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PROGRESSIVE ERA REFORM
AND PRIVATE SECONDARY SCHOOLS FOR WOMEN, 1890-1920

by

ALLEN SIROKY

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in History in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, The City University of New York.

1996

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This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty of History in satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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Abstract

PROGRESSIVE REFORM AND PRIVATE SECONDARY SCHOOLS FOR WOMEN,

1980-1920

by

Allen Siroky

Advisor: Professor Barbara Welter

This study of the activities of officials of private female secondary schools in the Northeast during the Progressive Era focuses upon a group of female reformers whose work in education has been generally overlooked in the study of progressive reform, as has been their link with its social gospel aspect. The women (and a few men) headed female private secondary schools in Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island, New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania from approximately 1890 to 1920. They provided young women with an education reflecting a communitarian social focus typical of progressive educational ideals and of a non-sectarian Christian approach typical of the social gospel.

Many women's school administrators and faculty members were advocates of reforms like woman suffrage, temperance, child labor laws, and consumer protection, exalting the efficacy of democratic society while acknowledging its dependence upon a well-educated,

knowledgeable citizenry. Their educational methods addressed development of the "whole child." In promoting a consciousness of social issues in their students, they correlated school with society, demonstrating an affinity with the contemporary "Progressive" or "New" movement in education generally associated with such advocates as John Dewey, G. Stanley Hall, Marietta Johnson, and Francis Parker.

Leaders of women's schools also promoted greater social sexual equality, believing their female students to be capable of the same type of academic, spiritual, and physical development as counterpart male students. By simultaneously emphasizing the school community ("school spirit") and individual development through various means of self-expression, women's school officials aimed to develop self-confident, "socially useful" women. Evidence indicates that numerous alumnae of such schools did indeed make notable social contributions during the twentieth century, many in fields previously regarded as predominantly male.

PREFACE

American society encountered dramatic forces of change in the years immediately following the Civil War. Predominantly Protestant, nineteenth-century Americans tended to cast social issues in moral terms. Traditional American conceptions of society and self could hardly have escaped alteration when contemplating the unprecedented carnage of Civil War battlefields. Many Americans perceived the Civil War as a kind of divine retribution, a cleansing of the American national soul, whether for the sins of the other side, or for those of American society collectively.¹

Women were actively involved in various reform activities during the nineteenth century, on behalf of issues such as anti-slavery, temperance, and woman suffrage. During the Ante-bellum years, the dominant reform activity had been anti-slavery. Despite having been shouldered aside for official leadership and policy-making positions by their male anti-slavery organizational counterparts, many women, nevertheless, had made significant contributions to reform causes. Because of prevailing Victorian social attitudes toward gender roles, it was unusual for individual women to be as highly visible as was Harriett Beecher Stowe, whose popular novel, Uncle Tom's Cabin, was effective

¹ Page Smith, Trial By Fire: A People's History of the Civil War and Reconstruction (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1982), 42-44.

in rallying anti-slavery sentiment in the North, or Dorothea Dix, whose efforts resulted in reforms in penal and medical practices.

Although most of the nation's women seemingly remained content with their perceived role as moral guardians of home and hearth, traditional boundaries of female behavior were being strained. A continuing pattern of insistence by male leaders on male dominance in the leadership structure and activities of the most prominent anti-slavery organizations led a group of female abolitionists, including Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Lydia Maria Child, and the Grimke sisters, to conclude that such subordination of women was symptomatic of a wide and deep-seated American social attitude toward women's social role. These women met and organized at Seneca Falls in 1848, to confront a wide range of topics dealing with the general subject of women's rights in the United States. Suffrage for women was in the forefront of their call for equal rights. Such a demand for sexual equality seemed to constitute a radical attack on cherished beliefs of many Americans, including many women, about the proper nature of American womanhood. Women were traditionally regarded as the primary stewards of social morality in their roles as nurturing wives, mothers, and daughters. During Reconstruction, many female anti-slavery activists were stung by the unwillingness of American political leaders to extend to women, the same suffrage rights as those granted to male blacks by the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments.²

² Mabel Collins Donnelly, The American Victorian Woman: The Myth and the Reality (New York: Greenwood Press, 1986), Chapter 11.

During the last half of the nineteenth century, women increasingly became involved in social issues in an American society which continued to be largely middle class and Protestant. However, large, impersonal forces appeared to be at work, altering American society in ways that demanded resolution, while defying traditional American social conceptions. Urbanization, industrialization, and immigration were related forces which were changing the nature of society. Big business, big cities, and impersonal market forces seemed to many men and women to be promoting upheaval and corruption in American society.

Unhealthy living and working conditions became increasingly widespread in the nation's larger cities. More and more urban residents lived in neighborhood's in which living conditions were below generally accepted human standards of health. These slums contrasted sharply with certain city neighborhoods and outlying suburbs which typified a contrasting opulence. Urban political corruption was often a fact of life. Americans, who traditionally had valued a sense of community pride and a corresponding sense of individual self-worth, increasingly considered those values to have become casualties of urban living conditions. A perception grew that prevailing laissez-faire economic theory and its social counterpart, Social Darwinism, were palliatives that had contributed to current problems rather than providing satisfactory solutions to them. Men and women, many of whom had grown up in rural parts of the country, organized for the purpose of mitigating the worst urban conditions through public and private programs. Diverse and varied, these responses constituted a movement for progressive reform.

Historians have offered a wide range of interpretations about the basic nature, composition, and relative effectiveness of what has been called the "Progressive Movement" of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Yet, there seems to be general historiographic agreement about two of its aspects with which this study will deal. Historians agree that educated women, as part of the white, largely middle and upper class component of progressive reform, played important roles in the movement. Since progressive reform activity in general conveyed a sense of moral urgency, it is not surprising that the work of female progressives tended to reflect a moral prerogative.

Historians further agree that many progressive reformers, men and women alike, based their hopes for the establishment of just social conditions, on a spiritual, essentially Christian impulse, which became known as the "Social Gospel." The historical roles, both of educated women and of the social gospel, have been investigated in varying contexts. For instance, in his Introduction to The Progressive Movement, 1900-1915, editor, Richard Hofstadter says that social gospel activists "helped to give the Progressive movement the character of an evangelical revival in politics and economics," that "the voice of the Christian conscience was heard more clearly than at any time since the days of the abolitionist movement." He also describes an increasing role for women in the politics of progressive reform, declaring that "Now the educated, middle-class woman was beginning to grow tired of the passivity that was expected of her and sought to express herself in civic affairs." Hofstadter further indicates that progressive reform was not limited to purely political activity, rather that such activity reflected a fermentation of

progressive ideas in American social life. "What politicians were doing in the field of public leadership, and what writers were doing in the field of reporting and exposure, a new generation of thinkers and scholars was doing in the academic world."³ Ronald C. White Jr. writes that, "more than a traditional religious movement, the social gospel stepped outside the churches to intersect the political, social, and economic forces of changing America."⁴

The purpose of this study is to focus upon a group of female reformers whose life's work in the field of education has been generally overlooked in the study of progressive reform, as has been their link with its social gospel aspect. The study will focus upon the activities of the women who were leaders of private female secondary schools in the Northeast during the Progressive Era from, approximately, 1890-1920. The group of women (and a few men) were leaders of female private secondary schools in Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island, New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania, during the Progressive Era. They did their work in a non-sectarian Christian setting, establishing educational programs which reflected a social gospel emphasis on social justice.

³ Richard Hofstadter, ed. The Progressive Movement, 1900-1915 (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1963), 7-9.

⁴ Ronald C. White Jr. and C. Howard Hopkins eds., The Social Gospel: Religion and Reform in Changing America (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1976), xi.

Progressive reformers exalted the efficacy of democratic society while acknowledging its dependence upon a well-educated knowledgeable citizenry and believed that education was an important component of reform. Along with certain other educators, these women were extending progressive reform into the classroom, modifying educational methods to deal more effectively with with development of the "whole child," correlating the school with society and promoting a consciousness of social issues in their students. The educational philosophy of women's private secondary school leaders can be described as progressive because of their affinity with the contemporary "Progressive" or "New" movement in education, which is generally equated with the work of such men as John Dewey, G. Stanley Hall, Felix Adler, and Francis Parker. Advocates of progressive educational philosophy believed that school and society were part of the same democratic social package. Building on the educational thought of men such as Herbert Spencer, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Johann Pestalozzi, and Johann Herbart, educational progressives wished to inject a dynamic element into educational methodology and course content, making it at once, more interesting and meaningful for students while benefitting democratic society by preparing students to become effective citizens.⁵

Simultaneously, these educators of young women were attempting to promote greater social sexual equality through progressive educational methods and within a Christian,

⁵ See, for example, Merle Curti, Social Ideas of American Educators (Paterson, N. J.: Pageant, 1959); Adolphe Meyer, Educational History of the American People (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1967); David Norton, Democracy and Moral Development (1991).

"social gospel" context. They regarded their female students as being capable of the same type of academic, spiritual, and physical development as counterpart male students. Like other female reformers of the Progressive Era, many of these women were advocates of such aspects of reform as woman suffrage, temperance, child labor laws, and consumer protection. The educational approach of the group of private women's secondary schools depicts their belief in the importance of developing the values of good citizenship in their students. Like young men, they believed, young women should receive an education that enhanced their social usefulness. This was accomplished by incorporating an element of civic awareness into curricular and extracurricular activities.

Private women's secondary school programs emphasized development of the full potential of young women in three main interrelated areas: the intellectual, the physical, and the spiritual. School programs provided various means of individual self-expression, in the classroom, in school organizations and activities, at social functions, and through the arts. Similarly, these programs defied the traditional conception that the feminine physique was inherently delicate, unsuited to vigorous activity. School leaders rejected notions that such activity was "masculine," in its nature and effects. On the contrary, they believed that physical and emotional benefits of suitably vigorous individual and group physical activity would be as great for young women as for young men.

It is also evident that the most fundamental aspect of their tripod of development, was the spiritual one. They believed that a strong spiritual foundation must be developed within

the individual student in order for her to reach her full potential as a human being. School programs were permeated with a holistic, social gospel outlook. Although most schools were non-sectarian, they were unabashedly Christian in their basis. Students were subject to a pervasive, essentially Christian, moral influence. Virtually all required students to attend church and/or chapel regularly, with variations only in the precise format of the requirement. This assured exposure to an organized Christian style of worship, which, paranthetically, seems to have been customary in the previous home upbringing of most students.

Virtually all school activities were grounded in the conception that intellectual and physical development are connected with the development of character, and character with community. School traditions were established and developed on the basis of furthering a sense of community within students, a loyalty to something greater than self, namely, a school community. That community served as a kind of microcosm or representation of society. Progressive private school programs emphasized the idea that the strength of a community depended upon the efforts of each of its citizens. Activities designed to demonstrate that point varied widely, ranging from the simple to the complex, from the everyday to annual events, from recognition of specific individuals or groups, to inclusion of all students. Yet, the constant aim was to instill in students a sense of their individual importance to the well-being of their school community and, by extension, either implicitly or explicitly, to society itself. This conveyed a sense of both the fragility and potential strength of such a community.

To progressive leaders of women's schools, civic responsibility seemed, ultimately, to be a component of spiritual development. The character of each student could be developed among the predominantly female staff and student body, what in recent times has come to be called a "feminine support system," among the predominantly female school staff and student body. Each female student was encouraged to believe that her role in society should be more than ornamental. Using a phrase that may have been fraught with ambiguity, but which was, nonetheless, commonly used by progressive private school leaders, they exhorted each student to understand that the most important part of her social responsibility was to learn how to become a "socially useful woman."

Acknowledgments

A wise person once said that a good marriage is a commodity beyond price. My wife Helen was a bastion of support throughout this project, as she has been in all other phases of our life together. Her assistance with proofreading of the paper, her insights about its content and her steadfast moral support contributed immeasurably to its successful completion.

Key to whatever might be deemed of value in this study was the professional counsel of Professors Barbara Welter and Thomas Kessner, Advisor and First Reader respectively. I thank them for their guidance in clarifying the focus of the paper throughout its writing, helping me to express more effectively the material and my thoughts about it. I am very grateful to Professors Kathleen McCarthy, Gerald Markowitz, and Judith Stein from the City University system for serving on my Final Examination Committee on short notice in order to accommodate my circumstances. Their insightful comments about the paper were quite helpful.

I must also express my deepest appreciation to the present day school officials and keepers of the archives at the schools which were the subject of the study. At each school, I was received and assisted with the utmost courtesy. In a sense, the archivists became colleagues in the undertaking. Their sincere interest in my project and the graciousness with which they provided "grist for the mill" through accessibility to archival materials

proved invaluable to my research efforts. I left each school with a sense that officials there shared my interest in the study. They certainly share significantly in whatever degree of information and insight it conveys to its readers.

Also of great assistance in my research efforts were Eric Johnson and his excellent staff at the Teikyo Post University Library in Waterbury, Connecticut. While teaching as an adjunct at Teikyo Post during the 1993-94 school year, my access to the fine library facilities there proved to be of immeasurable benefit. I was able to effectively address the difficulty created by the distance between my home and the library facilities of the City University system. Eric and his staff are extremely knowledgeable and are unfailingly courteous and friendly. Through their efforts, I was able to locate much material that proved vital to development of my thesis. Betty Einerman, History Department Secretary at the CUNY Graduate Center, has been consistently helpful and a most pleasant person with whom to deal. Her willingness to go the extra mile in helping both students and faculty at the Graduate Center has been a major help in my clearing of the successive academic hurdles on the way to completing degree requirements.

Finally, my thanks to George Ziskind through whose astute technical assistance this dissertation was put into the proper form. George combines with his vast technical knowledge an eye for the aesthetic, and a deep sense of professional pride in his work. The final product has been significantly enhanced by the care he has taken in preparing its format.

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CHAPTER 1: PROGRESSIVISM AND WOMEN'S PRIVATE SECONDARY EDUCATION DURING THE PROGRESSIVE ERA

Women had become increasingly active in the field of education throughout the nineteenth century, primarily as teachers. Female educators also played a significant role in social reform during the Progressive Era of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The leaders of private secondary schools for women during the Progressive Era, constitute a group of women (and a few men), whose work in the context of progressive reform has gone largely unnoticed. Investigation shows that these school officials were sympathetic to the progressive argument for integrating school and society in training students to become socially useful citizens. Underlying the academic curriculum and extracurricular activities of these schools was a non-sectarian, Protestant, Christian spiritual dynamic which was typical of the emphasis on social service articulated in Progressive Era reform movements known as the "Social Gospel" and "Progressive Education Movement."

While a few historians such as Peter Filene, have questioned the historical value of the term, "Progressive Movement" by citing evidence which reflects greater diversity among

reformers than could be adequately covered by earlier interpretations,¹ Robert Crunden has suggested that the wide-ranging influence of religion in the United States might serve as a conceptual basis for an understanding of the moralistic progressive atmosphere which pervaded reform during the Progressive Era. Political activity was only one of the social manifestations of a morally-oriented "progressive ethos" that influenced varied, yet, often interrelated, areas of American life, including politics, the arts, literature, and education. Increased social consciousness with a spiritual emphasis on the brotherhood of man lay at the core of this progressive ethos. Progressives assumed that democracy provided the framework which was most amenable to the establishment of the ideal moral society.²

Other historians have offered similar assessments of the pervasiveness of religion in progressive reform activities, both directly through examples of activism by church organizations and more indirectly through a Protestant religious influence upon many reformers during their formative years. Clyde Griffen's study shows that within and without the churches, a progressive ethos included the goal of transforming urban

¹ See, for example, a response in the form of essays by three historians to the issue Filene raises, with a lengthy excerpt from Filene's article which was originally published in Peter Filene, "Obituary for the Progressive Movement," American Quarterly 22 (1970), 20-34; John Buenker, John Burnham, and Robert Crunden, eds., Progressivism (Cambridge, Mass.: Schenkman Publishing Company, Inc., 1977); Also, Daniel C. Rogers details the historiographic controversy with "In Search of Progressivism," Reviews in American History 10 (December, 1982): 113-132.

² See Crunden's essays in Buenker, et. al, Progressivism and Robert Crunden, Ministers of Reform: The Progressives' Achievement in American Civilization, 1889-1920 (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1982).

cultures to accommodate quintessential small town values, emphasizing virtues such as compassion and brotherhood in increasingly rough-and-tumble urban areas.³ Gregory Singleton describes the impact of the Protestant ethic on American culture through the activities of voluntary, church-related organizations. John Burnham also shows the distinctively mainstream, middle class cultural stamp which was placed upon progressivism through a kind of consensus idealism in such evangelically-based forms as the purity and mothers' movements. Progressive reformers generally came of age around the turn-of-the-century and many appear to have been profoundly influenced by the traditionally Protestant moral values with which they were raised.⁴

The analyses of historians like Crunden, Griffen, Singleton, and Burnham, while differing in specific application, suggest, in common, the pervasive influence of Protestant religious values as a useful mode of describing the distinctively moralistic reform ethic of the Progressive Era. Progressives typically urged citizens to pursue activities which were "socially useful," as the keystone to building an ideal democratic society premised on love for one's fellow man. Two significant expressions of a progressive ethos were manifested in the social gospel and the methods promoted by advocates of progressive

³ Clyde Griffen, "The Progressive Ethos," in The Development of an American Culture, eds. Stanley Coben and Lorman Ratner (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1970), 120-149.

⁴ Gregory H. Singleton, "Protestant Voluntary Organizations and the Shaping of Victorian America," American Quarterly 27 (1975), 549-560; John C. Burnham, his essay in Progressivism, 1-29; Robert Abzug, Cosmos Crumbling: American Reform and the Religious Imagination (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994).

education. Both movements reflected a belief that the identity of the individual had no meaning in isolation but was most fully developed by constructive interaction between the individual and his/her society.

This communitarian behavioral ideal drew upon the fact that, despite growing national diversity, American society continued to validate a moral system whose essential character was Christian and Protestant. Arthur Ekirch writes that the social gospel "supplied the bridge by which Progressivism, as almost a religious faith, and Christianity, as a movement of social reform, were able to join hands and march in unison."⁵ Takahisa Ichimura states that "the social gospel movement supported the Progressive education movement," promoting social salvation through a progressive type of education whose aim was to develop citizens of high moral stature.⁶ Maurice Berube also links the social gospel and progressive education, citing their philosophical reform ethic which emphasized social experience and education as overlapping keys to social reform. He cites the work of Jacob Riis, Jane Addams, and John Dewey as representative of progressive reformers. Berube says that, among their common philosophical bases of

⁵ Arthur A. Ekirch, Jr., Progressivism in America (New York: New Viewpoints, 1974), 57, 58.

⁶ Takahisa Ichimura, "The Protestant Assumption in Progressive Educational Thought," Teachers College Record 85 (Spring, 1984): 451-454.

reform, each promoted an education in which the child was "an innocent being to be molded into a citizen fully developing his or her talents."⁷

Progressives believed that among the social institutions which provided training for democratic citizenship, none was more fundamental than the nation's schools. The Progressive Education Movement attempted to buttress the nation's democratic system by helping students develop the requisite skills for effective social interaction. This could be accomplished through a morally-based educational training, which reflected the nation's essential values. Consequently, these two aspects of progressive reform, can be described as springing from a profoundly optimistic belief in the efficacy of a democratic social system and from an optimistic Christian value system of social service.⁸

⁷ Maurice R. Berube, American School Reform: Progressive, Equity, and Excellence Movements, 1883-1993 (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 1994),3-10.

⁸ Influential philosopher William James was best-known for emphasizing empirical experience in his philosophy called, "Pragmatism." However, James' writing during the Progressive Era, endorsed the efficacy of religious faith and its relationship to the well-being of society, even though he conceded that conclusive evidence of the existence of God was unavailable. In The Will to Believe, James said that "A social organism of any sort whatever, large or small, is what it is because each member proceeds to his own duty with a trust that the other members will simultaneously do theirs. Wherever a desired result is achieved by the cooperation of many independent persons, its existence as a fact is a pure consequence of the precursive faith in one another of those immediately concerned." Quoted in an excerpt from William James, The Will to Believe and Other Essays in Popular Philosophy (New York: Longmans, Green & Co., 1897) in Bernard M. G. Reardon, Religious Thought in the Nineteenth Century (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1966), 399. Historians have linked the optimism and devotion to social service marking the Progressive Era with a mid-nineteenth-century religious phenomenon called "Perfectionism." It was based upon a belief in the ultimate perfectibility of man and society. For example, Timothy Smith shows that perfectionist belief in the Holy Spirit's "abiding presence" in the world was akin to the Transcendentalist concept of the "oversoul" and reflected the Romanticism of the period. Similar was the social gospel's conception of God's "Immanence" in society. Smith gives
(continued...)

A Progressive Ethos Reflected in Women's Private Secondary Schools

The imprint of such progressive ideas is evident in the education offered to young women at single-sex Northeastern private secondary schools during the Progressive Era.

Officials at the schools were aware, perhaps personally and painfully so, of the limitations which American society continued to place upon the role of its women. Yet, the type of education which they provided reflected their advocacy of a certain widening of women's sphere which was becoming increasingly apparent in American society during the years from roughly 1890-1920. Investigation of the educational approach which women's school leaders followed reveals their underlying belief that a progressive education which encouraged development of socially useful citizens would provide the means through which female students could best live fulfilling, productive lives. The thesis of this study of thirty private secondary schools for women in the Northeast during the Progressive Era is that the educational training which the schools provided reflected a pervasive progressive ethos which was most clearly expressed through the social gospel's

(...continued)

examples of application of a perfectionist religious ethic by such mid-nineteenth century social reformers as Phoebe Palmer, Gilbert Haven, and Stephen Olin, whose work on behalf of the urban poor seemed a precursor for progressive reform efforts like the social settlements. Timothy Smith, Revivalism and Social Reform In Mid-Nineteenth-Century America (New York and Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1957), especially Chapter IX; See also Chard Powers Smith, Yankees and God (New York: Hermitage House, 1954), who presents an unflattering interpretation of the social gospel but who portrays a similar connection with Perfectionism; Robert Handy, et. al. eds., American Christianity, 1820-1960 (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1963); A more recent work depicting the role of Perfectionism in mid-nineteenth century reform, including that of female reformers like Angelina and Sarah Grimke, is by Robert Abzug who applies theologian Paul Tillich's term, "kairos," in its describing "a moment in history marked by entry of the Kingdom of God into human affairs." Robert Abzug, Cosmos Crumbling, op. cit., 5.

emphasis on the social usefulness of individuals. This communitarian concept was also typical of the type of training advocated by those favoring a progressive method of education.

The study is not intended to be a formal quantitative analysis. Archival materials from most of the schools are inadequate for detailed analysis over the full period, 1890-1920. Despite the somewhat sketchy nature of school records, they are sufficiently detailed to allow the investigator to reconstruct the educational approach of the schools, one which, despite certain differences in specific application among its practitioners, reflected their pursuit of identifiably progressive goals through identifiably progressive educational means. A further question about the degree to which a certain "social class consciousness" may have influenced the policies of women's private secondary schools may be the one worthy of fuller investigation than the complexities of the issue would allow within the scope of this paper. Evidence indicates that, with some exceptions, the families of students possessed the financial means to bear the substantial costs of a private school education for either a day or boarding program, placing them in a financial strata above that of most Americans. It must be acknowledged that an underlying tone of "class consciousness" might be discerned in the policies of school officials and the

actions of students at times.⁹ Aspects of such behavior will be discussed more fully in later chapters, though not specifically in an in-depth context of "class consciousness."

Virtually all of the schools promoted educational policies which were based on the communitarian reform beliefs asserted by the social gospel and by progressive educators, reflecting a common goal of integrating spiritual, academic, and physical development of students. A substantial number of the schools' leaders and alumnae were personally involved in progressive social reform activities, but, over and above that, all officials attempted to train their students within a larger social framework than that which had traditionally been utilized in schools. The aim of the training, which provided options of a general academic or college preparatory track, and in several schools, a vocational one as well, was to equip students with academic and social skills which would facilitate their becoming socially useful citizens.

The Northeastern part of the country, comprising the states of southern New England (Connecticut, Massachusetts, and Rhode Island) along with New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania, offers a geographically compact sampling of private secondary schools for

⁹ For example, in stimulating support for school civic outreach projects for the needy, school leaders were not adverse to plucking a sense of "noblesse oblige," in their students, a sense of social obligation toward others who were less fortunate than they. Further, despite their democratic rhetoric, school officials clearly followed admissions policies which were racially and religiously exclusive. Such aspects of school policy suggest that, at least to a degree, an element of social and educational privilege which conceivably could be defined as "class consciousness" may well have been present at women's private schools.

women. The Northeast had led the way in the establishment of such schools during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The thirty single-sex schools which comprise the study were selected on the basis of their having functioned as all-female secondary educational institutions during the period of 1890-1920 and their ability to provide accessible archival materials adequate for an analysis of their educational programs during the period.¹⁰

Northeastern women's schools varied in the details of their daily operations, yet they shared important fundamental characteristics. Each school selected for this study utilized one of the two prevailing school approaches of the period: those which offered exclusively a day program and those which provided a boarding component. The chart in Appendix I indicates the appropriate category for each school. Most schools experienced changes in leadership during the period and a few had changes in school name. However, all retained their status as single-sex secondary schools for women during the period.

¹⁰ In 1890 there were 1,632 private women's high schools and academies in the United States. In 1900, there were 1,978. By 1910, the number had fallen to 1,781 but increased again by 1920, to 2,093. The number of girls attending such schools increased steadily for each decade, approximately doubling between 1890 and 1920 from 47,397 to 99,931. These figures from records of the United States Commission of Education are cited in Thomas Woody, A History of Women's Education in the United States vol. I (reprint, New York: Octagon Books, 1966), 545.

Despite some fluctuations in size of student populations, the schools tended to remain small and intimate in character. Several accepted students at both the elementary and secondary levels and were divided into upper and lower schools on the basis of age and educational background. In those schools, it appears that academic and physical training of upper school students was separate from and largely unaffected by counterpart activities of the lower schools. In some instances, school social outreach programs appear to have been inclusive of both lower and upper school students, but no evidence suggests that those instances were significant enough to require special attention by the investigator. Essentially, the impact of lower schools on the daily activities of secondary students seems to have been minimal and its consideration in the context of this project would confuse more than clarify its focus. Therefore, only the curricula and activities of the secondary level (upper school) in such institutions will be of direct concern.

Chronologically, the founding dates of the schools can be grouped into two general periods. These essentially correspond to the establishment of clearly collegiate institutions which accepted women during the last quarter of the nineteenth century. During the first of the two periods, from the eighteenth century to about 1880, a "pioneering group" of women's secondary schools was established. During the years from 1880 to 1920, the concept of a collegiate education for women had become sufficiently established to spawn a distinctive "collegiate-era" group of schools. Women's private secondary schools founded after 1880 routinely included a college preparatory line of study in their curricula, whereas those founded earlier had had none

since they had provided the highest level of education available to women at the time. The chart in Appendix I also provides a listing for each school regarding its appropriate chronological category, based upon the year of its founding.

Women's Private Secondary Schools: A Brief Historical Survey to 1900

The pioneering historical study of women's education in the United States is that of Thomas Woody, published in 1929. In his first volume, Woody shows that education in the American colonies/states of the eighteenth century contained significant elements which fostered religious and domestic element supplementary to development of rudimentary academic skills. Americans of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries tended to believe that female domesticity had been divinely ordained. They regarded women as refining agents for the cruder propensities of men.¹¹

Historian Mary Beth Norton notes that "Piety was as characteristic of the ideal colonial woman as was notable housewifery." The Early National Period was called "the republican experiment" by contemporaries. In that context, women were considered to be the primary caretakers of the "republican virtue" requisite to the very survival of the republic. Women could accomplish this function through their duties as republican wives, sisters, and mothers, inculcating a sense of morality in present and upcoming

¹¹ Ibid., 192-198, 398-401.

generations of republican citizens. This constituted a kind of domestic educational function for women, vis a vis their families.¹²

Schools called "seminaries" were established to provide formal education for females around the mid-eighteenth century, although only a small percentage of girls in the population attended them. Prayers and the reading of the Bible were daily rituals. "Accomplishments" such as music and crafts dominated early seminary curricula. Nineteenth-century society continued to view women as having the primary role of being virtue's caretakers and as promoters of aesthetic beauty. During the century women increasingly entered teaching, a profession regarded as a socially acceptable outlet for the natural piety and nurturing skills commonly attributed to women. Educator Catharine Beecher, daughter of a noted Protestant clergyman, declared teaching to be, "woman's true profession." From about 1820, the number of women requiring more than an elementary education expanded commensurately with the number who wished to teach. Woody noted several defects in the curricula of female seminaries for the period from the mid-eighteenth century to the mid-nineteenth. Among these were a tendency to offer more courses than they could effectively teach and widely varying admissions and grade level standards. During the first half of the century, female educational reformers like Emma Willard, Zilpah Grant, and Catherine Beecher increased the emphasis on academic subjects in the seminaries which they founded. By the mid-nineteenth century, such

¹² Mary Beth Norton, Liberty's Daughters: The Revolutionary Experience of American Women, 1750-1800 (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1980), 126-127, 242-250.

reformers had made substantial progress toward standardization in women's schools including: three years for secondary level work, a minimum entry age of thirteen, and fewer courses. Coeducational public high schools were also established during the 1820's, though they did not become numerous until late in the century and they varied in academic rigor.¹³

Women's colleges were established during the final three decades of the nineteenth century with the goal of providing education to women on the same academic level as the best men's colleges. Between 1870 and 1880, the percentage of women in the country between the ages of eighteen and twenty-one who attended college increased from 0.7% to 1.9%, and by 1890 was up to 2.2%. Statistics for the two decades on women twenty one years or older are unavailable but Barbara Solomon believes that percentages of college women in the female population would be significantly higher if a larger cohort were used. In any event, by 1880, female collegiate education had acquired a substantial foothold and most seminaries had become more distinctively secondary schools with predominantly pre-collegiate coursework.¹⁴

¹³ Woody I, 525-544.

¹⁴ Barbara Solomon, In the Company of Educated Women (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), 64. Woody, 357-363, 399; Otto F. Kraushaar, American Nonpublic Schools: Patterns of Diversity (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1972) 72, 73.

Founders of women's colleges were, however, learning, to their chagrin, that the majority of incoming students required remedial work. Wellesley's Henry Durant and Alice Freeman Palmer and Bryn Mawr's M. Carey Thomas and James E. Rhodes, were among women's college leaders who hoped to expedite a flow of thoroughly-prepared entering students. Realizing that they needed to supplement the agreements they had made with existing schools to administer entrance examinations for prospective students, they encouraged establishment of new secondary schools which had a distinctive college preparatory function.¹⁵

Such was the case with Dana Hall in 1881, founded by Sarah and Julia Eastman in Wellesley, Massachusetts at the behest of President Henry Durant of Wellesley. Dana Hall was the first school in the study (and apparently in the nation) to be established primarily for the purpose of providing college preparation.¹⁶ Others followed during the last two decades of the century. Dr. James E. Rhodes, President of Bryn Mawr College, instigated the establishment of The Baldwin School of Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania in 1888, as well as The Shipley School of Bryn Mawr in 1894. The Cambridge School in Weston,

¹⁵ Woody Vol. II, 163-185.

¹⁶ Winifred Lowry Post, Purpose and Personality: The Story of Dana Hall (Wellesley, Mass.: Dana Hall School, 1978), 1-3.

Massachusetts, founded in 1886, had similar connections with The Harvard Annex, which became Radcliffe College.¹⁷

Female private secondary schools thus expanded their functions to serve students who wished to attend college, as well as those who did not. At the turn-of-the-century, families which could afford private education, still tended to limit their daughters to a prototypical "finishing school" secondary education. Formal academic training for such young women was, practically speaking and quite literally, "finished," upon completion of academic requirements. The products of a finishing school were typically expected to marry, oversee the maintenance of the household, and conduct social functions with grace and charm. They and their families desired a training whose academic stringency was sufficient to enable them to be charming and interesting companions for educated men.¹⁸

Officials of Private Secondary Schools for Women: Drawn from the Middle Class

Historians have constructed a profile of the family backgrounds of women who attended college from 1870 through the Progressive Era, which indicates a decidedly middle class nature. Liva Baker and Barbara Miller Solomon show that fathers of college women were typically professionals, businessmen, or farmers, often of white Anglo-Saxon,

¹⁷ Heather Neal and Judith L. Hammerschmidt, A Preposterous Extravagance: The Centennial History of The Baldwin School, 1888-1988 (Bryn Mawr, Penn.: The Baldwin School, 1988), vii-5; Krausharr, 73.

¹⁸ Liva Baker, I'm Radcliffe! Fly Me! The Seven Sisters and the Failure of Women's Education (New York: MacMillan, 1976), 215; Kraushaar, 70, 71.

Protestant stock, relatively affluent, and "morally conservative." A significant number of middle class parents had been teachers. Many had been involved in social reform of some type.¹⁹

Aileen Kraditor's research suggests as well, that women who were active in progressive reform came primarily from what she regards as a middle class background and included family members who had typically been involved in ante-bellum reform activities, particularly abolition. Kraditor finds that most Progressive-Era female activists for reforms like suffrage, temperance, and labor legislation shared a commitment to education as a means through which reform could be promoted, tending to be well-educated themselves. Protestant religious tenets were influential in shaping the moral outlook of such women reformers.²⁰

A biographical profile of women's private secondary school officials indicates that they too, fit this middle class model. A more detailed description of the backgrounds of the private school leaders will appear in a later chapter. It is sufficient to state here that the parents of virtually all of the school leaders had been conscious of inculcating strong Protestant moral values in their children, including, perhaps not surprisingly, an emphasis on educational attainment. Fathers of nearly all of those school officials were

¹⁹ Baker, 215; Solomon, 63-65.

²⁰ Aileen Kraditor, Ideas of the Woman Suffrage Movement, 1890-1920 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1965), 60-66.

professionals, including many who were Protestant clergymen. This middle class background of school officials appears to have been an important factor contributing to the social values which they brought to their educational endeavors, values reflecting a morally-based communitarian ethic common to the social gospel and progressive education.

The European Roots of American Educational Reform

The roots of American progressive educational methods were actually European transplants. In the early 1870's, a young American, Francis Parker, returned to the United States following a period of intensive study in Germany. He had been profoundly influenced by the thought of three European educational activists. Their pedagogical theories, in turn, had built upon the idea of eighteenth century philosopher, Jean Jacques Rousseau, fostering the self-expression and creativity of children in order to hasten their development. Johann Pestalozzi was Swiss, and his disciples, Friedrich Froebel and Johann Herbart, were German. Pestalozzi placed the child at the center of the educational process. Rather than drill and discipline, he favored a holistic approach which developed the child's, mind, body, and spirit. Froebel also believed that children could best develop in an environment of warmth and understanding. Johann Herbart believed that the educator's primary role was to utilize the child's own interests as much as possible, helping to bring him/her into the real world. Herbart's method, called "apperception," established formal steps by which a child could learn in an interdisciplinary fashion and apply knowledge to his/her environment. The methods advocated by Pestalozzi, Froebel,

and Herbart involved three fundamental educational principles which ultimately became components of progressive educational philosophy:

1. Individualizing study and utilizing nature in developing both mind and body of the child in a manner fostering spiritual growth.
2. Belief that education's ultimate end must be social progress.
3. Putting facts into use rather than merely memorizing them.²¹

Although Europeans like Rousseau, Pestalozzi, Froebel, and Herbart, had exercised a significant influence on American educators by the turn-of-the-century, British philosopher Herbert Spencer appears to have synthesized their ideas. Referring to progressive education, Cremin claims that, "If the revolution had a beginning, it was surely with the work of Herbert Spencer."²² Merle Curti agrees with Cremin's analysis of Spencer's contributions to progressive education, placing Spencer with Froebel and Parker in promoting a "complete and harmonious development of the individual."²³

Although Spencer's Social Darwinist philosophy of the late nineteenth century was anathema to progressive social reformers, much of his educational thought served as a precursor for important progressive educational principles. Spencer placed education within a social context, its primary aim being to prepare students for "complete living."

²¹ Joel Spring, The American School, 1682-1985 (New York: Longman, 1986), 170-172; Adolphe Meyer, Educational History of the American People (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1967), 232-244; Merle Curti, Social Ideas of American Educators (Paterson, N. J.: Pageant, 1959), 29, 30, 253, 254; Charles DeGarmo, ed., Introduction to the Pedagogy of Herbart, Trans. J. C. Zinser (Boston: Heath, 1896), 3-45 passim.

²² Lawrence A. Cremin, The Transformation of the School: Progressivism in American Education, 1876-1957 (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1961), 91-96.

²³ Curti, 246, 264.

He believed that schools should be responsible for the health of their students.²⁴

Progressive reformers at the turn-of-the-century reflected this idea in their utilization of public schools to promote health reforms, as will be discussed more fully below. Like progressive reformers, Spencer exhibited a faith in technological progress and technical expertise. He considered the study of science to be essential to the development of the student's thought processes and self-knowledge, facilitating development of necessary skills for effective functioning in society.²⁵

Historical Development of Progressive Reform in American Education

Educational historians agree that traditional nineteenth-century American pedagogical methods adhered to a basic pattern which they call, "formalism." Merle Curti uses the term, "formal discipline," explaining that its adherents tended to place little importance upon teaching children about the social order, at least not in specific terms. Curti and Adolphe Meyer agree that the dominant view of formalist school authorities was that the mental discipline and character-molding instilled by a few key subjects would provide sufficient training for students to effectively deal with any situation in life. The so-called "three R's," reading, writing, and arithmetic, provided this learning foundation, along with natural science and Latin in high school. The primary methodology was rote

²⁴ Herbert Spencer, Education (New York: Allison, 1860).

²⁵ Herbert Spencer, First Principles (New York: National, 1880).

memorization through drill. This traditional approach tended to utilize discipline in a corporal as well as an academic sense.²⁶

Undergirding the formalistic emphasis on mental and physical discipline, was an image of retribution for transgressions which was reminiscent of the traditional Calvinistic emphasis on a judgmental God of reckoning. The Puritan origins of American educational methods retained a dominant influence through the nineteenth century. Calvinist thought assumed that man's original nature was sinful and would remain so if man were left to his own devices. Natural human tendencies such as those toward comfort and diversion, were considered to be sinful, requiring external discipline to counter the tendency to go morally astray. Formalistic education practices emphasized rigid structure. Proponents regarded their primary virtue as being a toughening of the moral fiber of youth and believed that harsh disciplinary methods in school were in the child's own best interest.²⁷

"Faculty psychology" and the "formal disciplinary" method were logical outgrowths of Calvinist assumptions. These emphasized a mental and moral rigor that would provide the optimum means of developing human "faculties" through study of such subjects as formal geometry and Latin. Progressive educational thinkers disagreed with this

²⁶ Curti, 451; Meyer, 71, 254.

²⁷ Ernest E. Bayles and Bruce L. Hood, Growth of American Educational Thought and Practice (New York: Harper and Row, 1966), 2-5.

approach. Rather, they adopted gentler, more nurturing methods. Progressives accepted and attempted to incorporate the natural proclivities of children into their methodology. They emphasized development of a positive self-image in children by building upon their natural interests, attempting to formulate ways in which children could relate their academic learning to the world.²⁸

A series of articles by journalist Joseph Mayer Rice appeared in a New York monthly publication called The Forum in 1892. Rice had investigated conditions at public schools throughout the country. He reported that, despite occasional exceptions, the rule had been one of unhealthy conditions in facilities and the use of dull, essentially ineffective pedagogical methods. While much of the blame could be attributed to underfunding of schools, Rice argued that traditional educational methods also were at fault for what, he felt, was a general failure of American public school systems to adequately address the intellectual, physical, and moral needs of children. Sparks of lively classroom interest were infrequent and too often immediately extinguished, he contended, by a dour system that valued order and expediency at the expense of spontaneity. Although his conclusions proved to be a lightning rod for the wrath of many of the nation's school officials, Rice nevertheless felt that his articles had contributed to a growing movement for educational change. He declared that "The general educational spirit of the country is progressive."²⁹

²⁸ Ibid., 59-62; Spring, 126.

²⁹ Cremin, 3-8.

About a decade later, journalist Adele Marie Shaw undertook an assignment closely akin to Rice's, for The World's Work. Following similar nationwide investigative techniques, Shaw found that, while occasional examples of progressive inroads could be cited, general educational conditions remained much as had been described by Rice.³⁰ In the quality of intellectual, physical, and moral training offered by the nation's schools, she concluded that:

Compared with other nations, we are not a race of weak-minded pagan people, but compared with what we might be, we are all these things! Our public-school graduates make the bulk of the educated population; and if the schools were everywhere and in all ways what they are in some ways in certain places in the United States, we should be truly great.³¹

Francis Parker felt that many of the educational ideas to which he had been exposed in Germany were ideally suited to a democratic nation. In 1875, Parker became Superintendent of Schools in Quincy, Massachusetts, home state of the legendary educational reformer, Horace Mann, whose overriding principle was the accessibility of education for everyone. Parker allowed the child to pursue individual interests, which would naturally develop the skills necessary to fit him/her for some type of life work. Indeed, Parker regarded the school's major role as helping each student to develop a love for work. In Parker's schools, the arts, music, manual training, and physical culture were taught by specially-trained teachers. A fervent believer in democratic methods, Parker

³⁰ See Adele Marie Shaw, The World's Work VII (1903-04), 4204-4222, 4460-4466, 4540-4553; VIII (1904), 4795-4798, 4883-4894, 49996-5004, 5244-5254, 5405-5414; IX (1904-05), 5480-5485.

³¹ *Ibid.*, IX, 5481.

viewed prevailing formalistic pedagogic practices as smacking of elitism with socially divisive effects. He encouraged frank, open communication with his faculty, students, and parents.³²

Vocational Education

Francis Parker also supported the controversial policy of developing alternative educational tracks in the curriculum to suit the needs of individual students, rejecting the traditional single-track, college preparatory approach, which, he considered as elitist and discriminatory. Advocacy of a multi-track curriculum became another recognizable plank in the progressive educational approach. Supporters of a single track system, like Harvard's president Charles W. Eliot, argued that it helped to maintain high academic standards and that any student, regardless of socio-economic background, could be prepared to enter college. Psychologist G. Stanley Hall strongly disagreed. He advocated the multi-track system, believing, as did Parker, that it was necessary to develop vocational tracks for those students who were incapable of coping with a rigorous academic curriculum. Hall claimed that a lack of academic success would consign such students to lifelong poverty. His educational theories and studies supported Parker's emphasis on developing a sense of cooperation and social service in adolescents.³³

³² Meyer, 256-258; Curti, 253, 254, 383-386.

³³ G. Stanley Hall, Life and Confessions of a Psychologist (New York: Appleton and Company, 1923), 502-506; Daniel Boorstin, The Americans, The Democratic Experience (New York: Random House, 1973), 491-499; Spring, 201.

Many educational progressives felt that vocational training should be of a type which complemented other school work, helping to round the experience of the child.

Beginning in the 1880's, Felix Adler and Calvin Woodward were among reformers who, like Parker, wished to add a new type of practical "vocational" or "manual" training to meet the demands of an industrial age. However, they also thought that such training ought to complement liberal education rather than being primarily for the purpose of teaching specific trades. Adler advocated an orderly progression of manual training through elementary and secondary school years, parallel with academic studies. He, Woodward, and others believed that every child's overall development would be enhanced by a type of training in the manual arts whose overall effect fostered the child's creativity and a wider appreciation of his/her social role. They also felt that manual training in elementary and secondary education could increase the esteem in which manual labor was held by society. The vocational approach had influenced the views of many educators by the 1890's.³⁴

Others of practical bent saw an even more specific role for vocational education. More intensive and specific training seemed to promise a potential source of supply for the nation's labor force by training certain pupils for specific occupations. This would result in increased productive efficiency. By 1900, the editor of the Journal of Education was arguing that regular school attendance through high school and the consequent training in

³⁴ Cremin, 27-33; Spring, 208.

such virtues as cleanliness, discipline, and respect for authority, was of greater practical value to pupils than was their dropping out of school and going to work. A. E. Winship said that "the boy who leaves school and goes to work does not necessarily learn to work steadily, but often quite the reverse."³⁵

In 1905, the Committee on Industrial Education of the National Association of Manufacturers stated in its report that "Technical and trade education for youth is a national necessity." The committee felt that the country "must train its youth in the arts of production and distribution" in order to keep pace with international competitors like Germany.³⁶ While many progressives did not go as far as the N.A.M. in urging schools to provide training for specific occupations, the common motivation behind including vocational education in school curriculums was to integrate the personal fulfillment of students with the overall well-being of society.

John Dewey was a protege of Parker at the University of Chicago in the early 1890's. He called his mentor, "the father of progressive education." Dewey felt that each school constituted a community with a social life of its own. Practical learning within that

³⁵ David K. Cohen and Marvin Lazerson, "Education and the Corporate Order," in Michael B. Katz, ed. Education in American History: Readings on the Social Issues (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1973), 319.

³⁶ National Association of Manufacturers, "Reports of the Committee on Industrial Education (1905, 1912), in Marvin W. Lazerson and W. Norton Grubb, eds., American Education and Vocationalism: A Documentary History, 1870-1970 (New York: Teachers College Press, 1974), 91.

context could demonstrate basic principles of social experience and the education process assumed a moral prerogative to fit each student for effective contributions to society.³⁷

In that spirit, Dewey, like Woodward and Adler, favored a type of vocational training which complemented rather than dominated a child's education. He contended that each child was "a member of society in the broadest sense," one which included numerous roles in life. Ultimately, "He is to be a worker, engaged in some occupation which will be of use to society, and which will maintain his own independence and self-respect." Yet, he cautioned, "It is an absolute impossibility to educate the child for any fixed station in life." Dewey believed the child to be "an organic whole, intellectually, socially, and morally, as well as physically."³⁸

Diversity of Institutions Practicing Progressive Education

Much of progressive reform was directed at and promulgated through the public schools. However, it is important to note that many private schools which were established during the Progressive Era, most co-educational, but some single-sex, also utilized progressive educational methods. Not surprisingly, these schools were funded primarily by people from the upper middle class, those who could afford the luxury of financing educational

³⁷ Curti, 503-511; Cremin, 116, 117; Spring, 173.

³⁸ John Dewey, Moral Principles In Education, (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin and Company, 1909), 10, 11.

experimentation, and whose background placed a premium on education and a willingness to foster its improvement through the application of new approaches.³⁹

Typical of private schools of progressive orientation which were established during the period was Marietta Johnson's coeducational Organic School. It was founded in Alabama in 1907 on the basis of Johnson's desire to "minister to the health of the body, develop the finest mental grasp, and preserve the sincerity and unselfconsciousness of the emotional life," of the students. The school utilized an informal, communitarian style of living in its twelve grades. Dewey visited in 1915, praising its pedagogical principles and its effectiveness in developing the whole student. Among other things, he was impressed with the physical vitality of the students, which seemed commensurate with an evident enthusiasm for other of their school activities. Dewey proclaimed the school to be living proof that "it is possible for children to lead the same natural lives in school that they lead in good homes outside of school hours."⁴⁰

Some existing private schools also modified their approach to institute progressive practices. James McLachlan demonstrates that the leading private boys' preparatory schools such as St. Paul's, Choate, St. Mark's, Phillips Exeter, and Groton, took their cue from the social gospel which was being preached in colleges and universities throughout

³⁹ Cremin, 276-291; Berube, 13.

⁴⁰ Cremin, 149-151.

the country during the Progressive Era. Northeastern boarding schools for boys intended their educational training to be well-rounded and balanced, addressing mind, body, and spirit, a kind of "muscular Christianity," which exhorted young men to develop their talents and energies and to devote their use to public service. Daily chapel services and corporate prayer were important components of the school day, with moral fitness considered to be as much an educational goal as physical and mental fitness.⁴¹

While private secondary schools for girls, the subject of this study, were not precise carbon copies of boys' schools of the period, they followed the same educational model, adapting it to their own needs. A statement by Clara Spence of New York's Spence School, is representative of those by other girls' schools:

Education ought to be in the largest sense of the term a full and complete preparation of mind and body and spirit alike for all life's activities, the orderly and symmetrical development of our various powers in such a way that our work in the world, whatever it is, may be done by us effectively and well.⁴²

⁴¹ James S. McLachlan, American Boarding Schools: A Historical Study (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1970), 173, 217, 239, 268-289.

⁴² From typewritten notes of Miss Clara Spence in preparation for her talks to her students and to other organizations. Some of these have been preserved in the school's archives. Most, unfortunately, are undated, without designation as to the purpose of the talk. The notes from which this quotation was taken is designated only as, "Notes for Dec. 9." Miss Spence's "Notes," though varying in topic, retain a fundamental consistency in espousing views which adhere to typically progressive contemporary thought. Archives of The Spence School, New York, NY, hereafter called Spence Archives.

Women's Schools as Intimate Communities of Growth and Development

Several characteristics made private secondary schools for women distinctively progressive in the education they provided during the Progressive Era. Such factors appear to have contributed to a strikingly similar educational approach among the schools in this study. This approach, consequently, resulted in similar educational experiences for students from the various schools, experiences which alumnae from the period tend to characterize as personally enriching, contributing to feelings of intimacy and trust among classmates and staff, and ultimately, to increased self-esteem for students through academic, physical, and spiritual growth.

Important characteristics include: 1) Small Population of Students, 2) Models of Female Leadership, 3) "Thorough" Academic, Physical, and Vocational Training, and 4) A Spiritual Basis of School Community Life. The brief discussion of each characteristic, which follows, will be primarily descriptive in nature. Discussion of a more specific nature regarding the effects of these factors upon the students will follow in succeeding chapters in the context of their application to the educational programs established by the schools.

1) Small Population of Students

Most Americans who attended secondary schools during the Progressive Era, went to public schools. The decline in private secondary school enrollment for the decade from 1879-1889 had been precipitous, dropping over forty percent from 73.3% in 1879. The

proportion of students attending private secondary schools of any kind continued to decrease over the next three decades, though less precipitously, falling from 31.9% in 1889 to 8.9% in 1920.⁴³ Demographic figures indicating percentages of attendance throughout the female population at private secondary schools for women during the Progressive Era are unavailable. However, nothing seems to indicate that demographic trends had a particularly adverse effect on the women's private schools of this study. Decisions by their traditionally middle and upper class clientele regarding whether and where to send daughters to be educated, appear to have been more affected by occasionally dramatic national economic downturns like that in the mid-1890's than by the general educational trend toward public high schools.⁴⁴

⁴³ Kraushaar, 14.

⁴⁴ For example, Charlotte Conant described the effects of a national financial panic on her and her Co-Head, Florence Bigelow, during the opening year of The Walnut Hill School in Natick, Massachusetts in 1893. Prior to the panic, their friends, the Eastman sisters, Co-Heads of Dana Hall, had encouraged them to open the new school by promising that they would send a number of students from the long waiting list they had. However, when the panic struck, "Our good friends at Dana Hall had not enough students to fill their own school that year, so they could not help us." Despite this, "we kept on," and Walnut Hill managed to open with fourteen students. The number grew to twenty-three by Commencement in June, 1894. (From a typed manuscript entitled "Recollections of Miss Conant," pages 3, 4). Archives of Walnut Hill School, Natick, MA, hereafter called WHS Archives; Sources from other schools comment upon similar ups and downs in enrollment during the period, yet, those dips appear to have been infrequent and without long-term adverse effects on school enrollments. The private women's schools constituting this study all survived the period with identity intact. How typical their experiences were can only be definitively answered by exceeding the scope of this project. It does seem reasonable to conclude that, while frugality and efficiency of management were consistent watchwords in the operation of women's private secondary schools, stability in those operations was the rule rather than the exception, apparently enhanced by a relatively stable market of available students.

The population of secondary-level students at the schools seldom exceeded one-hundred, with numbers most commonly between forty and eighty, although enrollment tended to increase substantially from the rather modest numbers in the schools' earliest years. The student-to-teacher ratio seems to have been consistently low. Evidence relating to the average number of students enrolled in each course is very sketchy. Required courses generally would have been expected to have had larger class rolls than did optional courses, though it does not appear that large class size was an inordinate problem for the schools studied.⁴⁵

2) Models of Female Leadership

Recent feminist scholars of the Progressive Era have emphasized the effectiveness of female support networks in the activities of female reformers on both professional and personal levels, along with the ability of women in such networks to cultivate the support

⁴⁵ School records of student and faculty population figures for the years from the founding dates of schools to 1920 were incomplete. Yet, such evidence as exists provides a reasonably substantial picture of relative size. Such primary sources as school yearbooks (which sometimes fortuitously included a complete listing of the student population for the year and/or pictured and named all students), advertising circulars, alumnae association records and publications, account ledgers, student publications (newspapers, literary magazines, etc.), biographical and autobiographical accounts, articles or essays by school administrators, and all-school photographs, proved to be helpful. Many school archives contained useful secondary sources, notably histories of the school, which provided or corroborated school population data. It was upon these types of sources that I based my characterization of relative school size, which I believe to be an accurate one.

of like-minded male reformers.⁴⁶ Women's private schools were quintessentially, schools of, by, and for women with resultant feminine support networks. Faculty and staff positions were predominantly filled by women. The most common titles applied to the top official(s) of the schools was "Headmistress", "Headmaster" (if appropriate), or "Principal(s)". Most heads or principals of women's schools were women, with only the Brearley School in New York City having been headed exclusively by men throughout the period.⁴⁷ Even at the relatively few schools headed by men during any part of the period, the faculty was predominantly female.

Among the exceptions to the pattern of female leadership in the top position was St. Mary's Hall of Burlington, New Jersey, which was established by the Episcopal Church of New Jersey in 1837. Local rectors were officially in charge of operations but, during the Progressive Era, women were appointed as principals and were actually in charge of

⁴⁶ For example, Kathryn Kish Sklar depicts the efficacy of such support systems in describing the interaction between reformer Florence Kelley and her colleagues like Jane Addams and Lilian Wald in Kathryn Kish Sklar, "Hull House in the 1890's: A Community of Women Reformers," Signs 10 (Summer, 1985): 658-77, and Florence Kelley and the Nation's Work: The Rise of Women's Political Culture, 1830-1900 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995). Among others are Maureen A. Flanagan, "Gender and Urban Political Reform: The City Club of Chicago in the Progressive Era," American Historical Review 95 (October, 1990): 1032-1058; Robyn Muncy, Creating a Female Dominion in American Reform, 1890-1935 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990); Anne Firor Scott, Natural Allies: Women's Associations in American History (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1991).

⁴⁷ Ruth McAneny Loud, ed., The Brearley School: 75 Years (New York: The Brearley School, New York, N. Y., 1960), 22-28. Archives of the Brearley School, New York, N. Y. Hereafter called Brearley Archives.

the day-to-day operation of the school.⁴⁸ The MacDuffie School in Springfield, Massachusetts was founded and headed jointly by a wife and husband, Abigail and John MacDuffie.⁴⁹ The Cambridge School in Weston, Massachusetts, was founded and headed by Arthur Gilman. Following his death in 1907, the next two heads were women.⁵⁰ Upon Sarah Porter's death in 1900, Miss Porter's School in Farmington, Connecticut was briefly headed by her nephew, Robert Keep and his wife Elizabeth. Dr. Keep died in 1903 and Elizabeth Keep officially took the reins of the school for the remainder of the period.⁵¹

Evidence suggests that a common spirit of mission and camaraderie, a mutual support network, existed among the female administrators and their teaching and office staffs, despite what were sometimes spartan living and working conditions. A few examples will indicate the manner in which this approach of mutual support was incorporated by the schools. The author of a Dana Hall school history says that the Eastman sisters

⁴⁸ Helen Louise Shaw, The First Hundred Years of St. Mary's Hall on the Delaware: A Century of Private School Education for Young Women Under the American Episcopal Church (Copyright by the Board of Trustees of Bukrlington College, printed by The Cook Printers, Yardley, Penn., 1936), 78-100. Archives of St. Mary's Hall, Doane School, Burlington, N. J. Hereafter called St. Mary's Archives.

⁴⁹ Abby Parsons MacDuffie, The Little Pilgrim: An Autobiography (New York: privately printed, 1938), 44-47.

⁵⁰ George St. John, Jr., Individuals and Community, The Cambridge School: The First Hundred Years (Cambridge, Mass.: Windflower Press, 1986), 1-9. Archives of the Cambridge School, Cambridge, MA.

⁵¹ Nancy Davis and Barbara Donahue, Miss Porter's School: A History (privately printed by Miss Porter's School, Farmington, Conn., 1992), 28-33.

provided separate faculty housing, describing that as "extremely enlightened policy at a time when in most boarding schools custom and thrift combined to sanction the practice of using teachers as housemothers in the dormitory." Like heads at other schools, the Eastmans expected their predominantly female faculty to join them as role models for the students by immersing themselves in the school's daily activities. "Their teachers stood right with them, shoulder to shoulder, sharing their values and just as 'intent' on 'making character' as they" by participating fully in all school activities.⁵²

At Dobbs, Eliza Masters began to add college-trained teachers to the faculty around the turn-of-the-century, remaining steadfast in her primary goal of developing the character of students above all else, and enlisting the support of her teachers in carrying out activities toward that end. "Her teachers were chosen with fine judgment for ability plus character," says Miss Masters' biographer. Faculty attended church with students and monitored and participated in numerous other activities. School authorities further promoted a supportive environment through a unique living situation for boarding students. A "cottage system" of small, intimate "homes" was devised by Miss Masters, with a limited number of girls living in each cottage under the care of a "house mother," who facilitated development of a harmonious lifestyle for the group.⁵³ Westover School's

⁵² Post, 9, 13, 14.

