

AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF

Katrina Anne Knewton for the degree of Master of Arts in Interdisciplinary Studies in Women Studies, History, and Adult Education presented on May 8, 1995. Title: The Experience of Women's Higher Education at Oregon Agricultural College, 1870-1916.

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This study addresses women's experiences in higher education at Oregon Agricultural College between 1870 and 1916. The experiences of these women illustrate how they were affected by society's beliefs and values, and further, how their education encouraged them to develop skills necessary to transform their role in society. Education has been used to either maintain power structures or to transform a group's role in society. Education can be used as a tool to transform a group's role in society through the skills and opportunities obtained in learning. Women developed skills through their educational experiences. These experiences included academic studies, campus climate, extracurricular activities, and career opportunities. Through these activities these college women developed skills which they then used to expand their role in society.

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**The Experience of Women's Higher Education at
Oregon Agricultural College, 1870-1916**

by

Katrina Anne Knewton

A THESIS

submitted to

Oregon State University

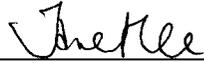
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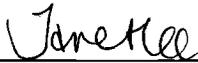
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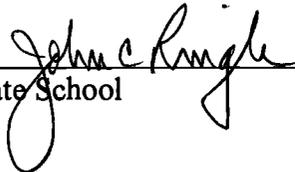
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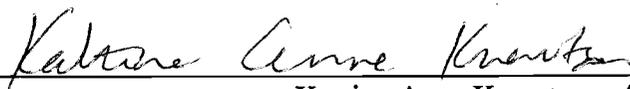


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The Experience of Women's Higher Education at Oregon Agricultural College,
1870-1916

1. INTRODUCTION

In 1903 Charlotte Perkins Gilman wrote, "strong indeed, is the girl who can decide within herself where duty lies, and follow that decision against the combined forces which hold her back. She must claim the right of every individual soul to its path in life, its own true line of work and growth."¹ Here Gilman refers to the "forces" in the United States which worked to maintain the contemporary structure of society; these forces were essentially the powers of the state over a society, working to maintain the status quo. In this interpretation of these powers or "forces" of society, the institution of education played a powerful role.

This study focuses on women's experience in higher education at Oregon Agricultural College between 1870 and 1916. Oregon Agricultural College (now known as Oregon State University), was historically a coeducational, land grant institution with much of its early curriculum directed by the Morrill Act of 1862. This act designated land for a college that promoted "the liberal and practical education of the industrial classes in the several pursuits and professions of life."² The curriculum at Oregon Agricultural College expanded from liberal arts to agricultural, domestic sciences, and engineering, to name a few. Women have always been present at the College and their numbers did increase over the years, though the ratio of women to

¹Charlotte Perkins Gilman, The Home. It's Work and Influence, (New York: Charlton, Co., 1910), 268.

²Annual Catalogue of the Agricultural College of the State of Oregon for 1899-1900 and Announcements for 1900-1901, (Corvallis, Or.: Privately printed, 1900), 11.

men remained the same, at about one to two and at times almost one to one.³ While Oregon Agricultural College welcomed women students between 1870 and 1916, their experiences, both educational and personal, were affected by the struggles to define women's higher education as well as women's expanding role in society. Using archival sources primarily housed at the Oregon State University Archives this study will examine the experiences of women at the College during this period.

In 1848 the Seneca Falls Declaration of Sentiments, known as the first women's rights convention to be held in the United States, demanded women's access to education. By 1870 women were a part of higher education as instructors and students and they pursued formal, higher education for personal enhancement and for occupational training. It has been said that education is essentially a tool, a tool that can be used in two ways: to reform social structures or to maintain the distribution of power in society.⁴ Since the status quo helps define the values and beliefs that govern the education of a group of people, women's perceived role in society played a large part in the nature of their education; women learned how to be mothers, wives, and workers within the domestic sphere, men learned to be skilled laborers and professionals in the public sphere. Oregon Agricultural College provides an example of how education can be used to either maintain the status quo of a society, or to transform a particular group's position and role in that society. The higher education of women at Oregon Agricultural College between 1870 and 1916 illustrates how women were affected by society's beliefs and values, and further, how their education developed skills necessary to transform their role in society.

To begin, education has been used to maintain power inequities throughout the history of the United States. Education socializes people by teaching them the values,

³Estimates collected from Oregon Agricultural College Biennial Reports of the Board of Regents, 1908-1918.

⁴Paulo Freire, Pedagogy of the Oppressed, (New York: The Seabury Press, 1970), 15.

beliefs, and skills of the dominant society and the dominant society often dictates the conditions under which this education takes shape.⁵ The needs of the status quo do not necessarily benefit all members of the society; white, middle and upper class men, men with the power of a political voice have historically represented the status quo. As such, "the nature of education provided for any particular group within a society reveals a good deal about the status and position of that group and in a large measure defines the social boundaries beyond which members of the group cannot easily move"; thus, women who sought higher education during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century were limited by contemporary society's views of the female role.⁶ The needs of the dominant society vary over time but overall carry an underlying principal of maintaining control through education. In the nineteenth century the increase in immigration from Europe brought a need to "Americanize" immigrant children in order to "render the mass of the people more homogeneous...for uniform and peaceable government." Similarly, a work force of good, obedient laborers was needed in the factories.⁷ In this way, education was used as a means of producing an expendable and accessible labor force for an increasingly industrial society. In a capitalist society reliable labor is invaluable for the successful production of marketable goods. Many working class women in New England for example, were educated through vocational training in order to provide a group of laborers for the textile industry.⁸

⁵Gary Colombo, Robert Cullen, and Bonnie Lisle, eds., Rereading America. Cultural Contexts for Critical Thinking and Writing, (Boston: Bedford Books of St. Martin's Press), 493.

⁶Averil Evans McClelland, The Education of Women in the United States. A Guide to Theory, Teaching, and Research, (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1992), 3.

⁷Colombo, et al., 493.

⁸McClelland, 78.

On the other hand, education can also be used as an opportunity, an opportunity many women took advantage of during the nineteenth century. In this case higher education provided a choice for women; either they could use their education to expand their choices in life, or continue in their roles of mothers and wives. Education could be used as a tool to transform their position in society, giving them new roles and opportunities.⁹ Implementing the transformation of their roles through education would necessarily place women in positions of power as teachers and other roles. Following Paulo Freire's theory of the pedagogy of the oppressed which holds that "the implementation of a liberating education requires political power," the oppressed generally have none; thus, a liberatory pedagogy can be carried out in two stages: first, through social transformation, and second, by dispelling the myths that limited society and yielded a hierarchy of power.¹⁰ In the United States, women during the late nineteenth century had little political power. Yet, increasingly, following the Civil War, women taught at public schools, women's colleges opened, and women entered a variety of occupations; women began developing the power to be able to transform their roles in society.

As teachers they held the tools and the power to change the lifestyles of their women students. For example, Dr. Margaret Snell encouraged her students to dress practically and comfortably, thus eliminating the restrictions of female fashion that limited their actions and energy. At the turn of the century the United States faced serious changes in the structure of its society; the Civil War had divided the nation, African Americans had been emancipated from slavery, women were demanding equal rights and a representative voice outside of the home. Women's voices had previously been heard only in matters of the home, and, while women in the United States had

⁹Freire, 33-34.

¹⁰Ibid., 38-42.

always worked outside the home, it was at the turn of the century that they became an active part of social reforms.

These changes threatened to rip the very fabric of the society. In response, the "forces" that Gilman refers to sought to maintain the status quo, working diligently to maintain the historic pattern of life that had placed women in the domestic sphere and men in the public sphere.¹¹ These "forces" lambasted the "failure of higher education to make young women desirous of having homes of their own and of being efficient managers of it"; higher education was blamed in part for this social upheaval and instead it was reiterated that such education prepare women for the future benefit of a husband and family.¹² On the other hand, there were others such as Anna C. Brackett who sought to disrupt this historic pattern. She was a contemporary writer who urged women to study more "...to draw out their intelligence" so "their education might equal a man's."¹³ Such was the dichotomy that split society and converged on the higher education of women in the United States. Eventually women's demands for higher education triumphed, but only after a serious struggle to expand the roles of women in society, a struggle that continues today.

Higher Education for Women: Repressive and Supportive Forces

During the late nineteenth century the discussion of women's higher education in the United States was dominated by two sides: the repressive forces that argued

¹¹Barbara Welter, "The Cult of True Womanhood: 1820-1860," in The Underside of American History, ed. Thomas R. Frazier, (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc., 1971), 256-258.

¹²Willystine Goodsell, The Education of Women, (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1923), 46.

¹³Anna C. Brackett, ed., The Education of American Girls, (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1874), 23.

against women's changing role and the pro-women's education forces. Women who pursued higher education felt the impact of these forces each day whether it concerned their choice of study or what social activities were deemed acceptable for a single young woman on campus. Both of these forces played a pivotal role in women's access to higher education and their destination after graduation. It was the perseverance of women who opened the gates inch by inch, who allowed other women to claim a position in higher education.

Women's demand for a college level education was no simple feat in a society where a woman's place was ideally located in the home or the domestic sphere while the man's place dominated the public sphere, outside the home.¹⁴ This scenario more accurately describes the lifestyle of the middle class, since working class women worked both inside and outside the home in order to maintain a household. At the time, as still today, the opinions of the middle class tended to dominate public discussions of the issue of higher education for women.

Middle class opinions expressed diverse views on the issue of women's higher education and as Emma Almy, a contemporary critic, stated, there was so "much activity of thought and examination of educational issues...that one must have a hundred pairs of eyes to see it all."¹⁵ Most recorded discussions are from the middle class since they were privileged enough to write or discuss their opinions and benefitted the most from the structure as it was.¹⁶ Such nineteenth century propaganda on

¹⁴Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, Disorderly Conduct. Visions of Gender in Victorian America, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 124.

¹⁵Emma Atkinson Almy, "A Year's Progress for College Women," Education 10 (April 1890): 476.

¹⁶Smith-Rosenberg, 167-169.

education included: popular novels, lady's magazines, poetry, medical journals, editorials, religious literature, and short stories.¹⁷

The arguments surrounding the discussion of women's education worked as the "unseen forces" that Gilman wrote about which either hindered or helped women's progress. The arguments against women's higher education focused on whether women, as the moral base of society, should pursue an education that might bring her into contact with the public sphere at the cost of the tranquility of the domestic sphere. It was believed that women's pursuit of higher education risked the very stability of nineteenth century society. It must be noted that the woman envisioned by most of these arguments was the European American middle class woman. European American society believed women should produce children to increase their number; therefore, putting off childbirth to go to school or to pursue a career was considered "race suicide" by many.¹⁸ The issue of "race suicide" became an additional factor in discussions concerning the benefits of educating white, middle class women who might use birth control to limit their family size.¹⁹ The underlying tone of these arguments was one of aggressive racism that existed in United States society at the time. Society's racist urge to maintain white women's status within the home as a domestic worker or mother placed limitations on her ability to choose her destination in life, as racism also limited the opportunities of women of color to pursue their education and careers. These arguments focused on three characterizations of women; two which limited their

¹⁷Smith-Rosenberg, 13-14; Welter, 238-239; Frances B. Cogan, All-American Girl. The Ideal of Real Womanhood in Mid-Nineteenth Century America, (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1989), 67. Contrary to Smith-Rosenberg and Welter, Cogan points out that this literature urged an academic education for the cult of Real Womanhood in order to produce well informed women, capable of taking on motherhood as opposed to the Cult of True Womanhood, which reduced women to the existence of a uterus.

¹⁸Rosenberg, Divided Lives, 15.

¹⁹Ibid.

opportunities: the "Cult of True Womanhood" and the "frail women," and one which worked to expand their opportunities: the "New Woman."²⁰ Such characteristics were used not only to decide if a woman should pursue higher education but also to define the type of education she might have.

"The Cult of True Womanhood"

The "Cult of True Womanhood" developed to justify the seclusion of women from the world; it was based on the idea of "four cardinal virtues--piety, purity, submissiveness and domesticity."²¹ It was also linked to "subservience" and encouraged as a symbol of middle class status.²² This status represented a class that could maintain a family with one paid income as opposed to the two required for most working class families. This trend paralleled the "family wage" which paid men twice as much as women since it was postulated that men were the sole supporters of families.²³ As such, the idea that women were no more than a "family possession," limited to the options of domesticity as a wife and mother or to care for their families, placed boundaries on their education.²⁴ If it was felt that a woman only needed an education which taught the "ideals of wifedom and motherhood" then her education

²⁰Smith-Rosenberg, 13-14; Rosenberg, Divided Lives, American Women in the Twentieth Century, (New York: Hill and Wang, 1992), 25; Welter, 239 & 259; Elaine Showalter, Sexual Anarchy. Gender and Culture at the Fin de Siecle, (New York: Penguin Books, 1990), 38.

²¹Welter, 239.

²²Smith-Rosenberg, 13-14.

²³Rosenberg, Divided Lives, 20.

²⁴Ibid., 3.

would be limited to the needs of a house, a husband, and children.²⁵ The role of motherhood was further emphasized by the idea that the whole family was uplifted when women received an education.²⁶ By contrast, a man was considered an individual whose education affected only himself.²⁷ These ideas reinforced the idea that the education of a woman prepared her for a role as a mother, not an individual contributing to society through her own interests.

Many argued that women simply needed the basic training of cooking, sewing, and religion to fulfill her position in society. A capable woman was thought to be "fully educated...in the arts of 'cooking, sewing, sweeping, dusting, etc.'"²⁸ Support for this thought stemmed from the belief that women were "not equal, mentally, to the thorough mastering of the higher branches of study" nor was she "able, physically, to pursue a thorough and complete course of study."²⁹ Thus, her limited capacity allowed her to train only in the realm of the domestic sphere. As the work a woman did in the domestic realm was backbreaking and time consuming, with great amounts of planning and calculations, this argument presents an ironic twist to women's needs and the demands of society.³⁰ This point of view further suggested women must be able to think clearly and pointed out that "the power of independent thinking, without which there can be no judgment, and which alone frees the soul, the real mother must have."³¹

²⁵L.C.O., "Women and Their Ideals; Things a Man Should Know," The New York Times, 31 October 1897, 18.

²⁶Mabel Newcomer, A Century of Higher Education For American Women, (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1959), 32.

²⁷Ibid.

²⁸Brackett, 18.

²⁹Ibid., 93.

³⁰Ibid.

³¹Ibid., 90.

The emphasis on rational decisions suggests women are incapable of such skills without training, a thought that might have roots in the contemporary medical beliefs concerning women. For instance, common medical advice for hysterical women noted they were "highly impressionable, suggestible, and narcissistic."³² This idea helped vouch for a specific kind of education, but only in the capacity of a future mother. An education of this kind would produce an expert in domestic skills, but for women who chose not to marry, it provided little to work with.

The "Frail Woman"

The ideas behind women's natural incapacities also applied to the second characteristic of women, the "frail woman." Arguments behind the "frail woman" parallel those behind the "Cult of True Womanhood," but delve further into women's physical ability. The underlying belief behind this characteristic holds that women who pursue their education render themselves infertile or at least badly damaged from the strain of higher education.³³ Those who believed the medical literature that supported such an idea criticized women for neglecting their duty to society.

It was believed the "frail woman" would only succumb to the strain higher education brought to the brain and body. The proponents of this argument staunchly believed that women would be taking from society by pursuing their education, based on the belief that women were the moral angels of society and upon them rested the responsibility of producing future, morally correct, citizens of the United States. Consequently, when a woman chose to pursue her education she was essentially "dangerous to society because her obsession with developing her brain starved the uterus; even if she should wish to marry, she would be unable to reproduce."³⁴

³²Smith-Rosenberg, 202.

³³Showalter, 40.

Accordingly, the responsibility of producing the future population of the United States rested on the shoulders of women, again, implying a primary role as mother. This limited her to the "Cult of True Womanhood," otherwise known as the "...female conscience and moral voice...of pious submission and isolated domesticity."³⁵

The fear a woman would be unable to fulfill her obligatory reproductive duty dominated the media. Volumes of literature and editorials were published illustrating a variety of thought concerning menstruation. Many of these opinions were supported by more folk lore than scientific research, as Leta Hollingworth found. In 1914 when Hollingworth, a Columbia University graduate, researched menstruation she discovered

[a]...striking disparity between what has been accepted and the figures yielded by scientific method...the tradition...that woman is a mysterious being, half hysterical, half angel, has found its way into scientific writing. Through centuries gone those who wrote were men, and since the phenomenon of periodicity was foreign to them, they...seized upon it as a probable source of the 'alleged mystery' and 'caprice' of womankind... Men of the most varied interest and professional equipment have written on the matter, historians, physicians, lawyers, philosophers, physiologists, novelists, educators.³⁶

Such was the atmosphere surrounding the "female disease," menstruation, and women's higher education in the nineteenth century.³⁷ The mystery of women's menstruation focused on her physical ability to not only complete her education but also on her future reproductive quality. Until Hollingworth researched menstruation's effect on

³⁴Ibid., 39.

³⁵Smith-Rosenberg, 130.

³⁶Leta Stetter Hollingworth, Functional Periodicity. An Experimental Study of the Mental and Motor Abilities of Women During Menstruation, (New York: Teachers College, Columbia University, 1914), 97.

³⁷Smith-Rosenberg, 183-184.

mental and physical ability, little scientific data was available to base a sound judgement. However, the belief that menstruation was a disease and left women helpless guided many ideas for and against women's higher education.

Hollingworth's research into the literature of periodicity was significant as revealed by the 1885 Association of Collegiate Alumnae study which determined that of seven hundred and five respondents in a survey of twelve colleges, two hundred and thirty-nine women abstained from physical activity, two from mental, and seventy-three from both during their periods. The abstinence from physical activity may be attributed to a link Dr. Cecilia Mosher found in her interviews of hundreds of women in the 1900's. Mosher found that many women abstained from work, not because they needed to, but because they were instructed to.³⁸ Hollingworth and Mosher's studies are significant not only for providing a scientific approach to menstruation, but also as an example of women who succeeded in higher education and helped dispel myths that prevented women from seeking alternatives to a life of domesticity. The concern with reproduction and menstruation, as Hollingworth discovered, prompted opinions from people in a variety of occupations; the overwhelming concern behind such limiting views of menstruation was women's role in the domestic sphere.

Arguments such as these were found to advise women on their future, as the "ovaries began their dictatorship of woman's life at puberty...[and] released her, often exhausted...at menopause."³⁹ With such a future to look forward to women were further advised, upon puberty, to "concentrate on the healthy development of her reproductive organs" and to "devote her life to maintaining their health."⁴⁰ It was believed a woman's physical state could also pose problems at home as The British Medical Journal declared, in 1878, that it was "...generally known to every housewife

³⁸Hollingworth, 4-5.

³⁹Ibid., 184.

⁴⁰Smith-Rosenberg, 187.

and cook that meat would spoil if salted at the menstrual period."⁴¹ However, through all these physical limitations the education behind the "Cult of True Womanhood" advised her on creating a home with comfort and love. This form of education limited itself to tasks such as "...bed-making, cooking, cleaning, and child-rearing."⁴²

While many doctors and psychologists claimed the "disease rendered her incapable of studying further" others advised that "...a very great number of healthy women are mentally different during menstruation...every month for several days she is enfeebled, if not downright ill."⁴³ This was a serious misconception of menstruation; it provided a reason not to allow women into universities or professional careers. Many women found themselves isolated every twenty-eight days, but, as Hollingworth pointed out, this limitation was placed only on women in certain occupations:

The physician declared fifty years ago that woman were forever unfitted for higher education because of this function; yet the women graduates increased yearly. It is positively asserted that women cannot successfully pursue professional and industrial life because they are incapacitated and should rest for one fifth of their time; yet it is not proposed that mothers, housekeepers, cooks, scrubberwomen, and dancers should be relieved periodically from their labors...⁴⁴

Consequently, it seems the limitations of menstruation were selectively applied to the status of women. With arguments such as this it was an issue of controlling women's actions; creating a population of women who only expended energy on the family.

Hollingworth's efforts to produce scientific knowledge about menstruation probably helped to dispel the mystery of menstruation. Her research concluded that

⁴¹Hollingworth, v.

⁴²Ibid., 187.

⁴³Ibid., 2.

⁴⁴Ibid., 97.

"...careful and exact measurement does not reveal a periodic mental or motor inefficiency," lending credibility to women such as Anna C. Brackett who had doubted such myths.⁴⁵ Such women were as active as others in the discussion of women's higher education. They urged other women to pursue their education, whatever it might be.

The arguments for women's higher education were most often championed by women themselves. Women who wrote in support of the higher education of women developed their own beliefs to explain why women were capable of applying their mind. They had suggested years earlier that if they could cook and clean, they could figure geometry and literature, even with a uterus. Anna C. Brackett provides an example of women who wrote in support of women's higher education.

Brackett was among the writers of the nineteenth century who examined women's education. She wrote against the limitations imposed on women by the "Cult of True Womanhood": "...to God the brain of a woman is as precious as the ovary and uterus, and as he did not make it impossible for her to think clearly when the uterus is in a congested state, so...the uterus should be capable of healthy and normal action while the brain is occupied with a regular amount of exercise."⁴⁶ In fact, many colleges found an "...impelling force which drives...the girl to pursue her studies with a tireless sort of energy...It seems to be a compound of conscience, ambition and a desire to please in varying proportions with a peculiar feminine sort of obstinacy."⁴⁷ This force was perhaps exerted to contrast the beliefs that women could not complete their education. In a society where women's roles were to secure the future of society not necessarily their own, there were several forces compelling them not to succeed in their education. However the works and success of such women as Anna C. Brackett

⁴⁵Ibid., 94.

⁴⁶Brackett, 379.

⁴⁷J.L. Pickard, "Education in Colleges," Education 13 (January 1893): 264.

helped in the struggle to place women in a respected place within the domain of higher education.

The "New Woman"

The "New Woman," the third characterization of women, openly "criticized society's insistence on marriage as women's only option for a fulfilling life."⁴⁸ As a result her critique of society resulted in her being feared by many who were insistent on maintaining the status quo. These women demanded an education and broke the rules about traditions associated with sexual activity to those concerning clothing.⁴⁹ The "New Woman" questioned society and the dictums that controlled their life "society...does not know what women are really like because it supposed that it knew. It has gone round and round in a circle, giving women the training that was sure to bring out certain so-called womanly attributes, and then claiming to discover in these attributes a reason for the training."⁵⁰ These women perceived themselves as being free from the constraints of domesticity, yet were open to the realm of motherhood. This "New Woman" expended her energy outside the home as well as within it, politicizing the home and the need to nurture families and children through their social work. A "New Woman" was one who not only raised her children well, but also "transcended the 'beaten path of the domestic treadmill with its everlasting insistence upon the incident of sex' and had entered 'fields where social service is gauged by other standards than those of child bearing, housekeeping, and adoring teas.'"⁵¹ However, to many this

⁴⁸Showalter, 38.

⁴⁹Ibid.

⁵⁰Elisabeth Woodbridge, "The Unknown Quantity in the Women Problem," The Atlantic Monthly (April 1914): 511.

⁵¹Rosenberg, Divided Lives, 65.

"New Woman" posed a threat to the stability the realm of domesticity offered society. The privileged "New Woman" broke tradition by pursuing a career of interest in addition to the family, though some chose only to work outside the home, leaving the task of family to others. Education offered these women opportunities for work and mobility as alternatives to marriage.⁵² Many privileged women enjoyed a life of travel, parties, and clubs, which it has been claimed, had previously been bartered for through marriage.⁵³

It was the group of "New Woman" who refused to marry and bring children into the world who threatened the security of many institutions. In 1895 Mrs. Ballington Booth denounced the activities of the "New Woman" in a speech for the Salvation Army, of New York city.⁵⁴ To her this woman with her "books, cigarettes, chewing gum, and return to trousers," was found to have sacrilegied all the ideals of wifehood and motherhood "...she has an insane idea that she is emancipating her sister, ...she tries to beat down man, belittle him...we, the true woman say, ...that we do not want her to emancipate us for we are trying to raise men to a higher sphere."⁵⁵ Thus, the "New Woman" posed a threat to the tranquility of domestic life. Yet she was not necessarily one to give up the domestic sphere entirely. While marriages were perceived to have gone down drastically in the period women sought higher education, there is little evidence to support this assumption.⁵⁶ Some women chose not to marry, but their numbers are few: fifty percent of college educated women married between

⁵²Showalter, 39.

⁵³Ibid.

⁵⁴"Advanced Woman Upheld," The New York Times, 2 September 1895, 5.

⁵⁵Ibid.

⁵⁶Newcomer, 30.

1885 and 1894 while sixty-six percent married between 1895 and 1899.⁵⁷ For most women of this genre, higher education gave them a choice, an opportunity to choose to marry or to live independently.

Opportunities for Women's Higher Education

By 1870 women's higher education had become more acceptable throughout the United States. A need for women's further education had developed during the Civil War and consequently women were able to push for further education in an ever increasing range of fields. Coeducation became common in many state systems of higher education and allowed working and middle class women access to formal higher education.

The possibility of higher education for most women of this era rested in coeducational institutions. Many institutions, especially state supported colleges in the west where teachers were in greater need relied on coeducation as a necessity: "coeducation has the advantage of economy...the churches or the people could not afford two colleges in a single common wealth."⁵⁸ Despite the "strong prejudice against the mingling of the sexes in school life...the necessities of frontier conditions and the influence of education by the state paved the way for educating them together."⁵⁹ Hence, coeducation did not signify a more liberal societal attitude; it was a necessity during a time of change.

