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The University of Southern Mississippi

THE INVISIBLE WOMAN AND THE SILENT UNIVERSITY

by

Elizabeth Robinson Cole

Abstract of a Dissertation
Submitted to the Graduate School
of The University of Southern Mississippi
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

May 2012

ABSTRACT

THE INVISIBLE WOMAN AND THE SILENT UNIVERSITY

by Elizabeth Robinson Cole

May 2012

Anna Eliot Ticknor (1823 – 1896) founded the first correspondence school in the United States, the Society to Encourage Studies at Home. In the fall of 1873 an educational movement was quietly initiated from her home in Boston, Massachusetts. A politically and socially sophisticated leader, she recognized the need that women felt for continuing education and understood how to offer the opportunity within the parameters afforded women of nineteenth century America. With a carefully chosen group of women and one man, Ticknor built a learning society that extended advanced educational opportunities to all women regardless of financial ability, educational background, race, geographical location, or physical ability. Through concerted effort she kept the Society and its works as quiet as she could, an invisible woman leading a “Silent University.” The silence in which Ticknor sought to cloak her Society still overshadows its work today. Ticknor’s influence spread far and wide in the educational developments of the nineteenth century and today, quite unknowingly, the field of adult education reaps the benefits of her innovations.

It is rather unfortunate that educational history, particularly adult education history, has left virtually unacknowledged the rich legacy that resulted from the work of Ticknor and her beloved Society. Careful analysis of the Society’s documents and an examination of the social, historical, and political context in which it was situated reveal a vibrant, volunteer-led organization which initiated the development of correspondence

education in the United States, furthered the advanced education of women, and inspired one of the greatest movements in adult education history, the Chautauqua Literary and Scientific Circle (CLSC). Left out of the literature of adult education history is the link between John Heyl Vincent, Chautauqua cofounder, and Anna Eliot Ticknor. Historical documents of the Society and writings of those closest to Vincent provide evidence to support that it was Ticknor's vision of correspondence education which gave birth to the CLSC. Anna Eliot Ticknor and the Society to Encourage Studies at Home have never been credited neither by Vincent nor by the field of adult education for their innovations and inspiration that changed American education.

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A Dissertation
Submitted to the Graduate School
of The University of Southern Mississippi
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for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The author wishes to thank Dr. John Rachal, advisor, mentor, and chair, for his inspiration and guidance for this project. Without his support and advice this project would never have taken flight. The author also wishes to thank the other members of the committee, Dr. Lilian Hill, Dr. Thomas O'Brien, and Dr. Thomas Lipscomb. Your time and advice were invaluable.

The author would also like to thank the archives and their staffs who provided access to the materials critical to this project. First, I cannot express enough appreciation for the Rare Books and Manuscripts Department of the Boston Public Library. Sean Casey and the rest of the staff spent an extraordinary amount of time aiding the search and pulling every item wished to be seen, regardless of how difficult it was to find. They also took the time to teach a novice historical researcher the techniques of the craft. Their work is greatly appreciated. Second, the Oliver Archives Center of the Chautauqua Institute is a wonderful place to conduct research. The staff is tremendously knowledgeable and wonderfully helpful. Many thanks to Archivist Jon Schmitz and his staff.

Of course, I must thank my family. They have been my cheerleaders, my big shoulders, and my motivation to complete the project. Thank you to my husband Jim who has been extremely patient while I have been in school and often stressed beyond comprehension, as well as my travel companion while I traipsed about the country to dig through archives. Thank you to my daughter Lora who at age six has been most understanding when Mommy had to work on her "dissertation." Thank you to my

parents and siblings who have always believed in me. Thanks also to the women of my family who have paved the road for me to be a first, the first woman in my family to earn a doctoral degree. To my grandmother Maxine Combs who was the first woman in our family to attend college. To my grandmother Wilma Robinson who was the first woman in the family to earn a professional licensure. To my mother Ann Combs Robinson who was the first woman in the family to earn a college degree. To my sister Jane Robinson who was the first woman to earn a graduate degree. Thanks for showing me the way. Thanks be to God for surrounding me with love and support.

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PREFACE

Research is endlessly seductive; writing is hard work.

–Barbara Tuchman, *Practicing History*

Historical researcher Barbara Tuchman wrote her comment regarding the seductiveness of historical research more than twenty years ago. This researcher can attest to the fact that the process of researching is as seductive as she suggests and even more so today with changes brought about by advancements in technology. During this project the researcher has learned to apply technology to recording historical documents and has learned the art of the search using technology to find historical documents.

The Boston Public Library was gracious enough to allow me to digitally photograph and scan all documents that related to the Society to Encourage Studies at Home, the Anna Ticknor Library Association, and the Ticknor family. A digital camera, portable scanner, and laptop were used to create more than 1,000 images of these necessary documents to use in the development of this project. Digitization allowed for much more substantial as well as convenient study of these documents.

Many archives are moving towards this process of digitizing historical documents. This preserves delicate documents while making more readily available these materials for research. The archives of the Chautauqua Institute is currently engaging in such a project, providing a searchable database of many of their holdings. Likewise, others do the same and have made available their documents via the internet. Searches of key words related to this project generated many useful documents that were integrated into the final project. While some archives have not digitized their documents, they have digitized their lists of holdings. These lists are also searchable via the internet

and provide locations for useful documents in historical research. Google Books also provides an invaluable research tool, access to historic texts and journals that are searchable and yield sources that are, more often than not, free for download. Through this avenue many reports from organizations of the nineteenth century were accessible and downloaded in support of this project. Also easily available were historic texts that otherwise would have been difficult to locate in a library near to the researcher. Books, such as Edward Clarke's 1874 book *Sex in Education*, were free to download and use though not easily available in any area library. In addition to the digitization by archives, some newspapers are also digitizing their past editions. The *New York Times*, for example, provides a searchable database of newspaper articles as far back as 1851. The continued digitization of historical materials will add so much more to the fullness of the historical framework of any future pieces.

These advancements in research brought about by technology make the process even more seductive and the writing much more detailed though much harder to get to. Just in the three short years since the beginning of this project, the researcher has been amazed by the growth in availability of historical documents and materials via the internet. It will be interesting to watch the continued evolution of historical research over the next twenty years and beyond. The seductiveness of historical research will no doubt grow on!

Her finely touched spirit had still its fine issues, though they were not widely visible. Her full nature, like that river of which Alexander broke the strength, spent itself in channels which had no great name on earth. But the effect of her being on those around her was incalculably diffusive: for the growing good of the world is partly dependent on unhistoric acts; and that things are not so ill with you and me as they might have been is half owing to the number who lived faithfully a hidden life, and rest in unvisited tombs.

–George Eliot, *Middlemarch*

CHAPTER I
ANNA TICKNOR: PREPARATION FOR A LIFE AS AN EDUCATIONAL
INNOVATOR

The Society to Encourage Studies at Home was the innovation of Anna Eliot Ticknor. Her upbringing and education were perfectly formed to inspire her innovativeness, to cultivate a heart for service to others, and to tool her intellect, thus creating the perfect leader for a revolutionary movement in correspondence education, women's education, and adult education. This life demands careful examination as it provides the foundation for her future endeavors. It is in this life where the influence of her family and her extraordinary education form the base of a philosophy of education which would shape the Society to Encourage Studies at Home can be found.

Anna Eliot Ticknor was born June 1, 1823, in Boston, Massachusetts, to George and Anna (nee Eliot) Ticknor. Anna E. Ticknor was the eldest of four children born to the Ticknor family of which only two children survived beyond early childhood. As a Ticknor child, Anna E. Ticknor was afforded access to the very best of Boston society as well as the very best education a woman of 19th century America could formally receive. Within the respected Ticknor family, Anna E. Ticknor found her inspiration and her motivation to give back to the world the very advantages given her by her exceptional parents. Her parents built the potential for an educational innovator within Anna E. Ticknor through their own educational backgrounds and philosophies of education.

George Ticknor was born August 1, 1791, in Boston, Massachusetts, the son of two teachers, Elisha and Elizabeth Ticknor. The two teachers raised their children to be

staunch Calvinists,¹ something George Ticknor would reject for a more liberal form of Christianity as an adult.² A sickly yet bright child, George learned to read and write by the age of four and had passed the admissions exam in Cicero's orations and Greek testament for Dartmouth College, his father's alma mater, at the age of ten.³ Though technically a freshman from the age of ten, George did not officially enter Dartmouth until he was fourteen, entering as a junior. Though he found college to be boring, he stayed the course and graduated two years later in 1807.⁴ Following college George continued his studies through private studies for three years.⁵ During this time he studied Latin and Greek with Dr. John Gardiner, the rector of the Trinity Church. Following this three years of study, Ticknor spent yet another three years studying law with William Sullivan, the son of a former Massachusetts governor.⁶ George Ticknor was admitted to the Massachusetts bar in 1813 and practiced law for only one year.⁷ Though described as a serious student,⁸ he was anything but serious about continuing with a career in law. For George Ticknor the next step was to travel domestically and abroad.

¹ David B. Tyack, *George Ticknor and the Boston Brahmins* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1967), 23.

² *Ibid.*, 25.

³ *Ibid.*, 8-9.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 10-11.

⁵ O. W. Long, *Thomas Jefferson and George Ticknor: A Chapter in American Scholarship* (Williamston, MA: The McClelland Press, 1933), 6.

⁶ The Ticknor Society, "George Ticknor 1791 – 1871," The Ticknor Society, <http://www.ticknor.org/George.shtml> (accessed February 26, 2011).

⁷ George Ticknor and Anna Ticknor, *Two Boston Brahmins in Goethe's Germany: The Travel Journals of George and Anna Ticknor*, eds. Thomas Adam and Gisela Mettele (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2009), 2.

⁸ David B. Tyack, *George Ticknor and the Boston Brahmins* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1967), 9.

His domestic travels began in the winter of 1814 and continued into 1815. Armed with letters of introduction from John Adams,⁹ Ticknor began to extend his personal network beyond the Boston society that had so readily accepted him post graduation.¹⁰ In February 1815 Ticknor arrived at Monticello to meet the man who would become his mentor and friend, Thomas Jefferson.¹¹ The two men struck up a near instant friendship. Speaking of the relationship between the two men, Long notes that “it seems clear that for no young American of that period did Jefferson manifest as much personal interest.”¹² Jefferson was so taken with the promise of the young Bostonian that he provided letters of introduction to the heads of Europe in which he reportedly describes George Ticknor as a “man of great promise, erudition, and merit.”¹³ Equally impressed with the elder statesman, Ticknor offered to purchase books for Jefferson’s personal library during his upcoming tour in Europe. Jefferson had recently donated his holdings to replenish the destroyed Library of Congress¹⁴ and accepted Ticknor’s help in rebuilding his personal library.

In April 1815 George Ticknor, Edward Everett,¹⁵ and two sons of John Quincy Adams left for studies abroad in Europe. Arriving in Göttingen, Germany in August

⁹ O. W. Long, *Thomas Jefferson and George Ticknor: A Chapter in American Scholarship* (Williamston, MA: The McClelland Press, 1933), 6.

¹⁰ David B. Tyack, *George Ticknor and the Boston Brahmins* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1967), 15.

¹¹ O. W. Long, *Thomas Jefferson and George Ticknor: A Chapter in American Scholarship* (Williamston, MA: The McClelland Press, 1933), 5.

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ *Ibid.*, 9.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 10.

¹⁵ Edward Everett, also a Bostonian, would later be a Harvard professor and president, Governor of Massachusetts, a US congressman, US senator, a minister to Great Britain, and US Secretary of State.

1815 only days after his 24th birthday, Ticknor began his studies at the University of Göttingen,¹⁶ immediately impressed with the German understanding of what education should be. While in Europe, he corresponded frequently with Thomas Jefferson and in one letter remarked that he wanted to bring the German philosophical understanding of studies back to the United States.¹⁷ Of particular interest to Ticknor was an educational system which was more free and liberal in its structure. Ticknor and Jefferson continued the exchange of letters throughout the trip, often sharing opinions and ideas regarding education. Jefferson reminded Ticknor “that knowledge is power, knowledge is safety, and that knowledge is happiness,”¹⁸ an ideal which can be seen in Ticknor’s life and his understanding of education.

In July 1816, George Ticknor received an invitation from Harvard College to become the new Smith Professor of French and Spanish Languages and Literature, and of Belles Lettres.¹⁹ He accepted the position, leaving the University of Göttingen in March 1817 to travel to Spain and Italy in order to further his studies of languages and literature. Interestingly, though he had been offered and accepted such a prestigious position, Ticknor wrote Jefferson in 1818 pondering what he should do with his education and

¹⁶ O. W. Long, *Thomas Jefferson and George Ticknor: A Chapter in American Scholarship* (Williamston, MA: The McClelland Press, 1933), 12.

¹⁷ George Ticknor to Thomas Jefferson, April 23, 1816, in O. W. Long, *Thomas Jefferson and George Ticknor: A Chapter in American Scholarship* (Williamston, MA: The McClelland Press, 1933), 19.

¹⁸ Thomas Jefferson to George Ticknor, November 25, 1817, in O. W. Long, *Thomas Jefferson and George Ticknor: A Chapter in American Scholarship* (Williamston, MA: The McClelland Press, 1933), 22.

¹⁹ O. W. Long, *Thomas Jefferson and George Ticknor: A Chapter in American Scholarship* (Williamston, MA: The McClelland Press, 1933), 20.

further lamenting that he had no political aspirations whatsoever.²⁰ George Ticknor hinted that he had great responsibility beyond a career in response to the incredible education he had been afforded. In 1819 Ticknor and his travelling companions returned to the United States, arriving in June. Ticknor arrived with as good, if not better, an education as anyone in America including the knowledge and use of several languages and their literature, as well as several thousand volumes for himself and Jefferson and worldwide contacts which he would maintain over his lifetime.²¹ George Ticknor was inaugurated as a Harvard professor August 10, 1819.

As George Ticknor's professional career as a Harvard professor began, a new chapter in his personal life did also. On September 18, 1821, George Ticknor married Anna Eliot. Anna Eliot was born September 23, 1800, the youngest daughter of a wealthy, self-made merchant, Samuel Eliot.²² In addition to their societal connections, the Eliots were well connected to the Harvard community. Samuel Eliot endowed the Harvard Professorship in Greek Literature and his elder daughter, Catherine Eliot, married Harvard professor and later Unitarian "pope" Andrews Norton.²³ Anna Eliot is described as very intelligent, independent, and witty with an interest in literature,²⁴ an excellent match for the young scholar, George Ticknor. Anna Eliot also had a passion for

²⁰ George Ticknor to Thomas Jefferson, August 10, 1818 in O. W. Long, *Thomas Jefferson and George Ticknor: A Chapter in American Scholarship* (Williamston, MA: The McClelland Press, 1933), 24.

²¹ O. W. Long, *Thomas Jefferson and George Ticknor: A Chapter in American Scholarship* (Williamston, MA: The McClelland Press, 1933), 26.

²² George Ticknor, *Life, Letters and Journals of George Ticknor*, eds. George Stillman Hillard, Anna Eliot Ticknor, and Anna E. Ticknor, vol. I (London: Sampson Low, Marston, Searle, & Rivington, 1876), 335.

²³ David B. Tyack, *George Ticknor and the Boston Brahmins* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1967), 16 – 17.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 89.

Boston society²⁵ and with the combination of a well-known husband, a well established family name, and an inheritance from her father of a little more than \$84,000,²⁶ she had the ideal formula for becoming the queen of Boston society. George Ticknor's father also left the soon-to-be-married couple a sizable inheritance when he passed away a few months prior to their wedding. Though the sum was never revealed, the amount is described as enough for the couple to live a life without financial concern.²⁷

The couple easily took their place among the upper crust of Boston society. Boston itself was colorfully dubbed "Ticknorville," a reflection of the Ticknors' position in the center of Boston society.²⁸ This position within the center of Boston society was solidified physically with the purchase of their home at No. 9 Park Street in 1829. The Ticknors purchased a portion of the Amory Mansion which occupied the corner of Park and Beacon Streets, located across from the Commons, Boston's famous park, and across from the Massachusetts State House. The house would later come to be known as the Amory-Ticknor House. Now the couple occupied not only the societal center of Boston but also the physical center of Boston life and law. Here George Ticknor found a home for his books in the home's center, its library with a row of windows overlooking the 45-acre park.²⁹ It was here in the library where the Ticknors entertained the literati of New

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid. The sum of \$84,000 is 2009 dollars adjusting for inflation is approximately \$1.34 million.

²⁷ George Ticknor, *Life, Letters and Journals of George Ticknor*, eds. George Stillman Hillard, Anna Eliot Ticknor, and Anna E. Ticknor, vol. I (London: Sampson Low, Marston, Searle, & Rivington, 1876), 335.

²⁸ David B. Tyack, *George Ticknor and the Boston Brahmins* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1967), 2 – 3.

²⁹ George Ticknor, *Life, Letters and Journals of George Ticknor*, eds. George Stillman Hillard, Anna Eliot Ticknor, and Anna E. Ticknor, vol. I (London: Sampson Low, Marston, Searle, & Rivington, 1876), 337 – 338.

England society, visiting scholars, and European dignitaries. Mrs. Ticknor was considered a gracious hostess. Kate Gannett Wells, a contemporary of the Ticknors, is quoted describing the Ticknors and their home as such:

“From the beginning of her married life until her death she was a queen. There was only one Mrs. Ticknor, by implication, and greatly honored were those who had access to her house, - to the parlor and to the library upstairs, the throne room as it were. There she and Mr. Ticknor received nightly. About half-past nine the waiter brought in a tray of cakes and ices, sometimes cakes only. The nobility and the scholars of Europe met there as nowhere else. Prescott, Motley, G. S. Hilliard were often to be seen. I have never seen any society equal to what was there, quiet cordiality shading off into degrees of welcome, high-bred courtesy in discussion and courtly grace of movement. Politics were discussed, never scandal. The basis of life was character and literature, its usage good English and deferential manners.”³⁰

This vivid picture of the social gatherings in the Ticknor home provides further evidence of the Ticknors’ grand place in Boston society.

The Ticknors’ life was not all social events. George Ticknor had his work at Harvard to focus upon and both had social issues and causes in which to invest themselves. Ticknor sought to improve the Harvard education through many changes based on his experiences in Europe and his conversations with Thomas Jefferson. He began his crusade for change in 1821 seeking to bring changes to the administration, organization of the departments, flexibility of studies, instructional methods, and scope of the College.³¹ But it was an uphill battle for Ticknor to implement the changes he felt so passionate about. In 1823 he received a letter from Jefferson who indicated that the students of the new University of Virginia were to be allowed to choose the lectures they

³⁰ Interview with Kate Gannett Wells in Mary Caroline Crawford, *Romantic Days of Old Boston: The Story of the City and of Its People During the Nineteenth Century* (Boston: Little Brown, and Co., 1910), 317 – 318.

³¹ O. W. Long, *Thomas Jefferson and George Ticknor: A Chapter in American Scholarship* (Williamston, MA: The McClelland Press, 1933), 32 – 33.

attended rather than being required a single course of study.³² George Ticknor replied later that year, revealing great enthusiasm for the experiment in flexibility of courses.³³ Less than a year later Ticknor arrived in Virginia to see Jefferson's great educational experiment first hand and was inspired to continue his own work towards improvements at Harvard.³⁴ The hard work paid off and in 1825 many of the changes he had advocated for were implemented at Harvard. Unfortunately, the experiment was abandoned shortly after it had begun. It would not be until fourteen years after his cousin Charles Eliot took the helm as Harvard President in 1869 that the changes Ticknor thought necessary, particularly a free elective system, would be implemented for good.³⁵

Aside from his work at Harvard, George Ticknor also worked to improve society, particularly in the area of education in which he was passionately interested. Following his father's death in 1821, he served on the primary school board for thirteen years, taking his late father's seat.³⁶ He also set up a fund to print quality literature for those without the means to purchase books.³⁷ From 1826 until 1830 Ticknor was a member of the board of trustees of the Massachusetts General Hospital and from 1831 until 1864 was a member of the Massachusetts Congregational Charitable Society which helped the

³² Thomas Jefferson to George Ticknor, July, 16, 1823 in O. W. Long, *Thomas Jefferson and George Ticknor: A Chapter in American Scholarship* (Williamston, MA: The McClelland Press, 1933), 32.

³³ George Ticknor to Thomas Jefferson, December 25, 1823 in O. W. Long, *Thomas Jefferson and George Ticknor: A Chapter in American Scholarship* (Williamston, MA: The McClelland Press, 1933), 33.

³⁴ O. W. Long, *Thomas Jefferson and George Ticknor: A Chapter in American Scholarship* (Williamston, MA: The McClelland Press, 1933), 34, 37 – 38.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 38.

³⁶ George Ticknor, *Life, Letters and Journals of George Ticknor*, eds. George Stillman Hillard, Anna Eliot Ticknor, and Anna E. Ticknor, vol. I (London: Sampson Low, Marston, Searle, & Rivington, 1876), 336.

³⁷ George Ticknor to Mr. Daveis, date unknown, in George Ticknor, *Life, Letters and Journals of George Ticknor*, eds. George Stillman Hillard, Anna Eliot Ticknor, and Anna E. Ticknor, vol. I (London: Sampson Low, Marston, Searle, & Rivington, 1876), 336.

widows and orphans of clergy.³⁸ Ticknor's greatest achievements were related to the public library. He became a trustee of the Boston Athenæum, a membership library, in 1823 and was its vice president in 1833. He wanted to merge the Athenæum with other subscription libraries to create one large public, circulating library.³⁹ This was not to be, but he found another way to bring his vision to fruition. He became involved in efforts to build Boston's first public, circulating library, soon to be known as the Boston Public library. The library he worked to create opened its doors in 1854. Referred to as one of its "chief founders,"⁴⁰ George Ticknor's name was inlaid in the marble entry way of the Boston public library's permanent home, the first public library in the United States.

Mrs. Ticknor also engaged in philanthropic activities. It was said of her that "[w]hatsoever she was connected with gained from her an added dignity and charm..."⁴¹ Though little detail of her activities is available, her work is referenced occasionally. One available instance of her charitable work regards her involvement with the Ladies Sewing Circle of Boston. As president she led the circle to create nearly 3000 articles of clothing to be sent to East Tennessee in 1864 relief efforts for Unionists who had been treated as enemies of war by southern forces in the Civil War.⁴² As a pillar of Boston society it is likely that Mrs. Ticknor was engaged in many similar organizations which

³⁸ George Ticknor, *Life, Letters and Journals of George Ticknor*, eds. George Stillman Hillard, Anna Eliot Ticknor, and Anna E. Ticknor, vol. I (London: Sampson Low, Marston, Searle, & Rivington, 1876), 379.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 370-371.

⁴⁰ O. W. Long, *Thomas Jefferson and George Ticknor: A Chapter in American Scholarship* (Williamston, MA: The McClelland Press, 1933), 5.

⁴¹ Society to Encourage Studies at Home, *Society to Encourage Studies at Home: Founded in 1873 by Anna Eliot Ticknor: Born June 1st, 1823 and Died October 5th, 1896* (Cambridge, MA: Riverside Press, 1897), 17.

⁴² Edward Everett, *Account of the Fund for the Relief of East Tennessee; With a Complete List of Contributors* (Boston: Little Brown and Co., 1864), 55 – 56.

provided for the needs of the less fortunate. Unfortunately, accurate records of such activity are not readily available.

Though it appeared the Ticknors lived an idyllic life, they suffered their share of ups and downs in their personal, family life. Their family began with the addition of their first child Anna Eliot Ticknor on June 1, 1823. Almost exactly two years later they added another daughter, Susan Perkins Ticknor, on June 10, 1825. Unfortunately tragedy struck the Ticknor family and Susan Perkins lived only a few weeks, passing away from unreported causes in July that same year. George Haven Ticknor was born two years after on July 1, 1827, and Eliza Sullivan Ticknor⁴³ followed a few years later on January 1, 1833. Life seemed to move along smoothly again for the Ticknor family. By all accounts, George Ticknor was a devoted husband and father. It was noted that he cared for his wife while she was ill for some period of time, he cared for her “mind and body,” reading to her and taking care of her physical needs.⁴⁴ It was also noted that he oversaw the education of his oldest child,⁴⁵ taking every care in her intellectual growth. Tragedy struck the Ticknor family again in 1834 when shortly after his seventh birthday, George Haven succumbed to an infection of the pericardium, the sac around the heart.⁴⁶ The death of George Haven was a devastating loss felt by the entire family. Recognizing a need for change for himself and his family, Ticknor resigned his position at Harvard in

⁴³ There is some discrepancy in the first name of the Ticknors’ youngest child. Some records indicate her name is Eliza and others Elizabeth. Though it is likely she was named Elizabeth after George Ticknor’s mother, the name Eliza is found in the two volumes of his letters and journal entries: George Ticknor, *Life, Letters and Journals of George Ticknor*, eds. George Stillman Hillard, Anna Eliot Ticknor, and Anna E. Ticknor, 2 vols. (London: Sampson Low, Marston, Searle, & Rivington, 1876).

⁴⁴ George Ticknor, *Life, Letters and Journals of George Ticknor*, eds. George Stillman Hillard, Anna Eliot Ticknor, and Anna E. Ticknor, vol. I (London: Sampson Low, Marston, Searle, & Rivington, 1876), 384 – 385.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 385.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 398 – 399.

1835⁴⁷ and embarked upon an extended trip to Europe with his family for the health of his grieving wife.⁴⁸ Though the family travelled extensively throughout New England and some in Canada prior,⁴⁹ this was to be their first trip together overseas and the beginning of a wonderful, educational adventure for their elder daughter, Anna Eliot Ticknor.

The lengthy European trip lasted three years (1835 through 1838) and took the Ticknor family to England, Wales, Ireland, Belgium, Switzerland, Germany, Austria, Italy, and France. During this time Anna E. Ticknor, the elder Ticknor daughter, was afforded an excellent European education. Ticknor considered his daughter's education while in Europe of highest importance, second only to the health of his family.⁵⁰ As such he secured only the best tutors in music, art, and languages.⁵¹ While in Germany, Ticknor hired a German tutor who had formerly been employed by the royal family of the Kingdom of Saxony.⁵² Ticknor's connections from his first European tour served him well in providing the best education that Europe had to offer for his eldest daughter. After three years of travelling, the Ticknor family decided to make the long journey back

⁴⁷ George Ticknor to Charles Daveis, January 5, 1835 in George Ticknor, *Life, Letters and Journals of George Ticknor*, eds. George Stillman Hillard, Anna Eliot Ticknor, and Anna E. Ticknor, vol. I (London: Sampson Low, Marston, Searle, & Rivington, 1876), 399 – 400. Henry Wadsworth Longfellow was George Ticknor's Harvard replacement.

⁴⁸ George Ticknor to Charles Daveis, March 19, 1835, in George Ticknor, *Life, Letters and Journals of George Ticknor*, eds. George Stillman Hillard, Anna Eliot Ticknor, and Anna E. Ticknor, vol. I (London: Sampson Low, Marston, Searle, & Rivington, 1876), 401.

⁴⁹ George Ticknor, *Life, Letters and Journals of George Ticknor*, eds. George Stillman Hillard, Anna Eliot Ticknor, and Anna E. Ticknor, vol. I (London: Sampson Low, Marston, Searle, & Rivington, 1876), 385 – 386.

⁵⁰ Journal entry by George Ticknor, November 11, 1835, George Ticknor and Anna Ticknor, *Two Boston Brahmins in Goethe's Germany: The Travel Journals of George and Anna Ticknor*, eds. Thomas Adam and Gisela Mettele (Lanham,MD: Lexington Books, 2009), 104.

⁵¹ George Ticknor and Anna Ticknor, *Two Boston Brahmins in Goethe's Germany: The Travel Journals of George and Anna Ticknor*, eds. Thomas Adam and Gisela Mettele (Lanham,MD: Lexington Books, 2009), 105.

⁵²*Ibid.*, 9.

to the United States and left Europe in June, 1838. But the family did not go straight home, rather they continued their tour in the United States for almost a year visiting family and friends. In 1839, the family returned to the home at No. 9 Park Street after a four year hiatus.

Back in Boston Ticknor focused his career upon being a scholar of Spanish literature and did not return to teaching, at least not in the formal sense. He was still the careful overseer of his daughters' educations. Ticknor was known to sit with his daughters and their friends by the fireplace and study literature with them.⁵³ George Ticknor was himself a pioneer in women's education. This pioneering spirit was something he would pass on to his children. As a result his daughters were well educated, better than the vast majority of women of the time period.⁵⁴ Both Ticknor daughters grew to adulthood. Eliza Sullivan Ticknor was married at the age of 23 to William Sohier Dexter in May 1856.⁵⁵ The couple gave George and Anna Ticknor four grandchildren.

Anna Eliot Ticknor, the elder daughter, remained unmarried. She continued to travel with her parents and also travelled often for health reasons as an adult. In 1846 George Ticknor spent several months in New York with Anna Eliot Ticknor while she was under the care of an oculist.⁵⁶ An undisclosed eye issue forced the Ticknors to seek

⁵³ David B. Tyack, *George Ticknor and the Boston Brahmins* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1967), 162.

⁵⁴ Harriet F. Bergmann, "'The Silent University': The Society to Encourage Studies at Home, 1873 – 1897," *The New England Quarterly* 74, no. 3 (September 2001): 449.