⁵³ Marion Brown Shelton, An American Schoolmistress: The Life of Eliza B. Masters, 1845-1921 (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1927), 110-113.

Mary Hillard also expected her teachers to interpret and carry out her vision of the appropriate "spirit of the school." She relied especially heavily upon two close friends and colleagues, Mary Bailey Pratt whose primary duty was to oversee the school's finances and Helen LaMonte, who directed day-to-day school policy and sometimes intervened to soften the effects of Miss Hillard's less temperate moments. The three came to be called "the Triumvirate" by those familiar with the workings of the school.⁵⁴ Through direction of and involvement in varied school activities, women faculty and school heads thus served as mentors and as female role models for their students.

3) "Thorough" Academic, Physical, and Spiritual Training

An article which appeared in Good Housekeeping magazine in 1909, disclosed an approach to private secondary education for women which reflected a relative enlargement of women's sphere, as well as a progressive orientation. The article's author, Thomas Hotchkiss, claimed that the "new type of finishing school" which was emerging in the Northeast, was contrary to the stereotype that private girls' schools were "intended to fit a girl, not for college, or for a profession or for any of the practical duties of the home, but only for society."⁵⁵

⁵⁴ Elizabeth Choate Spykman, Westover, 1909-1959 (Middlebury, Conn: Westover School Inc., 1959), 22-25, 54; Phyllis Fenn Cunningham, "My Aunt and Godmother Miss Mary Robbins Hillard: Founder and First Principal of Westover School," n. d., 10-13, (a soft-cover publication whose author was the daughter of Miss Hillard's sister Emily). Archives of Westover School, Middlebury, CT, hereafter called Westover Archives.

⁵⁵ Thomas Hotchkiss, "Finishing Your Daughter," Good Housekeeping, July, 1909, 26.

Among other things, this new type of women's school provided the option of college preparatory coursework. Hotchkiss further identified primary characteristics of the schools as: high academic standards, modern buildings with features for maximum comfort, safety, health, and educational utility, heightened civic awareness, heightened self esteem through physical development, manual training in various handicrafts, and an overall emphasis on spiritual values. Many of these aspects were highlighted by photographs of such activities at various private women's secondary schools in the Northeast.⁵⁶

Hotchkiss said that, with only minor variations, these schools promoted common elements of a well-rounded program that would prepare each student for her future. The training, Hotchkiss stated, "was not to be superficial." Rather, he described it as being "thorough." An investigation of school archives reveals that many of the institutions in this study used that term in promotional material which described their educational approach.⁵⁷

⁵⁶ Ibid., 26-31.

⁵⁷ For example, The MacDuffie School of Springfield, Massachusetts consistently declared in its promotional catalogs that the education it provided for girls was "as thorough as that offered at the best boys' schools." Catalogs for years 1900, 1902, 1907, 1912. Archives of The MacDuffie School, Springfield, MA, hereafter called, MacDuffie Archives; Miss Hall's school catalogs describe the school as "intended for girls who wish a generously planned, thorough education." Catalogs for 1909-1916. Archives of Miss Halls School, Pittsfield, MA, hereafter called MHS Archives.

The schools provided "the introduction of educational methods leading to a fuller realization of each girl's innate aptitudes," although these methods were not specified. Typically, schools listed courses in the English branches, literature, Latin, French, German, history, mathematics and the sciences, art, music, and physical training. They offered courses and activities which were geared toward developing self-expression. In addition to the fine arts, (drama, music, drawing, painting, dance, sculpture, etc), students were introduced to the "more scholarly subject of home decoration and furnishing...and how to tastefully attire oneself."⁵⁸

The article described the "manual training in various handicrafts," at several schools, which provided a practical course of study in "domestic science," in order to teach the essentials of effective household management. It included instruction in the "chemistry of food preparation," and of efficient methods of housekeeping. Hotchkiss stressed that the primary purpose of these domestic training courses was to give students a knowledge sufficient to manage an efficient household, rather than technical training for specific employment in a domestic occupation. The author concluded by stating that, "The student is a member of a large home circle where she has as intimate and dearly loved friends as ever a man had in college."⁵⁹

⁵⁸ Hotchkiss, 27, 28.

⁵⁹ Ibid. 28-31.

4) Physical Training and Sports for Women

While they did not initiate the concept of physical training and sports for female students, women's school leaders of the Progressive Era saw a need for it and made it an integral part of their school programs at a time when such activities were still the exception rather than the rule. In the 1820's, Catharine Beecher and Emma Willard had been among the earliest educators to publicly disagree with the traditional attitude that vigorous exercise for women was both "unladylike," and potentially damaging to a relatively frail feminine physique. Around mid-century, British philosopher Herbert Spencer (who gained significant influence with American educators in the latter part of the nineteenth century) along with Dio Lewis, Ira Mayhew, and William Wood argued that girls, like boys, required the multiple benefits which physical exercise could render.⁶⁰

By the turn-of-the-century, educational progressives like Francis W. Parker, John Dewey, James Huff Stout, G. Stanley Hall, and Marietta Johnson had become convinced that physical development was an important corner of an educational triad which included physical, mental, and spiritual development for both sexes.⁶¹ Findings by female researchers like Helen Thompson and Jesse Taft were discrediting earlier ideas that physiological differences between the sexes produced the stereotypical analytical male

⁶⁰ Woody II, 109-112; Ira Mayhew, Universal Education (New York: Barnes and Burr, 1860), 7-60; William Wood, M. D., "Physical Education," in eds. J. L. Campbell and A. M. Hadley, Teacher's Miscellany (Cincinnati: Moore, Wiltach, Keys, 1856), 129-155.

⁶¹ Cremin, 133, 144, 150, 151, 196.

and irrational female. They believed that behavioral differences could be explained by differences in social context.⁶² With the nearly universal endorsement of such views, as evidenced by the rigorous physical training programs which they established for their students, officials of the women's schools investigated placed themselves in the company of educational progressives. The specific nature of these programs will be more fully discussed in Chapter Three.

Spiritual Basis of School Community Life

St. Mary's Hall was the only school in the study which was officially denominational in character, though its admission policy always welcomed students with Protestant religious preferences other than Episcopalian. It is unclear whether or not all students were required to attend services regularly at an Episcopal church, but religious celebrations were generally of standard Christian occasions rather than those of distinctly Episcopal character. The founder, Bishop George Washington Doane said, "There are systems which are called religious, that are quite dangerous: the system that forbids a smile, that takes all the rose color from life; the system that would hang the universe in sack cloth. It may succeed in making hypocrites, or infidels of men." He and successive leaders of St. Mary's appear to have attempted to provide an atmosphere for students of

⁶² Rosiland Rosenberg, The Academic Prism: The New View of American Women in America (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1986), 318-341.

love and trust, which was generically Christian in nature rather than being one of strictly sectarian character.⁶³

All other schools in the study were officially non-sectarian. Saint Margaret's of Waterbury, Connecticut received part of its funding from the Episcopal Church, but was never exclusively an Episcopal school, nor was its admission policy limited to Episcopalians. Its initial affiliation with the Episcopal Church of Connecticut was through a joint agreement of ownership with a secular local business consortium. For all intents and purposes, Saint Margaret's functioned in the same non-sectarian manner as did the other schools in the study.⁶⁴

All however, consciously incorporated a Christian spiritual component. Students were required to attend church services on Sundays, generally at the church which had been designated by their parents. Another requirement was attendance at school chapel services during the week. Many schools held chapel daily. It was routine practice at the women's schools to invoke prayers at daily functions as well as at special ones.

⁶³ Shaw, 13-25.

⁶⁴ Carol Burke Ohmann, Saint Margaret's School, 1865-1965 (Published by Saint Margaret's Alumnae Association, Saint Margaret's School, Waterbury, Conn.), chapters 1-4.

Variations Among Schools in the Trend Toward College Preparation

Undoubtedly the academic rigor at schools of the period varied for reasons which were and remain, educationally universal. Aspects such as emphases on particular subject matter, relative quality of instruction, variations in the academic abilities of students, and the question of how to accurately measure student academic progress make such variations difficult to quantify. While groups of schools can establish common guidelines in the form of formal academic standards as some basis for evaluation of the relative quality of different academic programs, such standards are only as perfect as their human designers. In fact, sometimes the very precision for which the designers of universal standards strive, itself creates an undue rigidity creating its own set of educational problems. Such appears to have been the case with standards for the college preparatory track which was increasingly established and followed by secondary schools for women during the Progressive Era.

School officials faced an educational situation which was in a state of flux following the advent of women's colleges in the late nineteenth century. Many of the school officials and their faculty had been among the so-called "first generation" of college-educated women who had pioneered in college training in the final three decades of the century. Others had not been, either because they had reached maturity at a time prior to the period when college was an option for women, and/or simply because they did not believe that a formal college education was a necessary ingredient for the leading of a productive, satisfying life.

Yet, regardless of the personal inclinations of school officials, the trend toward college education for women was sufficiently strong by the early twentieth century, to have made inclusion of a college preparatory curricular option available at each of the thirty women's schools, even if, at many of them, it was selected by a minority of students throughout the period. Some older schools moved quickly to institute a college preparatory curricular track. This was the case with Albany Female Academy (founded, 1814) in Albany, New York and The Emma Willard School (founded in 1819 and known, until 1895, as Troy Female Seminary) in Troy, New York. Both instituted certificates of agreement with specific women's colleges in the Northeast, generally those in close geographical proximity to their school. Such agreements between a college and a secondary institution essentially provided that college preparatory work offered at the secondary school was sufficiently rigorous to warrant a certificate of entrance to the college upon documentation of its successful completion by a student. The Albany Female Academy made such an agreement with Wellesley College in 1880, placing the venerable institution in the vanguard of college preparatory institutions. Within the next ten years the Academy made similar arrangements with other women's colleges. Emma Willard instituted college preparation in 1895, including certification agreements with Vassar, Smith, and Radcliffe.⁶⁵

⁶⁵ Photostatic copy of a school-sponsored brochure by Lucy A. Plympton, "Historical Sketch of The Albany Female Academy, With a Description of the New Building," 1894, 14. Archives of The Albany Academy for Girls, Albany, New York; Troy Daily Press, June 7, 1899; Advertising circular, Emma Willard School, Troy, New York, 1905-06, listed name of graduates from 1900-1904, including those who had been admitted to colleges and whether by

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By 1911, all of the pioneering schools in the study had altered their curricula to offer college preparation, though with varying degrees of enthusiasm. The question had become one of the precise nature of college preparation rather than whether or not to include it. Fragmentary figures combined with anecdotal evidence indicate that the number of students who graduated from private women's secondary schools and went on to attend college continued to increase throughout the period. Nonetheless, the inclusion of college preparatory curricular tracks did not completely alter either the academic or social character of women's private secondary education during the period. A significant number of students continued to select a general course track leading to a terminal degree.⁶⁶

This undoubtedly reflected, at least in part, the continuing traditional social values of the clientele, and even, of a few Heads of school themselves. Notable were Sarah Porter of

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certificate or examination. All but two were admitted by certificate; Troy Times, October 2, 1914. Archives of The Emma Willard School, Troy, New York, hereafter called EWS Archives. Various sources from other schools, some based on projections from actual figures, others relying on more anecdotal evidence, conclude similarly that the number of students attending college tended to increase during the period.

⁶⁶ Among schools which provide figures on the relative numbers of students choosing to attend college, the most complete was given by Miss Charlotte Conant, Co-Head of The Walnut Hill School in Natick, Massachusetts in her Commencement address of 1918. Miss Conant reported that, since the school's inception in 1894, 221 of 309 graduates had attended college. Natick Bulletin, June 14, 1918, 1. WHS Archives; At The Emma Willard School, one of the pioneering group, college preparation showed increasing popularity between 1899 and 1904 with 24 of 63 graduates opting for college. For the 1898-99 school year, figures given in a clipping from The Troy Daily Press, June 7, 1899, in archival scrapbook. School years 1899-1900 to 1903-04, from advertising circular, The Emma Willard School, Troy New York, 1905-06, 43-45. EWS Archives.

Miss Porter's School in Farmington, Connecticut, Eliza Masters at The Masters' School in Dobbs Ferry, New York (more commonly called, Dobbs School at the time) , and Mary Hillard, Principal at Saint Margaret's School in Waterbury, Connecticut and founder of Westover School in Middlebury, Connecticut. Each drew on a tradition of female piety, insisting that their most important function was not to prepare students for college work. Rather their priority was to help mold the character of their students, while providing a thorough academic training which might not necessarily fit students for the specific requirements of a college education, but which would suitably equip them for useful lives as spouses, parents, and/or for some facet of social service. These schools retained the essential character of the traditional finishing school, albeit with modern trappings such as increased academic rigor and physical training programs.

Perhaps the fact that most of the span of Miss Porter's career occurred prior to the collegiate era provides a partial explanation of her reluctance to endorse college attendance for women. Although a few of her Farmington girls did attend Vassar beginning in the late 1860's, Miss Porter's anti-collegiate attitude was clear in her remark about the wisdom of hiring college-trained teachers, made in a letter to her nephew, Robert Keep. "I do not want one college college trained woman--they are narrow, arrogant--and do not infuse the spirit I want," she wrote. She aimed to teach her students lessons of virtue by means of school rules, but also by her personal example of kindness, responsibility, and service. Sarah Porter attended sick girls, listened to, commiserated with , prodded , and applauded her students in their daily activities. Dr. Keep, who was

Miss Porter's successor in 1901, did not add a college preparatory track, but his wife, Elizabeth Vashti Keep, who succeeded him following his death in 1903, finally did, in 1910.⁶⁷

Eliza Masters, though somewhat younger than Miss Porter, was also a product of the educational philosophy of the pre-collegiate era, establishing Dobbs School in 1877. Miss Masters' educational training had been at Oswego State Normal School in New York where a two-year program certified her for upper-school teaching. Oswego was an institution pioneering in the practical training of teachers. Like Miss Porter, Eliza believed her primary function to be the building of "Christian character" in her students first, scholarship next. Miss Masters' father, a Presbyterian minister, had advised his daughter to "seek the sanctification of your soul first and secondly the education of your mind."⁶⁸

Mary Hillard, born in 1862, was youngest of the three. She was a protege of Miss Porter, having taught at Farmington from 1885-1890. A sister, Martha Hillard Macleish, declares that Mary had "found herself in congenial surroundings" at Farmington and "heartily approved of Miss Porter's ideas, her way of handling girls, and the methods she

⁶⁷ Davis and Donahue, 17-21, 33.

⁶⁸ Shelton, 46-63; Biographical pamphlet by Pamela Daly Vose, Eliza B. Masters, 1845-1921 (Privately printed by The Masters School, Dobbs Ferry, NY, n. d.), unnumbered pages. Archives of The Masters School, Dobbs Ferry, NY, hereafter called, Masters Archives.

used to impress girls who came from homes where wealth and social prestige were the all-important things, with a sense of the real values of life." Yet Mrs. Macleish also indicates that, Miss Porter's influence only reinforced an opinion about collegiate training for women which had already been formed by the time Mary had completed her first year as a student at Abbot Academy in 1880. Despite the Reverend Hillard's offer to finance her college education, "Mary herself declared that she did not wish to follow her two sisters to college. She wished to map out a career for herself." Miss Hillard ended her formal academic training with graduation from Abbot Academy in 1883, returning to her hometown of Plymouth, Connecticut to embark on a teaching career. From there, she went to Miss Porter's, to Saint Margaret's as Principal, and finally, founded Westover School.⁶⁹

Yet, although neither Mary Hillard nor Eliza Masters actively promoted a college preparatory track, both included it as an option in the curriculum of their respective schools for the relatively small percentage of girls who chose it.⁷⁰ Nor should their emphasis upon character-building imply that officials at other schools who strongly supported college preparation, (the majority of those in the study), regarded such an academic emphasis as automatically relegating the spiritual element at their schools to a

⁶⁹ John T. Dallas, Mary Robbins Hillard (Concord, N. H.: The Rumford Press, 1944), 37-39.

⁷⁰ Spykman, 28, 29; In promotional catalog, The Misses Masters' Boarding and Day School for Young Ladies and Children, 1881-1882, the "Course of Study," section states: "Pupils who so desire may be fitted for the Harvard Examinations." Although no evidence exists that any students selected the option, it clearly was available. Masters Archives.

secondary position. Neither does evidence suggests that Miss Hillard and Miss Masters, two strong-minded women, felt that they were necessarily making "a pact with the devil" by including the college preparatory option. Possibly they simply felt, as most of their counterparts apparently did, that, regardless of their personal opinion, the ultimate choice was most wisely left to students and their families.

Many school leaders expressed concerns about curricular limitations resulting from strict admissions standards established by colleges. The primary objection boiled down to the rigidity such standards imposed upon the course selection of students pursuing the college track. Mrs. Keep, as indicated, had decided to append college preparation to the curriculum at Miss Porter's School in 1910, but she discontinued it in 1916, claiming that its strict course requirements excluded many of her students from taking certain traditional courses which the school had always regarded as valuable.⁷¹

A statement by the Board of Trustees of St. Mary's Hall in Burlington, New Jersey during the 1890's guardedly endorsed the college preparatory course design newly-instituted by the principal, Miss Charlotte Titcomb. The statement declared the course to be "desirable and important," but added that "it is at the same time herewith understood that except in such cases the full classical or scientific course should be insisted upon for all scholars." The latter implies that, despite the fact that the trend toward collegiate education for

⁷¹ Davis and Donahue, 33.

women had to be acknowledged, the regular course of study was considered by the Board, to be more stringent and of greater value to St. Mary's students.⁷²

Similarly, Abbot Academy's Principal from 1859-1892, Miss Philena McKeen, feared that the women's college movement would cause schools such as Abbot to "sink to the level" of a preparatory school. She insisted that the general course track provided the best means of filling a "quiet, useful, artistic niche in the educational system."⁷³ Miss Laura Watson, Abbot's Principal from 1892-1897, introduced a "college training course" in 1893, and the number of students enrolling in it each year soon grew to significance. However, her successor, Miss Emily Means, who served from 1898 to 1911, and the school's Board of Trustees during that period, expressed some ambivalence about college preparation, wishing Abbot's public identity to remain primarily that of a finishing school. They, like the Board at St. Mary's, continued to favor a wide array of courses which, they felt, produced students with a well-developed sense of the literary and artistic. Yet, Abbot's leaders also recognized the growing popularity of college preparation and the financial benefits which its inclusion provided to the school. Miss Bertha Bailey became Principal in 1912 and declared both tracks to be of value, though in need of reorganization. Thus, over the remainder of the period, the two tracks were

⁷² Shaw, 78, 79

⁷³ Jane B. Carpenter, Abbot and Miss Bailey and Abbot in the Early Days (Abbot Academy, Andover, Mass., 1959), 29.

made more parallel, and their standing was officially accorded equal respect at Abbot.⁷⁴

Saint Margaret's Principal, Emily Munro, similarly streamlined that school's college preparatory and general course tracks in 1914.⁷⁵

Even school officials who were among the most enthusiastic advocates of college training for women expressed reservations about the effects of the rigidity it imposed on college preparatory course selection during the period. Caroline Ruutz-Rees, founder of Rosemary Hall in Wallingford, Connecticut (she subsequently moved the school to Greenwich, Connecticut in 1900) and Clara Spence of The Spence School in New York City were each, themselves, college-educated. Each included a college preparatory track in the curriculum at the school she founded.⁷⁶

Several Rosemary Hall alumnae who attended during Miss Ruutz-Rees' tenure, comment about her enthusiasm in proselytizing students on behalf of college preparation.⁷⁷ In

⁷⁴ Ibid., 29-33.

⁷⁵ Ohmann, 64-67.

⁷⁶ Lorraine Seeley, "The History of Rosemary Hall," The Rosemary Question Mark November, 1915, 7. (Rosemary Hall's student-operated literary magazine/school newspaper, published several times per year, copies of which have been maintained in the archives, even after the merger with Choate in the late 1970's). Archives of Choate/Rosemary Hall School, Wallingford, CT. Hereafter called C/RH Archives; Mary Dillon Edmondson, Profiles in Leadership: A History of The Spence School, 1892-1992 (West Kennebunk, Maine: Phoenix Publishing, 1991), 15.

⁷⁷ For example, the transcript of an interview with Dorothy Baker Harvey, Rosemary Hall Class of 1905, February 26, 1985, conducted by Lee Sylvester, Director of Archives, quotes Mrs. Harvey as saying, "Miss Ruutz-Rees wanted everybody to go to college;" In the alumnae publication, Rosemary Newsletter, November, 1954, 7, Anne Howe of the class of 1908 recalls that "I had no desire for college, but Miss Ruutz-Rees' strong influence persuaded me
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response to a request for her educational views, Miss Ruutz-Rees wrote in 1911, to Emerson G. Taylor of the Loomis Institute. Among other things, she recommended inclusion of the college preparatory track in the curriculum of the Institute's proposed school for girls. While wishing to dispel what she called, "an entirely false notion of [a] college preparatory course as being opposed to, and not providing, a liberal or ornamental education," Miss Ruutz-Rees conceded that it had flaws. For one thing, the course "demands that too many subjects should be 'held in solution' in the mind for the last two years." She also recommended omitting the Latin prose composition requirement, feeling that it had little practical value. Finally, she believed that expediting the examination process would allow greater time for coverage of a wider area in history and "more courses in science and general culture."⁷⁸

At the November meeting of the Head Misstresses Association of the East in 1912, the Association discussed the matter of college preparation under the heading of "The Comparative Value of the College Preparatory and the General Courses." Clara Spence addressed the gathering. Miss Spence reinforced Miss Ruutz-Rees' point that science courses were short-changed or even excluded entirely in some instances. Among other

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to try." An undated letter to Mrs. Sylvester from Lilla Sawyer Robertson, class of 1896, indicates the affirmation of her choice of the college track by school officials and fellow students as she describes her pride in having lived in a dormitory called "the College Settlement," where she and several other students "spent their happy years preparing for college." C/RH Archives.

⁷⁸ Photostatic copy of typed letter from Caroline Ruutz-Rees to Emerson G. Taylor, April 24, 1911, pages 1, 2. C/RH Archives.

problems, the college track presented difficulties for teachers in addressing individual deficiencies in pupils. Miss Spence felt that many students were motivated to pursue the option by the wholly practical goal of being accepted by a college. There were also some, she believed, who chose it simply to shorten their tenure in school, rather than to face the additional year or more necessitated by the wider requirements of a general course.⁷⁹

Miss Spence cited excessive emphasis on narrow aspects of particular subject matter to the exclusion of preliminary material. She declared her support for the basic idea of college preparation, saying that, "If the girl with this preparation intends to have four years at college, we find no fault with the requirements." Yet, she acknowledged the merit of a central argument of those who defended of the wider-ranging selection of courses in a finishing school general track stating that, "to give a girl this kind of program (college preparatory) and then send her out into life, means that she has had an inadequate training, and it also means that culture in its best sense is far removed from her."⁸⁰

Public discussions like these among school officials, dealt with the issue only from the standpoint of the relative effect on student development of the two course tracks.

⁷⁹ Transcript entitled, "Proceedings of The Headmistresses Association of the East, November 9, 1912," 20-22. Sophia Smith Collection, Smith College, Northampton, MA, Box 2, Folder 2, hereafter called, Smith Collection.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 21.

Whether supporters of the general course may have been influenced by the relative economic benefit accruing to schools because of the extra year which was generally needed for completion of its requirements, must be left to speculation. The writer found no evidence of reference by officials to that aspect, though, logically, it was likely to have been considered privately by them, even if some or all may have been so high-minded that they summarily assigned it a low priority as a rationale for their decisions. Financial considerations were, if nothing else, a necessary evil, a means to the end of achieving the lofty publicly-stated goals of the schools for student development. In any case, despite the increasing popularity of the college preparatory track, the general course enjoyed a continuing popularity among students and parents that appears to have superseded whatever personal views school officials held about its relative efficacy.

The question of how to modify college preparatory requirements in order to most effectively accommodate academic balance continued to be discussed well past the Progressive Era. For example, Miss Ruutz-Rees was still addressing it in 1929 when she made a plea for universal application of a standard college board examination.⁸¹ Ultimately, even with its acknowledged structural limitations and the relative unevenness in the degree of its acceptance by school officials, the comprehensive inclusion by women's private schools of college preparation, constituted a practical expansion of

⁸¹ Caroline Ruutz-Rees, "Academic Influence," in William Allan Neilson, ed., The Education of the Modern Girl (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1929), 24-46.

women's sphere. By including it in their curricula, women's private secondary schools could provide those students who had the desire, the means, and the academic ability, with the option of attending college.

A Distinctively Female Progressive Education

While the education at private secondary schools for women was patterned in certain fundamental ways along the lines of counterpart men's schools, school leaders felt that they would not be forsaking the strength inherent in uniquely feminine qualities.

Students at women's schools could benefit from a supportive atmosphere that was female in character, with a training which implicitly validated such acknowledged nurturing feminine traits as a sense of virtue, of the aesthetic, and of domesticity. At the same time, training was based upon the notion that it was also natural for women to develop their physical health and skills along with their intellects, in the same fashion as did young men. The following chapters will describe the ways in which women's schools based their education upon a typically progressive educational belief that the curriculum and activities should aim to develop the student as a whole person, one composed of intellect, body, and spirit.

CHAPTER 2: THE SOCIAL GOSPEL AND THE PROGRESSIVE EDUCATION MOVEMENT

The common goal of the social gospel and progressive education was to create a society whose core values embodied the fundamental principle of Christian love through service to others. The emergence of these aspects of progressive reform during the final decades of the nineteenth century reflected a confluence of religious and secular trends in American society. Notable among these was the growing tendency to expand the traditionally feminine or domestic trait of nurture, applying it in a socio-religious sense. In contrast to traditional formal religious and social doctrine, the effect of this progressive outlook was to remove certain distinctions, not only between the secular and the religious, but also between the masculine and the feminine.

Proponents of the social gospel placed the salvation of individuals in a social context, calling upon individuals to view their road to salvation as being one and the same as that of the society of which they were part. In helping to reform society, they were promoting not only their own salvation, but that of society. This was meant to surpass traditional orthodox religious doctrine whose emphasis on individual salvation was, they felt, a prescription for the isolation of the individual from society and, potentially, his/her victimization by it.

Progressive educational methods were aimed at a related type of isolation, that of the classroom from society. The fundamental purpose of progressive educators was to infuse the learning of students with a morally-based spiritual dynamic which would enable them to transcend superficial barriers between classroom learning and social practice attributed by progressives to traditional formalistic methods. A progressive educational goal was to foster in students an understanding of the constructive role that they might play in their society, not merely as citizens-in-training, but as young citizens whose own school community was as real as the larger world which encompassed it. Students would learn about society by experiencing it in their school communities.

Adherents of the two movements abhorred society's flaws and worked to reform them. Their reform efforts were progressive in their fundamental optimism that American society was redeemable. They viewed their essentially Christian religious beliefs and the democratic system under which the nation was constituted, as reservoirs of strength upon which to draw in providing a blueprint for a moral society. American society could, they believed, eventually realize its full potential through the moral commitment of its people. This progressive optimism, a belief in human perfectibility, buoyed education at women's private secondary schools of the Progressive Era. This progressive ethos asserted that individuals should pursue a life of social usefulness, a belief which comprised the heart of the social gospel message.

The Social Gospel

Historians have sought to explain the nature of the social gospel from within two main interpretive frameworks. In the 1930's, Arthur M. Schlesinger established the standard interpretation. Schlesinger regarded the social gospel as a response to changing economic and social conditions, marking a distinctive shift in traditional American religious thought from an individual to a more societal focus. Challenges to this interpretation began in the 1950's. Timothy Smith, George Marsden, and Robert Handy are among historians who have questioned that view. These revisionists believe that, rather than having constituted a sharp break from orthodox Christian tradition, the social gospel maintained a certain continuity in nineteenth-century American Protestant thought. Evangelical movements before and immediately after the Civil War affected social gospel doctrine. Revisionist research shows that various strains of American Protestant thought throughout much of the nineteenth century contained elements which recognized the significance of the role played by society in an individual's hopes for salvation.¹

Two interrelated characteristics mark the social gospel as a distinctively progressive reform phenomenon which emphasized the individual's moral imperative to "social

¹ Arthur M. Schlesinger, "A Critical Period in American Religion, 1875-1900," *Massachusetts Historical Society, Proceedings* 64 (1930-32), 523-546; Timothy L. Smith, *op. cit.*; George M. Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980); Robert T. Handy, *A Christian America: Protestant Hopes and Historical Realities* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984).

usefulness," or social service. First, its non-sectarian but essentially Christian message of social brotherhood reflected an underlying belief in the efficacy of democracy and a blurring of distinctions between society's secular and religious functions. Second, with its rejection of orthodox individualism and associated patriarchal practices, the social gospel affirmed and extended an increasingly feminized version of God as a loving, nurturing redeemer, removing some social distinctions between the masculine and the feminine. In these two effects, social gospel activities and those of the Progressive Education Movement were at times parallel to one another, at other times overlapping. Their common basis of action was the communitarian ideal of social service which underlay the progressive ethos from which both movements sprang.

1. A Non-sectarian Christian Message for a Democratically-Constituted Social Brotherhood

Despite growing religious diversity, most turn-of-the-century Americans of every faith remained within the fold of what were traditionally labelled, Protestant religious ideals. Many who worked actively on behalf of progressive reform were influenced by their Christian values. This ethos had become, according to Robert Crunden, something of a "civil religion of American mission" which "soon transcended its origins and became a complex of secular democratic values."² Social gospel advocates appear to have drawn

² Crunden, Ministers of Reform, op. cit., ix, x.

upon overlapping American religious and social traditions which venerated the creation of an idealized "Christian Civilization."³

A Non-Sectarian Character

Although the social gospel alliance was predominantly Protestant in character, it was by no means exclusively so. Crunden believes that the Protestant Christian ethic was widespread enough to influence not only those American progressives who continued to label themselves as Protestants, but others from varying backgrounds as well. Several other historians have also demonstrated that the social gospel contained significant Catholic and Jewish components.⁴ However, the scope of this paper will be limited to the Protestant aspect of the social gospel. The leaders of the private women's schools which were investigated, and virtually all of their students, were Protestants. The spiritual basis of the programs established at the schools was non-sectarian, though Protestant in character, promoting a basic creed of social usefulness in a spirit of Christian love.

³ See Handy, *A Christian America*; See also Carroll Smith Rosenberg, *Religion and the Rise of the American City: The New York City Mission Movement, 1812-1870* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1971) for the origins of Christian-centered reform activism.

⁴ Crunden, *Ministers of Reform*; Among other writers who discuss the influence on and by non-Protestants are Aaron Abell, *American Catholicism and Social Action: A Search for Social Justice, 1865-1950* (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1963) and ed. *American Catholic Thought on Social Questions* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1968); Mel Piehl, *Breaking Bread: The Catholic Worker and the Origin of Catholic Radicalism* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1982); and James E. Roohan, *American Catholics and the Social Question, 1865-1900* (New York: Arno Press, 1976).

Like the term, "Progressive Movement," the "social gospel" defies simple definition. It is easy to specify such individuals as Josiah Strong, Washington Gladden, and Walter Rauschenbusch, who helped to provide both form and substance to the movement by their articulation of ideas and their leadership of inter-denominational organizations. However, no single individual stood out as the primary leader, no single Protestant denomination was predominant, and no centralized organizational structure existed for the movement. The social gospel was integrated into the general social reform ethic of the Progressive Era, a loose alliance of avowedly Christian clergy and lay people working toward the goal of a better, ultimately, a morally-perfected, human society.⁵

Social gospel doctrine, then, was non-sectarian, urging Christian pastors and congregations from a variety of denominations to address social problems. Socialized Christianity emanated from within Episcopalian, Unitarian, Baptist, Presbyterian, Congregationalist, and other main-line Protestant denominations. The primary theme which linked its otherwise diverse advocates was an idealized vision of society which was commonly known as the "kingdom of God."

⁵ In addition to Handy, standard accounts which continue to be useful in tracing the background and characterizing the nature of the social gospel include Charles Howard Hopkins, *op. cit.*; Aaron I Abell, *The Urban Impact on American Protestantism, 1865-1900* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1943); Henry F. May, *The Protestant Churches and Industrial America* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1949); Paul A Carter, *The Spiritual Crisis of the Gilded Age* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1971).

The Kingdom of God as a Social Ideal

Despite its somewhat ethereal character, the "kingdom of God" was a widely-acknowledged conceptual ideal with which social gospel adherents of varying denominations and theological outlooks could identify and in terms of which the message of Christian-oriented social reform could be spread. Social gospel thought focused concern upon the well-being of all, with the overall goal of establishing an ideal society, the "kingdom of God." Supporters of the social gospel utilized this religious term, which had traditionally been applied to conceptions of the afterlife, applying it instead to human society. Josiah Strong wrote that, "Some need to be reminded that by the kingdom of heaven or the kingdom of God, of which Christ speaks so often, he does not mean the abode of the blessed dead, but a kingdom of righteousness which he came to establish on the earth, of which he is the king, and whose fundamental law is that of love."⁶

In the 1890's, Walter Rauschenbusch was one of the founding members of a group of socially-oriented theologians, calling itself the Brotherhood of the Kingdom. Late in the Progressive Era in 1917, he attempted to synthesize social gospel theology in his book, A Theology for the Social Gospel, in which Rauschenbusch described the kingdom of God as "the continuous revelation of the power, the righteousness, and the love of God." The Baptist clergyman, like Strong and other social gospel spokesmen, believed in the concept's earthly application, contending that, "The establishment of a community of

⁶ Josiah Strong, The New Era (New York: The Baker & Taylor Co., 1893), 231.

righteousness in mankind is just as much a saving act of God as the salvation of an individual from his natural selfishness and moral inability."⁷

Congregational clergyman and political activist, Washington Gladden, was even more specific about the nature of the kingdom of God, identifying it with the nation's most notable institutional victim of undue materialism, the city. A Gladden sermon preached in 1899 entitled, "What Can We Do for the City?" exemplified a typical unwillingness by adherents of the social gospel, to acknowledge boundaries between the realms of the religious and the secular. Gladden proclaimed the function of the city to be divine, claiming that a city was not secular but, "just as sacred, just as divinely ordained as the church." He optimistically depicted the kingdom of God as being entirely possible to construct, even in the greatest scenes of urban squalor, advising Yale seminary students in 1902, to keep before people a vision of what could be. "We must see the New London, the New Boston, the New Chicago, the New New York; the city that ought to be; the regenerated, purified, redeemed city; we must see it, and believe in it and be ready to work and suffer to bring it down to earth."⁸

⁷ Walter Rauschenbusch, A Theology for the Social Gospel (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1917), 139, 140.

⁸ Quoted in John M. Mulder, "The Heavenly City and Human Cities: Washington Gladden and Urban Reform," Ohio History 87 (February, 1978): 166-169.

The concept of a Kingdom of God provided common ground for social gospel advocates with otherwise varying theological outlooks. C. Howard Hopkins says that social gospel writers shared a belief that Christ had foreseen the love of God as culminating in an eventual perfecting of relations in human society. He names diverse writers, including Francis G. Peabody, Lyman Abbott, Josiah Strong, Harry Montgomery, and Shailer Mathews, who agreed that the social regeneration of society was to be an evolutionary process. It would be accomplished by individuals, groups, and institutions who, through their behavior, disseminated a spirit of Christian brotherly love.⁹

Revisionist historians have shown that, although the social gospel clearly placed a greater emphasis on the social sphere than had been the case with orthodox Christianity, its beliefs were rooted in evangelical tradition. Those evangelical roots may indeed have been both deep and wide. Ferenc Szasz demonstrates that the social gospel's kingdom of God ideal cast a wider reform net than has been reflected by standard interpretations. Szacz finds that, along with the widely-acknowledged liberal clergy, less well-known but important individuals holding more conservative theological views were also active in progressive reform.

Szacz claims that, during a period from about 1900-1917, an informal progressive reform alliance appears to have existed between parallel groups of liberal and conservative

⁹ Hopkins, 207-210.

clergy, centering upon a common allegiance to the kingdom of God ideal, albeit on the basis of fundamentally different theological impulses. He outlines the reform activities of three prominent conservative ministers, John Straton, Mark Matthews, and William B. Riley, as illustrative of his thesis. Szasz says that, while liberal clergy believed that the kingdom could be realized most readily by removing distinctions between secular and religious aspects of society, thus merging Christianity with society, more conservative evangelicals who continued their traditional emphasis on personal evangelism and the grace of God which they felt to be a necessary supplement to human efforts.

Conservative reformers, however, coupled those fundamental beliefs with support for social reform, believing that the lack of social obstacles would enhance prospects for individual salvation. Szasz attributes the eventual disintegration of this liberal/conservative reform alliance around 1917, to a growing awareness by each group of the fundamental differences in their theological bases.¹⁰ Although Szasz is not particularly clear about the extent to which the parties to the alliance he describes were conscious of its nature or even of its existence, his research is valuable in showing that there was even greater diversity among social gospel reformers than has been traditionally thought.

One of the earlier exponents of the kingdom of God, in the sense of its application to the here and now, was Noah Porter. Porter was one of eight influential scholars at Yale,

¹⁰ Ferenc M. Szasz, "The Progressive Clergy and the Kingdom of God," Mid-America 55 (January 1973): 3-20.

who, from the 1840's to the turn-of-the-century, attempted to reconcile a growing antagonism between the social sciences and divine truth. His sister, Sarah Porter, was the founder of Miss Porter's School in Farmington, Connecticut. According to the historian Louise Stevenson, Sarah Porter was influenced greatly in her social and religious outlook by her brother's thought. Miss Porter, in turn, served as mentor to several other leaders of women's schools, including Mary Dunning Dow of Miss Dow's School in New York and Mary Hillard who was Principal of Saint Margaret's School in Waterbury, Connecticut, before founding Westover School in Middlebury, Connecticut. In a talk delivered at Wellesley College in 1880, Noah Porter described the function of the Christian college. He spoke of its role in helping to establish "a future kingdom of God that shall be built up under the guidance of an Almighty power, and shall be neither more nor less than a human society transformed, by means of social agencies, into a tabernacle in which God shall, indeed, dwell with men and wipe away all tears from all eyes."¹¹

Formalism: An Educational Orthodoxy

Educational formalism displayed a kindred spirit with religious orthodoxy, sharing common origins in Calvinist thought. The hallmark of that thought was emphasis on a systemic rigidity which was intended to combat the essential waywardness of human nature through external forms of discipline. The widespread acceptance of that approach

¹¹ See Louise L. Stevenson, Scholarly Means to Evangelical Ends: The New Haven Scholars and the Transformation of Higher Learning in America, 1830-1890 (Baltimore: the Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986). Kingdom of God quote on page 69, from Noah Porter, "The Christian College, An Address Delivered at Wellsley College, May 27, 1880."

was eroding by the turn-of-the century. In religious thought, the tendency to substitute a milder, more socially-minded, "Jesus of history" as a model for human behavior, had made significant inroads during the nineteenth century. In education, progressives were challenging individualistic formalist assumptions on the same communitarian basis as were social gospel advocates who called into question the individualistic premises of religious orthodoxy.

Hopkins says that orthodox Christians were neither unaware nor unconcerned about social problems but that their religious convictions limited the number of available reform options that they perceived. He describes orthodoxy as "a sterile union of individualism and formalism." Traditional church policies, based on literal scriptural interpretations, urged each person to pray for divine guidance and to live a morally circumspect life, leaving social regeneration to be achieved one individual at a time. The apocalyptic view of Christ's return served as a palliative to many. The religious skepticism which was often expressed by the growing scientific movement appears to have further hardened orthodoxy's rigid defense of Biblical literalism. Indeed, the social gospel made use of contemporary New Testament scholarship which seemed to place a scientific imprimatur on new revelations about the social teachings of "the Jesus of history."¹²

¹² Hopkins, 17, 18.

Progressive educators wished to remove formalist distinctions between school and society through a type of education which contained a socially-oriented moral component. John Dewey, arguably the best-known advocate of progressive educational methods, was an outspoken proponent of the kingdom of God ideal. He declared that, "The kingdom of God, as Christ said, is within us, or among us."¹³ To those who continued to make traditional distinctions between the secular and the religious and between the school and society, Dewey responded that, "Apart from participation in social life, the school has no moral end nor aim." He contended that only social interaction could give meaning or validity to such developmental concepts as "power" or "harmony." In social gospel fashion, Dewey placed the school, its administrators, teachers, and students, squarely within a social context. Dewey said that effective membership in a democratic society required an education system under which "The child must be educated for leadership as well as for obedience."¹⁴

Democratic Underpinnings Connect the Religious and Secular

Social gospel and progressive educational proponents placed their ideas in a democratic social context. Hopkins shows that the social gospel viewpoint included a continuing significant role for the individual, though with a somewhat different purpose than that of orthodox Christianity. Rather than accepting social unfairness as the byproduct of the

¹³ Ibid., 55.

¹⁴ John Dewey, Moral Principles in Education, op. cit., 11, 12.

natural condition of human inequality, social gospel advocates argued that social fairness was both attainable and desirable in a democracy. For instance, social gospel minister, Orello Cone, established a context in which individuals were cast as actual and/or potential victims of undue institutionalized materialism. Cone claimed that, in Christ's gospel, "the worth and welfare of the human soul are of such inestimable importance that the individual should not be made the slave of the institutions that men establish." Rauschenbusch wrote that "The God of Jesus was the great Father who lets his light shine on the just and the unjust, and offers forgiveness and love to all." This love determined that Jesus regarded people as being "children of that God." Therefore, "Even the lowliest was high."¹⁵

To social gospel advocates, democracy and Christianity were intermingled. The essence of a democracy was, they felt, based on constructive social dialogue among its citizens. The church as an institution and its individual officials and members should work actively to improve social conditions. Gladden, who served a term on the Columbus, Ohio city council and often appeared in person at the Ohio state legislature to lobby, attributed a democratic nature to his vision of the kingdom of God. He felt that the kingdom must be inclusive, enfolding "all the people, young and old, rich and poor, good and bad, black and white, native born and foreign born, all people of the city."¹⁶

¹⁵ Cone and Rauschenbusch quoted in Hopkins, 17, 18, 209, 210.

¹⁶ Mulder, 169.

Charles S. MacFarland taught at Yale Divinity School during the Progressive Era. An ardent advocate of the social gospel, he gave a series of lectures to Yale theological students who would soon be assuming responsibilities as church pastors. The lectures were recorded in a book which he wrote in his capacity as secretary of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America. MacFarland asserted a typically progressive belief about the eminent compatibility between democracy and Christianity. In rejecting the conventional idea of circumscribed responsibilities for a pastor, he felt that no strict distinction should be made between the secular and the religious, contending that a democratic setting provided a wide array of social possibilities for the pastor's work:

The minister of to-day, I say it guardedly and thoughtfully, who does no more than serve his own church, preach to his own congregation, and exert an influence upon his own little flock, may be doing a great deal, but it is only a suggestion of the power that he may possess. Indeed, there never has been an age when the opportunity of the high-minded, large-hearted, and great-visioned preacher was anywhere near so great as it is to-day. While he must be faithful to the church of Christ, he must see that it is now only one department of the great Kingdom of God. That Kingdom of God exists in all these great movements, in our industrial and social life, towards the realization of brotherhood, of democracy.¹⁷

Some from the academic world agreed. Typical was Simon MacLennan, professor of Philosophy at evangelically-oriented Oberlin College. MacLennan declared that "the

¹⁷ Charles S. MacFarland, "The Part and Place of the Church and the Ministry in the Realization of Democracy," in The Christian Ministry and the Social Order: Lectures Delivered in the Course in Pastoral Functions at Yale Divinity School, 1908-1909, ed. Charles S. MacFarland (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1909), 19.

religion of Christ was really democracy," that "all religion as well as all government should be by the people and for the people."¹⁸ Economist Richard Ely challenged Christians to "put as much as possible, not of doctrine or creed into the State constitution, but of Christian life and practice into the activity of the State, working to be sure, to change the constitution in so far as this may stand in the way of righteousness."¹⁹ The social gospel thus made few distinctions between religious and secular work, equating good citizenship with a fundamental Christian principle of caring for one's fellow man. Civic duty was regarded as being part and parcel of Christian duty. The establishment of a moral society, of a kingdom of God, could be achieved only through the efforts of socially-conscious, moral people.

This faith in democracy was shared by progressives active in various reform activities. Implicit was their faith, not only in the efficacy of democracy, but in the vital role that education played in developing a moral sense in society's youthful citizens. Typical was the outlook of Herbert Croly, an acknowledged progressive spokesman, a confidant of Theodore Roosevelt, and an architect of Roosevelt's "New Nationalism." In his book, The Promise of American Life, Croly insisted that democracy was most tenable in a morally-inspired society.

¹⁸ Quoted in Crunden, Ministers of Reform, 8.

¹⁹ Quoted in Handy, A Christian America, 167.

Reiterating a social gospel precept of social organicism, he argued that "Democracy must stand or fall on a platform of possible human perfectibility." Reminiscent also of the social gospel, Croly believed that there should be no distinction between the religious and secular in society. He promoted a progressive belief in a dualistic academic/moral function for education, saying:

It is by education that the American is trained for such democracy as he possesses; and it is by better education that he proposes to better his democracy. Men are uplifted by education much more surely than they are by any tinkering with laws and institutions, because the work of education leavens the actual social substance. It helps to give the individual himself those qualities without which no institutions, however excellent, are of any use, and with which even bad institutions and laws can be made vehicles of grace.²⁰

John Dewey described the United States as possessing "a democratic and progressive society." He and other progressive educators placed society in an organic context, linking the use of human reason with a comprehension of divine truth. He felt that the power to reason could propel men to moral action. "Beyond all other means of appropriating truth, beyond all other organs of apprehension, is man's own action," said Dewey. He also expressed a typically progressive veneration of democracy, believing that it provided a means of revelation by enabling citizens "to get truths in a natural, everyday, and

²⁰ Herbert Croly, The Promise of American Life (New York: Belknap of Harvard University, 1909), 26, 27.

practical sense." Democracy was, Dewey believed, "the means by which the revelation of truth is carried on."²¹

While the school had a responsibility to help develop in the young, the requisite skills to enable them to effectively fulfill their roles as citizens of a democracy, Dewey was concerned because, "The social work of the school is often limited to training for citizenship, and citizenship is then interpreted in a narrow sense as meaning capacity to vote intelligently, disposition to obey laws, etc." Dewey argued that "The child is to be not only a voter and a subject of law; he is also to be a member of a family, himself in turn responsible, in all probability, for rearing and training of future children, thereby maintaining the continuity of society."²²

A Common Communitarian Basis for Reform

Social and educational progressive reformers were linked by a common adherence to the kingdom of God as a non-sectarian social ideal, manifested in a communitarian approach. David Norton says that John Dewey has often been miscast as being a corporatist. In fact, his major educational goal was to provide the means by which each individual could choose his goals and acquire the competence to attain them. What Dewey called the "new individualism," was social in its essence. The moral purpose of

²¹ Quoted in Crunden, Ministers of Reform, 55-58.

²² Dewey, Moral Principles in Education, 8,11.

education was to help each individual to fulfill his/her potential for true individuality by empowering him to move past a complete initial dependence upon external agencies, thus becoming contributory to others in an interactive, interdependent society.²³

Reflecting the influence of William James and his philosophy of "Pragmatism," Dewey emphasized social experience as a guide to personal activity. He insisted that individuals were capable of determining appropriate social behavior by exercising informed judgments in the context of social experience, rather than relying upon literal Biblical guidelines, thus drawing the ire of many religious fundamentalists.²⁴ This social underpinning characterized progressive educational methodology and connected such educational thought with social gospel communitarianism.

Social gospel writers also distinguished their socially-based theology from the individualism which orthodoxy stressed. Typical was theologian Shailer Mathews, who acknowledged that Christianity had introduced individualism, "if by individualism is not meant atomism." He insisted that individuals must be placed within a social context and rejected the individualistic approach promoted by orthodox theology. Said Mathews, "the Christian doctrine of society is not that of an aggregation of individuals made repellent through uncompromising demands for rights...the real worth of every life

²³ David L. Norton, Democracy and Moral Development (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 53, 54.

²⁴ Spring, op. cit., 172, 173.

consists not in separate existence, but rather in the identification of its interests with the interests of others in the exercise of that fraternal love which was both the ideal and the practice of Jesus himself."²⁵

Elizabeth Clark describes the approach of female evangelical reformers as having had a similar communitarian emphasis which stressed social as much as individual action. She contrasts the philosophy of evangelical reformers like those who functioned through the Women's Christian Temperance Union (W. C. T. U.) and its primary leader, Frances Willard, with that of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and her followers, characterizing the approach of the latter as being that of "classical Liberalism." Clark declares that, the God of classical liberalism was "off stage most of the time," leaving moral decisions to be determined by the individual and his/her particular God, as dictated by individual conscience. On the other hand, the God of female evangelical reformers, was "center stage" and "stressed kinship and care." Yet, evangelical reformers shared with liberals, a basis in non-compulsion. Evangelicals emphasized a concept called "voluntary compliance," in which the ideal was for each individual to be self-governing, though not in the same self-directed sense of free-agency implied by classical liberalism. "Voluntary compliance" implied that individual behavioral decisions would be guided by assessing

²⁵ Shailer Mathews, The Social Teachings of Jesus (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1910), 210, 211.

how such decisions could best help the individual fulfill his/her role as a contributing member of society. Community standards took precedence over individual isolation.²⁶

Evangelical reformers shared a non-sectarian approach with social gospel activists. Clark depicts evangelicals as attempting, not only to span social differences through their programs of outreach to the downtrodden and wayward of society, but also wishing to transcend denominational differences among reformers. W. C. T. U. leaders tended to keep their rhetoric free of expressions of denominational preference, emphasizing instead, a commonality of purpose with all Christian women, one which reflected the bonds of sisterhood. Evangelicals further described a bond between society and the individual, which was cemented by submission to God's will and overrode all human differences. Clark says "the Christian ideal of brotherhood was the foundation of a relational view of community." The resultant righteous government seemed, to evangelicals, to be one and the same with the kingdom of God on Earth. The W. C. T. U.'s first Declaration of Principle stated that, "we believe in the coming of His kingdom whose service is perfect freedom."²⁷

²⁶ Elizabeth Batelle Clark, The Politics of God and the Women's Vote: Religion in the American Suffrage Movement, 1848-1895, Dissertation, Princeton University, 1989, 229, 230, 247, 248.

²⁷ Clark, 241-257, with Declaration of Principle of W. C. T. U. quoted, 277.

Robert Crunden has remarked upon this tendency of many progressive reformers to pursue their activities with spiritual fervor, while maintaining a non-sectarian approach. Indeed, some like Jane Addams, found themselves unsatisfied by traditional formalized religion and remained outside of any denomination. Crunden attributes much of this to personal psychic tensions, usually resolved by following a generic Christian moral guideline which might be described as a belief in the essentiality of social usefulness.²⁸

A sense of community, of social organicism, of social nurture, links reform activities like settlement work and the various works on behalf of the socially needy by the W. C. T. U. with the social gospel. Jane Addams wrote in a fashion typifying the rather commodious spiritual tent under which many progressive reformers conducted their activities:

Jesus had no set of truths labeled Religious. On the contrary, his doctrine was that all truth is one, that the appropriation of it is freedom. His teaching had no dogma to mark it off from truth and action in general...I believe that this turning, this renaissance of the early Christian humanitarianism is going on in America, in Chicago, if you please, without leaders who write or philosophize, without much speaking, but with a bent to express in social service and in terms of action the spirit of Christ.²⁹

Addams and other reformers viewed their work as having an organic character. Addams believed that Christianity "cannot be proclaimed and instituted apart from the social life of the community and that it must seek a simple and natural expression in the social

²⁸ Crunden, Ministers of Reform, 3-5.

²⁹ Jane Addams, Twenty Years At Hull-House (New York: Macmillan, 1966, reprint, Signet Paperback), 96, 97.

organism itself."³⁰ Lillian Wald's Henry Street Settlement in New York City sent out trained nurses to minister to the sick of the community. Wald felt that the medical training which she and her colleagues at the settlement provided would enable them to have "an organic relationship with the neighborhood."³¹

The spirit of communitarian organicism which underlay progressive reform is further amplified by Jeffrey Bineham. Writing in Communications Studies, he focuses upon social gospel theory, as enunciated in Walter Rauschenbusch's book, A Theology for the Social Gospel, claiming that it provides a clear example of a phenomenon which scholars of communications methods identify as, "consensus theory." Bineham describes this as a process in which "Meanings are created rhetorically and are regarded as 'true' when accepted by consensus within any particular community." He adds that "Different communities may validate different meanings and create different realities. A person's reality, then, is a combination of sensations and the socially shared meanings by which one knows the sensations."³²

³⁰ Ibid., 97.

³¹ Quoted in an excerpt from Lillian Wald's book, The House on Henry Street, copyright, 1915, in Frank Freidel and Norman Pollack, eds., American Issues in the Twentieth Century (Chicago: Rand McNally & Company, 1966), 51.

³² David L. Bineham, "Consensus Theory and Religious Belief," Communications Studies 3 (Fall, 1989): 141, 142.

In A Theology for the Social Gospel, Rauschenbusch characterized orthodoxy as having interpreted the gospel as a commentary on the individual. That interpretation, he declared, inadequately reflected the dynamism of society and the role of the individual within it, providing insufficient understanding of the important role played by collective social sin. While an emphasis upon the individual was a logical outgrowth of the intellectual bases of Protestantism and of Capitalism, notes Bineham, Rauschenbusch posited the social gospel as constituting the oldest and truest of interpretations, citing its origins with Christ himself and the first generation of disciples. Rauschenbusch claimed that the social gospel was more theologically inclusive than orthodoxy because it could account for both individual and social salvation, while the orthodox emphasis on individual salvation was limited by its inability to address social salvation.³³

Rauschenbush wrote that the social gospel "fuses the Christian spirit and the social consciousness in a new outreaching toward God." Individual moral behavior should be determined, he believed, not by individual whim, but on the basis of thoughtful, informed choices, drawn from the values held dear in one's community. Presumably such values would be premised on a concept of Christian love. "We select those theoretical ideas which agree with our experience and are cold to those which have never entered into our life." Rauschenbusch argued that the cumulative process of many active minds working

³³ Ibid., 149.

together to achieve a common purpose could have dramatically positive effects.³⁴ W. C. T. U. literature likewise emphasized social interdependence, often using an analogy of ever-widening rings of influence which connected all humans in concentric circles.

While temperance women urged each individual to strive to make her best contributions to society, victory in projects was gained only through the collective work of individuals pursuing the same goal.³⁵

Evangelical and social gospel reformers advocated, in common, many specific social reforms. These included controlling the influence of saloons, providing for the wayward and the helpless, and striving to improve health and sanitation. Most fundamentally, they shared the basic ideal of a Christianized society, a kingdom of God. Reflecting the terms of Christian nurture suggested by Horace Bushnell in his mid-nineteenth century challenge to Calvinist orthodoxy, the ideal individual was placed within the context of an ideal family, and, by extension, within a society which would nurture him/her.³⁶

2. Rejection of Orthodox Individualistic Patriarchal Practices and Affirmation of the Trend Toward Social Domestication

Orthodox Christianity emphasized individual salvation and resided comfortably within the traditional American social acceptance of rugged individualism. By the latter portion

³⁴ Rauschenbusch, A Theology for the Social Gospel, 20, 21.

³⁵ Clark, 299-303.

³⁶ Horace Bushnell, Christian Nurture (New York: C. Scribner and Co., 3rd ed., 1861).

of the nineteenth century, Darwinist evolutionary thought was being applied as a justification for laissez faire social and economic policies by Social Darwinist popularizers such as Herbert Spencer and William Graham Sumner. Supporters of this approach claimed that it had provided a context of freedom within which individuals could prosper and whose efforts, thus, combine to contribute to the the nation's social progress.³⁷

Yet, to some alarmed Americans of the late nineteenth century, the social fabric of an increasingly urbanized, industrialized country seemed to be dangerously frayed, with traditional individualism seeming more like self-serving greed than sound social theory. The social gospel conveyed a note of moral urgency, proclaiming that the most basic lesson which Christ had conveyed was that we are all, indeed, our brothers' keepers. In the late nineteenth century, an increasing number of scholars from the emerging fields of the social sciences added their support to the growing social gospel movement. They too stressed the social implications of Christ's teachings in the belief that they were grounded in His religious presuppositions.³⁸

A kingdom of God represented the concept of a healthy, morally upright society that hearkened back to a simpler time of greater neighborliness in a more rural American

³⁷ May, 142-147.