The onset of the Civil War provided another reason for at least testing coeducation. The Civil War was a pivotal point of change for a wide range of people

⁵⁷Goodsell, 42.

⁵⁸Rosalind Rosenberg, Beyond Separate Spheres: Intellectual Roots of Modern Feminism, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982), 31.

⁵⁹John P. Garber, "Co-Education," Education 23 (December 1902) : 236.

in the United States, from African Americans to white middle class women, since it opened new directions in their lives. By the end of the Civil War there were seven occupational options for women: domestic services, agricultural labor, seamstress, milliners, teachers, textiles mill workers, and laundresses.⁶⁰ The war had depleted the number of men available for work and women readily took their place. While women took advantage of these occupational opportunities, they did not place women in many positions of power. For the working middle class women, teaching was the most respectable occupation which, at the time, required only a grammar school education.⁶¹ Public education had become a common demand of communities prompting the establishment of Normal departments for the professional training of potential teachers.⁶² Normal Departments were started in the 1850's and provided "...suitable provisions for the professional training of female teachers."⁶³ Though these departments were coeducational, they were not developed specifically for women's education since men still held the majority of public teaching positions. The acknowledgement of women as potential public teachers in the 1850's marks the gradual acceptance of women in the public sphere; however, to many, public teaching was deemed an exception as "the education necessary to fit a woman to be a teacher is exactly the one that best suits her for that domestic relation she is primarily designed to fill."⁶⁴ The decrease in male students during the Civil War met with an increased female enrollment in the Normal Departments to meet the growing demand for teachers. By

⁶⁰Newcomer, 17.

⁶¹Ibid., 170.

⁶²Helen R. Olin, The Women of A State University. An Illustration of Coeducation in the Middle West, (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1909), 14.

⁶³Ibid.

⁶⁴Sheila Rothman, Women's Proper Place: A History of Changing Ideals and Practices, 1870 to the Present, (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1978), 57.

1870 three of five teachers were women, who, in addition, were also paid at a lower salary than the men.⁶⁵ Consequently, while there was a demand for educated women who could work for a short time, a career outside the home was not a permanent option for most.

The education women received as future public teachers through normal departments provided a model on which to develop more coeducational institutions. However, coeducation provided an additional problem to women's higher education. Educating men and women together introduced the issue of sexual morality in a Victorian society that directed women "to be chaste, delicate, and loving."⁶⁶ It was no longer simply a question of whether a woman was physically and mentally capable of completing college, was she morally safe in a coeducational facility? If coeducation was determined to pose a threat to female morality and endurance, the future of women's higher education was at risk. Coeducational facilities were important to women's higher education as they provided the only affordable opportunity of further education for many women.

In the Victorian world a woman's virtue was held as a judgement of her character; the increased contact between women and men was feared, as a potential for disaster. Rules were established at coeducational institutions to limit or control contact between men and women. The extent of the regulation varied from school to school, but many such as Oregon Agricultural College prohibited contact between women and men in its early years. At the University of Michigan freshman and sophomore women were under the care of junior and senior "co-eds" to insure their safety and to perhaps act as mentors for them.⁶⁷ Cornell College offers another example where the school regulations of 1857 prohibited "young ladies and gentlemen [from] associating together

⁶⁵Newcomer, 14-15.

⁶⁶Smith-Rosenberg, 183.

⁶⁷"At Other Colleges," The College Barometer, 9 April 1910, 4.

in walking, or riding, nor stand conversing together in the halls or public rooms" and banned "the escorting of young ladies by young gentlemen."⁶⁸ In the early days of coeducation, rules such as these limited much of the contact between women and men on college campuses, reducing the risk of sexual passions ignited in the classroom. Such situations were to be avoided at all costs to prevent lowering the standards of the education received at coeducational institutions. This concern was illustrated by President Hamilton of Tufts College who declared coeducation, "un-education" and closed its doors to women after fifteen years of coeducation.⁶⁹ Thus, these rules were seen as a necessity to protect the virtues of women, preventing the possibility of sex scandals, as well as maintaining a classroom standard in which "proper" learning could take place. These rules may have helped avoid the problem, as suggested by an article appearing in 1883 which celebrated the lack of sex scandals at universities. In the article, President Canfield of the University of Kansas declared "sixteen years of radical co-education without a whisper of scandal have passed."⁷⁰ Similarly, the President of the University of Wisconsin felt "after an experience of ten years in large college classes, I am more than convinced of the suitability of coeducation: I believe it to be preeminently the fitting method of training our youth."⁷¹ Although what was boasted by a college president for the record and what was actually happening on these campuses may vary greatly.

A study of marriage by G.V. Hamilton analyzed the sexual history of one hundred women. Hamilton found that earlier than 1880 only four of these one hundred women were sexually active before marriage while after 1891 twenty-three had had

⁶⁸Winfred M. Atwood, "Scrapbook from Cornell, 1893-1903," Manuscripts Collection, Oregon State University Archives, Oregon State University, Corvallis.

⁶⁹"At Other Colleges."

⁷⁰Charles F. Thwing, "Women's Education," Education 4 (September 1883): 60-61.

⁷¹Ibid.

pre-marital sex.⁷² While this study was limited to one hundred women and there was an inclination for women to under report their sexual behavior, it is significant in suggesting that the sexual activity of women increased with access to higher education. This increase in sexual activity among women may be directly linked to higher education as women and men developed relationships outside of the traditional institution of marriage. Sexual relationships explored outside of marriage were not limited to the purpose of reproduction, allowing women to explore their sexuality freely. In addition, the increase in courses on hygiene and an understanding of the body led to more freedom. Knowledge of their bodies perhaps helped prevent pregnancy.⁷³

In another study conducted by Katharine Bement Davis of 2,200 women, seventy percent of the respondents were college educated and had completed their degrees around 1900. The study revealed that seventy-one women had engaged in premarital sex, sixty percent of the unmarried women practiced masturbation, and fifty percent of the unmarried women admitted to "having intense emotional relationships with other women."⁷⁴ The results of this study reveal that women were sexually active before marriage, but perhaps were able to conceal their activity from the watchful eyes of college faculty. The rules of conduct for students in colleges from the 1870's to the 1900's were strict; however, enforcing these rules and limiting contact between the sexes might have been difficult. The existence of such rules reflects the significant concern many felt for young women at college.

While coeducation threatened the Victorian morality of women, some believed it to be beneficial to marriage. The educated wife was perceived to bring an added dimension of knowledge to a marriage since "...it is well for family happiness when

⁷²G. V. Hamilton, A Research In Marriage, (New York: Boni, Inc., 1929), 383.

⁷³Rosenberg, Beyond Separate Spheres, 203.

⁷⁴Ibid., 199-200.

husband and wife have interests in common."⁷⁵ A report in a 1911 issue of the College Barometer at Oregon Agricultural College noted Dr. Benjamin Ide Wheelers, president of the University of California, commenting that "'coeducation in American universities is conducive to the highest and most ideal marriage, ...[that] provides a new solution for the perplexing divorce problem'...the value of coeducation is steadily becoming more apparent."⁷⁶ Perhaps it was also the expansion of women's roles in society that contributed to this "marital bliss."

Meanwhile, a slight decrease in the marriage rate of white middle class women brought queries to the system. It was thought that "to the average cost of each girl's education through the high school must be added one unborn child."⁷⁷ While a presumptuous statement, it was believed that 40,000 women in college were putting off marriage, half of whom might never marry and the other half who might have only two children.⁷⁸ It was determined that "when spinsters can support themselves with more physical comfort and larger leisure than they would have as wives; when married women may prefer the money they can earn and the excitement...found in outside employment to the bearing of children" then there was a problem on hand.⁷⁹ More directly, the decrease in the birth rate reflected the fear of race suicide. White women's reproductive ability was believed to be linked to the survival of their race. White, middle class women were expected to produce babies, and if they worked outside the home, to teach, fulfilling the role society designated to them.

⁷⁵J. McKeen Cattell, "The School and the Family," Popular Science, (January 1909): 92.

⁷⁶"College Wedding Happy," The College Barometer, 29 April 1911, 4.

⁷⁷Cattell, 92.

⁷⁸Ibid.

⁷⁹Ibid.

Introduction to Oregon Agricultural College

I wandered today to the hill..., and gazed on the scene below and as in the song, "The Entire Scene Has Changed." How much it is hard for me to realize. I'm one of the few privileged to live in Corvallis for over half a century. So many changes, so much growth in that time,...I came to Corvallis in a covered wagon in September of 1894...To me Corvallis was beautiful. A little town of 1500, flowers, trees everywhere, and many of what we now have as lawns I recall as fields covered with beautiful wildflowers. While the hiss [wetlands], were covered with wild strawberry patches...

Lora Lemon, interview by Lillian Van Loan, 1956, oral history transcript.

As Lora Lemon's historical description of the city details, Corvallis, home of Oregon Agricultural College, is located in a beautiful valley where farming and industry fill the land. Located in the lush Willamette Valley of Oregon, between the Coastal and Cascade mountain ranges, the College grew in a location a variety of cultures have chosen to call home. The Willamette valley shares a rich history of Native American, European American, and Asian American heritages.

Oregon Agricultural College was originally known as Corvallis College, a liberal arts college that was established with private donations. The Corvallis community built the school to provide an education for the local children and to provide a meeting house.⁸⁰ It was known as the Corvallis Institute when it received its charter from the Oregon Legislature in the 1856 to 1857 session, and the Board of Trustees was maintained by the Baptist Association.⁸¹ The Corvallis College was closed in 1860 due to financial difficulties.⁸² Following the institute's closure, the property was sold to the Reverend Orcenith Fisher in 1865 and was used as the

⁸⁰John B. Horner, "History of Oregon State College, 1865-1907," The Oregon Historical Quarterly 31 (March 1930): 42.

⁸¹H. Earl Pemberton, "Early Colleges In Oregon," The Oregon Historical Quarterly 33 (September 1932): 230.

⁸²Ibid., 234.

Southern Methodist Episcopal Church College.⁸³ In 1868, the state legislature accepted Corvallis College as the location of the land grant college.⁸⁴ Oregon received 90,000 acres of land through the land grant process of the 1862 Morrill Act. In 1885, the Methodist Episcopal Church South relinquished its claims on the funds of the Agricultural College to the college Board of Regents.⁸⁵ In 1961, the Oregon legislature changed the college's name to Oregon State University.

Oregon Agricultural College exemplifies the efforts of women in the West to pursue an education. It is important to note that the history of women at Oregon Agricultural College between 1870 and 1916 is limited to the European American experience since there is no record of women of color attending the College during the time period of this study. Given the vast populations of Asian Americans and Native Americans in the area, it is unusual that few, if any, entered the University. Initial surveys of student profiles and photographs show a lack of diversity at Oregon Agricultural College in its early years. While international students began attending the college around the turn of the century, no female international students attended the College during the time period of this study. However, Lora Lemon, a student who came to Corvallis in 1894, recalled three Native American students attending Oregon Agricultural College: "one became an architect, one a musician, and one an artist."⁸⁶ Verification of this family is difficult since no names were given, but Lemon's memories imply that there may have been a few Native Americans at the College. The lack of

⁸³Horner, "History of Oregon State College," 42.

⁸⁴Carolyn Homan, "Donation to Foundation Contains Bit of Oregon State University History," Albany Democratic Herald, 5 September 1990, Manuscripts Collection, Oregon State University Archives, Oregon State University, Corvallis.

⁸⁵Annual Catalogue of the Agricultural College, 1899-1900, 12.

⁸⁶Lora Lemon, Interview by Lillian Van Loan, 1956, Oral history Transcript OH3a:8, Oral History Collection, Oregon State University Archives, Oregon State University, Corvallis.

evidence pointing to a greater population of people of color at Oregon Agricultural College says something in itself and is an example of the racism which dominated society during this era. While there were no laws or references limiting Native Americans or Asian Americans access to the university, a pervasive racism existed which might have been felt as an "understood" rule of exclusion.

The Morrill Act provided for the formal education of the scattered population in the United States. This act provided an educational opportunity to many who might never have afforded a private institution much less found a school that supported their academic interests. The Morrill Act created an unlimited fund for colleges

...where the leading objects shall be, without excluding other scientific and classical studies, and including military tactics, to teach such branches of learning as are related to agriculture and the mechanical arts, in such a manner as the legislature of the state's may respectively prescribe, in order to promote the liberal and practical education of the industrial classes in the several pursuits and professions of life.⁸⁷

It was intended to provide for the working and middle classes of the United States, incorporating higher education into rural communities and providing more opportunities for young students. For women, Oregon Agricultural College provided an education for career opportunities such as teaching. Dean Bailey of New York College of Agriculture noted in 1907 that the agricultural colleges provide teachers who help "to adapt the rural schools to the needs of the people."⁸⁸ The message of the day was to educate the people in their areas of industry in order to be productive.

By 1869 the agricultural college had two professors and twenty-eight students in the college department.⁸⁹ The school conferred degrees for the bachelor of arts,

⁸⁷ Annual Catalogue of the Agricultural College, 1899-1900, 11.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 29.

⁸⁹ Horner, "History of Oregon State College," 44.

bachelor of science, and the master of arts. In 1870, Alice Biddle graduated with the first class of Oregon Agricultural College. From the start "coeducation was fully recognized and young ladies were admitted to all college classes and were entitled to the same honors and diplomas as young men."⁹⁰ As a land grant college this was a necessity. The need for coeducation was not a choice in most communities at this time since few could support separate schools for each sex. While Oregon Agricultural College may not have held a liberal view on the education of women it did nothing to prevent women's access to the school.

The women who attended Oregon Agricultural College lived through many of the changes that were occurring in the United States between 1870 and 1916, presenting an interesting case study of this scenario. The experience of these women at an historically coeducational, agricultural college is unique. As a land grant institute, the college also offered a perspective on the education of working and middle class students. Most of the students at Oregon Agricultural College were from a working or middle class background; few had parents with excess money to lavish upon their children. The President's biennial report of 1906-1908 declared that ninety-five percent of the student's parents or guardians "represented industrial occupations" and only five percent were "from medicine, law, journalism, education, or mining professions."⁹¹ Of these parents or guardians fifty-one percent were in agriculture, fourteen percent in engineering, eleven percent in mechanics, fifteen percent in businesses, ten percent in lumber, four percent in sales and bookkeeping, and five percent in professional work.⁹² In the 1916 to 1918 Biennial Report of the Board of Regents agriculture, businesses, skilled labor, unskilled labor, mercantile, professional, government service, and manufacturing were among the more common occupations of the parents of the

⁹⁰Ibid.

⁹¹Oregon Agricultural College Biennial Report of the President of the College, 1906-1908, (Corvallis, Or.: Privately printed, [1909]), 7.

⁹²Ibid.

students.⁹³ While there is a variety of occupations represented by the parents and guardians of the students, the majority appeared to be from working and middle class families. Even middle class students often worked during their college education to make ends meet.

Studies reported in the 1906 to 1908 presidential report found that "eighty-nine percent of the students were earning all or some of their own way through school."⁹⁴ In the 1916-1918 Biennial Report forty-two percent of the students were self supporting during the 1916-1917 school year. Many of these students worked through the summer, and thirty-eight percent were employed by the college or in Corvallis during the school year. Women comprised the majority of the students who were not working.⁹⁵ However, many such as Lora Lemon spent summers picking strawberries and hops in order to raise money for college.⁹⁶ It was not uncommon for some students to take six or seven years to finish their degree after taking time off to earn money for another year. The efforts of these students gained the admiration of the college President: "the persistency and determination of purpose which carry these students through college under such adverse conditions indicates the character of the men and women--because women as well as men make these sacrifices--who constitute the student body of the institution."⁹⁷ These acknowledgements suggest that most of the students were at Oregon Agricultural College because it was the only education they could afford. The students understood their situation and made the most of it: "we are not blessed with wealthy parents. Many are thrown upon their own resources

⁹³Oregon Agricultural College Biennial Report of the Board of Regents, 1916-1918, (Corvallis, Or.: Privately printed, 1919), VII.

⁹⁴O. A. C. Biennial Report of the President, 1906-1908, 7.

⁹⁵*Ibid.*, 7-8.

⁹⁶Lemon.

⁹⁷O. A. C. Biennial Report of the President, 1906-1908, 8.

and must either be content with a common school training or seek a higher institution at their own expense."⁹⁸ The lack of excess wealth also suggested that most of the students would work after graduation.

The college officials made an effort to "reduce the cost of attending the college...all laboratory, shop and other student fees are reduced to the minimum required in purchasing the laboratory or other student supplies. Student entertainment also are limited both in number and cost."⁹⁹ The students could help pay their way by working during the year or by taking a student loan. An hour of compulsory labor was already required of all students, women included, and students could take on extra work for ten cents per hour.¹⁰⁰ Paid employment from the college included a variety of work: janitorial, farm and orchard labor, laboratory and clerical work, or general campus duties.¹⁰¹

A student loan fund, with low interest rates, was established in 1911 for all Oregon Agricultural College students. There were fifty loans ranging from five to seventy-five dollars.¹⁰² Tuition costs were minimal during the earlier years of state colleges; for example, the total tuition listed in the College Catalogue for 1909-1910 was twelve dollars per year and included entrance, diploma, and incidental fees. There may have been additional course fees, but since they were minimal, the loans appeared adequate. Students were willing to do what was needed to secure an education that would help them in their desired occupations. The state college system was established

⁹⁸"New Students," The College Barometer, October 1900.

⁹⁹Oregon Agricultural College Biennial Report of the Board of Regents, 1912-1914, (Corvallis, Or.: Privately printed, 1915), XII.

¹⁰⁰Horner, "History of Oregon State College," 49.

¹⁰¹Catalogue of the Oregon Agricultural College for 1909-1910, (Corvallis, Or.: Privately printed, 1909), 55.

¹⁰²Oregon Agricultural College Biennial Report of the Board of Regents, 1910-1912, (Corvallis, Or.: Privately printed, [1913]), XII.

with the understanding that opportunities lay with better education.¹⁰³ At the turn of the century, young adults were taught this ideal and hoped for a better future through their higher education. This belief system got students into college and made the sacrifices seem worth it, as long as their dreams were fulfilled.

The fact that most of the students at Oregon Agricultural College between 1870 and 1916 were from working or middle class families, provides a more diverse history of higher education in the United States. Students worked for their future, whether that was farming or law school, and many had to put themselves through school. Even women students worked to earn money for themselves while preparing for a future occupation. Oregon Agricultural College offered something to each student, and its location in Corvallis kept the school centered around its agricultural and industrial background.

In 1870 women entered the university on an equal level; however, the angle of the playing field changed over the years. Between 1870 and 1889 women pursued the same degrees as men, a bachelor of science, a fact which helped insure the value of their degree. In other words, they received the same degree as men, which helped to reinforce the value of their education. In 1889, when the department of Home Economy and Hygiene was established, the range of degrees completed by women dropped significantly. The department, creatively organized by Margaret Snell, became their home away from home. Within its sanctuary women students felt protected in the company of other women since men were excluded from the degree.¹⁰⁴ This sanctuary provided a valuable source of strength and camaraderie for the women at Oregon Agricultural College; however, its safety prevented them from exploring a more diverse education. The philosophy behind the home economics department would change with time, yet the underlying message maintained women's place as a domestic worker or

¹⁰³Colombo, et al., 492.

¹⁰⁴"Domestic Sciences," The College Barometer (January 1905) : 17.

teacher, neglecting her possible value in another field of study. Even as options such as commerce and pharmacy provided opportunities outside of the domestic sciences, women were still compelled by unseen forces to stick to familiar turf.

Women graduates who pursued careers were valued by the community primarily as teachers, but also in commerce and pharmaceutical industries. As teachers, these graduates provided a necessary commodity for the West. The educated teacher provided the growing states exactly what they needed, a trained educator and future mother. Women were often paid less than men for teaching: the salary of a woman teaching in Oregon in 1893 was \$41.74, while a man's was \$51.11. This resulted in considerable savings by the state.¹⁰⁵ However, their appreciation of women's efforts is not so evident as shown in their conclusion that "women are good teachers, especially young girls with their intuitive sympathy for children and mothers who have bred children of their own, and women are cheaper than men of equal education and ability."¹⁰⁶

The pursuit of careers outside of teaching increased between the 1870's and 1900's as women began replacing men in commerce, sales, and pharmaceutical positions.¹⁰⁷ A woman's class identification also factored into the equation for her destiny in life. By 1916 it became school policy to divide women in the College of Domestic Sciences by class to provide a more efficient education.¹⁰⁸ This policy divided the women between those who needed the skills of a homemaker and those who intended to work outside the home; pushing life long decisions ahead by four

¹⁰⁵John C. Almack, "History of Oregon Normal Schools," The Quarterly of the Oregon Historical Society 21 (June 1920) : 100.

¹⁰⁶Cattell, 93.

¹⁰⁷Rothman, 48-52.

¹⁰⁸"To the Members of the State Board of Higher Curricula," Memo, March 31, 1916, Record Group 73, Record Group Collection, Oregon State University Archives, Oregon State University, Corvallis.

years. In addition, the pursuit of a business career offered a secure living for many women in the 1900's, but not for the middle class woman.¹⁰⁹ Consequently, the chances of a woman breaking out of such class divisions were slim.

On campus, rules and regulations established boundaries between the sexes to meet the demands of a society bound to protect virtuous young women on campus. Life on campus included a variety of student activities. Students were not ignorant of the social rules that regulated them through the iron gates; this awareness is evident in their social activities and their choice of degrees.

Yet even with these restrictions, women tended to enjoy their educational opportunities and did not take them for granted. While they were at Oregon Agricultural College for an education, they revelled in the good times common to all college students. For them, entertainment lay in literary societies, clubs, socials, athletics, and roommates. The separation of the sexes did not seem to hinder their fun, and two distinct lifestyles developed for men and women. These lifestyles sometimes intersected in the form of social gatherings, athletic events, or literary society competitions. Overall, though, women expected to live independently of men while at school. For some, this provided the only four years of independence in a lifetime. The friendships between women on campus were valued, and single sex social events were common. There was a great amount of loyalty between women at the College and friendships, cliques, and playful rivalries existed.

Conclusion

The experiences of women at Oregon Agricultural College illustrates how unseen societal forces limited and directed the choices, both personal and educational, that women could make in college. Their experiences were more than a course of

¹⁰⁹Rosenberg, Beyond Separate Spheres, 44.

academic study; they provided an opportunity to live with other women, develop their abilities, and explore options in their lives. Change was slow to occur, but women's access to higher education was a significant step against the forces that worked to maintain the division between domestic and public spheres in the structure of society. Other changes throughout society such as the Civil War, also contributed to the increasingly powerful role some women were able to achieve in society. Power can be expressed by a group of people in several ways: political clout, money, or through united voices shouting down imposed values and beliefs. The women who sought higher education during the nineteenth century did not have political clout, nor did many of them have excessive wealth, but they did find a united voice that pushed open the gates to higher education and eventually new roles for women in society. The changes that occurred were the result of both women's demands and the changing needs of a diverse society. Women's access to higher education was a slow struggle, but a position was won and continues to be held.

2. ACADEMIC "CHOICES," 1870 to 1916

I cannot say that it is not a good thing for some women to know how to cook and sew well, for it is indeed both good and necessary to civilized life...But I do believe that the idea at the basis of it all is fundamentally false. For the idea is this: that one half of the human race should be 'educated' for one single occupation, while the multitudinous other occupations of civilized life should all be loaded upon the other half.¹

Mary Leal Harkness, in The Atlantic, 1914

Mary Leal Harkness' comments on the lack of career choices for women focused on a central issue in their higher education at the turn of the century. After decades of women's higher education, courses of study were still limited by the needs and beliefs of United States society. Despite the increasing diversity of land grant college curriculums women remained restricted by the belief that they belonged in the domestic sphere alone. Schools such as Oregon Agricultural College started out with a classical course of study, but with the money and land allocated by the Morrill Act were able to diversify their curriculum. However, women students did not share the unrestricted choices that male students had, a fact marked by the significant increase in domestic science degrees for women without a similar change in the number of technical degrees awarded to them. This significant change reflects the belief that women's primary role in society either as a professional or non paid worker is in the home. Thus, their opportunities were limited by the beliefs and values of society even though some women were able to expand their roles.

¹Mary Leal Harkness, "The Education of Girls," The Atlantic Monthly (March 1914): 328.