⁵⁵ George Ticknor, *Life, Letters and Journals of George Ticknor*, eds. George Stillman Hillard, Anna Eliot Ticknor, and Anna E. Ticknor, vol. II (London: Sampson Low, Marston, Searle, & Rivington, 1876), 321.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 226.

special professional care for their daughter's eyesight. In 1856 following the marriage of the younger Ticknor daughter, George and Anna Ticknor along with their adult daughter Anna Eliot Ticknor and a niece travelled back to Europe. With a purpose of securing books and materials for the new Boston Public Library, George Ticknor took his family on a second tour of Europe which included England, Belgium, Germany, Austria, France, and Italy.⁵⁷ Anna Eliot Ticknor, now age thirty-three, began her second European tour and was afforded further advantages in her intellectual growth. During this tour Anna Eliot Ticknor continued to advance in art, painting landscapes in a studio every morning, visiting historical sites, and with her father enjoying dinner with the members of the royal families of Europe discussing politics and literature.⁵⁸ All this she chose over the social events she could have attended. George Ticknor reported that Anna Eliot Ticknor had no intention of being part of the social scene of Europe, particularly Italy, though she had decided to attend a few events.⁵⁹ In contrast to her parents who lived in the center of the social swirl, Anna Eliot Ticknor chose to remain quiet, almost unnoticed at the edge of society. Anna Eliot Ticknor and her mother left Europe headed for the United States June 1857. George Ticknor remained in London to complete his work for the Boston Public Library and returned later.⁶⁰ This would be the last trip for Mr. and Mrs. Ticknor to Europe, but Anna Eliot Ticknor would return one more time in 1865. For health reasons

⁵⁷ Ibid., 321.

⁵⁸ George Ticknor to William H. Prescott, January 25, 1857 in George Ticknor, *Life, Letters and Journals of George Ticknor*, eds. George Stillman Hillard, Anna Eliot Ticknor, and Anna E. Ticknor, vol. II (London: Sampson Low, Marston, Searle, & Rivington, 1876), 342 – 347.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 346.

⁶⁰ George Ticknor, *Life, Letters and Journals of George Ticknor*, eds. George Stillman Hillard, Anna Eliot Ticknor, and Anna E. Ticknor, vol. II (London: Sampson Low, Marston, Searle, & Rivington, 1876), 356.

she went to London in order to recuperate while her family remained in Boston.⁶¹ No account of the illness is given but Anna Eliot Ticknor would later write to a friend stating that she was glad to be able to be busy again following years as an invalid prior to 1873.⁶² It would be this period of busyness in which Anna Eliot Ticknor would change the field of education, particular women's and adult education, forever.

Though the facts of growing up in the Ticknor household are readily available, birthdates, anniversaries, and death dates, travel logs and correspondence, residences and vacation stops, no personal journals remain to reveal what growing up as Anna Eliot Ticknor was really like. Historians point to a lack of preservation of women's historical documents due to gender bias in the field⁶³ as the root cause of this problem. Fortunately Anna Eliot Ticknor left evidence of life growing up Ticknor behind in a fictionalized account of a family travelling to Paris. Her *An American Family in Paris*, published in 1869,⁶⁴ after her last trip to Europe, provides a rare glimpse into the family life of the Ticknors. The story revolves around the education of two children, Fannie⁶⁵ and Rob Lewis, who travel with their parents to Europe, spending the majority of their time in Paris learning French, French history, and art. Mr. Lewis, the children's father, is

⁶¹ George Ticknor to General Michael Thayer, April 25, 1865, in George Ticknor, *Life, Letters and Journals of George Ticknor*, eds. George Stillman Hillard, Anna Eliot Ticknor, and Anna E. Ticknor, vol. II (London: Sampson Low, Marston, Searle, & Rivington, 1876), 470.

⁶² Anna Eliot Ticknor to Miss CDS, February 19, 1874, in Society to Encourage Studies at Home, *Society to Encourage Studies at Home: Founded in 1873 by Anna Eliot Ticknor: Born June 1st, 1823, Died October 5th, 1896* (Cambridge, MA: Riverside Press, 1897), 72 – 75.

⁶³ Linda K. Kerber, "Gender," in *Imagined History: American Historians Interpret the Past*, edited by Anthony Molho and Gordon S. Wood (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998), 43.

⁶⁴ Anna E. Ticknor, *An American Family in Paris* (New York: Hurd and Houghton, 1869).

⁶⁵ Naming the lead female character Fannie is an interesting choice. Anna Eliot Ticknor's nickname was Nannie and is the name frequently used in George Ticknor's journals and correspondence. See George Ticknor, *Life, Letters and Journals of George Ticknor*, eds. George Stillman Hillard, Anna Eliot Ticknor, and Anna E. Ticknor, 2 vols. (London: Sampson Low, Marston, Searle, & Rivington, 1876).

portrayed as a brilliant and kind man who has great concern for the education of his children. He takes great care in selecting only the best tutors for the children and actively participates along with Mrs. Lewis in their education. Tutoring or formal education occurs primarily in the mornings. In the afternoons and evenings a very family-oriented, non-traditional education ensues. The book was written with the intention of educating young people in the United States regarding the history of Paris and to provide a “tour” of the city and its historical sites.⁶⁶ The history and tour are woven through the educational adventures the family takes, parents and children together travelling the city, visiting the historic locations in chronological order, and learning the significance and place in history of each. In the evenings the Lewis family is seen gathered in the parlor either discussing history or listening to Mr. Lewis read. Throughout the story the children anxiously await the next lesson, the next historical location to be visited, the next historical account to be shared.

Though fictionalized, Anna E. Ticknor’s *An American Family in Paris* reveals much about her upbringing and the influences which shaped her opinions regarding education. The book reveals a familial approach to education which includes formal components yet finds a very important informal component that occurs between parent and child. The book also reveals a life spent finding learning in all aspects of life, not just within the confines of a school or formal lesson. It also reveals a thirst and enthusiasm for learning that is shared by all members of the family. It is her particular upbringing, her access to educational opportunity, the opportunity to be well-travelled

⁶⁶ Anna E. Ticknor, *An American Family in Paris* (New York: Hurd and Houghton, 1869), vii – viii.

domestically and abroad, and her own life experiences which combined to create the ideal leader, Anna E. Ticknor, for a new movement in adult women's education.

In 1871 tragedy struck the Ticknor family once more. The family patriarch, George Ticknor, passed away at the age of seventy-nine. Following his death Anna E. Ticknor and her mother began the long task of collecting George Ticknor's journals and correspondence for the purpose of publishing his more personal works. The task originally fell to George S. Hillard who was unable to complete the task. Hillard completed the first ten chapters before falling seriously ill, leaving Anna E. Ticknor and her mother to complete the remaining 15 chapters in the first volume as well as all twenty-five chapters in the second volume.⁶⁷ George Ticknor's memoirs were a project that the women devoted themselves to out of love and respect. As Hillard states in the preface, George Ticknor had a great passion for knowledge and using it for the purpose of helping others.⁶⁸ It was this love that Anna E. Ticknor and her mother shared with the world through his journals and correspondence. The project took approximately five years to complete with the final manuscript being published in 1876. During the process Anna E. Ticknor began to think of how she too could use the education she had acquired for the benefit of others and share her father's legacy with others.

Anna E. Ticknor had learned that education was a gift. Writing to a friend later in her life she stated, "[F]or knowledge is a treasure of which, like money, we are stewards

⁶⁷ George Ticknor, *Life, Letters and Journals of George Ticknor*, eds. George Stillman Hillard, Anna Eliot Ticknor, and Anna E. Ticknor, vol. I (London: Sampson Low, Marston, Searle, & Rivington, 1876), iii – iv.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

and have to give an account.”⁶⁹ The question now for her became, how does one become a good steward of such an incredible education, the gift of a devoted father? The answer to this question comes from who Anna E. Ticknor became as an adult. She was likened often to her father. He had a passion for education, felt a desire to serve the public need, and recognized his own advantages and used them to help others. Anna E. Ticknor would follow suit. Described as “well-organized and public-minded” like George Ticknor, she sought to “liquidate ignorance” particularly among women.⁷⁰ She would create a society of women, for women to share the remarkable education she had received with those who did not have access to it. She is described by one historian: “Ticknor’s maiden daughter Anna – plump and plain with frizzled black hair, cultivated and earnest – carried on her father’s pioneer efforts to educate women.”⁷¹

Anna E. Ticknor was uniquely suited to this call for educating women and liquidating ignorance. Her status as maiden was an advantage as it allowed her to take on a large scale project without the interference of running a household, raising children, or acting as a proper hostess. Ticknor also had the advantage of being of Boston’s upper class which meant she was not expected to work but was expected to engage in activities designed to help those who were at a disadvantage in some way. Her social standing also gave her access to key persons who would support her work and in subtle ways insulate her work from the scrutiny of those opposed to education for women. In addition, she

⁶⁹ Anna E. Ticknor to L.T., September, 14, 1884, in *Society to Encourage Studies at Home, Society to Encourage Studies at Home: Founded in 1873 by Anna Eliot Ticknor: Born June 1st, 1823, Died October 5th, 1896* (Cambridge, MA: Riverside Press, 1897), 102.

⁷⁰ David B. Tyack, *George Ticknor and the Boston Brahmins* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1967), 163.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*

had the financial means, though single, to devote herself to charitable activities without worry. And Ticknor took advantage of these opportunities.

Anna E. Ticknor's personality and philosophy of education as evidenced in her life and work would also play an important role in her efforts to educate women. Six major themes drawn from her life mold the philosophy of education which drove her efforts: Education is not limited to school, education should be for all including women and the convalescent, education should be flexible, education is a whole person experience, education had to be creative, and education is relational. Ticknor's life was filled with educational opportunities in her upbringing and her travels. Her father modeled a life which recognized that learning was not restricted to the confines of the hallowed halls of formal educational institutions but rather existed at all stages of life, in the everyday spaces of life. This idea of education Ticknor carried with her and into her work in education for adult women. The movement she created was predicated on the fact that education could and did take place anywhere in time and in location and in life.

Anna E. Ticknor also recognized that education should be flexible. Likely influenced by her father's efforts to make changes in the stringent curriculum at Harvard, Ticknor believed that topics of study should reflect the desires and needs of the student. Rigid curriculum had no place in her educational efforts. As one's life changed, one's educational needs may change as well. Ticknor herself experienced the need for an ever evolving education as she travelled across Europe with her family, learning the language of the country in order to fully partake of the riches of its culture. Constant revision and expansion of available topics of study became a key component of the educational process. The educational experience was also tailored to the abilities of the student in

Ticknor's efforts for education. Education at its best inspired and encouraged growth, meeting the student where she was and providing an appropriate ramp for rising above one's current abilities.

Anna E. Ticknor also stood for education for all, particularly women and the convalescent. Ticknor's father had not shortchanged the education of his own children due to their gender. Neither of the Ticknor female children may have received university educations, which in the early to mid-nineteenth century would have been extremely difficult to find for women, but Anna E. Ticknor received a college-quality education at the direction of her father. This is an exceptional gift as women of this time period from families of means were brought up and educated not to be part of the workforce but to be wives of elite men in society.⁷² In the Ticknor home this level of education was shared with all, not just the men of society but also the women. Anna E. Ticknor, her sister, and her friends were all given the advantage of literature studies with a Harvard professor, George Ticknor. George Ticknor also read with his wife, who shared his love of literature, when she was ill. He demonstrated that those who are invalid still have active minds in need of stimulation and exercise. These two ideas become entrenched in the motivations for Anna E. Ticknor's educational endeavors. Quality education beyond school is extended to women, not for the purpose of being a wife, but for the purpose of being better educated and improving society. This extension of educational opportunity is not only made available to the healthy or the elite but to all women. For those who were ill and those who were physically challenged, in particular, Anna E. Ticknor held a special place. She herself had battled unspecified illnesses in her lifetime that had

⁷² Nina Baym, *Feminism and American Literary History: Essays* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1992), 125.

restricted her abilities and in response she was quick to adapt studies to meet the needs of those who were physically limited.

Anna E. Ticknor was a staunch believer in the mind-body connection and believed that a healthy mind and a healthy body were inextricably intertwined. Her father modeled this ideal in caring for her mother during one particular illness in “mind and body.”⁷³ Ticknor recognized that health and education went hand in hand. Good health was a necessary component of intellectual development⁷⁴ and likewise, a healthy body needed an active healthy mind.⁷⁵ For Ticknor then, education had to have a component that addressed the health of the body as well as the health and the development of the mind. Concern, as an educator, for the health of the student was a necessary component of a quality education experience.

Anna E. Ticknor believed education had to be creative in order to overcome the many obstacles that students faced, particularly female students. Demonstrative of this fact is how she and the organization she led overcame the lack of books and materials many students faced. Anna E. Ticknor had a great passion for books and believed, as her father did, that books should be available for all. As part of her educational undertaking she found a way to place the necessary books and materials into the hands of students through the establishment of a lending library which operated via train. This would not be an easy undertaking, as her students reached around across the country, and yet she developed an open library system for all her students with books, equipment, and art

⁷³ George Ticknor, *Life, Letters and Journals of George Ticknor*, eds. George Stillman Hillard, Anna Eliot Ticknor, and Anna E. Ticknor, vol. I (London: Sampson Low, Marston, Searle, & Rivington, 1876), 384.

⁷⁴ Society to Encourage Studies at Home, *Health*, 5th ed. (Boston: Rockwell & Churchill, 1894), 3.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 13.

works far more travelled than many of her students. For Ticknor education could not be hampered by lack of access or means of acquiring the necessary tools. Creativity was an essential tool for overcoming those obstacles to education which arose.

Lastly, Anna E. Ticknor recognized the relational component of education. Ticknor's experience with education had often been within the family relationship and/or within the one-on-one relationship with a tutor. Key in either case is the relationship between student and teacher. This particular characteristic of Ticknor's version of good adult education is what sets her work apart from the work of others in her time period. Ticknor spent much time developing relationships with students and between students and teachers in the learning transaction. For Ticknor, education had to be about more than the subject, but rather an active, open conversation between student and teacher bound in the safety of a positive relationship.

These six traits of education: more than formal, flexible, attainable and available for all, holistic, creative, and relational, formed the bases for the educational work which would consume Anna E. Ticknor's life from 1873 until her death October 5, 1896. Her passion for education and devotion to the students with whom she worked are evidenced in the letters from members of the organization she founded at her passing. As one wrote, "I feel that I lost my best friend."⁷⁶ This particular student-turned-teacher laments the deep loss of a friend, teacher, and mentor and one who offered her educational opportunities which she could not afford. Another praises Ticknor's work for providing education in a way that was accessible to mothers and women unable to participate in the

⁷⁶ Mrs. A.S.B to Society to Encourage Studies at Home, October 22, 1896, in Society to Encourage Studies at Home, *Society to Encourage Studies at Home: Founded in 1873 by Anna Eliot Ticknor: Born June 1st, 1823, Died October 5th, 1896* (Cambridge, MA: Riverside Press, 1897), 143 – 144.

traditional means of education beyond that which was required.⁷⁷ Yet another describes the importance of individualizing education to meet the needs of the student and building the relationship between student and teacher in order to best facilitate learning.⁷⁸ And finally a correspondent relays the thanks of a deaf student barred from the Chautauqua Literary and Scientific Circle due to her handicap who was able to continue her studies through Anna E. Ticknor's work.⁷⁹ These are but a taste of the testimonies to a life devoted to expanding the educational quality for and availability to adult women in the United States.

Anna E. Ticknor, as one student wrote, lived by the biblical principle, "Freely you have received, freely give."⁸⁰ The life afforded her by well-educated parents with financial and societal means was greatly appreciated. Just as her father recognized the power in knowledge and the responsibility to use it for the betterment of society, Ticknor sought to use her own education for the benefit of women who lacked access to education beyond mandatory education. Recognizing the extraordinary opportunities she had been given, particularly in terms of education, she freely shared the extraordinary with any woman willing to study with her. She spent her lifetime opening new doors for women,

⁷⁷ Miss M.L.B. to Society to Encourage Studies at Home, December 4, 1896, in Society to Encourage Studies at Home, *Society to Encourage Studies at Home: Founded in 1873 by Anna Eliot Ticknor: Born June 1st, 1823, Died October 5th, 1896* (Cambridge, MA: Riverside Press, 1897), 146 – 147.

⁷⁸ Mrs. L.S.R. to Society to Encourage Studies at Home, December 5, 1896, in Society to Encourage Studies at Home, *Society to Encourage Studies at Home: Founded in 1873 by Anna Eliot Ticknor: Born June 1st, 1823, Died October 5th, 1896* (Cambridge, MA: Riverside Press, 1897), 147 – 148.

⁷⁹ Miss M.W.B. to Society to Encourage Studies at Home, December 10, 1896 in Society to Encourage Studies at Home, *Society to Encourage Studies at Home: Founded in 1873 by Anna Eliot Ticknor: Born June 1st, 1823, Died October 5th, 1896* (Cambridge, MA: Riverside Press, 1897), 152 – 153.

⁸⁰ Miss M.H.G. to Society to Encourage Studies at Home, date unknown, in Society to Encourage Studies at Home, *Society to Encourage Studies at Home: Founded in 1873 by Anna Eliot Ticknor: Born June 1st, 1823, Died October 5th, 1896* (Cambridge, MA: Riverside Press, 1897), 156 – 158. The biblical quote comes from Matthew 10:8 (New International Version).

and as a result expanded minds and future opportunities in education. Adult education finds its roots here in the work of Ticknor. There is much to be learned from the life of Anna Eliot Ticknor and the organization she founded.

CHAPTER II
SOCIOHISTORICAL FOUNDATIONS OF NINETEENTH CENTURY WOMEN'S
EDUCATION IN AMERICA

The Society to Encourage Studies at Home was cultivated in the Gilded Age of American history. Understanding the Society and its founder depend greatly upon an understanding of the political, historical, educational, and social context, particularly as applied to the female experience, in which they existed. Nineteenth century America witnessed great change in an era marked by civil war, technological advancements, industrialization and a shift in cultural and social norms. For women this century would host the greatest changes in educational access and opportunity, though not without cost and conflict. Contradiction may well be the watchword for women of the first half of the 19th century in America. The rhetoric of the early century focused on the equality of all, while public sentiment continually supported the notion of women as the inferior sex.¹ The turn of the century also brought with it a theological shift in which the 17th century Puritan idea of man as innately sinful gave way to a belief in the “perfectability of man.”² This shift in ideology would spawn social and humanitarian reform. The key to this statement is that man is used here in its gendered sense. Although this age would see the freedom of black men and women, women, neither black nor white, would see gender equality until the following century. Particularly in the first half of the century, women lacked political rights, and married women especially were discriminated against

¹ Harold W. Keane and Patrick Keane, *Adult Education in the American Experience: From the Colonial Period to the Present* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1994), 152.

² Harold Whitman Bradley, *The United States 1492 – 1877* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1972), 318.

politically, socially, and economically.³ The last half of the century though would see a transformation of gender roles.⁴ This transformation coupled with the desire for humanitarian reform would lead to advancements in opportunities for women in education. Amid the change, conflict, and discrimination of this century Anna Ticknor created and nurtured the Society to Encourage Studies at Home, thus inspiring a ripple in history influencing the future development of women's, correspondence, and adult education.

The 19th century was born in a period of great invention. These innovations would provide both hope and conflict for Americans as the century unfolded, and it would bring changes in American practice, beliefs, and ultimately the family.⁵ The hope of Americans that “one’s inherited economic and social status *could* be changed gave rise to the notion that it *should* be changed.”⁶ The ability to change was much dependent upon education, fueling a “hunger for knowledge,” something this century could feed through simultaneous increases in literacy, advancements in the production of reading materials, and a rise in the number of “native” or American scholars.⁷ Though literacy levels were on the rise and educational opportunities were becoming more readily available, both remained limited when applied to women, particularly in the first half of the 19th century. The beginning of the century recorded lower literacy rates for women than men, even in

³ Douglas, T. Miller, *The Birth of Modern America 1820 – 1850* (Indianapolis, IN: Western Publishing Company, 1970), 166.

⁴ John L. Rury, *Education and Social Change: Themes in the History of American Schooling* (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Earlbaum and Associates, Publishers, 2002), 105.

⁵ Douglas, T. Miller, *The Birth of Modern America 1820 – 1850* (Indianapolis, IN: Western Publishing Company, 1970), xi.

⁶ *Ibid.*, xii.

⁷ Malcolm S. Knowles, *The Adult Education Movement in the United States* (New York: Holt, Rhinehart, and Winston, 1962), 19.

New England⁸ then known for its more liberal stance regarding women's education than the rest of the country.⁹ Over its 100 years, this century would witness the rise of women's literacy rate to eventually exceed that of men by its close.¹⁰ This rise in literacy rates for women would spur the desire for greater access to educational opportunities as the century progressed.

Women were viewed throughout the 19th century as primarily keepers of the home while men were designated the keepers of the financial and public realms, a gender distinction industrialization further separated.¹¹ Charged with the care of the household, women were expected to be subordinate, raise morally upright children, and protect the home from any inappropriate influences¹² and find satisfaction in the "indirect ameliorating influence on husband and children."¹³ Though charged with the education of her children,¹⁴ woman's intellectual capacity was viewed by society as something less than man's.¹⁵ This view of women as the intellectually inferior keeper of the home

⁸ John L. Rury, *Education and Social Change: Themes in the History of American Schooling* (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Earlbaum and Associates, Publishers, 2002), 98.

⁹ Edwin G. Dexter, *A History of Education in the United States* (New York: Burt Franklin, 1906), 429.

¹⁰ John L. Rury, *Education and Social Change: Themes in the History of American Schooling* (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Earlbaum and Associates, Publishers, 2002), 98.

¹¹ Karen J. Blair, *The Clubwoman as Feminist: True Womanhood Redefined, 1868 – 1914* (New York: Holmes & Meier Publishers, 1980), 3.

¹² Lori D. Ginzberg, *Women in Antebellum Reform* (Wheeling, IL.: Harlan Davidson, 2000), 9.

¹³ Karen J. Blair, *The Clubwoman as Feminist: True Womanhood Redefined, 1868 – 1914* (New York: Holmes & Meier Publishers, 1980), 2.

¹⁴ Jill K. Conway, "Perspectives on the History of Women's Education in the United States," *History of Education Quarterly* 14, no. 1 (1974), 4.

¹⁵ Jean Strouse, "Private Strife: Some Social Consequences of the Anatomical Distinction Between the Sexes," in *Women and Higher Education in American History*, ed. John Mack Faragher and Florence Howe (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1988), 4.

limited the opportunities for women's education as well as the scope of education available to them. Even though opportunities for women's education began to expand during this century, the form of women's education would continue to be restricted by this view of women's intellect as inferior.¹⁶ The 19th century primarily espoused "domestic feminism," an idea that appropriate education developed better wives and mothers.¹⁷ Thus, the call for women's education became rooted in the theory of education for managing the home, a "recurring theme in a (male) egalitarian republic."¹⁸ As a result, only some areas of study were considered acceptable for women, those that were based in religion and those which supported the family and home; education for purely self-indulgent purposes was considered inappropriate for women.¹⁹ A woman had to be able to justify her courses of study and find space within her domestic duties to complete her education without "eliciting male hostility and contempt."²⁰ Since areas of study were so restricted, the test of women's education became quite simple: Did the education adequately prepare a woman for an effective domestic and social life?²¹ In spite of 19th-century beliefs and norms, some women did manage to earn a broader education, some even earned college and professional degrees. Even so, many of these

¹⁶ Harold W. Stubblefield and Patrick Keane, *Adult Education in the American Experience: From the Colonial Period to the Present* (San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 1994), 109.

¹⁷ John L. Rury, *Education and Social Change: Themes in the History of American Schooling* (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Earlbaum and Associates, Publishers, 2002), 100.

¹⁸ Harold W. Stubblefield and Patrick Keane, *Adult Education in the American Experience: From the Colonial Period to the Present* (San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 1994), 107.

¹⁹ Linda K. Kerber, "'Why Should Girls Be Learn'd and Wise?' Two Centuries of Higher Education for Women as Seen Through the Unfinished Work of Alice Mary Baldwin," In *Women and Higher Education in American History*, ed. John Mack Faragher and Florence Howe (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1988), 36.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 41.

²¹ Thomas Woody, *A History of Women's Education in the United States*, Vol I (New York: The Science Press, 1929), 304.

women would oftentimes find themselves trapped in the all-consuming role of housewife.²² But by mid century, the United States found itself in the midst of a demographic shift. Up until this point the population of men had always outnumbered that of women, noticeably in the eastern part of the country.²³ The reduced number of men in the east, attributable to the Gold Rush and the Civil War, alleviated the pressure for women to marry²⁴ since there would be no guarantee that a woman would be able to marry or expected to run a household.²⁵ This demographic change would open the avenues of study for women to include areas that would support her in obtaining socially acceptable employment.

There was also a shift in opinions regarding self-education occurring during the early part of the 19th century. Self-improvement was considered a “noble path” for American men in the 18th century but in the early 19th century this noble idea was opening to include all.²⁶ For men, self-education during this time period was accessible primarily through mutual improvement societies, such as library associations and literary societies. But unfortunately, the opportunities afforded women for self-improvement through mutual improvement lagged behind that of men, and those societies that were available often lacked the resources of men’s societies, particularly in regards to access to

²² Karen J. Blair, *The Clubwoman as Feminist: True Womanhood Redefined, 1868 – 1914* (New York: Holmes & Meier Publishers, 1980), 60.

²³ Thomas Woody, *A History of Women’s Education in the United States*, Vol II (New York: The Science Press, 1929), 1.

²⁴ Karen J. Blair, *The Clubwoman as Feminist: True Womanhood Redefined, 1868 – 1914* (New York: Holmes & Meier Publishers, 1980), 59.

²⁵ Thomas Woody, *A History of Women’s Education in the United States*, Vol II (New York: The Science Press, 1929), 1.

²⁶ Joseph F. Kett, *The Pursuit of Knowledge Under Difficulties: From Self-Improvement to Adult Education in America, 1750 – 1990* (Stanford, CA: University of Stanford Press, 1994), 76.

appropriate books and materials for study.²⁷ Regardless of access to groups or materials, women moved forward in their attempts for education through self-directed studies, supported by many of the authors of the day who encouraged the acquisition of “habits of study”²⁸ and often provided reading lists for avenues of inquiry.²⁹ Thus, many women “shaped their intellectual lives out of their own reading, their diary keeping, and their letter writing.”³⁰

The notion of self-education through mutual improvement was particularly supported in the early 19th century by the Lyceum movement. The Lyceum movement was inspired by Josiah Holbrook who printed an outline of a “Society for Mutual Instruction” in the October 1826 edition of the *American Journal of Education*. His visionary society had two main stated goals: to engage the male youth and community in the spread of knowledge and to utilize the sciences in practical applications of life.³¹ The purpose of the Lyceum movement was threefold: promote mutual development through “study and association,” diffuse knowledge through the building of museums and libraries, and bolster support for public elementary schools.³² Holbrook expected this movement to educate and support education without the inclusion of politics or religion

²⁷ Ibid., 151.

²⁸ Ibid., 75.

²⁹ Harold W. Stubblefield and Patrick Keane, *Adult Education in the American Experience: From the Colonial Period to the Present* (San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 1994), 108.

³⁰ Linda K. Kerber, “‘Why Should Girls Be Learn’d and Wise?’ Two Centuries of Higher Education for Women as Seen Through the Unfinished Work of Alice Mary Baldwin,” In *Women and Higher Education in American History*, ed. John Mack Faragher and Florence Howe (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1988), 35.

³¹ Carl Bode, *The American Lyceum* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1956), 12.

³² C. Hartley Grattan, *In Quest of Knowledge* (New York: Association Press, 1955), 156 – 157.

in its operations.³³ It was Holbrook's hope that this movement would inspire a national network of local study groups³⁴ for the purpose of mutual improvement. All of this he envisioned occurring through "regular courses of instruction."³⁵ The first Lyceum lecture was held in Millbury, Massachusetts, and given by Holbrook himself. The second lecture would move to the "intellectual center of the country," Boston,³⁶ and from there the Lyceum ideal spread quickly throughout the United States, disseminating "mainstream (Northern) culture and values."³⁷ It would be the Massachusetts middle class which would provide the backbone for the Lyceum movement, a class which was literate and open to educational endeavors. For the lower classes of society, this movement would build an avenue for societal advancement.³⁸ With a reasonable cost of approximately \$2 for yearly enrollment,³⁹ local Lyceums were not only accessible to the middle and lower classes but also in high demand by those with lesser educations.⁴⁰ These local Lyceums would usually meet once each week during the winter to discuss literary and scientific topics led by local or regional experts on a particular subject.⁴¹

³³ Harold W. Stubblefield and Patrick Keane, *Adult Education in the American Experience: From the Colonial Period to the Present* (San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 1994), 86.

³⁴ Malcolm S. Knowles, *The Adult Education Movement in the United States* (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1962), 16.

³⁵ Carl Bode, *The American Lyceum* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1956), 12.

³⁶ James Truslow Adams, *Frontiers of American Culture: A Study of Adult Education in a Democracy* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1944), 146.

³⁷ Harold W. Stubblefield and Patrick Keane, *Adult Education in the American Experience: From the Colonial Period to the Present* (San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 1994), 95.

³⁸ Carl Bode, *The American Lyceum* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1956), 43 – 44.

³⁹ In 2010 values, adjusting for Inflation, the amount of \$2 in 1826 is roughly equivalent to \$40.