³⁸ Hopkins, 207; May, chapter 4.

society, one which marked the growing-up years of many Americans who comprised the predominant generation at the turn-of-the-century. Many progressives had been raised in homes which emphasized Christian values, sometimes rigorously. Crunden has suggested that many in the generation which came of age during the Progressive Era, were inclined to think and live in a more secular fashion than had their parents. Exposed to new scientific skepticism and the everyday pressures of secular life, they nonetheless continued to feel the tug of their moral training and responded to an inner need to apply their moral longings in a manner suitable to an increasingly sophisticated, pragmatic, hard-nosed world.³⁹ Times were indeed changing in both obvious and in subtle ways. A convergence of theological and secular trends helped to increase the appeal of the social gospel for both men and women during the Progressive Era.

Evidence suggests that one important factor which prompted many progressive reformers to undertake their activities was the religious values which they held. Allen Davis cites a poll of 339 settlement workers taken in 1905. It showed that eighty-eight percent were active church members, and nearly all respondents stated that religion had played an important role during their formative years. Related statistics shows that most settlement workers were from a variety of main-line Protestant churches. Over half had

³⁹ Crunden, Ministers of Reform, 3-5.

Congregationalist or Presbyterian backgrounds and a large number were Episcopalian or Unitarian.⁴⁰

The Young Men's Christian Association (Y. M. C. A.) had been established in 1844 as a benevolent association for the urban poor. In a book published in 1913 by the International Committee of The Young Men's Christian Association, the author, A. M. Trawick, Secretary of the International Y. M. C. A. Student Department, reported active organizational involvement in social settlement activities. Trawick endorsed the social gospel's customary communitarian outlook, saying that, "Society is a unit and whatever affects the welfare of one portion of it inevitably affects all portions." He also exhibited a social gospel posture in claiming that "The social centers prepare living men and women for the duties of citizenship...Many acts of life are religious which have not been generally included in the term. Fitting men and women for true living is a religious act."⁴¹

In addition to social settlement projects, the Y. M. C. A. supported a holistic educational approach which incorporated intellectual, physical, and moral development of students. Trawick wrote that the home was capable of assuming only part of the responsibility for

⁴⁰ Allen Davis, Spearheads of Reform: The Social Settlements and the Progressive Movement, 1890-1914 (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1984 edition), 27.

⁴¹ A. M. Trawick, The City Church and Its Social Mission: A Series of Studies in the Social Extension of the City Church (New York: Association Press, 1913), 147-154.

inculcating civic values in future citizens. "The public school must undertake a large part of the task, not as an appendix to the home, but as sharing the same ideal and purpose, yet having a distinct function." Trawick urged schools to be cognizant of the mental, physical, and spiritual well-being of pupils, advocating a safe and stimulating environment. He urged higher pay for teachers and greater attention to proper school equipment, arguing that "We fail to get full value out of our investments in public school buildings unless we put enough money in the schools to equip them properly for their task." He also contended that "There is no reason why morals and religion should not be taught in the public schools," in order to "meet the demand for moral and social life" in the nation.⁴²

Other progressives may have been more reticent about obliterating the constitutional line between church and state. Nonetheless, they typically felt moral development to be an important component of education, public or private. Dewey, for example, intended that the education process should develop the whole child, including his/her moral character.⁴³ The rich exchange of ideas and consequent reform activities which occurred among progressive educators, settlement workers, and other reformers, seems to, simultaneously, have reflected, flowed from, and perpetuated, a socio-religious atmosphere of reform, a progressive ethos. Jane Addams said that Dewey's "insistence upon an atmosphere of

⁴² Ibid., 25-33.

⁴³ Cremin, *op. cit.*, 115, 116.

freedom and confidence between the teacher and pupil...profoundly affected all similar relationships, certainly those between the social worker and his client." Allen Davis summarizes by saying that a goal for cities, held by progressive educational thinkers and settlement workers alike, was "to make the schools more like social settlements."⁴⁴

A Feminization of American Society

In substituting a view of the immanence of God in society through Christ's role of compassionate redeemer, the social gospel built upon a general nineteenth-century trend toward American societal feminization which has been noted by a number of historians. C. Howard Hopkins describes Protestant clergymen of the nineteenth century as having shown an increasing tendency to preach a milder form of Christianity, a kind of "emasculated Calvinism," as he expresses it. Barbara Welter and Ann Douglas similarly note such a shift in Christian emphasis in American society during the century, terming this phenomenon a process of religious and societal "feminization." The harsh Calvinist "Atonement" view of God as the imperial judge of human sin, was being displaced by a gentler, more humanistic version of a loving creator, whose son, Jesus Christ, embodied forgiveness and love.⁴⁵

⁴⁴ Davis, 58, 59.

⁴⁵ Hopkins, 18, 19; Barbara Welter, "The Feminization of American Religion, 1800-1860," in Clio's Consciousness Raised eds. Mary Hartmann and Lois W. Banner (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1974), 137-157; Ann Douglas, The Feminization of American Culture (New York: Doubleday, 1977, chap. 4, 5.

Welter and Douglas each show that the robust theology of Calvin had appealed to the male domain which was that of American scholars during the previous two centuries. However, many women had been distressed by elements of harshness in Calvinist teachings. One doctrine that mothers found particularly appalling was that of "infant damnation," the belief that, regardless of the tenderness of age at death, an unbaptized soul could not be among the saved. Economic events of the nineteenth century further dichotomized the sexes, placing a social imprimatur on a predominantly secular male economic role as the provider for his family. This patriarchal notion idealized the hard-headed, shrewd, entrepreneurial man, whose role was complemented by that of woman, the pious, caretaker of the home and of moral virtue in society. Because so many men were preoccupied with secular endeavors, women became the predominant force in organized church activities.⁴⁶

Thus, the nurturing of home and family, which had traditionally been largely a feminine role, a private feminine domain, was enlarged during the nineteenth century. It was expanded into the more public realm of religion. This lowered somewhat, the social prestige of its primary American product, organized Protestant religion. Yet that more feminized religion retained great social importance, serving as a bulwark of moral stability in society.⁴⁷

⁴⁶ Douglas, chap. 4; Welter, 138, 139.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

The piety traditionally associated with women in American society, provided a basis for an increasing feminine influence within the institutional church. The American woman represented a necessary counterpoint of virtue to the dynamic, competitive business world of the American man. Female grass-roots church activists formed a solid phalanx within churches which helped to expand ideas of Christian nurture ever more widely throughout American society. The functions of male Protestant ministers became more nurturing, taking on what traditionally had been regarded as a feminine characteristic. This increasingly feminized religion, despite its lowering of the social status of the male Protestant minister, retained an influential place in society as a bulwark of social stability and respectability.⁴⁸

Women as a Moral Force in Turn-of-the-Century Politics

Building upon the work of Welter and Douglas, Paula Baker outlines the evolution of a domestication process in American politics during the years, 1780-1920. Baker depicts the gradual closing of a gender gap between a female domestic sphere and a male public sphere of influence during those years. Ratification of the woman suffrage amendment to the Constitution marked a culmination of the process in which changing fundamental ideas about the function of government and politics eroded previous notions of an exclusively male political sphere. This was coupled with an expanded conception of the

⁴⁸ Douglas, chap. 5; Welter, 138-151.

boundaries of domestic social influence, in response to changing national social conditions.⁴⁹

A central tenet of Baker's thesis is that, by the turn-of-the-century, men's political ties took on a wider, less localized scope as a consequence of the expanding influence of the domestic sphere. A systemic transformation was occurring. By the time of the Progressive Era, it had become apparent that contemporary social problems often defied the type of individualistic solutions which had typically been offered by the traditional, intensely partisan brand of male-dominated politics. The scope of government had increased, gaining more of the socially nurturing functions traditionally regarded as belonging within the domestic sphere, in large part through the efforts of organizations like women's clubs. The male model of partisan political participation was replaced by a less partisan, single-issue type of political activity. Women had long utilized the latter approach. The threat which increased female political involvement previously had seemed to pose to the manhood represented by male political culture, decreased correspondingly, facilitating greater cross-gender cooperation on behalf of various reform measures, including suffrage.⁵⁰

⁴⁹ Paula Baker, "The Domestication of Politics: Women and American Political Society, 1780-1920," American Historical Review 89 (July, 1984): 620-647.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 639-641.

As the separation between male and female political cultures diminished, the concerns of home and those of politics increasingly overlapped with a kind of "social housekeeping" coming into vogue by the turn-of-the-century. Many reform measures, even those which were primarily feminine in orientation, seemed less radical. Previously, suffragists had couched their arguments in terms of political equality, reminiscent of the tradition of abolitionism, within which suffrage had important roots. In the early twentieth century, the second generation suffragists' arguments became broader in scope, more mainstream in their social thrust, often with the goal of deflecting charges by opponents that suffrage would alter traditional American womanly virtues. Several historians of the movement agree that this shift in tactics gave the suffrage movement a more conservative complexion.⁵¹

Other historians demonstrate that the basic spiritual values demonstrated by the activities of female evangelical reformers contributed to an increasing domestication in politics and society. Their research implies a spirit of social reform which was based on communitarian ideas strongly resembling those promulgated by the social gospel. Joseph Gusfield and James Timberlake are among historians who describe the evangelical aspect of social reform. They place evangelical reformers in a larger context of social class

⁵¹ Ibid., 642; for analysis of this shift to more conservative strategy see Aileen Kraditor, Ideas of the Woman Suffrage Movement, op. cit.; William L. O'Neill, Everyone Was Brave: A History of American Feminism (Chicago: 1969); Carl N. Degler, At Odds: Women and the Family in America from the Revolution to the Present (New York: 1980); and Ellen DuBois, ed., Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony: Correspondence Writings, Speeches (New York: 1981), 192, 193.

consciousness, believing their primary motivation to be a desire to exert, or perhaps more precisely, to regain, a significant degree of social control in a society whose demographic features were changing in fundamental ways.⁵²

More recent historians have emphasized gender issues in analyzing evangelical reform. Barbara Epstein sees important links between an increasingly domesticated social sphere and social reform, believing that "women's piety and religious activity in the first half of the nineteenth century helped to create the networks and give women the experience that made possible the flourishing of women's reform organizations in the latter part of the century." She argues that the nature of this religious base was such that it encouraged two simultaneous and contradictory impulses, namely "deference and obedience to superior authority and the need to take action on behalf of cherished values." Ultimately, Epstein claims, this framework required evangelical activists like Frances Willard and her Women's Christian Temperance Union, to justify their challenge to patriarchal authority by invoking the authority of God and Christ, with the paradoxical result that their model was a male one.⁵³

⁵² Joseph Gusfield, Symbolic Crusade: Status, Politics and the American Temperance movement (Urbana, Ill.: University of Illinois Press, 1963); James Timberlake, Prohibition and the Progressive Movement, 1900-1920 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1963).

⁵³ Barbara Epstein, The Politics of Domesticity: Women, Evangelism, and Temperance in Nineteenth-Century America (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1981), 8, 9, 87.

Elizabeth Clark too, focuses specifically upon the the evangelical style of reform activity represented by Frances Willard and the Women's Christian Temperance Union, claiming that it was most representative of the mainstream of the women's movement during the final decades of the nineteenth century. Clark questions the emphasis of traditional historical interpretations on secular antebellum feminist roots and the central role which those interpretations allot to suffrage. She challenges traditional assumptions that the philosophical basis of the reform activities of such essentially secular feminists as Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony, was typical of that of most female reformers of the late nineteenth century. Clark contends that, although women utilized the abstract rights arguments of the founding fathers in the manner of Stanton and Anthony, they supplemented them with the philosophies of liberal Protestantism.⁵⁴

Clark depicts a communitarian evangelical image of "spiritual motherhood," a sisterhood of all women, regardless of whether or not they were biological mothers, and a concurrent responsibility for a uniquely female type of social nurturing. On this basis, evangelical reformers like those in the W. C. T. U. supported not only temperance legislation but other acknowledged progressive reform positions like those in support of woman suffrage and improved labor conditions. Clark contrasts this with the classical liberalism espoused by Elizabeth Cady Stanton and her supporters, whose emphasis was on individual rights. Such liberals insisted upon a clear distinction between the public and private spheres.

⁵⁴ Clark, 20, 21, 245, 246.

Evangelicals countenanced no such distinctions, believing in a unitary Christian moral and legal code to which all were accountable and under which all should help to take care of one another.⁵⁵

Washington Gladden described the loving, nurturing God who was central to social gospel belief. He declared that God was present in even the most degraded of human conditions, "never overpowering the will, but gently pressing in, by every avenue open to him, his gifts of love and truth." Gladden was confident that God "has a way for men to live in society...For all this common life of ours there are ideals that uplift and transfigure and ennoble it. There is an ideal for the home and for the church, for the school and for the shop, for the factory and for the city." This ultimately meant "that religion is and must be the heart and soul of it all."⁵⁶ It was the responsibility, not only of individuals, but of society's institutions, to respond to social needs, as a family would to the needs of its own members.

Clark contends that evangelicals posited an ideal home in which existed an ideally practical democracy, with each member rejoicing in his/her role. The various institutions established by W. C. T. U. women to assist the needy and wayward to social redemption, were called, "homes." Temperance leader Emily H. Miller wrote that "the best-governed

⁵⁵ Clark, 146, 147, 248-257.

⁵⁶ Washington Gladden, Social Salvation (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1902), 23-31.

children are those who seem to govern themselves." To evangelicals, free will continued to be bounded by traditional social limits of propriety to which people were voluntarily compliant.⁵⁷ In short, true freedom could be exercised only within the purview of God's will.

Social gospel proponents also viewed society in a religious context, with the standards of individual behavior shaped and guided by what was determined to be the well-being of all in society. Gladden described conversion as requiring a fundamental change within the individual of more than merely "religious sentiments." It "involves a change in the ruling ideas as well as the sensibilities. 'Change your minds!' is the first order." That being the case, Christians should set their minds to the pursuit of socially useful activities in helping to shape and establish the kingdom of God. "I trust, my bretheren, that I have made plain to you my own deep conviction that the work of the ministry in these days must be deeply concerned with social questions...that you will be able to communicate that interest to the people to whom you are sent; to kindle in their hearts the enthusiasm of humanity and to guide them in their thoughts and labors for their fellow men."⁵⁸

Whether or not evangelical reformers should be considered by historians to have constituted a part of the social gospel is less important than the fact that the beliefs upon

⁵⁷ Clark, 241, 278-284.

⁵⁸ Gladden, 10-19..

which their actions were based, seem to have been identical in important ways to those which prompted the actions of social gospel advocates and other progressive reformers. A familial view of society as a community of humankind, was common to such aspects of progressive reform. The God whose kingdom in human society was regarded by evangelicals and the social gospel as a realizable goal, was, essentially, the same feminized, nurturing God. Dividing the movements into two discernably separate groups seems more a matter of semantics or historical convenience than of any fundamental differences of philosophy or of their historical effect.

Progressive Education's Contributions to Removal of Distinctions in Gender

Progressivism in education mirrored other aspects of social reform in substituting a nurturing approach for a sterner, more patriarchal one. As the social gospel had shifted the theological focus from the impersonal insistence that each individual must be responsible for his own salvation, progressive education rejected the formalist concern for the needs of the school as an institution over those of the child, regarding the well-being of each child as outweighing the impersonal needs of the institution. Progressive methodology echoed the refrain of Rauschenbusch as he noted the Biblical incantation that, "Even the lowliest was high."

A feminization process akin to that occurring in other facets of American society was evident in education during the latter portion of the nineteenth century. Following the Civil War, teaching had clearly become, if not "woman's true profession," at least the one

which was chosen with greatest regularity by women who pursued a career, and one which was becoming predominantly feminine in both form and function.⁵⁹ By the turn-of-the-century, the preponderance of women in the classroom enhanced an image which seemed naturally to lend itself to the teaching profession, that of a nurturing function, with commensurate organic connotations of development and growth. Many evangelical activists who were teachers, utilized the concept of voluntary compliance in their classrooms, stressing reinforcement of positive achievements along with calm, rational discussion about negative behaviors.

Among examples was the "Corps of the self-governed" at Northwestern Women's College under Frances Willard. Girls became members if they demonstrated a consistent adherence to the code of conduct.⁶⁰ Similarly at Saint Margaret's School in Waterbury during the 1870's and 1880's, "honor girls" were given badges for "exemplary behavior" and were allowed to walk downtown unescorted once each day.⁶¹ Many of the women's schools in this study operated daily under some type of "honor system," which essentially relied on the personal consciences of students to report truthfully to school authorities at a specified part of the day. During the period, many women's secondary schools established formal student self-government mechanisms, in some of which, one important function was student involvement in determining the details of the school's disciplinary

⁵⁹ Spring, 114

⁶⁰ Clark, 241.

⁶¹ Ohmann, *op. cit.*, 29.

system. These will be described more fully later. Such methods reflected an underlying emphasis on rational persuasion and affirmation rather than on compulsion. They were at once, democratic and maternal in nature.

Student Health and Physical Development

Progressives allotted to schools, an institutional responsibility for the health and physical development of students. This constituted a significant manifestation of the feminization process which was evident in progressive reform in general and in progressive education specifically, Progressive educators asserted that access to the latest methods of physical training should be available to both male and female students. In doing this, they expressed both a tendency for social nurture and a belief in the right of women to physical self-expression. In this, progressives were in conflict with general social tradition, an often penurious cost consciousness by school authorities, as well as entrenched formalistic methodology, all of which tended to deny the importance of that aspect of school life.

During the first part of the nineteenth century, only a relative handful of educational thinkers had proclaimed the educational benefits of comfortable educational facilities and opportunities for physical training for boys. There were fewer still who did so for girls. The standard conception was that "the gentle sex" tended to be too fragile for vigorous physical activity. Also, such activities were deemed by many to be "unladylike," with a

potential cost to femininity, in much the same manner as rigorous academic work was generally considered to be a threat both to physical health and to femininity.⁶²

Although most nineteenth-century school authorities in the United States viewed exercise programs and athletic competition for female students skeptically, there were exceptions. Catharine Beecher instituted a program of physical development for girls at her school in the 1820's. She also wrote and published a textbook which illustrated a series of calisthenic exercises, claiming that they were suitable for both sexes. Emma Willard at Troy Seminary and William Bentley Fowle at his Monitorial School for Girls used a similar approach during the same decade. During the next decade, Mrs. Phelps' school, Patapsco Female Institute, incorporated "physical culture" into the curriculum. Dio Lewis developed a system of "Gymnastics" in the 1850's, putting it into practice in his Home School, established in 1866.⁶³

Also around mid-century, Herbert Spencer, Dr. William Wood, and Ira Mayhew had urged schools to provide properly ventilated and lighted classrooms with seating arrangements conducive both to good posture and to comfort. They advocated regular physical development regimens for students. The fundamental idea was to combine directed exercise activities with play. Spencer, Wood, and Mayhew were among a

⁶² Woody, II, op. cit., 109-115.

⁶³ Ibid.

minority of contemporary educational thinkers who argued that the health and well-being of female students required physical activity commensurate with that of their male counterparts.⁶⁴

A boarding school called Maplewood Young Ladies Institute of Pittsfield, Massachusetts, used what appears from its description, to have been an aerobic type of "gymnastic exercise" for its pupils. A catalog for the school year of 1863-64 listed the Reverend Charles V. Spear as Principal and stated that the school had been in existence since 1841. It reproduced a portion of a report from a correspondent of The Pittsfield Sun, February 24, 1863, which described the gymnastic activity of students as incorporating "marching exercises in great variety, arm exercises without apparatus, exercises with wands, and ring exercises" accompanied by "music and the 'foot-propelling' drum." The newspaper correspondent reported that beneficial physical effects included improved blood circulation and respiration and "symmetrical development of form."⁶⁵ The catalog did not indicate for how many years the school had been practicing the exercise program. Its descriptive language of physical effects is very similar to that used by Wood and Mayhew during the 1850's.

⁶⁴ Wood, 129-155; Ira Mayhew, Universal Education; Spencer, Education (New York: Allison, 1860).

⁶⁵ Promotional catalog, Maplewood Young Ladies Institute, Pittsfield, Mass., 1863-64. (unnumbered pages). This writer found the catalog among the archival materials of The Masters School in Dobbs Ferry, New York. The archivist has been unable to unearth an explanation of, when, how, and why it had been placed in his school's files. In any event, it seems to document one of few exceptions to the rule that social traditions of its time dictated more sedentary activities for young ladies than those which it portrays.

Equality of opportunity in physical training programs for the sexes remained uncommon at coeducational institutions during the remainder of the century, with decidedly greater attention afforded to boys.⁶⁶ In the early 1900's, progressive social scientists utilized their research to spotlight the continuing need for students to have suitable physical outlets as part of their educational development. Despite appearing to have included girls in his analysis as an afterthought, G. Stanley Hall sounded at least a muted theme of gender equality in promoting youthful play, precisely because it was natural:

Pubescent boys *and even girls*, (italics mine) often feel like animals in captivity. They long intensely for the utter abandon of a wilder life, and very characteristic is the frequent discarding of foot and head dress and even garments in the blind instinct to realize the conditions of primitive man.⁶⁷

Helen Thompson was more explicit in supporting physical development as an essential component in the education of girls, arguing that both physical and psychological consequences ensued from attributing physical limitations to young women. American society routinely encouraged boys to participate in a wide variety of exercises and in an outdoor life, but endorsed relatively few forms of such activity for girls. Instead, it encouraged more "ladylike" sedentary indoor activities which were essentially connected with the household. Therefore, development of physical strength was a male, rather than a female social ideal. Thompson contended that this conception was extended into ideals

⁶⁶ Cremin, 144.

⁶⁷ G. Stanley Hall, Youth: Its Education, Regimen, and Hygiene (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1911), 125.

of mental development and assertiveness. Girls were traditionally taught to be obedient, dependent, and deferential, while boys were encouraged to be independent in thought and action. This societal imprimatur on male physical superiority with related mental attributes of assertive leadership and the emphasis on the converse for females was, essentially, a self-fulfilling prophecy, Thompson concluded.⁶⁸

Other progressives supported the idea of physical training in school for both boys and girls. Claiming that "any school without a gymnasium and a trained physical director is only two-thirds of a school,"⁶⁹ educational investigator Adele Marie Shaw consistently used as a criterion of educational quality, the degree of commitment to the physical training of students, male and female, which a school demonstrated. She wrote approvingly about one of the few school physical directors in the country who used the same training methods and equipment for both sexes. The man, identified only as Mr. MacArthur of the Menomonie School District in Wisconsin, was quoted as saying about the typical school girl that, "the conventionalities of modern society rob her of freedom during her years of growth."⁷⁰ Shaw regarded the school as a nurturing agent for the physical well-being of students. Using an organic analogy, Shaw insisted that, "human

⁶⁸ Helen Thompson, The Mental Traits of Men and Women (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1903), 177-179.

⁶⁹ Shaw, IX, 5482.

⁷⁰ Ibid., VII, 4542.

bodies in city or country no more grow properly without care and training than do corn and beans without weeding and hoeing."⁷¹

In several school systems whose efforts in other respects she judged to be outstanding, Shaw criticized a dearth of physical training. For instance, she felt that enforcement of statewide requirements had made Indiana's schools exemplary in an academic sense. However, she lamented a lack of such standards for physical training, citing Broad Ripple's schools as an example:

But here, especially in the high schools, the lack of physical training begins to show, bad air to reveal its effect. The boys look hardier than the girls. 'Chores' give to farmers' sons fresh air, though they may not prevent stiffness and round shoulders. The girls are many of them beautiful in a fragile, weak-chested way, but their look suggests exercise too entirely confined to the house. Here too, there seems to be a deficiency in instruction...The deficiencies of the Indiana schools exist in most other schools.⁷²

Shaw's commitment to the efficacy of fresh air and the positive effects which proper physical training could have on student respiratory systems and posture was evident in several additional references to a need for physical training and proper classroom ventilation. For instance, she complained that the Council Bluffs, Iowa school system was typical of many others nationwide in having taken "no scientific care or training of bodies already marked by bad habits of posture and wrong breathing."⁷³ Shaw lamented

⁷¹ Ibid., VIII, 5247.

⁷² Ibid., 4795, 4796.

⁷³ Ibid., 5003, 5004.

the pervasiveness of overly warm classrooms where windows seemed to be perpetually closed against whatever seasonal elements prevailed, coldness in winter and marauding insects in warmer weather. She reported that direct heat from old stoves during the winter dried air and bodies, and bred contagion.⁷⁴

Indeed, the overall awareness by Americans of the health benefits of fresh air, appears to have increased during the period. Some came to believe that open windows, regardless of outdoor temperature, were conducive to good health. Screened sleeping porches came increasingly into vogue in the early decades of the new century, with outdoor weather conditions dictating the amount of covering required for the sleeper. Some progressives attempted to apply such ideas to the educational setting.

For instance, a book called Open Air Crusaders, published in 1910, detailed a fresh-air educational project undertaken in the Chicago public school system during the school year, 1909-1910. Chicago educational reformers, with the support of the progressive Superintendent of Schools, Ella Flagg Young, addressed the concern about respiratory diseases among children in the city's economically blighted districts. Several children who had been exposed to tuberculosis were selected as participants in an experimental "Open Air School." Project coordinators carefully monitored the physical and academic progress of these students, who, outfitted appropriately for existing temperatures, did

⁷⁴ Ibid., 5244-5254.

their school work in an open-air setting in all seasons. Nutritious meals were provided and their physical condition was monitored by trained medical people.⁷⁵

The book's editor, Sherman Kingsley, exhibited a continuing concern about the same school health issues which had been raised some fifty years earlier by Spencer, Wood, and Mayhew. Kingsley commented in the preface, that "Ventilating systems that do not ventilate have been revered too long." He also condemned poorly-designed desks which contributed to unnatural posture as well as a degree of discomfort which detracted from the student's academic success. Overheated, dry, forced air sapped the "already wilted system" of the student during the school day, Kingsley said. Based on physical and academic results of the open-air experiment, he declared the approach a successful antidote for such conditions.⁷⁶

A few of the women's schools in this study went to similar lengths in their devotion to the benefits of fresh air. At least one, The Ethel Walker School, had a sleeping porch accomodating forty students at the Simsbury, Connecticut campus, to which it had relocated from Lakewood, New Jersey in 1917. Students were adamant in support of the health benefits of the sleeping porch, despite the discomfort sometimes involved. "Our nightclothes in winter included an incredible number of scarves, bedsocks, caps and

⁷⁵ Sherman Kingsley, ed., Open Air Crusaders (Chicago: Lakeside Press of Donnelly).

⁷⁶ Ibid., 7, 8.

mittens. Snow sometimes fell on the outer row of beds," alumna Molly Parker recalls. Like many other of the schools investigated, the Simsbury site featured acres of open ground which could be devoted to sports activities, long walks, even recreational horseback riding. Fresh air and rural scenery abounded.⁷⁷

The Alumnae Association of the Brearley School in New York City called itself, The Brearley League. Among its many activities in the community the League promoted the health benefits of fresh air. In 1916, it sponsored "The Brearley League Open Air Class," using a specially-equipped classroom on the top floor of the school building for a project which was nearly identical to the Chicago Open Air League experiment of a few years earlier. On Brearley's specially-altered top floor, twenty selected children from the city's poverty areas who were at risk from tuberculosis, took regular school courses at their grade level, in an open-air classroom. Their health was monitored by a visiting physician and visiting nurse.⁷⁸

The Brearley League supplied the heavy clothing required by the children for cold weather, as well as food, including breakfast, lunch, and an afternoon snack, each school day. Financial gifts from individuals had made possible the refurbishing of the

⁷⁷ Mabsie Walker Lewis, ed., Our First Fifty Years, (Simsbury, Conn: The Ethel Walker School, 1961), 12, 13. Archives of the Ethel Walker School, Simsbury, CT., hereafter called Ethel Walker Archives.

⁷⁸ "Annual Report of the Committee on Charities, April 5, 1916," Report of the Brearley League, The Brearley School, New York, N. Y., 22-25. Brearley Archives.

classroom, the requisite number of desks, and school supplies for the project. The League's report concluded that, "The many school hours in the open air and sunshine have proved their value by the gain in weight and general health, the brightness of the faces, and the added interest in the daily tasks of the children in the class." Indeed, some had become sufficiently healthy to "return to their former class rooms to give place to others who so greatly need these hours in the good fresh air."⁷⁹

Progressive Educational Nurturing in Health and Community-Building

The "social housekeeping" approach was also evident in other areas of overlap between progressive education and other aspects of reform. Progressives used the public schools as the locus for some reform activity, notably aspects of community-building and public health. Reformers often supplemented city recreational facilities by utilizing those of the public schools. They kept school playgrounds open for use by city children when school was not in session and sometimes used other portions of the school plant for community social functions. Public schools thus became social centers, serving to promote a greater sense of community in urban areas. For example, the University Settlement in New York used twenty-one school buildings within which the clubs that they organized could function. As a practical consequence, the expanded use of school plants justified their structural enhancement, particularly of safety features.⁸⁰

⁷⁹ Ibid., 25.

⁸⁰ Spring, 165, 166.

Health and nutrition reforms often were administered through public education systems. Progressives saw both immediate and longer-term social benefits in the practice of having schools provide supervised bathing facilities for students from poor neighborhoods, feeling that those children would grow to appreciate the benefits of cleanliness and carry the practice back to their families and neighborhoods. Similarly, establishing school infirmaries staffed by health care professionals would facilitate detection and treatment of contagious diseases, contributing to their containment. Social settlement nurses like those under Lilian Wald at New York's Henry Street settlement, coordinated their community health activities with those of school nurses. Miss Wald also contributed to improved nutrition for children by helping to establish a city-wide school lunch program. It served as a model for programs in a number of other cities.⁸¹

Said Rauschenbusch in A Theology For The Social Gospel, "If we could observe a native Christian church in a pagan people, after the Christian organization is once in operation as a social organism, and it is weaning families and village communities from pagan customs and assimilating them to the new ideas, we should realize better the power of conservation exerted in our own communities."⁸² Women's private secondary school leaders appear to have formulated a type of educational training whose emphasis on community reflected a progressive persona. In those schools, each student was

⁸¹ Shaw, VII, 4204-4221; Cremin, 61, 64, 71.

⁸² Rauschenbusch, 121.

considered important, but that importance was social in its connotation. Each individual was clearly a part of her school community, responsible in her behavior, for the well-being of her fellow members of that community. The leaders of women's schools also fostered an extension of this sense of moral responsibility to the larger society of which each student was a part.

The primary goal of women's private secondary school was to challenge each student to become a woman who was as healthy, intelligent, and moral as she could be. She was, ultimately, left to resolve the precise nature of her future social role for herself. However, the school could provide a social context within which the student could gain social experience, learning about herself and her world in a relational setting which informed her about her society and the place she might have in it. The underlying moral guideline which schools provided was that each girl should attempt to grow in her capacity for social usefulness. This was the nature of the social gospel message, a message which the leaders of women's private secondary schools incorporated into the education they provided.

CHAPTER 3: THE SOCIAL GOSPEL'S SOCIAL EMPHASIS IN PROGRESSIVE EDUCATION

Progressive activists in the social gospel and in the Progressive Education Movement believed that individual Americans could and must adopt a social point of view in order to fulfill their full moral potential by being useful, contributing members of society. Around the turn-of-the-century, advocates of the social gospel conveyed that message through the agency of clerical and lay people of various religious backgrounds, declaring that American society needed less emphasis on orthodoxy's doctrines of religious individualism and economic laissez-faire, and more on building a loving brotherhood of man. They believed that orthodox doctrines were being used to justify systemic practices whose effect was to isolate and victimize many in society. Similarly, progressive educators, felt that traditional formalistic educational practices isolated the education system from society, thus depriving the nation's young of the type of training necessary for constructive social thought and action. The social gospel message combined a doctrine of Christian love with a sanctification of democracy as a social system worthy of producing a kingdom of God. Progressive educational reformers too regarded the democratic system as the model to be emulated and utilized in school systems, the most fundamental function of which was to train young people to be morally upright, useful citizens.

Education played an important role in progressive reform at two related levels. At one level, it was used by progressive activists, most of whom were outside the profession but who utilized both education's resonant symbolism and the physical facilities of schools to promote social reform. The second level was marked by the thought and activism of professional educators of progressive inclination, who orchestrated, "The Progressive Education Movement." These progressive educators were most directly concerned with the "nuts and bolts" of educational theory and practice, attempting to reform the educational system from within, thereby more fully equipping students to become socially useful adults. Progressives both within and outside the education field shared a reform philosophy which emphasized a communitarian social context. Further, this like-mindedness prompted their mutual involvement in overlapping reform activities.

Education's Role in Social Reform

Progressives typically felt that the education process was an integral part of reform. Most fundamentally, it could function as a means by which to achieve reform goals through an educated and informed electorate and a preponderantly moral one. Progressives regarded an efficacious education system as indispensable to the perpetuation of a democratic society. They believed that, along with traditional academic subject matter, the education system should reflect the essentially Christian values of the society, providing students with the knowledge and skills necessary to effectively contribute toward a realization of social ideals.

To progressives, the education process was a useful, multi-faceted tool for social reform. Michael McCarthy says that an aura of optimism existed among urban reformers during the Progressive Era. Many wished to utilize education in a generic sense of acquiring knowledge and applying it on behalf of reform. More specifically, progressives felt that empirical studies by social scientists contributed to public understanding of urban problems. Reformers assumed that, when such findings were conveyed to the public, an educated citizenry would be likely to make rational decisions to support proposed reforms.¹

Within the education profession also, reform was occurring under the same progressive communitarian social spirit as that which provided the basis for the message of the social gospel. Lawrence Cremin has described progressive education as, "American Progressivism writ large."² Allen Davis' research shows that many who chose settlement work had a professional background in education. Their work blended with that of social scientists. They were influenced in their work on behalf of the urban poor by various progressive educational approaches, one of which was the vocational training advocated by Felix Adler's New York Society for Ethical Culture.³

¹ Michael P. McCarthy, "Urban Optimism and Reform Thought in the Progressive Era," *The Historian* 51 (1989): 261, 262.

² Cremin, *op. cit.*, viii.

³ Davis, *Spearheads of Reform*, *op. cit.*, 57-59.

In addition, professional educators of progressive bent frequently offered both their professional advice and personal support to settlement educational projects. John Dewey served on the first board of trustees at Jane Addams' Hull House in Chicago and was actively involved in helping her to formulate neighborhood educational projects. He gave lectures on a variety of topics at Hull House to groups largely composed of residents of the neighborhood. Upon assuming a new post at Columbia University's Teacher's College in New York, he did similar work with Lilian Wald's Henry Street settlement. Dewey customarily toured settlement houses in many of the cities which he visited.⁴

Other proponents of progressive educational methods were involved in settlement programs. Adler served on the original board of the Outdoor Recreation League of New York City. Mrs. Quincy Agassiz Shaw established the Civic Service House in Boston, which was directed by educational reformer Meyer Bloomfield. The project involved organizing immigrants into clubs and classes to help them to learn English, to discuss social issues, and to encourage participation in trade unions. Numerous other settlements established vocational training and guidance programs. Such programs were used as models for those established in many public schools during the first decades of the twentieth century.⁵

⁴ Ibid., 57-59.

⁵ Ibid., 48-63; Cremin, 63-67.

Features of a "Progressive Education"

What then, were the primary characteristics that constituted a, "progressive education," during the Progressive Era? Progressive educational methods were designed to address an organic development of the student as a whole person. In this view, it was as important to nurture the student physically and spiritually, as it was, academically. The school life of a child should involve a "hands on" preparation for the responsibilities of good citizenship.

Specific methodological applications of these notions appear to have varied among their progressive practitioners. Lawrence Cremin describes progressive education as having "meant different things to different people," adding that, "these differences were only compounded by the remarkable diversity of American education."⁶ Another historian of education in the United States, David Plank, has amplified that idea. His research indicates that public support for progressive reform measures in education was not monolithic in character. It was diverse and dynamic, varying by geographical area and over time. Plank does believe that historians who have identified certain factors common to various progressive educational approaches have made helpful contributions, but cautions that such findings be applied with an eye to variance in local situations.⁷

⁶ Cremin, x.

⁷ David N. Plank, "Educational Reform and Organizational Change: Atlanta in the Progressive Era," *Journal of Urban History* 15 (November, 1988): 22-41.

Three characteristics which seem to most fundamentally reflect a distinctively progressive approach to education by schools are those which demonstrated a concern for students in the areas of Health and Physical Development, Vocation, and Community and Family Life. Indeed, these were the most basic of the characteristics which Lawrence Cremin listed and discussed in his analysis of progressivism in education.⁸ These seem useful categories within which to describe and analyze the type of education offered at women's private secondary schools during the Progressive Era. The first, health and physical development, will be considered in the remainder of this chapter. The second and third, vocation and community and family life, will be discussed in the following chapter.

Officials of women's private secondary schools believed that those three aspects were developmental in nature and that they were inextricably linked. This linkage was reflected in their endorsement of an educational tripod which emphasized a holistic physical, mental, and spiritual development of students. Physical vigor was an essential component which could complement mental and spiritual well-being in the developmental educational tripod. The nature of a person's social interaction, the kind of contribution he/she could make to society was called vocation. The third point, concern for community life, provided what progressive educators regarded as the ingredient of personal experience, the social context of community, within which the student could

⁸ Cremin, especially viii, and Chapters Two and Three.

develop the requisite means, knowledge, skills, and the personal character, to be most effective as a contributing member of society.

Concern for Health of Students

Miss Florence Bigelow, Co-Head of The Walnut Hill School in Natick, Massachusetts, articulated this holistic approach in a talk at the school's initial graduation ceremony in 1894. "It is our purpose to teach that life is threefold; and that unless body, mind and soul are symmetrically and proportionally developed, you have not attained your perfect womanhood." Miss Bigelow enumerated three primary responsibilities of students to their satisfactory personal development. She asked them to "Remember that the body is the incarnation of the soul--the instrument of its power," warning that, "If you disregard it, you are lessening your own usefulness."⁹

Miss Bigelow cautioned that, although the stated primary academic purpose of a Walnut Hill education was that of college preparation, "Study is a means to an end--do not make it an end." She declared that the purpose of academic work "is to fit you for work--do not let it unfit you in any way." The most fundamental goal of each pupil should be the development of her character. "Above all, remember that character is the highest attainment of which you are capable."¹⁰ In effect, neither mental nor physical

⁹ Natick Bulletin, June 22, 1894, 1. WHS Archives

¹⁰ Ibid.

development in isolation was a worthy goal. Each was important only insofar as it was balanced against the other, and to the extent that each contributed to the development of character.

A progressive ethos venerated the health benefits which could flow from nature's bounty. However, that outlook transcended a Romantic isolation into which the solitary individual might retreat for meditation by communing with nature. In the progressive communitarian view, the health of the individual and that of society, were linked. The moral imperative for each individual was to contribute to the utmost of his/her ability, to society. Educator Marietta Johnson said, "We must constantly bear in mind that we are dealing with a unit organism...it is impossible to have good health in one part of the organism and ill health in another! It is either good or ill for the entire organism always."¹¹

The health and vigor of a society depended upon the physical, mental, and spiritual health of the individuals that comprised it. The degree of a person's social usefulness would be affected by the degree to which his/her health allowed the person to effectively function as a useful member of society. Therefore, progressives believed that an important function of the school was to provide an environment of optimum benefit to the physical development of students.

¹¹ Quoted in Cremin, 149.

Safeguarding and Enhancing Student Health

Undoubtedly, the physical safety and well-being of students had been among the concerns of school authorities in both private and common (public) schools prior to the Progressive Era. However, progressive educational practices reflected a widened conception of the school's responsibility for student health. Progressive educators determined that it was necessary to provide a wholesome school setting, within which pupils would have ample opportunity to develop the interrelated physical, mental, and spiritual aspects of their being.

The surroundings and policies of the school were designed to minimize hazards to physical health, while maximizing opportunities to develop overall health and specific physical skills. Women's private schools displayed a number of progressive tendencies in their approach to student health. Notable among these was their emphasis upon a "wholesome" lifestyle which emphasized a healthful environment which included proper rest and nutrition, individual and group exercise regimens, and organized competitive sports. In these areas, school leaders portrayed a typically progressive reliance on the latest thought and technology.

Healthful Conditions

Despite some variation in the degree of comfort which women's private boarding schools offered in their dormitory living and other physical facilities, all aimed to provide a basic setting of home-like security for students. It is clear that parents who were affluent

enough to afford private school costs, were sufficiently satisfied with accommodations at women's private schools to send their daughters, thus assuring the schools' continuing financial stability. Beyond such pecuniary considerations for school leaders seems to have been their goal of providing a healthful, supportive environment within which each pupil could be nurtured. The concern for student health was part of an educational program which integrated physical, mental, and spiritual health.

Some nineteenth-century educational reformers had contended that schools should provide healthful physical conditions for students. They argued that physical comfort in classrooms and overall good health of students could facilitate the learning process. By the turn-of-the-century, progressives in education were attempting to maximize efficiency and comfort in classrooms in such aspects as lighting, ventilation, type of desks, safety procedures, and other health practices. Women's private secondary schools participated in the effort, indicating a knowledge of up-to-date thinking about matters of health, and attempting to provide for their students, the most healthful surroundings possible.

In line with progressive thinking about the benefits of nature and of traditional community values to be found in rural settings, many schools could point to their location in pastoral surroundings with fresh air and abundant space for energetic students to play and work. Some examples of schools which were in essentially rural or village settings were Westover School in Middlebury, Connecticut, Miss Halls School, on the outskirts of Pittsfield, Massachusetts, Northfield Seminary in Northfield, Massachusetts, and the

Ethel Walker School, Lakewood, New Jersey. Suburban schools like Miss Porter's in Farmington, Connecticut, Dana Hall in Wellesley, Massachusetts or Walnut Hill in Natick, Massachusetts, could boast of similar natural endowments of fresh air and spaciousness, in small-town surroundings. Such settings reflected the small town values reminiscent of the background common to many progressives and of many of the school leaders themselves.

Yet, neither were some of the schools in urban centers disqualified from accentuating their locations as having had similar health advantages. Philadelphia's Springside School was within the city limits. However, the Chestnut Hill section was considered at the time, to have been essentially suburban in character. Its residents included many from among Philadelphia's professional, business, and civic elite, a number of whom sent their daughters to Springside as day students. An early advertising brochure in 1879 stated that the site for the school had been chosen "on account of its extreme healthfulness and entire freedom from all malarial influences." The advertisement emphasized that "Special attention [is] paid to the physical well-being of pupils." Despite the implication of relatively healthier living conditions than those associated with downtown city living, Chestnut Hill's proximity to downtown Philadelphia's cultural advantages was also stressed as being advantageous.¹²

¹² Emmy Churchman Starr, ed. Springside School, 1879-1979, (Philadelphia, Penn.: Springside School Alumnae Association, Privately Printed, 1979), 5, 6.

The MacDuffie School in Springfield, Massachusetts also attempted to use its urban location to advantage. MacDuffie advertising depicted the school as being on a safe, uncrowded site in a growing city. It was within walking distance or a short trolley ride of the amenities of downtown Springfield. Further, school advertising stressed that Springfield itself had access by train, to the cultural advantages of the larger metropolitan areas of Hartford, New York, and Boston. Despite the fact that Springfield's winter climate was far from tropical, Principals Abigail and John MacDuffie emphasized the positive, using photographs of winter scenes in their promotional brochures which focused upon the season's beauty and the opportunities for recreational activities such as ice-skating and sledding. For potential students from Eastern coastal areas, advertising stressed "the absence of raw, easterly winds" in Springfield.¹³

The desire to be in step with the latest educational health technology is apparent in contemporary statements by the schools about the general wholesomeness of their surroundings and, particularly, of the health and safety features which, they believed were endemic in the design and maintenance of campus buildings and grounds. Some schools were able to construct new buildings. They seem to have taken pains to exceed the minimal building codes then in existence in most parts of the country, designing the buildings from the standpoints of safety and of their educational functions.

¹³ Promotional catalog, Year Book of Mr. and Mrs. John MacDuffie's Graduating and College Preparatory School for Girls, Springfield, Massachusetts, 1904, 5, 6; Archival Scrapbook for The MacDuffie School from 1903-1917 contains pictorial promotional pamphlets about Springfield. MacDuffie Archives.

Women's boarding schools had traditionally spoken of their "home-like" surroundings. During the Progressive Era, virtually every school coupled this with an advertising emphasis on up-to-date safety and health features in their facilities. Some schools constructed new buildings during the period. For instance, The Albany Female Academy in Albany, New York, a school in the pioneering group, erected a new multi-purpose, four-story building for the opening of the 1893-94 school year. A contemporary school publication devoted several pages to describing its salient features, which secured "the best and most permanent conditions of health and comfort." A large entrance hall and all rooms, including the gymnasium, were "lighted by windows of unusual size and furnished with the best appointments for a school home." The building had steam heat and students were further protected from inclement weather by a corridor leading from the dining room to the new building. Sturdy railings provided safety for those using the well-lighted staircases leading to the fourth floor. The writer gave a detailed description of the aesthetic touches in each part of the building. She concluded that "Everything suggests light, space, solidity, permanence, and comfort."¹⁴

Women's school officials aimed for a combination of form and function, of aesthetically pleasing as well as healthful, buildings and grounds. Some schools enhanced the natural beauty and safety of their campuses with landscaping procedures. In the process, they were attentive to student health and safety by using methods of proper drainage and in

¹⁴ Lucy A. Plympton, Historical Sketch, op. cit., 22-25.

erecting safe and attractive campus pathways. School leaders uniformly trumpeted the healthful aspects of campus life in their promotional catalogs.

John and Abigail MacDuffie had purchased the Howard School from the three sisters who were its namesake upon their retirement in 1890, renaming it, The MacDuffie School. A decade later, their advertising emphasized that their newest building, Howard Hall, had been completed in 1898 under the direction of "the well-known school architectural firm of Pyne, Gardner, and Pyne." Older buildings had been refurbished. Catalogs described the classrooms as having been designed for optimum student benefit in their lighting, heating, and ventilation. Similarly, the campus was landscaped for proper drainage as well as the enhancement of its natural beauty. The grounds contained "inviting walks and sequestered retreats for outdoor study." "Home comforts" included a "regular life and wholesome diet."¹⁵

Contemporary photographs show embankments on three sides of the MacDuffie campus, with wildflowers and magnolias adorning the interior. A student publication of the late nineteenth century indicates that students were influenced by their school surroundings. A poem by a student, which she called, "A Memory," describes the writer's " little cottage school," where the schoolroom is "a pleasant place, 'Tis bright and cheery." Another

¹⁵ Year Book for The MacDuffie School, Springfield, Massachusetts, promotional catalogs for years, 1900, 1904, 1907, and 1912 all contain references, as described. MacDuffie Archives.

student rhapsodized about the effects of the beauty of the campus on its student inhabitants:

The praises of Magnolia Terrace in spring and early summer have been reiterated many a time and oft by the MacDuffie girls, and, in whatever part of the country we may be, our thoughts always travel back to Magnolia Terrace as spring draws near. With the new girls we wander once again among the pleasant paths and see the Magnolia trees in their mass of glorious white bloom...Dear old Magnolia Terrace! The old girls treasure you in their minds as one of the pleasantest memories as the years go by.¹⁶

Anecdotal evidence suggests that MacDuffie's students from later in the period also regarded the physical setting of their campus as having had a positive impact on their school lives. Wynona Sherman Walker of the Class of 1920, recalled the beauty of the MacDuffie campus. She spoke especially of "the beautiful magnolia blossoms on campus." When asked whether students of her time had generally shared the pride which she had expressed in the beauty of the campus, Mrs. Walker replied that she believed they had. "It was lovely," she said. "We knew that they cared about us."¹⁷

Lincoln School in Providence, Rhode Island provided yet another example of the fact that women's schools typically developed and described their campus facilities in terms both of utility and the aesthetic. School officials made numerous shopping expeditions to find the proper furnishings during construction of a new main building. The building, large enough to house the entire boarding population in safety, comfort, and style was opened

¹⁶ Student literary magazine, Magnolia Leaves, April 17, 1896, 3, 5. MacDuffie Archives.

¹⁷ Interview by this writer with Mrs. Wynona Sherman Walker, Class of 1920 in Wilbraham, Massachusetts, February 23, 1990.

in 1913. The student response to such amenities as the four-poster beds and matching furniture of mahogany, the deep blue velvet in which the living room was decorated, and the intricately carved walnut tables and chairs was decidedly positive. Representative of the responses was that of Margaret Cooke Keiler, class of 1916, who wrote, "It was so wonderful we could hardly believe it was our own."¹⁸

Buildings constructed during the Progressive Era had modern features including electricity, steam heat, ventilation, and indoor plumbing. Schools typically described their new buildings as being "well-lighted." Classrooms had been newly-built or modified with the emphasis on comfort and educational utility. Safety played a major role in determining the manner in which women's school constructed their new buildings during the Progressive Era. Many schools described new buildings as being, "fire-proof."

This was a term used in a newspaper article in 1895 concerning Sage Hall, which had just been completed at The Emma Willard School (formerly called Troy Female Seminary) in Troy, New York. The school's 1914 catalog used the same term in describing the three new buildings. At The Brearley School in New York's Manhattan district, its new building, which was ready for the 1912-13 school year, was likewise called, "fire-proof."

¹⁸ Dorothy W. Gifford, Lincoln School: The First Century (Providence, R. I.: Lincoln School, 1984), 9.

It had brick walls, terra-cotta partitions, iron beams, stairways of iron and slate, and floors of stone.¹⁹

Several schools reflected a typically progressive reliance upon scientific expertise in the design and construction of new buildings. Promotional materials of those schools belie a progressive confidence that the resulting benefits would foster a holistic development of students. For example, at Emma Willard, the catalog for 1914 asserted that, "The schoolrooms, laboratories, and the gymnasium have been planned and equipped under the direction of experts in educational matters." The catalog contended that the school's beautiful and healthful setting combined with the design of separate buildings for specific functions, benefitted students by avoiding confusion and distraction. The combined effects of the various aspects of the campus setting enabled pupils to enjoy a "free and natural life."²⁰ However, parents must have clearly understood that it was obviously a "free and natural life" which the school had set within a purposeful structure of regularity in scheduled and monitored activities such as classes, athletics, mealtimes, etc.

The main building of the Wykeham Rise School in Washington, Connecticut was designed by the New York architectural firm of Ludlow and Valentine in 1907.

¹⁹ "The Sage Hall," Troy Daily Press, May 16, 1895, 12; Promotional catalog, The Emma Willard School, Troy, New York, 1914, 9-11. EWS Archives; Promotional catalog, The Year Book of the Brearley School (Limited), 1912, 4. Brearley School Archives.

²⁰ Catalog, The Emma Willard School, 1914-15, 9-11. EWS Archives.

Wykeham Rise had been founded in 1902 by Miss Fanny E. Davies, a protege of Caroline Ruutz-Rees of Rosemary Hall. In subsequent years, the hillside setting of the growing school was further enhanced by landscaping. Like the Emma Willard campus, Wykeham Rise enjoyed facilities with a student residence separated from the sites of other activities. The new white frame main building provided for a further separation of school activities among its three stories. The school added separate buildings for faculty residences and drama activities by the end of the period.²¹

Not all of the pioneering schools had been able to keep pace with the latest educational thought about the nature of campus physical facilities as effectively as had The Albany Female Academy and The Emma Willard School. At Miss Porter's School in the New England town of Farmington, Connecticut, the venerable founder, Sarah Porter, died in 1900. Miss Porter represented a somewhat simpler time in the evolution of boarding schools. Her piety and simplicity of lifestyle had set a moral example for the daughters of wealthy families whom she tended. However, the increasing complexities of financing the upkeep of a school plant seem to have eluded Miss Porter in her later years as she struggled with ill health. The co-executors of her estate, a nephew, Dr. Robert Keep, and her attorney, Wallace Allis, found that buildings needed repair, classroom and dormitory space was limited, and the school lacked a well-equipped gymnasium at a time when

²¹ Nell Irwin Whitman, History of Wykeham Rise, 1902-1943 (Washington, Conn.: Wykeham Rise School Alumnae Association, 1967 reprint), 3-5.

counterpart schools were acknowledging the need for increasingly sophisticated physical education facilities.²²

In contrast, facilities at Northfield Seminary in Northfield, Massachusetts were lavish. The school had been founded in 1879 by evangelist Dwight L. Moody. In addition to several large buildings for various school activities which had been constructed during the 1890's, Northfield Seminary had no fewer than eight residence halls of varying size, all supplied with state-of-the-art amenities. Skinner Gymnasium contained a dressing room with lockers and bath rooms. The lower floor offered a "swimming tank," and a bowling alley. "The gymnasium proper is one hundred feet long, fifty feet wide, and thirty-two feet high," stated the catalog. The room was said to be "well-equipped with the most approved gymnastic appliances." A running track was suspended from the roof.²³

Recognizing the need to refurbish and build at Miss Porter's during the years 1900-1903, Messrs Keep and Allis made significant improvements. They had an infirmary and a library built, added to two existing buildings, modernized the plumbing and added electrical power. They also made improvements to the estate's farm, which continued to supply the school with much of its food. Some of the farm buildings also continued to

²² Nancy Davis and Barbara Donahue, Miss Porter's School: A History, op. cit., 28, 29, 33.

²³ Promotional catalog, Northfield Seminary, 1899-1900, 14. Courtesy, Archives of Northfield/Mt. Hermon School, Northfield, MA, hereafter called N/MH Archives.

supplement the Miss Porter's plant. Mrs. Elizabeth Keep, who became Head of School in 1903, had, by 1915, overseen the construction of a gymnasium and music cottage and purchased and refurbished two buildings for additional dormitory space.²⁴

Dana Hall's Julia and Sarah Eastman were typical of collegiate-era school founders in having been consistently attentive to health and safety in their school facilities. They issued a printed public announcement of the opening of Dana Hall in 1881, stating that "The School Building is large, arranged with scrupulous regard to ventilation and drainage, and warmed throughout with steam." The sisters added a southern wing to the building the following year. Among the rooms in that wing was a dispensary.²⁵

Helen Temple Cook succeeded the Eastmans upon their retirement in 1899. Miss Cook demonstrated the ingenuity which school heads sometimes had to utilize in order to achieve their goals. She envisioned making an addition to the Main Building to accommodate additional dining, dormitory, and lounge space for the growing population of students. The location upon which Miss Cook chose to build was ideal in all respects except one; a small brook crossed the area and architects dismissed the soil as too moist to adequately support the proposed structure. However, Miss Cook refused to accept the verdict and offered an unorthodox plan to "put the brook in a pipe." Experts grudgingly

²⁴ Davis and Donahue, 33.

²⁵ Winifred Lowrey Post, Purpose and Personality, op. cit., 4, 8.

agreed that this could be done and, so it was. By 1902, the plan had come to fruition, with the brook having become a benign, controlled, subterranean presence, harmless to the firm foundation of the new structure above.²⁶

Nor was that the extent of Miss Cook's building plans. She continued to add to the Main Building in 1911-12 with a new gymnasium wing. It was connected to the north wing by yet another of the "well-lighted corridors" which a school historian reports to have been ubiquitous during the tenures of the Eastmans and of Miss Cook.²⁷ As was the case at many other of the women's schools of the period, corridors were often provided to afford protection from the elements for students and faculty alike as they moved from one portion of the campus to another. The Baldwin School in Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania, occupied a converted hotel. It was a stately building which contained, "The Passageway," a covered walkway between the residence and classroom areas. The building also provided covered balconies or porches all around the exterior. Students were encouraged to use the cover these provided for walks during inclement weather. Balconies were also used by students and staff for both formal and informal gatherings.²⁸

²⁶ Ibid., 22.

²⁷ Ibid., 27.

²⁸ Heather Neal and Judith L. Hammerschmidt, A Preposterous Extravagance, op. cit., 34, 35.