Early Curriculum and Women's Choices

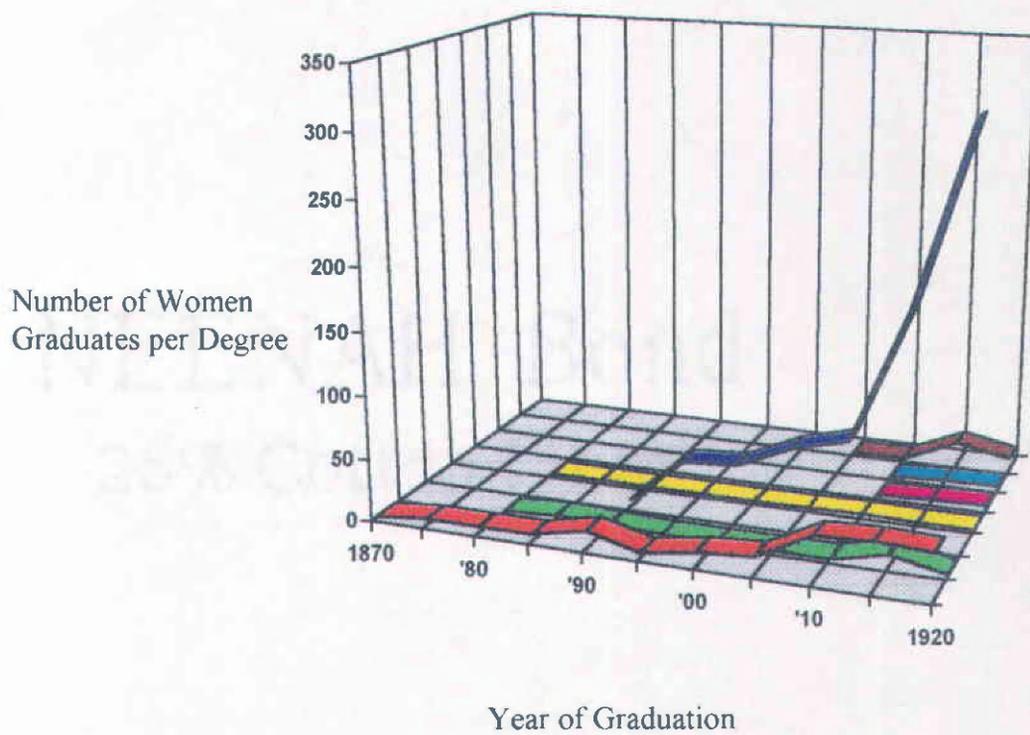
For women, the popular new choice of study was in the Department of Domestic Science. Following Oregon Agricultural College's initiation as a land grant college there was a significant change in women's choices for degrees. Figure 2.1 (see following page) illustrates this drop in the number of bachelor of science degrees and the dramatic increase in the number of domestic science degrees during the early twentieth century.² The graph also details other degrees completed by women, none of which were as popular as the domestic sciences. Until the twentieth century a bachelor of science or bachelor of arts allowed women to teach. Towards the end of the nineteenth century the establishment of schools for domestic sciences funneled women into courses designed specifically around the function of a home and family.

The move from a liberal arts focus to a more vocational one at Oregon Agricultural College was slow and the course catalogue for 1870 to 1871 showed little had changed from the Corvallis College curriculum. Classes in this catalog ranged from algebra, elocution, classical literature, and moral science to mental philosophy.³ Similarly, the curriculum of Corvallis College included history, algebra, elocution, Greek, literature, and sciences.⁴ However, over the next ten years the curriculum diversified and by 1881 the college catalog listed a variety of choices by school: the School of Physics, Mathematics, Moral Science, Languages, History and Literature,

²Graph compiled from alumni lists in Oregon Agricultural College catalogues, 1870 to 1920 and biennial reports, 1906-1918.

³Sixth Annual Catalogue of Officers and Students of Corvallis College, 1870-1871, (Corvallis, Or.: Privately printed, 1871), 8.

⁴Catalogue of Corvallis College, September 1866-July 1867, (Corvallis, Or.: Privately printed, [1866]), 13.



Legend

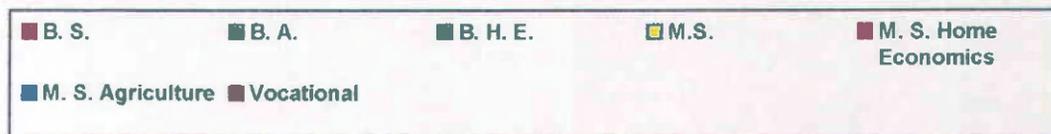


Figure 2.1 Graph Illustrating the Distribution of Women's Degrees, 1870-1920.

Engineering, and Agriculture.⁵ Many of the choices were limited to men since few women were encouraged to pursue a degree outside of a bachelor of science or bachelor of arts. Women were not expressively excluded from the agricultural classes and many took them in the interest of teaching in rural areas the lack of choice came with graduation. Graduating in an area outside of the Liberal Arts was limited by the few jobs available; personal interest tended to motivate women to study courses such as entomology and moral science. However, men were barred from two degrees, the bachelor of household economy and the bachelor of letters which were "...conferred upon ladies only" at Oregon Agricultural College.⁶ The exclusion of men from these degrees is clear as they served no purpose to men of the era. Some forestry men took Household Science courses: "the rest of the college got a good chuckle when we foresters took a course in what was called 'Household Science,' but it made sense when you were in the woods to know how to sew and cook."⁷ In this way men were able to apply the course work to their lives, but not the degree. The bachelor of letters involved a year of study beyond the bachelor of household economy and concentrated on liberal arts course work. Over the next ten years the College's curriculum became increasingly science oriented in engineering and agricultural studies, with a growing Department of Domestic Sciences.

⁵Seventeenth Annual Catalogue of Officers and Students of Corvallis College, 1881-1882, (Corvallis, Or.: Privately printed, 1882), 10.

⁶Annual Catalog of the State Agricultural College of the State of Oregon, 1891-1892, and Announcements for 1892-1893, (Corvallis, Or.: Privately printed, 1892), 29.

⁷T. J. Starker, "Oregon Agricultural College, 1910," in Remember When, (Corvallis, Or.: Benton County Retired Senior Volunteer Program, 1977), 18.

Department of Domestic Science

The course of study offered in the school should make of the young women we graduate not only a woman of culture, but she should know, and be interested in knowing, the influence a well ordered daily life has upon happiness and usefulness in the world...She should be a power for good, holding high ideals, ready, able and willing, to help in advancing her community to its greatest possibilities; and the advanced work should enable her to cope successfully with the problems of professional work for which the courses are planned...⁸

Juliet Greer, Dean of the School of Domestic Arts and Science, 1908

Greer's perception of women's education in the Domestic Sciences paralleled changing attitudes in society concerning women's education between 1889 and 1908. Women's education did expand, as women's role in society expanded; however, this expansion simply incorporated women's domestic duties to professional work outside the home. The new women's professional work in domestic science included occupational specialties such as social work, college professionals, and high school teaching.⁹ Since homemaking became a business between 1900 and 1910, there was a need for qualified women and a consequent demand for more domestic science courses in higher education. Oregon Agricultural College opened its department of Home Economy and Hygiene in 1889. The department went through a variety of name changes, but will be referred to as the Domestic Sciences in this paper. The professional work associated with domestic science was welcomed by many Oregon Agricultural College students as a career opportunity, but it continued to funnel women

⁸Juliet Greer, "School of Domestic Arts and Science" report in O. A. C. Biennial Report of the President, 1906-1908, 125.

⁹Newcomer, 86.

away from other plausible careers and remained only a step away from the domestic sphere.¹⁰

By 1911, sixty percent of women professors at coeducational institutions taught through departments of domestic sciences; this lack of women faculty members in other fields such as science marked how women were often segregated into the domestic sciences.¹¹ The work of domestic science had become a vocational career, but a limited one since the hiring trend kept women in a separate sphere on campus.¹² The increase in women's professions shows a growing acceptance of women working outside the home, but their work was limited by the expectation that it relate to household interests. However, many women felt Domestic Science studies empowered them: "there have been great revolutions in the characteristics of the home-making woman...the women of O.A.C. and progressive women of other institutions are, through their education, preparing for these duties...which means the educated in mind and hand, win influence and power simply because they know how."¹³ How much domestic science empowered women is difficult to determine. Many students felt domestic science provided opportunities that could not be found elsewhere and others, who might have excelled in other disciplines, were limited by the expectations placed on them. It was the women who applied such education to social reform who actually pushed the boundaries for women's roles. There is no doubt that many of the women who graduated in domestic science applied their study to social reform. The developing field of social work would become a new institution in the United States so in this context domestic science was able to empower them.

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹Margaret Rossiter, "Women's Work in Science," ISIS (September, 1980) : 390.

¹²Ibid., 396-397.

¹³"The Women Students of O.A.C.," The CoEd Barometer, 16 May 1914, 4.

For others, domestic sciences kept them in the realm of domesticity. It is difficult to determine, but easy to believe, that many of these women would have chosen a life outside of the domestic sphere, given a real choice. Many upper class women were able to choose a career in medicine, but fewer middle and working class women could simply because their failure to find work left them without support. The prejudice that kept women in the domestic sphere or in careers associated with domesticity kept them out of male dominated professions. Oregon Agricultural College faculty member, Dr. Margaret Comstock Snell provides an example of a woman trained in medicine who "chose" to apply her education to domestic science. How much Dr. Snell's choice involved free will is a difficult question. She could have applied her degree to teaching in medical schools for example if she had had a real choice.

Dr. Margaret Comstock Snell developed the department of Household Economy and Hygiene at Oregon Agricultural College in 1889. It was believed to be the first of its kind west of the Rocky Mountains and the fourth to be established in the United States.¹⁴ She earned a medical degree at Boston University, but decided not to practice medicine as a doctor.¹⁵ Instead Dr. Snell decided to teach preventative medicine through home economics; "her conviction was that her life should be invested in the prevention as well as cure of disease...I made up my mind that I would not so much try to cure diseased lives, as teach people how to avoid getting them."¹⁶ The Department of Household Economy and Hygiene gave her the opportunity she needed

¹⁴1889-1939, Fifty Years of Home Economics at Oregon State University, (Corvallis, Or.: The State Board of Higher Education, 1940), 2.

¹⁵Ava B. Milam Clark, Lecture given to Home Economics students at Oregon State University, October 8, 1963, Oral History Transcript OH3a:1, Oral History Collection, Oregon State University Archives, Oregon State University, Corvallis.

¹⁶Ava B. Milam Clark, Lecture given Oregon State University, July 12, 1956, Oral History Transcript OH3a:2, Oral History Collection, Oregon State University Archives, Oregon State University, Corvallis.

to reach people. She believed that the education of a man, educated only one person, "but when you educate a woman, the welfare of the family is secure."¹⁷ Snell's conviction that a woman's education benefitted the family points to her belief that a woman's primary role focused on the institution of the family. Snell's curriculum taught the women students "how to cook; the art of sewing, cutting, and fitting; the elements of the milliner's art; and how to take care of their own health and family."¹⁸ She wanted her students to be well educated and sensible mothers who, as homemakers, had a "...duty to society" and the responsibility of the proper "...management of time, money...[and] family welfare."¹⁹ She encouraged these qualities through courses in child development and family relationships.²⁰ Dr. Snell was said to introduce revolutionary ideas into the Domestic Sciences many faculty members feared she would go beyond the means of farmers because she was ahead of her time in educational ideas.²¹ To many the curriculum of domestic science taught cooking, sewing, and household finance. To Snell, it included much more: physics, chemistry, biology, botany, English, and History.²² The basis behind Snell's curriculum at the College was preventative care, and, by teaching women, she felt she was reaching more people.

Dr. Snell's interest in health and hygiene mandated itself in several ways in the Department of Household Science. While she did not openly encourage her students to expand their roles outside of the family, she did challenge them to question certain expectations placed on them by society. First, she taught her students about their

¹⁷Ibid.

¹⁸Annual Catalogue of the State Agricultural College, 1891-1892, 18.

¹⁹Clark, lecture, July 12, 1956.

²⁰Ibid.

²¹Margaret Comstock Snell, various letters and notes, Manuscripts Collection, Oregon State University Archives, Oregon State University, Corvallis.

²²Ibid.

anatomy, which was a rare topic to introduce to women who were not pursuing a medical degree.²³ Dr. Snell snuck hygiene into the "puritan--victorian" classrooms at Oregon Agricultural College in her efforts to teach about preventative medicine.²⁴ The Hayseed, the school yearbook of 1894, wrote about Dr. Snell's paper mache organ model in which "every organ is removable, perfect and of life size. We have thus many of the advantages of the dissecting room without its offensiveness in learning how 'fearfully and wonderfully we are made.'"²⁵ In this way Snell managed to educate her students without offending anyone who had the power to shut down her classroom.

Second, she encouraged her student's to dress comfortably and to eliminate tight fitting corsets, long skirts, tight skirts, small shoes, cold clothes, and layers of petticoats. Instead, she urged her students to dress comfortably, as she also dressed, believing women should be comfortable and not limited by their dress or ignorance.²⁶ Dr. Snell's classroom was not a typical college classroom; she taught and cared for her students, cooking them meals on a little stove as they sewed and she read literature.²⁷

Snell's subject matter was often considered the "first of its kind in the Northwest" and reflected her concern for improving women's household education. Two reasons were involved here, one to improve the care of the home and its efficiency and two, a concern for society as a whole. Teaching women improved the life of society because women were encouraged to take care of people's sanitation and health. Snell believed women had an important role in the home and needed help to alleviate

²³Ibid.

²⁴Ibid.

²⁵Ibid.

²⁶John B. Horner, Oregon History and Early Literature, (Portland: J. K. Gill, 1931), in Margaret Comstock Snell Collection, Manuscripts Collection, Oregon State University Archives, Oregon State University, Corvallis, 262. Corvallis, Oregon.

²⁷Clark, lecture, October 8, 1963.

the burden of domesticity. She believed education could improve household maintenance, a problem which probably brought her into domestic science in the first place:

...the home as we find it today has scant warrant that anything born of its teaching is worth while to impart, yet the problem grows of how to get better results, how to lessen the labor of the farmer's wife, the washer-woman, the cook, the boarding house keeper, the city missionary, the school teacher, and the woman of fashion. The solution requires something more than the knitting of brows over theories, there must be actual testing of these theories by practice in the college laboratory, if they are to have value and permanency. The precious acquisition of the scholar who *knows* must be further supplemented by that of the artist who *does*.²⁸

The education women received from Dr. Snell would provide them with the knowledge they needed to run an efficient household. She made domestic science more than the study of household chores, she turned it into a science.

As for society, the basic belief behind Snell's curriculum was that "to the state, no more important work can be done than to cultivate those habits which should prevail in every household...the happy home is prosperous, upon such homes rest the prospects of the Republic."²⁹ Snell's beliefs directly acknowledged that the purpose of women's higher education was to maintain a complacent household so that the husband could work effectively outside the home. The very essence of Dr. Snell's beliefs establishes education as a tool to socialize a particular group for their position in society; it "defines the social boundaries beyond which members of the group cannot easily move."³⁰ Thus, Snell pushed some of the boundaries placed on women such as dress and comfort at the same time she firmly believed women served a valued purpose

²⁸Annual Catalogue of the Agricultural College, 1899-1900, 62.

²⁹Horner, Oregon History and Early Literature, 262.

³⁰McClelland, 3.

for the state through their work at home. Snell introduced new ideas to the women who attended the university and offered them a sanctuary from the rest of the school. However, this comfort had the drawback of isolating women students and limited their exploration into other subjects.

The department grew rapidly. By 1908 there were one hundred and fifty-five students, up from eighty-one in 1907.³¹ Changes in courses and the alternative degree work helped increase enrollment, but there was also a need for more faculty members and an increase in salary "if the integrity of the present faculty...is to be maintained a decided increase in salaries will be necessary."³² There was also a push for a building devoted entirely to the school of Domestic Science and Art since the conditions of the old building was not conducive to study. They had been relegated to a dingy basement with little ventilation and space.³³

The growth of the School of Domestic Science was commended in a letter of appreciation to Dean Greer on her retirement when the school was "recognized throughout the state for its power, for its breadth of training and for the ability of its graduates...from a department which gave merely training for the home, the school has developed into a training school for women who are to become leaders throughout the state. The course now embraces theoretical and scientific work in addition to practical training."³⁴ These changes were well received by the communities since the skilled women graduates provided a valuable resource.

By 1908 home economics was a popular choice of study for women students. The variety of occupational choices had increased and the mission of the department of domestic science adapted to these changes. Under Dean Juliet Greer the department

³¹O. A. C. Biennial Report of the President, 1906-1908, 121.

³²O. A. C. Biennial Report of the Board of Regents, 1912-1914, 63.

³³O. A. C. Biennial Report of the Board of Regents, 1910-1912, 33.

³⁴"In Appreciation," The CoEd Barometer, 13 May 1911, 2.

had emphasized the professional aspect of work which provided women students with the training they needed. Dean Greer believed women served the community through domestic science and encouraged civic work. Dean Greer developed courses in nutrition, sewing, cookery, and millinery over household management or child development.³⁵ These courses emphasized the professional work that many of the graduates pursued. By 1914 opportunities existed for teaching home economics in high schools and colleges, as well as executive and administrative positions in various institutions: hospitals, institutional homes, and asylums promised a demand for skilled women workers.³⁶

The increasing demand for women workers led to a more vocational focus in the department. The College's efforts to establish vocational courses or short courses began in 1906 and were directed towards students without a high school degree.³⁷ Vocational courses were also established in dairying, forestry, industrial arts, and commerce methods. By 1914 the college catalogue listed a separate year of vocational study in domestic sciences for "those whose schooling may not qualify them to enter the degree courses, [or] whose duties demand that they content themselves with a briefer period of training for their lifework."³⁸ This marked a shift in the department's focus as the vocational aspect of the College's instruction became more important. While the vocational course work provided students with less money or education an opportunity for better jobs, it limited their career mobility since they did not have a full degree.

³⁵Clark, lecture, October 8, 1963.

³⁶Catalogue of the Oregon Agricultural College for 1914-1915, (Corvallis, Or.: Privately printed, 1914), 122.

³⁷O. A. C. Biennial Report of the President, 1906-1908, xv.

³⁸Catalogue of the Oregon Agricultural College, 1914-1915, 121.

The increased job opportunities for domestic science students brought changes to the standard curriculum as well. The 1914 to 1915 course catalog stated "many opportunities are open for the woman capable of solving the problems of good food service for large numbers of people, and for experts in the management of large institutions. Equally attractive opportunities are available for the expert needlewoman, the tasteful designer of gowns, the competent dressmaker or milliner, the ladies' tailor, and the woman with artistic resources as a household decorator and furnisher."³⁹ By 1914, the department had divided the course of study between a "Home Makers' Course" and a "Degree Course in Home Economics."⁴⁰ These changes pushed life long decisions into women student's first year of college. The homemaking course emphasized child care, sewing, sanitation, personal hygiene, preventative medicine, and home furnishing. The professional course emphasized chemistry, sewing, rhetoric, hygiene, housewifery, and electives: domestic arts, institutional management, home administration, education, applied design, and domestic science.⁴¹ The difference in these courses of study signified the importance of a first year student's decisions. The course work for the professional course provided a thorough education in a variety of subjects and consequently a variety of occupational choices. It was important for a student to have a clear idea of where she wanted to go; the decision to become a homemaker was difficult to make unless the student was already engaged. In addition, a decision to pursue the homemakers' course of study often further limited an already slim group of career opportunities for women.

Women students in the department of Domestic Sciences also contributed to its development. Women in domestic science were often isolated from the men because few men took domestic science courses, but through other campus activities and

³⁹Ibid., 122.

⁴⁰Ibid., 123.

⁴¹Ibid., 123-125.

classes they did develop friendships with men. On occasion the women were known to toss treats to the boys from the window of their cooking classes.⁴² Overall, however the domestic science courses were professionally run down to the details of the dresses; students wore a "cooking costume" of a "dull blue dress with a white cap and apron."⁴³ The student's most cherished endeavor between 1870 and 1916 occurred in San Francisco at the Panama-Pacific Exposition of 1914 when the students maintained a model dining room.⁴⁴ Seven students stayed in San Francisco for periods of six weeks and directed the kitchen and serving of their dining room; the women received six college credits in institutional management for their work.⁴⁵ The numerous Barometer articles detailed the thrill of the exhibit and the significance of the women's achievement for themselves and the College. This exhibit gave the Department of Domestic Science and Oregon Agricultural College national recognition, which helped graduates find work.

The Department of Domestic Science gave the impression that it was a close group of students and faculty. The sanctuary of domestic sciences helped women succeed, but it also hindered women from exploring more diverse degrees. The lack of women faculty and students in other disciplines such as agriculture and engineering also contributed to this problem because cohort support, such as in the domestic sciences, was not found throughout campus. While the goal of domestic science in its early years recognized women's role primarily in the home, the goal grew with women's expanding roles. Women did choose professional careers; however, these careers often

⁴²Horner, Oregon History and Early Literature, 262.

⁴³Catalogue of Oregon Agricultural College, 1909-1910, 54.

⁴⁴"Co-Eds To Maintain Model Dining Room at Exposition," The College Barometer, 8 December 1914, 1.

⁴⁵Clark, lecture, July 12, 1956.

remained closely tied to the domestic sphere. Most were content with their decisions, but given the lack of real choice it is difficult to determine if they were satisfied.

Other Disciplines For Women at Oregon Agricultural College

There were two significant factors in a woman's destination at college. The first was the potential for work following graduation and the second, the number of women present in any given discipline. The potential for future work as professionals remained limited for women throughout the early twentieth century. As the job market expanded there was a parallel increase in the diversity of women's degrees. Women were given increasing occupational choices by 1910, but overwhelmingly these choices remained closely connected to a female role of nurturing and educating. By 1910, women comprised one percent of lawyers, six percent of physicians, ninety-three percent of nurses, fifty-two percent of social workers, and seventy-nine percent of librarians.⁴⁶ These figures show the reality of women's choices at this time; women were essentially locked out of professions which required training outside of the domestic sciences, why study in another field? Women at Oregon Agricultural College were not privileged to study a field for personal interest alone, they went to college for a future job. However as fields opened up women moved into them since women's interests were not limited to domestic sciences.

By 1910 the College of Commerce at Oregon Agricultural College was established and producing graduates to meet a growing demand for trained workers. Prior to this period most clerical work and commerce positions were limited to men; however, women were finding positions as typists and clerks. While commerce positions contributed to women's career options, they offered little opportunity for

⁴⁶Barbara Miller Solomon, In the Company of Educated Women. A History of Women in Higher Education in America, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), 127.

advancement. It was the men the women replaced who typically moved on to better paid positions. Despite the lack of career advancement in commerce, courses such as accounting, management, political economy, stenography, and typing were alternatives to the domestic sciences.⁴⁷ The School of Pharmacy provided yet another option for women at Oregon Agricultural College as it developed. Despite the options of commerce or pharmacy most women remained in the domestic sciences; between 1908 and 1920 only ninety-two women graduated with a bachelor of science in commerce and nine with a bachelor of science in pharmacy as compared to five hundred and fifty-four who graduated with a bachelor of science in household sciences.⁴⁸ The number of women who remained in household sciences reflects the expectations placed on women during this time in society. The women students themselves declared that the "institution offers almost unrestricted opportunities for women to engage in any field of study open to men...But the School of Home Economics, enrolls, of course, the great majority of the women of the institution."⁴⁹ So the contrast between perceived "unrestricted opportunities" and the small numbers of women who took advantage of these opportunities illustrates how much society's beliefs directed women students' decisions in college. The career opportunities grew, but there was a lack of support for women to pursue a degree outside of the domestic science.

The second factor paralleled the gradual expansion of career opportunities; women entered fields of study outside the domestic sciences as the career opportunities opened. The change in women's degrees was significant, but not remarkable. Again, figure 2.1 (see page 35) illustrates the slow rate of women's movement from the domestic sciences given the few inducements for them to leave the security of domestic sciences. Women students had established their own secure sphere, separate from most

⁴⁷O. A. C. Biennial Report of the Board of Regents, 1910-1912, III.

⁴⁸O. A. C. Biennial Report of the Board of Regents, 1918-1920, 70.

⁴⁹"True Co-Education At O.A.C.," The CoEd Barometer, 30 May 1916, 8.

of the College where they found an inviting climate which empowered them through its separateness.

There was a lack of support for women outside of the domestic sciences due to the lack of women faculty members in other fields. The number of women faculty members outside of the domestic sciences remained small. Considering that one hundred percent of the faculty in the domestic sciences were women, the lack of women in other disciplines had to affect women students decisions to enter other fields. The number of women in other disciplines remained at about two to three. As a minority population on campus women students were less likely to enter a male dominated discipline without women faculty members or other cohorts to help them through. The numbers of women outside domestic sciences did grow, but during the period of this study the change was slow; the reasons for remaining in the domestic sciences outnumbered the pursuit of other disciplines.

Having faculty contacts to address the needs of students was important to the women's existence on campus and the general climate. The smaller ratio of women students to faculty helped women by providing support and solutions to their problems. In general many professors were overworked during the expansion of Oregon Agricultural College. A rapid increase in students at the College created resentment in the over burdened faculty. In the 1906 to 1907 school year the ratio of faculty to students was one to thirty-two making it a very "congested condition throughout the institution, occasioned by the large increase in attendance with insufficient funds to provide for corresponding increases in room, equipment, and instructors."⁵⁰ The ratio of students to faculty members was high for a land grant college, in addition to the fact that Oregon Agricultural College faculty had the lowest paid salaries of all land grant colleges.⁵¹ This created friction on campus because the lack of funding meant a lack of

⁵⁰O. A. C. Biennial Report of the President, 1906-1908, 9.

⁵¹Ibid., 10.

research funds and a greater inducement for experienced faculty members to move elsewhere.⁵² This put some tension on campus, but in general women student's benefitted greatly from their smaller numbers and thus smaller ratios of faculty to women to insure their needs were met.