⁴⁰ C. Hartley Grattan, *In Quest of Knowledge* (New York: Association Press, 1955), 158.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

Town Lyceums grew and eventually Holbrook's vision of a national system was attained. The American Lyceum existed from 1831 to 1839 and represented local and regional organizations, some general in nature and others specialized for the needs of women, blacks, teachers or other special interests, from the east coast to as far west as Ohio and Illinois. For a brief moment in 1837 an international organization, the Universal Lyceum, connected study groups worldwide. The stability of organizations at the local level would not translate to the national and international levels,⁴² resulting in the demise of these umbrella organizations. The peak of the Lyceum movement occurred around 1835 with approximately 3500 active local organizations, but by the Civil War years, the Lyceum movement had greatly declined and had begun the shift from academic pursuits to entertainment, depending mainly upon professional lecturers rather than local experts.⁴³ The intent of the lecture series had been to "bridge the gap between the intelligentsia and the common man."⁴⁴ Though the idea was noble, the execution was much less so, often opting for notoriety over academic ability in choice of lecturer.

In effect, the Lyceum movement as designed by Holbrook in 1826 had essentially ended with the Civil War.⁴⁵ The impact upon society would be felt for generations to come, particularly for women. The Lyceum movement was a critical point in adult education,⁴⁶ bringing with it a new societal value on books and periodicals in the home

⁴² Harold W. Stubblefield and Patrick Keane, *Adult Education in the American Experience: From the Colonial Period to the Present* (San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 1994), 88 – 89.

⁴³ C. Hartley Grattan, *In Quest of Knowledge* (New York: Association Press, 1955), 158 – 161.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 160.

⁴⁵ Carl Bode, *The American Lyceum* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1956), 247.

⁴⁶ C. Hartley Grattan, *In Quest of Knowledge* (New York: Association Press, 1955), 155.

for classes other than the wealthiest⁴⁷ while creating a network of study groups for the sole purpose of adult education which in turn stimulated the general intellect of the country.⁴⁸ The publication of scientific pamphlets for the home inspired by this movement would lay the groundwork for a future movement in correspondence education.⁴⁹ For women this movement provided only a taste of the education they desired. With the advent of increased educational opportunities, women sought more formal avenues of intellectual training and targeted the one remaining restricted institution, higher education.

A movement to teach young women to be proper ladies evolved into a push for higher education for women.⁵⁰ Advocates for access to higher education for women began to appear in the late 18th to early 19th centuries. Many of these advocates, such as Benjamin Rush, supported women's education for the purposes of supporting the domestic requirements and the raising of well-educated children to be good citizens.⁵¹ Opponents considered such education for women as "unnatural and heretical."⁵² In spite of the criticism, opportunities for women in higher education became available in three distinct forms during the 19th century, female academies and seminaries, coeducational colleges, and women's colleges.

⁴⁷ Carl Bode, *The American Lyceum* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1956), 34.

⁴⁸ Malcolm S. Knowles, *The Adult Education Movement in the United States* (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1962), 18.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ Karen J. Blair, *The Clubwoman as Feminist: True Womanhood Redefined, 1868 – 1914* (New York: Holmes & Meier Publishers, 1980), 8.

⁵¹ Thomas Woody, *A History of Women's Education in the United States*, Vol I (New York: The Science Press, 1929), 301 – 302.

⁵² Roberta Wein, "Women's Colleges and Domesticity, 1875 – 1918," *History of Education Quarterly* 14, no.1 (1974): 31.

Female academies on the level of higher education appeared in the United States as early as 1818 with the founding of the Elizabeth Female Academy near Washington, Mississippi, just north of the thriving southern city of Natchez. The academy was chartered by the state legislature, the first of its kind in the South to offer degrees to women and possibly the first in America.⁵³ The female seminary saw its birth shortly after in 1821 with the founding of Troy Female Seminary by Emma Hart Willard in Troy, New York. Academies and seminaries throughout the United States grew and thrived from the 1820s until the 1870s,⁵⁴ peaking in institutions and enrollment from 1830 to 1860.⁵⁵ These female institutions primarily focused on the “domestic arts”⁵⁶ as well as religion with the purpose of preparing women for real life⁵⁷ as opposed to preparing them for a profession or providing a college experience. Often criticized as being part high school and part college, academies and seminaries faced issues such as weak curriculum, ineffective teachers, and poor equipment and facilities.⁵⁸ These issues often coupled with an age requirement as young as twelve years⁵⁹ relegated women’s education of this type to a lesser form than the college experience of men. Nonetheless, the seminary was the

⁵³ Clark Burkett, “Elizabeth Female Academy Could Be US’s First Women’s College,” *Natchez Democrat*, November 29, 2009.

⁵⁴ Thomas Woody, *A History of Women’s Education in the United States*, Vol II (New York: The Science Press, 1929), 470.

⁵⁵ Thomas Woody, *A History of Women’s Education in the United States*, Vol I (New York: The Science Press, 1929), 395.

⁵⁶ Roberta Wein, “Women’s Colleges and Domesticity, 1875 – 1918,” *History of Education Quarterly* 14, no.1 (1974): 31.

⁵⁷ Thomas Woody, *A History of Women’s Education in the United States*, Vol I (New York: The Science Press, 1929), 397.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 441.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 411.

dominant form of women's higher education until the mid 1870s.⁶⁰ A desire for an equivalent education to that of men was growing during the 19th century. Though the seminary showed the greatest growth of all forms of women's higher education until the 1870s,⁶¹ their growth was outpaced by the growth of female high schools⁶² creating a large number of females desirous of advanced educational opportunities. This larger educated cohort of women coupled with the criticism of seminary and academy education would create a movement to improve the opportunities for women in higher education. Reformers called for either an overhaul of seminary education for women or the creation of new colleges.⁶³ Thus, the female academies and seminaries would open the doors to the development of women's colleges.⁶⁴

The earliest evidence of a coeducational college appears in the history of the University of Tennessee. Chartered originally as Blount College in 1794, it is the first known college to admit women on equal terms with men. The experiment would be short lived as the institution closed its doors to women and was re-chartered as East Tennessee College in 1807.⁶⁵ There would not be another coeducational institution of higher

⁶⁰ Ibid., 363.

⁶¹ Linda K. Kerber, "Why Should Girls Be Learn'd and Wise?' Two Centuries of Higher Education for Women as Seen Through the Unfinished Work of Alice Mary Baldwin," In *Women and Higher Education in American History*, ed. John Mack Faragher and Florence Howe (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1988), 35.

⁶² Joseph F. Kett, *The Pursuit of Knowledge Under Difficulties: From Self-Improvement to Adult Education in America, 1750 – 1990* (Stanford, CA: University of Stanford Press, 1994), 74.

⁶³ Thomas Woody, *A History of Women's Education in the United States*, Vol II (New York: The Science Press, 1929), 138.

⁶⁴ Thomas Woody, *A History of Women's Education in the United States*, Vol I (New York: The Science Press, 1929), 457.

⁶⁵ Edward Terry Sanford, *Blount College and the University of Tennessee: An Historical Address* (Knoxville, TN: The University, 1894), 23. In 1879 East Tennessee would again be rechartered and become the University of Tennessee but would not reopen the doors to women until 1892.

learning until Oberlin College in Ohio opened its doors to women in 1837. The college offered educational opportunities not only to white women but also black, something even most female seminaries and academies would not do.⁶⁶ Other colleges both private and public would slowly follow Oberlin's lead in the decades to follow. Even Oberlin's acceptance of female students reflected the understanding of society regarding women as keepers of the home. Oberlin, a working college, required its female students to provide domestic services including cooking meals, cleaning, and doing laundry for male students. Each day, in addition to classes and studies, women were expected to cook and serve meals to their male classmates. Classes for women were cancelled on Mondays so that women could provide cleaning and laundry services yet no time was allowed for women to take care of their own cleaning or laundry needs.⁶⁷ Coeducational institutions of this time period, though appearing forward thinking, often maintained the status quo for the women they educated.

It would not be until the 1850s that the first coeducational colleges granting women education on an equal level with men would appear, first with Antioch College and then the University of Iowa. Opponents of coeducational colleges would accuse women who attended a man's college of undermining "the moral fiber of America"⁶⁸ while critics would continue to cite these colleges for giving women "minority status"

⁶⁶ Linda M. Perkins, "The Education of Black Women in the Nineteenth Century," in *Women and Higher Education in American History*, ed. John Mack Faragher and Florence Howe (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1988), 70.

⁶⁷ Jill K. Conway, "Perspectives on the History of Women's Education in the United States," *History of Education Quarterly* 14, no. 1 (1974), 6.

⁶⁸ Roberta Wein, "Women's Colleges and Domesticity, 1875 – 1918," *History of Education Quarterly* 14, no.1 (1974): 32.

and often denying them appropriate and equivalent facilities.⁶⁹ The minority status of women was particularly evident in the development of women's annexes to male colleges and universities. Though not technically a coeducational venture, these types of higher educational opportunities developed in response to women seeking access to colleges that had been previously closed to them. Harvard developed the women's annex basically as a university extension program for women in 1874. Women were denied entrance into Harvard's college program by then president Charles Eliot⁷⁰ and provided a less than equivalent opportunity to study through the annex. Colleges such as Tulane University in New Orleans would follow Harvard's lead, developing H. Sophie Newcomb Memorial College as a women's annex in 1886. Growth for college coeducational opportunities, both integrated and annex, was extremely slow and the quality often poor. This coupled with an increased female enrollment in high school by the mid-1850s, created an increasingly larger group of women seeking quality higher education.

A lack of faith in the quality and equality of coeducational higher learning⁷¹ paired with concerns regarding female seminaries and academies inspired the development of separate women's colleges. The first true female college was founded in 1836 as Georgia Female College in Macon, Georgia. It was not until after the Civil War that the northeastern United States would see the development of women's colleges, primarily private. Vassar, founded in 1861 in New York state, opened its doors in 1865 as a private college for women only. Smith College and Wellesley College both opened

⁶⁹ Rosalind Rosenberg, "The Limits of Access: The History of Coeducation in America," in *Women and Higher Education in American History*, ed. John Mack Faragher and Florence Howe (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1988), 110.

⁷⁰ Thomas Woody, *A History of Women's Education in the United States*, Vol II (New York: The Science Press, 1929), 306.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 304.

in 1875 followed by Bryn Mawr in 1880. Noting the success of the women's college and a more accepting society regarding women's higher education, many of the female seminaries and academies were rechartered as colleges, including Mount Holyoke Seminary, founded in 1837, which was rechartered as Mount Holyoke College in 1893.

The advent of women's colleges provided advantages only to those who were of college age. Women who had called for and deeply desired higher education in decades past found themselves still without access, due now to age rather than gender. These women still had the desire to learn and would have to create an alternative avenue for learning that would be acceptable for women of their years and status. By the last quarter of the century, middle-aged women would particularly feel the desire for a quality education they had previously been denied⁷² due either to gender or to access.

White women were the primary beneficiaries of advancements in women's education.⁷³ Though black women did see a shift in opinions regarding their education around the middle of the 19th century, the shift was in many ways a back step. The beginning of the century treated women and blacks similarly in terms of their intellect – both were considered inferior to white men and both should be educated only in those areas which would support their socially determined roles.⁷⁴ But since both black men and black women were considered inferior, the notion of fragile womanhood was applied only to white women. This would lead to education for black women along side of black

⁷² Joseph F. Kett, *The Pursuit of Knowledge Under Difficulties: From Self-Improvement to Adult Education in America, 1750 – 1990* (Stanford, CA: University of Stanford Press, 1994), 151.

⁷³ John L. Rury, *Education and Social Change: Themes in the History of American Schooling* (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Earlbaum and Associates, Publishers, 2002), 108.

⁷⁴ Linda M. Perkins, "The Education of Black Women in the Nineteenth Century," in *Women and Higher Education in American History*, ed. John Mack Faragher and Florence Howe (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1988), 64 – 65.

men, though the first half of the century would regard this education as that which was necessary for “civilizing” the race. As the movement towards abolition strengthened, education for black men and women began to take a different route, that towards education for liberation.⁷⁵ Black women along with black men were expected to demonstrate the race’s intelligence and ability.⁷⁶ This expectation did not waiver across the 19th century, but the opinions of education for black women would take an unexpected turn following the Civil War. For the majority of the century black women had received an education equal to that of black males. With the freedom received post-Civil War, black men began to receive political and social power that black women did not. In addition, black men began to acculturate into white male society. As black males took on the traditional white view of woman as fragile and less intellectual capable, the opinions towards black women’s education devolved, reducing acceptable black women’s education to only that which supported marriage and a moral lifestyle.⁷⁷ Though still expected to be a model of black intelligence, black women of the last half of the 19th century were afforded a lesser education than their male counterparts and a lesser education than the previous generation. For black women in particular, the contradictions of the 19th century proved the largest obstacles to education.

Formal higher education was not the only available route to intellectual development for women in the 19th century. Women discovered an alternative access to education through the women’s club movement. Though not credentialed and not valued by male society, education through women’s reading clubs and charitable organizations

⁷⁵ Ibid., 66 – 67.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 69.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 76.

thrived, evidence that women found ways around societal restrictions rather than remain chained by them.⁷⁸ Though men also developed their own clubs in 19th century America, notably the very exclusive male literary clubs,⁷⁹ these groups tended to have economic and social goals⁸⁰ and “had nothing of the sweep, cohesion, organization, importance and influence of the women’s club movement.”⁸¹ Women of this era were more engaged in the women’s club movement than in the rising suffrage movement.⁸² Though this movement did not focus on equality for women and women’s vote, it undergirded the support for women’s equality through educational initiatives that showcased women as intellectual equals. The women’s club movement was revolutionary in that it “crashed the gates of the old belief that only youth could learn and that the time and age for serious study were over when you had a high school diploma or college degree.”⁸³ Women of all educational levels joined clubs and sought education through these non-formal avenues. Women’s clubs of the 19th century were formed by and for women and were governed by women. For all women, those who had attended college and those who had not, the 19th

⁷⁸ Karen J. Blair, *The Clubwoman as Feminist: True Womanhood Redefined, 1868 – 1914* (New York: Holmes & Meier Publishers, 1980), 3 – 4.

⁷⁹ Joseph F. Kett, *The Pursuit of Knowledge Under Difficulties: From Self-Improvement to Adult Education in America, 1750 – 1990* (Stanford, CA: University of Stanford Press, 1994), 145.

⁸⁰ Jane C. Croly, *The History of the Women’s Club Movement in the America* (New York: Henry G. Allen & Co., 1898), under “The Moral Awakening.” Apple iBooks.

⁸¹ James Truslow Adams, *Frontiers of American Culture: A Study of Adult Education in a Democracy* (New York: Chalres Scribner’s Sons, 1944), 139.

⁸² Karen J. Blair, *The Clubwoman as Feminist: True Womanhood Redefined, 1868 – 1914* (New York: Holmes & Meier Publishers, 1980), 1.

⁸³ James Truslow Adams, *Frontiers of American Culture: A Study of Adult Education in a Democracy* (New York: Chalres Scribner’s Sons, 1944), 139.

century posed a struggle to maintaining and developing the intellect.⁸⁴ Women's societies would support women's education and become a vital component of 19th century social and political history.⁸⁵ Radical for its time, educational programming was designed with women as the primary learners rather than secondary as coeducational popular studies of the first half century had provided.⁸⁶ For the first time in women's education, women would find their own interests and educational needs at the core of the curriculum and would find an avenue for seeking and constructing their own knowledge. Clubs in general focused more on cultural knowledge than vocational skill attainment, providing talks on music, art, literature, and science though providing little in the way of practical instruction or experience in any of these areas.⁸⁷

The women's club movement began in 1868 almost simultaneously in Boston and New York with the founding of the New England Woman's Club and the founding of Sorosis. The New England Woman's Club was founded in Boston with Caroline Severance, women's rights activist, at the organization's lead. The group was founded as part philanthropic, part literary society for both women and men though women assumed control and all leadership roles.⁸⁸ Journalist Jane Croly founded Sorosis in New York after she and other female colleagues were refused admittance into a banquet featuring

⁸⁴ Joseph F. Kett, *The Pursuit of Knowledge Under Difficulties: From Self-Improvement to Adult Education in America, 1750 – 1990* (Stanford, CA: University of Stanford Press, 1994), 151 – 152.

⁸⁵ Anne Firor Scott, *Natural Allies: Women's Associations in American History* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1991), 111.

⁸⁶ Joseph F. Kett, *The Pursuit of Knowledge Under Difficulties: From Self-Improvement to Adult Education in America, 1750 – 1990* (Stanford, CA: University of Stanford Press, 1994), 150.

⁸⁷ Karen J. Blair, *The Clubwoman as Feminist: True Womanhood Redefined, 1868 – 1914* (New York: Holmes & Meier Publishers, 1980), 58.

⁸⁸ Jane C. Croly, *The History of the Women's Club Movement in America* (New York: Henry G. Allen & Co., 1898), under "New England Woman's Club." Apple iBooks.

Charles Dickens hosted by the New York Press Association. This incident spurred Croly to create an organization of women to build sorority and to support interests specific to women.⁸⁹ Soon after clubs would begin to emerge in other areas including the Fortnightly Club of Chicago founded in 1873 by Kate Newell Doggett, women's rights advocate, for the purpose of self-education among women.⁹⁰ This club attracted women such as Jane Addams, co-founder of Hull House and social activist, to its membership.⁹¹ From there many more clubs emerged across the country and in 1890, Jane Croly initiated a convention of clubs which would become the General Federation of Women's clubs.⁹² Ninety-seven clubs were invited to join the new General Federation, of which sixty-three accepted. By the close of the century the General Federation would host nearly 2000 clubs and regional federations from the United States and worldwide. These accounted for a portion of women's clubs as there were many who chose not to align their organizations with the General Federation, notably The New England Woman's Club and the Society to Encourage Studies at Home.⁹³

From the first clubs of the movement in 1868 until the 1920s, clubs for women by women would proliferate in America.⁹⁴ This proliferation may be attributed to a previous lack of equivalent "opportunity for mutual improvement through self-education in

⁸⁹ Ibid., under "Sorosis."

⁹⁰ The Fortnightly Club of Chicago, "The Club," The Fortnightly Club of Chicago, <http://www.fortnightlychicago.org/public/theClub.php> (accessed October 13, 2011).

⁹¹ Jane C. Croly, *The History of the Women's Club Movement in America* (New York: Henry G. Allen & Co., 1898), under "The Fortnightly Club." Apple iBooks.

⁹² Ibid., under "Founding the General Federation."

⁹³ Ibid., under "General Federation."

⁹⁴ Christina Woyshna, "Women's Club Movement," in *Historical Dictionary of Women's Education in the United States*, ed. Linda Eisenmann (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1998), 475.

groups” as their male counterparts, combined with the slow growth of higher education opportunities for women.⁹⁵ Thus, the objectives of middle class women to obtain an education and the popular self-education model collided in 19th century America to create the women’s club movement. At the core of women’s clubs of the last quarter century were middle-aged women.⁹⁶ During this timeframe clubs would have their greatest growth, reflecting a growth in the desire of women for formal education that far outpaced the growth of available opportunities.⁹⁷ In addition to a growing population of women seeking higher educational opportunities, there was also a growing population of women who had earned college degrees who neither had to work nor wanted to teach but wished to remain vital in society.⁹⁸ For them women’s clubs were an excellent outlet for their intellect and energy. Club membership afforded women of this time period access, opportunity, and freedoms that previously had been denied them. Women in clubs were given opportunities to do research, write, develop presentation skills, gain access to library resources, and engage in public speaking and with such skills gained confidence.⁹⁹ Clubs also offered women a socially acceptable escape from the isolation of the home and the restrictions of education solely for domestic service while providing them with

⁹⁵ Joseph F. Kett, *The Pursuit of Knowledge Under Difficulties: From Self-Improvement to Adult Education in America, 1750 – 1990* (Stanford, CA: University of Stanford Press, 1994), 150 – 151.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 151.

⁹⁷ Anne Firor Scott, *Natural Allies: Women’s Associations in American History* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1991), 113.

⁹⁸ Harold W. Stubblefield and Patrick Keane, *Adult Education in the American Experience: From the Colonial Period to the Present* (San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 1994), 154.

⁹⁹ Karen J. Blair, *The Clubwoman as Feminist: True Womanhood Redefined, 1868 – 1914* (New York: Holmes & Meier Publishers, 1980), 68.

increased autonomy, sorority and societal influence.¹⁰⁰ In order to effectively do so, these organizations had to espouse particular goals as “there was little sympathy with organizations of women not expressly religious, charitable, or intended to promote charitable objects.”¹⁰¹ But it was these organizations and these women who expressed the “‘silent virtues’ of charitable womanhood” who were “best able to undermine the practical disabilities of womanhood itself when it came to building their organization’s stability, wealth, and authority.”¹⁰² Literary clubs, though, often suffered the critic’s wrath. Male critics saw the literary club as an “incubator for trouble,” taking women from their natural place and potentially encouraging them to seek fulfillment of self-centered goals over the needs of the home.¹⁰³ In addition, the educational work of literary clubs was often criticized as weak and lacking academic rigor.¹⁰⁴ In spite of the critical views, women’s clubs accomplished their two purposes: providing education for and building solidarity among women.¹⁰⁵

As women began to take steps towards earning an equivalent education to their male counterparts, there were those who led a charge against education for women citing education as beyond a woman’s sphere and upholding the notion that women were

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 4.

¹⁰¹ Jane C. Croly, *The History of the Women’s Club Movement in America* (New York: Henry G. Allen & Co., 1898), under “Women in Religious Organizations.” Apple iBooks.

¹⁰² Lori D. Ginzberg, *Women in Antebellum Reform* (Wheeling, IL.: Harlan Davidson, 2000), 32.

¹⁰³ Karen J. Blair, *The Clubwoman as Feminist: True Womanhood Redefined, 1868 – 1914* (New York: Holmes & Meier Publishers, 1980), 70.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 58.

¹⁰⁵ Jane C. Croly, *The History of the Women’s Club Movement in America* (New York: Henry G. Allen & Co., 1898), under “Preface.”

mentally inferior and physically weak.¹⁰⁶ Some went so far as to say women's education was superfluous, leading women away from their domestic duties and potentially destroying society.¹⁰⁷ Women who fought for educational opportunity had to defend against societal charges of being unfeminine and behaving inappropriately.¹⁰⁸ Those who would be deemed reformers were "vulnerable to attack and anxious about setting permissible limits of behavior and belief among themselves."¹⁰⁹ For women who sought educational opportunities, the stakes were high as there was potential backlash from the very group, women, whom they represented. As a result women who chose to travel the road to educational freedom were often better off choosing avenues that provided discretion and the least amount of conflict.

The foundation had been laid for a new movement in education for women by women provided that education could grant broad access to all women regardless of race or age, geography, and materials, as well as shelter those who participated from possible societal retribution. Building upon the ideals of the Lyceum movement, the momentum of increasing access to higher education for women and the desires of those who had not been afforded such an opportunity, and the camaraderie and societal respect for and acceptance of the women's club movement, Anna Ticknor created the Society to Encourage Studies at Home. Ticknor witnessed personally each of these milestones for

¹⁰⁶ Thomas Woody, *A History of Women's Education in the United States*, Vol II (New York: The Science Press, 1929), 151-152.

¹⁰⁷ Thomas Woody, *A History of Women's Education in the United States*, Vol I (New York: The Science Press, 1929), 401.

¹⁰⁸ Linda K. Kerber, "'Why Should Girls Be Learn'd and Wise?' Two Centuries of Higher Education for Women as Seen Through the Unfinished Work of Alice Mary Baldwin," in *Women and Higher Education in American History*, ed. John Mack Faragher and Florence Howe (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1988), 19-20.

¹⁰⁹ Lori D. Ginzberg, *Women in Antebellum Reform* (Wheeling, IL.: Harlan Davidson, 2000), 13.

women's education. As a young woman in the 1840s she would have had access to some of the lectures of the Lyceum Movement from the heart of the movement in her hometown of Boston. As the well-educated daughter of a Harvard professor with an appreciation for educating young women, it is highly likely she was aware of the growing access to higher education for women in all of its forms though she herself would have had difficulty attending due to geographic distance from an institution which enrolled women, concern for academic rigor of available institutions for women, and/or age. As a woman from an affluent family she participated with her mother in charitable organizations and experienced firsthand the women's club movement. From each of these, Ticknor would craft her own organization, providing educational opportunities to women by women regardless of age, geographic location, academic background, financial ability, or race.

From the Lyceum movement Anna Ticknor would use the ideals of a society which advocated mutual instruction, self-improvement, education for those of lesser financial ability, and the value of books for the home. Ticknor would develop her society to bring together knowledgeable women and women with a desire to learn. Women would teach other women in the areas that women learners desired to know more about. In this society all women, both correspondent and learner, would be encouraged to grow and learn intellectually, so that as the society grew correspondents would become learners and learners would one day become correspondents. The lofty goal of this education for women would not be for vocational gain but rather for self-improvement as well as mutual improvement. Ticknor would create an organization that would educate and empower women to recognize and use their own intellectual abilities. This education

was not to be restricted in terms of financial access but rather to be affordable for almost any woman who wished to engage in mutual self-improvement. Key to this education would be books. Providing access to quality educational reading materials for each woman's home would be an essential component of the organization.

From women's higher education Anna Ticknor would incorporate the ideal of education for all regardless of race, the importance of quality education, the necessity to provide access to those in geographically limited areas, and the need to provide access to women of all ages. Ticknor would open the Society to all women regardless of race and actively supported women of color in their educational endeavors just as Oberlin College did when it became coeducational. Developing a society that provided a quality education was a critical component for Ticknor who herself had had access to an unusually high quality education at the feet of her father. Her feelings of duty to share the advantages she had been given would drive the desire to maintain a high quality educational experience. Maintaining high educational standards would also keep the critics at bay and allow her Society to operate quietly in 19th century society.

Geographical access to education would be opened by Ticknor and the Society. Few women lived in areas or could relocate to areas where higher education was available for women. The opportunities were growing and spreading but so slowly that many areas would be excluded for some time. By choosing a system that provided education across traditional geographic boundaries faced by brick-and-mortar institutions, Ticknor would connect women nationally and globally to each other and educational opportunities. Lastly, higher education for women was restricted to women of traditional college-aged years. For Ticknor, that was too restrictive a group. For older women, like herself,

education had been denied previously due to gender and now often due to age. But education had no age limits and Ticknor would express this idea in her formation of an organization which would embrace the desire to learn in all women at all ages.

From the women's club movement Anna Ticknor would use the ideas of charity, sorority, and women as the focus of the curriculum. Women's clubs often had charitable endeavors as a core value of their organizations. Ticknor's Society would place high value on charitable works. The organization itself would be designed to run strictly with volunteers serving as both administrative staff and correspondents. Administrative staff would be charged with the organization and oversight of the new organization, while correspondents would be assigned to facilitate learning for assigned students through regular correspondence via the postal service. The organization would reflect an understanding of sharing one's acquired knowledge with others as a responsibility of having the opportunity to learn. Ticknor would embrace the notion of sorority among the members of Society as a key component of the learning environment. The Society would be designed to encourage a relationship between learner and correspondent and camaraderie within the organization. Lastly, the curriculum of the Society would be designed with women as the consumers of education, an idea inherent in the educational activities of women's clubs. Curriculum would be responsive to the needs and desires of the women who were members of the Society and not a mimicking of any traditional ideas of advanced education.

From these ideas Anna Ticknor would form the foundation for creating a learning society for women. All that would remain would be the format of such an organization

and the volunteers with the passion to make the Society to Encourage Studies at Home a reality.

CHAPTER III

THE FOUNDING OF THE SOCIETY TO ENCOURAGE STUDIES AT HOME

In May of 1873 “some person in Boston” received information regarding an organization called the Society for the Encouragement of Home Studies in England.¹ This society offered distance education opportunities in botany and art through the use of reading lists and study plans. Students were expected to study independently for a period of one year and then compete in examinations for prizes.² It was, of course, fifty-year-old Anna Ticknor who received this information, most likely from a friend in England. Intrigued by the possibilities such a program held, she wrote to the society’s secretary requesting further information.³ The information she received inspired Ticknor to create the Society to Encourage Studies At Home, which would become the first correspondence school in the United States. Ticknor enlisted the help of her cousin, Samuel Eliot, to develop the Society, its rules and format. Over the summer and fall of 1873, the two planned the inaugural year of the Society. Two informal board meetings were held during this time to aid in the establishment of the Society in which new members of the board were recruited and involved in the development of the new Society. Through these meetings the first circular, “Programme of Studies,” was

¹ Minutes of the Society to Encourage Studies at Home, Chamberlain Collection of Autographs, Ms.Q.Am. 1414 (1), Boston Public Library, Boston, Promotions page. Courtesy of the Trustees of the Boston Public Library/Rare Books.

² Society to Encourage Studies at Home, *Eighth Annual Report*. (Boston: Rockwell & Churchill, 1881), 7.

³ Society to Encourage Studies at Home, *Society to Encourage Studies at Home: Found in 1873 by Anna Eliot Ticknor: Born June 1st, 1823, Died October 5th, 1896*. (Cambridge, MA: Riverside Press, 1897), 8.

developed.⁴ One critical component developed during this period of planning and restructuring was that instruction would come in the form of correspondence,⁵ a divergence from the original English society and an idea credited solely to Ticknor.⁶ Rather than allowing students to remain disconnected from the instructional organization to conduct her own studies, students of the Society to Encourage Studies at Home would receive guidance, encouragement, correction, and support via mail from a female correspondent well versed in the student's chosen area of study. By the fall of 1873 the components were in place to begin studies and the Society to Encourage Studies at Home was launched.