Like Miss Cook in suburban Wellesley, school heads in urban schools where space, fresh air, and direct light were often at a premium, sometimes had to resort to ingenious methods to in order to institute their ideas about healthy practices. Miss Clara Spence had selected a brownstone at 6 West 48th Street for the opening of The Spence School in New York City in 1892. Despite its narrow thirty-foot width, the four-story structure's high ceilings, rooms opening onto one another, and large windows, combined to give a feeling of spaciousness. She encouraged her girls to use the stairs rather than the small elevator, believing that form of exercise to be "good for the posture."²⁹

In the spirit of Mayhew and Wood, and other earlier reformers, Miss Spence believed that her classrooms should constantly circulate a supply of fresh air for students. She was concerned that the windows at the front and back of the building provided inadequate ventilation. Like Miss Cook and her piped brook at Dana Hall, Miss Spence also turned to the use of a humble pipe to resolve her logistical problem. She ordered the installation, in each classroom, of a specially-designed device resembling a bent pipe, to funnel in outdoor air. This device assured that, regardless of external weather conditions, fresh air would enter the classrooms. Miss Spence also required boarding students to care for their dormitory rooms with a daily morning cleaning, including an airing, with windows open

²⁹ Mary Dillon Edmondson, Profiles in Leadership, op. cit., 4, 5.

wide. Then, students were off for their group walk, again to enjoy the benefit of fresh outdoor air, along the city's fashionable Fifth Avenue.³⁰

The Brearley School in New York City described the ventilation of its new school building in 1912, as based upon "the plenum system." This was obviously a more sophisticated system than Miss Spence's bent pipe. Fresh air was forced through wall ducts, with shafts transporting it from the top of the building to cellar fans. These shafts would "avoid contaminants" and dispel "vitiating air." The catalog also praised the benefits of the building's systems of lighting, heating, and plumbing.³¹

At Miss Porter's School, alumnae were active in combining the benefits of nature with projects of civic usefulness. Several alumnae reflected progressive leanings by establishing "The Lodge" on the edge of Farmington, in 1887. The old farmhouse served as a summer refuge for working girls and women from regional cities, a place to enjoy a rural respite from the oppressiveness of their urban environment. In order to qualify for a visit to the Lodge, the potential recipient needed the promise of partial financial backing by an alumna, who also had to make a persuasive case of need by describing the living and working conditions, as well as establishing the upright moral character of her protegee. Successful candidates were assured of a nutritious diet, plenty of fresh air and

³⁰ Ibid., 5, 6.

³¹ Promotional catalog, The Year Book the the Brearley School (Limited), 1912, 4. Brearley Archives.

exercise, and camaraderie with others of her peers, who had been likewise selected by the Lodge Committee for vacation privileges.³²

Occasionally, attempts in women's schools to expose their students to the benefits of fresh air had unanticipated consequences. At Springside School, English teacher Edith Moses often opened a class session and her classroom windows simultaneously, urging students to breathe deeply and savor the scent of roses growing near the building.

Unfortunately, the aroma of fertilizer, recently applied, sometimes triumphed over that of the roses.³³

Schools included in their advertising and policy statements, notices of strict procedures to be followed in the event of illness or injury. The schools established during the Progressive Era often set up an infirmary or dispensary as part of the school plant. Many older schools which had not yet done so, did during the period. School policies came down rather heavily on the side of regulation in matters of health, particularly of contagious diseases.

³² Copy of "Annual Report of the Farmington Lodge Society, 1886" which detailed procedures and framework of the Society, in Louise L. Stevenson, ed. Miss Porter's School: A History in Documents, 1847-1948 (New York: Garland Publishing Inc., 1987), 5. Archives of Miss Porter's School, Farmington, CT, hereafter called Miss Porter's Archives.

³³ Starr, 35.

For example, in 1914, Chapin School in New York City required that each student submit a school-supplied form, signed by a doctor, certifying her physical fitness to withstand the rigors of the school year. Typical of increasingly strict state laws giving further impetus to firmness in policies were those in New York state. Chapin was among a group of the state's private schools whose heads and medical advisors had met and established procedures for "management of certain infectious diseases among private school children." The catalog outlined the procedures in some detail. By 1919, those procedures had become state law.³⁴

All schools established what they regarded as common-sense policies on the attire of students. While guidelines for dress were based on traditional social standards of modesty in appearance, officials were also concerned with safety and health. What students often considered to be "stylish" (low-necked dresses, lavishly lengthy skirts, high-heeled shoes, etc.) were regarded by officials as ostentatious and unhealthy. The Northeastern climate was often unkind to the wearer of such finery. Unprotected necks were regarded as prime targets for chill and contagion. Long skirts trailed in the mud or snow, were constantly soiled at the hemline, and sometimes caused the wearer to trip when caught underfoot. "Fashionable" high-heeled shoes, in addition to discomfort, could damage feet, allow moisture to the foot, cause turned ankles or other injuries.

³⁴ Promotional catalogs, Miss Chapin's School for Girls, 1914-15 and 1919-20. Archives of The Chapin School, New York, NY, hereafter called, Chapin Archives.

A review of the clothing requirements of schools and student reaction to them is occasionally amusing. The single greatest cause of student discontent at Dobbs School during the period stemmed from Miss Masters' insistence that they wear scratchy, uncomfortable long underwear during the winter season. A plethora of side issues arose regarding the times when it was appropriate to discard the wooly undergarments.

A survey of alumnae attitudes about their years at the school included a response to their "pet peeves." The Dobbs Bulletin described the responses:

Those in the classes from 1904-1927 complained most of the 'long underwear or union suits or Jaegers. Hot and itchy. I had colds all the time due to them. I was severely reprimanded for not bringing any back after Easter vacation my first year,' wrote one '10 graduate.³⁵

Despite the general grouching about the garments, however, some students grudgingly acknowledged their value. Caroline Squibb Sutphin of the Class of 1904 noted in her poem entitled "Dobbs Alphabet," that the letter "A--is for arctics so popular here we really could not do without them I fear." In its written recollections of the Class of 1912 at its fiftieth reunion, the attitude of that group of alumnae appears to have mellowed over the years, as indicated by the reference to "the long underwear and long-sleeved nighties that probably saved our lives."³⁶

³⁵ Penelope Spurr Marshall, "Pet Peeves and Traditions: Dobbs, 1904-72," Dobbs Bulletin, Summer, 1973, 26. Masters Archives.

³⁶ Typewritten copy of poem by Caroline Squibb Sutphin, 1904, "Dobbs Alphabet"; Typewritten Copy of recollections, "Class of 1912, 50th Reunion, October 18, 1962," 4. Masters Archives.

Nutrition Policies

An issue which highlighted a tension between the sometimes conflicting desires of school officials simultaneously to assure the good health of their students and an atmosphere of non-compulsion, was that of school policies about nutrition. Students and staff were required to eat their meals together at boarding schools. Meals provided an opportunity for camaraderie, for the practice of rules of etiquette, and to insure proper nutrition. Most boarding schools limited the amount and type of food consumed by students to that served at regular meals, apparently feeling that this exception to their general non-compulsory approach was justified by the overall well-being of health and community morale which they hoped to promote with the restrictions. Anecdotes involving these policies will also provide a glimpse into one aspect of everyday life at the schools during the Progressive Era.

Representative of regulations in this regard were those at Walnut Hill School. The catalog stated that "The table is supplied with a generous variety of healthful food." Consequently, "Students are not to receive or purchase confectionery or eatables of any kind, except fresh fruit."³⁷ Only slightly more lenient was the rule at Westover School, dating from its founding in 1909. One among only a few expressed school rules, Westover girls were limited to acquiring either one cake of chocolate per week or a small

³⁷ Promotional catalog, 1905-06, 12, 13. WHS Archives.

bottle of lime drops at a specified location. The rule remained in force for forty-eight years, long after the death of founder Mary Hillard.³⁸

School officials routinely screened incoming mail for food or any other form of contraband. Students might be summoned to open "suspicious-looking parcels" in the presence of school authorities. One example of the concurrent emphases on health and character-building typically practiced at women's schools occurred at the Masters School (or Dobbs School, as it was more generally then called), in Dobbs Ferry, New York. The Head and founder, Miss Eliza Masters, was reputed among her students, to have had the ability to penetrate the defenses of wrong-doers merely by a stern look. One girl attempted to evade the rule which forbade receiving candy in the mail by the subterfuge of having the notation, "Flowers--Rush" written on the package. Miss Masters peered intently at the parcel at mail call. Meeting the eyes of the recipient, Miss Masters confiscated the suspicious package without comment. The look apparently was sufficient chastisement. The student is reported to have made no subsequent attempt to deceive.³⁹

Beyond the desire to promote positive health practices for students, such restrictions on parcels and on the purchasing practices of students were prompted by considerations of the impact on overall school morale and discipline. In any case, school officials seem to

³⁸ Elizabeth Choate Spykman, Westover, op. cit., 39.

³⁹ Marion Brown Shelton, An American Schoolmistress, op. cit., 86.

have constituted a solid phalanx in maintaining such controls. That officials from member schools of the organization called The Head Mistresses Association of the East, were interested in maintaining uniform standards in school policies as much as possible, is evident from the nature of their discussions on such issues as length of the school year, of academic standards, and of admission policies. No official discussion of a breach of solidarity in regard to food restrictions is recorded in the minutes for biennial meetings during the years from the Association's founding in 1911, to 1920.⁴⁰

This is not to say that school authorities were completely successful in deterring furtive student practices of obtaining sweets and other forbidden foods. To what extent offending students were successful in evading detection is, of course, impossible to document. Indeed unauthorized, late-night "feasts" with food obtained by surreptitious means, were planned and, sometimes, successfully executed by small groups of students, as were stealthy forays to the establishments of local businesses which legitimately sold food items designated as contraband.

At Saint Margaret's School, a celebration was held in the gymnasium on the occasion of Washington's birthday in 1900. Among those entertaining the rest of the student body were six students whose portion of the program involved their dancing of a "cakewalk."

⁴⁰ Minutes From Meetings of The Head Mistresses Association of the East, 1911-1920. Length of school year discussed in minutes for November 9, 1912, 7-10, for academic standards, same date, 20-22, for admission policies, April 16, 17, 1920, 46, 47. Box 2, Folder 1. Smith Collection.

After completing the entertainment, they smuggled a cake to a dormitory room and enjoyed a "FEAST," as the girls emphatically expressed it in relating the incident some years later.⁴¹ Ostensibly, this private gathering retained the purpose of the official Washington's Birthday theme of the day, being entirely for the purpose of a more private salute to the "Father of Our Country."

An adventuresome nature, perhaps even a rebellious streak in some students, seems to have been brought to the fore by the presence of restrictions on food. Many officials including those at Dobbs, Abbot, and several other schools, relied upon an honor system under which school authorities provided a time each day when students who had committed any transgressions could confess them. With many students, that approach seems to have been effective. With others, that was not always the case. Two illustrative incidents occurred at The Ethel Walker School, one in its opening year of 1911-12, and the other the year following. Each was recounted in letters by the founder to her sister, Evangeline Walker Andrews.

During the school's first year, the modestly-sized student body of eleven girls voluntarily approached Miss Walker in her room, en masse and in contrite fashion. Breaking down completely, the girls wailed that they "didn't know what honor was," that they had done things that "they ought not to have done." Miss Walker described her reaction as one of

⁴¹ Ohmann, 46.

relief when she learned the reason for the histrionics. "They said that they had bought crullers at the tea house when I had let them walk one day round the lake alone etc., etc.," she related to her sister.⁴²

However, as Elizabeth Spykman of the Class of 1914 at Westover remarked in her commentary on the inadequacies of the honor system, "There are times when healthy young people who are working hard find an extra piece of chocolate far more valuable than their honesty or even their souls."⁴³ Evasion of the food rule seems to have taken on the character of a game to some students. The second incident at The Ethel Walker School seems representative of that situation.

During the school year, 1912-1913, a group of students involved in a food escapade similar to the one the year previous, were detected and confronted. Among them was Miss Walker's own niece, Ethel Andrews, daughter of Miss Walker's sister, Evangeline. Miss Walker and Ethel had previously enjoyed a close relationship. This group behaved in a far less contrite manner than had the one of the preceding year. The niece wrote to

⁴² Excerpt of letter from Ethel Walker to Evangeline Walker Andrews, in Walker's: The Bulletin of the Ethel Walker Alunae Association, 75th Anniversary Commemorative Issue, 1986, 3. Ethel Walker Archives.

⁴³ Spykman, 39.

her mother that their motivation had simply been that, "we are bored."⁴⁴ This attitude seems to have been representative of the rest of the group. Several of them were found the following day to be in possession of cigarettes. Miss Walker regarded the incident as one in which "for the first time there has been an ugly spirit of obstinacy and defiance."⁴⁵ Heads of schools may well have occasionally commiserated at their conferences, that the building of student character and good health was not always a simple process.

Physical Training and Athletics

Progressives felt that physical, mental, and moral fitness were interrelated, with each affecting the other. Building upon ideas of student physical development which had been articulated earlier in the century by advocates like Catharine Beecher, Herbert Spencer, Dr. William Wood, Ira Mayhew, and Dio Lewis, progressive educators supported the addition of "physical culture" (later called physical education) and organized athletic activities to the school curriculum. Such training could provide physical and mental benefits. It could be coupled with precautionary health procedures for avoidance of illness and injury. Officials at Northeastern private secondary schools for women clearly used this approach.

⁴⁴ Excerpts of letter from Ethel Andrews to Evangeline Walker Andrews in Brie Quinby, The History of The Ethel Walker School, 27. Unpublished typed manuscript in Ethel Walker Archives.

⁴⁵ Ibid., excerpt of letter from Ethel Walker to Evangeline Walker Andrews.

Women's schools instituted exercise for students as a regular part of the school day for reasons of health, along with other important perceived benefits. By the turn-of-the-century, physical training and athletic competition had become standard at private women's secondary schools, regardless of its age. The Progressive Era "zeitgeist" of emphasizing student health seems to have influenced schools in the pioneering group founded before 1880, to adopt increasingly sophisticated physical development plans which were comparable to those being used by the more recently-established women's schools.

Physical Training and Athletic Competition

Intra-school athletic competition was dominant in women's schools throughout the period, although a limited amount of inter-school competition occurred and became more frequent by the end of the Progressive Era. By the early twentieth century, schools typically authorized students to form and join a school athletic association. The institutions which had been established prior to 1880 also followed a common evolutionary pattern in developing exercise programs and athletic activities for students.

In women's schools, the development of good posture was traditionally considered to be an important factor in the general health and appearance of students.⁴⁶ Erect carriage was considered both attractive and healthful, allowing for maximum respiratory functioning

⁴⁶ For example, Mayhew, *op. cit.*, 21-36.

and fine muscle tone. Good posture continued to be an important goal throughout the Progressive Era at the newer schools as well. New techniques and technology were applied in many schools, old and new. During the pioneering period earlier in the nineteenth century, walking was the primary form of exercise at women's schools, among whose benefits was considered to be, good posture. Organized calisthenics and use of "gymnastics" apparatus for coordination, toning, and strengthening of the body became increasingly common at women's schools during the last quarter of the nineteenth century.

A prototype of complete physical training for girls was the program established at Rosemary Hall School. It was founded by Miss Caroline Ruutz-Rees at Wallingford, Connecticut in 1890 and moved to Greenwich, Connecticut a decade later. The English-born Miss Ruutz-Rees was committed to vigorous physical activities. An alumna describes Miss Ruutz-Rees as being, "full of energy." Dorothy Harvey Baker says that "You had to be out after lunch--outside."⁴⁷

Along with required calisthenics, walking, field hockey, and basketball were among the physical training options at Rosemary Hall. In addition to the English game of cricket, Rosemary Hall girls of the 1890's played a strenuous game called Hare and Hounds. Edith Wallis, a specially-trained Games Director, added another English game, field

⁴⁷ Transcript of interview with Dorothy Harvey Baker, Class of 1905, by Lee Sylvester, February 26, 1985. C/RH Archives.

hockey, in 1902. School officials claimed the distinction of having introduced the playing of the game to the United States. Track and field became a new competitive sport in 1905, with the completion of a track facility on campus. The track became the site for Spring intra-school field day competitions.⁴⁸

To facilitate freedom of movement while exercising, Miss Ruutz-Rees approved use of a gym uniform of unparalleled daring in the 1890's. "Rosemary girls" wore pantaloons or dresses that reached only to mid-calf of their stockinged legs. More sedate competing teams wore either full skirts and bloomers or only slightly raised skirts and bloomers. Photographs and written accounts from various women's schools indicate that, by the second decade of the twentieth century, gym uniforms at most other schools had evolved to more closely resemble the vanguard Rosemary Hall version.

Rosemary Hall allowed the fittest students to participate in long walking trips of two to three days. These covered distances considered to be startling by contemporary observers. "We were all gone over very carefully to be sure we could 'step it off,'" Dorothy Baker, one of the participants, reminisced. Walkers began the trip in a deceptively leisurely fashion by taking the trolley and then a train into New York state. They returned to school over the next few days by hiking and camping. Frying pans from the journeys became souvenirs when the triumphant walkers hung them in the

⁴⁸ Lorraine Seeley, "History of Rosemary Hall," The Rosemary Question Mark, vol. xxvii, November, 1915, 6-8. A student literary publication, C/RH Archives.

gymnasium after their return. Although such overnight hikes were discontinued around 1910, the school continued to encourage students to participate in "long bounds" (presumably completed during a given day) and "short bounds" throughout the period.⁴⁹

Miss Ruutz-Rees wrote a letter in 1911 in response to a request for advice from Emerson G. Taylor, son of John M. Taylor, Chairman of the Board of Trustees of Loomis Institute. The Institute sought to tap the experience gained by established schools in founding its own school, one with separate facilities and curriculums for boys and girls. She counseled the Institute about her approach to the health of girls:

We have found that in order to ensure a proper amount of exercise in the open air, compulsory [emphasis hers] games and exercise are needful, and we encourage interscholastic matches in basket ball and [field] hockey in every way when possible. This is a matter which needs very careful supervision, some girls are inclined to over-do, while the majority are, (unlike boys), sluggish and disinclined to exercise.⁵⁰

One example of Miss Ruutz-Rees' point about the inclination of some girls to "over-do" was evident at The MacDuffie School in 1909. Students requested that the school establish two intra-school teams to compete in various sports. Mrs. MacDuffie regarded the idea as being, "splendid," and the Spartans and the Athenians came into being. Competition, while intense, was described as, "sportsmanlike." Mrs. MacDuffie,

⁴⁹ Baker interview. by Sylvester. C/RH Archives.

⁵⁰ Copy of letter from Caroline Ruutz-Rees to Emerson G. Taylor of the Loomis Institute, April 24, 1911, 3. C/RH Archives.

however, felt compelled to intercede in the establishment of rules for walking races in order to curtail what were, in her opinion, "excessive" walking distances being established by the girls.⁵¹

Older Schools Update Their Physical Training

By the turn-of-the-century, older schools from the pioneering era were emulating the physical training regimens and intra-school athletic competitions utilized by their more recently-established counterparts. Typical was Miss Porter's School. Walking had traditionally been a daily ritual, supplemented only by informal skating, coasting, and tennis in their respective seasons, until the late 1880's. Intra-school athletic competition in baseball began in the 1890's. By the turn-of-the-century, the girls were also riding horses, playing tennis, field hockey, golf, and basketball. They exercised in a small gymnasium.⁵²

Abbot Academy in Andover, Massachusetts similarly intensified its approach to physical development over the years. During the last quarter of the nineteenth century, Abbot required an hour of outdoor exercise or gymnasium work, depending upon weather conditions. Walking had been a standard requirement throughout the school's long history. In 1913, students could choose to substitute cross country walking for indoor

⁵¹ The Annual, 1909, 29-31. (Yearbook of The MacDuffie School). MacDuffie Archives.

⁵² Woody, vol. II, 109-116; Davis and Donahue, 22, 33, 34.

gymnastics during the spring. In 1916, "physical education" replaced "physical culture" in school terminology. A tradition began of awarding "Honor A's" by vote of students and faculty, as a mark of distinction in the category of physical fitness. Inter-school competition seems to have been restricted to a nearby rival, Bradford Academy, in field hockey and basketball, beginning in 1901. More typical of athletic competition, was intra-school Field Days, which included a variety of sports.⁵³

The St. Mary's Hall catalog of 1857 noted a newly-constructed gymnasium. The school added calisthenics and dancing to the curriculum. During the Progressive Era, St. Mary's offered horseback riding and competitive athletics.⁵⁴ A gift from a member of the Board of Trustees enabled The Emma Willard School to build a new gymnasium for the 1892 school year. According to the catalog for 1892, gymnasium equipment was to be used for "the practice of the most advanced theories of physical culture." By following the Delsarte system, students could "cultivate symmetry of form, grace of movement and strength of body."⁵⁵

⁵³ Jane B. Carpenter, Abbot and Miss Bailey, op. cit., 39-47.

⁵⁴ Shaw, The First Hundred Years of St. Mary's Hall, op. cit., 31; Promotional catalog, St. Mary's Hall, 1918-1919, 22; School newspaper, Ivy Leaves, May, 1905. Archives of St. Mary's Doane's Hall, Burlington, N. J., hereafter called St. Mary's Archives.

⁵⁵ (School Catalogs) Troy Female Seminary, 1891-92, 15; The Emma Willard School, 1914-1915, 12. EWS Archives.

Emma Willard students formed an athletic association during the 1890's. For organized outdoor athletic activities, the school used a nearby park until 1899, when the Principal, Mary Alice Knox, (later to become founder of The Knox School) negotiated an agreement with the Troy Golf Club. The Emma Willard School purchased club memberships for each of the boarding pupils, thus gaining access, to the golf course, tennis court, and basketball grounds for sports activities three days per week. By the second decade of the twentieth century, the school had moved to a different location in Troy with newly-constructed buildings, including a large gymnasium. Students managed their own Walking Club.⁵⁶

After an aborted beginning during the 1860's, Saint Margaret's School in Waterbury, Connecticut was reconstituted in 1875 with funding from the Episcopal Church of Connecticut and a local group of secular investors. The Rector, Dr. John Russell and his wife Mary, required boarding pupils to take two twenty-minute, chaparoned walks daily, morning and afternoon, on any of four prescribed routes. If the weather was too inclement to be braved, even with their "waterproof cloaks," the alternative was to walk laps inside the gymnasium.⁵⁷

⁵⁶ Newspaper clipping from scrapbook: Troy Press, October 7, 1899, describing the arrangement for club membership and activities; Advertising circular, The Emma Willard School, Troy, N. Y., 1914-1915, 12. EWS Archives.

⁵⁷ Ohmann,, 28, 29.

Dr. Russell's successor in 1891 was Mary Hillard, who later founded Westover School. Miss Hillard gradually introduced intra-school sports competition. By 1900, four teams competed in basketball. Pupils formed a Tennis Club, which was in charge of a tournament and provided an engraved cup as prize. Utilizing the fund-raising efforts of the Alumnae Association and other friends of the school, Saint Margaret's erected a new gymnasium to be used for gymnastics classes, sports and other activities.⁵⁸

Springside School was founded in 1879. Mrs. Anna Bell Comegys and her sister, Miss Jane Bell, believed that good health through proper nutrition, proper rest, and exercise, was fundamental to the well-being of their students. Both day and boarding students took required walks of varying duration, regardless of weather. A "long porch" and a gymnasium provided shelter for walking when weather was inhospitable. Dancing was an occasional alternative activity for inclement days. Around the turn-of-the-century, Mrs. Comegys and Miss Bell retired. Under new Heads, Mrs. Lucia Polk Chapman and Miss Susan Jones, exercise and sports activities continued to be in the mainstream of school life with basketball and tennis competition supplementing conditioning exercises.⁵⁹

⁵⁸ Ibid., 43, 49, 50; Saint Margaret's yearbook was called The Salmagundi. The 1900 edition highlighted the formation of basketball teams and games, as well as formation of the Tennis Club, pages 19-22. (Saint Margaret's School merged with the McTernan School For Boys in the early 1970's, forming a new coeducational institution called Saint Margaret's/McTernan School). Hereafter called, SM/M Archives.

⁵⁹ Starr, 16, 32. Springside Archives.

The Loomis Institute of Windsor, Connecticut, was a corporate entity established by the Loomis family for the purpose of establishing separate but adjoining schools for boys and girls for students who could otherwise not afford a private education. Both schools opened in 1913. The author of a Loomis-Chaffee School history stated that use of the Institute's athletic facilities, were restricted to the boys attending the Institute's Loomis School.⁶⁰ Thus, the girls at Chaffee School were the only ones in the study who did not have access to a physical training program.

While the Northfield-Mt. Hermon Schools of Northfield, Massachusetts had been established for a similar purpose and in a similar fashion, an important difference was that, the Institute decided that only the Loomis School for Boys would have a boarding program. Thus, the Chaffee School for Girls was for day pupils only. The commodious athletic facilities at the Northfield girls' school were discussed above. In stark contrast was the utter lack of either physical training courses or athletic activities at Loomis. Because of its day school status, the student population of Loomis was distinctively local in character. As also established above, time and space limitations could prove to be formidable handicaps for the establishment of physical training programs at private day schools.

⁶⁰ George H. Hickok, For Better and Grander Lives: Loomis Chaffee at 75 (Windsor, Conn.: The Loomis Institute, 1989), 33.

Still, such limitations were not necessarily prohibitive. Schools such as Irwin's in Philadelphia and Brearley and Chapin in New York, had displayed the determination to establish such activities, despite logistical limitations which appear to have been no less daunting than those facing the Board of Trustees of the Loomis Institute. That a similar development did not occur at Chaffee seems to stem from a lack of will to provide it, at least as much as from pragmatic considerations such as cost. Reflective of the Institute's gender priorities is the fact that the annual student yearbooks were entirely devoted to coverage of Loomis School students and activities. From 1914-1923, neither photographs nor mention were made of the Institute's twenty female graduates for that period.⁶¹ It seems evident that, if adequate finances indeed did not exist to provide facilities for girls' sports, but if sufficient will had existed to provide them, some arrangements might have been possible. Advocacy for such arrangements appears to have been either weak or non-existent.

In any case, the Institute chose not to support girls' physical development activities which had been utilized for a number of years by the heads of women's schools in the Northeast. At least one, whose advice had been solicited by the Institute, Caroline Ruutz-Rees, expressed strong support in her letter, cited above in another context. Yet, no such program was enacted by the Institute at the Chaffee School for Girls. Since no clear-cut evidence of the Institute's reasoning remains, one is left to speculate that a combination of

⁶¹ Hickok, 33.

fiscal restraints and a general adherence to traditional attitudes unsupportive of physical training for girls accounted for the approach.

Physical Training's Benefits for Mind and Character

A 1914 newspaper editorial, "Recreation's Value in the School Life," by Emily Gardner Munro, Head of Saint Margaret's School, articulated the progressive tenor of physical development programs in girls' private schools. No longer, she wrote, did many girls' schools accept the conventional Victorian wisdom that appropriate play for girls should be different from that for boys. Girls, too, needed stringent exercise and athletic competition. Such activities carried both physical and mental benefits. Miss Munro asserted that "The girl who can concentrate her mind upon the points of the game, and who understands the value of accuracy, quick response, and alert attention, will unconsciously apply these same principles to her studies."⁶²

Further, Miss Munro argued that girls who conscientiously applied themselves to physical training and competitive athletics, were trained in a manner that transcended physical and intellectual benefits, to enhance even their basic character. Girls learned to respect fair play and agreed-upon rules. Most importantly, they learned that "direct

⁶² Emily Gardner Munro, "Recreation's Value in the School Life," New York Evening Post, September 12, 1914, 6. SM/M Archives.

methods are better than subterfuge, that in the last analysis one must depend upon one's self alone." This "makes the girl an agreeable person with whom to live."⁶³

That holistic approach to physical development, its integration with intellectual and spiritual goals, was typical of women's schools during the Progressive Era. "The relation between a well-trained body and a well-trained mind is recognized," noted The Emma Willard School in its catalog for 1914.⁶⁴ Similarly, Miss Hall's declared that it was a school "intended for girls who wish a generously planned, thorough education, the development of character, intellect and physique."⁶⁵

The St. Mary's Hall school newspaper reported upon a basketball game between St. Mary's and Springside School in 1905. Commenting favorably on the sportsmanship displayed by both schools and the involvement of the entire St. Mary's student body in activities surrounding the game, the article noted that "It has always been the aim of the Athletic Club to make membership stand for something more than mere physical prowess. The blue pin must mean a sound mind in a sound body, and, above all, sound principles."⁶⁶

⁶³ Ibid., 6.

⁶⁴ Catalog, The Emma Willard School, 1914-1915, 12. EWS Archives.

⁶⁵ Catalog, Miss Hall's School For Girls, Pittsfield, Mass., 1909, 1. MHS Archives.

⁶⁶ Shaw, 113; Ivy Leaves, May, 1905. St. Mary's Archives.

Schools believed that any imbalance among the elements of the academic, physical, and spiritual, would not be beneficial to students. The Walnut Hill School, whose academic focus was on college preparation, put it this way:

It is earnestly advised that ample time be allowed in all cases for thorough college preparation. Mental and bodily strength is often wasted when preparatory work is crowded into too short a time. This is a mistake, since the pleasure and in many cases the success of a college course depends upon the vitality and mental elasticity which the freshman brings to her new life.⁶⁷

The catalog pointed out that "school work is arranged so that all students may be out of doors two hours during the middle of the day, and all are required to give at least three hours a week to out-door sports." However, these activities were carefully supervised in order to "protect the student from fatigue and over-exertion." This balanced approach would allow students to "enter college with a sound and well-trained body as with a well-developed mind." The overall goal of the school was that Walnut Hill graduates "be known as women of Christian character, fine scholarship, good health and cultivated and womanly manners."⁶⁸

The author of a school history of Wykeham Rise School, Nell Irwin Whitman, who was also a member of the Class of 1909, says that sports "were considered in the light of character building." The Head, Miss Davies, played on various faculty teams in games against students and alumnae and occasionally coached basketball. She "entered an

⁶⁷ Catalog, The Walnut Hill School, Natick, Mass., 1905-06, 7, 13. WHS Archives.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

athletic contest heart and soul." Whitman points out that girls also took their involvement on sports teams seriously. Whitman claims that students on various teams were committed to doing their best in their sport, allowing, she says, "only religion and scholarship" to have greater priority. Team members ate at a training table and firmly believed that they should miss practices only when truly ill. Wykeham Rise teams competed with other schools under boys' rules unless the opposition insisted otherwise. Involvement in sports was regarded as a matter of honor as well as a physical challenge, at Wykeham Rise.⁶⁹

A New Moral Directness Instituted

Miss Munro's stated belief that physical development enhanced character development depicted a new outlook toward the sphere of women, at least in terms of what constituted appropriate feminine behavior. The new behavioral ideal continued to stress morality as its basis but rejected traditional notions about essential gender differentiation in both physical development and related behavioral differences. Women's school officials insisted that physical fitness of the body and behavioral characteristics of forthrightness and self-confidence were desirable character traits for women, as much as they were for men. They agreed with the basic precept of social scientists like Helen Thompson that social conditioning rather than genetic characteristics had determined traditional female social behavioral characteristics.

⁶⁹ Whitman, 9, 10.

However, women's school leaders were not advocating an across-the-board, unisex type of behavior. They remained devoted to standard ideas of innate feminine characteristics of nurture, which they regarded as uniquely female strengths. Yet, the new emphasis on directness marked a subtle but significant departure from the traditional Victorian ideal of femininity, in which the essence of womanliness was embodied in the form of demure indirection. This "Cult of True Womanhood," while portraying virtue as a natural feminine characteristic, simultaneously clothed it in terms of meekness and obedience to prevailing patriarchal custom. Directness in women was generally viewed as, unseemly.⁷⁰

Typical feminine practice often consisted of subtly manipulating others as a means of getting one's own way, at least partially in recognition of the fact that the power of directness was not generally a viable option. At one and the same time, these tactics were both socially validated and demeaned. Such feminine behavior tacitly reflected acceptance of traditional restriction of women to, what was regarded as, their own domestic sphere. American society had not only consigned womanhood to what was, essentially, inferior social status, but tacitly attributed, exclusively to men, the moral attribute of genuineness or honesty that is commonly associated with directness of behavior.

⁷⁰ Barbara Welter, "The Cult of True Womanhood, 1820-1860," American Quarterly 18 (1966), 151-174.

Private women's schools shifted the emphasis from woman's machinations through indirection, to that of community-building through directness. This approach asserted a clear feminine claim to what had previously been a kind of patriarchal social high ground. School leaders regarded the characteristic of honesty, and the means of fostering it to be, essentially, gender-neutral. By teaching young women to accept mental and physical challenges in a straight-forward manner and to deal with others in their community in the same direct fashion, the mature woman who emerged would be a woman of honesty, of a self-assurance which was based on moral certitude. Woman's basic, nurturing nature would remain intact but her behavior would be different, more direct, more honest.

In effect, women belonged on the same social plane of forthrightness as that which men had traditionally claimed for themselves. Self-confident, vigorous women could bring their own unique moral perspective to society, albeit on a wider scale than before, through a clearer understanding of themselves and others, as well as of that which they could contribute to the moral well-being of society. Women's private school officials were people of moral conviction, believing that the kingdom of God could be built only upon a foundation of honesty and directness.

Illustrative of this directness is the manner in which the biographer of Eliza Masters, founder and Headmistress of Dobbs School, described her subject's personality:

Men generally liked Miss Masters--liked her direct way of talking, and her habit of listening with undivided attention. They admired her keen, almost masculine grasp of affairs, her sound judgment, and her trick of giving the

most casual conversation an upward lift, so that the talk ended invariably on a higher plane. Artists particularly appreciated the fact that she never sentimentalized. But always, they came to realize, she was reaching out for new and better things for her girls.⁷¹

This same devotion to directness seems to have been a personal characteristic common to other women's school leaders during the Progressive Era. Alice Barnes Strater of the Miss Hall's School's Class of 1909, wrote that, along with poise, courtesy and loyalty, "straight-forwardness" was "not only taught but demonstrated" by Miss Hall for "the two generations of students whose lives she influenced." Ethel Wallace Hawkins, an alumna and one of Miss Hall's teachers, described her as "Sensitive by nature herself," but being also "grimly self-disciplined into fortitude, she had little mercy upon weakness or evasion."⁷² Mary Hillard's biographer described her demeanor at the time of her appointment as Principal of Saint Margaret's School in 1891 at age twenty-nine. "The townspeople and tradesmen found that she was direct, businesslike and that she knew what she wanted. She won their respect because she had no time to waste."⁷³

Insight into the effect of such training on students is reflected in an article which Katharine Shipley, one of the three Shipley sisters who founded The Shipley School in

⁷¹ Shelton, 97.

⁷² Alice Barnes Strater and Ethel Wallace Hawkins quoted in Mira Hinsdale Hall, 1863-1937 (Pittsfield, Mass.: Alumnae of Miss Hall's School, 1937), 18, 22. (A Book of personal tributes to Miss Mira Hall, following her death in 1937) MHS Archives.

⁷³ Dallas, 61.

Bryn Mawr, wrote for an Alumnae Bulletin. She illustrated the forthright approach which she and her sisters followed in their educational program with a story:

A little girl living at a distance in a somewhat milder climate saw some of the school snap photographs, one of which showed the girls on a bobsled in the snow, ready for coasting. The child looked at it, then asked, 'Do they really do it?' It was our aim, in sledding and other things, to 'really do it.'⁷⁴

When Dobbs students began to publish a school newspaper during the 1910's, they entitled it, Do It For Dobbs. School officials believed that the physical courage, the self-discipline required to participate in regular exercise regimens or compete in athletic activities marked an important beginning point in the development of the character of young women. Miss Munro made the Pestalozzian contention that the desire for play in children was natural and ought to be fostered and fulfilled in a safe environment. She summarized the contemporary state of affairs:

We have only to read the advertisements of girls' schools in the magazines to see how important a part this side of education now plays in a girl's life. Every up-to-date school has its fully-equipped gymnasium. Many have swimming pools, all kinds of outdoor exercise are advocated, hockey, basketball, tennis and even football have their regular place in the daily routine. The girl has a right to have her athletic activity considered.⁷⁵

⁷⁴ Quoted in Frances Stokes Hoekstra, The Shipley School: Courage for the Deed, Grace for the Doing, (Bryn Mawr, Penn.: The Shipley School, 1970), 5.

⁷⁵ Munro, 7.

Individualized Instruction in Physical Training

This did not mean though, that women's schools simplistically assumed that precisely the same degree of rigor in physical training should be should be expected of every pupil.

Individualized instruction was another and related aspect of student-centered progressive educational activity which was evident in the physical training courses at Progressive-Era private secondary schools for women. The 1914-15 catalog for The Emma Willard School reported that physical training instructors took the physical measurements of all pupils and monitored the condition of each throughout the year. Instructors utilized the Sargent and Swedish systems of gymnastics, giving special instruction to those needing "corrective work."⁷⁶

Several other schools used this progressive concept of child-centered individualization of instruction in their physical development programs. The Masters School retains a few copies in its archives, of records from the period containing detailed physical measurements of individual students. Instructors prescribed specific training programs and tracked the progress of each student for the school year. Posture was an important element there and at other schools.⁷⁷ For instance, Miss Porter's School instituted a

⁷⁶ Advertising Circular, The Emma Willard School, Troy, New York, 1914-1915, 12. EWS Archives.

⁷⁷ Charts of individual students and their physical measurements for each term, Masters School Archives.

"Stand-Up-Straight Class" during the early 1900's for students whose posture was regarded as deficient.⁷⁸

When Miss Mira Hall purchased her school from Miss Mary Salisbury in 1898, renaming it Miss Hall's School, she carried on a tradition in student physical development which her predecessor had established. In the early 1870's, Miss Salisbury had hired, a trained instructor from Wellesley to conduct a daily gymnasium drill for her pupils.⁷⁹ Under Miss Hall, a circular for the years 1900-1902, noted that "Excellent physicians" were available, "in case of need" and that individual exercise programs for students were determined "under the direction of a resident physical director."⁸⁰ A catalog for 1909 specified that the school's physical director was Mary Anna Wood, M. D., holder of a physician's diploma, with an additional two-year course in Anatomy and Corrective Gymnastics at Harvard. Dr. Wood examined each student at the beginning of the year, prescribing a specific and monitored physical regimen. "In addition to class work, each

⁷⁸ Davis and Donahue, 34.

⁷⁹ Mary E. Salisbury, "1867-1898. A Backward Glance," 14. An Address delivered on June 16, 1898 on the final day of school, as title of the school was transferred to Miss Mira Hall. Sketch was printed at the request of pupils and friends of the school. MHS Archives.

⁸⁰ Miss Hall's School For Girls, Pittsfield, Massachusetts, 1900-1902 (unnumbered pages), Advertising circular, MHS Archives.

pupil has special or corrective gymnastics all tending toward symmetrical development and graceful carriage."⁸¹

Miss Hall, like Miss Davies at Wykeham Rise, was occasionally willing to step personally into the fray of athletic competition. Alumna Alice Barnes Strater recalls that, during intra-school baseball competition, Miss Hall occasionally took "a hand at the bat to the great joy of both Blues and Golds!"⁸² Presumably, Miss Hall had been cleared for competitive athletics by Dr. Wood.

The MacDuffie School in Springfield, Massachusetts, Walnut Hill School of Natick, Massachusetts and The Chapin School of New York City were all founded during the Progressive Era. They too, designed individual physical development plans for each student following an initial physical examination, with subsequent monitoring throughout the school year. Like Physical Directors at several other schools, MacDuffie's Christian Neubauer was trained at the Sargent School of Gymnastics. He served at The MacDuffie School from 1900-1917.⁸³ The Walnut Hill School retained a cardiovascular specialist to

⁸¹ Miss Hall's School For Girls, Pittsfield, Massachusetts, 1909 (unnumbered pages), Advertising circular, MHS Archives.

⁸² Strater, quoted in Mira Hinsdale Hall, 1863-1937, 18. MHS Archives.

⁸³ Advertising circulars entitled, Yearbook of The MacDuffie School for Girls, Springfield, Massachusetts for the years 1900, 1904, 1907, 1912 all make reference to the school's policy of individualization in its physical training. Mr. Neubauer's tenure is confirmed by The Annual (the school yearbook) for years dating from 1903-1917. MacDuffie Archives.

conduct examinations of each pupil's heart and lungs. This physician prescribed supervised exercises for each girl's specific needs.⁸⁴ The Chapin School in New York City did the same.⁸⁵

Physical Training At Urban Women's Schools

Most day schools and some boarding schools were located in urban settings. A large local population offered recruiting advantages, along with access to cultural activities. However, crowded downtown conditions sometimes resulted in space limitations. The downtown schools which lacked adequate sports facilities had a difficult time providing physical training or athletic competition for their students.

A further disadvantage for day schools was that they had a relatively more "transient" student population than did boarding schools, that is, one which arrived in the morning and departed after classes. Boarding schools, on the other hand, enjoyed the advantage of having a "captive" core group of boarding students to form the backbone of an active sports program. At boarding schools, day students supplemented a boarding population which was already present at school in the morning and which remained when day students departed in the afternoon. Day schools had to require or otherwise induce their

⁸⁴ Advertising circulars entitled, Walnut Hill School For Girls, Wellesley Preparatory, Natick, Mass., 1896, 1, and Walnut Hill School, Natick, Mass., 1905, 7. WHS Archives.

⁸⁵ Miss Chapin's School for Girls, Miss Maria Bowen Chapin, Miss Mary Cecelia Fairfax, 32 and 34 East 57th Street, 1919-1920 (advertising circular, unnumbered pages). Chapin Archives.

pupils to participate on sports teams after school hours. Strong initiative by both administration and students was necessary in order to generate a sufficient degree of student enthusiasm for successful sports programs. Nonetheless, several day schools succeeded in doing that.

The Brearley School in New York City was a day school for girls, founded in 1885. When the student population outgrew the brownstone on 6 East 45th Street, parents raised funds to erect a new school building for the 1891 school year at 17 West 44th Street, next to the Berkeley Lyceum. In addition to utilizing a basement room for calisthenics and fencing, The Brearley School gained access to the Lyceum to supplement its exercise program. The Lyceum provided a place for students who wished to play basketball. This was the case through the first decade of the twentieth century. The growing school required yet another move in 1912, this time to a new, specially-constructed building at 60 East 61st Street.⁸⁶

Athletic competition increased with the move. The yearbook of 1913 indicates that the school had added competitive basketball. One reference also reflects a continuing tenuousness of student involvement in organized sports competition. Describing student activity at a typical morning recess period, the student writer, Barbara Shedd, reports that "Mary rushed up to inquire who was staying to gym that afternoon." The group then

⁸⁶ Ruth McAneny Loud, ed., The Brearley School: 75 Years (Privately printed by The Brearley School, New York, N. Y., 1960), 27, 39. Brearley Archives.

prevailed upon one of their number, Eleanor Keep, to return for the afternoon "to make up the team for basket-ball," to play against another Brearley class. Eleanor responded that, although "she had a lot of shopping that she ought to do," that she would "try to come." Mary reminded her that "We've got to beat the VII's."⁸⁷ Intra-school competition among classes grew during the decade. Classes added cheering sections and banners. In 1918, the Senior class began to compete against other schools in basketball.⁸⁸

The Agnes Irwin School in Philadelphia, was another downtown day school for girls which changed locations twice during the period, each time seeking more commodious facilities. Agnes Irwin was the original Head of the school, and her sister Sophy succeeded her when Agnes became the first dean of Radcliffe College in 1894.⁸⁹ Neither Irwin sister appears to have required exercise classes in their curriculum. Nor did either actively support organized sports activities in years prior to 1907. Records regarding the curriculum during those years of the school no longer exist and Joanne Neel's history of the school makes no mention of a gymnasium or of physical training requirements.

Yet, athletic spirit eventually prevailed at Irwin during the first decade of the twentieth century, primarily through the initiative of students. Freshmen girls formed a baseball

⁸⁷ Barbara Shedd, "At Recess," Brearley, 1913, 34. (School yearbook) Brearley Archives.

⁸⁸ "Class History," Brearley, 1918, 21; Loud, 44. Brearley Archives.

⁸⁹ Joanne Lowe Neel, Miss Irwin's of Philadelphia (Wynnewood, Penn.: Livingston Publishing Company, 1969), 22-43.

team in 1907, playing the following year against boys from the nearby DeLancey School on a Saturday morning and against a group of "older Episcopal boys" on a later Saturday. The Irwin girls won against the DeLancey boys but lost to the Episcopal group, despite surprisingly aggressive and adept play by the Irwin students. A contemporary account of the latter game describes the girls' sliding into bases and their pitcher as throwing, "tricky curveballs." The school subsequently formed an Athletic Association in 1910. The Freshman class, which had started the baseball team a few years earlier, had become the Seniors of 1910. They provided much of the leadership for the new association. Students elected officers and divided themselves into Blue and Gold teams, which selected their own captains.⁹⁰

Sophy Irwin, "Miss Sophy," as she was called, supported the association, once she was convinced that her pupils had the necessary resolve to make the endeavor a success. The Irwinian, the school newspaper, declared that the association had been formed "in a wave of school spirit." Miss Sophy agreed to rent a gymnasium and The Irwinian exhorted students to participate on the basketball team or to support it in other ways. The editorial declared that "School spirit is a very desirable thing and it is hard to have it in a very large degree in a day-school, when most of our time and our amusements fall outside of and have very little to do with school." Yet, the editor argued, some shifting of student

⁹⁰ Ibid., 47, 48.

after-school activity from the purely personal to that which was bound up in the school, "will be of inestimable value in fostering school spirit."⁹¹

Three members of the Alumnae Association voluntarily gave important individual support to development of the Athletic Association over the next several years.⁹²

Subsequent school yearbooks depict an increasingly active athletic program. Despite continuing difficulty in procuring playing areas, field hockey and basketball teams played several games against outside competition. A Swimming Club was formed in 1915 and each class fielded its own basketball team for intramural competition. Irwin added a tennis team, junior varsity field hockey team, and "Junior and Midget basket-ball" teams in 1916.⁹³

Kimberly School was a day school founded in Montclair, New Jersey in 1906. Lincoln School in Providence, Rhode Island began as a day school in 1884, adding a boarding department in 1910. Each school was located in a small city and offered physical training and sports programs tailored to its particular situation. Kimberly's Head was Miss Mary Kimberly Waring, a self-described "progressive." From the beginning, she encouraged

⁹¹ The Irwinian, vol. XIII, Number 5, March, 1911, 1, 2. Courtesy of Archives of The Agnes Irwin School, Rosemont, PA, hereafter called, Agnes Irwin Archives.

⁹² Neel, 48.

⁹³ Agnes Irwin School Yearbook, 1913, 6-27; Agnes Irwin School Yearbook, 1915, 6-27, 38; Agnes Irwin School Yearbook, 1916, 30-34. Agnes Irwin Archives.

exercise and school athletics. Miss Waring authorized her students to form an athletic association . She provided further support for physical training by borrowing money to construct a gymnasium in 1910 and an adjoining tennis court and field hockey area five years later.⁹⁴

Lincoln School, during its years as a day school from 1884-1910, was located in a portion of Providence that was primarily residential. Yet urban progress intruded at its Angell street location (1893-1898). A large crack ran down the middle of Angell Street where the housing for the city cable car line lay. Occasionally the Lincoln girls' outdoor games were interrupted by a cable car or market wagon.⁹⁵ The addition of a boarding department and the initiative of a new Head gave impetus to improved athletic facilities and a commensurate increase in the breadth of the program.

Sara Greene Beckwith was among the first group of Lincoln School boarders in 1910.

She recalls that an athletic field for basketball had existed at the school's Angell Street location (1898-1911) and that Miss Marian Evans of the Class of 1902 was the coach.

With the advent of Miss Lucas as new owner and Head of School in 1911, "we moved to 207 Governor Street where she lived." At the new location, "again, behind the house, we

⁹⁴ Photocopy of Chapter III of Robert D. B. Carlisle, Within These Halls (Montclair Kimberley Academy, 1987), 20-27. Archives of The Montclair Kimberley Academy, Montclair, New Jersey. (Kimberly School merged with Montclair School for Boys during the 1970's, forming the coeducational Montclair Kimberly Academy). Hereafter called MK Academy Archives.

⁹⁵ Gifford, 7.

had our athletic field, where we played basketball with the Moses Brown girls." At recess, students were allowed to walk around the block for exercise.⁹⁶

The Chapin School in New York was yet another day school which found it necessary to move as its enrollment increased. Maria Bowen Chapin began Chapin in 1901 as a lower school for girls and a kindergarten for boys and girls, at 12 West 57 Street. She added an upper school in 1909 and, in 1910, moved the school to 32-34 East 58th Street. Miss Chapin supported a physical development program for her girls, hiring a Director of Physical Education in 1910 and placing her in charge of forming the Athletic Association the following year.⁹⁷

The Chapin catalog for 1914-15 shows that the Association was expanding the athletic program, much as had occurred at Agnes Irwin during the same period. Like The Irwin School, Chapin created opportunities for activities where it could. In addition to the games that its own school yard could accommodate, the school reserved space at a variety of dispersed facilities. It rented Hartsdale from the Roger Ascham School of Scarsdale on Saturdays. At nearby city locations, it reserved courts for tennis, indoor or outdoor,

⁹⁶ Ibid., 7, 8.

⁹⁷ From the school newspaper of The Chapin School, "School History," The Wheel, May, 1926, (unnumbered pages). Chapin Archives.

depending upon weather. Students were transported for swimming in the pool at Teachers' College of Columbia University.⁹⁸

The Spence School in New York City had a significant boarding contingent. It dealt with logistical problems similar to those of its downtown day school counterparts. Miss Clara Spence required boarding students to take a morning walk, en masse along Fifth Avenue at 8:15, returning just before 9:00 when day students arrived. During the 1890's, the school required calisthenics and gymnastics work and offered fencing as a sport, although it is unclear whether the requirement extended to day students. Mary Weston Dominick of the class of 1898 describes a semester in which, "we had calisthenics and interpretive dancing under the guidance of no less a teacher than Isadora Duncan, a lithe and 'svelte' creature who fascinated us."⁹⁹

There is no record of Spence having been involved in organized athletic competition of any type. However, exercise was a continuing part of the school curriculum, at least for boarding students. Miss Spence made several suggestions to parents of day students in a printed notice prior to the opening of school in 1911. Among these, she recommended

⁹⁸ Advertising Circulars, Miss Chapin's School For Girls, Miss Maria Bowen Chapin, Miss Mary Cecelia Fairfax, 32 and 34 East 57th Street, 1914-15 and 1919-20 (unnumbered pages). Chapin Archives.

⁹⁹ Edmundson, 6, 11.

that they help their daughters to organize their after-school hours in a manner which enabled them to get exercise and recreation, as well as a sufficient amount of sleep.¹⁰⁰

The affluent New York families which were the daytime patrons of Spence came from the same social strata as the families which sent their daughters to The Brearley School. Compulsory afternoon attendance at school for physical development activities, would have been difficult to enforce in light of the after-school social distractions offered by the cosmopolitan city. Perhaps, though, at least one parent of a daughter at Spence was amenable to the Head's suggestions. John Dewey's daughter, Jeanne, attended the school during the early 'teens.¹⁰¹

Despite some differences in degree and type of emphasis, women's private secondary schools demonstrated a significant commitment to the physical development of their students. School officials appear to have believed that the benefits of physical training exceeded the purely physical, extending into areas of mental and character development. In endorsing physical training for female students, school leaders were acting within the context of and contributing to a national trend toward a more feminized avenue of social nurture, which tended to decrease gender distinctions. Physical training could facilitate for young women, their recognition of the value of straightforward, honest behavior. The

¹⁰⁰ Photocopy of notice to parents, dated October 1, 1911. Box 3, Folder 1. Spence Archives.

¹⁰¹ Spence School Class Rolls, 1914-1915. Spence School Archives.

communitarian moral foundation for this tendency was concurrently being articulated in the social gospel and progressive educational messages of organic social reform.

Healthy citizens could contribute more effectively to the evolution of a preponderantly moral, vibrant, healthy society.

CHAPTER 4: THE ROLE OF VOCATION IN PRIVATE SECONDARY SCHOOLS FOR WOMEN

As a group, women's schools demonstrated a somewhat less unified approach to "hands-on" vocational or manual training than they had in their consensus of support for health procedures and physical training. This ambivalence, however, was more in the variations of such training which some schools chose. Several schools included some form of specialized vocational training, while others did not. It is also apparent that women's private secondary school officials shared in a broad approval of vocational training in its most generic sense, that of supporting each student's search for a life's vocation or activities which would fit the particular talents she could devote to the benefit of her society. Also, whether or not school leaders chose to include specialized vocational training as part of their particular programs, they seem to have regarded it as a useful approach for students in other educational circumstances, students about which they felt their own students should be aware.

The Role of Domestic Training in Women's Education During the Progressive Era

Historians have reported a philosophical split in the ranks of feminists of the Progressive Era, which was discussed above in reference to the suffrage campaign. This shift in strategy by many suffrage proponents from a militant stance in favor of an independent role for women toward an apparently greater accommodation with society's traditional

view of women as inhabiting a primarily domestic sphere, seems also to have affected women's education. Many women's schools at various levels conceded that the predominant social role of women was that of overseers of the household or of some related nurturing activity. Some schools attempted to incorporate into their curricula a type of practical vocational training which reflected that outlook. Others shunned both the viewpoint and its application, preferring to continue with a type of training which stressed scholarship and represented a continuation of the spirit of feminine independence represented by the first wave of female collegians during the period of approximately 1870-1890.

Roberta Frankfort and Lynn Gordon both show that this phenomenon of increasing domestication in educational curriculums was reflected in the behavior of the so-called "second generation" of college women, those attending college during the Progressive Era. In increasing numbers as the period progressed, that second generation, displayed in the coursework they chose, college activities they pursued, and in their post-college lifestyles, a relatively greater tendency than had their predecessors, to adhere to traditional values of feminine domesticity. Both Frankfort and Gordon describe contrasting philosophies and styles of education offered in the various collegiate settings which were available to women at the time.

Frankfort emphasizes the changing dynamic within the power structures at many colleges which facilitated curricular changes designed to encourage women students to take

coursework more in line with traditional values of female domesticity. These could be termed, vocational, in the sense that they provided a "hands-on" practical training which encouraged students to pursue a certain type of life's work. Such offerings were generally equated with traditional ideas about the attributes of feminine nurture. They included training in such areas as home economy, hygiene, social work, and nursing.¹

Coeducational colleges widely promoted such training. Women's colleges were divided in their responses between those which accommodated the trend toward domestic training, and those which opposed it. The latter wished to emphasize a continuation of the trend by college women to pursue non-traditional role choices of the type established by the "first generation" of female collegians during years before 1890. Women of a scholarly bent, like M. Carey Thomas of Bryn Mawr College, resisted the advent of domestic training. They believed that women's scholastic advances would be diluted, fearing that some women who might otherwise continue the advance into scholarly realms would be diverted into a neo-traditional type of training, which would reinforce traditional limitations on the social sphere of women. Frankfort seems to concur with that view, saying that "domestic ideology was now enshrined in a much more specialized and hence more controlled area."²

¹ Roberta Frankfort, Collegiate Women: Domesticity and Career in Turn-of-the-Century America (New York: New York University Press, 1977).

² Ibid., xviii.

Lynn Gordon agrees that the pattern of behavior of the second generation of college women was, overall, more traditional in character than that of the preceding one.

However, she cautions against a simplistic historical stereotype of collegiate women of the Progressive Era as monolithic in their apparent conservatism. Gordon describes varied pressures and motivations which affected the behavior of second generation collegians, along with variations in the behavior itself. She argues that such generalizations as can be drawn, must be constructed within a context which includes such features as region, type of school, and changes over time.³

It is instructive to note that, whatever the differences in historical interpretation, evidence indicates that vocational training for both sexes in public secondary schools came increasingly into vogue during the Progressive Era. Further, school officials were not united in their reactions to it. To some extent, differences in response to women's vocational training by women's colleges, reflected kindred issues being posed about the nature of vocational training at women's private secondary schools. Yet, in sharp contrast to the women's colleges which were the subjects of investigation by Gordon and Frankfort, such issues seem not to have evinced noticeable rancor among the secondary schools of this study.

³ Lynn Gordon, Gender and Higher Education in the Progressive Era (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990).

A significant factor contributing to relative tranquility about the issue of vocational education among secondary school officials seems to have been a broad general acceptance of the efficacy of vocational training among even those school leaders who did not promote the inclusion of specific occupational training in their own curriculums. Although women's secondary school officials had neither a monolithic view nor a monolithic policy toward domestic training, they seem to have been in broad agreement on the basic outlines of vocational education's purposes and values. School leaders seem to have commonly embraced a belief that it was essential to foster in their students, at minimum, a basic sense of vocation. This essentially translated into a social gospel tenet that students could best establish their individual identities, their life's work, within a general community spirit of social usefulness.

Related to this was a general acceptance by private school officials of the democratic notion that all types of students should have access the education which would best equip him/her to function effectively in society. While their own schools were selective in the type of students which they enrolled, officials tended to view education for all as being socially beneficial, accepting a progressive view that, despite surface differences among people, such as race, ethnicity, and class, all were fundamentally alike. School leaders believe that perceptions of social differences among people were often based on ignorance and mistrust which could be ameliorated by greater exposure to one another with a consequent understanding of their fundamental similarities.

Finally, officials extended the concerns of their schools beyond the academic development of their students, expressing a progressive commitment to development of the "whole person." Women's schools promoted a sense of self-worth in students by encouraging what might be termed their, "self-expression," fostering individual talents whose development could facilitate a sense of personal vocation. Such activities as athletics, student literary work, the arts, speech and debate, and clubs and organizations including student government encouraged students to simultaneously develop and express their abilities. Domestic training might be merely one among varying types which could fit under the rather large umbrella of self-expression, with the precise nature of such training varying among schools in both subject matter and depth. Some aspects of self-expression have already been disclosed in terms of physical training and athletics. This chapter will disclose the way by which schools fostered self-expression through the fine arts, exclusive of drama. Drama which will be discussed with other aspects of the concept such as student self-government, publications, discussion and debate, and drama in Chapter Five and its consideration of Community and Family Life.