Even though only about one hundred women pursued technical degrees at Oregon Agricultural College between 1870 and 1916, their numbers were significant. These numbers reflected the slowly changing attitudes of a society which placed women in the domestic sphere as a paid worker, or unpaid wife and mother. This changing attitude gradually allowed women into a variety of fields. However, their upward mobility within these jobs was limited and women who did push into male dominated fields were seen as a threat to many. The increasing number of women outside of the department of household science was feared as a feminization of academe, but to some it was welcomed. At Oregon Agricultural College the Biennial Report of 1918-1920 proudly pointed out that the "number of women students in the technical and industrial branches of work at the college apart from home economics has for some time been increasing."⁵³ During 1917-1918, the school of Commerce had two hundred and eighty-two women students, the school of Mining Engineering and Chemical Engineering had three, and the School of Pharmacy had thirty-five.⁵⁴ The increasing numbers of women in technical disciplines after 1916 was significant; however, these numbers do not represent the number of women who actually graduated in these areas. The evidence shows that women were eager to push into other fields as the opportunities allowed and exemplifies how powerful society's beliefs were in influencing these choices.

⁵²Ibid., 12.

⁵³O. A. C. Biennial Report of the Board of Regents, 1918-1920, 6.

⁵⁴Ibid.

Scholarship of Women Students

The scholastic ability of women was never openly questioned at the College women were expected to complete the same quality of work as men. In fact records of grade averages for students beginning in 1914 show women averaged higher scores than the men. During 1915-1916 women averaged eighty-eight percent while men averaged eighty-four percent, and in 1916-1917 women averaged eighty-six percent with men at eighty-three percent.⁵⁵ While the difference in women's and men's grade averages is small, these numbers help establish women's scholastic aptitude in higher education. Women and men took the same chemistry, entomology, history, or math classes, to name a few, so women's higher averages did not reflect easier courses. Women were encouraged to excel in college with annual scholarships and awards. The Clara H. Waldo Prize of one hundred dollars was first offered in 1912 and awarded to women who had the highest academic standings, excelled in student activities, and showed qualities of womanhood and leadership.⁵⁶ Scholarship awards such as the Waldo prize encouraged women to become involved with campus activities and take on leadership roles which were valuable skills for women. Clara Waldo established the scholarship as an incentive to enable women "to reach higher standards in school work...[and] the most points should be given... to the girl having the highest qualities of leadership, that is, proficiency in establishing and maintaining organizations."⁵⁷ These are the skills that many found "unwomanly" a decade before and their increasing acceptance illustrates the progress women had made in society. In addition, the Waldo

⁵⁵"Summary of Scholarship Averages, 1914-1918," April 1921, Record Group 135, series 2, Record Group Collection, Oregon State University Archives, Oregon State University, Corvallis.

⁵⁶"Prize fund," Catalogue of the Oregon Agricultural College for 1912-1913, (Corvallis, Or.: Privately printed, 1912), 71.

⁵⁷"Most Competent Women Will Be Chosen Soon," The CoEd Barometer, 16 May 1914, 9.

Prize illustrates the characteristics that were encouraged in women for personal development at the land grant college. Skills developed through leadership, extracurricular activities, and scholarship were essential in women's efforts to expand their roles in society. The fact that Oregon Agricultural College actually encouraged these skills was significant in the women student's future success as professionals.

Thus, Oregon Agricultural College provides a unique perspective on the experience of women in higher education. As a predominantly working and middle class college its students were serious about their education. Most of the women expected to work when they finished either as a homemaker or in a professional occupation. For women the atmosphere at the College was accepting. Within the Department of Domestic Sciences women found a nurturing environment that encouraged their skills and helped them succeed in college. The small number of women at the College allowed for close relationships between faculty members and students which increased the women student's power on campus. While women at Oregon Agricultural College were accepted equally with men their opportunities were limited simply by contemporary beliefs that encouraged them to remain within the domestic sphere. Despite this hinderance to expanding their roles, women did push the limits, and their educational experience at Oregon Agricultural College helped them create a new future for college educated women.

3. LIFE ON CAMPUS

A large part of a student's life has little to do with academic study and some of the more memorable moments occur outside the classroom. This is why women's life on campus must be a part of the broader discussion of women's higher educational experience. The campus climate plays a significant role in how students adapt to the college environment and thus is an important factor in the students success. Support from faculty and other women on campus, comfortable living conditions, and an atmosphere of respect are all essential elements of a welcoming campus climate. To explore the conditions of the campus climate at Oregon Agricultural College during this period, the student conduct rules, faculty and cohort support, and women's living conditions will be discussed.

Even though there is little documentation of intolerance, as a coeducational institution Oregon Agricultural College had its share of problems. Women were tolerated on campus, and, though inequalities existed, most women students fared well at the College. It is important to point out that being tolerated does not imply that women were made to feel comfortable on campus. For the most part, while friendships developed between men and women on campus, these friendships did not eliminate sexism on campus. However in the case of Oregon Agricultural College there are few documented instances of open resentment against women students. Women students tended to be independent and were able to establish close ties to faculty members who provided the support they needed on campus. Faculty support was a vital part of meeting women's needs and the push for equality on campus. Between 1870 and 1916, Oregon Agricultural College was tolerant of women students and through the women's efforts, with faculty support, were able to establish their own viable sphere on campus where their needs were met.

Student Conduct Rules

The student conduct rules were established to maintain a sense of Victorian decorum for the students on campus. There was a great need, during the early years of women's higher education, to protect their virtue and honor as women given society's fear of exposing women to immoral behavior. The greatest problem Oregon Agricultural College faced was the fact it was a coeducational institution which placed a large amount of pressure on the authorities to maintain propriety on campus. For many the very existence of coeducation posed a threat to women's honor because "womanly virtues are endangered by the greater familiarity which coeducation permits."¹ Although, this belief was also resented by the "inference that girls are too weak, morally, to withstand the temptation of male society...such an argument is an insult to the girls or a stigma upon their brothers."² The pressure for women to maintain the morality of society was intense; yet, that same society had little trust in women's ability to carry out their moral duty. The regulations established on many campuses illustrate how little college students were trusted.

Often these regulations limited the women's freedom more than the men's and established a difference in the attitudes towards the genders on campus. Women were guarded while men were regulated through the conduct codes appropriated to each gender. When Oregon Agricultural College existed as Corvallis College in 1866 there were numerous restrictions placed on the students. The department of the students was valued as proof that the college was working to protect the honor of its students. A list of demerits for tardiness, absentees, or misbehavior was kept for each student as "all students will be required to practice punctuality and cheerful obedience."³ In the

¹Pickard, 264.

²Ibid.

³Catalogue of Corvallis College, 1866-1867, 16.

1881 to 1882 catalog, a new policy in student conduct prohibited "all communications between ladies and gentlemen on the college premises."⁴ This rule in particular limited the actions of the students and illustrates how divided men's and women's college experiences were. This rule contrasts starkly with the activities of literary societies which held inter-gender oratory and public debate competitions on campus. There was no policy forbidding women to participate in these competitions; they provided a means for women to express their opinions on campus. In this way, women were not a silent population on campus, but the weight of their opinions was limited due to their small number and the campus climate.

Most of the restrictions limited women's freedom at Oregon Agricultural College and left the majority of the responsibility for proper conduct on the women. Maintaining a separation between men and women at school was intended to guarantee that the quality of coeducation matched that of single sex colleges. Rule five of the college conduct code "drew a clear civil engineer's line between co-education and co-education as 'young ladies boarding in the village or vicinity who are under the care of the faculty will not be permitted the visits of young gentlemen, without the written consent of their parents, under such restrictions as the faculty may require.'"⁵ This rule helped assure the student's parents that their sons or daughters were safe while at college.

The general *belief* towards student conduct reflected a policy of "...teaching others to govern themselves" while the general *attitude* towards students, according to the catalogs, was one of mistrust: "all persons are forbidden to trust a minor without the consent of his or her guardian."⁶ Beyond this rule the regulations for men and women differed and maintained a distance between them. Every student had to sign a

⁴Seventeenth Annual Catalogue, 1881-1882, 15.

⁵Horner, "History of Oregon State College," 45.

⁶F. Berchtold, "Then and Now," The College Barometer (June 1900): 1.

copy of the college laws so they knew what was expected of them.⁷ The College took on a different identity for men and women students. To the male students, the College took on a "pater familias" attitude in which the father of the student named a member of the faculty as a guardian of his son while at school.⁸ The handling of money was a concern for men in the 1870's. The college catalog pointed out that "most of our difficulties arise from the improper use of money injudiciously entrusted to pupils."⁹ Men's funds were given to their guardian, but the men were held accountable for its proper use, which excluded gambling.¹⁰ Men were also forbidden to play cards or billiards.¹¹ There is no evidence of a similar relationship between women students and the College. However, the establishment of a Dean of Woman helped insure women's proper conduct. The 1910 report from the Dean stated the purpose of the department was to "work in cooperation with the other departments of the college in such a manner as to educate and train, most effectively, a body of young women."¹² This training for women students included a series of personal interviews with the dean and lectures for the physical, moral, and spiritual development of young women at the university.¹³ In one example given in the catalog, a lecture focused on the cardinal points of good manners at the table, in school, on telephones, the correct carriage, and the proper position in sitting and standing.¹⁴ The emphasis on the "proper

⁷Ibid.

⁸ Horner, "History of Oregon State College," 44.

⁹Sixth Annual Catalogue, 1870-1871, 20.

¹⁰Horner, "History of Oregon State College," 44.

¹¹Berchtold, 1.

¹²O. A. C. Biennial Report of the Board of Regents, 1910-1912, 90.

¹³Ibid.

¹⁴Ibid.

development" of women students indicates the College's concern for women's behavior. The development of college women was not limited to their minds and the value placed on their deportment and activities was based on the College's standards. This standard was measured by society's values and consequently women felt these societal pressures throughout their college career. The position of the Dean of Women essentially provided an insurance factor against potential problems at the same time that it reassured society and parents of women's high morals. The Dean also provided a link between the women students and college officials so that issues were addressed, in order to protect their welfare.¹⁵ The Dean worked hard to insure women were advised in their course work so they could do well in whatever endeavor they chose on graduation.¹⁶ In these ways the Dean of Women provided invaluable support to women students at the same time the Dean's office worked to maintain the propriety of the college. Women's funds were left with the keeper of the women's boarding house.¹⁷

Overall the college authorities found the students to be "men and women whose industry, earnestness of purpose, responsiveness, and general deportment are most commendable."¹⁸ Students who failed to follow the regulations were expelled from the college so there was adequate reason to follow the rules.¹⁹ The strict regulation of these rules helped colleges maintain their reputation as reputable institutions of higher learning.²⁰ The Student Assembly, formed in 1910, established their own set of conduct rules which closely resemble the school's official policy. The Student

¹⁵"Report of the Dean of Women," O. A. C. Biennial Report of the Board of Regents, 1916-1918, 90.

¹⁶Ibid.

¹⁷Horner, "History of Oregon State College," 44.

¹⁸O. A. C. Biennial Report of the President, 1906-1908, 8.

¹⁹Ibid.

²⁰O. A. C. Biennial Report of the Board of Regents, 1910-1912, IX.

Assembly forbade tobacco, intoxicating liquors, and hazing, and, on a less serious note, they instructed that the class insignias of one class can not be worn by a member of another class, that vocational students must wear their emblems at all times, and that freshman must wear their green caps for a specific time.²¹ Thus, the students took their conduct as seriously as did the College.

The College Town

The town in which the college is located plays a role in the college experience too. Corvallis and the College were, in the words of a 1911 student, "...not very noteworthy, the school was not far developed...there were no paved streets in the city. All the sidewalks were boards. There was [sic] only a few campus buildings."²² As the college was just establishing itself there was a great amount of development in its first decade. Pictures from the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century show immense open spaces with tree lined corridors and about five buildings on the campus. The college catalogue described Corvallis as "pre-eminently a college town noted for social clubs, literary societies, and active churches which vie with each other in friendly interest and hospitality toward our young people."²³ By 1906 the Catalogue was proud to note that it was located "...in Corvallis...a city of 2,000 inhabitants, many churches,

²¹"Student Assembly Constitution, 1906, revised 1910, adopted 1913," Record Group 43, Record Group Collection, Oregon State University Archives, Oregon State University, Corvallis.

²²Major E. C. Allworth, Interview by Lillian Van Loan, 9 August 1956, Oral History Transcript OH3a:13, Oral History Collection, Oregon State University Archives, Oregon State University, Corvallis.

²³Annual Catalogue of the Agricultural College, 1899-1900, 21.

and no saloons...[and had] never been visited by any dangerous epidemic diseases."²⁴ Oregon Agricultural College provides women's experiences in college at a rural, agricultural institution.

Campus Etiquette

There were also general rules of etiquette that students were expected to follow as a matter of course. At times the students neglected such contemporary acts of decency as tipping a hat, evoking letters to the school paper. One such letter questioned the lack of respect apparent in the West, especially at Oregon Agricultural College; the letter suggested that the West "is composed...almost entirely of farmers, who from the nature of their lives, are individualists. They have no reason to be dependent on others and in the mad rush of development, little time has been given to training in acts of courtesy."²⁵ This letter shows not only the lack of "acts of courtesy" in the West, but also a prejudice against the large population of farmers on the campus. Another letter addressed the lack of compassion in students and pointed out the author's perceived difference between educated and cultured people by stating "a life without sympathy and respect for others, is a total failure and it is high time that the students" realize this.²⁶ From these letters it is apparent that culture and manners were important to the college students, and they encouraged better behavior in other students. Women students firmly believed in chivalry and were upset when male student's neglected to carry out their duties or failed to respect women's privacy rights. In 1912 a letter from the "Coeds" addressed this issue,

²⁴Annual Catalogue of the Agricultural College of the State of Oregon for 1904-1905 and Announcements of 1905-1906, (Corvallis, Or.: Privately printed, 1905), 14.

²⁵"A Thought for Thoughtlessness," The CoEd Barometer, 13 May 1911, 5.

²⁶Ibid.

Boys meeting girls on the campus merely mumble and never attempt to raise their hats...[and] classes in surveying, instead of using their instruments for useful purposes, stare through them not only at passers-by, but into the windows at Waldo [girls dormitory]. Do the boys think Waldo a moving picture show? Is it gentlemanly? It does not seem possible that the men here realize that this is a coeducational school and that the girls have as many rights as the boys.²⁷

The issues of women's privacy on campus was important since so many rules limited women's freedom in order to insure propriety while men proceeded to carry out blatant acts of impropriety. This lack of respect for women students was not uncommon at colleges during this era. Women at Oregon Agricultural College struggled to establish respect by raising the issue on campus and emphasizing their new role in society.

The lack of chivalry in men was accompanied by an increased use of slang by college women. Slang, in this context refers to the student's colloquialisms. Women's use of slang was linked to their college education since college women were "more prone to use slang than their sisters who stay at home."²⁸ It was believed that women picked up slang from men at athletic events; women's use of slang was tolerated but only with occasional use.²⁹ Some of the students favorite colloquialisms were recorded in a 1904 edition of the College Barometer, and included "by the great screeching bagpipe," "Mr. President, I have the floor and I intend to keep it," and "by the great binomial theorem."³⁰ Women's use of slang paralleled their entrance to colleges and many blamed their coexistence with men for the change in their mannerisms.³¹ At

²⁷The Coeds, "What Has Become of Chivalry at O.A.C.?" The CoEd Barometer, 24 May 1912.

²⁸Student Opinion," The CoEd Barometer, 24 May 1912, 2.

²⁹"A Thought for Thoughtlessness."

³⁰"The New Alumni--'04," The College Barometer (June 1904) : 22-24.

³¹Smith-Rosenberg, 252.

college men and women were not completely isolated from each other and a mutual "cross cultural" exchange occurred.

Campus Climate

There seemed to have been few serious problems between male and female students at Oregon Agricultural College. There is little documentation of problems beyond issues of equality such as equal access to athletic equipment although of course it is important to emphasize that this does not mean that problems did not arise. Gender inequity was institutionalized into the fabric of higher education and inequalities would not have seemed out of order. Nevertheless, the expectations placed on women as students differed greatly from men simply because of their destinations after college. Men were expected to pursue a career, while women were encouraged to return to the home. The expectations placed on the students by society negotiated their path through school more than the actual school policies as shown by the fact that while women were allowed to pursue engineering or agricultural degrees from the day those departments opened, none did so for several years. Women knew what was expected of them in the future and a degree in civil engineering, though impressive, would not get them a job because they were women. Being in college did not change this situation for most women, illustrating how the attitudes of society shaped their college experience. However, while in college there were certain school policies, programs, and activities that women participated in that helped change the attitudes that limited their choices. These programs such as the Dean of Women Students office, women students' organizations, and their own friendships helped them establish a new understanding of women's role in society.

Faculty Relationships

*Because her smiles can stretch so far
 Because she loves us as we are
 Because her ideals reach so high
 Because we never hear her sigh
 We love our Mother Kidder.
 ...Because she is our own true friend..."*

"To Mother Kidder," in The CoEd Barometer, 30 May 1916, 1.

Women faculty helped female students establish themselves in college and making sure women student's had their needs met was part of every faculty woman's responsibilities even if it was not in the job description. Many felt that coeducational institutions could not offer the close faculty relationship for women students that women's colleges offered.³² However, Oregon Agricultural College was an exception because many of the women students developed close relationships with female faculty members. Dr. Margaret Comstock Snell of the Domestic Science department was one of the first women faculty members to take an interests in her student's well being. Snell took her female student's higher education beyond their books by "reciting poetry or reading a book or giving us advice on living good lives."³³ Snell believed in women's education, though her beliefs were limited by the contemporary idea that women's role in society was "to help create a Garden of Eden...as you use your mental powers and spiritual force to ennoble yourself and those around you."³⁴ Dr. Snell's efforts

³²Newcomer, 89.

³³Lillian Schroeder Van Loan, "Historical Perspective of Oregon State College" (Ed.D. thesis, Oregon State University, 1959), 340.

³⁴Margy Bare, "Oregon Agricultural College," in Pioneers!, ed. Ron Lovell (Corvallis: Oregon State University, 1976), 6-7.

established a precedent for faculty-student relations in the Department of Domestic Science.

Another remarkable faculty woman was Dean Henrietta Calvin who was also well loved for her work for women students on campus. Dean Calvin was credited with helping to increase women student enrollment by seventy-five percent; many believed it was her talent of helping first year women who arrived "lonely, frightened, and often much discouraged," and "were at once given a seeming new lease on life...for she has the rare ability at putting at ease all those to whom she speaks."³⁵ Dean Calvin added new courses and instructors to the domestic science department. She was also actively involved in the students lives as a member of the student affairs committee and as the acting Dean of Women; she was readily available in the student's affairs, problems, pastimes, and "womanly development."³⁶

Dean Mary E. Fawcett arrived at Oregon Agricultural College in 1915 after completing her doctorate at Bryn Mawr with studies in Oxford, England. Dean Fawcett was also celebrated as a professor willing to listen and one who helped organize the Woman's League, an organization for women students to "procure unity, centralization of effort, efficiency, social and educational progress, and to be recognized as an influence on campus."³⁷ The Woman's League, established in 1913, was crucial for the building of the Woman's Building with club rooms, rest rooms, lunch rooms, a swimming pool, and an auditorium for entertainment.³⁸

These women faculty members provided immediate connections for the students and helped them through their higher education. Students during the period of

³⁵"To Mrs. Henrietta W. Calvin," The CoEd Barometer, 21 May 1914, 4.

³⁶Ibid.

³⁷"Dean Fawcett," The CoEd Barometer, 30 May 1916, 4.

³⁸Ibid.; "O.A.C. Associated Women Students' Organization," The CoEd Barometer, 16 May 1914, 3; "Report of Dean of Women," O. A. C. Biennial Report of the Board of Regents, 1916-1918, 88.

1870 to 1916 were fortunate to have mentors who had been through the college experience themselves, and who were willing to work with them. The participation of faculty women in the students' lives was important to their survival at the school. Having the support of woman like Dean Fawcett helped organize the women to become a united voice, better able to address issues that affected them. In these ways women faculty provided important role models for women students.

Student Friendships

Understanding women's experience at the College is difficult since most research is limited to a collection of college catalogs and school papers. Occasionally a student scrapbook or oral history helped bring the experience to life, but most of the resources that gave the women personalities were found in the personal notes of the yearbooks and special College Barometer editions. These notes provided information on how diverse the women student's beliefs were at the College which also made it clear that generalizations about these women are difficult. However, while these women held diverse personal beliefs, they shared a number of interests that allowed them to work together.

The friendships these women shared is evident in the personal blurbs they wrote for each other in their scrapbooks or school publications. Friendships and networks were an important part of these college women's experience; this is evident in the efforts many women made to organize themselves into living groups with socials, events, and an alliance of friends to turn to. How close these women were is difficult to determine. Intimate friendships with other women were very much a part of Victorian women's lives and did not end directly with the turn of the century.³⁹ The extent of the intimacy in the friendships at Oregon Agricultural College is unclear since

³⁹Smith-Rosenberg, 53.

very few personal documents were found; however, in the few that are available there is evidence of some close friendships between women on campus. Ruth Kennedy, the first woman elected to be the Vice President of the Student Assembly is one such example. Kennedy's scrapbook contains little personal correspondence, but one card illustrates a close friendship, "To-Ruthie, From-Katie, Darling my gift is very meager, but it carries the love of my whole heart," a dime was etched into this note.⁴⁰ How close Ruthie and Katie were is not clear, perhaps Katie simply wrote terms of endearment in the custom of school chums. With so little to interpret, it is difficult to come to a sound conclusion, but the note does illustrate that women on campus were close and very much involved with each other's lives.

The yearbooks and college paper provide other examples of what these women were like and how they were affected by the actions of notable contemporary women. For example in the yearbook the '08 Orange, Lora Hansell was described as "graceful, tall, and dignified; she wins our admiration, but when her anger is aroused she's worse than Carrie Nation."⁴¹ Carrie Nation was the renowned leader of the temperance movement and often used an ax in saloons in order to make her point. Another prominent figure in campus discourse was Susan B. Anthony of the women's suffrage movement. Two students Faye Roadruck and Pearl Leonard, differed on their opinions of Susan B. Anthony. Roadruck believed herself an "imitator of Susan B. Anthony," while Leonard had "no desire for Susan B. Anthony."⁴² The stark contrast in these women's views of Susan B. Anthony illustrates how diverse student opinions were. While these students were interested in contemporary issues, there was no campus

⁴⁰Ruth Henrietta Kennedy, "Oregon Agricultural College, 1915-1920," Scrapbook, Manuscripts Collection, A.058, Oregon State University Archives, Oregon State University, Corvallis.

⁴¹J. G. Schroeder and Faye Roadruck, eds., "Junior Class," The '08 Orange, (Corvallis, Or.: The Junior Class, 1907), 44 & 79.

⁴²"Senior Class," The '09 Orange, (Corvallis, Or.: The Junior Class, 1908).

movement addressing such issues as women's suffrage. At other colleges there were organized student actions around issues. For example, a note appeared in the College Barometer in 1910 describing an organization of college suffragists: "from Wellesley, Bryn Mawr, Vassar, Smith, Radcliffe, and other women's colleges" who bound themselves to "foreswear the marriage vow until she has won over to the women's suffrage cause five hundred bona fide men voters."⁴³ What the women at Oregon Agricultural College thought about this action is unclear, but one student, Lillie Currin was reported to have "radical views on matrimonial subject, "just what those radical views were was never reported."⁴⁴ Evidently these "radical views" were not common. The lack of women students' organization around contemporary issues suggests a limited interest in these matters; women on campus did organize around issues they found important. The Woman's League, discussed earlier, is an example of how women students organized around their needs.

The personalities of the students is evident in the notes they wrote about each other, as is their fondness for one another despite their differences. One student, May Oviatt, was described as "gentle and thoughtful, serene in her way, as fair as the dawn of a midsummers day," while, Mary Rosa Scoggin or "Curly" was evidently more of a tomboy "although she isn't very tall, she's a trump at basketball, a leader in society, popular indeed is she."⁴⁵ Similarly the women's interests and skills, outside of the domestic sciences, is also evident; for example, Bertha Anna King, "Bert," was "a maid admired by us all, she likes to wield the calculus; she is a student of renown and surely does deserve a crown," or Mildred Elanore Dyer, "Roy," "she is taking forestry as every junior knows, and often does she linger beside the verdant grove."⁴⁶ The

⁴³"Student Opinion," The College Barometer, 11 May 1910.

⁴⁴"Senior Class," The '09 Orange.

⁴⁵Schroeder and Roadruck, 45.

⁴⁶Ibid., 58 & 69.

student's interests and activities were diverse and though national issues seemed to be of little concern, these women did organize groups to address their needs. The separateness of women's spheres at Oregon Agricultural College gave them power over their own jurisdiction.⁴⁷ Within this separate world they built their own supportive environment and developed skills that they were able to use throughout their life. At a time when women were encouraged to take care of everyone else first, these women took this time to take care of themselves.

Living Groups

*The girls all do just what is right at Waldo Hall.
They never stay up late at night, at Waldo Hall
And when the dear Dean goes around
Each girl in bed, is sleeping sound, At Waldo Hall...*

"At Waldo Hall," The CoEd Barometer, 16 May 1914, 2.

As this verse relates, women's dormitories were a source of comfort and cheer for the students. The security and welcoming atmosphere of the dormitories went far in helping the students function at school. The College was responsible for securing the women's safety while they were in school so they took an active role in regulating women students living arrangements. In the mid 1880's before campus housing, women students were provided with a Young Ladies Boarding House where they had to live unless they lived with family in town.⁴⁸ Living with relatives helped insure a young woman's safety while maintaining family bonds. It was also a method to "wean

⁴⁷Estelle Freedman, "Separatism as Strategy: Female Institution Building and American Feminism, 1870-1930," in Women and Power in American History: A Reader, eds. Kathryn Kish Sklar and Thomas Dublin, Volume II, from 1870 (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1991), 11.