The first regular meeting of the volunteers who would make up the Executive Committee for the Society to Encourage Studies at Home was held November 8, 1873, at Anna Ticknor's family home, No. 9 Park Street in Boston.⁷ This would become the primary headquarters for the Society for the first eight years of its existence. In this first meeting, Samuel Eliot assumed the role of Chairman and Anna Ticknor assumed the dual role of Secretary and Treasurer, though she in essence would be its true leader. The remainder of the executive board established for the inaugural year included Anna Ticknor, the elder, Elizabeth Cary Agassiz, Ellen Gurney, Lucretia Crocker, Elizabeth

⁴ Minutes of the Society to Encourage Studies at Home, Chamberlain Collection of Autographs, Ms.Q.Am. 1414 (1), Boston Public Library, Boston, Promotions page. Courtesy of the Trustees of the Boston Public Library/Rare Books.

⁵ Society to Encourage Studies at Home, *Society to Encourage Studies at Home: Found in 1873 by Anna Eliot Ticknor: Born June 1st, 1823, Died October 5th, 1896*. (Cambridge, MA: Riverside Press, 1897), 4.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 9.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 1.

Perkins, Elizabeth Cleveland, Katharine Loring, and Ellen Mason,⁸ all of whom were in attendance at the first regular meeting of the board except Ellen Gurney. At this meeting the organizational polity was established and affirmed by the board and regular meetings of the board were slated at six-week intervals on Saturdays with the ability to call special meetings when necessary. In addition, members of the board could be elected by unanimous vote only and correspondents were required to share copies of all readings lists and instructions to be sent to students with the secretary, Ticknor.⁹ With these few simple matters agreed upon, the Society to Encourage Studies at Home officially stepped into the realm of adult education. Not one of those involved in its formation would realize the dramatic impact the Society would have on education, nationally and internationally.

At the close of this first meeting, copies of the inaugural circular were given to each member of the committee for dissemination among female friends and family who might be interested in such an educational venture. Ticknor would also be charged with sending copies of the program to teachers and superintendents who might forward the information of this new society on to female teachers interested in furthering their own educations.¹⁰ The one avenue of distribution that would not be pursued however is print. Ticknor discouraged any discussion of printing advertisements in newspapers or journals,

⁸ Society to Encourage Studies at Home, *Society to Encourage Studies at Home: Founded in 1873 by Anna Eliot Ticknor: Born June 1st, 1823, Died October 5th, 1896* (Cambridge, MA: Riverside, 1897), 13.

⁹ Minutes of the Society to Encourage Studies at Home, Chamberlain Collection of Autographs, Ms.Q.Am. 1414 (1), Boston Public Library, Boston, 1 – 2. Courtesy of the Trustees of the Boston Public Library/Rare Books.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 2.

stating that if the Society were truly needed it would ““make itself known.””¹¹ Writing to an English friend, at the time of the formation of the Society, Ticknor expresses this same sentiment.

One thing which I have been busy about for a long time, but especially lately, is getting up a small society to work as noiselessly as possible, an imitation of an English one called a Society for the Encouragement of Home Studies....We have kept very quiet about our work hitherto, but presently, when our circular is handed about, it can no longer be a secret. We hope, however, never to get into the newspapers....¹²

Thus, Ticknor and the executive committee of the Society set off to build a learning community of women that moved quietly through the general public.

The first circular sent to prospective women students was a simple one-page folded document with print on three sides which included the purpose of the Society, rules and costs, names of the Executive Board members, contact information and courses of study. The purpose of the Society was described as seeking

...to induce young ladies to form the habit of devoting some part of every day to study of a systematic and thorough kind. Even if the time devoted daily to this use is short, much can be accomplished by perseverance; and the habit soon becomes a delightful one. To carry out this purpose, it is proposed to arrange courses of reading and plans of work, from which ladies may select one or more, according to their taste and leisure; to aid them from time to time with directions and advice; and, finally, to distribute to them, annually, certificates of progress, at a meeting where the Students may meet the Examiners and Managers of the Society.

This Society does not, however, wish to attain its end by any factitious excitement, and does not desire publicity for its Managers or for its Students.¹³

¹¹ Society to Encourage Studies at Home, *Society to Encourage Studies at Home: Founded in 1873 by Anna Eliot Ticknor: Born June 1st, 1823, Died October 5th, 1896*. (Cambridge, MA: Riverside Press, 1897), 4.

¹² Anna Ticknor to an English friend, September 29, 1873, in *Society to Encourage Studies at Home, Society to Encourage Studies at Home: Founded in 1873 by Anna Eliot Ticknor: Born June 1st, 1823, Died October 5th, 1896*. (Cambridge, MA: Riverside Press, 1897), 8.

¹³ Society to Encourage Studies at Home, Programme of Studies, No. 1, Scrapbooks of the Society to Encourage Studies at Home, Chamberlain Collection of Autographs, Ms.f.AM. 1418 (1), Boston Public Library, Boston, 1. Courtesy of the Trustees of the Boston Public Library/Rare Books.

The Society opened its invisible doors to women to enter into study in areas they so desired. But it did so in such a way to provide both education and protection for students and board members through its virtual anonymity intended to insulate it from criticism by American society of women's education. The Society also suggested that women in their daily lives could provide some time for intellectual development each and every day. It promised a reward in the form of a certificate of progress, not a certificate of achievement. The Society would seek not to provide a certification like that of formal education but rather would measure success in terms of personal progress of each student. Ticknor confirms this final ideal in her letter to an English friend explaining, "We hope to do some good, even if it is on a very small scale, by assisting women to form habits of study, without professing anything technical or learned."¹⁴

The rules of the Society were laid out in six simple requirements. First, women who enrolled were to be a minimum of seventeen years old. Second, each member was required to pay an annual fee of \$2¹⁵ in order to cover printing and postal expenses. Third, each student was expected to study daily or weekly as would fit into her schedule. Fourth, the term for each year would run October 1 through June 1 and culminate in an annual meeting in Boston for all students and board members at which time certificates would be issued. Fifth, those who wished to join must request a program from the Secretary and choose a least one area of study. Once she had informed the Secretary of her choice, she would be sent directions and questions related to the field chosen. Also

¹⁴ Anna Ticknor to an English friend, September 29, 1873, in *Society to Encourage Studies at Home, Society to Encourage Studies at Home: Founded in 1873 by Anna Eliot Ticknor: Born June 1st, 1823, Died October 5th, 1896.* (Cambridge, MA: Riverside Press, 1897), 8.

¹⁵ The fee of \$2 in 1873 was a relatively inexpensive assessment. In 2010 dollars this fee is approximately equivalent to \$36.

sent would be information regarding with whom she was to correspond and expectations for correspondence including content and regularity. Lastly, books chosen for reading were to be those more readily available through libraries and book clubs. Those wishing to purchase books could receive advice for purchasing in Boston from the Society.¹⁶ Contact information followed providing the address for the Secretary and Chairman as well as many of the Board Members.

The Programme of Studies was divided into six courses or sections as the Society later referred to them. Each course in the original program was described by the required readings. The first course was General History of the Period 1500 to 1550 and included books from European history and a requirement to develop a timeline of events and persons gleaned from the readings of this time period. The second course was Natural Science and included reading in zoology, botany, and physical geography and geology. The third course was Art which included sketches of the human form and nature and readings in European and Italian art as well as architecture. The fourth and fifth courses were German and French, respectively, and included studies in the language and literature combined. The sixth and last course was English Prose Writers, with Study of English Style which covered classic essays and history of English literature. At the close of the course descriptions was an invitation for all who completed their chosen course or courses to submit essays in English, French or German on a subject of their own choosing to demonstrate their attained knowledge through studies with the Society. Also included was a note that the courses could be easily combined to create a broader area of study for

¹⁶ Society to Encourage Studies at Home, Programme of Studies, No. 1, Scrapbooks of the Society to Encourage Studies at Home, Chamberlain Collection of Autographs, Ms.f.AM. 1418 (1), Boston Public Library, Boston, 1. Courtesy of the Trustees of the Boston Public Library/Rare Books.

the student if she so desired.¹⁷ These sections would form the structure of the Society's offerings throughout its existence. Topics would be added to these sections, but the departments themselves would remain virtually unchanged. The Society and Ticknor remained committed to a liberal arts-type educational model over the Society's tenure, an educational design which readily supported the purpose of both to encourage personal development through the study of classic higher education topics while managing to defray criticism of opponents of women's higher education through the study of courses that could be considered important for the education of children, the management of home, and development of genteel skills for polite society.

Once a student had enrolled in a section her assigned correspondent would send her a letter containing the specific instructions for her course and general instructions from the Society. In these general instructions were requirements for producing *Memory Notes*, a study technique developed by the Executive Committee to enhance student knowledge acquisition and retention. Memory notes were notes taken by the student on the readings for the course. These notes though were not taken as one read, rather these notes were taken after daily readings were completed. Students were instructed as such:

Each day, before reading, write notes *from memory* of what you last read. Make these notes in a Blank Book, on alternate pages only, or with wide margins, so that corrections may be made, and the book rendered useful for reference. Bear in mind, while you read, that you are to make notes later, and try, therefore, to fix important points in your memory. It is more desirable to remember what you read, than to read much.¹⁸

¹⁷ Ibid., 3 – 4.

¹⁸ Society to Encourage Studies at Home, Scrapbooks of the Society to Encourage Studies at Home, Chamberlain Collection of Autographs, Ms.f.AM. 1418 (1), Boston Public Library, Boston. Courtesy of the Trustees of the Boston Public Library/Rare Books.

From here students were instructed to correspond at least monthly describing what had been accomplished in readings, difficulties faced, copies of a selection of memory notes, and abstracts also to be completed from memory of completed texts and major sections of texts.¹⁹ Studies through the Society were taken with great seriousness and the requirements challenging while supporting intellectual development and developing a strong knowledge base within the learner. This would not be a typical nineteenth century book club and would rival the higher education institutions of its day in terms of its rigorous academic expectations.

With the structure of the Society in place, the Executive Committee consisting of nine women and one man would enter the world of adult education for women. This board was uniquely equipped to execute this new vision of education. Its members were not randomly chosen but rather thoughtfully considered for their academic abilities, administrative qualities, and their gifts of societal persuasion. This group was a critical component for the overall success and longevity of the Society to Encourage Studies at Home. Anna Ticknor's personality and talents were perfectly suited for this endeavor. She was considered an excellent administrator able to provide unity to the Society across its six departments. She was also an excellent financial officer who managed the funds of the Society efficiently and effectively, always able to operate within the Society's annual revenue and never having to solicit funds.²⁰ Fellow Executive Committee member Elizabeth Cary Agassiz attributes the success of the Society to Ticknor's administrative abilities: "Its success was due to her wise administration, her practical sagacity in the

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Anna Ticknor to an English friend, September 29, 1873, in Society to Encourage Studies at Home, *Society to Encourage Studies at Home: Founded in 1873 by Anna Eliot Ticknor: Born June 1st, 1823, Died October 5th, 1896.* (Cambridge, MA: Riverside Press, 1897), 4 – 5.

application of means and methods, and more than all, to her brave enthusiasm, which was an inspiration to those who worked under her leadership.”²¹

Her most effective administrative trait was her ability to enlist members of the Executive Committee who could support, encourage, and bring to fruition her vision for women’s adult education. She began with nine well-chosen allies in the inaugural year of the Society who would help her launch her dream society. Of course her most avid supporter in this venture would be her own mother who would serve on the executive committee until her death in 1885. Her mother was the hostess and clerk for the Society’s early years, opening the family home to meetings, those of the Executive Board as well as the annual meeting, and the general work of the organization all the while aiding her daughter in the general correspondence of the Society. Mrs. Ticknor was well known for her philanthropic work which coupled, with her high societal standing, provided her daughter’s educational venture weight in New England social circles. Mrs. Ticknor added “dignity and charm” to the Society.²²

Anna Ticknor continued her development of the governing body for the Society to Encourage Studies at Home by enlisting the help of her cousin, Samuel Eliot (1821 – 1898), to fill the role of chairman. Following his 1838 graduation from Harvard, Eliot spent the early part of his career as an author, producing numerous texts, many historical, including *Passages from the History of Liberty* (1847), *The Liberty of Rome: A History* (1849), and *Manual of United States History: 1492 to 1850* (1856). Eliot turned his focus towards educational and philanthropic endeavors for the majority of his adult life. In 1856 he began a career as a history professor in Hartford, Connecticut at Trinity College

²¹ Ibid., 7.

²² Ibid., 17.

and would serve as college president from 1860 to 1864. In 1863 Eliot received an honorary doctorate of law degree from Columbia University. He returned to Boston in 1864 and became an overseer at Harvard College in 1866, a post he held until 1872. In 1872 he became the headmaster of the Boston Girls' High and Normal School and remained in the position until 1876. He accepted the role as Boston superintendent of schools in 1878 and served as such until 1880. In 1880 Harvard College also bestowed upon him an honorary doctorate of law. He again served in the public school system from 1885 to 1888 as a member of the Boston School Committee.

Eliot gave much of his life and energy to his philanthropic interests, serving in various capacities for a plethora of charitable organizations. He served as a trustee of the Massachusetts General Hospital and served as president of the Massachusetts School for the Feeble Minded for twenty-one years. He also spent twenty-six years as president of the board of trustees for the Perkins Institution and Massachusetts School for the Blind. During his tenure a young Annie Sullivan would come to the institution as a student and then later as a teacher bring back the remarkable Helen Keller. In addition to serving in some capacity for many other New England organizations, he also served as a trustee of the foundation for the Boston Museum of Fine Arts and served as president of the Boston Athenæum from 1880 until his death in 1898.²³ Samuel Eliot spent his life educating students and serving others. His passions for education and service to others made Eliot an excellent choice for leadership in Anna Ticknor's new society. He brought with him academic ability and credibility as well as high social and moral standing. These coupled

²³ American Academy of Arts and Sciences, *Daedalus: Proceedings from the American Academy of Arts and Sciences*, 34 (Boston: John Wilson and Son, 1899), 646 – 650. Google books.

with the simple biological fact that he was a man in a male-dominated society provided the Society a degree of protection from critics.

Another member of the social upper stratum to be invited into the leadership of the Society to Encourage Studies at Home was Elizabeth Cary Agassiz (1822 – 1907). Agassiz was the granddaughter of Thomas Handasyd Perkins, the generous benefactor for whom the Perkins Institution was named. Agassiz had health issues as a young girl and subsequently was educated at home rather than attending a school for girls as did her sisters.²⁴ But her lack of formal education would not prevent the young Agassiz from earning an excellent education. In 1850 Agassiz married her husband, Louis, a Swiss-born Harvard professor of Natural History. When they married Elizabeth Cary Agassiz had no scientific training but learned to be a scientist in her own right through support of her husband's work. Agassiz wrote and published her first scientific text in 1859, *Actaea, a First Lesson in Natural History*, a children's book on sea creatures written under the close supervision of her husband.²⁵ In 1865 Agassiz published a book with her step-son, Alexander Agassiz, in which she wrote the text and he produced the sketches for a study of marine life of Massachusetts Bay titled *Seaside Studies in Natural History*.²⁶ In that same year she travelled with her husband to Brazil, documenting his work and lectures, and co-authored a book describing their journey in 1867, *A Journey to Brazil*.²⁷ Agassiz was now known as a scientist and respected for her academic abilities.

²⁴ Lucy Allen Paton. *Elizabeth Cary Agassiz: A Biography* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1910), 17. Google books.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 64.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 93.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 68.

In 1873, Agassiz and her husband chartered The Anderson School of Natural History as a summer school for the study of the sciences on Penikese Island in Buzzard's Bay off the Massachusetts coast.²⁸ Louis Agassiz would enjoy only this inaugural year of the school, as he passed away the following December. Elizabeth Cary Agassiz commemorated his life and work in his biography, *Louis Agassiz: His Life and Correspondence* (1885).

Science was not to be the only passion of Elizabeth Cary Agassiz. She was also a strong, vocal advocate for women's education. She began her career in education in 1856 when she opened a school for girls in the upper room of her home. She opened the school in order to generate funds to help fill in the gaps from her husband's small salary, operating the school for eight years with the help of two of her step-children. Though this venture was short-lived it would be the catalyst for the development of larger projects in women's education in the future.²⁹ In 1879 Agassiz re-entered the realm of women's education, joining a group referred to as Harvard Education for Women, which included others such as Ellen W. Gurney and Alice Longfellow and headed by Arthur Gilman. The group set to work to gain educational opportunities for women at Harvard College. The ultimate goal was to open the doors of Harvard to women to earn degrees, but the group began small, opening a certificate program for women who passed qualifying examinations to study in Harvard equivalent courses. The group produced a circular providing the details of enrollment in the program along with information on several branches of study in which young women could engage. The first entrance exams for women were held in September 1879. Though the desire had always been to allow for

²⁸ Ibid., 165 – 166.

²⁹ Ibid., 64 – 65.

women to earn degrees from Harvard, the result was the “Harvard Annex,” a separate, non-degree granting institution for women.³⁰

In 1882 the society which headed the Harvard Annex program incorporated and became “The Society for the Collegiate Instruction of Women” with Agassiz as its first president. In 1893 the organization would change the name of the Harvard Annex to Radcliffe College and would be authorized to confer degrees in the arts and sciences. Though The Society for the Collegiate Instruction of Women would not get its wish yet to have women earn degrees from Harvard, the degrees earned through Radcliffe would be countersigned by Harvard officials and all faculty members subject to their scrutiny. In 1894 Radcliffe was incorporated with Agassiz as its president despite criticism from many that women should not be relegated to a separate institution. Agassiz remained Radcliffe president until 1899 at which time she became honorary president and staunch advocate for the college until her death in 1907.³¹ Though she would not teach or correspond, Elizabeth Cary Agassiz was the perfect fit for the new Society to Encourage Studies at home: “...her name alone, uniting as it did the highest level of Boston society with the highest academic prestige, certainly was of crucial importance.”³² She had a passion for women’s education, the creativity and determination to develop and support new educational endeavors, and the academic and social credentials to give the projects she touched respect. With Agassiz on board Anna Ticknor was able to further protect the fledgling Society from overly harsh public criticism while providing the Executive

³⁰ Ibid., 192 – 208.

³¹ Ibid., 243 – 324.

³² Harriet F. Bergmann, “‘The Silent University’: The Society to Encourage Studies at Home, 1873 – 1897,” *The New England Quarterly* 74, no. 3 (September 2001): 459.

Committee with a passionate, creative soul to support its development and continued evolution.

In addition to women's education advocate Elizabeth Cary Agassiz, Anna Ticknor enlisted the help of Ellen Sturgis (Hooper) Gurney (1838 – 1887). Gurney was a friend to Agassiz and likewise staunch supporter of higher education opportunities for women. Gurney served with Agassiz in the organization Harvard Education for Women and served as a member of the Executive Committee of the Society for the Collegiate Instruction of Women which founded and oversaw Radcliffe College under the presidency of Agassiz.³³ Gurney was such a firm believer in the work of Radcliffe College and women's higher education that she hosted the first commencement of the college in her private library.³⁴ The friendship between Agassiz and Gurney had begun somewhat earlier. Gurney (nee Hooper), daughter of Dr. Robert Hooper and transcendentalist poet Ellen Sturgis Hooper,³⁵ was sent with her sister Marian "Clover" Hooper³⁶ to the Agassiz School.³⁷ There she met not only Agassiz but her future husband, Ephraim Whitman Gurney, who was a teacher at the school and later became

³³ The Society for the Collegiate Instruction of Women, *Annual Reports from the President and Treasurer*, 1885, iii. Google books.

³⁴ Eugenia Kaledin, *The Education of Mrs. Henry Adams* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1981), 47. Google books.

³⁵ Ellen Sturgis Hooper was a protégé of Margaret Fuller who died of Tuberculosis when Ellen Gurney was only 10 years old.

³⁶ Clover Hooper became wife of author Henry Adams and is known for her photography and her infamous suicide by consumption of chemicals used in developing film. Though all evidence of her was erased from Henry Adams' autobiography, he commemorated her in a sculpture by Augustus Saint-Gaudens referred to as the Adams Memorial in the Rock Creek Cemetery in Washington, DC.

³⁷ Eugenia Kaledin, *The Education of Mrs. Henry Adams* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1981), 37. Google books.

dean of Harvard.³⁸ The Hooper girls' education was not limited to the formal institutions. Their physician father took them with him on his trips to the Worcester Asylum for the Mentally Ill while treating patients. There the girls learned firsthand of the plight of those facing mental health issues.³⁹ The awareness of patients with mental illness they developed is something each would carry throughout her lifetime.

Ellen Gurney devoted much of her brief life to supporting those in need through her philanthropic efforts. Aside from supporting women's education initiatives she also supported the treatment of the mentally ill through her donations and volunteered with the Sanitation Commission of Massachusetts, a Red Cross-like organization.⁴⁰ Ellen Gurney was also a member of the Teachers' Committee which helped organize and equip teachers who would educate the newly freed slaves in America.⁴¹ Unfortunately, Gurney's devotion to education and those in need would be short-lived. She herself faced mental health issues in the form of depression resulting from the death of her beloved father and the subsequent suicide of her sister in 1885, followed by the death of her husband in 1886. In 1887 Ellen Gurney gave into her depression and committed suicide by walking into the path of an oncoming train.

Ellen Gurney's role in the Society to Encourage Studies at Home would be fleeting although important and would leave a lasting legacy in women's and adult education. "Unlike most women of her class, however, Ellen Gurney was willing to

³⁸ Ibid., 40.

³⁹ Ibid., 33.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 52.

⁴¹ Ednah Dow Cheney, *Reminiscences of Ednah Dow Cheney* (Boston: Lee & Shepard, Publishers, 1902), 85. Google books.

experiment with serious learning.”⁴² Her willingness to experiment made her an excellent member of the Executive Committee of the Society. This truly was a foray into experimental teaching techniques and the learning expected was that fit for a Harvard student. Her willingness and openness to educational endeavors of a serious nature and those yet untried was the perfect fit for a society that wished to change the rules of formal learning while opening the doors for women of all ages and stations to engage.

These first four recruits to the Executive Committee would lend their status, their creativity and their leadership to the Society to Encourage Studies at Home. Yet none would lend their direct academic expertise to students. Except for Anna Ticknor who would lead the English Literature course, the teaching would be left to the less visible women invited to join the Executive Committee. The most recognizable member recruited to teach in the Society was Lucretia Crocker (1829 – 1886) who headed the Science course. Crocker was an interesting choice for the Society as she was the only one who was not a Boston native, having been born in Barnstable, Massachusetts, and was also not of the same social stratum as the other members of the Executive Committee. Crocker did, however, study with Louis Agassiz, husband of fellow Executive Committee member, Elizabeth Cary Agassiz. Reportedly, “He saw her unusual capacity, and it was by his wish that she took charge of the Department of Science in the ‘Studies at Home.’”⁴³ In addition, her love of education was well known and easily recognizable. “Education was eminently the work of this noble woman, who was happy in the directness of her aims and the perfect adaptation of her powers to the

⁴² Eugenia Kaledin, *The Education of Mrs. Henry Adams* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1981), 46. Google books.

⁴³ Ednah Dow Cheney, *Memoirs of Lucretia Crocker and Abby W. May* (Boston: Massachusetts School Suffrage Association, 1893), 14. Google books.

task she loved.”⁴⁴ Teaching was that task she loved and she was heralded for her excellence in her work. “Her success in teaching came first from her own love of knowledge, and secondly from her power of imparting clearly what she thoroughly knew herself.”⁴⁵

Crocker had been educated at the Normal School for Girls in Lexington, Massachusetts, where she later became an instructor.⁴⁶ Her passion for education shaped her life’s work and teaching teachers would fill a large portion of that work. Aside from teaching in normal colleges, Crocker volunteered with the Teachers’ Committee alongside Ellen Gurney to help educate teachers to work with newly freed slaves.⁴⁷ She worked with southern freedmen from 1866 to 1875 to improve the educational opportunities available⁴⁸ and eventually served on the Executive Board of the Freedman’s Society.⁴⁹ Crocker served on the executive board for the Boston School for Deaf Mutes in the early 1870s, the same time Alexander Graham Bell began his first assignment as a teacher for the deaf in the same institute. In 1872 Lucretia Crocker helped found the Women’s Education Association of Boston which supported initiatives to allow women

⁴⁴ Ibid., 1.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 2-3.

⁴⁷ Ednah Dow Cheney, *Reminiscences of Ednah Dow Cheney* (Boston: Lee & Shepard, Publishers, 1902), 85. Google books.

⁴⁸ Ednah Dow Cheney, *Memoirs of Lucretia Crocker and Abby W. May* (Boston: Massachusetts School Suffrage Association, 1893), 26. Google books.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 36.

access to higher education institutions.⁵⁰ Crocker also was elected to the Boston School Board in 1873 and became the first woman chosen by the board members to hold a position on the Board of Supervisors for which she served as supervisor of the natural sciences.⁵¹ Ironically she was not one for publicity⁵² though public service was her vocation.

Just as she had a passion for teaching, Crocker had a passion for the subject she taught, science. She was “progressive in her educational views, and she had very much at heart the promotion of scientific study in the schools.”⁵³ She did much to promote and advance teaching in the field of science, including teaching methods to those who taught and writing at least one methods book, *Methods of Teaching Geography: Notes and Lessons* (1884). “As science had been considered as rather out of the range of women’s intellect, her influence in this direction was a great value to the general cause of women’s advancement, as well as to the schools.”⁵⁴ Her abilities in the sciences and science education was recognized and Crocker was inducted into the American Society for the Advancement of Science as well as the Boston Society of Natural History. Through the Boston Society of Natural history she was active in The Teachers’ School of Science for public school teachers and was instrumental in bringing zoology and nature studies into

⁵⁰ Norma Kidd Green, “Lucretia Crocker,” in *Notable American Women: A Biographical Dictionary*, ed. Edward T. James, Janet Wilson James, and Paul S. Boyer (Cambridge, MA: Radcliffe College, 1971), 408. Google books.

⁵¹ Ednah Dow Cheney, *Memoirs of Lucretia Crocker and Abby W. May* (Boston: Massachusetts School Suffrage Association, 1893), 45. Google books.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 53.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 8.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 8 – 9.

the Boston public school curriculum.⁵⁵ Lucretia Crocker brought these two great passions into the Society and developed the framework for the science department to follow. Her love of teaching and of teaching teachers made her an excellent fit for the goals of the Society, particularly the want to educate those who would be able to share what was learned with others. She also brought credibility to a science program for women at a time when women were not necessarily considered intellectually able to handle the challenges of science. Crocker possessed the academic tools as well as the teaching ability to develop a reputable program in the sciences for the Society to Encourage Studies at Home.

Lucretia Crocker was not the only member of the Executive Committee for the new Society to Encourage Studies at Home who had a connection to The Agassiz family. Both Elizabeth Welles Perkins (1847 – 1928) and Elizabeth Callahan Cleveland (1839 – 1914) were relatives of Elizabeth Cary Agassiz. Elizabeth Perkins was brought into the Society to teach the German course. She was the daughter of Stephen Higginson Perkins and Elizabeth Sumner Welles, wealthy Boston aristocrats. She was a supporter of the Boston Museum of Fine Arts which another family member, Charles C. Perkins, co-founded and became a proprietor of the Boston Athenæum in 1878 with the passing of her father.⁵⁶ Perkins had a love of culture and books which she brought into teaching German Literature in the Society. Her cousin Elizabeth Cleveland was recruited for the Society to teach the Art course. Like Perkins, Cleveland was the daughter of wealthy Bostonians, Henry Russell Cleveland and Sarah Perkins Cleveland. Cleveland's father

⁵⁵ Frances Zirngiebel, "Teachers' School of Science," *Appleton's Popular Science Monthly* (August 1899), 454. Google books.

⁵⁶ Boston Athenæum, *Chronological List of the Proprietors of the Boston Athenæum From Its Foundation to January 31, 1882: According to the Certificate Book* (Boston: Boston Athenæum, 1882), 1. Google books.

along with Edmund L. Cushing opened a school for boys in Boston which was renowned for its success.⁵⁷ She shared her love for the arts with her uncle, Charles C. Perkins,⁵⁸ a love she brought to the Society and the women she taught through the Art course.

Katharine Peabody Loring (1849 – 1943) was enlisted to run the History course of the Society. Like her fellow committee members she held a strong belief in community service. Over her lifetime she served as a Red Cross worker, officer in the in the Women’s Education Association, president of the Massachusetts Library Club, and trustee of the Beverly, Massachusetts Library.⁵⁹ Loring reportedly had weak eyesight which encouraged her to become proficient in Braille.⁶⁰ Her experience with her own physical disability likely made her more in touch with the needs of those who had suffered from lack of educational opportunities due to various physical limitations. Loring was also a long time friend and inseparable companion of Alice James (1848 – 1892), daughter of Henry James, Sr. and sister to Henry, Jr. and William. The two traveled together frequently⁶¹ and Loring spent the last eight years of James’ life caring for her through her illnesses which included the breast cancer that took her life. This eight year stretch would be the only period in which Loring would not be connected with the Society.

⁵⁷ Henry Russell Cleveland and George Stillman Hillard, *A Selection from the Writings of Henry R. Cleveland: With a Memoir* (Boston: Freeman and Bolles, 1844), xvii, xxxii. Google books.

⁵⁸ Harriet Bergmann, “‘The Silent University’: The Society to Encourage Studies at Home, 1873 – 1897,” *The New England Quarterly* 74, no. 3 (September 2001): 460.

⁵⁹ James Spear Loring and John Arthur Loring, *Loring Genealogy*, ed. Charles Henry Pope and Katharine Loring (Cambridge, MA: Murray and Emory Company, 1917), 264.