Some schools routinely provided specific forms of domestic training within their curricula. All routinely offered at least some exposure to the arts. Others established more intensive adjunct programs in domestic training, the arts, or both. Even vocational programs which were, technically, separate entities, operated concurrently and even overlapped in some cases, with the regular curriculum of the school. Directors of such vocational training programs functioned essentially as supervisors, perhaps most closely

akin to departmental chairpersons, and clearly served at the pleasure of top school officials.

Two distinctive features of vocational training which characterized women's private secondary schools during the Progressive Era might thus be termed: vocation as a social service ideal and vocation as practical training. Each will be discussed separately, although they are actually interrelated. Discussion of these two topics will elucidate both the common support for the concept of vocational training and the varied forms this support took among the schools.

Vocation as expressed through the social service ideal

James G. Croswell assumed the position of Headmaster of The Brearley School in New York City in 1887 following the death of his old college friend, Samuel Brearley, who had founded the day school for girls a scant two years earlier. Croswell served until his death in 1915. He seems to have held progressive ideas about the fundamental purposes of education.

In an address which he delivered in 1908, Croswell focused upon a concept which he called "the vocational ideal." In contrasting that ideal with what he labelled the "cultural" approach to education, Croswell's application of the term "cultural," bears striking similarity to the "faculty psychology" with which Dewey and other progressive educators found fault. The Brearley School's Headmaster condemned the cultural educational

emphasis for its detachment from the real world of students, much as progressives were faulting faculty psychology for emphasizing the theoretical in a manner which disconnected subject matter from many of society's and students' important concerns. Such practice lacked the relevance for students, which only a clear connection with their social setting could provide.⁴

Croswell felt that ideals which detached school from the real world should not be tolerated. He declared that school was too often viewed as "a place of delightful irresponsibility, where a youth may disport himself before he is condemned to hard labor." He argued that "We may let our children remain too long immature." The Headmaster contended that this immaturity was not effectively addressed by an educational approach which placed and retained students in what Woodrow Wilson had termed, "an unreal world." Croswell rejected a purely "bookish" emphasis in education, agreeing with Wilson's claim that the nation needed "men who know and who can think, men who can perceive and interpret, whose minds are accustomed to difficult tasks and questions."⁵ Presumably, as Head of a girls' school, Mr. Croswell included women in the equation, interpreting Wilson's use of the term, "men," in its broader application to

⁴ "The One Thing Needful," from an Address by James G. Croswell to the Association of Colleges and Preparatory Schools of the Middle States and Maryland, 1908, in Edward S. Martin, ed. Letters and Writings of James Greenleaf Croswell: Late Master of the Brearley School in New York (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1917), 224-257. Brearley School Archives.

⁵ Ibid., 231, 232.

humankind. It certainly implies that the educational responsibility of the school is not limited to the purely intellectual aspect of student development

Croswell believed that "Work, as work, is for some reason not sufficiently respected in American colleges and schools." While the maturing process of children was naturally and necessarily a lengthy one, it yet needed the spark of meaningful subject matter as well as a system which fostered such an approach. More than a mere reaction to the attractive personality of the occasional dynamic teacher, "Our students must know work." Pupils must all see that the educational process was "concerned with their marketable value." It was vital that "All pursuits in school should be thought of by the students as vocational pursuits" which would help each student to feel "that his work is worth more than he is."⁶

Like Dewey, Croswell was tantalizingly ambiguous at times. He did not specify what he meant by "work," Like Dewey, he did not tie himself to a limited conception of vocation as mere development of specific occupational skills. Yet, while not mentioning practical training specifically, neither did he seem to reject the concept. Croswell shared Dewey's central beliefs about the function of the school and the social context within which it should operate. Said Croswell:

Vocation alone can stimulate Americans to duty. We cannot, of course, deny the value of self-culture, as a good in itself, nor can we tell our

⁶ Ibid., 232-245.

children that anything they do at the age of secondary school life will be marketable in any very definite vocation. Nothing that our pupils put out, whether it be the solution of a mathematical problem or the acquisition of French or Latin is as marketable as they are themselves...Any boy or any girl in our time must work for some social market; the nearer the market the better.⁷

That "social market" ultimately involved the school's responsibility to enable students to see that they must "take their talents and their culture always in the spirit of service."

Whatever work was done in that spirit could be classified as being, "good work."⁸

Caroline Ruutz-Rees of Rosemary Hall spoke from a similar perspective when the Loomis Institute solicited her views on the role which vocational training might play in their projected school. Like Croswell, she advocated a training which facilitated development of students who were able to think, to function effectively in any contingency. Miss Ruutz-Rees wrote that, in general, she would consider a special practical training for girls as constituting "an inestimable benefit."

She added an important cautionary note:

But may I say, that from my observation of the training of women given by such courses, I should conclude that the stress is too much on the proficiency and too little on character and the power of taking responsibility and overcoming difficulty? In employing young women, we have very often encountered inadaptability rather than efficiency as the result of their training...This does not of course apply to very technical trades, but I may say that I think an institution would do great service that

⁷ Ibid., 245, 246.

⁸ Ibid., 256, 257.

could train girls, not for the more poorly paid trades of work, but for highly paid posts of responsibility.⁹

Miss Ruutz-Rees went on to stress that an educational institution which was able to train girls to be capable of being "ready for responsibility, able to cope with difficulties or emergencies, adaptable and executive, would confer a real boon on the community." She contended that such capabilities could indeed be taught. "We teach them in a measure even to our girls who are here but two or three years, by means of the self-government system." However, she concluded, "It goes without saying that an institution like the Loomis Institute could improve upon our results a thousandfold."¹⁰

It is important to note that neither The Brearley School nor Rosemary Hall had specific vocational coursework in their curricula, yet both heads saw great potential value in a type of specialized vocational training which was conducted in a practical, social context which helped to develop the whole person. Croswell referred to a "social market," Miss Ruutz-Rees to "the community." Both heads emphasized a balance between the scholarly and the practical. Croswell eschewed an over-emphasis on the "bookish" and "unreal" aspects of a formalistic or "cultural" educational approach. Miss Ruutz-Rees found fault with a technical narrowness that fostered "inadaptability rather than efficiency."

⁹ Letter from Caroline Ruutz-Rees to Emerson G. Taylor, 2, 3. C/RH Archives.

¹⁰ Ibid., 3.

In common, they felt that the catalytic balancing agent was social in nature. It was a major responsibility of the school to facilitate a development of individual character which was reflected in such characteristics as efficiency, adaptability, a "marketability" of the self. For both heads, this was fully possible only in a context of social service. Other heads of school were also convinced that a training which placed the ideal of social service before students, would concurrently provide the surest route to the achievement of personal fulfillment. In this, school officials shared the progressive premise that a democracy provided the optimum organic social structure, within which individual and community growth could occur.

Bertha Bailey, in her inaugural address as Principal of Abbot Academy in 1912, emphasized to Abbot students and alumnae, the increasing opportunities for educated women to serve in civic enterprises of various types. Miss Bailey used a term common to the vocabulary of contemporary women of progressive leanings, "community housekeeping," to convey her meaning.¹¹ Clara Spence noted in one of her talks, that "the final worth of life is not static. It must be found in life's work." Like Croswell and Miss Ruutz-Rees, Miss Spence rejected the idea "that schools exist only to supply children with certain instruments which may be of use for their advancement in life." Rather, people must realize that "schools are there for the making of citizens, and that it depends

¹¹ Carpenter, *op. cit.*, 8, 9.

largely on the way in which they are conducted whether our citizens are made or marred."¹²

A way in which women's school officials displayed their support for development of a sense of vocation in their students was by exposing them to people whose experiences were different from their own. One instance occurred at the Fall meeting of the Head Mistresses' Association in 1916. A representative of the Manhattan Trade School addressed the conference on the topic, "The Education of Girls for a Democracy." Identified in the minutes only as, "Miss Marshall," she described the work of her school as being that of teaching girls from a working-class background, the skills for a specific occupation. Hers and other trade schools in various cities also provided, to the extent possible, general education in academic subjects and provided corrective and developmental physical training.¹³

While acknowledging that significant differences in the types of girls taught seemed to exist between the private school and the trade school, Miss Marshall argued that they, nonetheless, shared important democratic goals for their different types of students. She asked her audience of private women's school officials, "Are we not each in our fields, I

¹² From a collection called, "Notes for Future Lectures," by Clara Spence. Box 6, Folder 2, Spence Archives.

¹³ "Proceedings of the Head Mistresses Association, Friday Evening, November 10, 1916, New York City," 5-23. Box 2, Folder 5. Smith Collection.

in one field and you in another, dealing with the girls of to-day who are to become the women of to-morrow, the women who must live and work side by side in our democratic field?" The question/answer session following Miss Marshall's talk, revealed that she may well have been "preaching to the converted." School heads indicated an acute interest in finding ways in which to bring together the two differing groups of students in settings which would provide a mutual learning experience while ameliorating ignorance and mistrust which might exist between them. Miss Marshall responded positively and participated in a discussion which broached a number of possibilities and the relative feasibility of each.¹⁴

Among the delegates was Miss Spence, whose school Miss Marshall specified as one which had previously brought students to visit her school as part of a class project. Another head of a New York School, Miss Maria Chapin, reported that some of her students had attended the Trade School graduation ceremony the previous year and had been impressed by the quality of the speeches given by graduates. She praised the ability of the Trade School girls "in being able to talk to the point and express their ideas." Miss Chapin and Miss Marshall agreed that mutual benefit could result from a speech contest between their two schools.¹⁵

¹⁴ Ibid., 6-23.

¹⁵ Ibid., 20, 21.

Miss Marshall's then asked about the possibility of her students speaking to private school girls on the topic of "their experience as wage earners," to which Miss Chapin responded enthusiastically, as did Mrs. Allen, who had previously taught at Brearley. Mrs. Allen commented that it was necessary to overcome the general ignorance within each group of girls of the conditions under which the other lived. Miss Marshall struck another responsive chord stating that, whether or not school girls wished or needed to be self-supporting in their future life, "they should nevertheless prepare themselves for rendering to Society a service equally great." Elizabeth Johnson of The Baldwin School agreed, declaring, "I think that nothing is so worth while as having a real job which makes one measure one's own economic value in return for what one can earn."¹⁶

In these discussions, the headmistresses displayed an overriding faith in a fundamental social homogeneity upon which they could draw in their support for activities between their schools and others in society who came from different backgrounds than their own. This faith that differences among people were superficial, that people had enough in common to surmount surface differences, was typically progressive. Social scientist Adna F. Weber, had written optimistically in 1899, that a new era of civic cooperation was occurring. He felt that the diverse social outreach of programs like those of social

¹⁶ Ibid., 22, 23.

settlements, was promoting social unity by bringing together social classes in the urban setting.¹⁷

Other examples include Jane Addams' declaration that success for settlement work would only be possible through "the overmastering belief that all that is noblest in life is common to men as men, in order to accentuate the likenesses and ignore the differences which are found among the people whom the Settlement brings into juxtaposition."¹⁸

Elizabeth Clark shows that evangelical reformers exhibited a form of gospel socialism, whose non-sectarian approach envisioned a homogeneous society transcending differences of ethnicity, class, race, and gender. She describes evangelical reform rhetoric as resembling that which might be used by mothers to reconcile siblings.¹⁹

In promoting the work of trade schools and in making the nature of that work real to their students, school officials were providing a kind of vocational training for their own students. It was a type of which James Crosswell spoke in his reference to a "vocational ideal." Rather than a circumscribed, "bookish" education, students gained a wider understanding of their place in the world, one whose complexities students could hope to understand only if they were exposed to them.

¹⁷ Adna F. Weber, The Growth of Cities During the Nineteenth Century (New York: Macmillan, 1899), 436.

¹⁸ Jane Addams, Twenty Years At Hull House (reprint, New York: The American Library, 1981), 131.

¹⁹ Clark, op. cit., 274, 275.

Officials at private secondary schools for women followed two related strategies in fostering a progressive sense of vocation in their students. One method was to enhance student awareness by presenting social issues to them in graphic form, usually by inviting speakers with recognized expertise in particular social areas. In effect, this was a method of bringing the larger society of which they were a part, to the students. Conversely, officials provided opportunities for students to become involved in "socially useful" projects which can be described as having injected students into the larger society.

A Sense of Vocation By Bringing Social Issues to Students

With the single exception of Chaffee School in Windsor, Connecticut, evidence indicates that the schools in this investigation followed either or both of the techniques described above in enhancing student understanding of social issues of the day. Students were exposed to the world around them in several ways. Schools invited guest speakers of some diversity. A typical catalog statement was that of Walnut Hill School, which said, "Talks on current events, art topics and home economics are given during the fall and winter terms and students are required to take notes and recite on these lectures."²⁰ Eliza Kellas, who became Head of Emma Willard in 1911, invited Eunice Avery to speak annually to the students with her "lively interpretation of current events." In common with nearly every school in the study, Emma Willard interspersed speakers and performers from a variety of fields. Miss Kellas' biographer reports that students enjoyed

²⁰ Walnut Hill School, Natick, Mass., 1905-1906, 10. WHS Archives.

"hours of music, talks with journalists and novelists, and evenings given over to just good fun with magicians and puppets."²¹

Several schools heard well-known American progressive reformers speak.²² Some lectures were intended to give the girls insights into lifestyles different than their own. This included a glimpse into American subcultures.²³ Schools invited people with

²¹ Elizabeth B. Potwine, Faithfully Yours, Eliza Kellas (Troy, N. Y.: The Emma Willard School, 1960), 86.

²² For instance, a promotional circular, Miss Hall's School for Girls, 1900-1902, indicated under a listing of "Entertainments for Students of Satisfactory Standing," that such students had been taken to hear what were, apparently public lectures by Jacob Riis and The Right Reverend Henry C. Potter. A similar circular for 1915 noted that "The courses of study are ably supplemented by many lectures, informal talks, recitals and concerts by men and women of note." MHS Archives; Settlement worker and political activist Mary MacDowell gave a lecture on May 7, 1912, at Rosemary Hall, according to school yearbook, "Social Calendar," The Rosemary Answer Book, 1911-12, unnumbered pages. C/RH Archives; Saint Margaret's students were able to hear Woodrow Wilson speak on "Patriotism," in 1900 and Jane Addams on "College Settlements," in 1903, school yearbooks for those years reported. "Category of Events," Salmagundi 1899-1900, 21 and 1902-1903, 44. The latter yearbook listing also included John Graham Brooks as a lecturer whose topic was, "The Consumer League." SM/M Archives.

²³ Presentations on Native American cultures were given at The Shipley School, Shipley School Yearbook, 1912-1913, 95. Shipley Archives; Saint Margaret's Salmagundi, 1899, 1900, 20, reported that, on November 20, 1899, "The Reverend Mr. Merrill of Oneida, Wisconsin gave a talk on the Oneida Indians." Students decided to send a Christmas box to the Oneida Indians. The Salmagundi, 1914-1915, listed a lecture on October 14 by Mr. Wells of the Indian Rights Association. The Magpie, November, 1914, 19 (student newspaper) reported that the theme of Mr. Wells' talk had been that "The Indian can be converted and become as civilized as any other person," an interesting example of the unwitting paternalism of even the more ardent advocates of rights for minority groups during the period. SM/M Archives; During the 1909-1910 school year, MacDuffie students heard a series of lectures by Reverend Dr. B. D. Hahn who spoke of varying characteristics of the American Indian as "working man, inventor, musician and artist." Newspaper clipping, Springfield Republican, May 10, 1910, in Archival Scrapbook, 1903-1917. MacDuffie Archives. Settlement work among the nation's poor was a popular topic. For instance,

(continued...)

experience in foreign missionary work to give formal talks, followed by more informal discussions on their topics with students. This was most common at Northfield Seminary, and, though less frequent, occurred on a regular basis at the other schools as well.²⁴ Other speakers described the lifestyles in foreign nations and related world issues. Among examples were a Professor Morse, whose topic at Westover in 1910 was "Life in Japan," a Professor Lynch on "The Panama Canal," at Saint Margaret's in 1915, and a

(...continued)

Baldwin's Prologue for January, 1904, 18 and April, 1904, 11 reported two lectures on the subject with the January article declaring that "The girls were particularly interested in the views of the neighborhood in which this most charitable work is carried on." Baldwin Archives; Likewise, the Rosemary Answer Book, 1907-1908, 16, 17 reported two settlement talks, one on March 5, 1908 by a Mrs. Thurber and another by a Mrs. Tubby on May 4, 1908. C/RH Archives.

²⁴ Catalog, Northfield Seminary, 1899-1900, 39, was typical of Northfield policy throughout the period, stating, "Lectures on subjects connected with Bible study, missions, and other active Christian work are frequently given." N/MH Archives. Among examples from other schools, students from The MacDuffie School heard a talk by Miss Adelaida Marcials, Secretary of the International Institute for Girls in Madrid, Spain, which conducted the Gulick School for Girls in Madrid, in 1907. Responding to her plea for support of the only school in Spain for young women, students decided to hold a fair to raise funds. Clipping from Springfield Republican, December 9, 1907, in Archival Scrapbook, 1903-1917. Dr. Wilfred Grenfell's work with orphans in Labrador was the topic of a talk by an associate identified only as "Miss Ewing," to the MacDuffie School in 1919. Reported in a school publication called Silver and White, 1919, 18, a combination literary magazine, and school news magazine, published annually at the time. MacDuffie Archives; Dr. Grenfell spoke in person at Westover during the 1910's. A signed photograph taken during his visit is displayed in the Westover Archives. Spykman, 44, makes a brief reference to his visit in her book, as does an article on Westover's history in the Waterbury Sunday Republican, April 27, 1980, 5; The Baldwin School's student newspaper reported "a most interesting talk" by a missionary, Dr. Wilbur, on the religious situation in the Klondike region, Prologue, December, 1903, 17. The following Spring, a missionary identified as "Miss Short," addressed Baldwin students on the educational system for girls in Spain, prompting the article's writer to express her wish that Spanish girls "could have the advantages we have." Prologue, May, 1904, 13. Baldwin Archives; At Rosemary Hall in 1908, Reverend J. R. Robinson of Ovoca, Ireland addressed the students on his Parish work among the Irish poor. "Chronicles of Events of the Year 1907-1908," The Rosemary Answer Book, 17. C/RH Archives.

series of lectures at Walnut Hill School in 1918-1919 on such topics as "The Balkans, The Cradle of War," "The President at the Peace Table," and "Europe's Needs and Claims." The author of a history of The Spence School notes that "Students (had) heard about the political situation in Europe so the War in 1914 was not a surprise to many."²⁵

School also encouraged a knowledge of current happenings in other ways. Emily Munro, who became Principal at Saint Margaret's, instituted a general information test. It was administered each spring with one hundred questions in a variety of areas including religion, economics, education, history, science, etc. Many of the questions were related to current happenings and all were designed to increase the student's knowledge of the world around her. Some sample questions required identification of: The Passover, Rhodes Scholars, Causes of a lunar eclipse, Revenue Tariff, and the Vatican. The girl with the highest score earned a prize.²⁶

Some schools included current events courses among their curricular options. Among them, Abbot Academy began a series of Saturday afternoon "Current Events Talks" by a faculty member, Rebekah Chickering. Over the next few years, Abbot added a current events elective which focused upon news of the day studied in a larger context of the

²⁵ "Category of Events," Westover Annual, 1910, 76. Westover Archives; Salmagundi, 1915, unnumbered pages. SM/M Archives; Walnut Hill Annual 1918-1919, unnumbered pages. WHS Archives; Edmondson, 39.

²⁶ Ohmann, 59, 60.

histories of the countries involved.²⁷ Shipley, Springside, Miss Hall's, Westover, and Knox similarly provided current events electives by the second decade of the century. Mrs. Louise F. Gignoux, whose daughter, Mildred, was a Knox student, had an LL.B. degree from New York University. Her agreement with Mrs. Houghton stipulated that her teaching of the course would cover the cost of Mildred's tuition. Knox yearbooks for 1916-1919 indicate that Mrs. Gignoux periodically gave lectures to the entire student body, that quizzes on the material were administered, and that students sometimes made current events presentations to their peers.²⁸

At The MacDuffie School, the principals inaugurated a "Current Events Club," becoming known by 1912, as "The Magnolia Club. From its inception in the opening year of the school in 1890, its membership was constituted by the entire student body. One might classify it as a "required extracurricular activity," with students assigned research topics in areas of foreign and domestic issues. On specified dates, each student gave an oral

²⁷ Carpenter, Abbot and Miss Bailey, op. cit., 16.

²⁸ Hoekstra, 5; Starr, 42; School Catalogs for Miss Hall's for 1909 and 1915 confirm the presence of "Current Events" as an elective. "School History," MHS Alumnae News, September, 1958, unnumbered pages, indicates that it was part of the curriculum for rest of the period. MHS Archives; Yearbook, 1912, unnumbered pages. Current Events in "Listing of Courses," section. Westover Archives; Questionnaire for Knox Alumnae, 1979, response by Mrs. Mildred Gignoux Downes (Class of 1919) mentioned that her tuition "was paid by my mother's lectures at school on Current Events." Knox's Yearbook for years 1915-1916 to 1919-1920 list dates of current event presentations. In the 1915-16 volume, a date of January 12, 1916 was listed for "Mrs. Gignoux' Quiz" (yearbook pages unnumbered that year). The school catalog, The Knox School For Girls, Tarrytown-On-Hudson, New York, 1919-1920, 21, listed an "Outline of Lectures to be given by Mrs. Louise Fowler Gignoux, LL.B.", dealing with topics of "Government," "Elementary Law," and "Elements of Economics," Knox Archives.

report on her assigned topic. The club served as a discussion forum about current happenings under rules of parliamentary procedure. It added the presentation of formal debates by selected students during the 1910's.²⁹

Other women's schools, particularly during the 1910's, also instituted debate activities. Baldwin, had staged a debate as early as 1908, in the context of the Presidential election of that year. The school had an active "Debating Club" by 1912. The 1913 yearbook indicates that the club had forty-two members. Six dates were listed for formal competition. An article in the school newspaper in 1917 declared that debate activities provided the "ability to think logically, to express our thoughts well, and, above all, to think and speak with ability and self-possession when on our feet before more than one or two people."³⁰

The Agnes Irwin School established a Debating Club in 1917, holding three debates on the issues of Prohibition, Suffrage, and Abolition of the Teaching of the German Language in Schools for the Duration of the War. The club had fourteen members.³¹ In March, 1915, girls at Saint Margaret's School participated in a debate on "Woman

²⁹ The MacDuffie School yearbook, Annual, 1912, 47, describes the procedures of the organization. "A History of School," Annual, 1915, 17, gave highlights of the school's first twenty-five years including the development of The Magnolia Club.

³⁰ Baldwin Annual, 1913, 50, 51; Baldwin Annual, 1909, 53. Baldwin Archives.

³¹ Yearbook, 1918, 53. Agnes Irwin Archives.

Suffrage."³² Another controversial issue of the late 1910's was the proposal to establish a League of Nations. It was among topics debated by students at the Spence School.³³

School debate activity probably had its origins at several schools in the context of fostering student interest in political campaigns, particularly at the presidential level. Although the Nineteenth Amendment did not pass until the end of the period, female students at a number of schools were given the opportunity to make trial runs of that right within their school communities as early as 1896, when Dobbs students accurately forecast the election of McKinley over Bryan.³⁴ The Emma Willard student vote of 1900 in support of President McKinley, presaged his actual reelection.³⁵ In 1908, Baldwin sponsored a mock presidential debate between a group of students supporting William Jennings Bryan and a group for William Howard Taft. The straw vote which ensued paralleled the official national result, with Taft the victor. A whimsical mock "White House Reception" was staged later, with students playing roles of members of the Taft

³² Salmagundi, 1914-15, 44. SM/M Archives.

³³ Edmondson, 49.

³⁴ Vose, The Masters School, 1877-1977, 11, reports from a contemporary student's journal (Marion Doud Rumsey, attended 1894-97) that parades, speeches, and cheers punctuated the festivities.

³⁵ The Triangle, March 1901, 10. (Student newspaper) EWS Archives.

family and White House servants. The Shipley School also conducted a debate and vote for that election.³⁶

Similar campaign activity occurred at schools in other election years. Miss Munro at Saint Margaret's instigated student interest in the 1912 campaign. The student newspaper declared that student campaigners wished to understand the issues "so we read everything we could find."³⁷ Baldwin, MacDuffie, Shipley, and Rosemary Hall were among those which debated and took straw votes on the 1912 presidential election.³⁸ In 1916, Knox students voted on the Wilson-Hughes contest. The following year, they cast straw votes for the New York Senate race and the Suffrage Amendment, endorsing the latter.³⁹

³⁶ Annual, 1909, 53. Baldwin Archives; Shipley yearbook, The Rhombus, 1909, 90. Shipley Archives.

³⁷ Maggie, November, 1912, 2. SM/M Archives.

³⁸ Annual, 1909, 70. Baldwin Archives; The Annual, 1913, 47, MacDuffie Archives; Rhombus, 1913, 90, noted that Shipley girls combined athletics with politics on November 5, 1912, voting day, by staging a field hockey game between teams for Wilson and Taft, with a vote following. Shipley Archives; The Rosemary Answer Book, 1912-1913, unnumbered pages, describes campaign talks on separate days, from outside speakers for each of the three contesting parties, with a straw vote taken on November 4. C/RH Archives.

³⁹ Yearbook, 1917, 52 and Yearbook, 1918, 42. Knox Archives.

A Sense of Vocation Through Community Outreach

Both day and boarding schools established practices of altruism which fostered a sense of vocation and extended the idea of service to include those beyond the physical boundaries of the campus. Student populations and alumnae organizations of schools demonstrated a commitment to social outreach. It was natural for alumnae groups, formed as they were in the name and image of their schools, to have conceived a basis for their social reform work which was closely identified with the educational philosophy of the institutions from which the organizations had sprung.

Social Outreach of Day Schools and Their Alumnae Associations

The Brearley League was formed around the turn-of-the-century. One example of its social reform activity was the Open-Air Classroom project which was described above. Another was its work as a member of The Federation of Associations of Cripples, whose aim was to gain information on the overall status of cripples and to "standardize the work of Hospitals, Schools, Summer Houses and other Agencies." The League established a nursing department with medical and dental services. In 1908, it sponsored a Cripple School with a variety of vocational classes, including introductory and advanced classes in Manual Training for boys and Sewing for girls. Items produced in those classes were displayed for sale at businesses in various parts of the city. Part of the proceeds went back into operational expenses and the rest served as wages for the student-producers. The League also helped to find permanent employment for students with sufficient skills. For example, in 1916, the organization reported that "The Jewelry Trade has naturally felt

the recent financial depression and employers for a couple of years were not adding to their force, but we are now placing several scholars who are ready to become wage-earners."⁴⁰

The Alumnae Association of the Irwin School also demonstrated that their education had not been entirely academic in its orientation. When the Association was formed in 1897, its members adopted Miss Agnes' suggestion that its motto be, Non Sibi Sed Aliis (Not for Ourselves But For Others). The organization displayed a desire to be informed about social issues of the day, forming a current events class and a journal club for research and discussion of those issues. In addition to projects which benefitted their Alma Mater, the Association contributed items which members had collected or made to the primary departments of Philadelphia's public schools for decoration of their classrooms. In the aftermath of the hurricane that devastated Galveston, Texas in 1900, and again in San Francisco following the 1906 earthquake and fire, the Association contacted authorities in each city to determine what items were most needed, and then procured and sent.⁴¹

The Kimberly School and The Chapin School were day schools which incorporated altruism into holiday traditions. At Kimberly, Miss Waring organized a colorful display of Thanksgiving gifts from students each year. These were donated to the Altruist

⁴⁰ Brearley League, "Annual Report of the Committee on Charities," April 5, 1916, 22-27. Brearley Archives.

⁴¹ Joanne Lowe Neel, Miss Irwin's of Philadelphia, op. cit., 40-43.

Society of Providence and to a Children's Home. At Christmas, students purchased gifts for kindergarten children in a New York poverty area.⁴² Miss Chapin directed the generosity of her students away from Christmas gifts for her, establishing a tradition of contributing one dollar each toward establishment of scholarships for the Manhattan Trade School for Girls. At an annual ceremony, the donations were formally presented to Miss Chapin by the school's smallest girl, following a school Prayers service.⁴³

Social Outreach at Boarding Schools

Every boarding school in this study utilized practices which involved their students in the process of helping the less fortunate. School officials, and students, appear to have been, nearly universally inspired by calls to service for others. A typical student response was voiced by Alice Hamilton, one of three sisters who were alumnae of Miss Porter's School. Each went on to achieve renown in her chosen profession. Alice became a doctor who conducted medical research into diseases common to factory workers. Her findings contributed significant impetus to the nation's first industrial safety laws. During Alice's schooldays in 1888, she wrote to her sister Norah describing one of Miss Porter's talks:

I wish you could have heard Miss Porter's talk this morning. It was about being truthful and honorable in little things...She told us how the tone of the school was affected from year to year and how the traditions were

⁴² Robert D. Carlisle, Montclair Kimberly Academy, op. cit., 24.

⁴³ The Wheel, May, 1926, 2, 3. Chapin Archives.

handed down and she made us feel as if even the most insignificant of us had some influence.⁴⁴

However, at least a few students faced certain school service projects with a more jaundiced view. Alumnae of Dobbs School, Class of 1912, at their fiftieth class reunion, reminisced about the school custom of "sewing for the heathen." The official musings of the Class of 1912 records that the garments sewn were "horrible little unbleached muslin underwaists that would scratch any poor youngster and the agony of making buttonholes!" The state of mind of at least some of the students required to sew is further reflected in the statement, "I doubt if I ever finished my required three articles."⁴⁵

It is not clear precisely who the "heathen" were and the phrase strikes the more culturally-sensitive modern ear with a decidedly patronizing tone. Yet, it reflects also, an underlying sincerity of Christian purpose, for all of its naivete. The anagrammatic poem called, "Dobbs Alphabet," by Caroline Sutphin gave a more positive response to such activities. The poem declared that the letter, "C" represented "the collection to poor people sent." "F" stood for "the flannel so scarlet and bright we sew for the heathen each Monday night," while the letter "H" was for "the heathen whose lives we make bright."⁴⁶

⁴⁴ Quoted in Davis and Donahue, 26, 27.

⁴⁵ "Class of 1912, 50th Reunion, October 18, 1962," 4. Masters School Archives.

⁴⁶ Sutphin, 1904, "Dobbs Alphabet." Masters School Archives.

Doubtless, Miss Masters was sincere in her stated belief that Dobbs was "God's School," and she clearly meant to see that the school community did God's work in society. An important foundation for student service lay in traditional school organizations called "Tens." Social gospel advocate Edward Everett Hale had written a book called Ten Times One is Ten during the 1880's. In it he had urged Christians to organize in groups of mutual support in order to help create a truly Christian community. Students who read the book initiated the formation and proliferation of groups called "Tens," formulating a common creed "To develop and encourage all that is highest and best in the life and character of each girl in the Ten [in order] to uphold the standards and ideals of the school; to foster the "Dobbs Spirit...that she may be fitted for a useful future." Miss Masters credited the Tens with having contributed to a more selfless school atmosphere. The Tens continued to play a significant role at Dobbs throughout the period.⁴⁷

Several schools demonstrated a "social housekeeping" concern toward the young who were in unfortunate circumstances. Among traditional activities at Dobbs were fund-raising projects on behalf of the "Baby Fold," a day nursery in New York City, supported by both current students and alumnae.⁴⁸ Baldwin School students were similarly active in raising funds for and interacting with children at the Baldwin Day Nursery in Philadelphia's Kensington section. Florence Baldwin had established it in

⁴⁷ Pamela Daley Vose, The Masters School: 1877/1977, op. cit., 22, 26, 27; Marion Brown Shelton, An American Schoolmistress, op. cit., 98, 99.

⁴⁸ Shelton, 143.

1898 for the purpose of providing day care for "women whose husbands have left them, men left with young children, families where the man is a laborer and his work uncertain."⁴⁹

A long-standing tradition at The MacDuffie School involved projects on behalf of the Doane Orphanage in nearby Longmeadow. In addition to knitting items of clothing for the children, MacDuffie girls conducted fund-raising projects, and invited them to campus for a Christmas party each year. Throughout the period, students held a School Fair annually, with proceeds donated to a variety of causes. In 1896, recipients included "the Armenian sufferers," the Home for Crippled Children at Baldwinville, and the Springfield Day Nursery. A school publication editorialized that an added benefit of the Fair "is that it draws the pupils together, giving them one common object of interest."⁵⁰

49 Yearbooks were called The Prologue. Archives contain a set for the period beginning with 1904. Typical was the 1905 Prologue, which included a photograph of students who served on the Baldwin Day Nursery Committee, along with a listing of the various fund-raising activities and amounts collected from each. The Committee was described as being a "Sub-chapter of the College Settlement Association," page 44; Purpose of the Day Nursery quoted in Neal and Hammerschmidt, 38, 39. Archives of The Baldwin School, Bryn Mawr, PA, hereafter called Baldwin Archives.

⁵⁰ Magnolia Leaves, April 17, 1896, 1; School yearbook, "A History of the School's First Twenty-Five Years," The Annual, 1915, 21; Archival Scrapbook, 1903-1917, contains newspaper clippings which are notated only as being from the Springfield Republican, undated. Many give detailed accounts of Doane Orphanage activities by MacDuffie students. MacDuffie Archives.

At Wykeham Rise, a tradition developed of taking a collection at Baccalaureate each year for the New York Fresh Air Fund.⁵¹

The Spence School Junior class gave a play each year as a fund-raiser for various causes. Among them was the financing of a bus and two teachers for the tubercular children at Bellevue Hospital. As had Miss Chapin at her school, Miss Spence requested that students divert their Christmas gift-giving from her and the faculty, bringing instead, gifts for the needy. Spence girls enjoyed a spring concert each year, performed by the Music School Settlement. Spence students then provided refreshments for forty local children following the performance.⁵²

Spence alumnae carried on the spirit of service, forming Miss Spence's School Society in 1898 to assist the Children's Aid Society in improving conditions for tubercular children. It was incorporated as the Spence Alumnae Society in 1911. As city agencies became primarily responsible for work with tubercular children, the Society shifted its work to that of arranging for adoption of orphan babies and children. The example had been set by Miss Spence and her chief assistant, Miss Baker, who had been personally involved in placing eighty-two homeless children between 1909 and 1915.⁵³

⁵¹ Whitman, 11.

⁵² Edmondson, 27, 51.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 51, 52.

Even before entry into World War I by the United States, The Shipley School displayed a desire to address the suffering from war. On March 4, 1916, the school presented a charity Fete to benefit French orphans. The yearbook declared that "The girls took a great interest in the work and afterwards had the pleasure of sending a check for \$550 to the Secretary of the Junior League of the Orphelinat."⁵⁴ Virtually every school contributed, often in a variety of ways, to the Allied cause in World War I, especially after United States entry in 1917. Archival records at the schools investigated are replete with those and other instances of community outreach in which students were actively involved.

Vocation as Practical Training

A strong college preparatory option and a Head of School who had collegiate training, did not necessarily preclude inclusion of practical training in a school curriculum. However, as might be expected, those schools which do not seem to have included a practical vocational option were those established for the primary purpose of college preparation. To the extent that a pattern existed among schools whose curriculums included vocational offerings, these are the categories which best represent it:

⁵⁴ Yearbook, The Rhombus, 1916, 68. Archives of The Shipley School, Bryn Mawr, PA. Hereafter called Shipley Archives.

1. Dual-Track (including college preparatory and general) with vocational requirements or options within the regular curriculum.
2. Multi-Track (including college preparatory, general, and vocational adjunct program).
3. Academic and vocational training by schools established to serve students from the working-class.

Dual Track

Women's Christian Temperance Union reformers had relied upon a concept which its leaders called "organized mother love," to provide unity and cohesion to their movement. Elizabeth Clark regards this relational view of society by evangelicals as being more typical of progressive reformers than was the detachment of the individual from society which seems inherent in classic liberalism's emphasis on the inviolability of individual rights. Frances Willard and other W. C. T. U. officials worked from the premise that every woman had a capacity for the nurture of others, regardless of whether or not she had physically borne children. Such reformers perceived and projected themselves as being different than men, as promoting Christian love throughout the community in a manner which transcended patriarchal literalism and formulas. A term of the highest organizational title of honor for W. C. T. U. women who had distinguished themselves through service was simply, "Mother." Members were linked by a feminine, nurturing bond in a sisterhood which encouraged every woman to find her identity through the "mother love" which she expressed in her life's work.⁵⁵

⁵⁵ Ibid., 224-226.

This emphasis on the moral force inherent in the use of their natural powers of nurture, the innate sensitivity of women, seems to represent the basis upon which practical vocational training was offered in women's private secondary schools. For example, Clara Spence established and operated her school in New York as a single woman, but one whose values were reminiscent of such "mother love." She was herself college-educated, highly independent, and assertive. Miss Spence included the college preparatory option in her school's curriculum from its founding in 1892. Despite this, Miss Spence seems to have held traditional views on the basic nature of womankind. She acted accordingly in establishing a domestic vocational choice in her curriculum.

In counseling her students about the life choices they would face, she disagreed with the notion that girls think too much about marriage. Rather, she argued that they did not think about it enough, "at least in the right way." She wished for them to "aim to become ideal wives, fit to manage the house and to teach their children." The rearing of children, she regarded as a form of education, in effect a sacred duty of every mother. Indeed, the influence of Catharine Beecher's view of education as being, "Woman's True Profession," is evident. "You may never marry," said Miss Spence, "but you can be a Mother in Israel in spite of that--Every woman finds scope for motherliness if it is in her--one way or another, she will find children looking to her for love and help, and she must fit herself to educate those children, for this is a woman's main duty in life."⁵⁶

⁵⁶ Spence, "Notes for Future Lectures," Box 6, Folder 12, Spence Archives.

Miss Spence instituted instruction in sewing, mending, embroidery, and household accounting on Saturday mornings. The author of a school history claims that "Many a father declared that he sent his daughter to Miss Spence's School because she would learn essentials of home management as well as receive an excellent education." Any suspicion that the academic rigor of a Spence School education would be diluted by such practical training may well have been alleviated by the astoundingly high scores which Spence students attained on an experimental administration of the Barnard College Entrance examination in the Spring of 1915. Results prompted both Dean Gildersleeve and President Bultler of Barnard to express their congratulations. President Butler called the results "exceptionally interesting and significant," underlining the effectiveness for students of educational methods which "achieve the maximum result for each one."⁵⁷

Miss Mira Hall was another college graduate who added domestic training to the curriculum of her school, which was otherwise oriented toward college preparation. Miss Hall seems to have included Household Arts in 1909. The course was added to a group of electives like Art, History of Art, Voice, Current Events, and Psychology, which supplemented the mainline academic courses. Alumnae from the period, who contributed to a brief history of the school, pinpointed Miss Hall's belief that the such courses enhanced the students' aesthetic sense along with their practical skills. A faculty member from the period described Miss Hall's educational approach: "Immensely as she cared

⁵⁷ Edmondson, 10; Letter from President Butler of Barnard College, dated May 27, 1915, Box 3, Folder 1, Spence Archives.

about maintaining a high standard of scholarship, I think she cared more about developing fine potentialities and rounding and strengthening character."⁵⁸

Miss Porter's School in Farmington did not formally introduce Domestic Science to the curriculum until 1912. The course appears to have been largely oriented toward culinary work, with a significant amount of actual cooking to supplement the theories of "food chemistry."⁵⁹ Westover School, under Miss Hillard, one of Miss Porter's proteges, similarly was regarded as being, essentially, a finishing school, despite the presence of a college preparatory course. At Westover too, vocational training was more incidental in nature, apparently having been restricted to a cookery elective within the regular curriculum. A student in 1909 described the "bustling cookery in the kitchen" of "Crossways," a small frame building used for domestic training.⁶⁰

Abbot Academy embraced a college preparatory option relatively more assiduously than did Miss Porter's but appears to have had some concerns about the effect on academic standards, of domestic vocational training, adding it, finally, in 1913. Doubts appear to

⁵⁸ Promotional circular, Miss Hall's School for Girls, Pittsfield, Mass., 1909-10, (unnumbered pages); MHS Alumnae News, "A Brief History of Miss Hall's School, 1898-1948," September, 1958, (unnumbered pages); Ethel Wallace Hawkins, former faculty member, quoted in Mira Hinsdale Hall, 22. M. H. S. Archives.

⁵⁹ Davis and Donahue, 34.

⁶⁰ Spykman, 19; Student literary publication, issued quarterly, The Lantern, November, 1909, vol. 1, 25. Archives of Westover School, Middlebury, CT, hereafter called, Westover Archives.

have been reconciled and the Abbot vocational training approach was wider than that at Miss Porter's or Westover. In addition to fitting a laboratory kitchen for cooking courses, Abbot's training addressed the overall realm of household management. In common with similar programs at other schools, it involved both theory and practice by students. During the period between its inception and 1920, Domestic Science courses appear to have been electives within the regular curriculum.⁶¹

During at least the earliest years following its founding in 1890, notwithstanding the strong advocacy of Caroline Ruutz-Rees for women's collegiate education, Rosemary Hall incorporated a form of domestic training. A newspaper article which heralded the opening of the school in Wallingford, Connecticut in 1890, stated that "The special object of Rosemary Hall will be to foster any talent discovered in its pupils and to teach those who are not specially gifted, to make a study of some practical subject." The article elaborated only to the extent of saying that, "Housekeeping will form an important feature of the school course."⁶²

No evidence of the specific nature or duration of this aspect of the Rosemary curriculum could be found. School catalogs from the period no longer exist. A brief history of the

⁶¹ Carpenter, 35, 36.

⁶² Newspaper clipping from New Haven Morning News, October 3, 1890. C/ RH Archives.

school, written in 1915, mentioned only the college preparatory and general courses.⁶³

Given the scarcity of information, Miss Ruutz-Rees' college preparatory inclinations, and the steady growth of the student population which allowed her to accommodate those inclinations, the vocational offering most likely was short-lived. Still, Miss Ruutz-Rees did not find all forms of practical training to be anathema to high academic standards. During World War I, she instituted a course in First Aid. Also during the war, Rosemary students were involved in the patriotic activities typical of the time, including a rather elaborate potato-growing project on a nearby farm.⁶⁴

The Principal of Saint Margaret's School, Emily Gardner Munro, also taught a course in First Aid for her students during the war. Another wartime offering was a course in home nursing. Miss Munro had become Principal in 1909 and had used her organizational skills and grasp of educational trends to streamline the curriculum. Her predecessor, Miss Hillard, had established college preparation in 1896, notwithstanding her lukewarm sentiments toward it. Miss Munro revised the general track to more closely align with the college preparatory one, with several common requirements and a standard duration for both, of four years. She also inserted vocational electives into the curriculum, arranging

⁶³ Seeley, 7.

⁶⁴ Newspaper clippings in archival folder entitled, "World War I," unspecified newspaper titles, dated, May, 1917. Series of articles describe a "Woodcraft Potato Club" which the school had formed in order to plant, maintain, and harvest potatoes as part of "Hoes Behind the Flag" patriotic project; The First Aid course was briefly described in an article; Interview conducted by Archivist Lee Sylvester with Marguerite Booream of the Class of 1914 on September 5, 1989, also made brief mention of the First Aid course. C/RH Archives.

to have The Waterbury Institute of Craft and Industry provide afternoon courses for Saint Margaret's students. These included domestic courses in sewing, dress-making, millinery, and general cookery. In handicrafts, girls could take leather work, metal working, jewelry, and basketry.⁶⁵

Multi-Track

Abigail Parsons married immediately following her years in Cambridge at the "Harvard Annex," from 1879-1883. Her husband, John MacDuffie, was a Harvard alumnus and earned a Ph.D. from Lombard College. For her day, Abigail MacDuffie clearly held advanced views on the social role of women. She had attained a college education. The MacDuffies had founded a girls' school, The MacDuffie School, establishing college preparation in the curriculum. Abigail worked actively for woman suffrage and was an officer in the Springfield, Massachusetts chapter of the League of Women Voters, which was established soon after passage of the Suffrage Amendment.⁶⁶

Yet, in many ways, Mrs. MacDuffie's views on the basic nature of her own sex, like those of Miss Spence, emphasized a traditional nurturing function. In her autobiography, Mrs. MacDuffie wrote that "I look for a social order where the fundamental idea is seeng to it

⁶⁵ Ohmann, 64-69.

⁶⁶ Abby MacDuffie, The Little Pilgrim, op. cit., 43- 53.

that no normal child misses development into an able and so a joyful human being."⁶⁷

The MacDuffie School became one which established a separate track for vocational training. In an address to the school's alumnae in 1908, entitled, "The Outlook For Women," she suggested that domestic life, whether the role be that of housewife or domestic employee, should be taken seriously as a profession. It "ought to be carefully prepared for so that it might not only be better done but also that it might be regarded as a more important work by the community." Her proposal that a type of vocational education along this line might be established by the school, met with an enthusiastic response from her audience.⁶⁸

The MacDuffies initially had incorporated some domestic training into the coursework of their regular students in a standard, dual-track curriculum. Domestic Science, they said, was "a subject in which the principals are especially interested, and the school was one of the first to add to its curriculum." Training was "hands-on" in nature, with classes in "food chemistry," and "various phases of practical housework." It stressed overall household management, rather than training to become a professional domestic worker or teacher of home economics.⁶⁹

⁶⁷ Ibid., 56.

⁶⁸ Newspaper clipping in Scrapbook, 1903-1917, Springfield Republican, November 20, 1908. MacDuffie Archives.

⁶⁹ Promotional circular, Yearbook of The MacDuffie School For Girls, Springfield, Massachusetts, 1907, 15. MacDuffie Archives.

The MacDuffies eventually established an adjunct program called, "Housecraft," in 1915. Housecraft, too, was based upon a premise that students would be managing a household facility and managing servants, rather than, themselves, becoming professionals in the field. Evidence indicates that those vocational students did not take academic courses, and that regular MacDuffie students did not have the option of taking specific Housecraft classes, with domestic courses remaining available to them through the standard curriculum. However, regular and vocational students were integrated socially at least to some extent. A newspaper article emphasized the cultural advantages for Housecraft of its being located on the campus of "a well-known school for girls," with "the opportunity to meet others from all parts of the country on a plane of social equality." Courses included care of house and laundry, food chemistry, child care, and interior decoration. Classes were small and methodology included lectures, study, and hands-on projects. Near the end of the course, domestic servants performed under supervision of the students in a simulation of actual household management. A certificate verified successful completion of the course.⁷⁰

Pre-dating the MacDuffie Housecraft endeavor by over twenty years, was a domestic science project of a similar nature, undertaken by Eliza Masters of Dobbs School. An "Industrial Department" in domestic economy functioned as an adjunct curricular offering from 1892-1894 . The school catalog described the classes as being "under the guidance

⁷⁰ Newspaper clipping, Boston Sunday Herald, August 6, 1916, in Scrapbook, 1915-1936. MacDuffie Archives.

of intelligent teachers." The course was "intended for young ladies who, having finished school, wish to be taught the Art of Housekeeping." Specific courses were Housewifery, Cooking, Laundry Work, Sewing, and Emergency Talks (essentially, the application of first aid techniques).⁷¹ The brief duration of the course indicates that it may have been a bit ahead of its time, or perhaps merely that logistical or technical difficulties intervened. In any case, it seems to have been a harbinger of a coming trend.

In the late teens, The Knox School of Briar Cliff, New York, offered a secretarial course which the school's catalog stated could be taken "either as an elective or as a major course of two years with certificate upon satisfactory completion." As the latter, it appears to have stood as a separate curricular track. Knox instituted a school bank, in which all students kept records of their own accounts, under the direction of the school's bookkeeper. Household Arts apparently was constituted by elective courses within the regular curriculum. A student could take courses in cooking marketing, sewing, cleaning, and laundry work, "so that she may more intelligently direct the management of the household." During the 1915-1916 school year, the cooking class gave two dinners for the school and took a class excursion.⁷²

⁷¹ Vose, 8.

⁷² Catalog, The Knox School For Girls, Tarrytown-On-Hudson, New York, 1919-1920, 9, 20, 34; Yearbook, Roseleaves, 1916, unnumbered pages. Archives of The Knox School, St. James, N. Y., hereafter called, Knox Archives.

The Chaffee School in Windsor, Connecticut lagged behind other women's private schools in the Northeast in its lack of physical training, as discussed in Chapter Three. In other ways, however, the Institute demonstrated a progressive approach. The Prospectus of 1913 stated that the purpose of both the boys' and girls' schools was "to combine in just proportion, complete courses of study leading directly to the mastery of gainful occupations which the students may enter immediately upon graduation." That knowledge however, was to be attained from a larger context of vocation through such "cultural study as will enrich his store of general information, cultivate his taste, and broaden his intelligence." This included a non-sectarian effort to "inculcate ideals of right Christian living" through Bible courses, brief religious services, and occasional lectures by "eminent preachers."⁷³

Chaffee School also provided vocational training for girls in the narrower sense of occupational training, whether for the home or for the domestic trades. The catalog for 1915-1916 describes the facilities and curriculum as follows:

The quarters, while temporary, are complete, including a large Domestic Science Laboratory, three class rooms, lunch room and social room. The courses offered are in College Preparation and Domestic Science, but it is expected that all pupils will share in the practical work of the Domestic Science Course whether they are to enter a higher institution or not.⁷⁴

⁷³ Prospectus, 7, 11. LC Archives.

⁷⁴ Catalog, The Loomis Institute, Windsor, Connecticut, Catalogue, 1915-1916, 41. LC Archives.

Vocational Training in the Arts

Women's private secondary schools customarily provided training in the arts as part of their curricula. Standard course offerings included studio and crafts work, instrumental and vocal music, and drama. In addition, most schools provided the option of private lessons in music, and some did in art. Generally, arts courses were elective, though many schools required a certain number of elective credits for successful completion of certain curricular tracks. Choral music and drama were sometimes extracurricular. However, a few schools established a separate vocational track in one or more aspects of the arts.

During the 1890's, The Emma Willard School established two separate adjunct programs in the arts, one an Art School, the other, a Conservatory of Music. Each was separately supervised by a director. Facilities were located on campus and recitals and art shows were presented periodically throughout the school year. The catalog for 1900-01 reported that "Special students are received for Music and Art." Their faculty were distinct from regular academic faculty. However, mainstream Emma Willard students were allowed to take selected courses in either area and could arrange for private lessons from the special faculty of the programs, with parental permission. Students who were exclusively in the

special programs, however, were not allowed to take courses from the regular curriculum. No record exists of the school having provided domestic training.⁷⁵

In 1889, Miss Mary Wheeler began the Wheeler School in Providence, Rhode Island, with both day and boarding components. Miss Wheeler was an artist who had studied in France. Her work as a teacher of art was recognized by the French government, which named her an Officier d'Academie in 1911. Her niece, Blanche E. Wheeler Williams, who taught at the school following her graduation from Smith College in 1892, also was Miss Wheeler's biographer. Mrs. Williams reports that during the period, the school offered "an advanced academic or abridged collegiate course covering two years, which included special work in art or music according to the aptitudes of the girls, and for which a certificate was given." Most of the classes were taught by professors from nearby Brown University.⁷⁶

⁷⁵ Promotional Catalogs, Emma Willard School, 1895-96, 16, describes establishment of of Schools of Art and Music and requirements and quotation about "Special students...in Emma Willard School, 1900-01, 6-9, 40, 41, and The Emma Willard School, 1914,15 continues to describe the special programs much as before; newspaper articles made references to activities of Art and Music Schools. For instance, Troy Press, November 5, 1899 describes an exhibition by the Art School and its edition of January 20, 1900 describes the participants and selections to be performed at the Music Conservatory's Musicale, scheduled for February 1. Among other references to both programs are clippings from Troy Times, January 26, 1901 and Troy Press, February 2, 1901. EWS Archives.

⁷⁶ Blanche E. Wheeler Williams, Mary C. Wheeler: Leader in Art and Education (Boston: Marshall Jones Company, 1934), 219-235.

Miss Wheeler felt that required classes in drawing and painting would supplement the educational experience of students and contribute to an appreciation of beauty in the school community, an atmosphere to which all could contribute. Said, Mrs. Williams about her aunt, "Her own interest being painting, she recommended that, or the cultivation of any talent like music, or social service in any form." Miss Wheeler also established a branch of the school in Paris during the 1890's. Through her many connections in France, she also provided valuable field experience for her more talented students during the period.⁷⁷

Mary Waring, who had taught at The Wheeler School from 1899 to 1905, founded the Kimberly School And Studio, a day school, in Montclair, New Jersey, in 1906. The brochure announcing the opening of the school indicated that "Pupils will be prepared for college." Miss Waring also wished to incorporate painting, drawing, and modeling into the regular school course, similar to the practice of The Wheeler School. She assured parents that "fundamental" work would not suffer, but would, in fact, be complemented by art courses. In May each year, drama productions on the front lawn of the school alternated with art exhibitions in the studio. Whether or not Kimberly provided a separate curriculum in the arts for special students, similar to the approach at Emma Willard, is unclear. However, Robert Carlisle's history of the school notes that students

⁷⁷ Ibid., 222, 223, 240.

who were interested in pursuing art as a career could receive sufficient training to qualify for admission to the Art Students' League or to the New York School of Fine arts.⁷⁸

Vocational Training at Schools for Working-Class Students

Most of the private secondary schools for women in this study enrolled the vast majority of their students from affluent families which could afford tuition costs. School catalogs and other sources from the schools in this investigation indicate that, by the school year, 1919-1920, boarding charges exceeded one thousand dollars per year at all of the schools for which such records exist. Charges had averaged around \$700 per year in 1900. This does not include incidental expenses such as travel to and from school, clothing, books, etc. Day school charges ranged from about \$150 per year in 1900 to \$300-\$400 by the end of the period. The charges for boarding would have been beyond the means of the average working-class family. Conceivably, day school costs may have been covered with careful budgeting for at least some families of limited means, though sacrifices would have been necessary.⁷⁹

⁷⁸ Carlisle, 21-25.

⁷⁹ Annual incomes varied, of course, for occupations requiring manual labor, depending upon such factors as skill level, area of country, etc. but data from the U. S. Bureau of Census and U. S. Department of Commerce, Historical Statistics of the United States: Colonial Times to 1970 (Washington D. C.: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1975), 168, 169 indicates average incomes by occupation to have made boarding school costs prohibitive for all but those families in the most unusual of circumstances.

Two schools which were exceptions to the predominant private school pattern of educating the daughters of affluent families were Northfield Seminary in Northfield, Massachusetts, founded in 1879 through the ministry of evangelist D. L. Moody, and the Chaffee School in Windsor, Connecticut, Incorporated as the Loomis Institute by act of the Connecticut Legislature, opening for the school year, 1914-1915. These schools shared with others in this study, certain aspects of a progressive approach to education. Like their counterparts, Northfield and Chaffee each provided curricular choices for students. Both schools also attended to the spiritual development of their students. Northfield's overall approach was nearly indistinguishable from the educational pattern of the other schools, while Chaffee's was somewhat more limited than counterpart girls' schools.

Besides catering to students who could not otherwise have afforded a private school education of the caliber provided, Northfield and Chaffee both established curriculums which included college preparation and domestic vocational training and incorporated an emphasis on character development which was of a non-sectarian, Christian character. They were the only schools in the study which provided the necessary degree of practicality in their domestic training to prepare students for a trade upon completion of the coursework. Perhaps this was dictated to some extent by a greater practical need for specific work skills on the part of their students, who were predominantly of limited economic means. It is likely that many required assurance of the financial means to

support themselves following graduation. Yet, at both schools, those who wished to pursue a college education, also had that option by taking the College Preparatory track.

