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GEO 478/678 Spatial Storytelling
Dr. Meghan Kelly

Map Five Reflection

The goal of this map, my fifth submission to GEO 478/678 Spatial Storytelling, is designed to explore the borders of enslavement and non-enslavement Ona Judge faced during her quest for freedom as she moved between Mount Vernon, Philadelphia, New York, and Portsmouth. My final product was a map of borders with varying symbology highlighting Judge and the assistance she may have received from Richard Allen, the co-founder of the Mother Bethal Baptist Church, business man, and chimney sweep.

Documentation of the Mapping Process

Of the week's readings, Dr. Meghan Kelly's "Mapping Syrian Refugee Border Crossings: A Feminist Approach" was my operational and inspirational template for *Borders: Ona Judge's Quest for Freedom* because it introduced me to another new approach. Not a technique of addition – size, colors, symbology, topography, text, insets, etc. – but one embracing a hyper-focused minimalism. Additionally, the following works contributed to this mapping project:

- Armstrong, Dunbar. *Never Caught: The Washington's Relentless Pursuit of their Runaway Slave, Ona Judge*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 2017.,
- D'Ignazio, C., & Klein, L. 3. "On Rational, Scientific, Objective Viewpoints from Mythical, Imaginary, Impossible Standpoints." In *Data Feminism*. (2020), and
- Kelly, Meghan. "Mapping Syrian Refugee Border Crossings: A Feminist Approach." *Cartographic Perspectives*. (93) 2019, pp. 34-64.

In a similar vein with Dr. Kelly, “I ask the following questions: How can the cartographic portrayal of ... peoples’ border experiences be improved to more fully represent their experiences?”¹

Engagement with Core Storytelling Concepts

The core concepts of this map are Judge’s changing locations and how she engaged within and across multiple borders. Other than Dunbar’s *Never Caught: The Washington’s Relentless Pursuit of their Runaway Slave, Ona Judge*; Judge is generally not well known. Additionally, there are significant gaps in what historians know and do not know about her as she moved from enslaved spaces, Virginia and New York, to less enslaved spaces because of state laws, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and then to gain almost all of her freedom in New Hampshire.

In addition to the period she spent in hiding before sailing north to Portsmouth, she probably had multiple, hushed conversations with Allen, his allies, and other enslaved people within the president’s house or on the streets of Philadelphia. Allen, among his many other business ventures, was a cobbler. Maybe Judge “visited” his shop, sadly we do not know. So, engaging with her unknowns does appear in Map 5. Thanks to the technique’s minimal, hyper-focused technique I decided to embrace and acknowledge this historical gap that rests at the core of Judge’s story.

¹ Kelly, Meghan. “Mapping Syrian Refugee Border Crossings: A Feminist Approach.” *Cartographic Perspectives*. (93) 2019, p. 34.

Evaluation of the Mapping Technique

By comparison to other mapping techniques, this was the simplest conceptually because I was already familiar with Judge's story and movements. Once I formulated my line weights and dashes, I created several progressions that I drew upon during the final construction phase of the map, so I did not have too much trouble building out the project's states and borders. I chose to construct the project in Word because I wanted the canvas to be 8.5 x 11 in., which is a similar feature of the Kelly map, and I would not have to learn a new program. The only polygons that I created outside of Word were the state outlines because I needed to remove their fill and background. I did this in Illustrator. The most challenging component of this project was producing and replicating a similar format, and making sure the text and polygons did not move, so the viewer was not confused as they progressed from page to page.

Power and Position

As noted in my previous cartographic project reflections, deconstructing structures of power and position remains a foundational motivation within my cartographic work. Both the text and the borders presented in this map are designed to elevate Judge while reducing Washington. The historiography of enslavement, the southern plantation system, and primary and secondary sources relating to the early American republic have traditionally eliminated and/or silenced enslaved peoples, especially women. Many of the accounts historians have today have been recorded by empowered, white authors and enslavers, Washington is no exception here, which is why Judge's account is cartographically and scholastically valuable. The fact that her voice has been preserved and it appears in this map, not only showcases and empowers her

agency, but it celebrates the life of a formally enslaved woman who did the unthinkable, she gained and protected her freedom against the president of the United States.