⁶⁰ Robert D. Richardson, *William James: In the Maelstrom of American Modernism* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 2006), 222.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

Lastly, Ellen Francis Mason (1846 – 1930) was enlisted to teach the French course. Mason was also the daughter of Boston aristocracy and used her advantages to serve the community and those in need. Though she spent her life in the midst of the social swirl of Boston and summer events in Newport, Rhode Island with the New England wealthy, Mason lived “one of those quietly useful careers that, because of their informality, their variety, their unsalaried status, and the fact that the women who undertook them deliberately avoided attention, are generally lumped under the term *philanthropy*.”⁶² Mason’s life was filled with efforts to support the culture and the needs of others in New England. She was a supporter along with Anna Ticknor and Elizabeth Cary Agassiz of the Perkins Institution and Massachusetts School for the Blind for which she was a member of the corporation,⁶³ a supporter and life member of the General Theological Library,⁶⁴ along with Elizabeth Cary Agassiz a supporter of the Channing Home for indigent women of Boston,⁶⁵ and a member of the National Committee on Prisons⁶⁶ to name a few. She also had great interest in education, particularly women’s

⁶² Paula Blanchard, *Sarah Orne Jewett: Her World and Her Work* (Cambridge, MA: Perseus Publishing, 1994), 109.

⁶³ Perkins Institution and Massachusetts School for the Blind, *Sixty-First Annual Report of the Trustees of the Perkins Institution and Massachusetts School for the Blind for the Year Ending September 30, 1892* (Boston: Wright & Potter Printing Company, 1893), 12. Google books.

⁶⁴ Boston General Theological Library, *Proceedings of the General Theological Library for the Year Ending April 16, 1888* (Boston: David Clapp & Son, 1888), 45. Google books.

⁶⁵ The Channing Home, *Report No. 40, for the Year Ending March 31, 1908* (Boston: The Barta Press, 1908), 15 – 18. Google books.

⁶⁶ The National Committee on Prisons and Prison Labor, *The National Committee on Prisons and Prison Labor*, Vol. 35, 1916. Google books.

higher education. She was a signer of the articles of incorporation and member of the Society for the Collegiate Instruction of Women which would create Radcliffe College.⁶⁷

Even in death Ellen Mason continued to support the causes she loved. Her approximately \$5,000,000 estate donated a sum of \$500,000 to the organizations she had supported in life, including the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, Massachusetts General Hospital, South End Settlement House, Family Welfare Society, Children's Aid Society, Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals and the American Humane Society, Tuskegee Normal and Industrial Institute, Berea College, Church Institute for Negro Schools, and the Board of Domestic Mission of the Protestant Episcopal Church.⁶⁸ Though her life on the surface may have been seen spent in the social limelight, her work in service to others was her soul. She brought to the Society to Encourage Studies at Home this depth of soul which would support the sense of service to those lacking opportunities in education.⁶⁹

The Executive Committee of the Society to Encourage Studies at Home was now in place. Those chosen were an interesting group of the social and academic elite. All had a passion for service to others and a passion for education, particularly women's education. Together they would make a tremendous impact upon the future of education. It is interesting to note that the women who *taught* for the Society in its inaugural year were all unmarried and would remain so. As marriage in the 19th century gave a husband

⁶⁷ Lucy Allen Paton. *Elizabeth Cary Agassiz: A Biography* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1910), 45. Google books.

⁶⁸ "\$500,000 for Charity Left by Ellen F. Mason," *New York Times*, May 16, 1930.

⁶⁹ The Library of Congress lists three books with the translator as Ellen Francis Mason which likely but not assuredly is the same Ellen Mason. These texts are *Day in Athens with Socrates* (1883), *Talks with Socrates about Life; Translations from the Gorgias and The Republic of Plato* (1886), and *Talks with Athenian Youths; Translations from Charmides, Lysis, Laches, Euthydemus, and Theaetetus of Plato* (1891).

rights over his wife, the state of singleness for women held power and advantage in terms of the projects in which she could engage. The women who taught in the new, bold Society were able to exercise this advantage in choosing to directly support the furthering of education for women around the world, regardless of financial position, geographical location, physical ability, or race.

Another commonality shared by all of the members of the Executive Board is a connection to Harvard. The connection for Samuel Eliot is most direct as he was both a graduate and professor of the prestigious institution. Each of the women on the Executive Committee had close, though indirect connections as the daughters, granddaughters, wives, and/or students of Harvard men. These connections were indirect primarily as a result of Harvard's closed door policy for women. The connection was an advantage in that it provided the drive to offer a Harvard-quality education to those for whom Harvard was inaccessible, women. Through the Society to Encourage Studies at Home this group of ten indirectly opened Harvard to women in the nineteenth century. With the board in place and the desire to educate and serve high, the ten members of the Executive Committee, President Samuel Eliot, Secretary and Treasurer, Anna Ticknor, Anna (Eliot) Ticknor, Elizabeth Cary Agassiz, Ellen Gurney, Lucretia Crocker, Elizabeth Cleveland, Elizabeth Perkins, Katharine Loring, and Ellen Mason, opened the invisible doors of the Society to Encourage Studies at Home to students around the world.

CHAPTER IV
THE EXPERIMENTAL YEARS OF THE SOCIETY TO ENCOURAGE
STUDIES AT HOME 1873 – 1875

In November 1873 following the first regular meeting of the Executive Committee of the Society to Encourage Studies at Home, circulars outlining the new learning society and its rules and courses of study were sent across the country. The Executive Committee had but to wait to see if their radical idea of women's adult education would find an audience interested enough to enroll in this new endeavor and to hope that the results would be successful. Little did they know that their ingenious idea would create a spark that would change education for women.

By the second regular meeting held January 10, 1874, the wait was over regarding the plausibility of creating such a society. Thirty-four subscriptions had been received, for which all but two of the women who had been enrolled had paid their more than reasonable fee of \$2. Of these thirty-four women, twenty had chosen a single course of study, twelve had chosen two courses, two had chosen three courses, and one had yet to choose. Students had chosen courses from all of the different sections with history and English prose being the most requested. The distribution of enrollment across courses revealed favored courses of history with fifteen students and English prose with twelve, German with ten, art and French with five each, and science with one. Astonishingly, the reports from students were already being sent.

With enrollment, each student received a receipt from the secretary and a printed form asking three questions: what was her age, was she educated at a private or public school, and was she a teacher. The newly enrolled student was also sent a standard letter

from the department chair of the course for which she was enrolled. In that letter she was asked to answer a few questions regarding her interests as related to the course so that the department chair could pair her with the readings and instructions for work in the particular course.¹ Once her correspondent was assigned she received information from that correspondent on the specific work to be done and the books to read. This note provided the instruction to read the books in the order listed on the circular for her course, details on writing memory notes, and directions for corresponding monthly.² For the first course, History, five books were listed, including Freeman's *Outlines of History*, Prescott's Robertson's *Charles V*, G. P. Fisher's *History of the Reformation*, Froude's *History of England*, and Lingard's *History of England*. The second course, Science, was divided into three sections, zoology, botany, and physical geography and geology, each using three books for study. The zoology section used texts *Methods of Study in Natural History* by Louis Agassiz, *Seaside Studies in Natural History* by Elizabeth Cary Agassiz and stepson Alexander Agassiz, and *Manual of Zoology* by H. A. Nicholson. The botany section utilized texts all by Asa Gray, Harvard professor and renowned American botanist which consisted of *School and Field Book of Biology*, *How Plants Behave*, and *Structural Biology*. The third section of science, physical geography and geology used two books by Princeton professor Arnold Guyot, *Physical Geography* and *Earth and Man*, one text by American Geologist James Dana titled *Textbook of Geology*, and one text by English Geologist J. Beete Jukes, *Students Manual of Geology*. The third course, Art, had two required works from a single manual, *Winsor and Newton Handbook*.

¹ Society to Encourage Studies at Home, *Tenth Annual Report* (Rockwell & Churchill, 1883), 9 – 10.

² Society to Encourage Studies at Home, Scrapbooks of the Society to Encourage Studies at Home, Chamberlain Collection of Autographs, Ms.fAm. 1418 (1), Boston Public Library, Boston. Courtesy of the Trustees of the Boston Public Library/Rare Books.

Students chose either *Drawing from casts parts of the Human Figure, with study of H. Warren's Artistic Anatomy of the Human Figure* or *Drawing from Nature, with study of T. Rowbotham's Art of Sketching from Nature*. Readings “to be pursued at the same time”³ included Oxford professor John Ruskin's *Lectures on Architecture and Painting, Lectures III, and IV* and two works by Louis Viardot, *Wonders of Italian Art* and *Wonders of European Art*.

The last three courses were the literature and language courses. The fourth course, German, had readings broken into two components, one for literature and one for language. In literature the recommended readings were Gostwick and Harrison's *Outlines of German Literature*, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's play *Egmont* and Friedrich Schiller's play *William Tell*. For the language component, students were directed to translate English works into German using Otto's or Tiarck's *German Grammar* and Adler's *Dictionary*. The fifth course, French, was similarly broken into a literature section and a language section. In the literature section students were asked to read *La France Littéraire* by Ludwig Herrig and plays *Le Cid* by Pierre Corneille and *La Misanthrope* by Molière. As in German, French students were asked to translate English works into French using Noël & Chapsal's *French Grammar*. Students were also asked to read ‘*La Joie fait Peur.*’ The sixth course, English Prose writers, with a Study of English Style, used four basic texts which included William Spaulding's *History of*

³ Society to Encourage Studies at Home, Scrapbooks of the Society to Encourage Studies at Home, Chamberlain Collection of Autographs, Ms.f.AM. 1418 (1), Boston Public Library, Boston. Courtesy of the Trustees of the Boston Public Library/Rare Books.

English Literature, Robert Chambers' *Manual of English Literature or Cyclopædia*, Francis Bacon's First publication *Essays*, and Thomas Macaulay's *Essay on Bacon*.⁴

These books created a rigorous learning environment for the students who corresponded in the Society. These were some of the best works that academia, American and European, had to offer. With such a high quality reading list, students could expect to gain an education on par with that of the well-to-do classes of New England. The Society could also expect some students to be ill-prepared for such a rigorous course of study, exacerbating attrition rates and requiring the Society to make adjustments for those with weaker academic foundations.

By the second meeting, the first with students enrolled for studies, thirteen students had sent reports into their correspondents and "all these students seemed to be interested in their work, & busily engaged in it."⁵ The members of the Executive Committee were encouraged both with the numbers that had enrolled and the reports that had begun arriving. In this meeting each of the correspondents reported on the progress of their students as they would in every regular meeting of the Society. The secretary, Ticknor, would be deeply involved in the work of the Society and remain active and invested in correspondence with all of the students enrolled. "The secretary had received some interesting letters, and the tone of all the correspondence, both with her & with the ladies of the Committee was pleasant & encouraging."⁶

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Minutes of the Society to Encourage Studies at Home, Chamberlain Collection of Autographs, Ms.Q.Am. 1414 (1), Boston Public Library, 4 – 5. Courtesy of the Trustees of the Boston Public Library/Rare Books.

⁶ Ibid., 6.

Encouragement would not come only from the students and their progress but also from reports across the globe. A friend of Anna Ticknor's sent an interesting article from England in which she thought her friend would be interested considering her new educational venture.

The Secretary read, from the Journal of the Women's Education Union, (in England) – sent to her by a friend, - a passage from a paper read before the English Social Science Congress, Oct 3, 1873 by Mrs. Grey. This contained a brief account of the work of the English Society for the Encouragement of Home Study. In concluding the notice Mrs. Grey says "I would support that the plans might be very usefully combined with the system of teaching by correspondence."⁷

The ingenuity of Ticknor's design for the Society had just been confirmed by another educator half a world away. The news was good for the work of the Society. It was so good that the Executive Committee decided to reprint the circular and send out more invitations for students to join. The news of the Society and its work would continue to spread and the Society would see steady gains in enrollment and success over the first year.

The third regular meeting of the inaugural year was held February 21, 1874, and more successes were to be celebrated. The number of subscriptions had increased slightly to forty. Though studies had begun, enrollment remained open for those who wished to join at a later date. The Executive Committee kept enrollment open at all times during the life of the Society so that no women who subscribed would be denied access regardless of the point in time. Of these forty, one was reported to be an invalid who was

⁷ Ibid., 6 – 7. Information on the sender and the date of this letter is not included in the minutes, only a comment that a letter from a friend, likely the same one who sent the initial information on the English society, was sent to Ticknor. Mrs. Grey referred to in this statement is Maria Georgina Grey who was an English journalist and women's education advocate.

able only to “pursue the course of reading which she has selected without reporting.”⁸

This would be the first of many invalid students who would be welcomed into the Society and also the first of many adjustments made by the Executive Committee to the rules of the Society in order to meet the particular needs of the students. This was Ticknor’s vision of women’s adult education, an organization open and flexible, able to meet the needs of the student it served.

There were more firsts for the Society to be revealed. One of the most interesting innovations of the Society was described here in the third regular meeting.

Five of the students have formed a reading party at Hallowell, Maine, which has adopted a good system, and has made an excellent beginning. They meet once a week, and for the intervening days a portion is assigned for study, notes are written, and at each meeting the notes of one member of the party are read aloud.⁹

The first learning circle involved in correspondence education had its birth in the inaugural year of the Society to Encourage Studies at Home. This would be the first of many circles to form and associate with the Society and engage in studies of a higher education caliber. The focus of Ticknor and the Executive Committee would remain on the individual for now though. The bulk of the minutes, as would be true throughout the life of the Society, was devoted to the individual students, their progress, and any issues they faced. It is evident that concern for student success involved more than academic progress but also a deep sympathy for the student herself, her health, and her hurdles to education. Overall, Ticknor reports good works for the students who were reporting regularly and for the reading party in Hallowell, she reported that they were “beginning

⁸ Ibid., 9.

⁹ Ibid.

admirably.”¹⁰ Of course the same issues teachers across time have faced appear for the correspondents of the Society. There were those “averse to taking notes, & those who are painstaking but still in the ranks of beginners.”¹¹ This first year was experimental in a sense and the Executive Committee was open to exploring alternative methods of instruction that would engage the students and inspire greater correspondence. Samuel Eliot made the suggestion to encourage regularity in correspondence and quality by adding a fill-in-the-blank type document to the report for future work of the students. Generally pleased with the work of the students, Ticknor asked the correspondents to share the success of the Society with them and to invite them to the first Annual Meeting to be held in June.¹²

The end of the third regular meeting was spent planting the seeds of the next innovation of the Society. “The question was raised of arranging a lending library or a Book Club, as a part of the future work of the Society, & it was agreed that some investigation should be made as to the practicability of such an arrangement, what would be the best scheme for it, and how much labor it would involve.”¹³ One of the hallmarks of the Society was its ability to see a need and respond to it. As students needed access to texts and materials, the need for a system of loaning materials became evident and the Society actively sought to find a solution. This ability to be flexible and creative served well the students of the Society and encouraged the Executive Committee to remain open

¹⁰ Ibid., 10 – 11.

¹¹ Ibid., 11.

¹² Ibid., 11 – 12.

¹³ Ibid.

to innovation. With this last seed left to sprout among the members of the committee, the third regular meeting adjourned.

The last regular meeting for the inaugural year of the Executive Committee was held April 4, 1874. Over the first year of the Society to Encourage Studies at Home forty-five students had enrolled at various points, \$90 had been received in subscription fees, and \$31.50 had been spent, primarily in printing costs for programmes. Ticknor and the Executive Committee were frugal with the Society's money. Thus far all expenses for postage, letterhead, and envelopes necessary for the work of the correspondents had been graciously supplied at the correspondent's own expense. It was evident that their success was such that providing letterhead and postage was something the Society coffers could handle. Discussion ensued regarding this very issue and it was decided to approve the purchase of the necessary items for correspondence, but ever financially cautious, the committee decided to hold all purchases until the upcoming year.¹⁴

Though enrollment had been somewhat low, it had been perfectly suited for a first year of experimentation in correspondence education. The number was manageable for the number of correspondents available and building relationships between correspondent and student was much more doable in this personal environment. Thirty-one of these students were actively engaged in reporting of whom twenty were reporting consistently, seven were showing improvement in reporting, and four were now reporting less frequently than before. Of the remaining fourteen, twelve had withdrawn, been excused from reporting, or had joined too late to complete enough of the work for this term. The last two of the forty-five students who had enrolled had failed to select a course of

¹⁴ Ibid., 14 – 15.

study.¹⁵ All of these students who had been enrolled for at least four months and had corresponded to some degree and not withdrawn or stopped reporting were given rank by their correspondent. The Secretary collected regular reports from each of the six correspondents on every student with which she worked and recorded it in her log book. At year's end, ranks were issued. In this first year, the ranks used were *highly satisfactory*, *satisfactory*, and *good*. A student ranked highly satisfactory or rank I in the German course had the following comments in the Secretary's books.

Jan. Translation excellent.
 Feb Original composition in German
 March Excellent Translation April Admirable German [essay]
 Standing Very Satisfactory

A student with rank II or ranked as satisfactory in the German course received these comments found in the Secretary's book.

Feb. Criticisms very good. Translation poor.
 March Excellent criticism
 Standing Satisfactory

A student who earned a good or rank III in German had work reported as:

Jan. Busy, but no satisfactory report
 Feb. The same. March. No report.
Standing Good¹⁶

Students who did not complete work were considered failed but many were marked as excused for various reasons and the remainder "failed without sufficient reason."

Examples of such students from the English Prose course had reports like:

¹⁵ Ibid., 13 – 14.

¹⁶ Society to Encourage Studies at Home, Records of the Society to Encourage Studies at Home, Chamberlain Collection of Autographs, Ms.f.AM. 1416, Boston Public Library, Boston, 92 – 93. Courtesy of the Trustees of the Boston Public Library/Rare Books.

Jan & Feb no reports March nothing
 Failed absence from home & weak eyes.
 Failed but excused

and

Jan. little work, short report, but good.
 Feb & March nothing April Trying to resume
 Failed without sufficient reason.¹⁷

Using the numbers of those who did achieve rank, statistics were computed for the Society. The year was successful with an overall persistence rate of 68.9%, and excluding those who did not choose an area of study and those who had enrolled too late, an adjusted persistence rate of 79.5%, an excellent average for an experimental year in correspondence education.

With the thoughts of a successful year in mind, it was now time to turn the attention of the Executive Committee towards the upcoming June Annual Meeting. The meeting date was set for the first Thursday in June, June 4, 1874. The format was simple, “a friendly meeting in the morning, & a more formal one in the afternoon with reading of [essays] by or for the students, & with addresses from Mr. Eliot & other friends, if any are willing to speak.”¹⁸ It would take more Special Meetings on May 9, and May 30, to finalize the plan for the Annual Meeting. During the first special meeting examination papers were reviewed and the guest speaker, Charles C. Perkins, was announced by Eliot.¹⁹ During the second, reports to be read at the Annual Meeting were prepared, student essays were selected, and exam results were discussed. The group present also discussed the number of guests beyond the Executive Committee and students who could

¹⁷ Ibid., 150 – 151.

¹⁸ Ibid., 15.

¹⁹ Ibid., 16 – 17.

be invited and determined that each Executive Committee could invite two, except Chairman Eliot who could invite three persons.²⁰ This would complete the planning of the first Annual Meeting of the Society.

Though the work of the first year was wrapping up, the work of the future was beginning. The committee spent part of their time at the first special meeting discussing the next circular and making additions and edits to the current book list, as well as discussing potential changes to the make-up of the Executive Committee.²¹ By the second special meeting, three weeks later, the new circular had been completed and printed. It was the decision of the committee members present to hold the new circulars until the Annual Meeting and then share them with those in attendance. Changes to the Executive Committee would be certain by this second meeting and new leadership would be installed for the second term. Ellen Gurney who had attended but one regular meeting had decided to resign from the Executive Committee. In her place Miss Frances E. Appleton had been unanimously elected and had graciously accepted. Elizabeth Perkins who had been heading the German course also decided to leave the Society. No definite replacement for her position was in place, but a Miss Ellen Frothingham had been invited to take the position.²² Before the current year could close, the Executive Committee was looking forward to more successes in another year. Though the committee members would change slightly, the goals would remain the same – provide a quality educational experience for all women that was flexible and accessible regardless of student need.

²⁰ Ibid., 18 – 19.

²¹ Ibid, 17.

²² Ibid., 18 – 20.

All that remained of the inaugural year of the Society was the celebratory Annual Meeting. This event was the culmination of a year's worth of work by Ticknor and her committee. The secretary's enthusiasm for this event is evident in the 26 pages of notes included in the Society minutes, more than the cumulated number of pages written for all of the previous meetings, regular and special, combined. June 4, 1874, finally arrived, as did 17 women from Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Maine, Rhode Island, and New York, some travelling as far as 200 miles²³ to No. 9 Park Street in Boston. These students came to the home of Anna Ticknor and her mother to meet the six members of the Executive Committee who were in attendance and to spend the day celebrating the first successful year of the Society. The meeting began precisely at 11:00 am with a social event for the women students and committee members only, a time of women celebrating the academic achievements of their sisters.²⁴

Ever the teacher and the student, Ticknor would not let an opportunity pass by to provide an educational activity in which the women, students and committee members, could participate. At noon the group of twenty-three women adjourned to the Boston Athenæum to meet with Charles Perkins, cofounder of the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, art expert and critic, and relative of the Elizabeths, Agassiz, Perkins, and Cleveland, who would take the group on an educational tour of the items that would become part of the museum's collection held at the Athenæum in permanent holdings and on loan. Perkins entertained them with a presentation on the history of the pieces on display as well as a

²³ Ibid., 29.

²⁴ Ibid., 22.

discussion on the “laws & beauty of fine arts.”²⁵ He was seemingly well received by the women of the Society as he “ passed round the rooms exhibiting & explaining the most interesting objects contained in the cases to an eager group of ladies who crowded round him, & all of whom expressed delight & gratitude.”²⁶ The Society demonstrated that learning could occur amidst the everyday activities of life, inserting an educational opportunity within its own meeting. The Society also demonstrated through this event that the teacher was also expected to be the student, an ideal that would become more prevalent as the Society matured.

Following the presentation at the Boston Athenæum, the women returned to No. 9 Park Street for lunch with their hostess, Mrs. Ticknor. Lunch would end at 2:30 pm for a one hour break and preparation for the formal segment of the Annual Meeting. At precisely 3:30 pm Chairman Eliot joined the women in attendance along with thirteen invited guests. The meeting lasted an hour and consisted of formal reports from the secretary and treasurer, from each of the correspondents, and opening remarks and parting words from the chairman.²⁷ The reports began with Anna Ticknor as treasurer. Overall 46 women enrolled in the Society which collected \$92 from their subscriptions. The most significant expense for the year was the printing of the circular or programme. The first year some 800 circulars were printed, 300 in the first run and 500 in the second, of which all but 100 were distributed. A total of 500 circulars had been printed for distribution to recruit members for the second term of the Society. The only other expense had been postage and stationery which until April had been supplied by the

²⁵ Ibid., 23.

²⁶ Ibid., 23 – 24.

²⁷ Ibid., 25.

members of the Executive Committee. The money allotted for these expenses since April had amounted to \$11.48. The cost for educating the forty-six members of the new Society to Encourage Studies at Home had been \$56.98, an average cost of \$1.24 per student.²⁸ Most importantly the Society had funds to begin the next term in the amount of \$35.02 “to facilitate the work of the Committee.”²⁹

The most exciting news Ticknor would report was the plan for a lending library. The Executive Committee had continued to work on the idea, deeming it feasible, and developing a working plan for its implementation.

A plan is under consideration for arranging a lending library, through which those students who show perseverance in systematic reading and an earnest desire for improvement, may be supplied with the less accessible books on our lists.

A weekly payment will cover the outlay, after the first, but in starting the collection whatever remains in hand from the past year & incoming subscriptions for the next term may be used, if the project is carried out.³⁰

The excellent management of funds and the generosity of the members of the Executive Committee in supplying their own materials had made way for future innovations in the Society. This particular one would showcase the desire to support women’s education in a truly unique way, by making sure that all who desired to learn would have the materials necessary to so do.

Ticknor continued her reports as secretary, stating that 45 students had entered into study with the Society, the slight discrepancy in number resulting from the fact that one student subscribed yet never chose a course of study. The enrollment of students

²⁸ Ibid., 26 – 27. In 2010 dollars this average cost is approximately \$24.

²⁹ Ibid., 27.

³⁰ Ibid.

continued throughout the year with ten joining in November, seventeen in December, twelve in January, four in March, and two in April.³¹ Enrollment for the Society would never be closed as the philosophy that prevailed was learning could begin at any point in the year and continue across the terms for a lifetime. Ticknor described for all the process of student recruitment through the distribution of circulars to persons known to the Executive Committee and select superintendents. She reiterated the Society's stance on publicity, stating

We have adhered, and still wish to adhere to a fixed purpose of avoiding all connection with newspapers and periodicals, preferring to make our work known in the unobtrusive manner which is in harmony with its spirit. The atmosphere of Home Study while it need not exclude the sympathy of an organization like ours, would not be healthily affected by association with public comment or applause, any more than by artificial excitement of open competition, certainly not if we should seek it ourselves.³²

Interestingly, Ticknor and the Executive Committee continued to feel a need to protect their fledgling Society from the scrutiny of public opinion as well as praise and to avoid as much as possible the advent of similar groups acting in competition to the Society. There is also that element of the humble servant running through her report. The work of a volunteer was done not for the praise of self but for the benefit of others, and it would be incongruent with this spirit to seek congratulations for one's work through 19th century media. Although the Society avoided the public eye in its first year, it managed to send circulars across the United States and beyond and gained students from as far west as Indiana.

³¹ Ibid., 28.

³² Ibid., 28 – 29.

From here Ticknor discussed the students' course preferences and the variety of enrollments the students selected for this first year.

The attraction of the different courses of study offered in our circular varies widely; and is in some points unexpected. It is natural the course of History should draw the largest number of students, but it is a surprise to find the science course drew the smallest. The rest is as follows. First History. Next, English Literature and German which are equal. Third Art and French which are also equal, and last Science.³³

The expectation of science having a larger enrollment than it did is an interesting statement. It begs the question, What caused the science course to have a lower enrollment? Would the target audience background and social standing have influenced the enrollment pattern? The sciences were only in the 19th century becoming a part of the elementary and secondary school curriculum, largely influenced by course leader Lucretia Crocker. The lack of scientific foundation may have deterred some from participating in such courses. Although women were entering the sciences, it was not held in esteem as a subject for women and would not have had the social practicability that the other courses would. Such societal attitudes may have also influenced this enrollment. Another interesting enrollment pattern discussed by Ticknor in her report was the number of courses in which students enrolled and their corresponding success rate. She indicated that more than two-thirds of the students enrolled in only one course, “and it has proven to be a wise thing that they so restricted themselves.”³⁴ This was something unexpected for the committee. Thirteen of the students enrolled in two courses of study and it was found that for the most part few were successful and the remainder focused on a single course and let the work in the other lapse. It is likely these

³³ Ibid., 30.

³⁴ Ibid., 30 – 31.

lapses were the result of the rigorousness of the coursework the Society demanded from its students. Coursework of this caliber would be sufficient to fill the available time of a woman running a household and raising children if enrolled in but one course. Adding a second, or even a third, when one has many obligations, domestic or societal, would have been difficult to successfully manage. This information would prove useful in forming policy in the future for the Society. The Executive Committee closely monitored the successes and failures of its students and sought to understand the obstacles to education for each so that the Society could better provide for the education of the women who subscribed.

A review of the methods was presented to the members and dignitaries present and the rationale for such methods. This supporting information is very revealing in terms of the educational philosophy of Ticknor and the Executive Committee.

In one respect the special directions for all the courses are uniform. All the Students are requested to make notes, from memory, of what they read, in a book, this being the best method we have found by which private study may receive a test, like recitation, and the notebook, after correction, being a serviceable record for future referral.³⁵

The Society sought to provide as close a traditional educational experience as possible, seeking avenues to test, challenge, and correct its students in ways that fit the mode of delivery, correspondence. The old paradigm of lecture-based, teacher-centered learning was not applicable here. They morphed teaching techniques so that students became their own educational explorers while the correspondent served as merely the guide. The Society opened the doors to a much more student-driven system with correspondent as facilitator, correcting and guiding students along the course.

³⁵ Ibid., 31.

The most fascinating revelation made by Ticknor at the annual meeting was that of the “experiment” at Hallowell, Maine.

An experiment which has been successfully tried may, perhaps, furnish a good example for imitation. Five ladies in Hallowell, Maine, have formed a reading club in connection with us, reporting to us monthly and pursuing the same method we commended for individuals. They have met regularly once a week for loud reading, but in the intervening days have continued, individually, the reading of a prescribed portion of the book in hand, and each has taken notes of the whole matter read. At the weekly meetings the notes of one have been read aloud to the others, each one taking her turn.³⁶

The first reading party or reading circle persisted through the first year of the Society and the Executive Committee took note of their work. Ticknor deemed their work good and from this plan developed another, stating

This is a good plan, and there is another which has not been tried but which might be attempted hereafter. Affiliated societies might be formed in different places, drawing their instructions from us, and reporting to us through their secretary. If any one sees an opening for trying this, we shall be happy to work out the details of the organization with her.³⁷

The roots of the Lyceum movement show through the Society in the desire to build a network of local societies who have connection but operate independently in their own communities. What will need to be discovered as the Society matures is whether such a plan, similar to the Lyceum movement which was in severe decline at this point in history, would actually take root.

From the new ideas of the Society the report returned to current students and their course performance. Thirty-nine of the students had been enrolled long enough in the Society for the Executive Committee to be comfortable in judging performance. Of these, twenty-five “have adopted our method with sincerity and have been able to

³⁶ Ibid., 32.