⁴⁸Sixth Annual Catalogue, 1870-1871, 20.

the daughter from her home" so she could start her own family soon.⁴⁹ The future role of most college women at this time, was ultimately believed to be in the home so policies insured her virtue would be safe.

Over the years, the increase in women's enrollment led to new policies in order to accommodate all the women students adequately. Women were eventually given a choice of living in one of four places: in residence halls, at home, off campus, or in private homes for self support.⁵⁰ Whether a woman lived on or off campus during the early years of Oregon Agricultural College had a significant impact on her existence at college. Women who lived on campus in Waldo Hall formed a club for social activities and friendships, but those women living off campus were separated from other campus women and lacked a similar social organization. The formation of the Downtown Girls club solved this problem and helped create a sense of community for all the women living off campus. Eventually sororities also provided off campus living groups. Women's living group helped reduce the isolation some women felt on campus and established support networks.

The first on campus housing for women was the Sorosis house, the home of the literary society members.⁵¹ The expansion of on campus women's housing was slow, and the college had difficulty keeping up with the rapid increase in women's enrollment. One year in a housing crunch the College had to convert Cauthorne Hall, a men's dormitory, into a women's dorm. Alpha Hall, Waldo Hall, and Cauthorne Hall were the earliest women's dormitories on campus.

Waldo Hall and Alpha Hall served as the first women's dormitories on campus. Alpha Hall opened in 1899 and Waldo Hall opened in 1908 when the Department of Domestic Sciences was moved there. The Hall was named after Clara Waldo, a college

⁴⁹Smith-Rosenberg, 66.

⁵⁰"Report of the Dean of Women," O. A. C. Biennial Report of the Board of Regents, 1918-1920, 90.

⁵¹"The Sorosis Club," The College Barometer, (October 1898) : 6.

regent, who promoted women's education with endowments and was the driving force behind the building of Waldo Hall in 1907. It was a women's dorm until 1958 with a Dean of Women or a housekeeper presiding over the residents.⁵² After Waldo hall was established all women were expected to live on campus unless their parents or relatives lived in town.⁵³ The dorms such as Alpha Hall were promoted as a healthy location where typhus never occurred, with electricity, hot and cold water, baths and a reception room with a piano.⁵⁴ The dormitory regulations provided the best chaperoning for women while they were at college. The policies at Waldo and Alpha Hall also helped regulate the students' activities and insured study time with week nights reserved for study.⁵⁵ The Dean of Women understood the importance of social life in women's education and provided for one or two formal parties, and, on the afternoons of the first Tuesday of each month there were dancing parties, gaming parties, or candy making and refreshments.⁵⁶ Waldo Hall also gave such receptions for new students as the annual, informal reception which provided information on activities outside of course work. These activities included various clubs, sports teams, and campus publications and were often followed by a dance. They were successful in orienting new students to the campus and helping them form connections and friendships.⁵⁷

⁵²Nettie Spencer, "Scrapbook of O. A. C., 1883-1897," Manuscripts Collection, A.009, Oregon State University Archives, Oregon State University, Corvallis.

⁵³Catalogue of the Oregon Agricultural College, 1909-1910, 52.

⁵⁴Ibid.

⁵⁵"The New Alumni--'04," 22-23; Annual Catalogue of the Agricultural College, 1899-1900, 19.

⁵⁶The 1912 Orange, (Corvallis, Or.: The Junior Class, 1911), 336.

⁵⁷"Society," The College Barometer, 2 October 1914, 3.

The dorms provided the students with entertainment and socials. Living in dormitories created some frictions between the women, but it mainly developed friendships and a sense of loyalty to other women. Each dorm formed its own organization that allowed each resident membership; the Waldo Hall club was instrumental in establishing a place for women's dorms in campus activities.⁵⁸ The entertainment events given by the Waldo Hall women set the precedent for future dormitories. The women were well taken care of, and Waldo presented the hall with a gift each year so they could give a reception for their friends as well.⁵⁹ These receptions sometimes led to problems such as when the women discovered that men were stealing their possessions during house tours, leading to a new policy that prevented them from entering the bedrooms.⁶⁰

At other times, the Waldo Hall women held benefit parties to raise money for a student organization or event.⁶¹ These parties were campus sensations with their "brilliant social activities and decorations with ivy, ferns, palms, butterflies suspended from the ceiling, and orchestra music."⁶² Dances were popular social events on campus and several were held each year. There were military balls, junior proms, junior hops, the senior dance, and the annual Coed ball.⁶³ They were well liked events and involved a great deal of planning and expense with lavish decorations. Not all the socials

⁵⁸V. Keatley, "Dormitories Popular Home For Women," The CoEd Barometer, 16 May, 1914, 7.

⁵⁹Ibid.

⁶⁰"Waldo Hall," The College Barometer, 8 January 1910, 1.

⁶¹"Waldo Hall Spirits," The College Barometer, 9 March 1910, 2.

⁶²"Waldo Reception Unique Event," The College Barometer, 29 April 1911, 1.

⁶³"Dances and Balls," Flyers and dance cards from Oregon State University, Manuscripts Collection, Oregon State University Archives, Oregon State University, Corvallis.

included men though, occasionally the women would organize a night on the town, or a slumber party.⁶⁴

Dormitories such as Waldo Hall were well maintained and improved each year. One year a fireplace was donated to Waldo hall by the Oregon-Portland Business Men which helped to create a sense of "homeness" to the hall.⁶⁵ Another popular improvement was the installation of a phone which created some discord among the women and the need for more phones since the hall was large and many women did not get their calls.⁶⁶ This problem was solved with the installation of four new phones, one for each floor.⁶⁷ Cauthorne Hall was converted to a women's dorm in 1913 and required extensive renovations with a party room complete with chafing dishes, electric plates, dishes, and a telephone.⁶⁸

In general the women in Waldo Hall shared close friendships and experiences, although as in any living situation some problems occurred. At Waldo there was some friction between the classes over traditions. One instance concerned Junior Flunk Day when the seniors make the juniors' lives miserable. One year the sophomores tried to usurp the prank from the seniors, and, the latter assured the former that they were "fully capable of managing their own affairs."⁶⁹

Off campus the living situation was less compact and many women found themselves spread throughout the town. Since these women tended to be isolated from other students and campus events, they organized themselves into the Downtown Girls

⁶⁴"Locals," The College Barometer, 25 November 1911, 4.

⁶⁵"Student Opinion," 24 May 1912.

⁶⁶Waldo Inmate, "Student Opinion," The CoEd Barometer, 24 May 1912, 2.

⁶⁷"New Phone System at Waldo," The College Barometer, 3 November 1914, 2.

⁶⁸Ibid.

⁶⁹A Senior, "Student Opinion," The CoEd Barometer, 24 May 1912, 2.

club or the D.B. Club (the meaning of D.B. remains a secret) when the College approved campus clubs.⁷⁰ This club was organized in 1910 by a group of women living off campus who wanted to "promote friendship and good times" for off campus women.⁷¹ These women wanted to share the college experience of on campus women who were active in their own clubs. Living group clubs provided a large amount of the entertainment, hikes, and socials for college women and were important parts of their lives. Most women were involved with several clubs, but it was the living group organizations that students were involved with every day. The Downtown Girls club held two annual dances, and picnics.⁷² The most important part of the club was said to be the friendships and comfort the downtown girls found in their organization.⁷³ The need for the off campus women to fit in was evident in one note in the 1914 CoEd edition of the College Barometer asking for more unity between the dormitory and down town women, "...the 'down town' girls does not expect to be included in all dormitory affairs, yet she would appreciate very much some interest shown as well as participation in a few social functions. The 'left out' feeling would no doubt be dispirited very easily."⁷⁴ Evidently the need for women to organize themselves was an important part of the college experience. These groups provided women with the connections and friendships associated with college activities. Exclusion from such groups apparently created problems for many women and points to their significance to the college experience.

⁷⁰"Women's Organizations Are Big Factors of Development," The CoEd Barometer, 21 May 1915, 6; "Girls Clubs Are Formed," The College Barometer, 14 November 1914, 1.

⁷¹"Locals," The College Barometer, 9 March 1910, 3.

⁷²"Women's Organizations Are Big Factors of Development."

⁷³"D.B. Society Binds Town Girls Together," The CoEd Barometer, 16 May 1914, 5.

⁷⁴"An Inquiry," The CoEd Barometer, 16 May 1914, 4.

In 1915, Oregon Agricultural College was able to accept national sorority organizations on campus as the university had been accredited. Alpha Chi Omega, Alpha Chi, and Delta Mu were the first such organizations on campus.⁷⁵ The first sororities found little campus support, but were eventually able to prove themselves capable of living in their own living groups off campus.⁷⁶ Alpha Chi was organized by six women from the Waldo Hall dormitory in 1914, although they were unable to move off campus until 1915. Alpha Chi Omega obtained its national charter shortly after in March of 1915, while Delta Mu was granted permission to exist as a club in January of 1915 and expected to move off campus the following year.⁷⁷ The Dean of Women insured the President that local Pan Hellenic groups were conducted "most sanely and carefully."⁷⁸ The sororities helped alleviate the housing problem for women, and in the Fall of 1917 two sororities were allowed to move off campus in order to make room on campus for new students.⁷⁹

Though sororities existed at Oregon Agricultural College they were still not very popular. More organizations were chartered between 1915 and 1921, but their numbers remained small with only about ten organized by 1921.⁸⁰ Sororities eventually gained popularity and probably replaced women's literary societies, though they served a different function on campus. In the early years of such organizations, sororities

⁷⁵"Sororities Become Part of Girl Students' Life," The CoEd Barometer, 21 May 1915, 9.

⁷⁶Ibid.

⁷⁷Ibid.

⁷⁸O. A. C. Biennial Report of the Board of Regents, 1916-1918, 88.

⁷⁹Ibid.

⁸⁰"National Sororities," June 15, 1921, Listing, Record Group 135, series 1, Record Group Collection, Oregon State University Archives, Oregon State University, Corvallis.

offered a selected community for women students who were similarly committed to community outreach.

Overall, the climate at Oregon Agricultural College between 1870 and 1916 was accepting of women. The policies on campus concerning women recognized the rights of women students to an equal education. While the written policies illustrate an acceptance of women there were other ways for women student's to feel excluded on campus. There are few documented instances of intolerance towards women. Perhaps this in itself represents a lack of women's voices on campus, it is difficult to tell. What can be determined from the research on this college is that women students did organize and were concerned about receiving equal educational opportunities. The Woman's League, organized in 1913, is one example of how women students made their needs known. The women students also found support and allies in their professors who established strong faculty-student ties. The position of the Dean of Woman helped to insure women students needs were met, but it was the women themselves who approached the Dean with their problems. These women faced a changing societal structure and the guidance they received from the faculty women helped. These women created a campus that accepted women and the evidence of their work is apparent today with the Woman's Building, Waldo Hall, and the Department of Home Economics. The separateness of women's and men's education even at coeducational institutions allowed women to develop strengths. They were empowered by their own organizations and activities. They developed leadership skills and helped form alliances that assured them of a place on campus.

4. STUDENT ACTIVITIES

Clubs, campus events, college pranks, and societies were all part of student's experience at Oregon Agricultural College. These activities provided students with entertainment and training in a variety of areas such as oration, leadership, and writing. Extracurricular activities such as campus events, student organizations, student pranks, and national student organizations were considered "one of the most important factors in rounding out the results and benefits of a college course," and were encouraged for all students by college faculty.¹ This chapter will discuss the variety of extracurricular activities available to women and how these activities helped develop important skills. Extracurricular activities filled the week days, literary societies met on Saturday evenings, and Sunday's were spent in spiritual meditation and lectures. For example, a typical Sunday started with chapel, a period of song, prayer, and scriptural readings; followed by vocal and instrumental music, and finally, a course of lectures, free to all students.² Students developed close relationships with each other at these events and were able to continuously challenge themselves and grow professionally. For women students between 1870 and 1916 the experiences gained from these activities provided invaluable lessons in leadership, organizational and oration, skills that the women could apply to their own life experiences and careers.

¹Catalogue of the Oregon Agricultural College for 1908-1909, (Corvallis, Or.: Privately printed, 1908), 43.

²Annual Catalogue of the Agricultural College, 1899-1900, 20.

Campus Organizations and Events

Many clubs and societies developed between 1870 and 1916 at Oregon Agricultural College, paralleling the nation wide development of women's clubs. This national movement started with the founding of the Sorosis club in 1868 and led to the development of hundreds of clubs across the United States.³ In the United States women's clubs eventually moved beyond their focus on social activities and worked on civic reform programs.⁴ At colleges across the country women students looked to the foundation of women's clubs and activities to provide important support networks. At Oregon Agricultural College clubs and student activities were a source of empowerment for many women because they dealt with women's needs.

A variety of student interests were represented by clubs and organizations campus wide. The most common women's clubs at Oregon Agricultural College were the literary clubs and clubs focusing on such individual interests as the domestic sciences. The literary societies were the oldest campus organization at Oregon Agricultural College. The range of other organizations for women included the Young Women's Christian Associations, the Pharmaceutical Association, the Household Science club (also known as the Margaret Snell Club and the Home Economics club), the Athletic Association, and the student body assembly, to name a few.⁵ There was also an honor society for juniors and seniors known as the Forum.⁶ This organization was intended to "recognize and promote high qualities of man and womanhood through

³Freedman, 517.

⁴Ibid.

⁵List compiled from Oregon Agricultural College catalogues, 1905-1919.

⁶"National Honorary Organizations," June 15, 1921, Listing, Record Group 135, series 1, Record Group Collection, Oregon State University Archives, Oregon State University, Corvallis, 8.

scholarship, character, and leadership," membership was determined by a vote.⁷ While the Forum was first organized for both women and men, ultimately the club was separated by gender even though the college catalogue still listed the Forum as a coed club in 1918.⁸ The first national honor society for women was Phi Theta Kappa, established in 1919.⁹

The Domestic Science Club

The Pharmacy, Commerce, and Domestic Science clubs were specifically formed within a discipline to allow students from different years to mingle. These types of organizations were social clubs with designated purposes: the Domestic Science club, formed in 1908, brought women of "the Domestic Science and Art course into closer touch with each other, "...the problems concerning their work,... discussions of various questions not covered in regular class-room work,...and the presentation of lectures by authorities."¹⁰ Members of the Domestic Science Club addressed such contemporary concerns as the changes brought to the domestic sphere by increased industrialization. These students noted the "radical change in the economic position of the house and the housewife as mistress of it...with the invention of machinery...the importance of production within the home was very greatly lessened and consumption...has come to find an important place."¹¹ Through such discussions club

⁷Kennedy.

⁸"Members of Upperclass Honor Society Meet," The CoEd Barometer, 16 May 1914, 1.

⁹"National Honorary Organizations," 7.

¹⁰Summary of goals taken from Domestic Science Club descriptions in Oregon Agricultural College Catalogues, 1909-1916.

¹¹Thrift.

members expanded their knowledge about general domestic concerns that were not included in the regular curriculum.¹² The Domestic Science club also worked in collaboration with the Agricultural Club in the publication of their monthly magazine, the Oregon Countryman, which addressed issues of concern for the farm family.¹³ This work allowed the students from two disciplines to work together to address community issues. In addition, this work relationship allowed both genders to understand the other's actual and potential role in agricultural and domestic labor.

The Domestic Science Club was successfully established as a college organization under the guidance of its third president, Inez Bozarth who "conscientiously worked for the advancement of the club... [with] her ability as a leader, and her ability to successfully carry out work in responsible positions."¹⁴ Bozarth's applied her experiences in developing the clubs to her career and was said to have had "great success in California."¹⁵ Bozarth's experiences as a domestic science student illustrate how important such extracurricular activities as the Domestic Science club were. She not only helped develop a women specific club that was important to women students, she also developed leadership and organizational skills for her career. Whether or not women alumni were paid or unpaid workers, this club helped them to understand the significance of their work.

¹²Ibid.

¹³Catalogue of the Oregon Agricultural College for 1913-1914, 65.

¹⁴Thrift.

¹⁵Ibid.

The Woman's League

The Woman's League was formally organized by Dean Mary Fawcett in 1915, but the seeds of the organization were planted in 1913 when campus women first tried to formalize their activities. The earlier organization was more concerned with college activities such as dances, school spirit, and publishing the CoEd Barometer.¹⁶ The CoEd Barometer was the annual women's edition of the College Barometer that provided women students with a needed medium to address their interests and concerns on campus. The CoEd Barometer documented all of the women's events and interests for the school year. The coed edition essentially became the women's yearbook and summarized the years events as fewer women's activities were documented in the regular Barometer. Thus, the CoEd Barometer provides a valuable historical document of women's activities at Oregon Agricultural College.

The later Woman's League, however, was intended to "procure unity, centralization of effort, efficiency, social and educational progress, and to be recognized as an uplifting influence on campus."¹⁷ Essentially the women students were looking for more clout on campus and the League, with Dean Fawcett as an ally, gave them more power. As a minority population on campus, female students needed to have a faculty member who was sympathetic and supportive of their needs. The Woman's League enabled the women to make demands to the College as a group, which they did. One of their greatest needs was a woman's building in which women could procure some of the privileges male students already had on campus. Among their demands were an auditorium, swimming pool, club rooms, lunch rooms, and rest rooms.¹⁸ Compared to the earlier organization, the League provided an effective tool

¹⁶"O.A.C. Associated Women Student Organization."

¹⁷"Dean Fawcett."

¹⁸Ibid.

to secure their demands, not a social events organizer. This move from organizing socials to securing their own benefits was an important step in women students position on campus. The women students decision to establish their needs before those of the campus empowered them. Through their unity they challenged the school with their demands, forcing the College to recognize their existence on campus. A united voice, with a faculty ally, can go far for students rights, and, with the completion of the Woman's Building, these women proved how successful unification could be.

Campus Events

At every college, campus events provided popular activities for the students, faculty, and often parents. Activities at Oregon Agricultural College were diverse and ranged from hiking trips to Mary's Peak to Junior Flunk Day. The annual events became campus favorites and helped break the monotony of classes and studying. They were anxiously anticipated as a chance to relax and usually included men and women students.

The Newport excursion was known as the one time each year when "...the entire student body and their instructors banish dull care and betake themselves upon a merry picnic. From four o'clock in the morning till twelve o'clock at night."¹⁹ The Newport Excursion was a campus favorite and allowed everyone an opportunity to relax and socialize before the last two weeks of school. The train trip through the mountains where the "rhododendrons are in bloom...and many mountains are resplendent, covered with these flowers was considered an especial treat."²⁰ It was intended as a day of fun, but every student was reminded that "they are still students,

¹⁹"Locals," The CoEd Barometer, 24 May 1912.

²⁰"Locals," The College Barometer (May 1905).

and as representatives of the college will play the part of ladies and gentlemen."²¹ Regardless of social rules, the students enjoyed themselves immensely. As detailed in a 1914 CoEd Barometer: "...after strolling about for some time so as to help settle the sandwich and coffee the weary traveller threaded his [sic] way beachward...after several blood-curdling screams of joy the first diver plunged into the boiling surf amid jeers from thousands of less courageous onlookers," and, in 1916, "...the usual seashore pastimes occupied the attention of the picnic party...hunting for agates along the beach, hiking to Yaquina light and lunching on the beach were some of the favorite pastimes of the excursionists."²² There were few reports of inappropriate behavior, and photographs showed women and men enjoying the beach.

Individual class parties or gatherings such as Junior Flunk day were also common campus events. These activities ranged from faculty endorsed events to class pranks, a common form of entertainment for any student. Junior Flunk day was started in 1911, and designated a day of games, picnics, and community service for the junior class.²³ Other activities such as interclass hazing found less approval from the faculty, but were endured as part of the college experience.

Interclass pranks were the favored form of entertainment and first year students were often at the receiving end of most of these pranks. In two student's scrapbooks, these pranks were recorded with care, one with snap shots, the other with notes. In Ruth Kennedy's, 1915-1920, there are references to the "burning of the green"; a day where the green caps, all first year students were expected to wear, were burned.²⁴ The wearing of the green caps was no small event on campus; the sophomore class sent out

²¹"Locals," 24 May 1912.

²²"Joys of Newport Experienced Today," The CoEd Barometer, 16 May 1914, 1; "Annual Newport Excursion Last Saturday," The CoEd Barometer, 30 May 1916, 1.

²³The 1912 Orange, 354-355.

²⁴Kennedy.

vigilante groups to catch any first year student, male or female, without their green cap, any student without their cap was dunked in the fountain.²⁵ In another incident during the sophomore hike and breakfast to the Mary's river, through Avery's woods, two rooks (first year students) "supplied the entertainment by pushing hot dogs along the floor with their nose."²⁶ Such behavior illustrates a definite hierarchy of class power.

The scrapbook of Ruth Niblin, 1914-1918, documents a challenge between the women of the class of 1918 and the class of 1917. The challenge involved a detailed statement of intent with colorful insults added to make the point,

...we the class of 1918, fresh at OAC, having already proven our physical and mental superiority by defeating the baggardly, big headed, overbearing, and boastful examples of Darwin's theory of the missing link, in several athletic and forensic contests, do hereby challenge said "links," the class of 1917, to come forth from their respective burrows and have the grime and sweat of their former defeats washed off in the calm murky waters of the mill race. Time and place to be arranged by respective captains.²⁷

Followed by this, further descriptive, reply,

...we the class of 1917, sophomores, OAC, do hereby accept with pleasure, the boastful challenge of the babbling, babes of the freshman class to a "tug o'-war" across the mill races. Come out you measly, low down, verdant topped insects and give us a chance to extinguish that spark of would be manhood that is incarcerated in your humble forms.²⁸

²⁵Ibid.

²⁶Ibid.

²⁷Ruth Niblin, "Oregon Agricultural College," [1915], Scrapbook, The Education Collection, MSS 1504, box 2, Oregon Historical Society Archives, Oregon Historical Society, Portland..

²⁸Ibid.

Which class was able to "extinguish" the others spark remains a mystery, but the intent is clear. It is also clear that the sometimes malicious behavior of campus pranks did not escape women students. This example of rival classes, with so many creative insults, illustrates how women students really lived. Women students appeared to have lived a life of contrasts since they were expected by society to be "ladylike" yet, as students they wanted to enjoy the pleasures of joviality and friendship. Obviously women students participated in a great deal of the hooliganism that overtakes most students, despite society's values that discouraged such unlady like behavior. These activities also show as great deal of spirit and camaraderie amongst the women.

Mock Legislature

Some of these campus events took on a more serious tone and addressed serious contemporary issues. Activities like the mock legislature held between 1909 and 1911 provided the students, mainly men, with an opportunity to act out the legislative process and make their opinions known, if only at the college level. The mock legislature was an event that gave its participants experience in leadership and power.

Though the legislative meetings were not real, the issues and attitudes addressed in the meetings reflected the general attitudes and issues of society. Issues such as women's suffrage were discussed in the legislature. The Journal of the Proceedings details the bills discussed, passed or vetoed during the legislative sessions. Many of the bills addressed serious issues of concern to the student body, most with male bias. Women students were not allowed to participate in the mock legislature, just as women could not participate in the national legislature. The decisions the male students made addressed issues important to women and the women's exclusion reflected the sexism common to the era.

Bills that addressed women's issues and rights were common in the sessions. On January 14, 1909, bill number five proposed granting any woman holding property in Oregon the right to vote on state issues. In February of 1911 a member, Mr. Isbahn moved to admit the women at Oregon Agricultural College to full membership in the legislature with the power to vote, but lost. Later that week, bill number five, granting women's suffrage, was "laid on the table indefinitely," essentially killing the bill without making a decision.²⁹ The vote to exclude women is a significant indicator of the general attitude towards women on campus. As friends and comrades there was a good relationship between the genders, but in the decision making process, women lacked any real clout on campus. The mock legislature is a perfect cameo of how decisions affecting women were made campus wide, with little or no input from the women themselves. The women on campus held power in their own organizations and areas of interest, but these were limited areas.

Meanwhile the men continued their mock legislature and passed bill number ten, introduced in 1911 which prohibited "members of the legislature from walking with more than two young ladies at one time, or more than twenty-three in one week."³⁰ The seriousness or underlying meaning of this bill was never discussed in the journal, but apparently it involved establishing some form of moral code for the legislatures. In one last effort to establish a moral code, the legislature voted on bill number nine which prohibited "the wearing of hobble skirts by the ladies who keep company with any member of the legislature"; the bill lost.³¹ Whether a women wearing a hobble skirt affected the image of a legislator is unclear, but it is implied that women who wore hobble skirts were perhaps morally "unsafe."

²⁹"Oregon Agricultural College Mock Legislature," Journal of Proceedings, 1909-1911, Record Group 45, Record Group Collection, Oregon State University Archives, Oregon State University, Corvallis..

³⁰Ibid.

³¹Ibid.