At Chaffee, the Domestic Science curriculum offered "such instruction in the branches of textile study, Dressmaking, and Millinery as will enable a girl to take up such work as a trade intelligently." Coursework "in cooking, household accounting, purchasing, care of the house, sanitation and design is planned to lead, if the pupil so desires, to professional work after graduation, as teacher or manager, or to institutional positions of responsibility." The school further insisted upon a blending of coursework in the two curricular tracks. While college preparatory students were required to take some domestic science courses, students enrolled in the vocational track were required to take English, history, mathematics, chemistry, and either French or German.⁸⁰

At Northfield Seminary, the coursework in Household Science functioned similarly. Domestic training at Northfield did not stand alone as a curricular option, as it did at Loomis and at MacDuffie. It was integrated into the school's three curricular options. These were: The College Preparatory Course, The General Course, and The English Course. The first two were primarily academic while the English Course was designed for students "who desire a thorough training in English without the study of Latin and other languages." Students taking the college preparatory or general courses could

⁸⁰ Prospectus, 10. LC Archives.

choose electives from within a wide variety of Household Science offerings, with the understanding that it might extend the time needed to complete the requirements within their chosen track. Students in the English Course track were required to select specific Household Science courses, including advanced cookery, sewing and bookkeeping.⁸¹

Yet, even though domestic training did not stand as a separate curricular track at Northfield, the Housekeepers' Course could be designed in a way which provided the training necessary for students "who wish to occupy the position of matron or housekeeper in an institution or home." Classes in basketry, embroidery, millinery, and dressmaking were additional electives. Courses in music and art were standard and singing lessons were available for a nominal fee.⁸²

The dominant force on the Northfield campus, however, was religion. Reflecting the non-sectarian evangelism of the founder, D. L. Moody, and his son and daughter-in-law, Mr. and Mrs. W. R. Moody, who succeeded him following his death in 1899, students were required to take courses on various aspects of the Bible, regardless of the curricular track they chose. Additionally, students and staff attended chapel exercises each school day, and "family prayers" were conducted daily in residence halls. Students had to

⁸¹ This curricular arrangement was standard throughout the period. A representative catalog statement is contained in, Northfield Seminary, 1909-1910, 22, 23, 52-55. N/M H. Archives.

⁸² Ibid., 52-59.

attend one of the churches in town each Sunday, and could choose to join Sunday School classes. The Young Women's Christian Association was an integral part of the school's activities. A catalog described its role as one of developing "Christian character," and training for "effective service." Students became involved in some of the Association's missionary work and were "trained in systematic giving." A vehicle for such activities was mid-week prayer meetings.⁸³

In addition to the various religious and service-oriented campus student organizations which such activities spawned, Mr. and Mrs. W. R. Moody hosted a Young Women's Conference for a study of religious matters and the activities that might flow from them, for students from women's private boarding schools in the region. These began in 1902 and proved to be annual events, thanks in large part to the strong support given the project by Eliza Masters of the Dobbs School. Mrs. Moody credits the Dobbs delegations with having provided "the nucleus" for continuing conference work.⁸⁴

Vocational training in religious work was available in the Northfield Bible School, which had been established by D. L. Moody and which continued throughout the period. A brochure from 1905 indicates that the Bible School had just been incorporated as part of Northfield Seminary. It was under the same trustees and shared many of the school's

⁸³ Catalog, Northfield Seminary, 1905-1906, 16-19. N/MH Archives.

⁸⁴ Photocopy of article, Mrs. W. R. Moody, "Miss L. B. Masters: A Tribute," Record of Christian Work, September, 1921, 663-664. Masters School Archives.

instructors and Bible students took some of the Northfield Bible courses. Admission standards indicated that candidates were expected to be at least twenty years of age, in good health, and possessing the equivalent of a high school education. The school's aim was to "send out young women who know how to use their Bibles in teaching, and in personal work; young women who can act as church visitors, rural missionaries, pastors' assistants, settlement workers, Y. W. C. A. secretaries, or who are prepared to share in other ways in Christ's work at home or abroad."⁸⁵

In summary, vocational training at women's private secondary schools incorporated artistic, spiritual, and practical elements of training, and blended them into the schools' curricula. Some schools provided practical training in the arts or in domestic work. Northfield provided vocational training for religious occupations. Even those schools which did not provide specific practical training, seem to have regarded their educational approach as vocational in the sense of providing students the means by which to gain an appreciation for the dignity of various kinds of socially useful work.

⁸⁵ Catalog, Northfield Bible School, 1905-1906, 6, 7. N/MH Archives.

**CHAPTER 5: FAMILY AND COMMUNITY LIFE AT
PRIVATE SECONDARY SCHOOLS FOR WOMEN**

Advocates of the social gospel and of progressive educational methods regarded democracy as an expression of Christianity's fundamental emphasis on the dignity of the individual within the context of human brotherhood. Progressives saw education as an important means through which the nation's young citizens developed the character required for a moral democratic society. G. Stanley Hall explained in his book, Adolescence, that, during puberty, "The social instincts undergo sudden enfoldment and the new life of love awakens." The type of development occurring during those years, "depends upon how the new powers given suddenly and in profusion are husbanded."¹ Educational progressives considered it essential for schools to enable students to understand their role in a democratic society.

Leaders of women's private secondary schools enlisted the help of staff and students in the process of building a sense of community within their schools, using a progressive rationale in their educational approach. They regarded the school community as a training ground for life, an opportunity for students to learn about themselves and the ways in which they could help to better their democratic society. The model of development was a feminized one, familial in character with a school lifestyle which fostered close relationships among students and staff. It was one that emphasized the

¹ G. Stanley Hall, Adolescence Vol. 1 (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, 1904), xv.

importance of each person's contributions to the well-being of fellow community members while extending that spirit into society by familiarizing students with social issues. "School spirit," was a term which school officials routinely used to express the concept of a common devotion to the well-being of the school community.

It was in this emphasis upon the fostering of community feeling through school spirit, that school leaders most fundamentally demonstrated their adherence to the social gospel message of a socially contributory style of daily living, a dedication to social usefulness. Social gospel advocates believed that society had a spiritual component which was evident to the extent that humans were willing and able to incorporate God's immanence into social behavior. Josiah Strong counseled both prayer and action, contending that "Jesus teaches that the kingdom is to be the first subject of daily prayer and the first object of daily effort."² He and other supporters of the social gospel believed that orthodoxy's emphasis on the individual had undercut the importance of the social group in determining individual behavior and in dealing with collective sin. Said Shailer Mathews:

Just as the complete life of the individual depends upon the union of the soul and body does the normal life of the personality depend upon a similar union with other personalities. The failure of theology to emphasize this fact is the outcome of a psychology that has been so much

² Josiah Strong, The Next Great Awakening (New York: The Baker & Taylor Company, 1902), 55.

concerned with the deliverances of a single consciousness as to slight evidences of social psychical forces.³

In A Theology for the Social Gospel, Walter Rauschenbusch stressed interaction between the individual and his/her social group, emphasizing the primacy of the social in the gaining of religious knowledge. While individuals could contribute importantly to an inspired theology, it was necessary to look beyond the inspired person "to the social group which produced him, to the spiritual predecessors who inspired him, and to the audience which moved him because he hoped to move it."⁴ Women's school leaders aimed to develop such an interrelationship between the students in their schools and their society.

Mary Hillard contributed a chapter entitled, "The Spirit of School and Religion," to a book on various aspects of women's education. In it, she described a link between character-building and school spirit which was common to the practices of leaders of women's private secondary schools during the Progressive Era. Miss Hillard imputed an organic and spiritual dynamic to the education process. Educators of the young experienced "the constant reemergence of freshness and novelty like that of discovery, of the sensitiveness of youth to 'real existence,' colorless, formless, intangible, visible only to the intelligence that sits at the helm of the soul." She described a "universe of spiritual values," of which each student was a part. By failing to help the student comprehend

³ Shailer Mathews, The Social Teaching of Jesus, op. cit., 28.

⁴ Rauschenbusch, op. cit., 190.

that truth, "the school may betray him in greater or less degree and destroy or deeply mar these precious possessions entrusted to it for nurture."⁵

Students would both influence and, themselves, be influenced by, their school community. Each student would be encouraged to play an effective role in the building of school spirit and would experience a process of personal growth within the context of their immediate community and the larger world of which it was a part. Officials regarded school spirit as forming an ever-changing, yet on-going collective whole within which students could gain a sense of belonging to a community whose beliefs were developed and displayed through school activities. School traditions held an important place among these activities because they could give the student a sense of "the social group which had produced" her and "the spiritual predecessors who [had] inspired" her. The spirit developed within a school community would thereby validate individual identities and provide the context which gave meaning to individual lives.

Voicing a fundamental progressive belief about the nature and function of the school,

Miss Hillard wrote:

The life of the school is the life of the world in miniature. Its values are those of the larger world. For release from self-consciousness and for the merging of self into a larger and more generous consciousness, nothing is more helpful in school, as in the larger life of the world, than participation in what may be called a kind of ritual of life, ever varying, yet ever

⁵ Mary Hillard, "Spirit of the School and Religion," in Neilson, ed. The Education of the Modern Girl, 47, 48.

partaking of the same general characteristics of efficiency and dignity of execution, perfection and detail and appropriateness to time and occasion.⁶

Thus, through its traditions and other activities, the school could inculcate values and practices which would provide experiences shaping the character of students in order that they might work for good in, "the larger world."

This progressive educational process asserted that education must extend the boundaries of student social concern beyond the walls of the school to the outside world and must do so on the basis of spiritual verities which students could learn and apply along with the academic knowledge they gained. School officials determined that daily life at women's private secondary schools was to be safe and healthy, but not isolated. A progressive outlook which emphasized the need to integrate school and society rather than a one-dimensional devotion to academic abstractions provided the basis of education at women's schools.

School Spirit: A Religious Matter

Formal school spiritual gatherings were called "Prayers," "Chapel," or "Vespers." As the social gospel was of non-sectarian character, so was the setting within which these spiritual occasions were celebrated at the schools. Schools endeavored to maintain a sense of dignity at the events. Caroline Ruutz-Rees of Rosemary Hall, in 1911, responded to Loomis Institute's request for advice about designing a program for their

⁶ Ibid., 50.

projected girls' school. She stated that "We have found our daily use of the chapel, with its choir and chapel-committee in charge of its order and arrangement, quite remarkable in its effect upon the school in general." This effect included "an element of decorum and reverence."⁷ However, as indicated above, character-development was a goal which was not limited to such formal settings but was incorporated into all school activities.

Social gospel advocates recognized the role of individuals in building the kingdom of God, to the extent that the kingdom could be built only by people of strong moral character who devoted themselves to building and sustaining their personal integrity, albeit in a social context. Acknowledging that orthodox theology was correct in claiming that it was essential for individuals to correct "defective" behavior, Washington Gladden pointed out that, nonetheless, "the defective conduct of these individuals is in their social relations. (his emphasis) He declared that society and individuals were constantly being modified and modifying themselves and, as God has "for every man's life a plan, so has he for the common life a perfect social order into which he seeks to lead his children." Thus, while humans may never be fully conscious of that plan, "if we are humble and faithful and obedient, we shall come to understand it better and better as the years go by."⁸ In this spirit, school officials emphasized development of personal character, believing that it went hand-in-hand with the development of a type of school spirit which

⁷ Ruutz-Rees, Letter to Loomis Institute, 3. C/RH Archives.

⁸ Washington Gladden, Social Salvation (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1902), 10-31.

could be carried forward into the larger society by the people whose moral character it had helped to shape.

Despite variation in the degree of scholarship in their formal educational backgrounds, the women (and relatively few men) who headed women's private schools, shared a common devotion to the importance of religious convictions in one's daily life and a corresponding commitment to character development, which took on its full meaning only in a social context. Mary C. Wheeler of The Wheeler School in Providence, Rhode Island said, "There are certain essentials in life that cannot be omitted, our relations to others and our individual growth."⁹ The Shipley sisters, Katherine, Hannah, and Elizabeth, founders of The Shipley School in Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania, had all been college-educated and intended that as many as possible of their students be prepared for college. Yet, no less than high academic attainment, the Shipleys emphasized a spiritual element in school community life. The school catalog of 1910 stated that "The spirit of the school is that of high standards in work and scholarship, in moral and religious life..These standards influence the healthy outdoor life, active pleasures and gentle intercourse."¹⁰

⁹ Williams, 54, 224, 241.

¹⁰ Quoted in Frances Stokes Hoekstra, Courage for the Deed, Grace for the Doing (Bryn Mawr, Penn.: The Shipley School, 1970), 6.

Emily Gardner Munro, Principal of Saint Margaret's School, contended that her leadership role involved a continuing support for the school's "fundamental aim," which was, "above all others, to inculcate high ideals of Christian character, and to develop the special abilities of each girl, so that she may become a power for good, and a very useful member of society."¹¹ Maria Chapin provided yet another example of devotion to the development of individual character as the basis for a morally-sound school community. Ethel Stringfellow, one of Miss Chapin's teachers and later her successor as Head, believed that "It was her character-building" that was Miss Chapin's forte and she caused her students to become socially conscious in the process.¹² Rosalie Watson Warren, alumna and member of the Board of Trustees, described an important aspect of Miss Chapin's commitment to personal development:

Character building was of paramount importance to Miss Chapin and she started a method of 'Headmistresses' Reports' which have since been adopted by other schools. These were estimates written by each teacher of the character of the child, apart from her academic ratings. She had a deep religious faith and emphasized spiritual values from the start.¹³

An editorial in the yearbook of The Knox School in 1915 depicts a communitarian view.

The anonymous writer described the yearbook as constituting "a symbol of the

¹¹ Ohmann, 60.

¹² Transcript of interview with Ethel Stringfellow by Mary Rousmaniere Gordon, Class of 1928. Undated but a handwritten notation by the archivist indicates that it likely occurred in the mid-to-late 1960's. Quotation is from page 5 of transcript. Chapin Archives.

¹³ The Chapin School Alumnae Bulletin, Special 50th Anniversary Edition, 1901-1951, 1951, 4, 7. Chapin Archives.

ever-increasing school spirit, enthusiasm and unity shown by the girls." The article went on to amplify the concept of community improvement through self-improvement:

The growth of this spirit of unity is not something abstract but may be exemplified in many forms: for instance, we are better students, better athletes, better sports and better friends than ever before. Every girl has given her best for the improvement of her school.¹⁴

Mary Hillard felt that "the Spirit of the School," could be most readily developed by and was most discernable in, "school traditions." She described these activities as involving a "general participation by the student body, or by all the members of a defined section of that body, in some ritual, ceremonial, celebration, entertainment, or social activity that in its own significance has excuse for its place in school life." Miss Hillard argued that, "What is embodied in school tradition and incorporated in the ordered life of the school from season to season will communicate to the student body continued experience of the sentiment from which that custom sprang." She regarded school spirit as a natural phenomenon. It was an element of stability with which students naturally identified, and was worthy of perpetuation, "unless it can be shown that the custom is in some way harmful to that precious thing, School Spirit."¹⁵

Miss Hillard conceded that change was also a part of life and that there existed, everywhere, varied problems crying for solution. "Life to be lived aright must have its contacts with reality." Yet, such spiritual realities as "Truth, honor, love, selflessness,

¹⁴ Yearbook, 1915, unnumbered pages. Knox Archives.

¹⁵ Hillard, 49, 50.

courage, patience, justice, mercy have been unchanged from the days of the cave man. They cannot change." If those comprising a school are inspired by such verities, "the spirit of that school will be high, fine, and strong and will possess power to stimulate, inspire, and strengthen its members whether belonging to the teaching staff, the department of organization, or the student body."¹⁶

Reminiscent of the communal values expressed by evangelical reformers, Miss Hillard declared, "When the success of an activity or spectacle becomes dependent, not upon any individual, but upon the sinking of individuality into the larger rhythmic whole, there results release of spirit as well as creation of beauty for its own sake." Such a spirit has the power to transform the community into organic wholeness. "When school life is permeated with beauty for its own sake, created and maintained by the student body, it becomes a life of harmony, proportion, sincerity, and happiness." Ritual events "give opportunity both for expression of youth's deep silent emotions of reverence and worship and of its flood tides of sparkling, spontaneous enthusiasm, and include the fulfillment by each of her own responsibility for the perfected whole."¹⁷ This "perfected whole" seems not dissimilar to the idealized kingdom articulated by advocates of the social gospel.

¹⁶ Ibid., 56-58.

¹⁷ Ibid., 51, 52.

School traditions constituted a means by which the officials of women's private secondary schools built school spirit, a sense of community among their students and staff. This immersion of individuals into a community whose well-being became the focal point of school life, was regarded as character-enhancing for students. Traditional activities were universally utilized both by day and boarding schools in promoting school spirit. Although examples abound, space limitations allow for only a sampling of those activities which contributed to a spirit marked by a distinctively progressive, social gospel sense of community.

Traditional Activities

Traditions gave the school year a certain predictable rhythm, while the events themselves tended to be fraught with meaning and excitement for the participants each year. Not surprisingly, given the Christian character of the schools, the Christmas season was central to the school year, both chronologically and spiritually. It was marked by a plethora of annual activities, usually including a ceremonial meal and festivities, with the spirit of giving highlighted in the events. A few months prior to Christmas, welcoming activities had begun the school year. A few months hence, the year was brought to an end in a dignified ceremony called, Commencement. At other times during the year, a myriad of activities dotted school calendars. These varied in the degree to which they were common among schools and in the precise way in which they were done. Nonetheless, each activity was designed to promote a positive spirit in the school

community, one in which each individual sensed the contributions she could and/or would make as part of that community.

Welcoming Customs

The term, "old girls," was used in two related, nevertheless, differing ways during the period. At several schools, it referred exclusively to alumnae, at others exclusively to currently-matriculating, returning students, at still others, it was used for both. To avoid confusion, the term "old girls," refers here, only the returning students who were still matriculating. Those who had graduated will be called, "alumnae." At nearly all of the boarding schools studied, newcomers to the student population or "new girls," and returning students or "old girls," were each responsible, as a group, for organizing and carrying out specific traditional activities which fostered unity at the beginning of each school year by extending a warm welcome to new students. Several examples will be representative of these events.

Old and new girls at The Dwight School in Englewood, New Jersey exchanged parties for one another during the early part of the school year.¹⁸ At Walnut Hill, old girls sponsored a dance in honor of the new girls, soon after their arrival in September. The new girls

¹⁸ Anjala Vaishampayan, "Where we come from: The Dwight School, 1889-1973," in Dwight-Englewood School: The First Hundred Years, 1889-1989 (Englewood, N. J.: Centennial History Student Project of Dwight-Englewood School, 1989), 11. Courtesy of Archives of Dwight-Englewood School, Englewood, N. J., hereafter called, Dwight Archives.

reciprocated in November, with a party for the returnees.¹⁹ At The Shipley School, the yearbook for 1915 reported that, in the fall, the old girls had given a play to entertain the new girls, "as is the custom." In December the "New Girls' Stunts" were presented for old girls and faculty.²⁰ Similarly, old girls at Spence traditionally gave an informal party for the new girls early in the year. The new girls returned the compliment later, including, as part of the entertainment, a brief dramatic production.²¹

At some schools, the Head(s) supplemented the efforts of the old girls in welcoming the new. During the first few days of school in October at The Baldwin School, the Baldwin sisters sponsored a Tea for the new girls, at which the old girls acted as hostesses. A student publication reported in 1903, that the old girls had "warmly welcomed the new girls into the family circle." Later that month, each group conducted a dance in honor of the other. The barn dance sponsored by the new girls was reported to have been, "most delightful," its decorations consisting of corn stalks and pumpkins and with the new girls costumed as farmers.²² At nearby Shipley, the Misses Shipley customarily gave a welcoming Tea at their home for the faculty and all students. During the 1909 school

¹⁹ Catalogs, The Walnut Hill School For Girls, Natick, Mass., 1917-1918 and 1919-1920 listed the major school events and the dates upon which they had occurred during the previous year. WHS Archives.

²⁰ Yearbook, "The School Calendar," The Misses Shipley's School, 1915, 57.

²¹ Edmondson, 26.

²² Baldwin School literary magazine, The Prologue, December, 1903, 16. Baldwin Archives.

year, the new girls produced a new "Blue and Green Magazine," as a "contribution to school spirit."²³

Christmas Activities

Christmas provided an occasion for traditional school events and consequent development of school spirit. Virtually every school seized the opportunity to mark the event with activities which combined solemnity with joyful reveling. Miss Hall's School held a religious service, the lighting of a Christmas tree, and caroling, as did Wykeham Rise, where the students sang as they walked through the streets of the town in which the school was located, Washington, Connecticut.²⁴ The Knox School celebrated with a special Vespers service, at which the singing of carols was the focal point.²⁵

At St. Mary's Hall, the school's Episcopal affiliation was obvious in its annual celebration of the "Bishop's Feast," which dated back to the school's founding in 1837 by Bishop George W. Doane. He and his successors hosted students at a sumptuous dinner at the school. By the Progressive Era, it had become customary to follow the dinner with a festive dance.²⁶ Christmas dinner and a dance were also traditional at Shipley and at

²³ The Rhombus, 1915, 57 and 1909, 17, 18.

²⁴ "We Remember," 1. MHS Archives; Whitman, 11.

²⁵ Knox Yearbook, (unnumbered pages) for years 1915 through 1920 all list Christmas events under heading "School Calendar."

²⁶ Shaw, 34, 73, 136, 140.

Emma Willard. At Shipley, the alumnae were welcome to join the students and staff at dinner, which was highlighted by ceremonial presentation of a boar's head at the table of the Principals, who then, formally welcomed all guests. Between courses of the meal, alumnae and the current classes sang their class songs. At Emma Willard, alumnae also joined the festivities. A Christmas cotillion, with decorations and favors followed a Christmas dinner. A contemporary newspaper account described the "almost dazzling effect that is produced when the bright colored ribbons and favors are donned by the dancers."²⁷

Commencement

Virtually all of the schools ended each year by honoring those who had completed course work satisfactorily, particularly those who had met all requirements and would be leaving the school as graduates. The end-of-year celebration, called Commencement, varied in precise form among schools. However, most formally recognized graduating students, usually by presenting each with a diploma or certificate. Most importantly, ceremonial activities, tended to follow a consistent format with only minor variations from year to year. The standard Commencement format consisted of an opening prayer, followed by musical selections and addresses by school officials and/or a guest speaker. At many schools, a notable member of the graduating class was invited to speak, usually the class

²⁷ The Misses Shipley's School, 1915, 57. Shipley Archives; Newspaper clipping in Archival scrapbook, Troy Daily Press, December 8, 1900. EWS Archives.

president or class member with the highest marks. An invited guest speaker then gave his/her remarks. The handing out of diplomas and awards was sometimes preceded by remarks from the leading school official.

One significant deviation from the standard formality of the occasion occurred at The Brearley School in New York City. The long-time Head of School, James G. Croswell, insisted on minimal ceremony. He established the tradition at Brearley of simply calling the event, "Last Day." Mr. Croswell felt that no student should be under the impression that her education was ever truly finished. The primary event to mark the occasion of granting of degrees, was the reading by each graduate of an essay she had written. In this farewell address, graduating pupils described the effects on their lives of their education at Brearley. Copies of many of those essays have been maintained in the school's archives.²⁸

Other Traditions: The Element of Surprise and Honoring Friends of the School

Many traditional activities emphasized fun and informality. Several contained aspects of secrecy and intrigue, taking on the character of a game. In the early 1900's, Walnut Hill Juniors initiated a "Mascot Hunt," in which they selected and hid a secret object which became their "mascot," for as long as it took the seniors to discern its identity and locate

²⁸ Loud, 39, gives a general description of the tradition and Mr. Croswell's reasoning in establishing it. The archives has retained copies of many of the essays from the period. Brearley Archives.

it. Acting upon clues which the Juniors gave, it often took the Seniors several weeks of diligent sleuthing to find the object. Seniors reciprocated later in the year with a "Tree Day." After planting a tree in a secret location, they left a trail for Juniors to follow in their search. Once the tree was discovered, the Senior class prophecy and class will was read, along with the "slams," humorous remarks about the idiosyncrasies of individual Juniors.²⁹

In some instances the date and time of a traditional event whose primary theme was fun and relaxation was purposefully kept secret and sprung upon students to enhance its impact. Picnics were sometimes unexpectedly announced at Wykeham Rise to celebrate especially noteworthy individual or group achievement.³⁰ The seven oldest boarding students at The Spence School gave a surprise late-night feast for the younger students during Spring term. Guests were awakened by noisy gongs, bells, and tin pans to enjoy food and entertainment. A few teachers were invited as special guests and Miss Spence, an ex-officio guest, always attended and was reported to have been "the life of the party."³¹

Theodate Pope Riddle had designed the campus of Westover School in her capacity as an architect. She was also a close friend and had been a student of Mary Hillard while at

²⁹ "Echoes," Alumnae Newsletter, Summer, 1968, 28. Walnut Hill Archives.

³⁰ Whitman, 10.

³¹ Edmondson, 27.

Miss Porter's in the 1880's. Mrs. Riddle arrived unexpectedly for breakfast at the school one morning in May, 1909, and asked Miss Hillard to allow the students to take a holiday with her. Miss Hillard agreed on the condition that she would do the same thing annually, though varying the date each year in order to surprise the students. The agreement was made, and "St. Theodate's" became a much-anticipated holiday each year at Westover.³²

At least one school established a fixed date for festivities to honor a special friend of the school. At Wykeham Rise, a picnic was held each year on the birthday of Sister Elizabeth of the Anglican order of St. Peter. She had made many friends at the school and in the town of Washington during her visits, and was also, literally, the sister of the school's Head, Fanny Davies. A tradition within a tradition occurred when the hardier students and faculty disdained the transportation provided to the picnic site and hiked the six-mile distance, establishing that as a customary option.³³

Addressing Disunity

Sometimes traditions were established by school officials to counteract specific divisions in the student population. By 1913, Knox School initiation activities seem to have

³² Phyllis Fenn Cunningham, My Aunt and Godmother Miss Mary Robbins Hillard: Founder and First Principal of Westover School (Westover School, Middlebury Inc., Conn., 1975), 22. Westover Archives.

³³ Whitman, 10.

exceeded the bounds of what most new girls considered to have been good-natured fun. The customs themselves, which stressed servility of the new girls to the old, and their duration of the first few months of the school year, appear to have contributed to separation rather than unity between the groups. Nearly half a century later, some alumnae who had been new girls during that period, continued to resent the manner with which they were treated during the initiation period, despite otherwise positive feelings about their school years. Louise Gignoux Koke's recollections were typical of that discontent. She expressed dislike of the "social separation" between old and new girls and the "Humiliation at the hands of the old girls" which she felt that she and her classmates had endured.³⁴

Mrs. Louise Houghton had succeeded the school's founder, Mary Alice Knox, in 1911. Mrs. Houghton worked unobtrusively with old girls over the next several years to ameliorate offensive practices. During the period from 1913-1918, in addition to arriving at clearer limits of propriety, Mrs. Houghton and the old girls developed new activities which either replaced or modified undesirable ones. Among these was a restructuring of intra-school teams which had previously pitted the old girls ("Roses") against the new girls ("Buds"). Renamed "Roses" and "Whites," each team was comprised of a mix of old and new girls. Each also competed against a newly-formed

³⁴ "Alumnae Questionnaire," distributed to surviving Knox alumnae during school year 1978-79 by the Development Office of The Knox School for the 75th Anniversary of the school. Response of Louise Gignoux Koke, Class of 1913. Knox Archives.

faculty team called, the "Thorns," which gave the students a common foe against whom to vent some good-natured aggression. Another new activity which promoted cohesion was a "Baby Costume Party." Members of the Senior class dressed and behaved as babies, who were pampered, fed, and entertained by "mothers" and "nurses" from other classes. While Seniors were almost invariably, old girls, lower classes generally contained both old and new. The acknowledged silliness of the event allowed students to share in good-natured fun without malice and further focused attention on commonality. Old or new girl status became less important, membership in school classes, more so.³⁵

In 1911, Abbot Academy's Head, Emily Means, planning her retirement at the end of the school year, addressed a similar issue, one which she did not wish to bequeath to her successor. Three societies had been formed among students during the early part of the century. These were similar in function to college sororities, although all society members did not necessarily share the same dormitory buildings. The administration had tolerated these societies because they were often helpful in rallying students to support school activities and because they gave their specially-invited members a feeling of belonging. They also enhanced ties with many alumnae. The societies had become, to many alumnae who had been members during their school years, symbols of familiarity

³⁵ Roseleaves, for years, 1915 , 1916 (unnumbered pages) 1918, 42, 91; "School History," The Knox School Fall Bulletin, 1993: 90th Anniversary Issue, 6, 7. Knox Archives.

amid campus changes. They felt assured of a warm welcome from their old society, when returning to visit.³⁶

However, Miss Means was deeply concerned about the negative impact of societies on students who were not invited to join. She, therefore, called the society members to a special meeting, outlined her concerns, and asked them to voluntarily disband. The students did because they essentially agreed that, as one member expressed it, "Abbot is too small and the living quarters too intimate to have secret societies." Many of the alumnae did not take the development as well but the school addressed their fear that changing faces and conditions over the years would leave them feeling like strangers during visits. Special greeting committees were established each year and the large Alumnae Office in Abbot Hall became a traditional gathering place for returning alumnae.³⁷

Still, Miss Means' successor in 1912-13, Bertha Bailey, did not inherit an entirely unified school. The Senior class was clearly divided into two distinct groups, those in the College Preparatory track and the Academic students, who took the general, finishing school track. The two divisions had no classroom work together and even had separate class organizations. During her first year as Head, Miss Bailey invited all of the Seniors

³⁶ Carpenter, 12, 13.

³⁷ Ibid.

to the mountain area of Intervale, New Hampshire for an outing following the midyear examinations.³⁸

On the outing, Miss Bailey casually mixed girls from the two divisions into the various activities and was, herself, immersed in the festivities. This included making pancakes for the girls over a campfire and her cheering on of contestants in a spontaneous pancake-eating competition. Before the three-day event was over, girls had shared fun, chores, and some heart-to-heart talks with one another, without regard to curricular categories. Soon, Seniors from the two divisions decided to meet as one group and to elect a slate of officers to represent the entire Senior class. Alumnae from those years have expressed the general opinion that the Intervale activity not only healed the division within the class, but also showed that Miss Bailey respected them as leaders within the student population.³⁹

Traditions and School Spirit at Day Schools

Unity among students and staff was relatively easier to foster at boarding schools than at day schools. Out of the close proximity of living conditions generally grew a feeling of cohesion and intimacy among boarding students and between boarding students and staff. This unity tended to be a positive contagion, often radiating outward to induce the

³⁸ Ibid., 13, 14.

³⁹ Ibid., 14, 15.

school's day students to become as involved as possible in school activities. Although distinctions between day and boarding students were not always completely dissolved, school spirit was, in general, more naturally established and maintained in boarding schools, than at day schools. Still, as indicated in the discussion about day school athletic programs, above, a significant degree of school spirit was also attainable at day schools.

Interaction between students and faculty at Kimberly School did not end when the academic school day was finished at 1:15. Miss Waring allowed the children to stay at school for "self-chosen activities." Among options were art studio projects, athletics, and drama. School traditions which encouraged a sense of pride in socially useful behavior included collections of food at Thanksgiving for donation to the Children's Home and the Altruist Society of Providence. During the Christmas season, students donated money to purchase gifts for children at a kindergarten in a New York City poverty area. Those and other activities became traditions and contributed to rapport among staff, students, and parents. Teacher Margaret Gallie recalled that there was "much opportunity for teachers and pupils to be together. We often went to homes for luncheon; we played basketball against them (student teams) and often won...On Saturdays we went to New York to the theater and opera. Sometimes we went to town in the evening for horse shows and dog shows."⁴⁰

⁴⁰ Carlisle, 23, 24, 27.

Maria Chapin started an organization at her school, which was known by the generic name of, "The Club." Initial membership was comprised of girls she had taught at a previous school, expanding gradually to include former Chapin students from its time as a lower school, and finally to members of her own recently-added upper school in 1911. Evening meetings provided an opportunity for current students to gather informally with a group composed of their peers and alumnae. Their common loyalty to Miss Chapin provided the basis for new friendships and dialogue. The 1951 Alumnae Bulletin says that "free and lively discussions" on a variety of topics, occurred at the meetings. Eventually, the weekly meetings had to be moved from Miss Chapin's home to the school, in order to accommodate the increasing size of the group. Those attending liked the casual atmosphere in which they felt free to express their views.⁴¹

Mr. Croswell of The Brearley School, appears to have only gradually and reluctantly allowed extracurricular activities to flourish there. One section of a history of the school was collaboratively written by alumnae from various eras, in the form of their recollections. Alumnae from the turn-of-the century remarked that, while extracurricular events "were discouraged," students nonetheless "thoroughly enjoyed our high-minded secret societies." By 1908, students were allowed to dance at recess, (with one another, rather than with boys), especially enjoying the popular waltz. By the 1910's, a new

⁴¹ "History of the School," Alumni Bulletin, 1951, 4; School literary magazine, "School History," The Wheel, May, 1926, 3.

gymnasium had been built and inter-school athletics had been instituted to supplement physical training classes.⁴²

Despite his reluctance to have the school take on added responsibilities in extracurricular areas, Mr. Croswell's students remembered him with warmth and affection. They found him to be "so very human and humorous," in contrast to his scholarly demeanor. He conducted "seemingly casual morning assemblies" and gave readings and talks to the students on Greece and the Greeks on Friday afternoons. Alumnae remember that "we caught bits and pieces of wit, of understanding, of tolerance, that are still vivid for us today." The tradition of producing a yearbook began with the Class of 1908. A more long-standing tradition was that of having the senior class (Class VIII) sit in a place of prominence, the front row, at daily Prayers sessions, with Mr. Croswell affably telling them that they were now, the school's "old ladies." Classes from VI to VIII, selected their own class officers, beginning in 1900. A day was established for class picnics and a Teachers' Lunch.⁴³

After Mr. Croswell's death in 1915, his successors, Henry Sedgwick (1915-1916), Carl Van Doren (1916-1919), and Interim Head, Sarah Dean (1919-1920), each continued to expand school athletics. Class banners and mascots were added. Competition against

⁴² Loud, 38-43.

⁴³ Ibid. 42; Brearley yearbook called simply, Annual. 1908, page 7, 1915, page 10, 1918, 21, 22. Brearley Archives.

other schools began in 1918. Class VII established the tradition of giving a party in honor of Class VIII on a Spring afternoon. The school established a drama program and enjoyed annual dramatic productions.⁴⁴

The development of athletics at The Agnes Irwin School has been described above. The Athletic Association adopted the motto, "Win Well, Lose Well," in 1911. The school paper, The Irwinian, was begun in the early 1900's and continued, throughout the period, to be a vehicle for student expression and a means by which to promote school spirit. The Class of 1913 produced the first yearbook and, in 1914, interested students spearheaded formation of a Dramatics Club called the "Wouldbegood Players," whose Shakesperian productions were successful enough to elicit invitations to perform for Bryn Mawr College students on their campus for several successive years. Josephine Natt became Head in 1915, following the deaths of the Irwin sisters. She supported continued development of school traditions. Students formed a Musical Club in 1917, a Debating Club in 1918, and an Art Club in 1920, with each electing its own officers.⁴⁵

School Spirit Through the Fostering of Self-Expression

The underlying philosophy of women's private secondary school officials reflected a typically progressive optimism about human nature and its ultimate perfectibility. This

⁴⁴ Ibid. 42-44; Annual, 1918, 22. Brearley Archives.

⁴⁵ Neel, 48, 49, 56, 57; Agnes Irwin School Yearbook, 1918, 55, Yearbook, 1917, 46-51, and 1918, 52, 53. Agnes Irwin Archives.

optimism was manifested in their rejection of the traditional formalistic patriarchal disciplinary model and the substitution of the more distinctively feminized approach favored by educational progressives and evangelical reformers. John Dewey had said, "Training is pathological when stress is laid upon correcting wrong-doing instead of upon forming habits of positive service."⁴⁶

Unquestionably, school authorities reserved and exercised the right of final judgment in matters of school policy. Despite a charge sometimes made by critics that the use of progressive educational methods risked placing "the inmates in charge of the institution," women's private school leaders clearly provided a framework of ultimate adult authority, assuring parents of the physical and emotional security that they wished for their daughters. It is equally evident that, within that framework, school officials consistently provided opportunities for students to exert their influence in establishing a positive school community atmosphere, through various means of self-expression. Indications are that this formula proved to have accurately forecast positive student contributions and that it proved to be effective in eliciting the type of individual and community development that they envisioned.

Officials believed that, in the school community, as in the larger society of which it was a part, the optimum atmosphere within which self-expression would be most beneficial to

⁴⁶ Dewey, Moral Principles in Education, op. cit., 15.

personal and community well-being, was not one of extremes. It was characterized by neither completely unfettered (described as "selfish") behavior, nor by harsh repression. Behavioral guidelines were necessary. These leaders believed that some rules had to be clearly spelled out, but that they should be as few as possible. They relied on what they felt to be a natural human propensity to hasten, as the W. C. T. U. platform had described it, "the coming of His kingdom whose service is perfect freedom."

Officials of women's schools shared with evangelical reformers, a fundamental belief that people could exercise true freedom only within the context of God's Will. The kingdom of God was most attainable in a democratic setting. An ideal educational system should provide a nurturing atmosphere which promoted an interrelated development of intellectual and social skills. Although guidance was necessary, it was to be of a gentle, affirming type. To the extent possible, students were to be encouraged to exercise responsibility for their own behavior. In line with the emphasis of school officials on a balance of physical, spiritual, and intellectual development, they promoted pedagogical methods which developed critical thought and its effective expression, believing that the intellect should be fully utilized in service to the kingdom. Docility in mental development was no more acceptable than it was in the other two elements of the educational triad. Self-expression was, therefore, also a goal in academic development.

Representative was the approach employed by Arthur Gilman, who founded The Cambridge School for Girls in Cambridge, Massachusetts, in 1886. He had also helped

to establish The Harvard Annex, for women's higher education in 1879. In a magazine article which he wrote during the 1890's, the Cambridge School Head described his disciplinary philosophy. He declared that his school had "no set of rules but those which the laws of right living impose upon everybody." To those who believed that only strict rules which were stringently enforced would prove fully effective, he replied that, "The one system holds the pupil up by means of props and guys, the other leads the pupils to hold themselves upright by force of principles planted within."⁴⁷ The nurturing feminine model retained essential adult authority, but not authoritarianism, which was regarded as counter-productive to character development.

This philosophy extended into the classroom as well. Although it is difficult to know how nearly actual classroom practices approximated theory, other schools described their educational goals along the same lines as did Gilman, who said, "In this school the pupils are not driven, but led, not spurred on to get over so much ground, but rather held in check, the object being not to cram the memory but to educate the mind, and make the pupil think for herself."⁴⁸ Helen Cooke of Dana Hall said simply, "The task of the school is to help each girl to think."⁴⁹ The Emma Willard catalog stated that "Emphasis is placed

⁴⁷ George St. John Jr., Individuals and Community, op. cit., 1-3.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 3.

⁴⁹ Quoted in Post, 36.

not only upon the ability to meet requirements of the College or of the General Course, but upon work well done and to gain the power to think and to do."⁵⁰

Students were to learn to think and act, not merely mechanically, but were to build upon and apply what they had learned through experience. Typically, "So far as is possible, rules are derived inductively and not stated dogmatically. Rules, whenever used, come at the end instead of at the beginning of a subject."⁵¹ School leaders hoped to provide a type of education which would "lead to habits of thoughtful inquiry, by giving the pupils ideas and objects with which to deal, and not mere words; to awaken the mind to personal investigation and independent and logical reasoning." Typically, school government "will be such as will be needful for the comfort of all, and its ultimate aim be to aid in establishing habits of self-government, usefulness, and thoughtfulness."⁵²

Intellectual training was a necessary complement to rigorous physical and moral training in equipping a woman to meet the demands of life and was fundamental to making sound moral decisions. In effect, the educational goal of the schools was to provide an organic type of training which developed from within students, thought and behavior patterns which would enable them to meet whatever demands life placed upon them, in a

⁵⁰ The Emma Willard School, 1914-1915, 11. EWS Archives.

⁵¹ Catalog, Year Book of The MacDuffie School For Girls, Springfield, Massachusetts, 1907, 11, 12.

⁵² Prospectus, Northfield Seminary, 1879, unnumbered pages, under headings, "Character of Instruction" and "The Government." N/MH Archives.

thoughtful, reasoned, and caring manner. What of the specific use to be made of the training following the departure of students from school life? School authorities appear to have felt that both traditional and non-traditional paths were acceptable, dependent, of course, upon the will and abilities of the individual student. Clara Spence declared that "it is the 'ideal woman' with intellectual power as well as with her womanly qualities who will be an efficient co-worker with man for the common weal, for it is she who will see the vision, and to those who seeing, see not, she shall be the bringer of light."⁵³

Miss Spence indicated that this included young women with the traditional goal of being wives and mothers:

Girls are often blamed for thinking too much about marriage: I think they do not do it enough, at least in the right way: They should aim to become ideal wives, fit to manage the house and to teach their children. If you fit yourselves to be perfect wives, you will at least be very perfect old maids and find plenty to do for other people's children.

A woman must be able to command the resources of a developed intellect in making choices in such fundamental matters as marriage. Girls must understand that "To marry for money is degrading." However, Miss Spence added, "To marry without (her emphasis) money means debt which is irretrievable, degrading and is altogether selfish instead of romantic"⁵⁴ Whatever a young woman's goals in life, she was expected to strive for a standard requiring reflective, selfless behavior.

⁵³ Spence, "Notes For Dec. 9," Box 6, File 12. Spence Archives.

⁵⁴ Ibid., "Varied Notes for Addresses."

At a session of the November, 1916 meeting of the Head Mistresses' Association, Elizabeth Johnson, Head of The Baldwin School, noted a trend during, roughly, the previous ten years, for increasing numbers of her students "to expect and look forward to a real job," even though it was not financially incumbent upon them. Miss Johnson said that "The number of girls who ask me every year what they shall do when they get through school or college increases in geometrical progression." Miss Johnson lauded this phenomenon as showing that "nothing is so worthwhile as having a real job which makes one measure of one's own economic value in return for what one can earn." Mrs. Paul, whose school affiliation was not designated, concurred with both the trend and Miss Johnson's feelings about it, stating that "we find it very customary for our girls to be looking forward and planning for social service."⁵⁵

Reflective of the social gospel's confidence in the ultimate perfectibility of people and society and to the end of promoting independence of thought and action, women's schools tended to keep formal rules and regulations at a minimum. The final sentence of the 1890 catalog of the Cambridge School said: "It is expected that all who enter the household will be so fully in sympathy with the general purpose that there will be no need of formal rules of behavior."⁵⁶ This typified the approach of private secondary schools for women throughout the period. The catalog of Walnut Hill School said, "It is the aim of the

⁵⁵ "Proceedings of The Head Mistresses' Association," November 10, 1916, 23. Smith Collection.

⁵⁶ St. John, 4.

school to offer the pupils a pleasant home, and to surround them with conditions favorable to their best development. Only such regulations have been adopted as seem indispensable to this result."⁵⁷ The Dana Hall catalog for 1884-1885 similarly emphasized a nurturing, familial environment, encouraging students to contribute to it:

Dana Hall is essentially a Home School, the pupil being surrounded by such restraints only as seem indispensable to the best results of mental work. We purpose to combine thorough scholarship with general culture, and rather to develop in the pupil an habitual self-control than to enforce a formal (my emphasis) obedience. The government of the school is therefore, designed to establish relations of mutual courtesy and honor between teachers and scholars; and it is found that where self-respect and an ability for self-restraint on the part of the pupil are assured, reasonable regulations seldom fail to secure a loyal obedience.⁵⁸

Throughout the period, schools consistently expressed their faith in the efficacy of minimal rules and in Arthur Gilman's assertion that "Girls as well as boys will repay confidence."⁵⁹ Ethel Walker (Smith) applied a similar faith in dealing with her students at The Ethel Walker School. She wrote: "We had no written constitution or student government at first but there was a tacit understanding about behavior and conforming to class and household regulations." Yet, she and other school heads recognized that some limits must be imposed and enforced. "The girls soon understood that they could have a

⁵⁷ Walnut Hill School, Natick, Mass., 1905-1906, 11.

⁵⁸ Quoted in Post, 10.

⁵⁹ St. John, 2.

great deal of freedom if they didn't abuse it (my emphasis)...I gave them as much responsibility as I thought they could take."⁶⁰

The Emma Willard School catalog for 1914-1915 asserted that "The government of the school is based upon mutual good understanding between teacher and pupil, and the restrictions are only such as are believed essential for the general welfare of the household and for the best mental development." After stating that "The school wishes to rely on the honor of the students rather than upon restrictions, and attempts to train each pupil to govern herself," the catalog added that "No pupil out of harmony with the requirements of the school will be retained in the school, and the right is reserved of requesting the withdrawal of a pupil who for any cause is a detriment to the school."⁶¹

The latter, however, applied to only the most extreme and, apparently infrequent, cases. Evidence indicates that the vast majority of disciplinary infractions with which school officials dealt, involved relatively minor offenses such as attempts to circumvent food rules or clothing regulations. The only incident the writer could find that resembled an open challenge to duly-constituted school authority by a large number of students, occurred at St. Mary's Hall in 1898, during the Spanish-American War. A dual

⁶⁰ Pamphlet, by Ethel Walker Smith, "A History of the Ethel Walker School At Lakewood, New Jersey," unnumbered pages, written originally for the Alumnae Bulletins, Autumn, 1946 and Midwinter, 1947-1948. Ethel Walker Archives.

⁶¹ The Emma Willard School, 1914-1915, 11. EWS Archives.

celebration for the recent victory at Manila and a send-off of enlisted men from Burlington was to occur, with a large crowd in attendance, including children from the town's public schools. Day students begged the Principal, Miss Titcomb, to allow St. Mary's students to join the festivities, but despite her otherwise advanced beliefs about educational equality for females, Miss Titcomb's social views also reflected common Victorian principles of feminine conduct. She felt it unbecoming (and perhaps not very physically safe, even with chaperones) for St. Mary's girls to be part of a happy, nonetheless unruly, throng of excited patriots. When she refused, "the girls stampeded and left the Hall by the nearest exit, be it door or window," says the school's historian. They joined the crowd downtown, climbed atop the roof of a tombstone factory for a better view, and waved small American flags, which they had somehow secured along the way. Upon their return, Miss Titcomb confronted them, demanding that the flags be surrendered. Day students refused and left, returning that evening to stage a bonfire rally within sight of the school, thus exciting the boarding students who hung out of their open windows, waving various items of clothing instead of their confiscated flags. Miss Titcomb was devastated by the incident, unaccustomed to such clear defiance of her authority. The school history reports that student behavior had been premised more on the excitement of the moment than on pre-meditated defiance and most became contrite upon learning of Miss Titcomb's acute discomfort because, the girls did, in fact, have both love and respect for her. It is unclear whether the incident affected her resignation

the following year, in order to study in Paris, as she stated, but many former students made it a point to pay respectful calls on Miss Titcomb when travelling abroad.⁶²

No similar incidents are recorded for the remainder of the period at any of the schools. While schools attempted to provide constructive channels for student energy, they also provided behavioral guidelines. Although evidence is fragmentary, it suggests that the number and type of rules, as one might expect, varied among schools. To the extent that a pattern can be discerned, it seems that schools from the pioneering era tended toward lengthier lists of rules than did those which were founded during the collegiate era. Though the generalization must be stated tentatively because only a relative handful of schools have retained records of such rules and other evidence is anecdotal in nature (general references in school histories, interviews with alumnae, etc.) The archives of Miss Porter's School, The Masters School, and of The Emma Willard School have the most comprehensive extant lists of rules. Dobbs utilized the honor system of students reporting their own transgressions, nonetheless had a fairly extensive list of rules of conduct, for which Miss Masters had no apology and balanced them with kindness and attentiveness to the needs of individual students, according to her biographer, who said,

⁶² Shaw, 92, 93.

"With all the rules there was plenty of wholesome fun, and no one enjoyed a good time or a jolly laugh more than Miss Masters."⁶³

Punishments generally were mild and tailored to the individual situation. A reprimand from a designated school official was a standard, and apparently, sufficient method of dealing with less than major infractions. Typically, this was done in the form of counseling. The goal was to assist the transgressor in discerning the problems which her misbehavior had created for herself and the school community and to help her learn how she could behave in ways more constructive for all concerned.⁶⁴

⁶³ Shelton, 114, 115; Among newer schools, one of the few references to specific rules was one regarding Mary Waring's unwillingness to allow gum-chewing and to require the wearing of hats when outside of Kimberly School. Carlisle, 21; Overall, the relative paucity of such records of rules in collegiate-era schools indicates that their statements of minimal rules might be taken at face value.

⁶⁴ For instance, Alumnae of Miss Hall's School recall that Miss Hall's disciplinary methods were widely regarded among students as just, fitting the offense, sometimes with a touch of humor. Such was the case of the student whose penalty for skipping a lecture on medieval art was to give a talk on Gothic cathedrals, since, Miss Hall suggested with a straight face and twinkle in her eye, she must consider herself to be knowledgeable on the subject. Miss Hall's Alumnae, "We Remember," 1948, 4. MHS Archives; Miss Masters' biographer reported a story related to her by an alumna who had been summoned to the Head's room because of a low score in conduct during her first term at Dobbs. Miss Masters disarmed the student of her defensive demeanor with a kindly, yet, matter-of-fact expression of her understanding of the situation and her wish that the girl be willing to help make the needed improvements. Rising and gently holding the girl's hand, she asked, "You will help us, won't you?" When the girl tearfully answered that she would try, Miss Masters gave her hand a gentle squeeze and quietly insisted that no, that was not quite sufficient, "say you'll do it." Shelton, 189, 190; Mary Waring described her disciplinary approach as being guided by a fundamental principle "never to approach a student with suspicion or distrust. I think my method paid dividends, although I know students would say, 'Miss Waring scolds with her mouth but her eyes laugh.' Quoted in Carlisle, 20, 21.

The aim of school authorities then, was, as G. Stanley Hall had described it, to channel, in what they regarded as, positive directions, the developing powers in the young women who were the objects of their work. They, therefore, encouraged students to play an integral part in forging the spirit of the school by their involvement in a variety of activities which encouraged positive self-expression. The most significant areas included student participation in: 1) athletics and physical conditioning, 2) the arts, social involvement, and communication skill development (including drawing, painting, crafts, and drama, student publications, and involvement in activities relating to social issues), and 3) student self-government. Each area has been discussed to some extent in other contexts, so discussion and examples will be brief.

Athletics and Physical Conditioning

Physical development activities provided opportunity for increased self-confidence through skill development. The personal experience of some school leaders influenced their belief in the emotional advantages which could accrue from physical development. In the early 1880's, Abby MacDuffie, co-principal of The MacDuffie School, was introduced to gymnastic exercises by Dr. Dudley A. Sargent while attending college with the original graduating class of the Harvard Annex. A series of letters to her parents include several references to her involvement in gymnastics work. From an initial reluctance to attend the classes in early March, her change in attitude was perceptible in succeeding letters. After a few weeks, Abby reported that she "felt a good deal refreshed," following workouts. She gained further encouragement when her test results

in various areas of strength were very good. In April, she described the comfort and confidence that simply wearing her gymnasium slippers and suit gave her. "I feel just like a boy in it, strut around and cross my feet delightfully." In early May she exulted, "I think my leaping is superb."⁶⁵

The MacDuffies instituted the Sargent gymnastics method of physical training for students at their school. Newspaper clippings from the early 1900's describe public exhibitions by MacDuffie students. They executed intricate group maneuvers with Indian Clubs and competed against classmates in other gymnastic activities. Individuals judged as best in their areas of competition won prizes.⁶⁶ During her childhood, the physical frailty of Dwight School co-founder, Euphemia Creighton, was such that doctors feared that her death was imminent. Only exercise could save her, they said, but feared that she was too delicate for a sufficiently strenuous regimen. Euphemia began and doggedly sustained a program of skating, which proved sufficient for her survival. At Dwight, she supported a wide variety of exercise programs for students.⁶⁷ Mrs. MacDuffie and Miss Creighton were among women's school leaders who believed that mental and physical

⁶⁵ MacDuffie, The Little Pilgrim, op. cit., 30-37, contains excerpts of letters to Mrs. MacDuffie's parents dated, November 1, 1880; March 20, 1881; April 17, 1881; April 24, 1881; and May 1, 1881.

⁶⁶ Several clippings in an Archival Scrapbook, undated but listed as being from the Springfield Republican, describe these exhibitions. One glowing article says that "the excellent work demonstrated by the MacDuffie School pupils shows what is possible when training is properly administered." Archival Scrapbook, 1903-1917. MacDuffie Archives.

⁶⁷ Dwight Englewood, The First Hundred Years, 10, 11. Dwight Archives.

development were related and could be mutually advantageous, promoting self-expression for young women.

Other sources from the period indicate the belief by leaders in an interrelationship between development of mind and body and consequent self-expression. Northfield Seminary's catalog pointed out that "The aim of physical training is health, without which mental and spiritual growth are retarded." The catalog then gave a brief explanation. "Physical training demands quick thought and action and teaches the brain to control new neuro-muscular mechanisms, thus strengthening powers of mind as well as body."⁶⁸

Echoing G. Stanley Hall's observation about the role of education, Emily Munro, in her editorial of 1914 commented that, "Education is to direct nervous energy into the right channels, and nothing is more stimulating to the mental processes than a sufficient change of work in the daily routine." Miss Munro argued that, under the developed instinct of play offered in various aspects of physical training, "the girl gains control of herself, she gains the power of adapting herself to given conditions with ever-increasing efficiency." As a result, "She feels that upon herself rests the full responsibility for what she does."⁶⁹ To the mentors of young women, that sense of self-possession was a result of wholesome forms of self-expression.

⁶⁸ Northfield Seminary, 1909-1910, 63, 64. Northfield Archives.

⁶⁹ Munro, *op. cit.*, 6.

Students with natural athletic ability were able to further develop and express their skills. Those who were less gifted athletically were also able to benefit, improving their fitness and skill levels under the watchful direction of trained physical directors and coaches. Wynona Sherman of The MacDuffie School Class of 1920, chuckled about her low level of athletic skill during her years at MacDuffie, but praised the patience with which Physical Director, Christian Neubauer, worked with her and others of less-than-exceptional physical skills. Mrs. Sherman said, "I guess I got better at vaulting and other things, thanks to him."⁷⁰

Physical activity also served as a release for tension or tedium. Mary Waring of Kimberly School catered to the instinct for play in her students. She did not hesitate to deviate from the daily schedule when she sensed that students needed a refreshing change. "We'd tell the children to leave their desks and take a run, and off they'd tear around the outside of the building," she confided. "(I)t was good for the children to let off steam, and it broke a rigid teacher-student relationship."⁷¹

Most schools formed an Athletic Association, whose membership usually included the entire student body. Students paid minimal dues for an athletic fund to defray costs of athletic equipment. More fundamentally, however, the associations were designed for the

⁷⁰ Author's interview with Mrs. Wynona Sherman, *op. cit.*

⁷¹ Quoted in Carlisle, 21.

purpose of enhancing school spirit, giving students a sense of being sponsors of their own activities, an integral part of their community. Students sometimes formed clubs within the associations, sponsoring activities other than the standard sporting events. Walking clubs provide one example.

ShIPLEY School established such a club in 1910. Its continuing vitality five years later was underlined in the yearbook of 1915 which said, "The Walking Club, through its enthusiasm and true spirit, has represented the social and athletic life of the school." Membership positions were limited to twenty and acceptance was based on qualifications through "fasting and taking four long walks within two weeks." Members sometimes hiked long distances for campouts at points of scenic and historic interest, including an area called "The King of Prussia," near Valley Forge.⁷²

Organized intra-school and inter-school athletic competitions provided opportunities for student self-expression. School officials often remained in the background, providing only the most necessary assistance and guidance, allowing the spotlight to fall on students as much as possible. At Rosemary Hall, the student population traditionally gathered in the gymnasium following a game. The captain of the winning team was given the honor of ascending a ladder to the top of a pole and hanging the banner of the losing team, to loud cheers from the student body. After descending, the captain circled the gymnasium,

⁷² The Rhombus, 1915, 54. Shipley Archives.

gathering team members as she went, until all had rounded the circle.⁷³ The event focused upon a particular team, but allowed the student body to participate in the activity, which was simultaneously their own and that of their school community.

Students who performed well in athletic competition received awards and praise. Occasionally they were entrusted with unanticipated responsibilities. When, in 1909, students of The Agnes Irwin School wished to enhance the school's athletic facilities, the captains of the two intra-school teams, Sally Putnam and Ann Shirk, were authorized to present the case of the students to the Alumnae Association.⁷⁴

Women's schools lauded those who participated on school teams as well as those who attended as spectators to cheer for them. The annual Emma Willard intra-school Field Meet in May of 1913 was "enthusiastically contested," declared the school yearbook. Naming the winners of the meet and noting that they had been awarded medals, the writer went on to state, "From the success and support athletics have received this year, the school can assuredly look forward to a bright future in this important feature of school life."⁷⁵ The Shipley yearbook of 1916 declaimed, "Great spirit has been shown this year by the whole school; their earnest desire to help, if not playing, at least by cheering, has

⁷³ Lee Sylvester interview with Marguerite Booram, Class of 1919, op. cit. C/RH Archives.

⁷⁴ Neel, 48.

⁷⁵ The Gargoyle, 1912-1913, 64. EWS Archives.

proved their underlying love for Shipley."⁷⁶ Participants whose individual performances were outstanding were duly applauded and the efforts of others who had competed or otherwise lent their support to the event were recognized.