³⁷ Ibid., 32 – 33.

persevere in the work they undertook.”³⁸ The remaining fourteen had various reasons for not completing the work expected. One of the fourteen had notified the Society upon subscription that she would read but not take part in the memory notes, examinations, or regular correspondents, due to extenuating health issues. It was this particular student who was the only subscriber in the science course. Only two overall had no real excuse for not participating fully in their studies. With such a tremendous success rate Ticknor deemed the Society’s work a success, declaring that the Executive Committee had been repaid “for a good deal of thought and labour” and was inspired to continue the work that had begun.³⁹

The remainder of the meeting was filled with student essays and reports from each of the individual correspondents of the six courses. Three selected essays were read as part of the annual meeting from many essays that had been received from students across the courses. Each course at this point in the Society’s development had a single correspondent who was charged with the care of the students and materials. The first correspondent to report was Katharine Loring for the History course. Loring had eighteen students who registered in this, the largest of the courses. Of those, thirteen were able to persevere throughout the year, three finished all of the course readings and two passed the full exam. For this course the average age of the student was twenty-nine years. These students produced fifty-four reports over the course of the Society’s year

³⁸ Ibid., 33. The attrition rate for the Society was relatively low, and remained so, compared to distance education statistics today. Higher education reports attrition rates for its programs, both for traditional and non-traditional students, to be as high as 50%. See Kristen Betts and William Lynch, “Online Education: Meeting Educational and Workforce Needs through Flexible and Quality Degree Programs,” *iJournal* (Summer 2011): paragraph 6, <http://www.ijournalccc.com/articles/node/72> (Accessed February 4, 2012).

³⁹ Ibid., 34.

and submitted twenty-one abstracts and essays.⁴⁰ Elizabeth Cleveland sent a report on the Art Course which had an enrollment of five students described as investing in their work “with faithfulness & zeal.”⁴¹ The work accomplished was encouraging to the correspondent. Three of these followed the Society’s methods closely, completed the materials, and successfully completed the examination. From these, two essays for the annual meeting were received. One though did not begin work on the course until April 1 and was unable to accomplish as much but worked with great thoroughness in the short period of time which remained and still managed to submit an essay for the annual meeting. The one remaining student did not send work but did read throughout her studies with the Society.⁴²

Elizabeth Perkins reported via Ticknor on the German course which had an enrollment of twelve students. Some worked faithfully on the course requirements while others did not due to life circumstances or other hurdles. She reported that several, having sent no reports this year, had plans to enroll the following year and submit reports then. The students who did report sent many translations, some described as excellent. Overall, Perkins described the work of the students as satisfactory and wished for the next year of the course to improve and grow.⁴³ Ellen Mason reported on the French course which had five subscriptions. Success was a little more elusive for this group with only one completing the course and passing the examination. Of the others, only two

⁴⁰ Ibid., 35 – 36.

⁴¹ Ibid., 38.

⁴² Ibid., 38 – 39.

⁴³ Ibid., 41 – 42.

reported though few times. The other two for lack of time did not report and decided to attempt the course at a later time.⁴⁴

The last report to be given came from Ticknor as head of the English Literature course since Lucretia Crocker would have no students to report on from the Science course. Sixteen joined the course in her charge, of which two joined too late to accomplish much. Of those who joined prior to March, eight reported regularly of whom five were from the Hallowell, Maine, reading party and engaged in two courses. Five of the remaining women did not complete the work for various reasons of whom only two did not provide sufficient reason for not completing their work. One particular student was more advanced than the others enrolled and Ticknor adjusted the course to fit her particular skill level, focusing on criticism and paraphrase for the purpose of improving compositions. From her Ticknor received an essay which was included in the readings for the annual meeting. One other student completed the readings, passed the examination, and submitted an essay to the annual meeting.⁴⁵ Overall, the correspondents reported successful results in this first year. The organization faced attrition but little considering this was the inaugural year for a style of education unseen in the United States. The Executive Committee was looking closely at those factors which created successful and unsuccessful learning environments and would adjust the Society accordingly in coming years.

The reports having been completed, all that remained were closing remarks by the chairman and the distribution of certificates and new circulars. Samuel Eliot spoke

⁴⁴ Ibid., 43.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 44 – 46.

briefly on the work of the Society, both its students and committee members. He spoke of their excellent cooperation, remarking that all were “in some points learner, & in some points all teacher.”⁴⁶ He noted the movement of society toward higher education for women for which “he hoped all would be fellow workers.”⁴⁷ The chairman left the members of the Society and guests with an interesting charge to join the movement to support formal higher education initiatives for women. This is particularly interesting considering the Society’s professed desires to remain unnoticed and to support the development of women for the purpose of improving the home. While the Society spoke those words which would provide it protection from its naysayers, it also encouraged the changing of Societal opinion to favor the one product of the Society, advanced education for women. With these closing remarks, the work of the inaugural year of the Society to Encourage Studies at Home was officially complete.

The summer of 1874 did not change the resolve of the Executive Committee of the Society in offering another term of correspondence education for women. The work of the Society began in October that year with the first regular meeting occurring on October 3. There were issues to resolve at the beginning of the term. The correspondent who was expected to take over the German course, Frothingham, had refused during the summer months due to travel in Europe and a quick replacement had to be elected. Johanna Maria Hagan was introduced as the newest member of the Executive Committee and German course correspondent. Hagan, wife of Harvard professor of entomology Hermann August Hagan, was the first married correspondent to serve in the Society. Mrs. Hagan was well respected among the members of the Society as Anna Ticknor

⁴⁶ Ibid., 47.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 48.

wrote in the minutes “all rejoiced that a lady of so much cultivation, a German by birth, should be inclined to take charge of the course of her own National Literature, and all felt cheered at the prospect of seeing the interest of the student increased & wisely guided on this important subject.”⁴⁸

With the Executive Committee again filled with the necessary women to effectively guide the courses of instruction and the Society as a whole, the business of the Society moved on to the new year. Ticknor announced that thirty-seven students had already written with the intent of pursuing a course with the Society of which only twelve were students enrolled the previous year. There were “some special applications” for the Society to handle though Ticknor gave no written details on these students, their issues in enrollment, or the disposition of their applications.⁴⁹ Regardless, the enrollment for the second term was looking positive with twenty-five new students already enrolled. The Society was seeing its first growth, evidence of positive results from the previous year, growth that resulted from news spread woman to woman and not from advertisements in newspapers and journals. But this growth was not what Ticknor found encouraging. It was the return of the twelve in which Ticknor revealed “as proving that they obtained something of what they wanted, during the first Term.”⁵⁰ It was not the number served rather the quality of the educational experience for those who enrolled that was emphasized in Ticknor’s Society.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 51 – 52. Professor H. A. Hagen was invited to Harvard by Louis Agassiz and arrived from Germany to Cambridge in 1867.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 52 – 53.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

The last piece to be put into place for the new term was the Society library. Frances Appleton, who had been elected to the Executive Committee in Ellen Gurney's place, was taking charge of the newly formed library. This revolution in borrowing books was designed to loan via the United States Postal Service rather than requiring persons to check out books on site. Books had been purchased with funds available from the previous year and it had been determined that charges of 2¢ or 3¢ per day were appropriate for the cost of the loan making the library self-sufficient. Appleton was charged with care for this added department of the Society.⁵¹ The new term was beginning, and the first meeting adjourned so that the correspondents could begin the work of educating a new class of students and the new librarian could begin shipping books to students countrywide.

The second regular meeting occurred in the regular fashion November 14, 1874, and new growth was to be the first item on the agenda. Ticknor reported sixty-four subscriptions of which sixteen were from the previous term. Again there were individual cases to review for enrollment though no details were transcribed.⁵² Enrollment from the previous November had been only thirty-four and the growth for the second term was quite substantial at more than 88%. There was little more to discuss at this meeting other than to share the details of work among the courses and correspondents. With this time of support among teachers completed, the meeting adjourned.

The third regular meeting was held December 26 and had in attendance for the first time of the term the Society chairman, Samuel Eliot. Up to this point the formal work of the Society had been left in the hands of Anna Ticknor and the correspondents

⁵¹ Ibid., 53.

⁵² Ibid., 54.

who were the primary attendees at the Executive Committee meetings. The bulk of the work in structuring the Society had occurred in the previous year and now Executive Committee meetings consisted of the more mundane issues that had to be addressed. These were left to those who carried the bulk of the work of the Society, the correspondents. This particular meeting illustrated this very point as the primary items to be discussed were postage and changes to the circular. Eliot had taken the lead in getting postage information needed from the postmaster on postage costs for shipping notebooks. The committee then discussed the changes needed for the circular and the new edition that needed to be printed.

Ticknor then reported that new members had been added to the Society bringing the total number of members for the second term to seventy-five. She also reported that history books had been added to the “lending library” and that two students were now using these materials.⁵³ The lending library was now an official component of the Society and had already demonstrated the need for its existence. Though the news had been good for the Society to this point, bad news was on the horizon. Lucretia Crocker informed the Executive Committee that she would have to leave her post due to other commitments. She would however help the committee search for her replacement and continue her correspondence work until an appropriate person could be found.⁵⁴ The loss of such a noted educator as Crocker in the Science course would be a blow to the Society, but she would make room for a later, prominent woman scientist to take a significant role in the Society.

⁵³ Ibid., 56.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

The fourth regular meeting was not held until February 6, 1875, and true to her word, Lucretia Crocker helped the Society find a replacement for her position on the Executive Committee. With her she brought Cora Huidekoper Clarke (1851 – 1916) to the meeting who would continue her work for the year. Like many of the other members of the Executive Committee, Clarke had a Harvard connection in her father, James Freeman Clarke, who studied at Harvard's School of Divinity. Clarke's interest lay in botany and particularly entomology, the field in which she was best known due to her publications and findings. As a young girl she had been quite fragile of health and had not been able to attend school until the age of thirteen. Even with her late start it is claimed that she was able to keep pace with her classmates. By the age of eighteen she had moved on to horticultural school and later to study with Francis Parkman who helped cultivate her love of insects. As an adult Clarke was involved in several organizations related to her fields of interest including the Cambridge Entomological Club and the Boston Society of Natural History.⁵⁵ Clarke was an excellent fit with the Society in her academic achievements, her background, and her understanding of those who faced difficulties in attaining an education.

The number of members was up only slightly at this point in the second term to seventy-six, of which three had yet to make payment. Relative to the previous February in which the enrollment was forty, the Society had grown 90% larger. Enrollment across each of the courses changed of course but the pattern of enrollment changed as well. For this term History was not the favored course though enrollment was up to twenty-seven students. The favorite for the year was English Literature with thirty-five students

⁵⁵ "Cora Clarke," *Psyche* 23, no.3 (June 1916): 94. Francis Parkman was a noted historian but was also a horticulturalist and Professor of Horticulture at Harvard for a brief period.

including four in a new section on Shakespeare. Science showed the most dramatic improvement in enrollment with thirteen students, a 1200% increase over the previous term and infinitely improved in terms of the number corresponding. The Art course showed only slightly increased enrollment with six students. Likewise, German had six students, half of the previous term's enrollment. Lastly the French course had nine students for the term, almost double the previous term. Correspondingly, the lending library had grown with seven texts available for lending and one on order from Europe.

From here the discussion turned to student participation and academic growth. Through their discussion it was determined that approximately half of the students were actively engaged in the work of the course they had enrolled, being described as "reading with intent & profit."⁵⁶ Of concern though were the few who seemed to lack perseverance and thus were failing. For those who had disengaged the committee decided that if the student notified the Secretary of her intent to withdraw, the student could receive a full refund on her subscription fee. This decision was supported by the Chairman, Eliot, provided that the student had not put the Society to too much trouble in the time she was enrolled and active, if at all, in studies. For students who had used the resources of the Society no refund would be issued. With this final matter decided the meeting adjourned until March.

The last regular meeting to discuss the issues of the current academic year was held March 20, 1875. Again, enrollment increased slightly by three members of whom one enrolled in Science, one in English Literature, and one in both. The library was now receiving requests from students to purchase particular texts. With the approval of the

⁵⁶ Minutes of the Society to Encourage Studies at Home, Chamberlain Collection of Autographs, Ms.Q.Am. 1414 (1), Boston Public Library, 58 – 59. Courtesy of the Trustees of the Boston Public Library/Rare Books.

members of the committee, these books were purchased.⁵⁷ It was the need of the student that drove the building of the lending library, one of many features of the Society that would be student formed. In total the library now had twenty-nine texts available for lending, eighteen in history, seven in art, two in science, and two in English literature, and one still outstanding from Europe. Reports of the correspondents were shared and it was determined that roughly two-thirds of the students were “industrious” while others were “interested but thwarted by circumstances” and some failed or withdrew.⁵⁸

From this point the topic of discussion at the meetings of the Executive Committee began to center around the Second Annual Meeting of the Society. The date for the annual meeting was set for Thursday, June 3, the soon-to-be traditional first Thursday in June meeting time. The regular meeting held May 1 was devoted solely to the planning of this culminating event. The meeting scheduled was designed much like the first with students arriving at No. 9 Park St at 11:00 am for a social gathering. After a time of meeting one another and the correspondents and committee members, the women would divide into groups each led by a correspondent to visit the Massachusetts Historical Society, the Boston Natural History Society, the Athenæum, and the Boston Public Library. The groups would later reconvene at 3:00 pm to participate in the formal meeting. Ticknor was authorized to develop the programme for the meeting based upon this design and have it printed for the students who would attend.

One other small item remained for this last regular meeting of the Executive Committee in the second term of the Society to Encourage Studies at Home. “The Secretary requested a vote on the subject of a renewed application from the editor of the

⁵⁷ Ibid., 60.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 61 – 62.

Atlantic Monthly for information concerning the Society, to be inserted in the Education Department of that Periodical.”⁵⁹ Little did the committee know that the vote that would occur would change the Society dramatically and influence the future of education in the United States. In contrast to their oft stated desire to stay out of the media, the committee voted to provide the editor with the information he had repeatedly requested noted in this short line: “Voted, that the information be supplied by the Secretary, with the exception of addresses.”⁶⁰ As the Society continued its year-end business and planned its celebration for June, a whirlwind would begin to swirl that would soon sweep up the Society and send its work around the world.

Only one other special meeting on May 26, 1875, was called prior to the annual meeting. The purpose of this meeting was for completing the arrangements of the annual meeting only a few days away. Invitations had been sent to the students and all that remained was the selection of student papers and the completion of reports to be read, as well as a decision on the guests of the committee members that would attend this meeting.⁶¹ Like many of the meetings of the term, only the correspondents were in attendance. They carried the bulk of the work of the Society as well as directed the studies of the students with Anna Ticknor as their ever-present leader.

Twenty-two students and nine committee members arrived at No. 9 Park Street for the Second Annual Meeting of the Society to Encourage Studies at Home on June 3, 1875. Students came from Massachusetts, New York, Maine, Rhode Island, and New Hampshire to participate in the event, seven of whom had made the journey to Boston for

⁵⁹ Ibid., 63 – 64.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 64.

⁶¹ Ibid., 66.

the second time. Following a time of fellowship, the women divided into four groups to make the prearranged tours of the Massachusetts Historical Society's collection of relics, Boston Natural History Society collections, Athenæum collection of the Art Museum, and Public Library Rare Books and Engravings collection. Following the educational experience, the women returned to lunch in the homes of committee members and correspondents Anna Ticknor, Ellen Mason, and Katharine Loring.⁶² The small size of the Society afforded Ticknor and the Society the opportunity to create a much more personal atmosphere for the social component of the first and now second annual meetings. This, however, would be the last time the Society would be able to enjoy such an intimate event.

As scheduled, at 3:00 pm the formal meeting began with opening remarks from Chairman Eliot. Including Eliot, the students, members of the committee, and eighteen invited guests, fifty people were in attendance for the annual meeting. The guests included esteemed botanist, Asa Gray, and physician, professor, and renowned author, Oliver Wendell Holmes, who would be a long time supporter of the Society. From Eliot's remarks on the objectives of the Society the meeting moved to the Secretary's Report, given by Ticknor. Ticknor's report was primarily statistical in nature, providing the details on students, success rates, and enrollment. She reported 82 students who had entered into study for the second term of the Society, a growth rate of approximately 82% from the previous year. Of these, eleven withdrew or failed to report for various reasons including health, and one had joined too recently to have accomplished enough of the selected course. The remaining seventy students had all corresponded fifty-nine of whom

⁶² Ibid., 68 – 70.

“worked industriously, all giving us much satisfaction by their interest and desire to improve.”⁶³ For these fifty-nine students, ranks were issued.

Separating these Fifty-nine into three divisions, according to merit, _ zeal and methodical habits being the merits to be tested _ we find that 28 have the first rank, and deserve to be mentioned as Highly Satisfactory. 13 take a middle ground and 18 stand third. All of these Fifty-nine have adopted our methods sincerely, and have persevered, some of them in spite of many hindrances. There have been among them teachers, so busy that it was a wonder to us how they found the leisure for such study, and we have been remonstrated with one or two, fearing they were working too hard.⁶⁴

For the Society, Ticknor and the committee, there was more to learning than just the academic achievement. There was also the development of the person, both in improved ability and development of study techniques. Care for students also went beyond the academic to the emotional and psychological. Ticknor and the Society knew that the health of the student was a key ingredient of education, a belief that would later inspire the Society to produce and publish its own guide to health, mental and physical. Though the percentage of students who had failed the second term had increased from 5% in the first term to 8%, the percentage of students who had completed their studies for the term successfully had increased far more dramatically from 60% in the first term to more than 70% in the second.⁶⁵ In this there was much satisfaction.

Demographic information on the students was also provided as part of the Secretary’s Report. The students who enrolled resided across thirteen states in thirty-five different places. Of the eighty-two who subscribed, seven were married or widowed and approximately ten were teachers. Of the known ages of the women enrolled,

⁶³ Ibid., 72 – 73.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 73.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 74.

approximately three quarters were between the ages of twenty and thirty. These women were prolific in their work producing approximately 350 monthly reports in addition to memory notes and other correspondence. By the end of the term, the enrollment across courses was forty-three in English Literature of whom four were studying Shakespeare, thirty-one in History, sixteen in Science, ten in German Literature, eight in French Literature, and six in Art.⁶⁶

The most innovative news shared during the annual meeting was that regarding the new lending library headed by Frances Appleton. Ticknor reported that twenty-nine volumes were on hand for lending via mail, most of which were purchased at the request of the students. Some of these volumes were described as cost prohibitive for the students to obtain while others were difficult to procure, having to be imported.⁶⁷ It was this concern for the student to have the appropriate materials for learning that set the Society apart from other institutions of learning. In an age when education for women often suffered from a lack of appropriate facilities and equipment, Ticknor and the Society made sure to provide the necessary items for these women to pursue successfully their educational goals. This was a pattern of behavior that would continue throughout the life of the Society. The lending library was revolutionary also in the way it lent its books and materials. Rather than having the student come to it to check out a book, it went to her. Books were sent via US post with the student paying one, two, or three cents per day according to the book's value plus return postage for the book. The lending library was therefore not only effective but self sufficient, able to pay for its own postage and some new volumes through the fees generated. Overall the lending library was

⁶⁶ Ibid., 75 – 76.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 76.

considered a success: “The library has proved very useful, and it has also been pleasant to receive requests from students to purchase books for them, beyond the course they are reading, and requests from their friends for suggestions of books to be purchased as presents for them.”⁶⁸

The remainder of Ticknor’s report as secretary shared words of thanks and insights from students, some thankful for the experiences had and others describing their own methods and appreciation for the habits developed through their work with the Society. Following these words, Ticknor gave her Treasurer’s Report. As would always be the case, the Society operated well within its means drawing in \$164 in subscriptions and spending only \$140.57 over the term for stationery, printing, and postage, a per student cost of just over \$1.71. The low expenditure plus a budget surplus in the previous year left the Society with a balance of \$60.40 to begin its third term.⁶⁹

Each of the correspondents along with the librarian gave individual reports. The librarian’s report, provided by Frances Appleton, consisted of a listing of the new texts added to the Society’s holdings. Katharine Loring gave the History report, along with Appleton who aided her in this division. Of the thirty-one students who enrolled in the course, nine never corresponded and eight gave up studies for various reasons. The remaining fourteen reported regularly of which twelve took the examination with scores ranging from 60% to 98%.⁷⁰ Cora Clarke produced the Science report on the sixteen women who enrolled. The Science course was far more divided than the other courses with six women studying zoology, four physical geography, one geology, one zoology

⁶⁸ Ibid., 77.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 84.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 86.

and geology, and four botany. Eleven of these joined at the beginning of the term and the remainder in the spring. Overall the work was deemed good and the Secretary commented that “The reports sent have, for the most part, been very satisfactory, particularly when it is taken into account that the study of the Natural Sciences, more than any other requires personal intercourse with a teacher who can point out to her pupils the object of study, either in the field, or in a well classified collection of specimens.”⁷¹

Elizabeth Cleveland provided the report for the Art course and the six ladies who enrolled in this study, two of whom were members of the Society the previous year. Three provided excellent work while the remaining did not accomplish much over the term mostly due to illnesses. Three completed the examination with excellent answers and two submitted essays for the annual meeting. Concerning the overall work of the art students, Cleveland noted that “The result on the whole is satisfactory, but the great need is a faithful habit of regular method, which one fears is not often found in young women.”⁷² Johanna Hagan followed with the report from the German Literature Course. The course began with five students and grew to ten of which only six regularly attended to their studies and corresponded. None of them though took the examination.⁷³ Ellen Mason gave the report on the French Literature Course next and the eight students who studied with her. Of these students six either never corresponded or sent only a couple of

⁷¹ Ibid., 88 – 89.

⁷² Ibid., 90 – 91.

⁷³ Ibid., 92 – 93.

reports. One though was labeled exemplary, accomplishing much in her studies over the term.⁷⁴

The final report was given by Ticknor for the English Literature Course. Ticknor added an additional correspondent, Frances Morse, to shoulder the large volume of thirty-nine students who enrolled for the term. Morse (1850 – 1928) was active in the field of social work and in local charities, co-founding the Simmons School of Social Work and participating prominently in the Associated Charities of Boston.⁷⁵ Of the thirty-nine women who enrolled in the English prose section, fourteen either never corresponded or stopped doing so for various reasons, some health, others lack of time, and yet others commitments to another course in the Society. The remaining twenty-five completed the course at least satisfactorily with eight taking the highest rank.⁷⁶ From the twenty-five students who actively corresponded, 143 reports were received for the term. Over the winter a new section was added to the English Literature course, a Study of Shakespeare. Four students engaged in this new study. One completed her work beautifully while two accomplished some and one never reported but also had another course. The course instructions were to read a play three times: the first time to study the plot, the second to study the characters, and the third to develop a critique.⁷⁷ As with the other courses of the Society, the work was rigorous and the expectations were high. The study of

⁷⁴ Ibid., 93.

⁷⁵ Jean Strouse, *Alice James: A Biography* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press), Under “Chapter 5 Bostonians.” Google books.

⁷⁶ Minutes of the Society to Encourage Studies at Home, Chamberlain Collection of Autographs, Ms.Q.Am. 1414 (1), Boston Public Library, 94. Courtesy of the Trustees of the Boston Public Library/Rare Books.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 97 – 98.

Shakespeare was no different as it too was thorough and time consuming for the students who engaged. As in the other courses, students who spread their focus across two or more studies found difficulty in meeting the academic demands, while still maintaining their domestic, familial, and/or social requirements.

With the final correspondent report given, Chairman Eliot introduced the guest speaker for the meeting, Professor William B. Rogers, president of the Boston Institute of Technology. Rogers spoke on the importance of the sciences and the foundational element that mathematics provided to all of the sciences. Following, Eliot closed with remarks to the students, “in which he expressed his personal appreciation of the difficulty of studying, especially if one must study alone, and assured them of the sympathy with which the Committee of this Society follow and watch the efforts made by them to overcome these difficulties.”⁷⁸ The committee recognized the difficulties of studying via correspondence and worked to reduce those difficulties as they could, discussing issues at length in meetings, monitoring progress, and making adjustments. But most importantly, the correspondents with Ticknor as their model developed relationships where possible with the women they corresponded. It was the bond of relationship that provided the strongest link between student and Society. Eliot’s statement of sympathy was a testament to the concern that the committee had for the students with which they corresponded and to whom they drew close.

These first two years of the Society were the formative years. Methods were tested and adjusted, policies made, and innovations included. The first year was

⁷⁸ Ibid., 100 – 102. Rogers submitted the charter to the Massachusetts Legislature that would create the Boston Institute of Technology, as it is referred to here. The institute still exists today under its chartered name, Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

described as a “successful experiment”⁷⁹ and the second “like the first, a continuation of quiet success.”⁸⁰ Experimentation was now over; the experiment was a success and the details of delivering education via correspondence were well in place. Ticknor’s vision for the Society was coming to fruition, an organization which provided a higher education to women without access to colleges and academies around the country. Ticknor had built her ideal organization to be “at once simple and elastic, easy of expansion should numbers increase, and readily adjusted to more varied needs as they might arise in the farther development of her plan.”⁸¹ As the period of experimentation was closing, a new time of testing was about to begin. Ticknor would shortly find out how very flexible, expandable, and adjustable her Society really was.

⁷⁹ Society to Encourage Studies at Home, *Society to Encourage Studies at Home: Found in 1873 by Anna Eliot Ticknor: Born June 1st, 1823, Died October 5th, 1896*. (Cambridge, MA: Riverside Press, 1897), 17.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 20.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 4.

CHAPTER V

THE GROWING YEARS 1875 – 1882

The Society to Encourage Studies at Home was put to bed for the summer of 1875, following a successful second term. But a crucial vote in the spring regarding the publishing of a story on the organization in the *Atlantic Monthly* would awaken a sleeping giant – the desire of women without access to education for whatever reason to study. In September 1875 the first public notice of the work of the Society was published and sent a media wave across the United States and beyond. The brief article in the Education section of the magazine outlined the work of the Society with interspersed commentary. The Society was described as having a desire for

... influencing young ladies in the formation of *habits* of systematic reading. Their object not being to obtain uniform results, but to foster habits which might be of great benefit both to individuals and, in time, to communities, they did not fix upon absolute standards of attainment, but adopted informal methods which have thus far proved exceedingly effective.¹

The article continued with a description of the requirements, cost, courses of study, and general rules for participation. Regarding the quality of the courses the writer states, “So far as we can judge from the printed circular of the society, the lists of books are made out with much care and discretion, no attempt at undue cramming being discoverable in them. The intention is evidently to be modest in attempt and thorough in achievement.”² The details of the required memory notes and abstracts were included with the comment that “indeed it is not easy to overestimate the beneficial results which [notes and

¹ *Atlantic Monthly*, Education (September 1875): 383.

² *Ibid.*

correspondence] may have, when the field of action of the society gets more extended.”³ The words of the author would be prophetic for the field would be extended shortly as a result of the article published, and the system would subsequently be thoroughly tested.

Also included in the article was a brief note regarding the annual meetings held each June. Described as a “reunion of members,”⁴ they recognized the meeting’s purpose of bringing together women to celebrate and support the academic achievements of one another. “In this way the vital element of personal intercourse and mutual encouragement is supplied.”⁵ And of the essays produced by the students which were selected for reading at the annual meetings, the student work was referred to as “all creditable, and some showing uncommon powers of thought and analysis.”⁶ The article was closed with demographic information and a general comment of the effectiveness of such an endeavor.

Of course a system of study by correspondence must be limited in its scope; but we think it is clear that, as organized by this society, it cannot fail of a wide and useful application in quarters into which no other instrument of higher education can penetrate, and a corroboration of this belief would seem to offer itself in the fact to which we called attention last month, in *The Atlantic* [no italics in original], that a somewhat similar plan is now in operation in England. It is too early as yet to make predictions concerning the future of this society, but its beginnings – carried on with commendable reserve and with a noteworthy predominance of action over argument – are such as to lead to the hope that further connections may be formed by it, or other societies called into being by its example.⁷

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid., 384.

Again the vision of the writer is amazing for the advent of a multitude of similar organizations was on the horizon. The news was out regarding Anna Ticknor's beloved Society and the work that it had kept so quiet for two years, and the initial review was a good one.

True to the vote, no addresses were included in this first article covering the Society's works. But, just as the silence of the Society's work was broken, so too would the address of the secretary be revealed. By November of 1875 the demand for additional information was so great upon the *Atlantic Monthly* that a brief follow-up article was required in the Education section.

The notice of the Ladies' Society for the Encouragement of Studies at Home which we printed in the September number of *The Atlantic*, has attracted wide attention in the very quarters where it was most desirable that its information should be received, and we have had the pleasure of answering a large number of communications from women in many States asking for more direct means of obtaining information than had been supplied by our first writing. The ladies who preside over this excellent enterprise have been scrupulous in the avoidance of giving publicity to their names, preferring to work quietly and effectively, and as far as might be out of the region of mere display; so that it seemed desirable, while opening wider opportunities for membership in the society, not to trench upon the privacy which the managers had reserved to themselves. In view, however, of the frequent demands of which we have spoken, we are authorized to say that all who wish to gain further and more particular information may address themselves directly to the Secretary of the Society for Study at Home, 9 Park Street, Boston, Mass.⁸

From this point forward, the Society to Encourage Studies at Home would never be the same. The quietness with which the committee had worked in its first two years was broken with a loud bang for all to hear. And now all women who desired educational opportunity and had been denied access knew where to find it. The Society was not quite prepared for the response it was about to receive and Ticknor's design for flexibility, expandability, and adjustability was to be thoroughly tested.

⁸ *Atlantic Monthly*, Education (November 1875): 640.