From there the legislature took on more serious matters for the campus, such as appropriating money to pay for street improvements on Corvallis streets abutting the campus, discontinuing final examinations for seniors in state institutions, an act excluding all first year men from fraternities, and, finally, to change the name of Oregon Agricultural College to Oregon State College in 1911.³²

The variety of acts introduced by the mock legislature and the intent of the acts illustrates a variety of concerns by the men. The difference in how the concerns affects the genders is astonishing. For men, acts concerning their moral behavior directly affected the action of women students rather than men. This reinforced the idea that problem behavior were related to women, in other words, women were to blame for the moral misconduct of men since they could tempt men to evil.³³ Though the legislature was a model, it shows a remarkable connection between the students at Oregon Agricultural College and the contemporary popular attitudes which limited women's actions.

National Student Organizations at Oregon Agricultural College

National student organizations are those clubs and activities which were common to college campuses nation wide. Oregon Agricultural College student activities reflected those at most colleges throughout the United States. There were a variety of these clubs, on campus, but the ones discussed here concerned women. Some of these organizations, such as the Young Women's Christian Association had members around the world; others, such as the drama club and literary societies were clubs common to college campuses.

³²Ibid.

³³John D'Emilio and Estelle Freedman, Intimate Matters. A History of Sexuality in America, (New York: Harper and Row Publishing, 1988), 70-71.

Young Women's Christian Association

Organizations for community and civic service were considered safely within the realm of women's work. Women's organizations nation wide tended to focus on the Christian duty of women which reinforced the idea that they were the moral protectors of society. At Oregon Agricultural College literary societies were the first women's organization formed, not Christian organizations. This is remarkable since most colleges encouraged women's organizations which taught women a sense of moral responsibility in community and civic service, while literary societies taught oratory and debating skills.³⁴ Literary societies were the favored student organization for women, but the Young Women's Christian Association (Y.W.C.A.) eventually established itself on the campus in 1896. Such an organization was deemed necessary as Oregon Agricultural College was a state college and "the religious life" was not "planned by college authorities," hence, the need for a "vigorous and wholesome Young Women's Christian Association."³⁵

The Y.W.C.A. at Oregon Agricultural College was considered an acceptable association due more to its name than the actually work of the students. Beyond encouraging other women to keep in closer touch with God, the club members worked more for the security and emotional wellness of other women students. The association opened on the Oregon Agricultural College campus in conjunction with the Young Men's Christian Association, but besides occasional joint dinners or fund raising events they did little together. When the women's association opened in 1896 (the men's association opened in 1894) the club goal was endeavored "to establish more lasting friendships between its members, and in every way possible to meet the needs of

³⁴Newcomer, 226

³⁵Lillian Thordarson, "Real Value of Y.W. Shows," The CoEd Barometer, 16 May 1914, 2.

the girls in school, as well as to bring them into closer touch with the Ruler of All."³⁶ In 1900, the Y.W.C.A. was successful in making its "influence...felt at the beginning of school [with] booklets; handbooks, for students; and room and board recommendations."³⁷ Meeting new students at the train depot with information and the offering of friendship became a common event for the club and a successful recruitment program that many students enjoyed as "the wholesomeness...of...social affairs have cheered and brightened the life of many."³⁸ Further aid was given to new students in 1914 when the Y.W.C.A. women set up an information bureau on campus for directions about registering and campus orientations, as well as serving refreshments to the students as they waited to register.³⁹ The association was more of a women's network to insure that other women's needs were met, friendships developed, and the ropes of college life learned. Over the years the association was able to establish a room in Shephard Hall with its own china cabinet, dishes, and electric plate in order for off campus women to have a place to rest and study while on campus.⁴⁰ This association actually provided a valuable service to first year women by offering this kind of support to students who may have dropped out of school without it. In this way the association contributed a great deal to women securing a position at the college. Female students were stronger because of the bonds they developed in this association.

³⁶Schroeder and Roadruck, 140; "Progress of Local Y.W.C.A.," The CoEd Barometer, 30 May 1916, 7.

³⁷"Locals," The College Barometer (October 1900) : 20.

³⁸Thordarson.

³⁹"Extensive Plans Made For Future Y.W. Work," The CoEd Barometer, 16 May 1914, 3.

⁴⁰"Y.W.C.A. Work Wide Reaching," The CoEd Barometer, 30 May 1916, 4.

Civic works were done during the early years of the organization, but again the concern focused on the needs of women students. The association concentrated on making sure that the "work of the association is not a great burden of sadness and gloom, as is generally imagined. Far from it! It is our aim to fill our lives with pure clean pleasure and sparkling joy."⁴¹ Encouraging "clean pleasure" over the possibility that women would be led astray while at college helped relieve worried parents. "Clean pleasure" involved civic duties, ice cream socials, lectures on topics such as habit and character, and national conferences.⁴² A Reverend Baseford addressed the Y.W.C.A. on the topic of habit and character in which "from a college man's standpoint he showed plainly the relation of habit to character and the great need for good personal habits."⁴³ The concern that women maintain good habits, and thus good character runs in accordance with the efforts of the association to protect the virtues of these women. The national conferences, when held in Oregon, offered the Corvallis members a much anticipated opportunity to discuss their past and future activities with women from around the country. Plans to attend the conference involved extensive fund raising so as to send as many participants as possible. In 1914 a permanent fund was raised by offering luncheons in Corvallis; women could then borrow money from the club and pay it back, if possible, two years after finishing school.⁴⁴ In this way club members demonstrated adept ways in money management and a certain amount of monetary independence from their parents.

The concern for women's virtues, in addition to the association's effort to forge networks for women reached rural communities when members of the Y.W.C.A. and

⁴¹Schroeder and Roadruck, 140.

⁴²"Y.W.C.A.," The College Barometer (May 1905) : 12; "Young Women's Christian Association," The College Barometer (June 1905); "Y.W.C.A.," The College Barometer, 19 January 1910, 3.

⁴³"Y.W.C.A.," 19 January 1910.

⁴⁴"Extensive Plans Made For Future Y.W. Work."

students of Domestic Science and Art courses established Eight Weeks clubs near their homes.⁴⁵ The purpose of these clubs was to bring the "girls and young women in small communities together during the summer vacation to hear some of the many things which mean a happier and more useful life...for definite service to their home neighborhoods; to learn about the work of college; also to help in bringing its opportunities to other girls who have not had the opportunity of college life."⁴⁶ These clubs offered a series of courses in bible study, literature, nature study, sewing, cookery, gardening, and music, in addition to civic duties where each club had to do something for its community such as getting new books for the library.⁴⁷ Such were the community outreach efforts made by these women. While the club offered rural women an opportunity to meet together, its purpose remained within the confines of acceptable activities for women. The meetings did not encourage the women to make drastic changes to their lifestyles, although it did encourage them to go to college.

Finding employment for female students was an additional responsibility of the Y.W.C.A. Many women found permanent employment through the association and others found temporary work as it was needed.⁴⁸ In 1915 a reference to the "financial stress" felt nation wide indicated an increased need for employment by women students; the association was able to place all of the women who requested work and temporary work when they were able.⁴⁹ The club provided a great service to the women students since many relied on work to pay for their college education. Finding

⁴⁵Mae C. Brown, "Eight Weeks Club to Take O. A. C. To People," The CoEd Barometer, 16 May 1914, 2.

⁴⁶Ibid.

⁴⁷Ibid.

⁴⁸Catherine S. Vance, "Y.W.C.A. Shows Big Expansion," The CoEd Barometer, 16 May 1914, 2.

⁴⁹"Y.W.C.A. Helps Needy Girls," The CoEd Barometer, 21 May 1915, 8.

work through the Y.W.C.A. also helped to assure their parents that their work was morally safe.

Over the years the emphasis on social responsibilities, related to Christianity, took on a more central focus for the Y.W.C.A. in Corvallis. This return to social responsibilities was, in part, due to the work of Lillian Francis who became the secretary of the Y.W.C.A. and a home economics instructor at the college in 1915. Lillian Francis worked at Hull House in Chicago for three years where she was in charge of the home economics work at the Mary Crane Nursery and Training School. She was well liked by the association members and brought experience in social work to the college.⁵⁰ Several national and international Y.W.C.A. speakers also came to discuss issues related to the club. One such speaker was Margaret Matthews, a secretary in Tokyo, Japan, who talked about "the foreign responsibility of the association ...[and] a vivid impression of the critical conditions among the Japanese women."⁵¹ This lecture may have inspired Catherine Vance, author of several Barometer articles on the Y.W.C.A., to take up missionary work in China upon her graduation in 1915.⁵² Other lectures reported in the 1914 CoEd Barometer focused on the improvements the women could make in themselves by becoming more earnest in the Christian endeavors.

The numerous articles in the 1914 CoEd Barometer indicate how much the Y.W.C.A. had become a part of the women student's lives at Oregon Agricultural College. Articles indicated a great growth in membership such that by 1916 there were three hundred members in the association making it one of largest women's clubs on campus and reporting that "it has become the popular thing to be an association girl."⁵³

⁵⁰"Our Secretary," The CoEd Barometer, 30 May 1916, 4.

⁵¹Vance.

⁵²"Progress of Local Y.W.C.A."

⁵³"Y.W.C.A.," Work Wide Reaching."

The goal of the association continued to emphasize the proper influence and training of its members and women campus wide despite reports it was only a social club.⁵⁴ While their social activities were numerous the Y.W.C.A.'s success in community outreach is evident in the attendance numbers of their bible study courses which increased from sixty-five in 1913 to two hundred in 1915.⁵⁵

In this way, the Y.W.C.A. became a popular part of women's lives at Oregon Agricultural College; it provided many with leadership opportunities and as in the case of Catherine Vance, missionary work in China. While the overall goal of the association was to encourage Christian work in the students, it was their efforts in establishing women's networks on campus that provided the most benefits. These networks were invaluable to women since they offered friendship, help, and created a community for women students on campus. The organizations emphasis in its early years leaned towards developing these networks, indicating their importance to the students; civic service was not initially an essential element of the club.

Student Government

In response to an editorial letter written in 1910 asking for the student body's opinion on self government, a student explained:

I...am of the opinion that we are able and fully capable of making our own rules and regulations governing student discipline. This is not a new and exploded theory...it is a policy put into actual practice in a number of the leading colleges and universities of our

⁵⁴Ibid.

⁵⁵Vance; "Y.W.C.A. Helps Needy Girls."

country...The students have opinions, they express their opinions, they make their own laws and they respect their own laws...⁵⁶

This student wrote about a nation wide trend in which students were demanding the right to self government. At Oregon Agricultural College, these comments were evidently well received since the students replaced the "imposed student government" with their own government shortly after this letter appeared.⁵⁷ This response to the demands of the students reflects a form of trust between university officials and the students at Oregon Agricultural College. There is little documentation that Oregon Agricultural College was ever a rowdy college with undisciplined students, rather, little rowdiness was reported at all beyond the occasional prank. The campus plan for self government designated an advisory committee, backed by college officials, to decide on the form of government and a constitution.⁵⁸ The Student Body Assembly organized from this plan consisted of thirteen members who oversaw various student enterprises such as athletics, publications, oratory, and debate, in addition to student behavior.⁵⁹ Seventy percent of student activity funds were designated to athletics, with oratory and debate, publications, and general funds, all receiving ten percent.⁶⁰ The student conduct rules imposed by the student government prohibited hazing, alcohol, and tobacco use by the students.⁶¹ Each student paid five dollars per semester for fees which allowed them entrance to campus athletic events, entrance to annual concerts by

⁵⁶An Opinion, "Student Opinions," The College Barometer, 2 November 1910, 2.

⁵⁷O. A. C. Biennial Report of the Board of Regents 1910-1912, X.

⁵⁸Ibid.

⁵⁹Ibid.; Catalogue of the Oregon Agricultural College for 1911-1912, (Corvallis, Or.: Privately printed, 1911), 46.

⁶⁰"Student Assembly Constitution."

⁶¹O. A. C. Biennial Report of the Board of Regents, 1910-1912, X.

the band, orchestra, madrigal club, glee club, or mandolin club, admittance to debates, and the use of the college health service.⁶² Elections to the student assembly were hotly contested in some years. Up to May 7, 1917 no women held a position, outside of the secretary, until Ruth Kennedy's nomination. Ruth Kennedy, then a sophomore in Domestic Sciences, was the "first woman to be elected as Vice President of the student assembly...never before in the history of the institution was a woman even named for a student assembly position, other than that of secretary."⁶³ Later she became the president when the former president and first vice president left for work in agriculture and forestry.⁶⁴ The sensation of Ruth Kennedy's election remained with the college throughout her term. There are no reports of Ruth having any problems carrying out her duties or of any student questioning her status.

Beyond the sensational election of Ruth Kennedy, little about the Student Assembly is documented. The assembly made sure student groups received their funding and worked to have groups such as the athletic association recognized by the regents, but little else appears to have come from their efforts. The association expanded more when additional campus groups developed.

⁶²"Student Assembly Constitution."

⁶³Kennedy.

⁶⁴Ibid.

Literary Societies

*"Yell! Yell!
Wish her well
She will win it
We can tell
By her tongue and by her pen
U-T-O-P-I-A-N!"*

Utopian Society yell, c. 1900, Oregon State University Archives: MC-Yell.

"...to become cultured flowers, not learned weeds..."

Feronian Society motto, The College Barometer, November 1900.

Literary Societies were the first student organizations formed at Oregon Agricultural College, providing women and men an opportunity to gather together for informal weekly meetings and formal social events. Generally the weekly meetings involved debates, declamations, and compositions, while more formal functions such as socials attended by faculty members, occurred once a semester.⁶⁵ These societies were readily accepted as a viable extracurricular activity for women, and the formal parties allowed women to socialize in a controlled environment with male students. That these social events provided valuable mingling time is suggested by T. J. Starker, a former student at the College who recalled that the literary societies "offered us boys the chance to socialize with the coeds. We'd get together for plays, joint meetings, and dances."⁶⁶

The attitude towards women's public speaking must have been more accepting when these societies started since women were expected to participate in all the literary

⁶⁵Sixth Annual Catalogue, 1870-1871, 21.

⁶⁶Starker, 17.

societies events. Similar activities at Vassar College were not considered "feminine accomplishments" and students were not encouraged to participate, although private debates were common in the 1870's.⁶⁷ However, even as late as 1902 when Vassar held its first intercollegiate debate with Wellesley, participants had to have a health certificate before they were allowed to compete.⁶⁸ By contrast, in 1896, the senior class of Oregon Agricultural College nominated Mildred Linville as the college representative for an intercollegiate oratorical contest: "we believe the class made a wise selection and that Oregon Agricultural College will make a good showing, even among older and better equipped institutions."⁶⁹ They chose well as Mildred Linville won the interstate collegiate medal for oratory in Seattle.⁷⁰ Hence, women's involvement in these literary societies was encouraged and recognized in Corvallis. There were no limitations placed on women in the literary societies; they competed against the men's literary societies in the same formats. This provided a valuable opportunity for women students to establish a place on campus. All students respected the successful society members, regardless of their gender. The fact that women were allowed to participate in the public debates at a time when many considered it "unlady like" points to the uniqueness of these women's experiences.

In this way, the literary societies provided valuable experience to the women for public speaking and literary endeavors. Oratory contests were held each semester and the school newspaper The College Barometer was first started by the literary societies in 1896 as a monthly journal of literary work.⁷¹ The Barometer provided a medium through which women could display their literary work; writing for the paper became

⁶⁷Newcomer, 225.

⁶⁸Ibid.

⁶⁹"Daily," The College Barometer (April 1896) : 17.

⁷⁰Horner, "History of Oregon State College," 47.

⁷¹Annual Catalogue of the Agricultural College, 1899-1900, 22.

so popular they had to hold contests to place them.⁷² These activities provided women with an opportunity to vocalize their academic abilities and their presence on campus.

The success of the societies led to their growth and expansion. Sorosis, the oldest women's literary society, was organized in 1895 and more societies grew with the student's interest. In 1897 there were three literary societies for women, Sorosis, Pierian, and Feronian, and three for men, Amicitia, Jeffersonian, and Philadelphian. By 1912 there were twelve organizations.⁷³ Even with these expansions the literary societies were not able to accommodate all the students and membership was designated by elections.⁷⁴

The societies waged battles through oratory and debating contests. Oratory contests such as one on June 21, 1897, included a program of music from the Corvallis orchestra and oration: "A Few Phases of the Cuban Struggle for Liberty" by Edward Stimpson, Amicitia and "Intellectual Independence" by Ena Kyle, Feronian.⁷⁵ Debating matches occurred between male and female societies so there were no policies forbidding women to debate men at Oregon Agricultural College. It was expected of the female literary societies. This was quite a change from the student conduct law in 1881 that forbade "all communications between ladies and gentlemen on the college premises."⁷⁶ It is not clear that conversations between the sexes were allowed following the establishment of the literary societies, or if they were exempt from the rule since the debates were moderated conversations. Regardless of how these debates

⁷²Notation, The College Barometer (January 1905) : 8.

⁷³"Literary Societies, History," Pamphlets, flyers, secretarial notes, Manuscripts Collection, Oregon State University Archives, Oregon State University, Corvallis.

⁷⁴Annual Catalogue of the Agricultural College, 1899-1900, 21.

⁷⁵"Oratorical Contest at Oregon Agricultural College, June 21, 1897, In Literary Societies, History," Manuscripts Collection, Oregon State University Archives, Oregon State University, Corvallis.

⁷⁶Seventeenth Annual Catalogue, 1881-1882, 15.

fit into the college conduct rules, it is significant that women were able to debate men on an equal level and often won. The topics of the debates ranged from politics to social issues. For example, some intersociety debates in 1900 addressed the question, "is England justified in waging war upon the Boers," or "resolved, that the government should interfere in the formation of trusts."⁷⁷ Each question was debated by one male and one female team. However, in 1905 a series of intersociety debates separated the contests between the women's and men's societies so there were no longer women debating men.⁷⁸ Women and men still competed in oratory contests though.⁷⁹

Parties between men's and women's societies were common. One male student recounted his memories of such socials when he was a Jeffersonian, "...about every other meeting was a social affair at which we invited our sister society or some of the other girl societies. We would invite a girl to be our pal for the meeting."⁸⁰ One party between the men's Amicitia society and the women's Sorosis society centered around a farm theme where the "most enjoyable evenings of the term with taffy pulling, games, and talk."⁸¹ There were also social gathering between women's societies with candy, nuts, and "a babble of tongues and light hearts."⁸² Pranks between the societies were also common. In one instance the Sorosis rooster Amicitia was reported missing just after the women announced his arrival. Amicitia was returned unharmed after the

⁷⁷"Intersociety Debates," The College Barometer (May 1900) : 15.

⁷⁸"Literary Societies, History."

⁷⁹"O.A.C.'s Orator," The College Barometer, February 1905, 13.

⁸⁰Orren Beatty, "Reminiscences of Oregon Agricultural College," In College Days, Manuscripts Collection, Oregon State University Archives, Oregon State University, Corvallis.

⁸¹"Sorosis," The College Barometer (January 1900) : 14.

⁸²"Locals," 9 March 1910.

women posted a notice in the College Barometer.⁸³ Impromptu socials were also common practices, such as when the Feronian's surprised the Amicitians with a "bucket brigade," by walking in on one of their weekly meetings, observing it and then presenting lunches from the buckets.⁸⁴

The individual societies helped women students establish a place for themselves on campus. The Sorosis society was established under Roberts Rules of Order and their yell, "quantity--no, quality--yes, S-O-R-O-S-I-S", clearly established their intent.⁸⁵ Sorosis' objective was the "encouragement of literary and social culture, the promotion of educational purpose, and the establishment of fraternal feelings among its members."⁸⁶ The organizers then nominated and approved new members.⁸⁷ Alumni husbands could also be voted honorary memberships.⁸⁸ As the society established itself, rules, such as a five cents fine for tardiness, twenty-five cents for five unexcused absences, and a tax of twenty cents to pay for society book were approved.⁸⁹

Weekly meetings included a program consisting of an instrumental solo, a recitation, a reading, an essay, a vocal solo, a book review, or news of the day.⁹⁰ Many of the weekly meetings focused around a central theme such as a discussion of the life

⁸³"Locals," The College Barometer (February 1899) : 17 & 19, & (March 1899) : 17.

⁸⁴"Societies," The College Barometer (March 1900) : 15.

⁸⁵"Literary Societies, History.": "Sorosis Literary Society Minutes, Volume I, 1895-1901," Record Group 46, Record Group Collection, Oregon State University Archives, Oregon State University, Corvallis, 295.

⁸⁶"Sorosis Literary Society Minutes," 289.

⁸⁷*Ibid.*, 39 & 289.

⁸⁸*Ibid.*, 289.

⁸⁹*Ibid.*, 37, 43, & 69.

⁹⁰*Ibid.*, 43.

and writings of Burns, a program dedicated to women of the United States (including readings on such a variety of topics as, "Women's Rank in America," "Women in Hospitals," "Women and Music," and "The Club Women of America), and a discussion of women's suffrage which "became quite heated in the end."⁹¹ Some meetings were devoted specifically to areas of weakness in the members. For example, impromptu speaking was the subject of an entire meeting and various members were required to debate a question, followed by short talks on various subjects by other members.⁹²

Thus, there were a variety of campus clubs available for women to join. The numerous opportunities women found in these clubs ranged from developing oratory and debating skills to dramatics. Women pursued their extracurricular interests on campus and many benefitted from the friendships and activities they found in clubs. The networks and alliances that the Y.W.C.A. established for women at Oregon Agricultural College proved to be invaluable for new women students and helped to maintain a strong women's population on campus. The development of leadership and public speaking skills was important to women's quest to establish themselves in higher education and in future jobs. Ruth Kennedy provides an example of a woman who benefitted greatly from her extracurricular activities when she was elected as the first women Vice-President of the Student Government. This was a remarkable achievement for women when many were still marching for the right to vote. The Oregon Agricultural College campus seems to have been a bit more liberal concerning women's participation in various activities as shown by their abilities to debate men on political and social issues during a time many would consider it "un-womanly" for a woman to speak in public. Women at Oregon Agricultural College took their academic career seriously as they did their club membership, and, through their work they learned a great deal about themselves, in addition to forming life long friendships and skills.

⁹¹Ibid., 45-51; "Sorosism," The College Barometer (March 1900) : 15; "Sorosism," The College Barometer (May 1900) : 16.

⁹²"Societies," 14.

5. WOMEN'S ATHLETICS

Zip! Boom! Bee!
Zip! Boom! Bee!
O-A! O-A! O-A-C!

O.A.C. chant, The College Barometer, October 1900.

A student's years in college includes a variety of experiences outside the academic classroom, and athletics, societies, clubs, and campus events took up a considerable part of their life at school. Athletics is another important factor in the discussion of how women used higher education to transform their role in society as well as society's beliefs. Through the experience of college athletics, college women learned the value of being respected athletes, as well as competitiveness, and leadership. This chapter will discuss the major areas of women's athletic activities between 1870 and 1916. These include their efforts to participate in athletics, and physical education, sports teams, and extracurricular teams.

Athletics for Women in the United States

In the United States, sports has always been a vital part of our social experience; the baseball strike of 1994 cost one season of baseball and left the United States at a loss for replacing this essential ingredient to America's apple pie. In fact, President Clinton appointed a federal mediator to try to settle the dispute when the strike threatened a second season of baseball, a priority perhaps over the growing epidemic of hunger in the United States. With such drastic actions taken by the President himself it is evident that athletics is an important part of our society. At the college level, women have fought for a position in this often male dominated arena for

more than a century. Following the passage of the Educational Act of 1972 women began to have some federal clout behind their efforts. Title IX of the act provides that "no person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any educational programs or activities receiving federal financial assistance."¹ Though this section in the act did not specifically address the issue of sports, it did provide the necessary legal basis for creating more equality in college sports.² This act changed the history of women's experiences in sports and athletics in higher education; athletics is an experience approaching a century of history at Oregon Agricultural College.

Today's arena of women's college sports first developed towards the end of the nineteenth century. For most colleges and universities sports were just becoming popular, but with unanticipated gusto. Athletics for men and women introduced a whole new quandary for the colleges and universities in the United States and certain issues such as whether women should participate were a concern.

One of the major concerns was women's ability to be physically active, but over the years a changing attitude, associated with an increased variety in girls play activities, removed some of the doubt in women's ability. Play activities of young children often socialized them to their adult roles, and during the nineteenth century girls often played house with dolls where "marriage, deaths, [and] parties" were commonly acted out.³ These activities reflect the activities of adult women. Young girls learned about their future responsibilities from their mothers and this was often reflected in their recreational activities. A survey in the late nineteenth century of

¹Susan K. Cahn, Coming On Strong. Gender and Sexuality in Twentieth-Century Women's Sport, (New York: The Free Press, 1994), 250.

²Ibid., 150.

³Victoria Bissell Brown, "Female Socialization Among the Middle Class," in Small Worlds. Children and Adolescents in America, 1850-1950, eds. Elliot West and Paula Petrik (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1992), 246.

2,000 children between the ages of six and eighteen in Massachusetts listed the favorite play activities of children: for girls, dolls were mentioned 621 times, followed by sleds, jump ropes, tag, hide and seek, skates, balls, playhouse, jackstones, and playschool.⁴ By 1921, a survey of 474 children in San Francisco listed tag, sewing, bicycling, baseball, hide and seek, and basketball as girls favorite activities.⁵ This significant change in the play activities of girls reflects a change in the socialization of women; a similar change in educational socialization occurred during the same time period as more women pursued careers.