Indeed, the schools fully integrated physical development activities with other aspects of school life, encouraging students to utilize their individual talents while fostering school spirit. The Saint Margaret's student newspaper editorialized in its November, 1906 issue, that, "we see the true Saint Margaret's spirit shown in the interest taken in every thing; Basket-ball, Tennis Tournament, Glee Club Trials, and in the way the girls have written for this edition of The Magpie."⁷⁷ Although school officials provided a clear structure within which physical development activity occurred, they fostered a significant amount of spontaneity within the framework. They wished to enhance the self-confidence and a sense of independence in each student, while emphasizing her membership in the school community.

Self-Expression in the Arts, Social Involvement, and Development of Communication Skills

As established earlier, although emphases varied, all schools in this study offered instruction in aspects of the arts and other areas emphasizing skills of communication.

⁷⁶ The Rhombus, 1916, 56. Shipley Archives.

⁷⁷ The Magpie, November, 1908, 4. SM/M Archives.

Most required at least a few credits in courses in one or more of the fine arts. Nearly all provided extra-curricular options in the arts. Standard offerings, whether curricular or extra-curricular, included music (vocal and instrumental), drawing and painting, dance, and drama. Some schools provided training in even more specialized areas like fashion design. For instance, a newspaper article in 1902 disclosed that "The professional model, Madame Capri will bring four beautiful costumes for use in posing" for the Art Department at The Emma Willard School. "The work done by the life class with Madame Capri as model will be important as showing the ability of students to put in practice the theories of art." The same article indicated that an out-of-door sketch class was being organized.⁷⁸

Their own feelings and experiences appear to have influenced the positive attitude toward student self-expression which school authorities displayed. Abby MacDuffie's autobiography which she called, The Little Pilgrim, recounts experiences which she regarded as significant, during her years growing up in rural Massachusetts. Mrs. MacDuffie attributed great value to a seemingly simple childhood activity and the sensitive response of family and friends to it:

Nothing, perhaps, could illustrate more accurately the intimate and simple home life of the nineteenth century than the interest that my best friend's family and mine took in their children's elaborately prepared concerts given at her home on occasional Friday evenings. We had written programs, and the names of the performers, children of the two families were translated into foreign ones. I remember especially 'Mlle. Constantia'

⁷⁸ Newspaper clipping in archival scrapbook, Troy Times, May 17, 1902. EWS Archives.

and 'Mme. Fantasia.' We would present duets, songs and readings with the greatest seriousness, and each was appreciated by our parents with generous applause. As I remember, we dressed for the occasion in sweeping trains. But I do not remember any smiles or condescending looks. It was all very professional.⁷⁹

The parents of both Lucia Polk Chapman and Caroline Susan Jones, who became Co-Principals of Springside School in 1915, like those of many female officials of women's schools, believed that girls should have the same educational opportunities as boys. Lucia's father, Leonidas Polk, was the Episcopal Bishop of Louisiana. As an officer in the Confederate Army during the Civil War, he compiled an exemplary military record and was killed in action in June, 1864. Bishop Polk had believed that children learned constructive moral behavior, not by having ideas "bludgeoned into them," but by allowing sufficient independence of action for learning, thus gaining experience in dealing with other people more naturally, as "with the air of daily life." When Lucia's husband died, she declined his family's invitation to live with them, preferring her independence. She became a teacher in order to support herself.⁸⁰

Caroline Jones also grew up in the South. Her mother died in 1868 and her father, a medical doctor, remarried. Caroline's stepmother, Susan Raynor Polk, was the sister of Lucia Chapman. When her father died, Caroline faced a financial uncertainty similar to that which had confronted her step-aunt. Miss Jones also chose the path of independence,

⁷⁹ MacDuffie, 4.

⁸⁰ Starr, 23-25.

turning to teaching as her profession, becoming a teacher at Springside in 1891. When the founding sisters, Miss Bell and Mrs. Comegys retired in 1915, they selected Caroline Jones and Lucia Chapman to become their successors as Co-Principals of Springside.⁸¹

Ethel Walker Smith was founder of The Ethel Walker School in 1911 and an alumna of The Baldwin School and Bryn Mawr College. When asked what had motivated her to start the school, she explained that, although she had had virtually no experience with such an endeavor, "the moment came when I wanted more freedom of expression and action, and the opportunity to create something of my own." Mrs. Smith added, "I had learned to teach, by teaching, secretarial work, by doing it, and I took a chance that I might learn how to manage a school from having one."

Clara Spence described her childhood as having been "full of plain living and high thinking," under the tutelage of her Scottish immigrant parents, William and Ann Spence. After winning the Silver Laurel Award for oratory at Albany Public High School, Clara earned a bachelor's degree at Boston University in 1879. Her mother encouraged her to further her education abroad, which Clara did as a Shakesporean scholar at the University of London. She supported herself by performing at evening entertainments. Her talent was sufficient to induce a number of people prominent in English society to urge her to embark on an acting career. She chose a less glamorous but more socially respectable

⁸¹ Ibid., 25, 26.

career in education. At the school Miss Spence founded in New York in 1892, her dramatic readings and poetry recitations provided both entertainment for her students and impetus to development of their own talents in areas of self-expression. Students often expressed their appreciation of the educational atmosphere by which such opportunities were provided. Grace Henry of the Class of 1906 remembered "What fun the school entertainments were! On a stage in the assembly room we would recite chosen pieces for mothers and friends."⁸²

School leaders believed, as Emily Munro put it, that:

Another fundamental instinct of the child is its imitative or dramatic ability. Almost every girl goes through a period of longing to go on the stage. This is because she has a latent feeling within that desires expression. She wants to throw off her conventional every-day self, and for a little time live in her dream world of knights and ladies and adventurous heroes and heroines.

Miss Munro claimed that even a timid child wishes to occasionally be other than "just herself" and often can, "after she has had training and experience and this training cannot begin too young." She contended that, for growing females, "only when their natural instinct is allowed to sink into disuse," will acts of spontaneity cause them to feel "self-conscious and embarrassed." Therefore, in a larger sense, it was important to ask,

⁸² Edmondson, 1-12.

"how do they acquit themselves when they are acting upon their own initiative and responsibility?"⁸³

Women's schools provided students with a wide range of opportunities for "acting upon their own initiative and responsibility." They literally, "acted," performing in dramatic and musical productions, danced, and they discussed and debated social issues. Classes and/or clubs which served as vehicles of self-expression were ubiquitous among schools. Students were encouraged by officials to exercise their creative abilities in concrete ways and the self-expression of individuals was often channelled directly into the building of school spirit. Miss Spence encouraged a student, Caroline McCook, to write the Spence School song in March, 1903, and it was sung by the Spence Glee Club in its first annual concert the following month. On another occasion, Spence students, inspired by a marionette show at their school, designed puppets, scenery, and dialogue, staging their own performance. As at other schools, pupils at Spence could choose from a wide variety of artistic endeavors including lessons in piano, singing, art, dancing, and they might join the Glee Club. As was also the case at nearly all of the schools studied,

⁸³ Munro, 6, 7.

student cultural horizons were widened through attendance at operas, concerts, museum showings, and theater performances.⁸⁴

At Chapin School, students also wrote the school song, with the encouragement of Miss Chapin and the Music Department Chair, Mrs. Cartwright.⁸⁵ Around the turn-of-the century, Brearley girls enjoyed recess periods during which they "swirled and swooped to the newly popular waltz from 'The Merry Widow,' then playing on Broadway with Donald Brian." The Physical Director, Mrs. Martin, used background music to help inspire her pupils in their calisthenics. Students used Indian Clubs and wands to improve coordination and strength. Brearley alumnae from the 1910's remember making "any number of 'craftsy' gift items that we brought home to our long suffering parents."⁸⁶ While the Spence, Chapin, and Brearley Schools could and did enjoy the relatively easy access to cultural advantages offered by New York City, other schools in less

⁸⁴ Edmondson, 27; A particularly poignant incident occurred on a Saturday in 1911 when train carrying the Knox student body back from attendance at a matinee performed by the Metropolitan Opera, was wrecked. Several students were killed and Miss Knox, though physically unharmed, was reported to have been so shocked and saddened by the tragedy that her own death soon followed. The school was able to recover from that and a dramatic fire which demolished the main building the following year (fortunately with no human casualties). Knox is located now in St. James, New York. The school deemed it financially necessary to become coeducational, admitting boys for the first time in 1973, but has maintained many traditions from its previous incarnation, even reestablishing a few that had been discontinued. "School History," The Knox School, Fall Bulletin, (90th Anniversary Issue), 1993, 2-14.

⁸⁵ The Wheel, May, 1926, unnumbered pages. Chapin Archives.

⁸⁶ Loud, 41-43. Brearley Archives.

cosmopolitan cities, in suburbs, small towns, or rural settings, also effectively utilized the arts as a means of student expression.

An advocate of art in the curriculum was Mary Wheeler of The Wheeler School in Providence, Rhode Island. Her educational specialty was the teaching of art and her goal was to facilitate development in students of an appreciation for beauty and of their own ability to produce things of beauty. Miss Wheeler and Mary Waring, a protege who left to establish Kimberly School in New Jersey in 1906, both believed that student artistic endeavors would enhance a student's sense of personal accomplishment and, in thus contributing to the school community, also enhance school spirit.⁸⁷

Yet, a typical day at both The Wheeler School and at Kimberly included more than sedentary work in the art studio as a means of student expression. In addition to providing music and crafts options, Miss Wheeler purchased two adjoining farms near Providence where facilities were established for students to play the sports appropriate to the seasons. She also established an annual tradition called the "Brother Party," based on the same idea as the "Brother-and Sister parties" of her youth, featuring dances and games which dated back to colonial times, allowing students to don costumes and step back in time to enjoy otherwise forgotten activities. Miss Waring at Kimberly likewise stressed outdoor activities in sports, as well as music and drama productions. A member of

⁸⁷ Williams, 222-229.

Kimberly's Class of 1910 designed a school banner symbolizing truth, light, victory, ambition, and purity. The Senior class chose a representative to make the presentation at Commencement. At both schools, student art shows were standard events.⁸⁸

Elizabeth Kempton, Art instructor at Wykeham Rise during the period, said, "Art Exhibitions on the walls of the long hall at Wykeham Rise continually aroused lively discussions, and the interest of all students. They included the work of the art classes, prints, and the paintings of arrived artists." Miss Kempton described a "Special Art course, which was in all subjects and mediums," and prepared interested students to enter art schools. She added that, "many continued it later as a career." However, a student who, like most, did not pursue a profession in the arts, nonetheless described her exposure to the arts at school as having "opened to me a field that I didn't know existed, in which I shall always have pleasure." On the annual Prize Day, student art exhibitions were held. Noted artists served as judges.⁸⁹

Josephine Natt, who became Head of Agnes Irwin School in 1915, solicited student ideas and support for the establishment of school symbols. Miss Natt convinced seniors to write a school song. In 1916, she elicited student support in the design for a school emblem. One of the emblem's uses was as an engraving for a school ring. This prompted

⁸⁸ Ibid., 230-234; Carlisle, 20-25.

⁸⁹ Whitman, 7.

a school tradition. Any Agnes Irwin student "in good standing," qualified to wear the ring.⁹⁰

Dance lessons were available for a fee at many schools. At several, it became a part of the curriculum. At Abbot Academy, Folk Dancing was introduced in the early 1900's. Instruction in that and other kinds of costumed dancing resulted in Spring productions such as, "Pageant of the Open Fields" and "Masque of the Flowers." Beginning in 1916, instructors who had earned degrees from Noyes School of Rhythmic Expression in New York, were hired to direct interested students in a course called, Rhythmic Expression. They encouraged individual interpretations of selected works. Student interest was high, with about half of the student population selecting the course. Typical was the response of one participant who described the "happy and carefree," feeling which the rhythmic dancing method gave her as she danced in the warm Spring sunshine on a grassy field.⁹¹

Ethel Walker Smith described dance as having held "an important place in our program under the admirable direction of Miss Darling and Miss Minor." In addition to teaching their regular classes, the two women made a further contribution to school spirit by encouraging students and staff to join them for informal evening dancing sessions. Said Mrs. Smith, "These were hilarious evenings and what we lacked in agility we made up in

⁹⁰ Neel, 56, 57.

⁹¹ Carpenter, 42, 43.

merriment." Students were trained for special performances in connection with drama productions and for an annual May Day dance event. The Head honored student initiative by agreeing to establish events like an annual trip to attend cultural events in New York and the establishment of an annual school dance.⁹²

During the nineteenth century, dancing had served as a substitute activity for required walks during periods of particularly inclement weather at Springside School. There, as at most other schools, dancing supplemented physical training with opportunities for social development. During the Progressive Era, girls had the privilege of arranging some of their own social events, including fancy dress or masquerade balls. Generally, one or two students took the leadership role, enlisting the help of others in establishing a theme, which sometimes specifically honored one or two fellow students.⁹³

At most other schools, students traditionally were responsible for creating some of the year's school activities, many of them focusing upon dancing and other forms of self-expression. "Germans" became popular. The term initially described parlor games which were played at balls but during the period came to refer to the balls themselves, and eventually, to nearly any student-initiated entertainment. Such entertainment was a focal point of student life at Miss Porters. During one unspecified year in the mid-1910's,

⁹² Eethel Walker Smith, "A History of the Ethel Walker School...", unnumbered pages. Ethel Walker Archives.

⁹³ Starr, 32.

Germans included such varying themes as: golf, Puritans, paper dolls, Cinderella, a circus, and football. "At least one father expressed disapproval of his daughter's dressing up in jersey and tight pants for the Football German," reported a school history.⁹⁴

In 1912, The Chapin School staged an event which is difficult to categorize. The "Greek Festival," at nearby Hartsdale Field, was interdisciplinary in character, essentially a pageant portraying the traditions and customs of the ancient Greeks. Students, well-rehearsed and clothed in ancient Greek garb designed to be as authentic as possible, braved icy March winds, with teachers busily wrapping sweaters and coats around those of their charges who were not performing for the moment. They staged portions of Greek theater productions, complete with Greek choruses and masks, participated in Socratic discussions, and in athletic competitions. The spectacle attracted a sizable throng of curious onlookers, despite the polar breezes. In addition to the festival's assorted educational benefits, it was not lost on Miss Chapin that the performance had been, as she had anticipated, a public relations bonanza for the school.⁹⁵

The Magpie student editor exhorted her fellow students, reminding them that, "School spirit is what Saint Margaret's is noted for and we can't hold our reputation for such

⁹⁴ Davis and Donahue, 22, 34.

⁹⁵ "Memories of The Chapin School," Alumnae Bulletin of The Chapin School, (Fiftieth Anniversary Edition), 1951, 13.

unless you girls raise it yourselves."⁹⁶ There and at other schools, students appear to have taken such advice to heart, though none perhaps quite so literally as Marguerite Bernard, a student at The Masters School, whose project topic was specifically, the Dobbs school spirit. Marguerite wrote and was a performer in a play for the school's Class Day portion of Commencement activities in 1915, entitled, "The Search for the Dobbs Spirit: An allegorical Play Written for Class Day at the Misses Masters School." It was presented by the Class of 1915 on May 20 of that year. The message was essentially a Christian one of love for one's fellow man, replete with costumed fairies, sprites, wood nymphs and other creatures of creative fantasy.⁹⁷

However, reflecting an essentially Victorian standard of conduct, Miss Masters did not hesitate to discourage any form of student self-expression which she felt to be inappropriate. One Victorian quirk was her insistence that it was never appropriate for women, young or otherwise, to wear pants, even to play male roles in dramatic productions. Consequently, many a "male" character in Dobbs performances was deprived of full "masculine" effect by the skirt which flowed beneath the otherwise male look of slicked-back hair or derby hat, suit jacket, white shirt, and tie.⁹⁸ While such foibles may seem amusing, even endearing in hindsight, to contemporary students they

⁹⁶ Magpie, November, 1908, 4. SM/M Archives.

⁹⁷ Copy of play, Marguerite Bernard, Class of 1915, "The Search for the Dobbs Spirit: An Allegorical Play Written for Class Day at the Misses Masters' School," in Masters Archives.

⁹⁸ Marshall, 26. Masters Archives.

must have been the source of some frustration. Yet, Miss Masters supported many types of student-generated activity and was not averse to spontaneous, even boisterous events. Political rallies and celebrations for victorious political candidates were hardly prim affairs at Dobbs. Neither were uproarious traditional events like Germans nor April Fool's Day activities.⁹⁹

In addition to the discussion and debate and charitable social outreach activities discussed in a previous chapter, students became actively involved in social issues of the day in other ways which enhanced their knowledge about society and their own skills of communication. Shipley's Senior class was chaperoned by Heads Alice Howland and Eleanor Brownell on a visit to Washington D. C. in April, 1918. Among other points of interest, they visited the House of Representatives. The student author of a yearbook article about the trip, commented that she and her classmates had been surprised by the apparent general disorderliness of affairs in the main chamber. She went on to say that they felt sorry for the lone female representative, Jeanette Rankin of Montana, "but I am sure that if there were more women representatives, there would be less confusion and more work done."¹⁰⁰

⁹⁹ Vose, The Masters School, 10, 11.

¹⁰⁰ Helen Cunningham, "Leaves From a Senior's Diary," Rhombus, 1918, 39, 40. Shipley Archives.

Several schools had speakers who addressed the evils of child labor. Among these were Miss Mary C. Wiggin of Boston speaking to students at Walnut Hill School about the activities of the Consumers' League. John Graham Brooks did the same at Saint Margarets. A Miss Miner (possibly Sarah Luella Miner, who is noted for her missionary work on behalf of women and children in China from 1887-1937)¹⁰¹ addressed Knox students during several school years on the topic of "Child Labor."¹⁰² Students at Dwight School were among those moved to activism by their knowledge about the issue. Dwight students formed their own chapter of the National Consumers' League in 1909. Shipley students also joined the campaign for improved working conditions in factories and department stores and for the abolition of child labor. The students so identified with the plight of working girls, particularly those overworked during the Christmas shopping season, that "one and all joined the league, and some really tried to do their shopping before the fifteenth of December."¹⁰³

At Miss Hall's School, students expressed their interest in the human aspects of World War I, even prior to United States entry. Girls conscientiously rolled bandages and

¹⁰¹ Notable American Women, 1607-1950 (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1971), 58-550.

¹⁰² Promotional catalog, Walnut Hill School, Natick, Mass., 1913-1914, unnumbered pages, listed speakers who had appeared at Walnut Hill the previous year, and their topics. WHS Archives; Salmagundi, 1903, 44. SM/M Archives; Roseleaves, for 1916, 1917, and 1919, contain references. Knox Archives.

¹⁰³ Vaishampayan, 11; The Rhombus, 1913, 95. Shipley Archives.

knitted garments for the war's European needy. The activity stimulated two Seniors from the Class of 1915, Dorothy Farrand Haynes and Alice Wainwright, to compose a song which they and their classmates could sing as their hands were busied in rolling and knitting. The tune was that of the contemporary hit song, "Pack Up Your Troubles," and the key lyrics to their version, used the refrain, and "Knit, Knit, Knit."¹⁰⁴

Although recitation continued to be a commonly-used classroom method, indications are that students were also being exposed to educational methods and topics which developed coherent expression. In the early 1900's, Dana Hall offered an elective course in Political Economy. It was "designed to give older students an idea of the leading questions of the day and of the economic principles that underlie them." The course included field trips, one of which, in 1905, was to a Democratic rally in South Boston. Edna Vose Weston of the Class of 1905 critiqued the rally, describing it as "cheap," believing that the primary speaker's exhortation was "weak, not to the point, and extremely illiterate." She concluded that, "I don't see how an educated person after hearing these men speak could vote for them," and declared emphatically, "I hate democrats." Dana Hall's 1909-1910 catalog described a new Department of Expression whose aim was "to strengthen the personality of each pupil." In addition to developing speaking technique and enlarging their vocabulary, students were trained to think

¹⁰⁴ MHS Alumnae News, September, 1958, unnumbered pages. MHS Archives.

logically and express themselves coherently "by extemporaneous speaking on literary and art subjects."¹⁰⁵

Sometimes students wrote articles in their publications describing and analyzing contemporary national or international issues. Among examples was a discussion of the Russo-Japanese War in 1904 by one of the student editors of Baldwin's Prologue. Isobel Rogers pointed out Russian designs on Korea. In her view, Japan had served as Korea's liberator from China's grasp.¹⁰⁶ A Shipley student named Elinor Curwen described a visit she had made to a cotton mill. She told about the constant din and dust in the building and praised the skill of the workers she had observed. Elinor made no impassioned plea for specific reform of working conditions, apparently allowing readers to draw their own conclusions from her matter-of-fact depiction. She did conclude with the statement that, "When we came out of the mill, it felt very pleasant to get a breath of fresh air that did not make us choke and sneeze. The cotton that clung to our clothes was brushed off."¹⁰⁷

Debate activities also provided opportunities for students to gain insight into issues of importance. Perhaps as important as their knowledge of subject matter and the gaining of research skills, was the participants' development of skills of critical thought and the ability to express their ideas clearly and logically. Shipley was among girls' schools

¹⁰⁵ Post, 36.

¹⁰⁶ Isobel Rogers, "Russia and Japan," Prologue, March, 1904, 3, 4. Baldwin Archives.

¹⁰⁷ Elinor Curwen, "In a Cotton Mill," The Rhombus, 1911, 72, 73. Shipley Archives.

which established a formal debate program . The yearbook of 1918 commented on the benefits which had accrued to participants and placed the gains in a social context. "We are the women of the rising generation," the unidentified writer declared. "Shall the end of the war find us prepared or unprepared?" she asked, rhetorically. "Certainly prepared, if we realize the value of the Debating Society, for it offers an opportunity of learning how to debate and how to gain self-control."¹⁰⁸

Many schools established publications which served as vehicles for student self-expression. Most common of these were school yearbooks and newspaper/literary magazines, for which the design and content were largely in student hands. One such type of publication which served as a medium for development of student creative and formal writing skills combined a literary magazine format with the function of a school newspaper, providing news of the school and its alumnae along with literary contributions by students, including poetry, short stories, plays, and editorials.

Examples of this included the Silver and White at The MacDuffie School. It was a small, stylish, soft-cover publication which appears to have displaced the thicker standard yearbook, with its hard cover, when first appearing in 1918, perhaps prompted to save paper by the national atmosphere of wartime austerity. During the final few years of the period, Silver and White was published annually and incorporated aspects of the

¹⁰⁸ "The Debating Society," The Rhombus, 1918, 45. Shipley Archives.

Magnolia Leaves editions of the late nineteenth century, combining articles describing important school activities during the year, with a number of short stories and poems.¹⁰⁹

The Westover Lantern, also seems to have taken up some of the slack in coverage of school events, as the traditional yearbook was phased out by 1916. The Lantern had been established the year the school opened in 1909. Expanded coverage of school activities was the most significant modification in its format during the 1910's. However students continued to publish it quarterly with about the same volume of student literary pieces as before.¹¹⁰

Editions of the Question Mark (published with a title which was, literally, a ?) of Rosemary Hall, Dwightonia of the Dwight School, and Abbot Courant of Abbot Academy were other such publications appearing periodically each school year. Combining the functions of the school newspaper and literary magazine, an important purpose was their distribution to, not only the student body, but to alumnae and friends of the school, usually for a subscription cost to defray expenses. For example, a subscription to Dwightonia in 1917 was \$1.50, while Abbot charged \$1.00 for its publication. Other schools charged within that price range.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁹ Silver and White for years 1918-1920. MacDuffie Archives.

¹¹⁰ Lantern for years 1909-1920 in bound volumes. Westover Archives.

¹¹¹ Dwightonia, November, 1917. Dwight Archives; Carpenter, 66.

These and other student publications, such as yearbooks, listed committees of student editors who were responsible for them. Usually a student editor-in-chief was listed. Articles reported school activities, often in some detail, and usually reported on achievements and activities of alumnae. Many schools exchanged copies of their student publications, apparently in order to serve as a basis of comparison in format and coverage. In a broader sense, the exchange probably facilitated a sharing of ideas about activities occurring at counterpart schools, activities which might conceivably be adapted to their own school program.¹¹²

Editorials tended to exhort students to be conscious of their responsibilities toward the school community and the larger society. At the turn-of-the-century, topics usually focused on student participation in traditional activities, on academic effort, health practices, and involvement in community outreach activities. During the World War I years, students were encouraged to participate in such wartime activities as Bond Drives, bandage rolling, planting victory gardens, and participating in rationing programs.

¹¹² For example, The Irwinian, student paper of the Agnes Irwin School in its November, 1910 issue, on page 25, listed the titles of thirty-two school publications which it received, in exchange for editions of The Irwinian with reviews of some of the articles appearing in the imports. The following year, its March edition, on pages 18-20, listed fifty-four such publications, with some accompanying reviews. Critiques involved both content and writing technique. In the June, 1911 edition, on pages 3-6, a section called "As Others See Us," gave brief reviews of Irwinian articles by editors from other schools. While a few comments in this sampling of reviews by students from Irwin and elsewhere, might be categorized as being somewhat sarcastic in character, most seemed balanced and positive in orientation, indicating a willingness to learn from both the flaws and assets in the work of their counterparts. Presumably, editions of imported school publications were available for the perusal of the general student population, thereby proportionately increasing the possible participation in this interchange of ideas.

Following the war, articles about food and clothing drives for its victims were ubiquitous in the pages of student publications.

School Spirit Through Student Self-Government

Self-government might be defined as the practice by members of a group, of choosing their own leaders by election, with those leaders empowered to enact decisions bearing significantly on the daily life of that group. If so defined, abundant examples of such self-government existed at women's schools. Classes and organizations at every school selected individuals from among their peers to hold student leadership positions.

Yearbooks and other student publications, school histories, photographs, etc., verify the ubiquity of this most basic mechanism of democratic self-government, the right to vote.

The imposition, by adult school officials, of a minimum of rules had important ramifications for student life. A manifestation of this approach was that duly-constituted student leaders appear to have had perceptible influence on conditions of daily living at the schools. In a formal sense, many schools established student governmental organization and written constitutional procedures. In addition, classes and clubs elected their own leaders and established their own procedures at most schools, although adult officials remained a benevolent background presence, responding to requests for assistance or providing an occasional, and generally, subtle, nudge.

Although the structure of student governmental mechanisms varied somewhat among schools, a common factor appears to have been student involvement in establishing school disciplinary policies. Rosemary Hall's "Self Government" was established in 1896, its constitution drafted by a committee of five students. Their "Constitution of Rosemary Hall" was modeled on the United States Constitution. It placed the responsibility for the school's discipline with a committee of students, elected by their peers. Although adjustments to the original constitution were made at times, basic principles remained intact throughout the period.¹¹³

Other schools also delegated responsibility to students for establishing their own disciplinary procedures. It is reported that, at the opening of Wykeham Rise in 1902, "The first pupils made their own school rules and kept them, thus starting what later became the Self-Government Association."¹¹⁴ In 1909, the same year as the advent of Chapin's Upper School, Miss Chapin approved the request of students to form their Self-Government Association. She entrusted them with devising their own system, under which power was ultimately placed in an elected group of students called the "Advisory Council." Discussion of disciplinary issues and the methods of dealing with them appear to have covered a rather wide spectrum, initially. One suggestion for punishing infractions of school rules was to place the offender in a locker. Fortunately, cooler heads

¹¹³ Lorraine Seeley, The Rosemary ?, November, 1915, op. cit., 6. C/RH Archives.

¹¹⁴ Whitman, 4.

prevailed and the proposal was rejected. A motion which was passed in 1912, exemplified the tactic of moral suasion, stating that "the girls of the Upper School should be on their honour to dance only the Waltz and the Boston, and to hold one another in the old-fashioned way."¹¹⁵

Such esoteric practices were, however, much the exception and school officials accorded the institution of student government respect, treating it as a dignified ally in promoting stability and school spirit. When student self-government was instituted at Abbot in 1916, the function of the Council was described as being "oversight of the conduct of resident students off campus" and the appointment of "proctors to be responsible for good order in Draper Hall," the school's only dormitory at that time. Miss Bailey and the faculty held a solemn ceremony of induction. At the Council's second meeting, Miss Bailey formally presented a mahogany gavel, symbolizing the important place in school life of student government.¹¹⁶

Helen Cooke, Head of Dana Hall, cultivated an atmosphere of openness under which informal suggestions by students for dealing with aspects of school life were taken seriously, and often resulted in concrete action. For example, a group of students advised Miss Cooke about how to respond to a letter from the mother of a fellow student who was

¹¹⁵ The Wheel, May 26, 1926, 3.

¹¹⁶ Carpenter, 10, 11.

complaining that her daughter had to work too hard. In 1902, Miss Cooke formally established a student advisory group composed of Seniors, which was simultaneously an Honor Society. Although the latter might hint at elements of elitism, "Its job," says a school history, "was to set a high standard of honor, to promote school and class spirit, and to encourage a sense of democracy." This group evolved into the elective "Student Council" during the period, retaining the same essential goals in dealing with issues of student life.¹¹⁷

Emily Munro of Saint Margaret's School similarly encouraged open communication with her students. She had been hired to revitalize Saint Margaret's in 1909-1910. Most of the student population had accompanied her predecessor, Mary Hillard, who had opened Westover School in nearby Middlebury. Building upon some established traditions and instituting others, Miss Munro's efforts resulted in a steady and substantial increase in the student population. She deemed the student population ready for self-government by 1914 and presided at a formal installation ceremony in the Fall of 1914.¹¹⁸

Dwight School's student government evolved from a request by students in 1900, to discipline themselves in certain school activities. The first year of that approach was deemed a success and a full Honor System was established. Students agreed to report

¹¹⁷ Post, 40, 41.

¹¹⁸ Ohmann, 68, 69; The Magpie, November, 1914, 19. SM/M Archives.

their own and other offenses of which they were unequivocally aware. In 1904, the first slate of student government leaders was elected.¹¹⁹

Some school officials felt that student self-government could serve as a form of behavior modification, addressing a certain lack of maturity which they considered harmful to both school morale and to the students themselves. In 1916, student governments were established at Lincoln School, at Miss Lucas' instigation, and at Emma Willard, under Eliza Kellas. Both wished to elevate the maturity level evident in general behavior among students. At Lincoln School, Miss Lucas' straightforward manner and inclination to dress in bold colors had caused a stir upon her ascension to leadership of the school in 1911. It appears that she was concerned with an element of timidity and overdependence displayed by some of the girls, whose parents were, perhaps overly-protective. At Emma Willard too, Miss Kellas felt that greater responsibility for the school's well-being must be shifted to the students. This, she felt, would have a sobering effect on juvenile pranksters and would channel student energy into positive directions. Both Heads appear to have enjoyed some success. Student creative contributions poured into Lincoln's newly-established literary magazine in 1917, and avenues of student self-expression expanded in drama and music as well. At Emma Willard, The Gargoyle for 1916

¹¹⁹ "Dwight School--A Century Old," Dwight Alumnae Bulletin, Spring, 1959, 3; "Centennial Timeline, 1889-1989," Dwight-Englewood School: The First Hundred Years, 1889-1989, 2. D/E Archives.

described self-government as an "organization for developing the character of the girls," and evaluated it as having "proven a great success."¹²⁰

Like adult governments at every level, student government officials soon found that much of their work involved mundane, detailed activity, necessary perhaps, but often unglamorous and tedious. Evidence indicates that, at most schools, student leaders learned to accept and, perhaps benefited by, experiencing the literal meaning of being a "public servant." However, at some schools, the process was not initially a smooth one. An allegorical tale in The MacDuffie School yearbook of 1915 depicted such a setback. Entitled, "The Great White Bird," the story's main characters were a beautiful, white-haired "Godmother of Girls" and a Great White Bird, named "Student Government," who paused to rest on the branches of the school's Magnolia tree.¹²¹

Feeling that the best way to have her girls "learn the habits of this bird would be to have it live in their midst," the Godmother explained to them that it would be necessary for all to contribute daily to maintaining a loving environment for the bird by helping to care for its nest. After an initial burst of enthusiasm, however, the interest of most girls faded, along with their efforts. The nest became uninhabitable and the bird had to look for

¹²⁰ Dorothy Gifford, Lincoln School, op. cit., 9, 57; Potwine, 85, 86.

¹²¹ "The Great White Bird," The Annual, 1915, 34, 35. MacDuffie Archives.

another place where girls would be more hospitable to Student Government.¹²² The gentle but unmistakable chastisement in the story provides another example of the technique of "voluntary compliance," of an "honor system," which utilized a sense of guilt, not necessarily as a punitive measure, but as a means of helping children to learn from their mistakes.

Self-government at Springside School likewise appears to have required a period of adjustment by students. It was instituted in 1918, in connection with an honor system. Students wrote a report to their class presidents of any violations of school rules they had committed during the day. Deportment was the primary concern of the students' ruling body. Minutes of board meetings indicate that talking in halls and classrooms were sources of the greatest number of violations. A letter from Co-Principal Caroline Jones to the Self Government President in 1921, described an initial antagonism to the institution by many students which, she felt, had been largely ameliorated by the fact that she and Mrs. Chapman had been "willing to waive some of our own prerogatives [to get it] firmly established in the affection of the girls."¹²³

Evidence from the period discloses that, at virtually all schools investigated, students elected their own leaders for classes and clubs. Occasionally, an organization had

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ Starr, 44.

sufficient stature to formulate its own constitution. Among examples were the Athletic Association at Westover and the Northfield Seminary's chapter of the Young Womens' Christian Association and its branches at the school, organizations called "The Missionary Society" and "The King's Daughters".¹²⁴

The effects of self-government branched throughout the student population in both direct and indirect ways. At some schools, in addition to the duly-elected members of the formal student government boards, students were asked to assume leadership positions in other areas of responsibility such as proctoring dormitory areas.¹²⁵ More indirectly the same spirit of self-expression which fostered self-government, was evident at schools which provided opportunities for students to practice responsibility for certain of their personal activities, though under the discreet oversight of school authorities. One example was the use by a few schools, of a school bank, in which students deposited money in their own accounts and used checkbooks for withdrawals and deposits, keeping their own records. Miss Spence and Charlotte Baker, her close friend who eventually was named Co-Principal, examined student accounts monthly at Spence. The Knox School catalog of 1919-1920 described the school bank as "one of the most needed and

¹²⁴ Spykman, 52; Catalog, Y. W. C. A. Handbook of Northfield Seminary, 1898-99, 7, and catalog, Northfield Seminary, 1899-1900, 37, 39. N/MH Archives.

¹²⁵ For example, Ethel Walker selected some of her students to oversee and inspect the care of study halls and dormitory rooms even before a formal self-government was established. Smith, "A History of the Ethel Walker School..."; Similarly, students were elected to dormitory proctor positions at Emma Willard each semester, as part of the student government structure. Potwine, 85, 86.

valued institutions of the school, and it is appreciated by the parents when thoroughly understood." Its most significant benefit was that "each girl learns the proper use of money and responsibility and spends far less."¹²⁶ If so, little wonder that parents supported the idea.

The social gospel emphasized a communitarian spirit. It was a society which could be perfected only by assuring the dignity and full development of each individual.

Progressive educators emphasized the development of individual students within the context of a school community reflecting the larger society of which it was a part. It was, indeed, the progressive educational philosophy of nurturing students toward a realization of their potential as useful members of society, that underlay the willingness of school leaders to promote student self-expression in a myriad of ways. Each of these, in essence, provided students the opportunity for a measure of individual self-government within the context of their school community and their society.

In fostering the physical and intellectual skills of each student through methods of self-expression, school officials believed that they were also enhancing her all-important personal character. In this way a young woman could best develop her ability to think and act as an individual. However, school authorities agreed with John Dewey that, such

¹²⁶ Edmondson, 31; The Knox School for Girls, Tarrytown-On-Hudson, New York, 1919-1920, 34. Knox Archives.

development was impossible in isolation, that it had no meaning unless it occurred within a social context.

That students themselves understood this is reflected in the many expressions possible within their school community. Some of their recorded commentary on school spirit and its meaning has already been cited. An unsigned editorial in a Baldwin School student publication provides a further and representative expression of the extent to which students had absorbed the fundamental lessons that adult school leaders hoped to teach them. The writer linked physical health to good character and individuality to community well-being:

Each of us must be a 'good citizen,' a valuable asset to the portion of the world in which we live...If the school and grounds are to look well, we, as a part of the school, must keep up to standard and look well too...Therefore, if we want to be happy and successful together, and we most assuredly do, good posture must be one of the perfections for which we strive...If we are to be true 'good citizens,' we will care for our neighbors also...Moreover, our ample reward will be the joy of living where everything from trees to tempers, from hedges to hearts, is lovely.¹²⁷

¹²⁷ The Milestone, November 15, 1916, 2, 3. Baldwin Archives.

**CHAPTER 6: OFFICIALS OF PRIVATE SECONDARY SCHOOLS
FOR WOMEN: PROGRESSIVE ACTIVISTS**

Previous chapters have disclosed strikingly similar patterns in the educational approach of the leaders of private secondary schools for women. Officials of women's schools incorporated into school life, socio-religious values enunciated by the social gospel, expanding the boundaries of women's education to include exposure to social issues. This approach expressed a progressive ethos, manifesting a non-sectarian, Christian, social gospel message by centering the life of each individual on the well-being of his/her community and society. Reflecting a progressive educational approach, school authorities provided opportunities for students to shape the development of their skills and character through the experience of a socially contributory lifestyle in their school community.

Most of these school officials were women. Evidence shows that some were involved in progressive reform activities in the larger society. The backgrounds of those leaders tend to be typical of those of the school authorities studied as well as those of female reformers in general. Demonstrating a social awareness reminiscent of that promoted during their secondary school years, evidence suggests that many alumnae of the schools continued the progressive tradition of involvement in "socially useful" activities, whether professionally or as volunteers. They were among a group of women providing a bridge between Victorian standards of female social behavior and a widened standard. The

self-confidence of this group of women educated during the Progressive Era prompted them to pursue education and career paths not traditionally followed by women.

Profiles of Progressive Activism By Officials of Women's Private Secondary Schools

The backgrounds of those school officials about whom biographical information is available (most of the officials in this study), tend to match the descriptions historians typically give of the backgrounds of female progressive reformers. Their upbringing was generally under the tutelage of parents who inculcated Protestant moral values emphasizing honesty, diligence, the efficacy of education and of democracy. In common with other female progressive reformers, many school leaders grew up in families which had a reform tradition, often including abolition, and/or temperance activities.

In many childhood households of school officials, the father was a Protestant clergyman. Among examples was the Reverend James D. Lucas, a missionary to India for many years. On the day that Reverend and Mrs. Lucas celebrated their Golden wedding anniversary in 1922, their daughter, Frances, who had been Principal of Lincoln School from 1913 to 1921, was married to Dr. William Edwards Henderson, Dean of the Liberal Arts College at Ohio State University. Frances had encouraged civic awareness by Lincoln students during her tenure as Principal. When she left Lincoln in June, 1921,

Miss Lucas did social welfare work and gave a number of lectures throughout the country, describing the nature and importance of such work.¹

Abigail MacDuffie's father was college-educated. At times he served as a Unitarian pastor, at other times, as an educational administrator. In the early 1860's, Reverend Parsons' anti-slavery views had not resonated well with certain influential parishioners whose business interests were closely tied to those of the South and he resigned his Waltham, Massachusetts pastorate during the Civil War, turning to education as a career. His daughter, Abby, also became an educator. Her husband and Co-principal of The MacDuffie School, John MacDuffie Jr., had been educated at Harvard. He was the son of a self-educated Scotch-Irish immigrant father. John MacDuffie Sr. had been postmaster, then clerk of courts for the town of Cambridge, Massachusetts. He was elected to three terms in the state Legislature and was a member of the Cambridge Board of Education for several years.²

¹ Newspaper clippings, Providence Sunday Journal, September 26, 1920 and Providence Journal, April 2, 1922 in Scrapbook PB-266, (1920-1934), Archives of Lincoln School, Providence, RI, hereafter called Lincoln Archives.

² MacDuffie, Little Pilgrim, John MacDuffie IV, grandson of John MacDuffie Jr., wrote an essay called, "The Grandfather Theme," during his Junior year at Gould Academy in Maine during the 1947-48 school year, for which he did considerable research on his grandfather's family history. Ann Hathaway Sturtevant, MacDuffie Class of 1952, has written several unpublished papers about the MacDuffies for the school's Alumnae Association and was a friend of the wife of John Jr.'s son, Malcom. Mrs. Sturtevant obtained a transcript of John IV's "Grandfather Theme" for the MacDuffie archives. Information about John Sr. and John Jr. is from "Grandfather Theme," 2, 3. MacDuffie Archives.

While John MacDuffie Jr. considered himself to be a Republican, it does not appear that he was a political activist. Neither, however, does it appear that he objected to the activism of his wife, Abby , who belonged to the National Women's Suffrage Association. She described her involvement in suffrage work in her autobiography:

My father, in his quiet sincere way had stood for the freedom of the black man, and through his sympathies had sacrificed his pastorate. The only thing I sacrificed [for suffrage work] was time and strength. It was a joy to work in the ranks under such leaders as Anna Shaw, Mrs. Catt and Mrs. Pankhurst; it was thrilling to speak from an automobile and finally to march in a parade when woman's suffrage was won.

Abby was also active in forming the League of Women Voters in Springfield, Massachusetts, serving as the chapter's first president in the early 1920's.³

Yet, as devoted as she was to the suffrage cause, Mrs. MacDuffie, in 1918, stated in a published letter to the editor of a local newspaper that, "I am an ardent suffragist, but I would give up the privilege of voting if our land could be freed from the thralldom of the liquor traffic." Countering opponents of Prohibition who argued that such legislation constituted an incursion against individual rights, she asked, rhetorically, "Has any individual the freedom to carry on a mode of life that is a menace to other members of the commonwealth?" Abby further developed this communitarian position, comparing the willingness of Americans to make sacrifices during World War I for the overall public good, with a commensurate need to abolish a socially destructive practice in the sale and

³ "Grandfather Theme;" op. cit. MacDuffie, Little Pilgrim, 52.

consumption of alcohol.⁴ In the politics of the time, the causes of suffrage and prohibition were commonly linked. Women reformers tended to support both as promoting social morality. Proponents hoped, and opponents feared, that the passage of one would greatly enhance prospects for passage of the other.⁵

Sarah Porter was among the pioneering generation of women's secondary school leaders, but she lived into the Progressive Era, dying on February 17, 1900. Many of Miss Porter's younger counterparts at other schools seem to have held social ideals in tune with certain of hers. All attempted to follow Miss Porter's emphasis on personal rectitude. Like Miss Porter, they provided a Christian spiritual context within which educational training could enhance the general moral level of society. One specific aspect of Miss Porter's social/moral views with which a number of younger school leaders seemed fully in accord, was her abhorrence of the social effects of strong drink.

For instance, in 1897, Sarah Porter, an octogenarian and in ill health, still mustered the strength to write to former students from her sickbed, requesting donations in support of a local effort to eradicate the presence of a "Liquor Saloon" in the midst of otherwise

⁴ Newspaper clipping, Springfield Republican, March 7, 1918 in archival scrapbook, 1917-1928. MacDuffie Archives.

⁵ Paul E. Fuller, Laura Clay and the Woman's Rights Movement (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1975), 86, 87; Krador, 57-63; Carrie Chapman Catt and Nettie Rogers Shuler, Woman Suffrage and Politics (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1923), 133, 134.

idyllic Farmington. The saloon's location near an inn where the families of students stayed when visiting the school seems to have been a particular affront to her educational and social ideals. "The beauty, decency, the moral purity of this village, the danger of exposure to our pupils, all urge to this," she wrote, in soliciting support for its removal.⁶

Though of a later generation, Progressive-Era leaders of women's schools had in common with Sarah Porter, a middle class upbringing which emphasized strong Christian religious values. Many shared her temperance views. Charlotte Conant's father was Judge of Probate Court for Franklin County, Massachusetts. Like many of the parents of school leaders studied, Judge Conant believed that girls should be educated on a basis of equality with boys. Charlotte and her friend, Florence Bigelow, were Co-Principals of Walnut Hill School. They had met while attending Wellesley College in the early 1880's, during Alice Freeman's administrative tenure. Miss Freeman recommended that, following their graduation, the two should consider opening a college preparatory school for girls. President Shafer of Wellesley did likewise. In 1893, several years after their graduation, circumstances enabled Charlotte and Florence to open Walnut Hill School.⁷

Miss Conant and Miss Bigelow were committed to the temperance cause. They felt that it was an issue about which students should be informed and invited speakers to describe

⁶ Davis and Donahue, 27.

⁷ Typed manuscript by Florence Bigelow of her recollections of the manner in which Walnut Hill School was begun. Dated, November 3, 1935. WHS Archives.

the negative social effects of alcohol. For example, an article on the school's history in an alumnae publication reports that, on an October evening in 1898, a guest speaker gave a "particularly moving sermon on temperance."⁸ That Helen Temple Cooke, Principal of Dana Hall, was also against the use of strong drink was well-known in Wellesley, Massachusetts. Miss Cooke was active in maintaining Wellesley's status as a "dry" town, throughout the Progressive Era. Helen was born April 13, the day before Lincoln's assassination in 1865, in Rutland, Vermont. Her family was not wealthy and she began her teaching career in Rutland at the age of seventeen, in large part to relieve the financial strain on the family. Miss Cooke had little formal training. Nonetheless she became an administrator of that local school at nineteen. When the Eastman sisters subsequently convinced Helen to teach at Dana Hall in 1894, she emerged as their heir apparent, becoming Principal following their retirement in 1899.⁹ Although ambivalent about the efficacy of legislative prohibition, Clara Spence favored voluntary temperance. When the Eighteenth Amendment was adopted, however, she argued that the law must be upheld.¹⁰

In the area of woman suffrage, Abby MacDuffie was not the only activist among school leaders. Caroline Ruutz-Rees' family background was typical of the standard progressive profile, to the extent, at least, that it was middle-class in nature. She was born in

⁸ "Echoes," op. cit., 27.

⁹ Post, 18-20.

¹⁰ Edmondson, 48.

England. Her father, Emile Ruutz-Rees, was described as having been a "business entrepreneur" in India. He died there during the 1880's. His widowed wife and two children moved to the United States. Caroline established Rosemary Hall in Wallingford, Connecticut in 1890. She was an active supporter of woman suffrage, a member of the NWSA.¹¹

Other suffragist school officials included Mary Waring, Maria Chapin, Ethel Stringfellow, and Clara Spence. Mary Waring was born in Brooklyn in 1868. Her father, William H. Waring, was a lawyer, who, following her graduation from Packer Collegiate Institute, encouraged her to continue her education at Smith College. Miss Waring and several of her teachers at the Kimberly School belonged to the Montclair, New Jersey Equal Suffrage League. Activities included marching in parades which the League sponsored or in which it participated. Marionita Chalfin Ranger, whose family had befriended Miss Waring when she was still in College at Smith, was a Kimberly student (Class of 1922) who recalled that "Aunt Mary" often proselytized on behalf of suffrage. One person whom she attempted to convert to the cause was Jephtha Dillard, a black man who was the school's janitor. Dillard listened patiently to Miss Waring's impassioned case. "No, ma'am," he finally said, softly. "Women's suffered long enough."¹²

¹¹ Archival scrapbooks contain newspaper clippings from: The Bridgeport Post, December, 15, 1935; Daily News Graphic (Greenwich, Connecticut), March 6, 1935; Obituary for Caroline Ruutz-Rees, New York Herald Tribune, February, 16, 1954. C/RH Archives.

¹² Carlisle, 20, 21.

Ethel Stringfellow, from a substantial family in Alabama, had moved to the East and was one of Maria Chapin's teachers during the 1910's. Both participated in suffrage activities, including marching in suffrage parades. Ethel described a suffrage parade in New York City, in which she, Miss Chapin, and a number of Chapin teachers marched with a group of women representing private schools. Miss Chapin herself paid the cost of a band which accompanied the marchers. Despite the band, recalled Miss Stringfellow, one Chapin teacher, a Miss Hoyt, lacked a sense of rhythm and had trouble keeping in step. "So," said Miss Stringfellow, "we took turns, all the way up Fifth Avenue, saying to Miss Hoyt 'Left-right, left-right.'" Pictures of the march were circulated nationally by the news media. Ethel, who happened to appear in some of the photographs, was recognized by certain conservative elements in her hometown of Tuscaloosa, Alabama, including her horrified mother. "Well, to have a Stringfellow marching up Fifth Avenue was more than mother could take," she said.¹³

Clara Spence unequivocally supported woman suffrage. She marched in the parade down Fifth Avenue in 1913 with Harriot Stanton Blatch. The parade also dramatized the need for greater opportunities for women in such fields as medicine and law. It is difficult to determine with precision to what extent Miss Spence influenced the views of her students on suffrage, but many are reported to have supported it.¹⁴

¹³ Gordon interview with Stringfellow, *op. cit.*, 10, 11. Chapin Archives.

¹⁴ Edmondson, 48.

Miss Spence and her counterparts encouraged students to be aware of world events and needs, themselves setting personal example of such interest. Ruth Thompson Cathcart, Spence School Class of 1914, confided that, when she knew that she would be sitting at Miss Spence's table at dinner, she made it a point to be as up-to-date on world events as possible, in order to participate constructively in dinner conversation. Said Cathcart, "I have read The New York Times ever since." Summarizing the effect which Miss Spence had on the thinking of her students, Charlotte Demorest of the Class of 1919, said, "She taught us not to adopt an idea just because of its newness--not to reject one just because of its age--but to leave the old and welcome the new when such is the constructive course."¹⁵

Caroline Ruutz-Rees of Rosemary Hall successfully maintained the financial stability of her school, while being conspicuously active in political matters. Having moved the school in 1900 to predominantly Republican Greenwich, Connecticut, Caroline was nonetheless, active in the local, state, and national Democratic party apparatus. Although her political affiliation ran counter to the prevailing local one, the gregarious Head of Rosemary Hall was elected for several terms on the Greenwich Board of Education. She

¹⁵ Ibid. 26, 48.

also served on the Executive Committee of the Connecticut League of Women Voters, following adoption of the Nineteenth Amendment.¹⁶

Miss Spence shared a progressive social outlook with her close friend and colleague, Charlotte Baker. Both were active in a non-partisan, non-sectarian, New York City civic organization called, "The League for Political Education." It was founded in 1894 with the purpose of promoting "good citizenship, social justice and general intelligence through the education and expression of public opinion, mainly by means of lectures and addresses." Miss Baker and Miss Spence both served on the League's Board of Trustees. When Miss Spence died in 1923, the League held a meeting dedicated to her memory and the organization's newsletter contained a eulogy praising her consistent support and optimism, especially during the League's more trying times. "Her conscientiousness and steadfastness gave moral strength to every decision," declared the article. It also described her key role in helping the League effect construction of a new Town Hall.¹⁷

In 1916, with Miss Spence's blessing, Miss Baker established an affiliate summer "Continuation School," providing domestic vocational training for interested students. It offered practical instruction in areas like child care, home nursing, surgical dressing, first

¹⁶ Articles in archival scrapbook, The Bridgeport Post, December 15, 1935 and Daily News Graphic (Greenwich, Connecticut), March 6, 1935. C/RH Archives.

¹⁷ Newsletter published by The League for Political Education, The Town Hall Bulletin, November 1, 1923, 9, 16. Spence Archives.

aid, cooking, sewing, business methods, and city government. The program required a month's intensive training from 9:00-5:00 on weekdays and on Saturday from 9:00-12:00. Miss Spence described to the Parent's League of New York, the effect of the training on its participants, concluding, "That in learning what is useful, they may ask themselves, 'useful for what?' and that 'Servicableness to others' may be the answer, realizing that the 'others' may or may not be of their own household."¹⁸

Spence and Baker also labored to find suitable homes for orphaned or deserted children. In addition to helping place such children in private homes, they provided a section of the school building as temporary quarters for potential infant adoptees. Two prominent pediatricians, Dr. Charles Kerley and Dr. Henry Chapin, provided medical care for the project. By 1952, the Spence-Chapin Adoption Agency which had evolved, had accomodated the needs of over 1,400 babies, mothers, and adoption couples.¹⁹

At a time when adoption of children by single parents was unusual several female school officials were willing to accept the responsibility of parenthood. Miss Spence and Miss Baker each adopted children, establishing a nursery school for them on school premises. While each parent had legal custody of specific children, all shared living facilities and responsibilities, essentially functioning as a single family unit. A school history says,

¹⁸ Typed manuscript address by Miss Spence to the Parent's League of New York in the Fall of 1916. It was entitled "Talk on 'Continuation School.'" Spence Archives.

¹⁹ Edmondson, 52-56.

"The adopted children grew up together as brothers and sisters, with six to eight at table for every meal."²⁰

Alice Howland, niece of the Shipley sisters, joined with her close friend and colleague, Eleanor Brownell, to become the successors of her aunts as Heads of The Shipley School in 1916. So smoothly complementary were the abilities of Miss Howland and Miss Brownell in their running of the school, that the duo soon became known as "The Hownells." In the same manner, the Hownells became adoptive parents, each becoming the guardian of a baby girl. "Sylvia Ann arrived first and she was announced at the annual Christmas Dinner with the whole school assembled," recalled an alumna, Helen Oakley. "I well remember the split second of awestruck, absolute silence which preceded the wild and thunderous burst of applause." Mary was brought to the school six months later. Reminiscent of the Spence-Baker family, the two girls grew up as siblings in a two-parent, all-female family, with the common surname of, Shipley.²¹

Caroline Ruutz-Rees adopted an orphaned baby boy in 1909. Roland Ruutz-Rees was named in honor of Caroline's late younger brother, who had been killed during childhood when he fell under the wheels of a horse-drawn vehicle. Caroline's son did not lack for feminine attention during his childhood, having grown up on the Rosemary Hall School

²⁰ Ibid., 17, 18, 41.

²¹ Hoekstra, 11-16.

campus and being included in what Miss Ruutz-Rees considered her extended family of students.²²

Florence Baldwin of The Baldwin School provided assistance to children whose family life was not ideal. The Baldwin Day Nursery in Philadelphia's Kensington section, which she had established in 1898, was benefited by several student fund-raising activities every school year and students often interacted with the children at the Nursery. Fund-raising activities were described above. Perhaps Florence's sensitivity to the misfortunes of children was deepened by the experiences of her own childhood. Her father, a Congregationalist preacher, William Baldwin, deserted his family. Florence's mother, Julia, divorced him, not a common practice in those days, even under the circumstances. She financially supported Florence and her sisters, Anna and Helen, by teaching children in her home.²³

The mother's independent spirit and devotion to education appears to have provided a substantial maternal role model for her daughters, each of whom gained a college education and became educators, all serving at The Baldwin School, which Florence headed.²⁴ However, the pain of the father's desertion must also have had an effect on

²² New York Herald Tribune, February 16, 1954. C/RH Archives.

²³ Neal and Hammerschmidt, 5.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 4-9.

Florence's social outlook. Empathy may well have played a role in her determination to provide assistance to children, the quality of whose lives was threatened by familial disruption. The enthusiasm of Baldwin School students for fund-raising projects and interpersonal activities with the children of the Baldwin Day Nursery could hardly have been so consistently evident throughout the Progressive Era, without Miss Baldwin's sincere personal commitment to that aspect of social service.

School leaders demonstrated support for the work of social settlements. They invited speakers and encouraged student interaction through school activities, as discussed above. Some officials had even more direct experience with settlement activities. Emily Gardner Munro was born in Bristol, Rhode Island in 1876, and grew up there. Her parents were Otis and Hannah Billings (Waldron) Munro, who encouraged her to pursue higher education. Emily graduated from Brown University with a Bachelor of Philosophy Degree. While earning a Masters Degree in Sociology at Brown University, she was placed in charge of Christodora House Settlement in New York in 1900-1901.²⁵

Miss Munro's immediate predecessor at Saint Margaret's had been Mary Hillard, who was the daughter of Elias and Julia Whittlesey Hillard. Mr. Hillard was a Congregational minister, described by a friend and colleague as holding theological "views of the liberal progressive school." Elias served as pastor at three Connecticut churches and one in

²⁵ Ohmann, 59; Obituary in Waterbury Republican, January 9, 1924, 11.

Massachusetts during his long career in the ministry. The Hillards had nine children, of whom Mary was eldest.²⁶

Mary had more than a nodding acquaintance with settlement activities. Although she was not, herself, a settlement worker, her sister, Helen, was a nurse and served as Head Nurse of New York's Henry Street Settlement. It is not unlikely that Helen's influence had something to do with Jane Addams' visit to Saint Margaret's in the early 1900's, where she spoke to students about her work. Mary Hillard also appears to have been active on behalf of legislation to curb child labor practices, as a cryptic Western Union telegram addressed to her from Anna Rochester of the National Child Labor Committee, attests. The telegram, dated March 2, 1915, states: "Senate committee favorable report. Saturday vote uncertain. Continue pressure."²⁷

Eliza Kellas became Principal of The Emma Willard School in 1911. Eliza was the second of four children born to Alexander and Elizabeth Jane Perry Kellas. Both parents were naturalized citizens, Alexander from Scotland, Elizabeth from Canada. The Kellas family lived near Plattsburgh, New York, close to the Canadian border, and Alexander

²⁶ Dallas, *op. cit.*, 8.