The third term of the Society would be the testing grounds. The first regular meeting of the Executive Committee held October 2, 1875, was little different than those of the previous two years. The wave of interest generated by the article published in September had yet to hit the Society, and it appeared that it was business as usual for Ticknor and the correspondents. The minutes were simple, three sentences to sum up the current state of enrollment and the mundane issues of running a correspondence school. Seventy-one students had enrolled of whom fifty-five had paid their subscriptions, and as in the past two years the most populous courses were History and English Literature.⁹ With this covered the meeting adjourned. The numbers for the current year indicated increased enrollment, almost double the same point for the previous year. This was little different from the increase found between term one and term two, which had a fall increase just below 90% while to this point the increase was just over 90%.

By the second regular meeting held November 13 the wave had crashed. If Ticknor's handwriting was any indication, the growth was startling. The usually precise, clean handwriting that relayed the work of the Society in its minutes was almost frantic in the mistakes made and the running together of words. Ticknor opened the minutes stating,

The great & sudden growth of the Society owing first to the interest awakened by the account given in the Atlantic Monthly for September of its plan & operation and next to the wide spread of information by articles in newspapers in different parts of the country, a sequel to the notice in the Atlantic quite unexpected by the Committee, _the growth was the subject of much consideration. The correspondence had become so great as to oblige the Secretary to employ assistance.¹⁰

⁹ Minutes of the Society to Encourage Studies at Home, Chamberlain Collection of Autographs, Ms.Q.Am. 1414 (1), Boston Public Library, 103. Courtesy of the Trustees of the Boston Public Library/Rare Books.

¹⁰ Ibid., 104 – 105.

In the six weeks between meetings, enrollment had grown to 213 students, a 200% increase in just forty-two days. Ticknor reported that the committee discussed “Many cases of peculiar interest” though the details were unwritten, but stated that “a feeling of great zeal and encouragement prevailed.”¹¹ Students had enrolled from around the United States for this third term; twenty-three states, the District of Columbia, and Canada were all represented. History and English Literature remained the favored courses hosting enrollments of eighty-one and eighty-six, respectively. The rest showed increased enrollments as well. Science was up to twenty-nine, Art thirty, German Literature thirteen, and French twelve.¹² The obvious discussion followed as to the needs of the Society under the unexpectedly large increase in students. Printing and aid were the top two needs. Ticknor was authorized to employ an aid and the members of the committee were asked to determine how they could best be supported in their endeavors of correspondence.¹³

The committee was left to ponder these needs but the time would be short for a special meeting would be necessary two weeks later. Called November 27, “This meeting was called expressly to provide force & meet the new demand.”¹⁴ It had become obvious, quite quickly, that the committee was not capable of handling the number of students under its current structure. Adjustments needed to be made and made as quickly as possible. In the two weeks that had passed, three new correspondents had been elected to the committee. The courses of study were now referred to as departments with

¹¹ Ibid., 105.

¹² Ibid., 105 – 106.

¹³ Ibid., 106.

¹⁴ Ibid., 107.

department chairs and each department chair was authorized “in future secure for herself such assistance as she could procure.”¹⁵ Each department head was also given permission to purchase up to \$50 in books for the lending library to benefit her particular subject area. Though the Society had grown exponentially, there would be no limiting of services. The Executive Committee and Ticknor worked to maintain the level of educational quality regardless of the number of students. More students meant more need in terms of materials and that need would be met.

The next regular meeting held January 8, 1876, would see more elections to the Executive Committee including Alice James in History and Ellen Swallows Richards in Science. Alice James (1848 – 1892) was the sister to psychologist William James and noted author Henry James, Jr. She was also a friend to Frances Morse and the close companion of History Department Chair, Katharine Loring. James was an invalid most of her life and had a strong understanding of the want of others like her to find activity in intellectual pursuits.

The addition of Ellen Swallow Richards (1842 – 1911) would prove to be one of the great decisions of the committee. Richards was considered “[t]he most prominent female American chemist of the nineteenth century.”¹⁶ She is considered the mother of home economics and a founder of the sanitation sciences, a subject she would bring to the Society’s course offerings. Richards was a Vassar graduate and the first woman in the United States to be admitted to a scientific school, MIT, from which she earned a second undergraduate degree. Richards stayed with MIT offering free assistance, as well as

¹⁵ Ibid., 107 – 108.

¹⁶ Mary Ellen Bowden, *Chemical Achievers: The Human Face of the Chemical Sciences* (Philadelphia: Chemical Heritage Foundation, 1997), 156.

monetary donations to help establish the Women's Laboratory in 1876. The program lasted until 1883 when MIT opened the doors to women students on an equal basis with men. Richards also led one of the largest water-quality tests in the nation for the state of Massachusetts from 1887 to 1897, the results of which helped develop the first state water-quality standards in the United States and the first modern city water treatment plant. Her greatest love would always be the application of the sciences to developing a healthy home and family.¹⁷ This love would be shared with the women of the Society throughout the rest of its existence. Richards brought two unique characteristics to the Executive Committee. First, she did not have a Harvard association or social connections. She came from a poor, farming family but managed to work and save enough to attend college. At MIT she met and married her husband, Professor of Mining Engineering, Robert Hallowell Richards. Her connections, though academic, were not of Harvard. Second and most important, she was the first correspondent with a college degree - two undergraduate degrees in fact and a graduate degree. To this point none of the correspondents had been formally college educated. All had received the privileged education that came with wealth, access to private tutors, books, and New England intelligentsia. Richards had worked to secure her own college education and had earned the very paper that the women who formed the Society had so desperately desired.

The last item on the agenda for the brief meeting was a new circular. An enlarged edition was called for with the expansion of the Executive Committee and the committee

¹⁷ Ibid.

took care of that issue forthwith.¹⁸ The growth had not crippled the previously small organization but had given it license to improve and broaden its offerings. The design had been as flexible, expandable, and adjustable as Ticknor had hoped.

The remainder of the regular meetings for the year followed much the same pattern as the previous two years. Student numbers were discussed, reports from each of the departments along with discussions of successes and failures were shared, money was allotted for further book purchases, and the annual meeting was planned. However, there were new issues to address, and two other important decisions made by the committee during these regular meetings. The first decision made was to change the ranking of students for the end of the term. In the May 13 regular meeting it was decided to make some changes in the way ranks and certificates would be issued. Rather than three ranks, four would be applied as “exceptionally good,” “good,” “fair,” and “deficient.” Examinations would require a minimum score of 75% for passing and certificates would all be labeled with a note that examinations were conducted via correspondence.¹⁹ The value of examinations and certificates had been questioned in the February 19 regular meeting but kept though there was some expressed uncertainty as to their value, particularly for certificates.²⁰ The Executive Committee was beginning to reexamine their policy on annual examinations and course certificates. The current policy did not support their belief that students did not need to reach a certain point in their studies during a term. As such the Executive Committee began to adjust examination policies to

¹⁸ Minutes of the Society to Encourage Studies at Home, Chamberlain Collection of Autographs, Ms.Q.Am. 1414 (1), Boston Public Library, 110. Courtesy of the Trustees of the Boston Public Library/Rare Books.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 123.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 114.

support learning tailored to the learning pace of the student and reflected a value in quality academic progress over mediocre educational quantity.

The second decision was an interesting one given the recent boom in student population. The previous year the committee had discussed encouraging the development of organizations in other locations that would carry on the work of the Society as a separate entity yet still be attached to the parent organization in Boston. Ticknor continued to explore this possibility in the midst of the chaos of the third term. Though the development of new local organizations would enlist new correspondents to help with the glut of students that had materialized, it also ran the risk of increasing the volume of students and complicated the simple structure of the current organization by adding a level of hierarchy to the structure. Nonetheless, Ticknor recruited volunteers in New York for a first organization and reported to the committee her findings at the February regular meeting. There was interest in the new organization, but it was decided not to make it a separate group. "It seemed to them however more practicable to induce individual ladies to join our Boston Committee & work through our present organization, at least for the time, than to create a complete working Society with an independent system."²¹ By the May meeting Ticknor had a list of names from New York ready to be added as correspondents for the work of the Society who were unanimously elected,²² thus creating the first branch of the Society to Encourage Studies at Home.

Anna Ticknor would celebrate her 53rd birthday at the Third Annual Meeting of the Society to Encourage Studies at Home on June 1, 1876. Anticipating a large turnout, the meeting format was altered from previous years. It was recognized in the April 1

²¹ Ibid., 115.

²² Ibid., 122.

regular meeting that the annual meeting was likely to be significantly larger than in the previous two years with approximately 150 students living reasonably close to Boston.²³ Gone were the tours, educational events, and lunch in the homes of the committee as in the past. A thirty-minute social for the women members, students, correspondents, and committee members, would be held in the Ticknor home beginning at 11:00 am followed by reports from each of the department heads on the work of the Society. At 3:00 pm the formal meeting would begin with the addition of Samuel Eliot, presiding as chairman, and invited guests. The formal meeting would consist of remarks from the chairman, a guest presentation, and the secretary's report only. The informal portion of the meeting opened with seventy-one women in attendance of whom eleven were on the Executive Committee. The women who attended primarily came from the New England area though one from Washington, D.C. would make the trip to Boston. Five of the women had attended each of the annual meetings from the first and five others since the second.²⁴ Once a time of meeting one another had drawn to a close, Ticknor addressed the women, sharing some of the history of the Society and its development. Reports from each of the department heads followed. Each department head shared information on the students enrolled, course materials and methods used, progress made, and ranks earned. Though no formal field trip had been planned as part of the annual meeting, Charles Perkins had offered to admit a few of the women to see the newly opened Boston Museum of Art. Those who had traveled the furthest and those enrolled in Art were given preference in

²³ Ibid., 117.

²⁴ Ibid., 126 – 129.

admittance. Not all of the women in attendance could be accommodated though. For those unable to tour the museum, essays submitted by students in the Society were read.²⁵

When time for the formal meeting arrived at 3:00 pm, twenty-five were added to the number including guests and the chairman for a grand total of ninety-six people in attendance at No. 9 Park Street. Eliot opened the meeting and read the Secretary's Report. By term's end 298 students had been added to the roster for the Society of whom 67% had persevered in their selected studies. The great increase in students was handled with zeal by the committee who received more than 1300 reports to be read and responded to. This did not include all of the other correspondence that was received which amounted to between 1700 and 1800 letters for the students' work. These numbers did not include any of the correspondence handled by the Secretary.²⁶ The approximately 3000 letters and reports handled in the process of education were handled by volunteers who received payment only in the form of satisfaction for sharing knowledge with someone without appropriate access to it. The report continued relaying information on the examinations and certificates offered through the Society. Standards were high and this term forty-six students had attempted the examinations and thirty-three were awarded certificates based upon their performance.²⁷ In order to better understand the factors that influenced success in the Society, Ticknor had begun to collect data regarding study habits and shared the results in her report. One hundred students reported their efforts and for those who were very successful and accomplished much, approximately eight hours per week was necessary to study appropriately for a

²⁵ Ibid., 147.

²⁶ Ibid., 150 – 151.

²⁷ Ibid., 152.

course. Studying four hours per week allowed students to perform well.²⁸ The one thing that the committee felt helped most in supporting successful learning was the system of memory notes. This one time experiment in education had now become an efficient learning tool when combined with monthly correspondence. The general process of correspondence was described as successful as it enabled the Society “to reach many secluded spots” and increased the resources and interests of many homes.²⁹ Ticknor states that

A pleasant part of this effort produced is that an influence goes out from the Students themselves.... These influences, exercised in the midst of domestic duties, accord with our real ambition for our object is not to lead women out of homes, but to make them happier & more useful in them, & we pursue this object because we feel that our own best happiness & that of other women, is to be found at home.³⁰

The Society continued to support the idea of educating women for the support of the home. The education offered was not that of a vocational nature but rather a liberal education which was in accordance with this ideal of education for domestic tranquility. But it is interesting in that many of the women they would educate would find liberation through their educational opportunities in the Society.

Following the report, two more student essays were read to the guests and members of the Society. Eliot then introduced Lucretia Hale of the Boston School Committee as the first guest speaker followed by Alpheus Hyatt of the Boston Society of Natural History. Eliot then closed the meeting with his own remarks and the distribution

²⁸ Ibid., 153.

²⁹ Ibid., 157.

³⁰ Ibid., 160.

of certificates.³¹ This would be the new format for annual meetings and for the most part there would be little deviation for the remainder of the Society's existence.

The next six years of the Society proceeded in much the same way as this, each showing remarkable growth in students and accordingly correspondents, adjustments in the structure of the Society to fit student and Executive Committee member needs, and experiments in education for women and, as will be seen, men. The fourth term would begin with the first of the necessary adjustments, a change in the administrative structure. From a called special meeting in September throughout the rest of the meetings of the term, the organizational structure was examined and reconfigured. The bylaws of the Society for the first three years had been simple, providing for an executive committee made up of a secretary/treasurer, chairman, and correspondents, plus a few extra women with a desire to facilitate educational opportunities for women. With the rapid growth of the Society, a rapid growth in the number of correspondents was necessary to accommodate the need. Each correspondent had to be elected into the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee was quickly becoming too large to effectively manage the work of the Society, thus hampering Ticknor's goal to keep the Society adjustable and flexible. The growth was expected to continue which predicted a continued need for growth in the Executive Committee should adjustments not be made quickly.

A special meeting was called September 21, 1876, with the rationale, "This meeting was called for the adoption of some further adjustments, made necessary by the

³¹ Ibid., 162.

probable increase of members in the coming term.”³² It took the full term tinkering, adjusting, discussing, and voting to restructure. By the final regular meeting on May 15, 1877, the new structure and new bylaws for the Society were approved. There were six established rules for the administration of the Society to Encourage Studies at Home:

1. The Society would consist of an administrative committee, associate correspondents, and students.
2. The Executive Committee would consist of a chair, secretary, treasurer, librarians and one head from each department of study. Others “willing to undertake and continue monthly correspondence, with at least twenty students, under the supervision of the Heads of Departments, to whom such members of the committee will hold themselves responsible” along with the Executive Committee members would make up the General Committee and would provide the pool from which Executive Committee members would be chosen.³³
3. General Committee meetings would be held the second Saturday of October, January, and April, plus the Saturday prior to the annual meetings. Annual meetings would always be held the first Thursday in June at which the Executive Committee for the following term would be voted upon. At any general meeting, new members of the General Committee could be elected by unanimous vote.³⁴

³² Minutes of the Society to Encourage Studies at Home, Chamberlain Collection of Autographs, Ms.Q.Am. 1414 (2), Boston Public Library, 2. Courtesy of the Trustees of the Boston Public Library/Rare Books.

³³ *Ibid.*, 48 – 49.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 49 – 50. Though the bylaws stated that the Executive Committee would be elected at the annual meeting, in practice the election would be held at the last General Committee meeting of each term.

4. Associate correspondents would be chosen by department heads and approved by the Executive Committee to support the work of the department. Associate correspondents could attend all General Committee meetings but had no vote in the proceedings.³⁵
5. For enrollment in the Society, students would have to meet the requirements as printed in the circular.
6. The Executive Committee could create “special rules and regulations” for the Society but must seek approval for such from the General Committee.³⁶

With these six simple rules, the Society streamlined its governmental structure. The Executive Committee became the primary leadership of the Society, making the rules and regulations but still kept in check by the General Committee. The development of the General Committee allowed the continued election of correspondents into the administrative structure of the Society while creating a body that would not be so bogged down by its own size. It also maintained the voice of those who were in direct relationships with students in the decisions of the Society. A department head system was created to provide skill specific leadership to each of the areas of study and control over correspondents was relinquished to them, lightening the load on the secretary to recruit and examine worthy correspondents. The creation of the Associate Correspondent allowed the Society to recruit new correspondents quickly and efficiently and provided an avenue for testing the abilities of a new addition before election to the General Committee. The structure was reminiscent of other educational institutions of the time

³⁵ Ibid., 50.

³⁶ Ibid., 51.

with a governing board and faculty. What remained exceptional was the power given to the faculty body in approving the work of the governing board prior to implementation.

Though not approved until the final meeting of the term, many of these adjustments to the structure were put in place earlier, particularly the department head structure. In the Special called meeting in September, heads of departments were appointed, Katharine Loring to history, Ellen Richards to Science, Elizabeth Cleveland to Art, Johanna Hagan to German, Ellen Mason to French, and Frances Morse to English Literature.³⁷ Loring, Cleveland, and Mason had been with the Society since its inception and continued to provide leadership for their particular areas. Richards had only recently joined and was now taking the reins of science from Cora Clarke, a decision that would have tremendous positive impact upon the Society. Hagan had come in for the second term and Morse had been brought in to assist Ticknor with the volume of students in English Literature and now took her place as the lead. Ticknor had given up her leadership in the English Literature section but not her leadership in the Society. The growth had placed much demand upon her as secretary and treasurer and her administrative skill was best suited to these roles in the Society. However, she never ended her correspondence with students.

In the fourth term the other feature of the work of the committees was the further development of branches of the Society. The first Special Meeting announced the advent of a second branch in the South, Louisiana.

Miss Annie Porter of Franklin, St Mary's Parish, Louisiana, having become much interested in the plan and operation of the Society desired very much to introduce among the girls of her neighborhood, but expressed a doubt of the possibility of

³⁷ Ibid., 2.

inducing them to attempt reading works of so solid & advanced a character as those in the printed circular.³⁸

Obstacles to participation included lack of access to books and lack of funds to purchase the needed texts. Other suggested modifications by Porter included reduction of the age of entrance to something below seventeen and a reduced term year due to the climate. As a result of her enthusiasm and desire to share the work of the Society with those around her,

The Secretary, having talked much on the subject with Miss Porter, proposed to the Committee to appoint Miss Porter their agent for Louisiana, & allow her to prepare a Circular with rules & such as she should consider best adapted to the wants of her region, and to encourage her by the promise of supplies of books of the kinds she should desire, on special lists prepared by herself.³⁹

This new branch was similar to the New York branch established in the previous year in that it had its own correspondent and library, and its work was centered away from Boston. It was very different in that it was allowed to develop its own requirements, curriculum, and circular to meet the particular needs of the women in the area in which it was circulated. It was also different in that a single person was appointed agent and correspondent as opposed to the committee of correspondents that would manage the New York branch. This would be the only such branch the Society would support, but it would not be the last branch the organization would develop.

Also during the fall yet another branch organization was begun in California. As Ticknor reported, “Fees were sent from California, while the time consumed in asking questions and receiving an answer, seemed to make an attempt to instruct by

³⁸ Ibid., 5 – 6. The Porter family owned Oak Lawn Manor Plantation, which today still stands and serves as the home of former governor of Louisiana, Mike Foster. This plantation would be the site of this branch of the Society during its existence.

³⁹ Ibid., 7.

correspondence, nearly absurd.”⁴⁰ Beginning in December a group of seven associate correspondents were recruited to handle correspondence on the west coast. Like New York and Louisiana, a library for that area was in the works.

These were the only separate organizations to be established. There were, however, some other locations where affiliates were investigated. At the first regular meeting held October 28, 1876, the Society received a request from a group of women in Schenectady, New York, desiring to start an affiliated organization. The decision made at first was to admit the women in the usual manner⁴¹ but by the third regular meeting on January 20, 1877, seven women from the group had been admitted as some of the earliest associate correspondents. This group had decided to study as students in the current term to learn the rules and methods of the Society before engaging in the work of the correspondent.⁴² This would become the pattern for admitting correspondents hereafter, first a time as an associate and then the election into the committee as a full correspondent. This would also become the process for admitting affiliated organizations which had no members acquainted with the work of the Society. A second request for an affiliated organization came from Philadelphia and was addressed at the February 21, 1877, meeting of the Executive Committee. The committee decided to ask the interested women to join as the Schenectady group had and study as associate correspondents in the preparation for becoming correspondents and developing a branch organization.⁴³ These women would later begin this process as did the Schenectady women.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 80.

⁴¹ Ibid., 11.

⁴² Ibid., 21.

⁴³ Ibid., 32 – 33.

Ticknor and the committee were very proud of the expansion of the Society through the branch organizations. The work of the branches was well monitored and supported. Each regular meeting included a report of the work of each and for the New York branch, regular visits from Ticknor at their committee meetings. Just as Ticknor sought to build a relationship between correspondent and student across the miles, she also built a relationship with the outposts of the Society and the Boston hub. Maintaining connection was an important component of the work to be accomplished. These outposts also furthered the work of relationship between correspondent and students by quickening response times and providing better access to books in the students' home areas.

Ticknor's work and the work of the Society was rapidly becoming known and respected on a different level. Ticknor began receiving letters from other women advocating for higher educational opportunities for women. She was invited to participate in an organization "for centralizing all efforts for the higher education of women in this country, and for establishing communication among all persons & associations interested in the subject."⁴⁴ No motion was entertained by the Society regarding this request and no information was given on Ticknor's decision to participate. It is likely, however, that she declined the request based upon another declined invitation later that term. In January 1877, Ticknor received a request from Ednah Dow Cheney to speak at the New England Woman's Club from their Committee on Education. She was asked to speak "in regard to the excellent work in which you are engaged."⁴⁵ Ticknor

⁴⁴ Ibid., 15 – 16.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 25 – 26.

informed the Society that she had declined since speaking at such an engagement was “attempting something which is not at all adapted to my inclination or abilities”⁴⁶ - an interesting statement made for a woman who ran as large an educational venture as she did and conducted every meeting of its committees over its twenty-four-year history. Again Ticknor elected to keep the Society out of the public eye, as well as herself, choosing instead to let the work of the Society be its chief advertiser.

At the Fourth Annual Meeting there was much to celebrate in the work of the term. The numbers were up again with 576 students enrolled over the term, nearly double the previous term, and a corresponding persistence rate of 73%. Of these 122 were returning for a second term, nine for a second, and three for a third.⁴⁷ This is what Ticknor deemed evidence of good works by the Society. With such a large group of students, the annual meeting format was tweaked slightly, holding a social meeting with department reports at 11:00 am and the formal meeting at 12:30 pm. This time there would be no breaks and no educational event to accompany the meetings. Even though large numbers were expected and the format modified, the meeting was still held at the Ticknor residence. For the early meeting sixty-eight women attended to meet and hear the reports and essays of the Society they so loved, arriving from as far away as Michigan and South Carolina. Another twenty-five dignitaries along with the chairman were added for the formal meeting bringing the total number of guests in the Ticknor home to ninety-three.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 26.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 71.

Ticknor's report as secretary began by discussing the necessary changes in administration stating, "The extremely rapid expansion of our field, has not only required increased work in familiar routine, but new adaptation of means.... Old methods of study have been continued, but new methods of administration have been needed, and a clearer policy for the future."⁴⁸ The committees had been restructured but the methods of memory notes and monthly reports via correspondence were preserved for their effectiveness in teaching across distances. The Society did however vote to remove annual exams and certificates beginning in the next term as these were considered unsupportive of their work. The Society also added a new topic to the Science department for the next term, Astronomy. Ticknor reported that though this had been added, "It is, however, the purpose of the Committee to be very cautious in adding to the variety of subjects offered."⁴⁹ This statement referred to Samuel Eliot's comments during the discussion of adding Astronomy and a music course to the offerings. Eliot's position was that "the tendency in all forms of education in this country, especially in the education of women, is to include too many subjects & that he greatly desired to avoid this danger in our own plans."⁵⁰ His words were heeded somewhat in that only the astronomy course was added at least for this term. Ticknor's report also shared the news of the branch organizations that had or were developing. She opened this section of the report with "[a] very interesting movement was also begun at the September meeting

⁴⁸ Ibid., 70.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 82 – 83.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 40.

which promises admirable results.”⁵¹ Each of the organizations was heralded for hard work and success.

As always the annual statistics were given in the report. Students from thirty-five states and territories entered into study for the term with sixty-seven known to be teachers. The favored courses were as usual English Literature with 211 students and History with 208. But Science enrollment was on the rise with 108 students for the term. The 576 students who corresponded produced more than 3,500 letters and another 450 exams and abstracts, excluding requests to the librarians. Ticknor as secretary received approximately 3,100 letters which she made sure were answered appropriately. The Society now supported three libraries, the main in Boston and then one in New York and one in Louisiana, and a fourth in San Francisco was on the drawing board. The main Boston library combined with the New York library held 287 volumes which were loaned frequently via the post office and returned with little damage.⁵² The association of clubs with the Society was continuing to grow as well.⁵³ Unfortunately, no real details regarding numbers were provided in the report. It was Ticknor’s and the Society’s tendency to focus on the individual rather than the clubs, a flaw that would affect the numbers reported overall and render impossible the calculation of the real number of students reached each term by the Society. Closing remarks by Eliot and return guest speaker and MIT president William Rogers closed the fourth term of the Society.

The good works of the Society were confirmed by an article which ran in the *New York Times* that summer entitled “An Invisible University for Women.” The article

⁵¹ Ibid., 79.

⁵² Ibid., 73 – 76.

⁵³ Ibid., 87 – 88.

praises the Society saying, “[I]t has already shown that such a disembodied university was both needed and could be carried into practical operation,” declaring it the “least expensive university in existence.”⁵⁴ The Society is further described as one which introduces young women to cultural studies and “enlarges a girl’s horizon without changing her sphere.”⁵⁵ The “Invisible University” continued its quiet work under the guise of expanding women’s education without changing her domestic world over the next five years, increasing overall during this period. The most dramatic increase in enrollment occurred in the fifth term as 899 students enrolled for the 1877 to 1878 academic year,⁵⁶ representing more than 50% increase in enrollment for the year. The sixth and seventh terms showed slightly lower enrollments with 869⁵⁷ and 887⁵⁸ students, respectively. This may have been a reflection of the advent of correspondence education opportunities through other organizations that had been made available, likely inspired by reports of the Society’s work in newspapers and magazines across the country. Interestingly, the numbers of students who persisted in their studies for these years were higher than that of the fifth term. In the fifth term only 653 completed their course work while in the sixth 686 (79%) and seventh 679 (76.5%) students persisted. The eighth and

⁵⁴ “An Invisible University for Women,” *New York Times*, June 11, 1877.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶ Society to Encourage Studies at Home, *Fifth Annual Report* (Boston: Rockwell & Churchill, 1878), 5.

⁵⁷ Society to Encourage Studies at Home, *Sixth Annual Report* (Boston: Rockwell & Churchill, 1879), 4.

⁵⁸ Society to Encourage Studies at Home, *Seventh Annual Report* (Boston: Rockwell & Churchill, 1880), 4.

ninth terms showed the growth to which the Society had become accustomed with 960⁵⁹ and 988⁶⁰ students, accordingly. Each term had 732 students who completed their work for the season resulting in persistence rates of approximately 76% for the eighth and 74% for the ninth term.

Annual Meeting attendance grew as a result of this increase in students which would precipitate a more streamlined annual report and meeting. The greatly detailed, handwritten report in the minutes of the Society gave way to a printed summary, and the meetings were continued in their condensed form to expedite the proceedings for the large group that assembled, a group that numbered nearly 250 for the Seventh Annual Meeting.⁶¹ Though the large attendance at the annual meeting spawned discussion regarding a larger venue with the Executive Committee of the Society, the decision was made to keep the meeting in the Ticknor home. “[T]he prevailing opinion was, that the character of the meeting would be so much changed by its removal from a private house, that such a change was very undesirable.”⁶² The annual meetings regardless of size and cramped quarters continued to solicit some of the great minds of Boston for speakers. These years heard several Harvard professors, Frances Child and Elwood Byerly, Harvard president Charles Eliot, MIT professor William Niles, and Harvard Annex founder Arthur Gilman.

⁵⁹ Society to Encourage Studies at Home, *Eighth Annual Report* (Boston: Rockwell & Churchill, 1881), 5.

⁶⁰ Society to Encourage Studies at Home, *Ninth Annual Report* (Boston: Rockwell & Churchill, 1882), 5.

⁶¹ Society to Encourage Studies at Home, *Seventh Annual Report* (Boston: Rockwell & Churchill, 1880), 3.

⁶² Minutes of the Society to Encourage Studies at Home, Chamberlain Collection of Autographs, Ms.Q.Am. 1414 (2), Boston Public Library, 153. Courtesy of the Trustees of the Boston Public Library/Rare Books.

The general format of the work of the Society during the term did not change much over the growing years. Fine tuning was necessary but the major overhauls were completed with the aforementioned revising of the bylaws. The Executive Committee handled the majority of the work of the Society, meeting at least monthly and making recommendations to the larger General Committee, which met quarterly, for approval. The chairman's presence in these meetings was infrequent, counted mostly for the general meetings. Anna Ticknor, who never missed a meeting of any type in her lifetime, was the person acting as the chairman in the meetings. The general work of the Executive Committee consisted mostly of the same acts as before, adjusting the circular, allocating funds, approving associates and new correspondents. The difference became the required approval from the larger General Committee.

Four noteworthy changes were made in the Executive and General Committees during this time period. First, more sections were added to the various departments. Despite the admonishment of Eliot in expanding course offerings, expansion continued. All of the departments were sectioned in the fifth term into areas of study except for French and German,⁶³ and from this point forward, more topics of study were added. In May 1878, Ellen Richards requested that a course in Mathematics be added to the Science section in order to support the newly added Astronomy course.⁶⁴ By term's end the course was on the circular for the following year. In October of the following term Richards again began developing another new section in the Science division, this one in Hygiene. In the General Committee meeting held that month she outlined plans for this

⁶³ Ibid., 139.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 135.

new course which was added to the Society's available courses of study.⁶⁵ In the November 27, 1880, meeting of the Executive Committee, Richards returned with a request to add a section of study on prehistoric man which Katharine Loring hailed as a wonderful connection between the sciences and history.⁶⁶ This too was added to the list of course offerings. Ticknor created the Society to be responsive to student needs and led it to be flexible in meeting identified needs, particularly in terms of areas of study. Expansion of offerings was, therefore, a necessity and continued throughout the Society's existence in all sections.