The growing interest in physical activities by college women developed during their childhood with girls increasingly being able to "...indulge as never before in exercise indoors and in the fresh air."⁶ This change in attitude towards girls' play activities led to improved physical health as fewer young women were confined to the indoors in quiet activities.⁷ As more young women entered college with an interest in physical activities, their demand for access to athletics increased. According to an article in the New York Times, the activities deemed acceptable for women in the late nineteenth century were rowing, fencing, and cycling.⁸ According to The College Barometer at Oregon Agricultural College the popular athletic activities for women were tennis, cycling, walking, and horseback riding.⁹ While these activities were

⁴Bernard Mergen, "Toys and the Culture of Childhood," in Small Worlds. Children and Adolescents in America, 1850-1950, eds. Elliot West and Paula Petrik (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1992), 100.

⁵Ibid., 101.

⁶"Physical Sports For Women," The New York Times, 25 February 1894, 4.

⁷Cahn, 12.

⁸"Physical Sports For Women."

⁹"Athletics For Girls," The College Barometer (March 1896) : 14.

common among college women, many leaned towards team sports like basketball, baseball, and track and field.

The interest in physical activity by women was not limited to college women, nor did it end when college graduates left the campus since many women continued to participate in sports or athletics after graduation. This was linked to their changing role in society. As women spent more time outside of the home, they found they needed to "substitute for those invigorating forms of work and play that filled the days of primitive women."¹⁰ This comment referred to the decreased physical labor some women enjoyed with increased industrialization. The above comment appeared in a contemporary Good Housekeeping, and declared some physical activity helps to "...make up for the exhilaration she [middle class women] misses by sending blouses to the laundry. It isn't fair that the laundress should monopolize the benefits."¹¹ Women's increased social activities paralleled a drop in their physical activity associated with housework; an experience working class women did not share. The increased leisure time of middle class women was not enjoyed by working class women who still worked two jobs, one at home and another for pay. However, working class women did enjoy their own form of physical activity, activities that the middle class often considered debauchery, such as dancing in night clubs.¹² The dance halls provided working class women an escape from the monotony of their work: "the dance hall, with its lights, gay music, refreshments, and attractive surroundings, seems everything that is bright and beautiful."¹³ Thus, working class women were not excluded from this new social movement of women's athleticism, but the reason behind their activity points out that

¹⁰Cahn, 27.

¹¹Ibid.

¹²Ibid., 28.

¹³D'Emilio and Freedman, 195.

they danced for entertainment, while middle class women labored in sports to achieve a balance of health in their life.¹⁴

Athletics at Oregon Agricultural College

Women's athletics included a variety of activities at Oregon Agricultural College: physical culture, extracurricular activities, intercollegiate teams, and campus competitions were the most common activities. Physical culture classes, now known as physical education, were available for men and women students and provided a general exercise course to balance the listlessness associated with most academic courses. Athletics as an extracurricular activity provided a break from studying and an alternative to literary clubs and other interest clubs. Sports were considered serious activities by the students and the formation of an athletic association stressed their efforts to establish sports as part of the higher education experience. Extracurricular activities for men and women varied, but in general activities such as baseball, basketball, tennis, fencing, running, and archery were popular leisure pursuits. Intercollegiate athletics and membership to the campus athletic association were favored sports activity. Sports such as football, basketball, and baseball were the most popular intercollegiate activities. In general men had the strongest foothold in this area of athletics, but the women's basketball team made remarkable steps for women's athletics on campus. Often these extracurricular sports activities developed into popular campus competitions between various groups of students.

¹⁴Cahn, 27-28.

Physical Education

Physical education at Oregon Agricultural College was encouraged for all students. For men, gymnastics, running, and other vigorous exercises were the drills in physical education classes while women completed a different set of exercises. The more "womanly" attributes of female exercises were intended to develop ladylike skills and characteristics in women and to deter them from aggressive male sports that might destroy their feminine body with "masculine muscles."¹⁵ At Oregon Agricultural College physical culture was "encouraged in every way at the gymnasium and the training grounds," but activities such as fencing, bowling, football, and baseball were mostly for men, or so it was intended.¹⁶ Women's physical training included the Hamburg extension drill, jumping jacks, basketball (seniors versus freshmen), and dance.¹⁷ In addition, vigorous sports such as baseball, track and field, fencing, and tennis were all common extracurricular activities for women. The physical education drills designated as "womanly" for Oregon Agricultural College women were common athletic activities, but for the reassurance of their guardians or parents the physical culture classes avoided the more "manly" activities.

For further reassurance, the classes would also present a May Pageant where a dance, such as the "Dance of the Flowers" or highlights from Shakespeare's Midsummer's Night Dream, was demonstrated for the parents and guests of the students.¹⁸ In 1914, about one hundred women took part in a grand pageant that was

¹⁵Ibid., 26.

¹⁶Annual Catalogue of the Agricultural College, 1899-1900, 21.

¹⁷"Demonstration of Gymnastics by Members of Women Classes in Physical Training, May 14, 1909," Flyer in Manuscripts Collection, Historical Activities of Women, 1909-1930, Oregon State University Archives, Oregon State University, Corvallis.

¹⁸Ibid.

filmed for the 1915 World Exposition in San Francisco. Their were two themes to this pageant: the Greek mythological story of "The Loss of Proserpina," and a "Pageant of Nations," folk dances from Europe and United States.¹⁹ The students said they identified with the Greek myth selected because "the principal character, Cereer, goddess of agriculture and patron saint of the harvest, as well as the home..." connected with their education.²⁰ In 1916, the pageant had grown in its splendor, four hundred and fifty college women and school children enacted a two part performance; part one was the dance of the changing season and part two a "pastoral scene representing a Russian Fete Day, in honor of a Peasant Bride."²¹ Images of Hollywood productions come to mind with the grand extravagance of these pageants, but they were well liked. Two thousand guests were expected for the 1916 performance and special trains were run for the day.²²

These annual pageants were started in 1913 and became popular campus events. The emphasis on dance and grace indicates how important it was to maintain a division between male physical development which worked on developing muscles and female physical training which encouraged physical health, but always within the limits of feminine behavior. While physical culture involved more than the dance training, the May Pageant was emphasized as a demonstration to the parents that their daughters were learning grace and dignity at school. Not as much emphasis was placed on the success of women's basketball or other team sports.

This perceived division between women's and men's athleticism arises from the general attitude that sports were healthy for all, but gender and class designate

¹⁹Cleo White, "Girls Second Annual Pageant May 23rd," The CoEd Barometer, 16 May 1914, 8.

²⁰White.

²¹"Annual Pageant Will Be June 2," The CoEd Barometer, 30 May 1916, 3.

²²Ibid.

appropriate activities. Working and middle class women shared a common interest in sports, but the type of athletics differed. The middle class perception of acceptable activities set the norm for college athletics. Women in higher education practiced physical activities that "would develop 'judgment, accuracy, [and] self-control'" in order to produce a "'womanliness' rooted in the privileged position of the 'lady.'"²³ This approach to women's physical activities in higher education helps to explain which activities were approved by faculty members and parents. The annual May Pageant at Oregon Agricultural College demonstrated that women were learning "womanliness."

Women's Extracurricular Athletics

In 1896 women athletes began to make a name for themselves in higher education when Stella McCray, a Stanford student, became nationally known as a champion of the West coast. McCray excelled in basketball, tennis, running, jumping, and was able to ride a bicycle from Palo Alto to San Jose in one hour.²⁴ McCray is one example of a woman student who was recognized, but generally, few female athletes were afforded the same attention as men, just as their sports were neglected by media reports.

At Oregon Agricultural College there is lack of primary resources on women's sports due to a lack of contemporary documentation. There is a significant difference in the coverage of men's and women's athletics in the campus paper, the College Barometer, and the yearbook, the Orange. Few articles on women's athletics were published in either of these publications. While the coed editions of the College Barometer were published by female students and provided the most information these were only printed annually in the spring. The lack of documentation for women's

²³Cahn, 28.

²⁴"Athletics," The College Barometer (May 1896) : 20.

athletics at Oregon Agricultural College illustrates how difficult it must have been for women to get recognition and support. In what documentation there is, it is evident that women participated in sports events and often excelled. The diversity of women's campus sports increased over the years and in the late 1890's tennis, croquet, and track were common athletic activities among campus women. As for team sports, basketball became a popular campus game and the intercollegiate women's team dominated the state.

Athletics in higher education met with controversy off and on during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Men were thought to have over indulged in athletics while women were applauded for not taking such a competitive edge to their physical activities.²⁵ Whether or not women's competitiveness equaled men's is difficult to determine, but they were competitive. The women at Oregon Agricultural College proved that athletics meant more to them than cheering on the football team, though, they did support the team in creative ways as demonstrated by "a dignified senior girl [who] bravely climbed to the top of a windmill to cheer the team to victory with the college yell."²⁶ Women athletes also used their competitive spirit for women's basketball, baseball, track and field, swimming, and hockey teams; basketball became one of the more favored women's team sports on campus.

At Oregon Agricultural College athletics was a student concern and the issue of women's sports was addressed in the first edition of The College Barometer. The author of the article pointed out that though physical development is an important feature of school life "...in isolated places we find colleges with but slight equipments...and in many places none at all for the girls," such was the case at Oregon Agricultural College.²⁷ The author went on to encourage campus women to "originate

²⁵"Physical Sports For Women."

²⁶"Athletics," The College Barometer (January 1905) : 19.

²⁷"Athletics For Girls," 14

some form of athletic association that will be beneficial to themselves."²⁸ The article suggested that women push for their own athletic activities on campus since "...we all know that this movement must begin with the girls themselves, and we trust that such a movement will not be long delayed."²⁹ The movement for women's athletics struggled, but over the next ten years a successful intercollegiate basketball team and interclass competitions in tennis, swimming, and track and field were established.

The women's athletic movement was a slow process and at times the women found little support for their efforts on campus. From the opening of the college as a land grant school in 1870 it is apparent that the male students were provided with the necessary sports equipment, whereas, female students pushed to have their athletic ability recognized even though they had their own sports teams.

In 1900 a formal Athletic Union replaced the Athletic Association of 1892 because the latter association had neglected to provide more equipment in the men's gymnasium or uniforms.³⁰ The Athletic Union of 1900 listed as its goal the "further promotion of amateur athletics at Oregon Agricultural College."³¹ The association worked to establish athletics as an extracurricular program and its by laws illustrate their consideration for women's sports. The association invited the women's basketball team to join and further promoted women's sports by distributing funds equally among the different sports, by recognizing women's place in athletics and encouraging their efforts, and by having athletics recognized by the board of regents as an "indispensable

²⁸Ibid.

²⁹Ibid.

³⁰"Athletics," The College Barometer (January 1900) : 9.

³¹"Athletic Union, Oregon Agricultural College," Constitution by laws and minutes, 1900-1906, Record Group 41, Record Group Collection, Oregon State University Archives, Oregon State University, Corvallis, 1.

part of college life.³² This athletic association was working against the general belief that sports in college wasted student's time and encouraged problematic behavior, such as gambling.³³ The time and energy many students put into attending games or playing sports was considered wasteful and a detriment to the academics of college.³⁴ However, the student attempts to establish athletics as a respected extracurricular activity at Oregon Agricultural College failed when intercollegiate athletics were closed down during the summer of 1900 due to disgraceful tactics in a football game with Forest Grove, too much wasted time by participants and spectators, the behavior of spectators at a basketball game in Portland, betting by students at the intercollegiate contests, and the large number of football player injuries.³⁵ The closure of athletics ended sports activities, outside of physical education for two years, and resulted in some students leaving the college while others devoted more time to their studies.³⁶ When intercollegiate sports were once again introduced at Oregon Agricultural College in 1902 women found their prior success in basketball helped establish their position in the new athletic association.

The Women's Athletic Movement at Oregon Agricultural College, 1896-1916

Nationwide, athletics had become a popular pastime for women. Women's interest in sports at the College started an athletic movement even though finding support for this movement at the college was slow. In 1896 the men's campus

³²"Athletics," (January 1900) : 10-11.

³³"Physical Sports For Women."

³⁴Ibid.

³⁵"Athletics," The College Barometer (October 1900) : 10.

³⁶Ibid.

gymnasium was finished, but women remained without facilities. While the "new college women" had "...removed barriers that have heretofore prevented girls from enjoying many innocent and beneficial sports," there were further barriers to establishing themselves as college athletes.³⁷ The lack of facilities remained a problem through 1899, and reflected a lack of recognition for women's sports. The campus' neglect of women's athletics was fairly unique to Oregon Agricultural College as another College Barometer article in 1896 reported that the organization of the Young Women's Athletic Association at William University provided women with "membership...not only to the special gymnasium training, but in the spring, outdoor sports such as tennis, croquet, and basketball."³⁸

Three years later in 1899 women at Oregon Agricultural College were finally able to use the gymnasium, but only on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays.³⁹ The slow response to women's interest in athletics does not reflect a lack of interest from the women on campus, rather, the lack of interest in women's activities sparked criticism by women students. In a 1912 addition of the CoEd Barometer a letter denounced the way "girls are almost utterly barred out of athletics; they have inadequate gymnasium facilities, being obliged to share the men's quarters which are fitted up primarily for men's use. There are no athletic grounds on which to hold their track meets and sports."⁴⁰ In this case the student, a tennis player, also pointed out that tennis was an important athletic pastime for the women, and the courts had "remained a bed of weeds and shrubbery" long into the spring until the boys were able to renovate them.⁴¹ The tennis court incident is just one example of the frustration many women

³⁷Athletics For Girls," 14.

³⁸"Athletics," The College Barometer (April 1896) : 20.

³⁹"Athletics," The College Barometer (February 1899) : 15.

⁴⁰"A Tennis Enthusiast," Student Opinions, The CoEd Barometer, 24 May 1912.

⁴¹Ibid.

felt with the inadequate athletic facilities available to them. In other sports events such as the annual Waldo Girls versus the Downtown Girls track meets, the athletes had no equipment for practice. One year the women were seen preparing for this annual event "...out in the backyards and vacant lots lifting big chunks of wood and throwing huge stones, jumping and taking long runs before breakfast."⁴² Despite the lack of sports equipment and facilities, women athletes found a determination that pulled them through their frustration.

This lack of facilities was a serious hinderance to women's sports and symbolic of the college's inability to address the needs of women athletes who paid athletic fees. The concern surrounding the equal distribution of athletic fees addressed the issues of both facilities and athletic awards for students. In the early twentieth century the predecessor of the letter jacket, the letter sweater, was the recognized symbol of athletic excellence. At Oregon Agricultural College women athletes tended to be neglected in the awarding of letter sweaters.

The letter sweater was an object of desire and pride for any college bearer and letter sweaters became the craze of the early twentieth century.⁴³ The history of the letter sweater at the College is not a simple one to relate. The Oregon Agricultural College emblem was awarded to five women, Ivey Fuller, Bessie Smith, Minnie Smith, Letia Owenby, and Lizzie Hoover, in 1900, all of whom had played basketball first team for two years.⁴⁴ It was not uncommon for women to wear their beau's letter sweater, and some men even had their letter sweaters made to fit their girlfriends.⁴⁵ In 1910, a controversy concerning the wearing of the "Orange O" by women without

⁴²The 1912 Orange, 290.

⁴³Cahn, 18.

⁴⁴"Athletic Union, Oregon Agricultural College," 1.

⁴⁵Mrs. Edward C. Allworth, Interview by [Lillian Van Loan], [1956], Oral History Transcript OH1:1, Oral History Collection, Oregon State University Archives, Oregon State University, Corvallis.

having earned it drew this response from one woman, "...in regard to who is entitled to wear the Orange O, attention is called to...the Student Body constitution. 'No student shall be allowed to wear the official emblem on cap or sweater without having won it or is being awarded by athletic board.'...the best solution...is for these sweaters to be returned to their rightful owner."⁴⁶ The letter went on to declare that sweaters for women "should be of lighter weight and the O reduced in size as this is much more in keeping with feminine ideas of propriety."⁴⁷ Making the emblem smaller and more feminine reflected a desire to differentiate between women's and men's athletic endeavors, but it also illustrates how important remaining "womanly" was to many female students. The emblems remained the same and in 1913 the Student Assembly Constitution decided all first team basketball players, both men and women, would receive the red letter sweater with a monogram.⁴⁸ However, the following year the distribution of letter sweaters excluded women athletes, and, in response, a letter from a student in a 1914 edition of the College Barometer demanded that women athletes also be honored with the letter sweater. This letter, written by a woman tennis player, pointed out that "...the boys have something to show for their labor, to show that they have worked loyally and faithfully for their school. Have not the girls worked just as loyally and faithfully, in the face of great difficulties and sure defeat, without any reward?"⁴⁹ This athlete further stated that women paid the same athletic fee as men and "next year, with the increasing field of girl's athletics, the girls ought to be given the square deal, and have at least a share of their rights for which they pay."⁵⁰ This letter

⁴⁶A Senior Girl, "What the Girls Think," The College Barometer, 12 March 1910.

⁴⁷Ibid.

⁴⁸"Student Assembly Constitution."

⁴⁹"Why Not Letter Sweaters For the Girls As Well As the Boys?" The CoEd Barometer, 16 May 1914, 4.

⁵⁰Ibid.

summarized the issues many of the women felt in their unequal treatment, especially as paying students. Not only did this letter point out the lack of rewards, but also the struggle women athletes faced on a male dominated campus. There was no guarantee that women would receive recognition for their sports or efforts from year to year, making it clear it was an ongoing struggle to establish women's athletics. Women athletes realized they deserved the honor of the sweater and in the following years, team pictures show they proved their point.

Oregon Agricultural College Women's Basketball Team, 1898-1916

In 1898 the women at Oregon Agricultural College formed their first campus basketball team. This involved a serious student movement as "...the team organized...without aid, [or] encouragement, in the face of discouragement of every description worked and trained industriously away."⁵¹ There is no evidence of a men's basketball team, but men had their own football, track, and baseball teams.⁵² The team was extremely successful and finished its first year with an unbeaten season.⁵³ In fact, following their successful season, the faculty and other students encouraged them to continue playing, and the team brought Oregon Agricultural College into the twentieth century with pride.⁵⁴ The success of the women's basketball team helped establish women's sports on campus. Some faculty members went so far as to make spectator sports a required part of the student's day when they urged "...every young lady in

⁵¹"Athletics," (February 1899) : 14.

⁵²"Athletics," The College Barometer (June 1900) : 10.

⁵³"Athletics," (February 1899) : 14.

⁵⁴Ibid.

college [to] take an interest in this part of athletics and should at least give words of encouragement."⁵⁵

In 1900, following another successful season, the team became the intercollegiate champions of Oregon and "...had challenged Stanford and Berkeley to a game."⁵⁶ Following that victorious season intercollegiate athletics were closed at the College until 1902. Women's basketball was reorganized sometime after 1902, but when is not exactly clear. The next documentation of the team is a photograph appearing in a 1905 issue of the College Barometer noting that they had won a few games. In 1907 there was no documentation of a team, but this does not necessarily mean none existed. In 1908, a photograph appeared in The Orange marking another victorious season for the team.⁵⁷ There is little said about women's sports, especially basketball, between 1902 and 1910, but women's athletics did exist. The recognition they received as members of the Athletic Student Union documents their acceptance on campus and their success as a team; basketball was considered an indoor sport that required more "agility, coolness, and accuracy" than football.⁵⁸ The respect of basketball as an agile sport emphasized the women's talent as athletes. Even with the basketball team's records, the football team dominated most of the sports articles in the campus paper. It is apparent that very few sports teams can grab the spotlight from football even when they show a far superior athletic ability. The success of the basketball team helped lay the groundwork for more women's sports teams and athletic activity on campus. Over the years teams formed in a variety of sports and women's competitive nature flourished.

⁵⁵"Athletics," The College Barometer (October 1899) : 11.

⁵⁶"Athletics," (June 1900) : 10.

⁵⁷Schroeder and Roadruck, 161.

⁵⁸"Champions of Oregon," The College Barometer (March 1900) : 13.

Campus Competitions--Women Athletes

Athletic activities did not rely solely on intercollegiate teams, for friendly rivalries developed on campus between the living groups and classes. Among the more notorious and popular of these rivalries were the annual Waldo Hall and Downtown Girls Track Meets initiated in 1899 and intended as a friendly competition for the women.⁵⁹ By 1911 it was considered a serious campus sports event, the lack of organization at the meet drew the following commentary from one participant:

"...there have been no regulations, no regular schedule of events...all this should be regulated by rules decided upon by both Waldo Hall and the down town girls."⁶⁰

Athletic challenges were serious matters to the students and the lack of regulations for the track meets seemed to mark a negligent attitude towards women's sports in general.

Often the coed games were off limits to male spectators and were held at odd hours of the morning or in secluded locations. The annual track and field meet provides one example of the measures taken to prevent men from watching the sports activities. The privacy of this annual track meet was a major consideration in its planning as men often snuck in no matter what measures were taken. One reason women guarded their privacy was the fear sports can often lead to potentially embarrassing positions, but more than likely it was the women's chance to prove themselves without being under the watchful eyes of men. That male spectators often relegated women's athletic efforts to fashion is shown by the following male spectator's comments on a basketball game in 1905: "...the Willamette [University] girls looked almost as pretty as the Corvallis lassies in the red and blue suits, and although defeated in basketball, they came near to winning the hearts of some of the farmer lads, and carried away in triumph two freshmen, many cross-guns, college pins, class caps, and

⁵⁹"Athletics," The CoEd Barometer, 13 May 1911, 2.

⁶⁰Ibid.

other trophies and we are sure the gall of defeat was much mitigated by these compensations."⁶¹ The choice between being on display as potential dating material or as a true athlete may have led the women to hold their sports competitions without male spectators.

The seclusion of these annual meets involved serious preparation and last minute competition announcements to secure their privacy. The drastic measures women took are apparent in several of The CoEd College Barometer articles about their athletic competitions. One year the women kept the day and time of the challenge a secret from the men, but the Cauthorne boys (men that lived in Cauthorne Hall) knew something was up as the women were seen in vacant lots practicing for the meet.⁶² Needless to say, some men managed to sneak in and watch the meet, much to the women's chagrin. In 1911 following a coed track meet, a letter appeared in the College Barometer in which the women berated the men that had trespassed on their activities: "bluff...is merely a synonym for a trait that too often amounts to nothing more, nor less, than rudeness...a number of young men...insisted upon being audience at the Co-ed Track Meet, despite the fact that they were requested to leave...there is not a lady in the institution who would insist upon being present at an event where men only were desired."⁶³ The actions of the men illustrate a lack of respect for women's athletic endeavors, as well as the importance of privacy for women. By 1914, the women had developed a plan to protect their secret, "this year a new plan was adopted, that of not telling the girls until two-thirty the night before the meet."⁶⁴ Either this plan worked or the appointed hour of four-thirty in the morning helped dissuade the men from watching the meet. Unfortunately, some of the competitors also missed the meet

⁶¹"Athletics," The College Barometer (March 1905) : 10-11.

⁶²The 1912 Orange, 290.

⁶³"Student Opinion," The College Barometer, 13 May 1911, 2.

⁶⁴"Sensational Triangular Track Meet," The CoEd Barometer, 16 May 1914, 6.

because they were not told of the time.⁶⁵ Eventually, the women allowed men who had paid a "jitney" or nickel to watch their meets.⁶⁶

Campus competitions were common sports events for women at Oregon Agricultural College and competitions maintained friendly rivalries for all athletes to participate without the pressure of maintaining intercollegiate records. The campus sports events allowed women to control and organize the meets for their needs rather than for the men's entertainment. Their efforts to insure an amount of privacy during these meets illustrates how they sought to control the climate in which they competed. In other words, by preventing men from observing their sports they were able to maintain an atmosphere of dignity and seriousness for an important endeavor without being the object of demoralizing comments. The efforts these athletes made, given the few pieces of sports equipment with which they had to work are important testimonies to how much they valued their campus athletics.

Women's athletics was a vital part of the college experience at Oregon Agricultural College and considered a worthwhile part of college life. Today, women's athletics still struggles for the recognition that men's college athletics receive. Women's athletic endeavors at Oregon State University will reach the century mark in 1996. This is a significant landmark to women college athletes since the struggles experienced at the turn of the century continue today. The recognition of women's basketball at Oregon Agricultural College represents more than a commemoration of one hundred years of athletic activity, it would acknowledge the efforts of those women who laid the ground work for women's athletics on this campus. Women athletes in 1898 created a basketball team which remained unbeaten for several years. This was an incredible achievement during a time in which women strove to prove their ability in any endeavor outside of housework. These women not only gave credence to the next

⁶⁵Ibid.

⁶⁶Ibid.

one hundred years of women's athletics at Oregon Agricultural College, they also gained self confidence in demanding equal access to athletics, they developed a competitive spirit, and forged friendships. In a society that values athletes, athletics at colleges provided women with an opportunity to establish themselves as respected students; the athletic women who earned a letter sweater gained the admiration of the campus.

6. DECISIONS AFTER GRADUATION

To the Sweet Girl Graduate
You have found diverging paths,
Dear maid, with the dream-lit eyes,
Either seems as far to you,
Both may lead to paradise.
Maidenhood
You've found good;
Will you then forsake it?
Someone whispers of a home
Which he begs that you will grace--
Cozy cot for two alone,
Ideal, rose-embowered place;
Wifehood this
Would you miss?
Maiden will you take it
Tender dreams of what may be,
Future bright where 'er you look;
Maids are drawn by my story:
Will you open the sealed book?
Wedding morn--
Swain forlorn
Which one will you make it?

Alice Lindsey Webb, The 1912 Orange, Oregon Agricultural College.

