr College.

[126] Journal de la Maison de Grandbourg (November 1915–November 1918), February 22, 1918, FR-E.Gg5, Archives of the Sisters of Notre-Dame de Sion.

[127] Journal de la Maison de Biarritz (April 1918–February 1922), July 4, 1918, FR-B21, Archives of the Sisters of Notre-Dame de Sion.

[128] Letter from Erica Thorp to her family, July 11, 1918, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow Family Papers (1768–1975), Section 2, Correspondence, Series IV, Erica Thorp de Berry (1890–1943), LONG29030, Longfellow House, Washington's Headquarters National Historic Site.

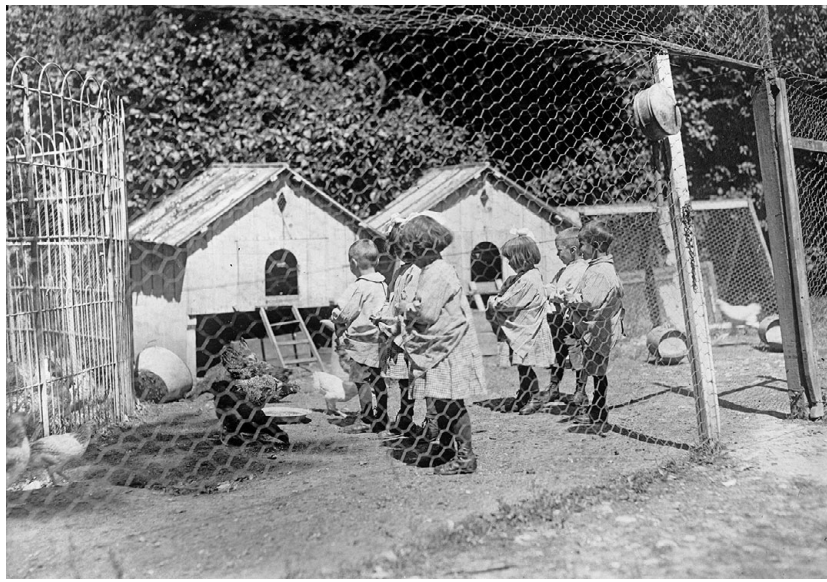

Figure 1.3 Orphaned children feeding chickens at La Jonchère, 1918.
Courtesy of the Library of Congress.

Figure 1.4 Luncheon under the trees at La Jonchère, 1918.
Courtesy of the Library of Congress.

until late at night, managing to stamp out the disease without losing any of the eighty patients.[129]

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A century after World War I, Frederic Coudert and August Jaccaci are names that are more or less forgotten. Together, they were instrumental in establishing an important wartime relief organization that was effective in providing refuge to destitute children from France's northern and eastern regions. The work of the CFAPCF led to its collaboration with the congregations of nuns who ran some of the colonies, with teachers in charge of schooling and American health experts overseeing provisions of sanitary conditions and hygiene. Running a network of colonies across France required considerable resources in personnel and the capacity to draw on a personal and social network of wealthy French citizens and American expatriates eager to shield France's children from hunger, destitution, and death. Along with the religious orders, they made their properties available to the CFAPCF for the duration of the war and provided financial and material assistance to rescue, shelter, heal, and educate the 1,557 young victims of war. The CFAPCF was the first Franco-American response aimed at ensuring the protection of the "children of the frontier." A few months after its founding, another binational humanitarian organization was founded that would, in time, overshadow the impact of the CFAPCF and lead to the "adoption" of 300,000 French orphans.

[129] Letter from August F. Jaccaci (Chairman of the Executive Committee in Paris) to Miss Alma Clark, August 22, 1918, Alma A. Clarke Papers, 1914–1946, Series I. War Work, 1917–1919, Committee for the Protection of the Children of the Frontier, Box 1, Folder 2, BMC-M84, Bryn Mawr College.