²⁷ Information about Helen Hillard from caption beneath a family photograph in Phyllis Fenn Cunningham, My Aunt and Godmother, Miss Mary Hillard, Founder and First Principal of Westover School, (Westover School, Middlebury, Conn., undated), photograph and caption on unnumbered page between pages 2 and 3: Original telegram from Anna Rochester to Mary Hillard, March 2, 1915. Westover Archives.

Kellas earned a substantial living from a combination of farming and lumbering. He and Elizabeth were staunch Scotch Presbyterians. Eliza gained a deep sense of spirituality during her childhood. The lumber company which Mr. Kellas had formed employed a number of men who were housed on Kellas land, some having their families with them. Eliza and her sisters often accompanied their mother on errands of assistance to members of those families who were ill or otherwise required attention.²⁸

After serving as a teacher and administrator for several years in the 1890's at a state normal school at Plattsburgh, a close friend, Mary Lyon Cheney, prevailed upon Eliza Kellas to live with her family and serve as a tutor and governess for her children. Mrs. Cheney's wealthy husband, Charles, had died in 1901. While residing with the Cheneyes in Boston during the early 1900's, Miss Kellas did volunteer work at Boston settlement houses. Eliza planned to go into full-time settlement work in 1911, but changed her mind when the opportunity arose to head The Emma Willard School. The opportunity was expedited by a personal reference from Agnes Irwin, who had become Dean of Radcliffe College, where Eliza had recently resumed her education and completed requirements for a Bachelor's degree.²⁹

²⁸ Potwine, 17-20, 40, 41.

²⁹ Ibid., 37, 38, 61.

Aspects of the tenure of Bertha Bailey as Principal of Abbot Academy were described above, including her urging Abbot graduates to engage in "social housekeeping" activities. Born in Albany, New York in 1866, Bertha once said, "Whatever of success I may have attained is due to the foundation laid by my father, a clergyman of the Dutch Reformed Church, who taught me to see, to think, to help myself, and never to say, 'I can't.'" Miss Bailey was involved in civic affairs in the Andover area. A prominent Andover resident, Miss Fannie Davis, spoke at a memorial service for the Abbot Principal following her death. Citing Miss Bailey's extensive work in social projects sponsored by the South Church of Andover, Miss Davis added, "She was also interested in the social agencies of Greater Lawrence and was a member of the Andover League of Women Voters."³⁰

Alumnae Progressive Activists

Alumnae organizations as well as individual alumne of the schools in this study were also extensively involved in social service activities. Graduates of the schools generally organized into alumnae associations for the purposes of remaining in contact with one another and with events at their Alma Maters, usually generating projects to benefit their schools in some fashion. Often, the activities of the organizations transcended those basic functions and extended into areas of social concern, in the name of the school. Social reform projects undertaken by alumnae organizations at Agnes Irwin, Brearley,

³⁰ Carpenter, 3,141, 142.

and Miss Porters have already been mentioned. These and social service projects undertaken by other alumnae groups indicate a general social consciousness engendered, at least in part, by their school training.

To the extent that one can trace the activities of alumnae who attended school during the Progressive Era, indications are that many became involved in occupational or volunteer branches of "social housekeeping." A statement in Springside School's history seems to typify the social involvement of alumnae, regardless of their marital status. "While most of the professions were closed to women as was the world of business management, volunteer organizations were still a primary outlet for women's energies," the author stated. "Most of Springside's graduates, in addition to their careers, did volunteer work with hospitals, churches, the Junior League, or the Red Cross."³¹

An article in a Providence newspaper in 1934 reported that Lincoln School's alumnae numbered over 1200. The article further claimed that the school had provided "many women of prominence in the community club and social life of Providence and other eastern centres."³² Lincoln School's alumnae organization was another of several actively involved in reform activities. The alumnae organization, calling itself the "Lincoln Club," raised funds and purchased items to be donated to various Providence

³¹ Starr, 44.

³² Newspaper clipping, The Providence Sunday Journal, June 8, 1934, in Scrapbook PB-360, 1934-1940. Lincoln Archives.

settlement houses. For example, in June, 1904, the Lincoln Club voted to allot \$42.35 to purchase items for a Settlement House on Point Street. These included household items such as a pillow, chair, rug, couch, and mattress. During the following year, it purchased a bathtub for the Grace Street Settlement House. The Head Resident of Neighborhood House in Providence, was invited to address the Lincoln Club at its June meeting in 1907. In June of 1908, the organization launched a project to establish a playground for children in downtown Providence.³³

The Mary Hillard Society, which eventually became known as Dorcas, was comprised primarily of alumnae from Westover School, although it also included alumnae from Miss Hillard's years at Saint Margaret's School (1891-1909). The Society, which originated with Saint Margaret's graduates in 1907, conducted diverse charitable projects. These included fund-raising for the Visiting Nurse Program in Waterbury, Connecticut and environs, the Grenfell Mission in Labrador, educational work in China, children orphaned through the devastation of World War I, Russian refugee children, and neighborhood improvement projects. A separate branch of the Society in New York operated a summer camp in New Jersey for children selected by the Grosvenor Neighborhood House in New York City.³⁴

³³ Handwritten minutes of meetings of the Lincoln Club for June 10, 1904, June 12, 1905, June 7, 1907, and June 10, 1908, contained in a bound volume entitled, "Alumnae Minutes, 1895-1944." Lincoln Archives.

³⁴ Spykman, 67-69.

Spence School alumnae became active in community service in 1898, forming Miss Spence's School Society. The group worked with the Children's Aid Society to provide medical care, tutoring, and summer outings to tubercular children at the Henrietta Industrial School. Discovering that education for tubercular children had been neglected, the organization broke new ground. It raised necessary finances for two teachers and a bus, which transported the children to an abandoned ferryboat in front of Bellevue Hospital. There the Society served them hot meals and provided open-air classes.³⁵

When, by 1915, local government agencies had assumed much of the responsibility for such services, the alumnae built upon the extensive work which Miss Spence and Miss Baker had done in finding homes for orphans. The Class of 1916 raised funds to renovate a building on East 62nd Street to use as a nursery for orphaned babies. Combining with the City Department of Health, the State Charities Aid Association, and Public Charities in funding the endeavor, the Society utilized alumnae volunteers in much of the work of the Spence-Chapin Adoption Service. They helped to make professional counselors accessible to needy parents. Alumnae devised various means to raise funds for the operation. As a legacy for Miss Spence just after her death in 1923, the Society established "The Welfare Fund," providing an annual income of approximately \$10,000 for the Adoption Service.³⁶

³⁵ Edmondson, 52.

³⁶ Ibid., 52-54.

A sampling will indicate the nature of the social service work undertaken by individual alumnae from various schools. Susan Blake Macpherson ('96) and Martha Perrine ('98) of St. Mary's Hall became registered nurses. Dorcas Bennitt, Class of 1914 of The MacDuffie School, spoke to students at her Alma Mater in 1929 at the invitation of the MacDuffies. Her topic was settlement work and was based on her personal experience as Supervisor of Nurses at New York's Henry Street Settlement.³⁷ Springside School's history does not specify the name, but indicates that "One alumna worked at Chicago's famous Hull House, founded by Jane Addams."³⁸

The Knox School yearbook for 1918 documented social service work being done by its recent alumnae (from 1913-1917), albeit in a more general context of alumnae news. From the Class of 1913, Mai Foxcroft and Clara Greenhut were involved with the Red Cross. Mai had finished a course offered by the Home Service Institute at the School of Philanthropy in New York City and was employed by the Home Service Section of the Red Cross. Clara Greenhut had done "wonderful work, both charitable and war relief in New York City." She had served at the Volunteer Hospital Garment Factory at Deal, New Jersey, had done settlement work, and was training social workers at Columbia University.³⁹

³⁷ Silver and White, December, 1929, 33. MacDuffie Archives.

³⁸ Starr, 44.

³⁹ "Alumnae Notes," Roseleaves, 1918, 92. Knox Archives.

Martha Edith Boyer of the Knox Class of 1915 had become chairperson of the Surgical Dressings Committee in Chicago as well as a member of the board of Directors of the Lake View Musical Society of Chicago, and was its Secretary. Her classmate, Roberta Lewis was working at the Barnes Hospital in St. Louis as a social secretary and Red Cross volunteer. In other parts of the country, Ethel Ketchin Ridge and Carrie Elizabeth Shean ('16) and Dorothy Mabie ('17) were doing Red Cross Work. Margery Borg and Bernice Kenyon of the Class of 1916 were balancing the academic demands of their Sophomore years at Wellesley with community service work. Margery was on the school's Liberty Loan Board and was director of the Sophomore Red Cross Rooms. Bernice was doing "War Relief work and settlement work at the College."⁴⁰

Alumnae Contributions to Expanding Social Opportunities for Women

Some alumnae married within a few years of graduation and settled into traditional roles as wives and mothers, although, as indicated above, many of those devoted considerable effort outside the home to volunteer charity work. It is also apparent that the educational emphases of women's schools on a balanced development of body, intellect, and character, fostered a sense of independence and self-confidence which increasingly served as a springboard for certain alumnae to venture into careers, some of which were not commonly occupied by women. For instance, a history of Wykeham Rise School states that, "The alumnae indeed, as time went on, seem to have entered almost every line

⁴⁰ Ibid., 92, 93.

of human endeavor: business, teaching, archaeological research, acting, writing, painting, farming, medicine and missions, to name only a few."⁴¹ Such women were part of a group within the generation attending school during the Progressive Era who, like their contemporary, Eleanor Roosevelt, broke new occupational and social ground for women, though with an understandably lower profile than Mrs. Roosevelt.⁴²

Several alumnae became school administrators at a time when it was still unusual for women to hold administrative positions in education. At women's private schools, it was more common for women to serve as administrators. Some were themselves products of Progressive-Era private schools for women. For instance, Ethel Walker of The Baldwin School of Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania, Class of 1890, established The Ethel Walker School in 1911 and headed it until 1954. Bertha Sheppard Adkins began her school career at Baldwin during the Progressive Era and graduated in 1924. In addition to becoming Head of Foxcroft School, she also served as Executive Director of the Republican National Committee Women's Division and was Undersecretary of Health, Education, and Welfare during President Eisenhower's Administration. Helen Taft Manning, Class

⁴¹ Whitman, 16.

⁴² Eleanor Roosevelt attended Allenswood, a private secondary school for women in England near London. Accounts of the education there bear a strong resemblance to the approach taken at the schools of this study with an emphasis on development of mind, body, and character. Also, Eleanor taught for several years during the late 1920's and early 1930's at The Todhunter School in New York City, where she utilized teaching methods which were progressive in nature, including an emphasis on current events. See Blanche Wiesen Cook, Eleanor Roosevelt Vol. I, 1844-1933 (New York: Viking, 1992), especially 323, 332, 395-412; Eleanor Roosevelt, The Autobiography of Eleanor Roosevelt (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1961 reprint), 20-32.

of 1908, was the daughter of President William H. Taft. She became the youngest college Dean in the country when, at twenty-five, she assumed that title at Bryn Mawr College.⁴³ Margaret Speer, Dwight School Class of 1917, took an additional year at Abbot Academy before attending Bryn Mawr, where she earned a Bachelors Degree. Miss Speer served as a missionary in China for over twenty years and was taken prisoner by the Japanese during World War Two. Following her release, she returned to the United States and became Head of The Shipley School. Her tenure lasted from 1944-1965. Among Miss Speer's accomplishments was her leadership in effectively increasing racial diversity of the school's student population.⁴⁴

With a few notable exceptions like Ella Flagg Young, Superintendent of Schools in Chicago, it was more unusual for women to hold administrative positions in public schools. Lillian Richardson, Class of 1898, reported to the Society of Graduates of St. Mary's in 1903 about her career as principal of an unspecified public school in the West. "I have worked hard along educational lines and as a result I am about to complete my second year as principal of a building with a membership of four hundred and twenty-five pupils, ten regular teachers under me, besides five specialists in drawing, singing, sewing,

⁴³ Neal and Hammerschmidt, 80-82.

⁴⁴ Trina Vaux, ed. Recollections of Miss Speer (Bryn Mawr, Penn.: The Shipley School, 1990), 29-47, 53-179 passim.

penmanship and manual training." Miss Richardson also had organized a kindergarten with sixty-three students. She described her work as, "wonderfully interesting."⁴⁵

Women also increasingly entered male-dominated professions in the arts, scholarship, and professions around the turn-of-the-century, with alumnae of women's schools among those in the forefront. Three Hamilton sisters and a cousin attended Miss Porter's School during the last two decades of the nineteenth century. One of the sisters, Norah, became an artist, a second, Edith, a well-known scholar and author of the texts entitled, The Greek Way and The Roman Way. The third sister, Alice, and a cousin, Agnes, chose work directly associated with social service. Agnes became a social worker. Alice, who, while still a student in 1889, had forecast that she would live in "Slum Alley," eventually earned a medical degree. As a doctor, she conducted extensive research into diseases common to factory workers. Reformers effectively cited this research in gaining the nation's first industrial safety laws.⁴⁶

Theodate Pope Riddle was a Miss Porter's alumna. She achieved notoriety as an architect in a field which was nearly exclusively male. Among her accomplishments were the designing of Westover School, Avon Old Farms School, and Hillstead, the latter, initially

⁴⁵ "Alumnae Notes," Ivy Leaves, June, 1903, unnumbered pages and June, 1908, 4. St. Mary's Archives.

⁴⁶ Barabra Sicherman, Alice Hamilton: A Life of Letters (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984) 21-113, 153-385 passim; Davis and Donahue, 23.

a home for her parents. Theodate also demonstrated a commitment to social service. "Sewing societies" in which Miss Porter's alumnae gathered regularly to sew clothing for charity, had been formed in various cities since 1878. Mrs. Riddle wished to supplement that work by encouraging self-help for those in need, so established classes for Farmington's "deserving poor" in crafts such as rug-hooking, gymnastics, and sewing.⁴⁷

Lydia Gould Weld of The Baldwin School's Class of 1898 was trained in Naval Architecture and Marine Engineering at Massachusetts Institute of Technology, becoming head of the drafting department of a shipbuilding company in Newport News, Virginia and later, a senior draftsman in Oakland California. Other Baldwin alumnae also enjoyed success in fields unusual for women. Laura Gilpin of the Class of 1909 became a professional photographer whose work was widely recognized for its high quality. Her sympathetic photographs of Native Americans were among those which gained notoriety.⁴⁸

Both Eleanor Pavenstedt and Anne Shiras of The Ethel Walker School's Class of 1920 entered branches of the medical profession. A staff member of the George Jr. Republic Training School for Boys had given a talk to the Ethel Walker School students in 1920, describing the work of the organization on behalf of troubled youth. Among students

⁴⁷ Davis and Donahue, 23, 24.

⁴⁸ Neal and Hammerschmidt, 79-82.

inspired by the address was Eleanor Pavenstedt, who decided to enter social work. However, a friend's stepfather convinced her that professional medical status would enhance her reform influence. Eleanor entered the Universities of Geneva and Zurich, earning an M. D. Subsequently, she gained a degree in Psychiatry from Johns Hopkins. Her work with child psychiatry was diverse, including stints at an Outpatient Clinic in Child Psychiatry at The Massachusetts General Hospital and consultations at Wellesley College and a Women's Reformatory. In 1943, Dr. Pavenstedt joined the staff of the Putnam Children's Center in Massachusetts. It soon became noted for work with severely disturbed or psychotic children. After joining the staff of the Boston University School of Medicine in 1948, Eleanor established her own Child Guidance Clinic, whose staff became consultants to pediatricians and surgeons dealing with children. Her staff experimented with new methods of treatment for psychiatric problems resulting from disorganized and maladjusted families.⁴⁹

Anne Shiras became a medical photographer in 1931, a relatively new occupation at the time. She was instrumental in forming an organization of her counterparts throughout the country. Through the Biological Photographic Association, Anne worked to improve medical photographic techniques with a worldwide exchange of ideas and information. She helped to standardize medical photographic methods, and, as events transpired, to provide a basis for meeting World War II's immense demand for diverse visual aids in

⁴⁹ Mabsie Walker Lewis, ed. Our First Fifty Years: The Ethel Walker School, 1911-1961 (Simsbury, Conn: Alumnae Association of The Ethel Walker School, 1961), 46, 47.

medical treatments and training. The impetus of war needs had accelerated the pace at which such techniques developed and these were further applied to the needs of the post-war world. Anne Shiras' post-war professional focus was on problems of communication. She conducted studies which incorporated knowledge about the physical structure and workings of vocal cords with basic concepts and use of language. Shiras continued the international contacts which had proved so vital in development of the profession of medical photography.⁵⁰

"At home I am interested in several charities, one of them Kingsley House, to which our Saint Margaret's School Society provided a visiting nurse as its project when it was founded in 1907 in Pittsburg," Eleanor Merrick DuPuy of Saint Margaret's Class of 1901 wrote to her alumnae organization in 1952. She commented that the alumnae reunion which she had recently attended had been "One of the happiest experiences of my life." In having seen the quality of the lives lead by many of her fellow alumnae, Eleanor was convinced that "Miss Hillard would have felt real satisfaction in the results of her teaching!" A classmate, Elizabeth Richards Day wrote in a similar vein in 1962. "My interests are in the Community Fund, Serving the Aged [Elizabeth was, herself, at least eighty years old at the time], Tuberculosis and the Permanent Charity Fund of which I am Vice-President."⁵¹ These women were among the Progressive-Era alumnae of women's

⁵⁰ Ibid., 48, 49.

⁵¹ Ohmann, 106, 107.

private secondary schools who demonstrated a spirit of independence, altruism, and social leadership in diverse fields, contributing to a conceptual expansion of woman's social sphere.

Homogeneity of Schools in Race and Religion

The record of leaders of Northeastern private secondary schools for women on controversial social issues, particularly those affecting the well-being of women and children, shows that they often acted far-sightedly, sometimes courageously on behalf of social reform. However, those same officials demonstrated less knowledge about, and less willingness to address, fairness of social treatment for racial and religious minorities. This was most directly reflected by an apparent unwillingness to adopt a policy of admitting racially or religiously diverse students to their schools. The student populations of Northeastern private secondary schools for women were essentially homogeneous in those respects. The racial composition, except in the rarest instances, was white, and the religious preference of students and their families was, by all accounts, uniformly Protestant.

Robert Handy says: "In the flood of [reform] literature emanating from social gospel and cooperative Christian sources there was relatively little reference to Negro life, problems, and religion. The search for justice and reconciliation to which the 'new Christianity' was dedicated was truncated by the axioms of the 'old Protestantism' with its overtones of

Anglo-Saxon world leadership."⁵² Admissions policies place the schools of this study within the attitudinal framework of progressive and Protestant white America, as Handy describes it. It was very rare for the schools to enroll students of a minority race (with the exception of a few Japanese international students and a few Blacks). No students worshipped at any but Protestant churches. While it is possible that non-Protestant students may have "slipped through the cracks" by agreeing to worship at the Protestant churches attended by classmates, the scenario was so fraught with potential difficulties that it must be regarded as having been unlikely in the extreme.

The declarations of belief by school authorities in democratic principles and in the importance to the well-being of society of a high-quality educational process, makes even more poignant and ironic their relative inactivity in promoting a truly open door to educational opportunity for qualified students whose skin color or religious creed differed from mainstream Protestantism. Whatever their personal proclivities regarding racial and religious freedom, ultimately, school officials appear to have been unwilling to accept the economic consequences to their institutions of accepting non-white or non-Christian students, including those with the ability to pay their own way. Many among the predominantly white, middle-to-upper income, Protestant clientele of the schools, wished for their daughters to attend a school whose student population was comprised of students with backgrounds similar to theirs.

⁵² Handy, A Christian America: Protestant Hopes and Historical Realities, op. cit., 174.

Ethel Walker's gingerly handling of applications from Jewish families provides insight, not only into the situation at her school, but the situation confronting counterpart private schools in the matter of admitting non-white or non-Protestant students. In a letter to her sister, Evangeline Andrews, in 1912, Ethel mentioned that her school's tenuous financial situation had prompted her to consider accepting Jewish girls more than once. In the most recent instance, she described a Jewish couple, originally from France, who were not professing Jews. The parents were willing to have their two daughters attend the Episcopal Church on Sundays, though they were unwilling to have the girls disavow their Jewish heritage. Ethel confided her concern that the financial infusion possible by accepting Jewish students, would be a costly one for the school in the longer term, prompting Protestant parents to send their daughters elsewhere. "If my school were five years old instead of two and the girls seemed as nice as the father I would take them without hesitation," Miss Walker mused.⁵³

The following year Ethel Walker again pondered accepting a Jewish student, the niece of a fellow Bryn Mawr alumna, Josephine Goldmark, but decided against it. Again, in 1916, when the school was five years old, she turned down the application of the granddaughter of Meyer Guggenheim, albeit on the truthful grounds that the school was

⁵³ Letter from Ethel Walker to Evangeline Walker Andrews, October 12, 1912, described and quoted in Brie F. Quinby, The Ethel Walker School History, 24, 25, an unpublished manuscript. Ethel Walker Archives.

already full, that the girl had applied late and was on a lengthy waiting list. A Jewish student did not enter The Ethel Walker School until the 1930's.⁵⁴

A letter to the Head Mistresses' Association of the East at its Spring, 1920 meeting, is recorded in the organization's Minutes. From Marion Coats, Headmistress of Bradford Academy, it sheds light on the general situation regarding the admission of Black girls. Miss Coats was unable to attend the conference, but wished to determine whether or not any of the officials in attendance would be willing to accept a "colored girl of unusual character and background." She explained:

We have had two at Bradford Academy; Portia, the daughter of Booker Washington, and Clarissa, the daughter of Dr. Emmet Scott. I do not wish to establish the precedent of receiving colored girls here, and I am wondering if there is any school in the Association which would be willing to take this third girl.⁵⁵

The candor with which Miss Coats stated that she did "not wish to establish the precedent of receiving colored girls here," (apparently ignoring the fact that she already had, established such a precedent by admitting the first two girls), serves as a jarring reminder that rhetoric praising the diversity of the American population which marks the mainstream speaker of today, is a relatively recent phenomenon, given impetus by the Civil Rights activism of the past four decades. During the Progressive Era, segregation was the rule rather than the exception. Only a relative handful of Black families could

⁵⁴ Ibid., 25. Ethel Walker Archives.

⁵⁵ "Proceedings of the Head Mistresses' Association," Spring Meeting, April 16, 17, 1920, 46, Box 2, Folder 8, Smith Collection.

have afforded the costs of a private school education for their daughters. For many Black families of means, homogeneous all-Black private school like Hampton Institute or Tuskegee Institute must have seemed preferable to white private schools where the machinations of administrators who made exceptions to admissions policies, were necessary for acceptance. That "acceptance," was tenuous indeed with the risk of potential hostility by some white parents and students posing a further complication.

Miss Walker's and Miss Coats' concerns provide a glimpse into the dilemma confronting private schools like theirs. A perception among the financially secure Protestant families composing the schools' clientele about the congeniality of a homogeneous racial and religious educational atmosphere militated against change in a somewhat circular fashion. School officials realized that including members of the student population who might offend certain mainstream families was counterproductive. In an educational market in which only minimal public advertising was done, a school's reputation was painstakingly built upon communication between past and present parents and their friends and acquaintances whose daughters were potential students. Not only could the reputation and economic stability of schools be damaged, perhaps irreparably, by the unhappiness of a few well-placed families, nearly all competing schools would be pleased to accept students from such disgruntled families.

However, at least some school authorities attempted to bring the plight of Blacks in the country to the attention of students. Some arranged for them to hear Booker T.

Washington, the most well-known and widely-accepted Black leader of the time. Clara Spence invited Washington to dine at school with her students despite the discomfort of a few Southerners. On another occasion he gave a lecture to Spence students. Miss Spence was also an admirer of another prominent Black, George Washington Carver, who spoke at Spence.⁵⁶ Among other schools which provided their students a glimpse of the social situation for Blacks were Westover, Dobbs, and Shipley. Dr. Washington was a guest at Dobbs and at Westover. Westover's Mary Hillard Society targeted some of its funds for needy Blacks. Shipley's yearbook for 1915 mentioned that, on January 10, 1915, "The negro quartet from Hampton Institute sang beautifully at the regular Sunday evening service."⁵⁷

Actions like these were limited both in number and effect. If school authorities truly wished to establish more open admission policies, what of the possibility of collective action and why was none taken? A formal organization already existed. The Head Mistresses' Association of the East included a sizable number, and certainly some of the most prestigious, of private secondary schools for women in the Northeast. In a different

⁵⁶ Edmondson, 33, 37.

⁵⁷ Westover Annual, 1910, 76 indicates that "Dr. Washington spoke at chapel." Westover Archives. In his biography of Mary Hillard, John Dallas, 38, 39, describes a trip by the Westover student body, under Miss Hillard's charge, to listen to an address by Washington at St. John's Church in nearby Waterbury. Alumna Elizabeth Spykman's history of Westover lists among the various charitable concerns of an alumnae organization called The Mary Hillard Society, the raising of "money for work among the Negroes," Spykman, 68; In her biography of Eliza Masters, Shelton, lists Washington among a number of famous persons who had addressed the students at Dobbs, likewise not specifying the year(s), Shelton, 95; The Rhombus, 1915, 58.

context, Mary Hillard of Westover had made a telling comment about the potential influence of that organization. During a discussion involving the possible establishment of a uniform school calendar among member schools, Miss Hillard commented to the group:

It seems to me that we really have everything in our own hands. Here we are, a company of head mistresses in the East, and will not the parents accept whatever our decision may be? If we make a decision and hold to it as a body, it seems to me we shall not find difficulty in enforcing it, because of the circumstance that there will not be schools left for the girls to go to.⁵⁸

While her contention that "there will be no schools left for the girls to go to," even if parents disagreed with a standard policy, seems overstated, the crux of Miss Hillard's point was that the Association could exert great influence as the single large organization of women's private secondary school officials in the Northeast. Although a number of private women's schools remained outside the organization, its membership nonetheless comprised the majority of respected schools and stood as a symbol of solidarity for the type of education being offered at such institutions. A concerted effort to unite its membership behind even a gradual program of greater inclusiveness in admissions might have had a substantial moral impact. Stating and pursuing an official, unified position in favor of achieving greater diversity, while entailing some difficulty, was one which could have allowed for a substantial softening of a potential white parental backlash. It might have served as a goal which schools could pursue, while spreading any negative financial

⁵⁸ "Proceedings of the Headmistresses' Association Annual Meeting," November 9, 1912, 10. Smith Collection.

impact among schools sufficiently to escape serious difficulties by any single member school. This did not occur, apparently due to a lack of social and organizational impetus.

Minutes of the Head Mistresses' Association do not mention official recommendations along those lines. Even in the later stages of the Progressive Era, Headmistresses like Miss Coats and Miss Walker were dealing with the issue on a case-by-case basis, each taking a cautious approach. One notes little urgency. In a practical sense, schools certainly were not inundated with applications from families of minority students.

Although many Jewish parents could have afforded tuition, evidence does not indicate organized pressure on or among schools for more open admission procedures.

Extant records of individual schools studied do not document a perceptible desire or effort by authorities to widen admissions policies. These educators, social and educational progressives, like their progressive counterparts in other lines of work, seem to have ignored the apparent contradiction between their stated democratic ideals of social inclusion, and the actual policies they pursued. Simply put, school admission policies reflected society's general obliviousness to issues of racial and religious diversity. If the Organization of Headmistresses wielded anything resembling the influence over parents which Miss Hillard's comment suggested, it did not choose to exert it, perhaps because of insufficient unity within its own ranks. More likely however, given the apparent dearth of discussion about it, the reason can be traced to a general failure to comprehend it as being an issue requiring more than stopgap measures. One might easily

conclude that school officials, in this respect, shared the prejudices and proclivities common to their social counterparts of the time.

Benefactors of Social Reform Through Education

Many school officials shared with other progressives, an activist zeal for social reform. Yet, as was the case with most progressive reformers, it would be inaccurate to categorize them as favoring radical social upheaval in order to achieve their goals. Social stability was a goal in itself. None among even the most politically active of the school leaders could be described as advocates of any but a stable, democratic social system that addressed its problems squarely but within the context of existing democratic political mechanisms. Progressives believed that the nation's education system could produce good citizens by incorporating intellectual, physical, and moral development of students in its training. It was upon this basis that the leaders of women's schools crafted their educational programs.

Their application of this tripod of development to female students constituted a somewhat novel educational approach, commensurate with the personalities and social outlooks of school authorities, but the essential adherence of the founders of women's schools to traditional American moral and legal principles appears also to have appealed to their benefactors. Founders of these schools were generally not independently wealthy. What manner of people agreed to help in funding the establishment of schools and their subsequent projects of growth and why?

Financing during the Progressive Era came from varied sources. With the exceptions of Northfield Seminary and Chaffee School, the schools tended to educate girls from families whose economic circumstances might be described as comfortable. Chaffee's financing of education for students from working class families came primarily from the quasi-public Loomis Institute described earlier. Northfield's was established by famed evangelist, D. L. Moody, whose fund-raising prowess was legendary.⁵⁹ Prominent male businessmen, as one might expect, provided the primary source of funding, although influential women of wealth and prominence, some of them widowed, also served as benefactors. Sometimes relatives of school leaders provided a portion of financing. Through financial contributions, benefactors expressed faith in both the ideals and the pragmatic common sense of those who headed or proposed to head, these schools.

The personal integrity and charm of school officials, as well as their perceived abilities, proved to be key assets in the process of attaining financial assistance. As mentioned in an earlier chapter, a standard personality profile emerges from biographies and anecdotes about female Heads of schools. While well-versed in matters of social decorum, the

⁵⁹ Biographer James F. Findlay, *Dwight L. Moody: American Evangelist* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969), describes Moody's fund-raising acumen as well as his priority on providing substantial funding for his Northfield and Mt. Herman schools. St. Mary's Hall was funded by the Episcopal Church throughout the period. Other schools began as individually-owned or family-owned enterprises, though most became incorporated as non-profit institutions during the 1910's. Among those which retained their private ownership during the period, incorporating many years later, were Knox, Miss Porter's, and Dana Hall.

women were also capable of being as direct and assertive as the men with whom they dealt. Indeed, their responsibilities were greater than those of many men, requiring a behavior that men of stature tended to admire, perhaps because they regarded it as being much like their own and of a type which they did not commonly expect from women. Astute creditors, whether or not they are of philanthropic bent, understand that a judgment about the personal qualities of those requesting financial help, plays a significant part in decisions to invest in a proposed project. To an extraordinary degree, positive perceptions of the personal integrity and ingenuity of female school officials appear to have shaped the decisions of their financial benefactors. Their will and ability to carry out the aims of their schools must have been clear to those who agreed to provide financial assistance.

Helen Temple Cooke, began with virtually no finances of her own but demonstrated superb business acumen. Sound investments enabled her to become the town of Wellesley's largest single taxpayer by 1938. Her success both in education and business were related to her personal character. While an educator in her Vermont hometown, Helen so impressed the father of one of her students, Helen Wheeler (Hutchins), that Mr. Wheeler was willing to advance the cost of her initial investment of ownership in Dana Hall School. Her directness and yankee shrewdness soon earned Helen Cooke a position of respect in Wellesley's business community. Many businessmen routinely sought financial counsel from her. When questioned by a group of businessmen about the formula she followed in deciding upon her investments, Miss Cooke's coy response was,

"Oh, I invest only in minds."⁶⁰ Indeed, regardless of the degree of financial skill they demonstrated, their wish to play an instrumental role in the development of young female minds was the cause which prompted the entry of school officials into the world of financial investment.

The experiences of Ethel Walker in securing financing for her proposed school, were typical, in several respects, of those of other Progressive-Era founders. Miss Walker knew that she wished to start her own school but was blissfully ignorant of the specifics of financing one. She soon found that she had to rely on more than one source of financial assistance. Among those helping her was an independently wealthy female philanthropist, not an uncommon occurrence in the founding or expansion of schools.⁶¹

Ethel Walker made a leap of faith in the Spring of 1911 by having printed a catalogue outlining the location and nature of her projected school. "There was just one conspicuous omission," she wrote in an alumnae bulletin many years later, that being that "there was no list of pupils for the very good reason that there were none." Potential

⁶⁰ Post, 19, 20, 30.

⁶¹ The Emma Willard School, for example, was able to construct several new buildings and even relocate the campus in 1913 through the generosity of an alumna, Margaret Olivia Slocum Sage (Class of 1847). Margaret Sage, widow of financier and politician, Russell Sage, also financed construction of a chapel in her husband's name at Northfield Seminary in 1909. Clipping, Troy Times, October 2, 1914, in Archival Scrapbook. EWS Archives; Catalog, Northfield Seminary, 1909-1910, 13. N/MH Archives.

investors wanted her to "get your pupils lined up and then we'll see what we can do." To Ethel, that seemed unreasonable "unless I can have something tangible to offer them."⁶²

She turned to friends, one of whom was Augustus Paine, husband of a Bryn Mawr College classmate, Maud Paine. Mr. Paine was president of the New York and Pennsylvania Company, a producer of chemical fibers and paper. He helped her to establish a projection of her financial needs (\$4,500 to \$6,000), and loaned \$1,500 of it himself. Ethel's sister, Evangeline Walker Andrews, suggested that she contact another Bryn Mawr alumna, Emma Carola Woerishoffer, who was heir to her late father's fortune. A philanthropist who preferred to keep her gifts anonymous, Emma, after meeting Ethel Walker, agreed to make a loan toward establishment of the proposed school. That, in combination with other loans from Evangeline and her husband, from a cousin, John Walker Holcombe, and from Landon Rose, a business associate of Augustus Paine, constituted an amount sufficient to establish the school. Paine again provided his expertise in 1916, helping Ethel to incorporate the school, establishing a (predominantly male) board of directors, most of whom purchased bonds.⁶³

A combination of relatives, friends, and their well-placed acquaintances and friends, male and female, had enabled Ethel Walker to finance her school. However, it is evident that

⁶² Ethel Walker Smith, "A History of the Ethel Walker School At Lakewood New Jersey," unnumbered pages. Ethel Walker Archives.

⁶³ Ibid.; Quinby, 15-29. Ethel Walker Archives.

the glue which connected these disparate people to her project was their common faith, not only in the type of educational program she would establish but in her ability to carry it through. In sum, they expressed their faith in her capacity to make a success of the school, an enterprise which rested largely on the integrity and educational acumen of Ethel Walker herself.

As had occurred with Helen Cooke, other Heads of schools received financial assistance from parents of former students or from former students themselves, who were appreciative of the positive influence exerted by the mentors. For instance, Clara Spence had tutored Alice and Edith Shepard, daughters of Colonel and Mrs. Elliot Fitch Shepard of New York City in 1891 and 1892. When the daughters learned of Clara's wish to begin her own school, they easily convinced their parents, who admired Miss Spence's character and ability, to finance the venture.⁶⁴ Mary Wheeler had taught at Miss Shaw's School for Girls in Providence from 1868-1870. Several of her students felt that they had so benefited from her teaching that, twenty years later, in 1889, they convinced her to begin and pledged financial support for The Wheeler School where their own daughters would be educated.⁶⁵

⁶⁴ Edmondson, 1.

⁶⁵ Williams, 57, 58, 220.

Judge William G. Choate and his wife, Mary Atwater Choate, were New York philanthropists who owned a farm which served as their summer home in Wallingford, Connecticut. The Choates founded the Choate School for Boys in Wallingford in 1890 and, that same year, Caroline Ruutz-Rees persuaded Mary Choate to underwrite her proposal for beginning a counterpart girls' school in Wallingford. It was named Rosemary Hall. Mary Choate believed in self-help programs for the needy. Responding to the needs of Civil War widows in New York City, she had established "The New York Exchange for Woman's Work," in 1878. The organization used Mrs. Choate's spacious home on Madison Avenue as a center of operations during its early years, collecting diverse home-made items from their client widows, selling them and returning 75% of the price to the producers. The idea spread to other cities. The Exchange continues to function today in New York City.⁶⁶

By 1900, Miss Ruutz-Rees realized that the school had outgrown the space available in Wallingford, so she moved it to Greenwich, Connecticut. Nathaniel Wetherell, wealthy father of a Rosemary student, suggested a parcel of land called "Rock Ridge," which he had purchased a few years earlier. He had been using portions of it to house "The Fold," a summer home for poor boys from New York City and "Cherry Vale," a vacation spot for working girls from the city, transporting the children and women there on his steamer

⁶⁶ Seeley, 6; "More Woman's Work," New York Times, September 12, 1991, 3C. C/RH Archives.

yacht. Wetherell sold a portion of his Rock Ridge land to Caroline at a bargain price, with the stipulation that it must be used as a "school for young ladies." Wetherell also assisted Miss Ruutz-Rees in establishing the school as a corporation and he purchased stock and served as a trustee.⁶⁷

Mary Hillard formed friendships with leading families in the Greater Waterbury area when she became Principal of Saint Margaret's School. Among these were industrialists like Frederick Kingsbury, Otis Northrup, James Elton, and John Howard Whittemore, all of whom were to serve on the Board of Trustees for Westover School. All were known for their philanthropic efforts. Whittemore in particular was noted for his willingness to personally fund public undertakings in neighboring Naugatuck. These included a school, a Town Hall, and a library. Whittemore, who owned a summer home on a lake within the Middlebury town limits, also made civic contributions to that town, including the building of a road which provided a more direct connection between Middlebury and Naugatuck. As part of his financial support for Westover, he contributed construction of an attractive stone wall which enclosed the campus from a busy thoroughfare.⁶⁸

⁶⁷ Newspaper clippings, The Daily News Graphic, Greenwich, Connecticut, March 24, 1900 and October 27, 1900; Warranty Deed, 3.6 Acres, Nathaniel Wetherell to Caroline Ruutz-Rees, December 7, 1899. C/RH Archives.

⁶⁸ Constance McL. Green. History of Naugatuck, Connecticut (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1948), 123-125, 181-190; Dallas, 47; Spykman, 22, 23.

While the motivations of benefactors like those described, as with most human beings, were likely to have been somewhat complex, a common thread is found in their personal respect for the school officials whom they were assisting. Another is in their apparent belief that they were doing a socially beneficial thing by promoting a school for young women. While some stood to profit financially prior to the shift to non-profit status by schools, that usually depended upon whether or not the school succeeded financially. Regardless, it is unlikely that the profit motive was the deciding factor in their support. Possible remuneration must have been relatively modest in the context of their overall business picture. In a number of cases, like that of J. H. Whittemore, his building of the stone fence for Westover, was purely a donation to the school. National income tax and its deductions did not exist prior to 1917. By that time, The Chaffee School, the last to be established among those in the study, was just beginning. It seems that the philanthropic tendencies of benefactors best explains the assistance they gave. Benefactors had the requisite finances to offer and apparently chose to do so more from personal conviction than for financial profit.

Benefactors could hardly have failed to be influenced by the personal charm of women like Rosemary Ruutz-Rees, Mary Hillard, or the Irwin sisters. However, the foundation of that charm was the earnestness with which the schools' proponents expressed their plans and the underlying purpose of those plans, that of providing an education which developed the body, intellect, and character of students. As a college student in Cambridge, Massachusetts in 1880, Abby Parsons (MacDuffie) heard Bishop Phillips

Brooks give" a splendid sermon." His primary points, according to Abby, were that faith was bound to change in form over time, but never died and that truth should be welcomed without fear, knowing that it was not new to God.⁶⁹

Twelve years later, in December of 1892, the same Phillips Brooks received Charlotte Conant and Florence Bigelow in his study. The two young women proposed to open a school for girls in Natick, Massachusetts and were there to request use of Brooks' name on the list of references by prominent people then customary as inclusions in promotional catalogs of schools. As Miss Conant described it:

"He received us graciously but put us through a series of questions on our purpose in starting the school; our own qualifications and our experience. We were rather terrified as the great bishop stood before the fire place in his Clarendon Street house looking down on us and firing those rapid questions at us. At last however he smiled and said--'And what can I do for you?' We asked in some fear if he would permit us to place his name as a reference on our little circular and with great cordiality he consented."⁷⁰

It seems fitting that Phillips Brooks, a proponent of the social gospel, would endorse the project of the two young women. The education which they proposed to offer young women was that of developing the body, mind, and spirit so that students might more effectively serve their society. Progressive educators and social reformers acknowledged the importance of personal character in building a better society, one which they envisioned as a kingdom of God. Benefactors of women's private schools may not all

⁶⁹ MacDuffie, 25.

⁷⁰ Photostatic copy of recollections to Friends of Walnut Hill School in the form of a letter from Charlotte Conant, dated, 1929. WHS Archives.

have shared Brooks' devotion to the social gospel but it seems unlikely that they could have been unaware of the educational approach which the school leaders proposed to follow. While expected financial remuneration can hardly have been the greatest factor in their decisions to invest in the schools, it would be strange that a person with even nominal business acumen would invest in a project about whose proposed goals and methods he/she knew little. Rather, the common denominator among the varied types of people who gave financial support appears to have been their positive response to the personal character of the schools' leaders. A typical aspect of that character was the common devotion of school leaders to the goal of helping their students develop into socially useful citizens, a goal which, coincidentally or not, was also a hallmark of the social gospel.

CONCLUSION

During the years 1890-1920 officials of Northeastern private secondary schools for women provided an educational premised upon a dedication to social progress through reform and social service. Like other proponents of progressive educational methods, women's school officials rejected traditional formalism which stressed a patriarchal style of external discipline and which gave priority to the interests of the school as an institution over the needs of the students. Rather than isolating school from society, progressives emphasized an interrelationship between the school community and the larger society.

Women's schools subscribed to the social gospel's message that creation of a kingdom of God in society was attainable. They shared the progressive belief that a moral society was best created and sustained by an educated citizenry. As progressive educators, they regarded their students as young citizens who could most effectively learn the attributes of good citizenship by experiencing and exercising it in their school community and in the larger world. Rather than compartmentalizing student "faculties" for development in detached academic areas, school officials were committed to holistic development of students in interrelated areas of mind, body, and spirit. Building upon the traditional concept of female piety, the leaders of women's schools believed that female students could supplement an inherent and uniquely female moral sensitivity with the development of latent intellectual and physical capabilities, channeling this development

toward socially useful activity. In this way, they believed, intelligent, healthy, moral citizens would be nurtured to their full potential.

This approach constituted a duality of individual and collective connotations. While school leaders considered it important to address the needs of each individual student, they and other progressives believed that individual development had meaning only in a social context. Therefore, school life was oriented toward building a community spirit within which each individual would thrive, a school spirit which was commensurate with building a kingdom of God in society. Formal chapel services and church attendance were important but far from exclusive aspects of student spiritual development. Officials taught students that their school community was, itself, a component of a larger world to which they could also contribute through activities of social outreach.

The goal of education at private secondary schools for women was to exert this newer, more straightforward feminizing influence on society through a nurturing process of spiritual growth. School officials countered traditional social expectations for female behavior by stressing methods of directness through self-expression in such areas as fitness training and organized sports, the arts, formal self-governmental procedures, and exposure to contemporary social issues. While providing essential behavioral guidelines for students, school leaders also allowed freedom to develop the self-governing skills which they believed necessary for effective citizenship in a democracy. Students formed

school organizations, elected their own officers for those organizations and for their classes, directed and wrote their own publications.

These experiences enabled students to gain not only knowledge, but self-confidence in their ability to be socially contributory. Some alumnae demonstrated a willingness to defy social convention in fulfilling their personal ambitions for social service. Others, in more traditionally female occupations or as wives and mothers, worked for or contributed to charitable efforts. Alumnae demonstrated a commitment to social service that had been fostered during their school years.

Given the efforts of school officials to juxtapose the school and the larger world, it is ironic that the gender isolation inherent in their predominantly female educational setting seems to have been a factor contributing to fuller development of the capabilities of female students than would have been possible in a coeducational setting which, seemingly, was more reflective of "social reality." At women's schools, female administrators, faculty, and staff acted as mentors and role models for their students. Sociologist Rosabeth Kanter believes that the organizational structure of educational institutions has largely reflected traditional social beliefs about innate gender characteristics. The traditional predominance of men in administrative positions displays a belief in the stereotypical analytical, authoritative male who is more suited to such duties than is the stereotypical emotional female. This has tended to be a self-fulfilling

prophecy, Kanter argues, perpetuating these views. Among other things, it has deprived female students of female administrative role models.¹

At most women's private secondary schools, the Head(s) was (were) female. Even in the rare instances where men were assigned that role, women held important supporting administrative positions. Over and above that, a major strength of women's schools was that they provided young women the means through which they could act upon and develop the skills which they possessed, some of which larger society failed to validate. Such development seems to have been enhanced by single-sex education.

Although the overall trend in United States during the Progressive Era was toward coeducation of a type in which both sexes were educated in the same classrooms, single-sex education remained more common at private schools.² Women's school leaders seem to have fostered a creative tension in their education between the progressive ideal of integrating school and society, and their perception that society, as presently constituted, did not foster full gender equality of opportunity. In this sense, women's schools provided a "socially atypical" nurturing environment within which young women could develop their talents to an extent which would have been less likely

¹ Rosabeth Kanter, "Women and the Structure of Organization: Exploration in Theory and Behavior," in Marcia Millman and Rosabeth Kanter, eds. Another Voice (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday [Anchor Books], 1975), 43.

² Woody I, op. cit., 545, 546.

of achievement in a more "socially typical" gender-integrated (coeducational) one. In female schools certain traditional gender constraints were made irrelevant and female students experienced development of physical, academic, and social skills more fully than might have occurred in a less nurturing environment. Following their departure from school, alumnae often demonstrated the confidence and ability to apply those skills, benefitting their society in diverse ways.

Recent educational research supports the contention that, at both collegiate and secondary education levels, female students make significantly greater gains academically and in self-esteem at single-sex schools because gender stereotypes can be more effectively circumvented there. In 1961, J. S. Coleman questioned the conventional belief that coeducation was more conducive to the development of both sexes than was single-sex education, contending that the issue required greater analysis.³ In the mid-1980's Valerie Lee and Anthony Bryk compared single-sex and coeducational Catholic school student development in several academic and personal growth areas between the sophomore and senior years of its student subjects. They found that, while both girls and boys fared better at their respective single-sex schools, gains for girls were uniformly higher than those of their counterparts in all-boys schools or of girls or boys in coeducational schools. Describing their findings in an article for Journal of Educational Psychology in 1986, Lee and Bryk remarked, "Whether considering academic achievement in specific areas at

³ J. S. Coleman, The Adolescent Society (New York: Free Press of Glencoe, 1961).

sophomore and senior year, gains in academic achievement over the 2 years, future educational plans, affective measures of locus of control or self-image, sex role stereotyping, or attitudes and behaviors related to academics, we found that single-sex schools appear to deliver specific advantages to their students."⁴

The absence of male students at girls' schools removes a boy-girl social dynamic which can serve as a deterrent to academic achievement. It obviates, for girls, the pattern of boys dominating classroom activities. In coeducational classrooms girls often face, not only peer pressure to conform to a more sedate, submissive academic role, but also a tendency by instructors of both sexes to be more attentive to and affirming of their male students. Barba and Cardinale report that boys are less inhibited about asking and answering questions, particularly in mathematics and science courses and instructors provide more detailed answers to boys' questions. Boys thus receive more adult affirmation for personal development than do girls in such coeducational classrooms.⁵ David and Myra Sadker found that, during any given class period, boys were called on by instructors between two and twelve times more often than girls, regardless of whether the instructor was male or female. The Sadkers see this as a clear failure of coeducational

⁴ Valerie E. Lee and Anthony S. Bryk, "Effects of Single-Sex Secondary Schools on Student Achievement and Attitudes," *Journal of Educational Psychology* 78 (1986): 381, 393, 394.

⁵ Roberta Barba and Loretta Cardinale, "Are Females Invisible Students? An Investigation of Teacher Student Questioning Interactions," *School Science and Mathematics* 91 (1991): 306-310.

schools to provide an equal education for females.⁶ Significant classroom social constraints based on gender are effectively removed in girls' schools. This appears to contribute to relatively higher achievement scores of girls in single-sex schools who can devote greater attention to detail, clarify when necessary, and gain a fuller understanding of material.

In a related area, leadership skills of female students, many of whom may have been inclined to defer to males and remain in the background in coeducational settings, can be more easily developed at an all-female school. Girls must rely upon themselves to provide the requisite leadership for their school community with little fear of social stigma being attached to such activities because of their sex.⁷ Analysts also identify a sense of community and service as important factors contributing to the effectiveness of contemporary girls' schools. J. L. Miller describes the experience of students in female schools as being a "narrative of community," in which each individual is committed to a common goal of improving herself in every way possible, within the context of relationship to others.⁸ Although such a sense of community is not necessarily restricted to single-sex schools it is strikingly reminiscent of the way Progressive-Era officials at

⁶ David Sadker and Myra Sadker, The Cost of Sex Bias in Schools and Society: The Report Card #1 (Washington D. C.: American University, Mid-Atlantic Center for Sex Equity, Andover, Mass.: Network, Inc., 1989).

⁷ Carol Gilligan, et. al., Making Connections (Troy, NY: Emma Willard School, 1989), 209.

⁸ J. L. Miller, Creating Spaces and Finding Voices (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1990), 7.

women's schools emphasized the development of "school spirit." Individual development apparently continues to be regarded as part of a collective, relational experience for students at women's schools.

Although the leaders of private secondary schools for women during the Progressive Era proceeded without benefit of such studies, the studies are, nonetheless, instructive in helping to understand the educational dynamic of their approach. In retrospect, school officials appear to have utilized the educational resources which had been placed at their disposal by providing an education which contributed to significant development of the skills and character of their female students. Women's school leaders were aware of gender inequalities in society, including relatively greater educational opportunities for males. They consciously attempted to redress that imbalance and utilized the inherent aspect of gender separateness to advantage at their schools. In their education, school officials seized the opportunity to selectively emphasize aspects both of commonalities of the sexes and of female uniqueness. While arguing that girls could cope as well as boys with physical and academic challenges in their development, officials were quite willing to accept conventional social assumptions of inherent female traits of nurture and superior moral character.

School authorities acted upon educational precedents. Educational theorists like Johann Pestalozzi, Herbert Spencer, and Francis Parker and pioneering officials of women's schools such as Emma Willard and Zilpah Grant, had previously expressed and put into

effect various aspects of the programs utilized during the Progressive Era. Women's school authorities of the Progressive Era synthesized those ideas and consistently applied progressive policies which emphasized the school's responsibility for student health and fitness, intellectual, and spiritual development. They built upon a fundamental belief that female students had the same capabilities as boys to benefit from such development and to apply those lessons in their adult lives. Their policies mark women's private secondary schools of the Progressive Era as being distinctively in the vanguard of contemporary educational thought. Young women at these schools developed their skills in a setting in which female role models abounded, and in which they were encouraged to express themselves by means which would have been less commonly available to them in settings which were more formal or in mainstream society.

The spiritual dynamic which guided women's private schools did not, however, hermetically seal young women from the imperfect world around them. Quite the opposite was true. School officials acted upon the basis of the social gospel's thesis that Christ had understood his mission as requiring him to remain a part of the world. School authorities made clear to students that they must bear responsibilities as citizens of society. Even while providing a protective environment of intellectual, physical, and spiritual preparation, school programs were permeated with a social gospel which encouraged students to prepare for a life devoted to social usefulness. Students listened to speakers who addressed social issues and they researched, discussed, and debated such issues. School officials promoted the active involvement of the school community in

projects which benefited both that community and the larger society of which it was, they made clear, but a part.

Perhaps the moral certainty with which the school officials of that bygone time approached their task reflects a certain naivete. Yet, whatever its limitations, the effectiveness of school authorities in conveying this optimism to their students was an essential ingredient in the degree of success the schools experienced in producing "socially useful" young women. While full gender equality is yet to be achieved, many entrenched stereotypes about the capabilities of women have been successfully transformed since 1920, due, in part, to efforts by alumnae of women's schools of the Progressive Era. These women were the products of an education engineered by school officials, many of whom were among the pioneering "first generation" of college-educated women. Among these were such school heads as Abby MacDuffie, Caroline Ruutz-Rees, Charlotte Conant, Florence Bigelow, the Shipley sisters and the Baldwin sisters. Even heads, who, like Eliza Masters and Mary Hillard, did not actively promote college education for women, acknowledged its growing place in women's education and provided a college preparatory curricular option to their students. Leaders of private secondary schools for women in the Northeast were virtually unanimous in their support of a well-rounded education which was on par with that at the best boys' schools. They subscribed to a belief expressed by the father of Abby MacDuffie, Reverend James Parsons. In 1879 he and his daughter travelled to Cambridge where she would join the newly-established Harvard Annex for Women. When questioned by a

friend about the wisdom of furthering the education of young women like his daughter, who would "end by getting married, probably," Parsons retorted, "A good education is never wasted."⁹

⁹ MacDuffie, The Little Pilgrim, op. cit., 10.

APPENDIX 1

School	Location	Founded	Type
Albany Female Academy	Albany, NY	1814	Boarding/Day
Abbot Academy	Andover, MA	1829	Boarding/Day
Chaffee Seminary	Windsor, CT	1914	Day
Dana Hall School	Wellesley, MA	1881	Boarding/Day
Dwight School	Englewood, NJ	1889	Boarding/Day
Kimberly School	Montclair, NJ	1906	Day
Miss Hall's School (Prior to 1898, Miss Salisbury's School)	Pittsfield, MA	1898	Boarding/Day
Miss Porter's School	Farmington, CT	1843	Boarding/Day
Northfield Seminary	Northfield, MA	1879	Boarding/Day
Rosemary Hall School (Greenwich, CT, 1900)	Wallingford, CT	1890	Boarding/Day
Saint Margaret's School	Waterbury, CT	1875	Boarding/Day
Springside School (Also called Chestnut Hill)	Philadelphia, PA	1879	Boarding/Day
St. Mary's Hall	Burlington, NJ	1837	Boarding/Day
The Agnes Irwin School (The Misses Irwin School until 1894)	Philadelphia, PA	1879	Day
The Baldwin School	Bryn Mawr, PA	1888	Boarding/Day
The Brearley School	New York, NY	1885	Day

School	Location	Founded	Type
The Cambridge School	Cambridge, MA	1886	Boarding/Day
The Chapin School (Added an Upper School, 1909)	New York, NY	1901	Day
The Emma Willard School (Called Troy Female Seminary until 1895)	Troy, NY	1819	Boarding/Day
The Ethel Walker School (Simsbury, CT, 1917)	Lakewood, NJ	1911	Boarding/Day
The Knox School (Called Briar Cliff School until 1912)	Briar Cliff, NY Tarrytown, NY, 1912; Cooperstown, NY, 1920	1904	Boarding/Day
The Lincoln School	Providence, RI	1884	Boarding/Day
The MacDuffie School	Springfield, MA	1890	Boarding/Day
The Masters School (Dobbs)	Dobbs Ferry, NY	1877	Boarding/Day
The Shipley School	Bryn Mawr, PA	1893	Boarding/Day
The Spence School	New York, NY	1892	Boarding/Day
The Wheeler School	Providence, RI	1889	Boarding/Day
Walnut Hill School	Natick, MA	1893	Boarding/Day
Westover School	Middlebury, CT	1909	Boarding/Day
Wykeham Rise School	Washington, CT	1902	Boarding/Day

APPENDIX 2

Archival Materials

Archives of Saint Margaret's McTernan Country Day School, Waterbury, Connecticut:
Archival Photographs-1901-1920 .

The Salmagundi --1900-1920, (yearbooks published annually).

"The Magpie"--1898-1920 (student literary publication, generally published quarterly).

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Archival Photographs--1890-1920.

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"Magnolia Leaves"--1896-1899 (student literary publication, published quarterly)

Scrapbooks--1903-1917; 1915-1936; 1918-1929.

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Archives of Westover School, Middlebury, Connecticut: Archival Photographs--1909-1920.

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Dana Hall School, Wellesley, MA.

Dwight-Englewood School, Englewood, NJ.

Miss Hall's School, Pittsfield, MA.

Miss Porter's School, Farmington, MA.

Northfield Mt. Hermon School, Northfield, MA.

Phillips Academy, Andover, MA.

Saint Margaret's-McTernan School, Waterbury, CT.

Springside School, Philadelphia, PA.

St. Mary's Hall-Doane Academy, Burlington, NJ.

The Agnes Irwin School, Rosemont, PA.

The Baldwin School, Bryn Mawr, PA.

The Brearley School, New York, NY.

The Cambridge School, Weston, MA.

The Chapin School, New York, NY.

The Emma Willard School, Troy, NY.

The Ethel Walker School, Simsbury, CT.

The Knox School, St. James, NY.

The Lincoln School, Providence, RI.

The Loomis Chafee School, Windsor, CT.

The MacDuffie School, Springfield, MA.

The Masters School, Dobbs Ferry, NY.

The Montclair Kimberly Academy, Montclair, NJ.

The Shipley School, Bryn Mawr, PA.

The Spence School, New York, NY.

The Wheeler School, Providence, RI.

Walnut Hill School, Natick, MA.

Westover School, Middlebury, CT.

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