As Alice Lindsey Webb's poem above describes, women graduates of Oregon Agricultural College faced complex decisions concerning their future. Despite the efforts of college officials, many women did have relationships with men, and for them, the decision of career or marriage loomed with graduation. The choice of a career often left the option of marriage available for a later date, and it was common for women to work for a few years to save up a nest egg since marriage directly out of college limited paid career options. Alice Webb's poem addressed these choices through her question, "which one will you make it" the choice of wifehood or

continuing maidenhood. Women who worked outside the home competed with men for jobs and were paid less since men earned a "family wage." The family wage provided a contemporary ideal of domestic tranquility, in which a man could support a wife and children on his salary alone, making it unnecessary for a wife to work outside the home.¹ This ideal of domestic tranquility often prevented single women from finding a self sustainable wage and was an insult to working class families.

Women who were able receive a college education were able to apply their degree to better paid jobs. The choices graduates made depended on their background, what was deemed proper by their family, and their own personal beliefs. Whether or not their actions were radical or within acceptable limits, women graduates were able to make a difference through their decisions. Between 1870 and 1916, women graduated from Oregon Agricultural College in a variety of fields, and these women chose to work in professional careers, at home, or both.

Women's Career Trends in the United States, 1870-1916

Class, race, and gender all played a part in the career choices of an individual. Prior to 1870 teaching was deemed an acceptable career choice for middle class women, while domestic and agricultural work was more common for working class women and African American women.

¹Teresa L. Amott and Julie A. Matthaei, Race, Gender, and Work. A Multicultural Economic History of Women in the United States, (Boston: South End Press, 1991), 103.

Table 7.1 below illustrates the breakdown of the primary occupations of women in the United States in 1900:²

	Manufacturing	Household	Agricultural
Chicana/Hispanic	25%	33%	--
European American	33%	30%	--
African American	--	44%	44%
Asian American	41%	36%	--

There was little variety in the occupations of these women and overall the majority of paid employment was found in household, manufacturing, and agricultural services. The shortage of men available for work during and after the Civil War led to women's increasing access to higher education, and helped expand women's occupational choices. Following the Civil War, ninety-three percent of working women were in

²Amott and Matthaei, 76, 124, 158, and 207.

domestic and agricultural services or were employed as seamstresses, milliners, teachers, textile mill workers, and laundresses.³

By 1910 there were more career options for college educated women.⁴ Some examples of these new occupations included commerce, clerical work, and social reform work, a rapidly growing area which developed into social work.⁵ Another option was volunteer work, although many women could not afford to do this. However, those who were able to be a part of the philanthropic movement pushed for social reforms and in the process worked to change the structure of society and women's role within that structure. It was mainly white middle class women who were able to do volunteer reform work, and their educational experiences helped develop the skills they needed. For example, participation in literary societies provided oratory and debating skills, club activities provided leadership skills, and learning the process of committee work all contributed to their training as successful reformers and civic workers.

Marriage

Not all college women decided on a career; many married after college and applied their education to running a household, farm, or family business. These women worked throughout their lives, but usually were not paid. College educated women continued to marry despite reports of the decreased marriage rate for white middle class women. Overall, over ninety percent of women married between 1890 and 1910,

³Newcomer, 17.

⁴Newcomer, 116.

⁵McClelland, 85 & 105.

fifty percent of them were college educated women.⁶ The rate of marriage for college educated women was not as high and did decrease during the late nineteenth century. Between 1869 and 1879, fifty-five percent married compared to twenty-three percent who married between 1888 and 1898.⁷

Marriage apparently remained an option for many women after their education at Oregon Agricultural College. In a farming community, women who worked at home, often worked without monetary benefits. Many of the women who remained in the Willamette Valley as wives and mothers helped on the farms or shared the responsibility of a business. One woman described herself as a housewife and farm partner in the Silver Jubilee History of the Class of 1899. Marriage was common since many students delighted in the romance of engagements, despite the best efforts of college officials to prevent them. The class of 1910 earmarked the extra \$2.55 from the proceeds of their yearbook to be used as a wedding gift for the first woman of the class to marry.⁸

In 1916 an article appeared in the CoEd Barometer lauding the work of "cupid" on campus, "despite the stringent non walking rules and other legislation designed for the guidance of O.A.C. youth...young Dan Cupid managed during the recent spring weather to get through."⁹ The article went on to announce four student engagements during the spring. Alumnae nuptial activities were also kept current in the college paper, making engagements and weddings a large part of society gossip for the college students.

Women's career decisions varied, although a large number of women did choose a career for a short time or, in some cases, a life time. Nettie Spencer, an 1882

⁶Newcomer, 119.

⁷Ibid., 121.

⁸"Locals," 8 January 1910, 1.

⁹"Big Scoop Is Made By Scribe," The CoEd Barometer, 30 May 1916, 1.

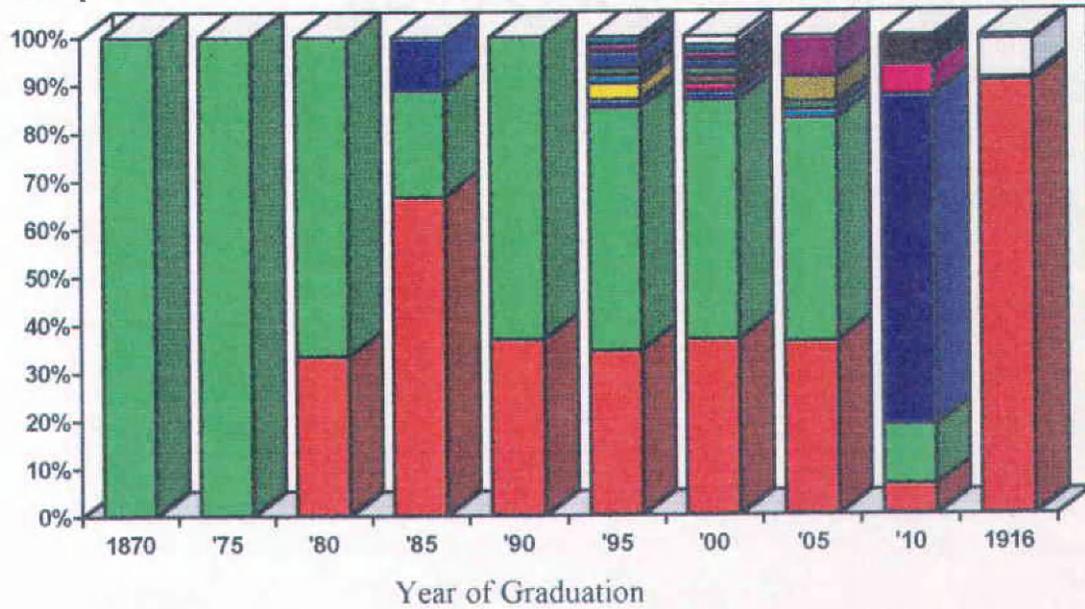
graduate who received a bachelor of science from Oregon Agricultural College exemplified women who devoted their lives to teaching. Her life story provides an interesting look at the life of a college graduate. Other women lived a life of hard work on family farms in the Willamette Valley area. An idea of what women graduates did with their degree can be pieced together from information gathered at the Oregon State University Archives.

The College Barometer, especially the Coed edition, were useful in tracking the activities of Oregon Agricultural College women alumni. The college catalogs also kept a list of alumni and their occupations throughout the period of this study. While these documents provide an idea of alumni activities, they were not official records and may not be thorough records.

The majority of the women at Oregon Agricultural College went into domestic sciences and teaching was a predominant career option. However, institutionalized administration in food service and health care also became popular fields in the early nineteenth century. As figure 7.2 (see following page) illustrates, the variety of women's occupational choices at Oregon Agricultural College reflected the changing career choices nation wide. This graph is a compilation of occupations listed in alumni directories, college catalogues, and the College Barometer between 1870 and 1916. It is important to emphasize that these are estimated figures since no accurate records were kept. The College was small enough in its early years that alumni activities were often tracked in the school publications. The Department of Domestic Sciences documented their alumni's activities between 1889 and 1939 and estimate that at least two years passed before their graduates married. Further they suggest that, one out of eight of their married alumni worked outside the home compared to thirteen of fourteen single alumni.¹⁰ As the graph details, the number of women who married straight out of college decreased significantly around the turn of the century and career choices began to vary significantly by 1895. Thus, women graduates at Oregon

¹⁰Fifty Years of Home Economics, 16.

Percent (%)
of Women
Alumni per
Occupation



Legend

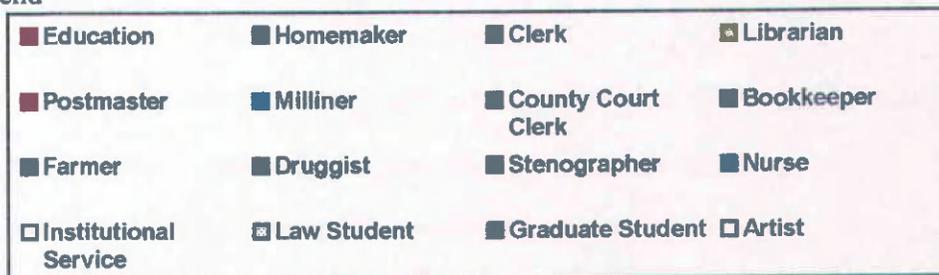


Figure 7.1 Graph Illustrating the Distribution of Women Alumni Occupations, 1870-1916.

Agricultural College often applied their education to professional work and about half of them held paid jobs at some point in their life.

Educational Careers

Alumnae of Oregon Agricultural College found themselves placed in positions in schools all over the state, across the country, and even around the world.¹¹ It was common for graduate women of coeducational institutes to find jobs as instructors at their alumnus, having already established their name and qualifications with the college.¹² The opening fields of Domestic Science and Sociology created a greater need for college educated women and made it possible for them to seek positions in higher education. Several Oregon Agricultural College graduates stayed on as instructors in the Domestic Sciences, English, Commerce, and in the extension office; however, many other women were placed in universities outside of Oregon in fields such as botany and nutrition.¹³ So some women alumni were able to apply their education to fields outside of the domestic sciences.

As early as 1882, women graduating from Oregon Agricultural College used their degrees for professional careers. During the earlier years of the college, teaching was the predominant career choice. Nettie Spencer, one of five 1882 female graduates, became a professional teacher. In fact, three of those five graduates taught after graduation. Nettie, however, documented part of her teaching career in her scrapbook. She began her teacher training while still a student by attending special Teachers

¹¹"Alumnae Notes," The CoEd Barometer, 30 May 1916, 8.

¹²Barbara Kuhn Campbell, The "Liberated" Women of 1914. Prominent Women in the Progressive Era, (New York: Umi Research Press, 1979), 56.

¹³"Alumnae Notes."

Institution seminars."¹⁴ The program included mini seminars on teaching and various topics such as school literature, school government, and incentives to study. Upon completing her degree, she taught in Portland at the Holladay, Couch, and Atkinson Schools until 1899.¹⁵ While in Portland, Nettie was also interested in drama and worked as an amateur actress. She loved attending plays, and her scrapbook is filled with programs from plays in Portland and Corvallis. Nettie also did oratory work; she presented an essay entitled, "Dust on Our Glasses" for her commencement in 1882 and a lecture on "Mental Training versus Memorizing" at a Teachers Institutes seminar in Portland. Nettie then attended the University of Chicago and taught at the Davenport College in North Carolina before studying at Harvard University for a time.¹⁶ She then spent twelve years abroad studying in Berlin, Paris, and London. She was the first United States citizen to receive a certificate from German authorities to teach English at the University of Berlin in 1906.¹⁷ She also became the literary secretary to Maharanee of Coech-Behar in India.¹⁸ In 1916 she returned to Oregon to teach at Eugene and Roseberg schools, finally receiving her master's degree at Oregon Agricultural College in 1928.¹⁹ Nettie Spencer's illustrious career is one example of an Oregon Agricultural College alumni's profession.

Several other women also held life long careers. One woman, Genevieve Lemus described herself as having a single, full life of teaching: "I may be the only old

¹⁴Spencer, scrapbook.

¹⁵Nettie Spencer, "1882 Graduate of Oregon Agricultural College," Manuscripts Collection, Oregon State University Archives, Oregon State University, Corvallis.

¹⁶"Locals," The College Barometer (November 1900) : 20.

¹⁷"Alumni," The College Barometer (June 1906).

¹⁸Spencer, "1882 Graduate."

¹⁹Ibid.

maid of the class [1899]...but my life has been full and warm."²⁰ Genevieve worked as an assistant professor of student teaching at Colorado State Teachers College. Another graduate in the class of 1902, Gertrude Ewing McElfresh taught, and was described by a former instructor as, "a star student, and always in eternal competition with one of the men star students of the class."²¹ Gertrude's reputation for competing with male students suggests that women at the College were encouraged to push themselves. Ina Pearl Allen, also of the 1902 class, was a history teacher in McMinnville, Oregon. Alumnus Bertha King devoted fifteen years to teaching in schools in Oregon, "I...taught in rural schools...wherever I could get a job...Millersburg, Mountain View, and Mehane...always in county schools...sometimes they'd have maybe nine or ninety and sometimes twenty-five [students]."²² The variety of educational positions these women obtained illustrates their adaptability, a necessary skill when women still struggled to be placed in careers.

Domestic Science Careers

Domestic Science graduates were popular resources in the Oregon community. As Henrietta Calvin, Dean of Domestic Science announced in 1914: "...opportunities for teaching home economics, not only in high schools and colleges, but as supervisors in the common schools of cities...of progressive rural communities" are opening up for

²⁰"Class of 1899, Silver Jubilee," Silver Jubilee History of Class of 1899, Manuscripts Collection, Oregon State University Archives, Oregon State University, Corvallis.

²¹"Class of 1902, Silver Jubilee," Silver Jubilee History of Class of 1902, Manuscripts Collection, Oregon State University Archives, Oregon State University, Corvallis.

²²Bertha King, Interviewer unknown, August 17, 1975, Oral History Transcript OH1:32, Oral History Collection, Oregon State University Archives, Oregon State University, Corvallis.

graduates in domestic science.²³ High schools and other institutions needed trained women to teach domestic sciences courses or administrate food service. The establishment of domestic science at Oregon Agricultural College met the state's growing need for qualified educators. In addition, the department was recognized "as one of the best in the United States" and graduates could be found in many states.²⁴ In the early years of establishing home economics programs in public schools many of the Oregon Agricultural College graduates were able to develop the programs from scratch. Emily Rogers, for example, a 1910 graduate, was placed in Baker City right after she graduated.²⁵ Another student, Winnie Shields was placed in Sitka, Alaska as a Domestic Science teacher.²⁶ The success at placing domestic science graduates was astounding; basically, any student that wanted a job had one, at least in Oregon. Of forty-six graduates in the class of 1914, thirty were placed in teaching positions with salaries ranging from seventy-five dollars to one hundred dollars a month.²⁷

The home economics program changed significantly in 1916 when the State Board of Higher Curricula altered the structure of the department for greater educational efficiency. The decision divided the home economics course work between the needs of the "two principal classes of women who come to the college...one, for those who desire to follow the profession of teaching, institutional management, dietetics work and [the second], for those who wish to take a less technically scientific

²³"Department of Domestic Science," Catalogue of the Oregon Agricultural College, 1914-1915, 122.

²⁴"Alumnae Notes."

²⁵"O. A. C. Girl Has Good Position Teaching Domestic Science in Baker City," The College Barometer, 1 October 1910, 7.

²⁶"Senior Graduates Fill Positions In Oregon," The CoEd Barometer, 16 May 1914, 8.

²⁷O. A. C. Biennial Report of the Board of Regents, 1912-1914, 60.

course intended primarily for...home-making rather than professional life."²⁸ This new policy forced the young students to decide whether they would work professionally or as a homemaker. Choosing the course of study for homemaking would greatly limit their future opportunities and, unless a student was engaged, seems an inadequate choice for a yet to be determined life. Women student's had fewer option than men in their careers so the added pressure of making the right choice early in their college education was not easy.

Other Careers

Careers outside the Domestic Science discipline were also available: clerical work, commerce, and even the Arts were other areas of interest for women. One graduate, Laura F. Pratt, received a four month scholarship at the Chicago Art Institute with the landscape artist Frank Phoenix in 1911.²⁹ This was a great opportunity for Pratt at a time when so few women were able to afford pursuing their artistic ability in the United States.³⁰

Another student, Helen Holgate graduated in 1895 and was instrumental in developing the Department of Commerce at Oregon Agricultural College. After graduating, Helen taught on a ranch in Joseph County but later decided to go to the Holmes Business College since the state college did not have business studies.³¹ After finishing her business degree, Helen returned to Oregon Agricultural College and worked as President Gatch's secretary. President Gatch believed everyone should

²⁸"To The Members of the State Board of Higher Curricula."

²⁹"Alumni," The College Barometer, 25 November 1911, 4.

³⁰Campbell, 62.

³¹Helen Holgate, Interview by Lillian Van Loan, July 5, 1956, oral history transcript OH3a:9, Oregon State University Archives, Corvallis, Oregon.

teach, and, in order for Helen to teach, business courses had to be established. One other man, Mr. Crawford and herself comprised the early faculty and taught shorthand and typing.³² Helen taught part time and continued her duties as the secretary for the experimental station until the department expanded. She was able to establish her career and later directed the campus clerical exchange which provided stenographers for college departments. In this way, an early women graduate helped create the new field of commerce at the College.

Business became another common occupational career option for women graduates. With the increase in access to jobs as clerks and in commerce, women had more choices in the earlier part of the twentieth century. One former student purchased her own millinery store after her degree in Domestic Arts.³³ Two sisters from the class of 1895, Amelia M. and Kate B. McCune, identified their occupations as farming in the alumni directory.³⁴ These sisters decided to live together and run their farm in Shedd, Oregon. Interestingly, both of their degrees were in domestic sciences, making it clear that agriculture was not truly a choice of study for women in higher education.

Oregon Agricultural College alumni followed diverse paths after graduation. The Bachelor of Domestic Science definitely limited women to careers within the domestic sphere, but many were not confined to homemaking and applied their knowledge to such diverse occupations as farming, nursing, or millinery. Many graduates did marry and worked inside the home, and their studies enabled them to be efficient, safe, and successful mothers. Graduates of Domestic Science pushed into social reform work with their knowledge of sanitation and hygiene, child development,

³²Ibid.

³³"Locals," The College Barometer (March 1900) : 21.

³⁴Annual Catalogue of the Agricultural College of the State of Oregon for 1906-1907 and Announcements for 1907-1908, (Corvallis, Or.: Privately printed, 1907), 220.

and a genuine concern for the welfare of people. On graduation the field of home economics was not as limiting as it could have been given the variety of alumni occupations. Most graduates remained within the confines of society's definition of work for women, but some pushed these limitations and went into law school or farmed on their own.³⁵ By 1916, the occupational choices of Oregon Agricultural College alumni were not as uncommon as they once were, illustrating the growth of society's beliefs and values, as well as women's success in expanding their roles in society.

Conclusion

The power of education as a tool to maintain the status quo is evident from this study of women's experiences at Oregon Agricultural College between 1870 and 1916. Their experiences illustrate how women's college education was directed by the beliefs and values of society. These values and beliefs defined not only their college education, but also their destination after college.

Freire's theory of the pedagogy of the oppressed states that a liberatory education helps disenfranchised groups obtain more power in the public sphere. This liberatory education enables certain groups in society such as women to push beyond imposed limitations and transform their role in society. Following the Civil War in the United States, women were attempting to do just that. Women had demanded access to formal education at the Seneca Falls Convention of 1848 and by 1870 women had not only become students, but also the teachers in higher education. This progress and their increasing demands for expanded roles and the recognition of their ability in the public sphere enabled women to work towards the transformation of their role in society. While these gains were not achieved overnight, women did succeed in

³⁵ Annual Catalogue of the Agricultural College, 1906-1907, 202-220.

gradually transforming their roles. This movement was marked by the increasing enrollment of women in higher education, by their increasing pursuit of careers either within or in place of marriage, and by the increasing formation of social organizations that demanded social reforms. The activities and decisions of these college women illustrates how society's changing attitudes affected their experience. As career opportunities opened up, these women slowly entered such new professions as commerce and pharmacy, they obtained a position on campus through their organizations, and they developed the skills such as public speaking that they would need in the public sphere.

The college experiences that guided women through their decisions after graduation included a variety of activities: the academic course of study, campus climate, extracurricular activities, and athletic programs. Each of these areas played a vital part in the college experience. In addition to helping women graduates into the public sphere, these elements were vital to the retention rate of women at the College. Women students needed a network of support to help them feel accepted at college. In the Department of Domestic Sciences women felt accepted because they were able to create their own viable sphere. This woman's sphere provided a network of alliances with women faculty members and other women cohorts.

Ultimately, however, even though women's roles were slowly changing during the time period of this study, the decisions women made during and after finishing college were not really choices of free will. The safety of the domestic sciences encouraged women to stay at the College at the same time it hindered their movement into other courses of study. With so few women faculty members in other disciplines, the supportive atmosphere of the domestic sciences was not replicated in other departments. Consequently women students remained at the College, but their movement into other areas of study was limited by their gender.

The tendency for women to stay within the domestic sciences as more opportunities opened up in commerce and pharmacy, in addition to the lack of respect

for women specific activities suggests a less than welcoming campus climate. Without more personal sources such as letters and diaries, a more thorough analysis of the campus climate is difficult. While it can be said that women's presence on campus was not openly resented, there is evidence for a subtle undercurrent of resentment which showed itself in various ways. This attitude was most apparent in the neglect of including women's activities in the college paper and the lack of respect for women's athletic efforts. This attitude paralleled the general attitude of society, but its existence at the College is significant to these women's experiences.

It was the efforts of other women students and faculty women who provided a more welcoming climate that helped in the retention of women students. This welcome climate was found not only in the domestic sciences, but also in the women's living groups, from the Dean of Woman, and through such organizations as the Y. W. C. A. These groups or departments helped create the networks which provided the necessary information, the survival skills, and the intimacy that were missing from other areas of the college.

The extracurricular activities women participated in also played a role in their college experience. Society's perception of women's roles and abilities outside the domestic sphere placed limitations on their freedom. Women at Oregon Agricultural College were allowed to participate in most campus activities. Generally such organizations as the literary societies, the Y. W. C. A., and specific interest clubs were divided between the women and men. Though the separation maintained a certain distance between men and women of the same organization, women were able to participate in the same activities as the men. For example, in the literary societies women's chapters promoted oratory, debating, and literary skills, as did the men's. In turn women and men would often compete with each other in official debates or oratory competitions. These activities were vital to women's educational experiences because they developed such skills as public speaking, writing, and leadership which women in turn used to transform their role in society. Such skills had previously been

denied to women. However, once women began developing these skills they were able to put them to use in transforming their roles in society.

While many of the experiences of Oregon Agricultural Women were empowering, their college experience was not free of the sexism that predominated much of late nineteenth and early twentieth century society. The experience of women in sports provides the clearest picture of these students struggle to establish themselves on campus. Women's athletic interest had matured by the late nineteenth century so it was not uncommon for women to expect such activity at college. However, Oregon Agricultural College was slow in providing for the needs of women athletes. This lack of concern for women's needs is apparent in the failure to provide athletic facilities to the women and in the lack of documented recognition of their athletic efforts. Women were barred from the college gymnasium until 1899. After 1899 they were only allowed to use the facilities on certain days of the week and further, the equipment was not designed for the women's use. The reports of women throwing rocks and leaping over tree limbs provides yet another example of how much these women's needs were ignored. When the Woman's League was formally organized in 1915 under the guidance of Dean Fawcett, women students were finally able to organize and centralize their efforts by placing demands on the College. The construction of the Woman's Building with facilities that specifically met the women students need's marked their success. This building also symbolized the recognition of women on campus.

The extent of these women's efforts to have their presence recognized by the campus illustrates how they were often excluded in the college experience. Prior to these efforts they were a silent minority on campus and their needs were not a priority. The slow response to women's needs at an historically coeducational institution is also symbolic of society's perception of women's role, little was done to encourage women to expand their roles; the transformation of women's position in society involved a continuous struggle and a large amount of energy. This scenario repeats itself even to today as college women struggle against sexism, an uninviting campus climate, and the

fear of sexual assault. The absence of more documentation on the inequalities women students faced at Oregon Agricultural College further illustrates the lack of power women had on campus. It is perhaps the silence itself that says more than anything because women's needs were ignored and the sexism they experienced was ingrained into society's values and beliefs.

This research of Oregon Agricultural College provides additional information to the growing body of knowledge concerning women and higher education, particularly the use of education as a tool that socialized women into designated roles in society. While there is considerable evidence that women were able to use their education to transform their role in society because of the increasing power their education gave them, there is also evidence that women sought an education at Oregon Agricultural College to fulfill certain roles in society. The women who entered the College as vocational students in such areas as domestic sciences, dairying, commerce, and pharmacy provide one example of this tendency. In addition, the Domestic Science department's curriculum of 1914 which split women between the homemakers course and professional course provides another example. First year women had to decide which course of study they would follow, and consequently locked themselves into a life long destination. In this way the societal expectations placed on women directed them through college and in their decisions after college.

Women's efforts and experiences at the College paralleled women's efforts to break their silence and push further into the public sphere. Women's break from the tradition of silence signifies women's increasing expectations of their role in society. With the silence broken women began expecting society to recognize their worth, their achievements, and their ability in the public sphere.

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