Second, the Society continued to struggle with first year students enrolling in more courses than could be successfully handled and adjusted Society policy to correct this issue. This became a key topic of discussion during the eighth term. The Executive Committee in discussions regarding first year student success developed a recommendation to restrict such students to a one course enrollment. Historically, those who enrolled in multiple courses struggled to be successful in all, an issue particularly true of first year students. In the Executive Committee meeting of April 30, 1881, the recommendation for allowing new students to enroll in only one course until methods and workload were understood was formally made and sent to the General Committee for approval.⁶⁷ The next General Committee meeting was held May 28, 1881 and at that time the following new bylaw was passed: "Students on first entering shall not be allowed to take up more than one subject of study; but after a time, when familiar with

⁶⁵ Ibid., 228.

⁶⁶ Minutes of the Society to Encourage Studies at Home, Chamberlain Collection of Autographs, Ms.Q.Am. 1414 (4), Boston Public Library. Courtesy of the Trustees of the Boston Public Library/Rare Books.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

our methods, they may, if their correspondent approves, take up a second subject without additional payment.”⁶⁸ Ticknor and the committees remained ever concerned with the success of the student. Never were numbers a measure of success, rather success rates were measured and examined as a sign of effective work within the Society.

Third, the lending library underwent renovations during this time frame. Books were growing in number, and circulation increased with student enrollment. The Society actively supported four libraries as of the fifth term in California, Louisiana, New York, and Boston which served as the main library. These libraries began to circulate not only books but also specimens for science and portfolios for art. A collection of rocks and minerals was received from chemistry professor Albert Foote in Philadelphia and a shell collection was given by former correspondent and Science Department Head, Cora Clarke. Each collection circulated to the women who studied for hands-on observation and practice in identification.⁶⁹ The Art course used its library allotment to purchase portfolios and photos of works to circulate among the women of its section for support in their studies as well.⁷⁰ The circulation of the many books and now other collections was becoming more difficult to manage and support with the four locations. In addition, “California did not seem to thrive.”⁷¹ And, the Louisiana branch was a small but demanding group in terms of library needs. Discussions towards the end of the sixth term

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Minutes of the Society to Encourage Studies at Home, Chamberlain Collection of Autographs, Ms.Q.Am. 1414 (2), Boston Public Library, 169 & 210. Courtesy of the Trustees of the Boston Public Library/Rare Books.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 176.

⁷¹ Minutes of the Society to Encourage Studies at Home, Chamberlain Collection of Autographs, Ms.Q.Am. 1414 (3), Boston Public Library, 20. Courtesy of the Trustees of the Boston Public Library/Rare Books.

began to turn towards consolidation of the library and its services. In April 1879, the Executive Committee recommended to consolidate the Boston, New York and Louisiana libraries into one central location in Boston.⁷² Though the libraries were moved, the work of the correspondents and associates in those areas continued. As for the struggling branch in California, “The Society is about to try a new departure on the Pacific by furnishing lighter & more entertaining reading, still instructive.”⁷³ Though the numbers grew slightly on the West Coast over the subsequent years, the growth was not enough to maintain the library and by the first meeting in the ninth term of the Executive Committee on October 8, 1881, the California library was also merged with the Boston library.⁷⁴

Other changes to the library came in the way of policies. The lending library was opened to all staff for use at no cost during the fifth term.⁷⁵ Continued learning by all members of the Society was valued and highly encouraged. Opening the lending library to these women scattered countrywide provided access for their development, as well as improvement of the quality of correspondence for students. In addition to this change, the lending library also granted greater access to its holdings for students. Up until the summer between the seventh and eighth terms all borrowing was restricted to books from the area of study, specifically approved by the correspondent. During the seventh term

⁷² *Ibid.*, 37.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 97.

⁷⁴ Minutes of the Society to Encourage Studies at Home, Chamberlain Collection of Autographs, Ms.Q.Am. 1414 (4), Boston Public Library. Courtesy of the Trustees of the Boston Public Library/Rare Books. It was worth noting that the approximate time to travel from the East Coast to the West Coast via train, as the mail did, took approximately a week.

⁷⁵ Minutes of the Society to Encourage Studies at Home, Chamberlain Collection of Autographs, Ms.Q.Am. 1414 (2), Boston Public Library, 127. Courtesy of the Trustees of the Boston Public Library/Rare Books.

the Executive Committee began discussing the possibility of allowing students who had been members for a number of terms to have full library access.⁷⁶ On March 27, 1880, the Executive Committee recommended that an auxiliary section be added for library use on an experimental basis. This section would be limited only to students who had completed at least two terms of study. For students still enrolled, the cost of the section would be an additional \$1. For former students who wished to be reading members only, the cost would be a flat rate of \$3.⁷⁷ Lending and shipping costs still applied for both types of students but access was given to choose books from whatever area interested the student. Eliot had concerns about this new plan regarding increased workload and lack of serious study which he expressed in the following committee meeting via note. His objections were noted but the vote was to continue as planned and the new rules for the lending library were adopted.⁷⁸

The last major change to the lending library was in the cost of borrowing books. During the eighth term this became the topic of discussion regarding the library. There were many donations for books and of books and other materials, and the library fees provided more than necessary to cover expenses and generate funds for new books. At the April 30, 1881, Executive Committee meeting it was decided to reduce the cost of borrowing a book to a half cent per day, plus the cost of shipping the book back to the library. All of these changes were well received by the students of the Society, as well as the correspondents and associates. By the end of the ninth term, the lending library

⁷⁶ Minutes of the Society to Encourage Studies at Home, Chamberlain Collection of Autographs, Ms.Q.Am. 1414 (3), Boston Public Library, 191. Courtesy of the Trustees of the Boston Public Library/Rare Books.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 193 – 195.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 203.

housed a collection of 1,308 books and boasted a circulation of 1,232 volumes for the year.⁷⁹

Lastly, with the growth of the students had come the natural growth of the number of correspondents and associates who worked with the courses. By the ninth term, the Society counted 184 women on staff, including correspondents and associates, all volunteers.⁸⁰ The growth was critical as it was the desire of the Society to provide each student “the same amount of attention that each did in the days of our small beginnings.”⁸¹ Although associates had no vote in matters of the Society, correspondents were members of the General Committee and formed the approving mechanism of the Society. The restructuring of the administrative component of the Society had improved the efficiency with which the work was carried out. The General Committee continued to grow with student growth as more and more associates were elected to the General Committee. The bulkiness in administration that the reorganization had sought to quell had returned. In the ninth term, the Executive Committee began to discuss the issue with the size of the General Committee. Discussions continued through the meetings of the second half of the term until the Executive Committee meeting of March 25, 1882, in which the recommendation was made to restrict the size of the General Committee to fifty, ten who made up the Executive Committee and the remainder correspondents duly

⁷⁹ Society to Encourage Studies at Home, *Ninth Annual Report* (Boston: Rockwell & Churchill, 1882), 9.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 5.

⁸¹ Minutes of the Society to Encourage Studies at Home, Chamberlain Collection of Autographs, Ms.Q.Am. 1414 (2), Boston Public Library, 196. Courtesy of the Trustees of the Boston Public Library/Rare Books.

elected to the committee.⁸² The General Committee meeting held May 27 that year took up this issue and approved the limited size of the governing body.⁸³

To the changes in the inner workings of the Society to Encourage Studies at Home came a couple of additional advancements. The first was the development of two publications, one on best practices for correspondence education and the other on best practices for health. It was Ticknor's idea to develop a handbook for correspondents and associates, an idea she shared with the Executive Committee in January 1878.⁸⁴ Such a handbook would provide instruction for the growing number of correspondents and associates and create uniformity in instruction. The idea was well received, and Ticknor was authorized to develop such an instructional volume. The announcement of the new handbook was made to the General Committee on April 13 adding an additional benefit: "The Secretary is about to prepare a Handbook for the use of all engaged in the instruction, which will contain all documents & lists needed in the general presentation of their work, diminishing the amount of correspondence with the Department Heads."⁸⁵ By the beginning of the next term, the handbook had been written by Ticknor, printed, and distributed to all who were involved in correspondence.⁸⁶ By the second meeting of the Executive Committee for that sixth term, the news of the handbook had spread and

⁸² Minutes of the Society to Encourage Studies at Home, Chamberlain Collection of Autographs, Ms.Q.Am. 1414 (4), Boston Public Library. Courtesy of the Trustees of the Boston Public Library/Rare Books.

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Minutes of the Society to Encourage Studies at Home, Chamberlain Collection of Autographs, Ms.Q.Am. 1414 (2), Boston Public Library, 134 – 137. Courtesy of the Trustees of the Boston Public Library/Rare Books.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 146.

⁸⁶ Ibid., 227.

requests were arriving for copies outside of the Society. In discussions it was decided that the Society needed to protect this information and the vote was to restrict the handbook to correspondents and associates only. The one exception would be to supply one copy to the Commission on Education in the Department of the Interior, in Washington, D.C.⁸⁷ Even the federal government had taken notice of and interest in the work of Ticknor and the Society. But not all public entities would receive such an exception. The Boston Public Library which had a personal connection to Ticknor requested papers and information on the Society for its own collections. The response? “It was agreed to send to the Boston Public Library (on request) all the papers which would show the workings and history of the Society with the one exception of the Handbook.”⁸⁸ The Society attempted to protect at least from general dissemination the details of its correspondence work as well as the women who participated in it. This is likely due to the proliferation of similar correspondence organizations that borrowed the methods of the Society and a need for discretion. In a special called meeting of the Executive Committee held December 13, 1879, Ticknor and the Executive Committee voted to deny a request from the Indiana School for Home Study for a copy of the handbook with the following statement, “The decision arrived at, was, that, in view of the past that already our rules & directions have been too closely copied without acknowledgement, & that our Handbook contains not only all the details of our work but the names of our associates which are nowhere else printed, some protection seems

⁸⁷ Ibid., 231.

⁸⁸ Ibid., 232.

desirable....”⁸⁹ The handbook would remain a fixture of the Society, continually updated with changes to sections, bylaws, reading lists, and correspondents and associates, and was considered a “valuable auxiliary” to the work of the Society.⁹⁰

In the same meeting that initiated the handbook, a second conversation arose regarding the poor health of many of the students enrolled in the Society. Led by Katharine Loring, a discussion regarding the creation of a reading list on the topics of “Physiology & Health” for students with the possibility of further study through the Science course was held. Ellen Richards was asked to take charge of creating an appropriate reading list for students as this was the area of her greatest passion.⁹¹ Following the announcement of the new handbook in the general meeting of April 13, 1878, came the announcement of this new area of concern and potential instruction.

The subject of imparting some instruction in Physiology & Hygiene having been discussed, in the Executive Committee, a suggestion had been made which would probably be developed & acted on, namely, that every student, joining for the next Term, should receive, at the beginning of the season, a printed list of books on these subjects, with a request that she read them, &, if desirous of further opportunities, should apply to Mrs. Richards.⁹²

By the first general meeting of the sixth and following term held on October 17, 1878, the reading list had become a pamphlet which would be distributed gratis to all students who

⁸⁹ Minutes of the Society to Encourage Studies at Home, Chamberlain Collection of Autographs, Ms.Q.Am. 1414 (3), Boston Public Library, 156. Courtesy of the Trustees of the Boston Public Library/Rare Books.

⁹⁰ Ibid., 119. The handbook is not a part of the collection of items available from the Boston Public Library or any other known collection. Along with the handbook, there are also files and the “Secretary’s big book” that are mentioned in the Society minutes but to date these items’ whereabouts are unknown.

⁹¹ Minutes of the Society to Encourage Studies at Home, Chamberlain Collection of Autographs, Ms.Q.Am. 1414 (2), Boston Public Library, 139. Courtesy of the Trustees of the Boston Public Library/Rare Books.

⁹² Ibid., 146 – 147.

enrolled in the Society.⁹³ The resulting publication was *Health*. The scant twenty-five page tract was published in the fall of 1878. At the Sixth Annual Meeting on June 5, 1879, its creation was described.

...finally the Head of the Science Department and the Secretary assumed the undertaking experimentally. When, at last, a manuscript had been prepared, and submitted to various critics, it was offered for the examination of two of the highest authorities on the subject in this Commonwealth, and, being approved by them, was sent out to the students and staff by free distribution.⁹⁴

Ticknor and Richards' pamphlet was divided into three topics, the body, the mind, and the home. Recommendations for each of these were given for building a healthy person and family.⁹⁵ By the end of the term more than 1000 copies had been distributed to students and more than 1,100 had been sold to others outside of the Society,⁹⁶ including the Women's Education Association who had purchased 200.⁹⁷ As with the handbook, *Health* was continuously revised and reprinted over the remainder of the Society's existence. The care and concern Ticknor and the Society demonstrated for their students and women everywhere was evident. *Health* also gave insight into the theory that education was a whole person experience, intertwined in the mind, body, and environment. For the Society one of the best practices in education was to support the

⁹³ Ibid., 227.

⁹⁴ Minutes of the Society to Encourage Studies at Home, Chamberlain Collection of Autographs, Ms.Q.Am. 1414 (3), Boston Public Library, 117. Courtesy of the Trustees of the Boston Public Library/Rare Books.

⁹⁵ See Society to Encourage Studies at Home, *Health*, 5th ed. (Boston: Rockwell & Churchill, 1894).

⁹⁶ Minutes of the Society to Encourage Studies at Home, Chamberlain Collection of Autographs, Ms.Q.Am. 1414 (3), Boston Public Library, 118. Courtesy of the Trustees of the Boston Public Library/Rare Books.

⁹⁷ Ibid., 31.

woman student not just intellectually but also physically in a healthy body and a healthy home.

The second advancement was the development of a second society, the Young Men's Society for Home Study.

Miss Ticknor had constant applications from young men asking to join the Society, which she was obliged reluctantly to refuse. She often talked of the necessity of a society for men on the same lines as hers, but there was no one with her enthusiasm and devotion to undertake it. At last in the autumn of 1880 she encouraged a graduate student at Harvard University to start the Young Men's Society for Home Study.⁹⁸

On January 8, 1881, this new society, much like Ticknor's but servicing men only, was introduced at the close of the General Committee meeting, "The Chairman closed the meeting with a few remarks, & mentioned the new society, called the Young Men's Society for Home Study of which he is also Chairman & of which Mr. Fredieu Gardiner, Jr. is Secretary."⁹⁹ Ticknor and the Executive Committee were very interested in the work of this new society so similar to their own, and Ticknor suggested a conference between the secretaries of each and was authorized during the Executive Committee meeting on March 5, 1881, to set up a meeting to discuss their common issues.¹⁰⁰ Following the Executive Committee meeting on April 9, 1881, members of the committee from the Young Men's Society came to meet with members of the Executive committee. Described as a "friendly conference," three committee members attended, Harvard professors George Palmer who was head of history and William Byerly who was head of

⁹⁸ Society to Encourage Studies at Home, *Society to Encourage Studies at Home: Founded in 1873 by Anna Eliot Ticknor: Born June 1st, 1823, Died October 5th, 1896* (Cambridge: Riverside Press, 1897), 69 – 70.

⁹⁹ Minutes of the Society to Encourage Studies at Home, Chamberlain Collection of Autographs, Ms.Q.Am. 1414 (4), Boston Public Library. Courtesy of the Trustees of the Boston Public Library/Rare Books.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

mathematics and Fredieu Gardiner, secretary of the new society.¹⁰¹ The Eighth Annual report indicates the enthusiasm with which the Society embraced the Young Men's group.

We are greatly interested in the recent creation of the Young Men's Society for Home Study, - which by inducing our Chairman to fill the same office for them, had established a real link of union with us. They have begun with an unexpectedly large number of students, and have had the satisfaction of obtaining so much good assistance that none of their volunteer teachers need be oppressed with work. They have found a great readiness on the part of those whom they applied to give a helping hand. The gentlemen who have undertaken it have our entire sympathy, and we count on a beneficial interchange of experience and suggestions.¹⁰²

Little is mentioned of the Young Men's Society in the ninth year other than to indicate a meeting with members of their executive committee following the April 29, 1882, Executive Committee meeting, and no mention of the men's society occurs in the annual report for that term. But its work did continue through the year, relying primarily upon Harvard professors to serve as correspondents for the men who enrolled.¹⁰³

The adjustments to the Society and the publications they created had helped continue the success of the earliest years of the Society. With this continued success came more recognition, more media coverage, and lots of requests for information. Ticknor and the Society began to embrace the publicity they were receiving for the quality education they offered. They had worked to build the Society and had done so in virtual anonymity but were now finding the accolades more palatable. Previously, the Society repeatedly denied media access and refused to advertise. Though they still did

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Society to Encourage Studies at Home, *Eighth Annual Report* (Boston: Rockwell & Churchill, 1881), 18.

¹⁰³ Society to Encourage Studies at Home, *Society to Encourage Studies at Home: Founded in 1873 by Anna Eliot Ticknor: Born June 1st, 1823, Died October 5th, 1896* (Cambridge: Riverside Press, 1897), 70.

not advertise, their openness to publication of stories regarding their work was evident in meeting minutes. The April 18, 1879, General Meeting mentions “Agreeable notices” in area papers and an “honorable mention in the Saturday Review where the only objection made is that Faust does not appear as one of the German books recommended among the three entries in the Circular though it might be conjectured that it would be one of Classics selected for advanced students.”¹⁰⁴ In her report at the first General Meeting for the seventh term of the Society, Ticknor again mentioned reports on the Society in papers and that the Society was receiving regular attention both for its work and the speakers who attended the annual meeting, particularly Oliver Wendell Holmes.¹⁰⁵

Of course with the greater coverage of its work came more requests for information on said work. In 1877 Ticknor requested permission to send information on the Society to a professor in Germany who had heard of the Society through a student traveling through Europe. Reportedly, he “desired to start a similar undertaking in his own country.”¹⁰⁶ Her request was granted and information about the Society was sent without delay. At the end of the same year, Ticknor received yet another overseas request for information. This time a school supervisor from Sweden with some 300 schools in his charge requested information so that he too could start a similar program in Sweden. Ticknor and the Executive Committee were more than happy to send the requested information.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁴ Minutes of the Society to Encourage Studies at Home, Chamberlain Collection of Autographs, Ms.Q.Am. 1414 (3), Boston Public Library, 32. Courtesy of the Trustees of the Boston Public Library/Rare Books.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 143 – 144.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 105.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 110.

The requests for information were local as well. Aside from requests from similar organizations and individuals for information on their methods, libraries had begun to ask for reading lists to use for purchasing books for their collections. “The Secretary stated as a pleasant fact that Town Libraries are now apt to buy the books recommended by the Society...” and these libraries were requesting lists for the purpose of making those purchases.¹⁰⁸ Ticknor took great pride in the reading lists that the correspondents crafted for each of the courses. Their work was noticed and respected by these libraries. In this way Ticknor and the Society exerted influence over the development of small libraries across the United States. In the Fifth Annual Meeting, Ticknor also informed the members that they had been asked to develop reading lists for women to be distributed to libraries everywhere. This request was more than the Society wished to handle at the time, and the request was sent to the Women’s Education Association for completion.¹⁰⁹

Another request arrived from the Harvard Examination for Women during the seventh term. At the Executive Committee meeting on January 30, 1880, Katharine Loring brought an idea to work with this group in their correspondence efforts. The request was tabled until on February 12, 1880, a special meeting of the Executive Committee was called for the purpose of discussing a relationship between the two groups. At this meeting the request was made for the Society to handle the correspondence work of the Harvard Annex. After much discussion it was decided to deny the request based upon two grounds. “The objections were chiefly that the responsibility of bringing students up to a certain point would be onerous, and that it

¹⁰⁸ Minutes of the Society to Encourage Studies at Home, Chamberlain Collection of Autographs, Ms.Q.Am. 1414 (2), Boston Public Library, 147. Courtesy of the Trustees of the Boston Public Library/Rare Books.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 200.

would be necessary to pay the correspondents employed.”¹¹⁰ This work was not congruent with the work being done in the Society. The Society promoted learning for the individual at the individual’s pace and ability, and it promoted volunteerism as a response to the gifts one had been given, in this particular case the gift of education. The work of the Harvard Annex, though right and necessary for the advancement of women in higher education, did not fit these ideals.

Growth and tremendous activity characterized the Society to Encourage Studies at Home from their third through their ninth terms. Their enrollment had reached a high of nearly a thousand students, the correspondents and associates numbered almost two hundred, the library held approximately 1300 books with an annual circulation of 1200 volumes, and the annual meeting had reached an attendance of around 250. In addition, the women of the Society had written nearly 10,000 letters in their correspondence work, and the Secretary had received more than 5,000 letters and sent approximately 2,500 beyond the sending of circulars and pamphlets.¹¹¹ All of this growth and the administrative activity took place in the Ticknor home. After nine years the Society had outgrown the private residence, and having office space for the work of the organization became a pressing need in the ninth term, particularly with the prospect of continued growth. In the first Executive Committee meeting of the term on October 8, 1881, Ticknor broached the subject of hiring rooms for the work of the Society.¹¹² The

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 185 – 187. Harvard Annex is the organization that would later become Radcliffe College.

¹¹¹ Society to Encourage Studies at Home, *Ninth Annual Report* (Boston: Rockwell & Churchill, 1882), 5.

¹¹² Minutes of the Society to Encourage Studies at Home, Chamberlain Collection of Autographs, Ms.Q.Am. 1414 (4), Boston Public Library. Courtesy of the Trustees of the Boston Public Library/Rare Books.

deciding factor would be raising enough money to cover the cost of renting space. The subject was discussed again at the next Executive Committee meeting on October 29, 1881, and the discussion turned towards creative ways to secure funds. The method chosen was that of a circular sent to Society friends and supporters to solicit the necessary funds. “The subject of a provision for the future need of funds for rent of rooms was then taken up, and the form of a circular was carefully discussed, looking to its private distribution among the immediate friends of the Society.”¹¹³ The one missing voice from this conversation was that of Samuel Eliot who was absent from both meetings. He was present, however, for the third installment of this discussion in the Executive Committee meeting for November 26, 1881. In the meeting Eliot shared his distaste for creating the circular and suggested “that it seemed wiser to raise the yearly fee of students to Three dollars.”¹¹⁴ Though the women of the Executive Committee had been known to vote against his recommendations, on this one they decided to accept his advice and pursue a course of raising the fee. The natural concern now was the loss of students. “The risk of diminishing the number of students was regarded as only temporary, & the steady increase of late, seemed to indicate that all desirable numbers would soon be recovered.”¹¹⁵

All that remained of this decision was to receive approval from the General Committee, and such approval was requested at the January 14, 1882, meeting. The discussion of raising fees was brought to the committee and a similar discussion that occurred in the Executive Committee meeting ensued. The biggest concern was the

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ Ibid. The fee of \$3 is equivalent to approximately \$67 in 2010 dollars.

potential loss of students, and other ideas such as fees assessed to correspondents and associates were discussed. At the end it was the raising of student fees that stayed in the forefront of the discussion. Eliot argued that there would be no source adequate for raising the funds necessary for hiring rooms and that maintaining the Society's independence was essential. The decision was made to table the vote and give time for thoughtful reflection before making a final decision.¹¹⁶ At the next General Committee meeting on April 8, 1882, the committee unanimously voted to raise the fees for the purpose of renting rooms.¹¹⁷ What remained to be seen was the effect this vote would have on the Society's future. Though it was certain that the number of students enrolled would decrease, would the decrease be temporary or permanent? Would it be small or significant? Would the Society be able to financially weather the change in fees generated? Did they make the right decision? Ticknor and the committee would have to wait until the next term began to discover the answers.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

CHAPTER VI

THE “WANING” YEARS 1882 – 1896

The tenth term of the Society to Encourage Studies at Home began with much excitement. There was a new office at No. 7 Park Street, next door to the Ticknor residence, that needed to be set up and shared with the members of the Society. The first meeting of the General Committee was held October 14, 1882, “for a renewal of personal relations, for distribution of stationery, & on this particular occasion for an inspection of the new headquarters of the Society.”¹ There was an air of pride among the members of the Society in the acquisition of their executive headquarters, yet there was a cloud of uncertainty which hung regarding the effects of raising fees on enrollment and long-term financial security. The Society would, throughout the remainder of its existence, operate caught between celebration of its achievements and grievance over its obstacles. Over the next fourteen terms the Society would be plagued by concerns and losses, but would use these to grow its programs and to articulate its philosophy of education. During this period, there would be two faces of the Society – the one of concern revealed through the minutes, and the one of quiet reflection revealed in the annual reports.

The most articulated loss for the Society would be in its enrollment of individual members. The first meetings for the tenth term indicated the expected losses in numbers as a result of the fee increase, but by the third meeting of the Executive Committee on November 24, 1882, a sense of alarm was beginning to rise in the reports of the Secretary. The Society was able to make its necessary payments for rent, postage, and supplies, but concern was mounting for the ability to make the remainder of the rent

¹ Minutes of the Society to Encourage Studies at Home, Chamberlain Collection of Autographs, Ms.Q.Am. 1414 (4), Boston Public Library. Courtesy of the Trustees of the Boston Public Library/Rare Books.

payments should enrollment not increase. By the 4th Executive Committee meeting on December 30, 1882, the enrollment had reached 717 individual students, down from 894 at the same point of the previous term, a loss of approximately 20%. The committee mandated “prudence in nonessential expenses”² in order to sustain funds for the completion of the term. Even though the Society faced financial difficulties, it continued to offer scholarships to those who themselves faced financial obstacles in order to further their education, issuing free tuition and book usage to eight students for the term. Prudence paid off and by the sixth Executive Committee meeting on February 24, 1883, there was some relief in sight as “Current expenses keep pace with the number of students....”³ The report of the Tenth Annual Meeting held Thursday, June 7, 1883, a landmark year, would not dwell upon numbers stating: “If we measured out successes wholly by numbers we might feel a shade of disappointment this year, for we show a smaller number of names than for some time past, owing partly to the increase of our fee; but we do not feel this little check to be painful, because we see no lessening of zeal, no lowering of our standards, and no deficit in our treasury.”⁴ Though concerned mid-term, they had survived the losses of the year without debt, and the students who had enrolled had shown far greater dedication to their studies. For the term, 768 individual women had entered for study, a decrease of more than 22%. Of these 622 had persevered and achieved rank resulting in a persistence rate of 81%, the highest yet for the Society.⁵

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Society to Encourage Studies at Home, *Tenth Annual Report* (Boston: Rockwell & Churchill, 1883), 6.

⁵ Ibid.

Though the numbers had decreased, student quality had most definitely increased.

There were some positive results experienced, but the losses would take their toll on the Society and its finances. Losses in individual enrollment would affect the Society in both the eleventh (1883 – 1884) and twelfth (1884 – 1885) terms, with decreases of 12.5% and 10.1%, respectively. Although the rate of decrease had begun to subside, the gross loss in fees paid by individual members (approximately 39%) over the three terms was more than the Society could overcome and maintain a positive balance in the Society's treasury. The twelfth term would be the last with a separate office for the Society. The beloved office that had generated so much pride was being relocated. To add insult to injury the new location could not be next door at No. 9 Park, the location from whence it had come. In the midst of loss and the financial struggle Anna Ticknor faced, she was faced with one of the greatest losses of her life, the loss of her mother on February 14, 1885. With the death of her mother, Ticknor would relocate to a home just on the other side of Boston Common at 41 Marlborough Street. Though her new home was small, she would offer the room she had as an office and library to the Society during the seventh Executive Committee meeting held April 4, 1885.⁶ Though the Society would not operate on Park Street as it had for so many years, it would reside within a Ticknor home as it had at inception.

Another loss to the Society and to Ticknor personally included the closing of the brother society, the Young Men's Society to Encourage Home Studies, after only three terms. The announcement was made at the fourth Executive Meeting of the eleventh

⁶ Minutes of the Society to Encourage Studies at Home, Chamberlain Collection of Autographs, Ms.Q.Am. 1414 (4), Boston Public Library. Courtesy of the Trustees of the Boston Public Library/Rare Books. The exact transition of the ownership of the home is unknown. The home was remodeled in 1885, adding store fronts and creating office space. The location of the home relative to the central hub of Boston made it an ideal location for business.

term on December 29, 1883. “The Young Men’s Society for Home Study having ceased to exist, its library of 29 vols. & its balance of \$7.28 have been handed to us.” But this would not mark the end of academic aid to men as “the Secretary had leave to give time & attention to providing young men with help for study, outside The Society.”⁷ It was reported that the effort to provide such an endeavor for young men far outweighed the results to justify its continuation. During its three short years it reached an enrollment of 133 students with seventy-nine correspondents, primarily Harvard professors, offering instruction.⁸ Samuel Eliot in this announcement to the General Committee, attributed its closing to something else: “The Chairman referred to the cessation of the Young Men’s Society for Home Study, & attributed it much to want of discipline, urging the ladies to hold their students to perseverance in the Society even if they desired to withdraw or were neglecting work so as to be likely dropped.”⁹ The chairman too felt the need to retain students and encouraged those who had direct contact with students to support their continued work with the Society.

The overall trend for the Society through to its closing term would be a regular decrease in individual enrollment, a disheartening fact for the members of the committee. By the twenty-third term the enrollment reached 329 individual members, lower than all but its first three terms. Though the increase in fees contributed to the loss of students another cause was lurking – the proliferation of correspondence agencies across the

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Society to Encourage Studies at Home, *Society to Encourage Studies at Home: Founded in 1873 by Anna Eliot Ticknor: Born, June 1, 1823, Died October 5, 1896*, (Cambridge, MA: Riverside Press, 1897), 70.

⁹ Minutes of the Society to Encourage Studies at Home, Chamberlain Collection of Autographs, Ms.Q.Am. 1414 (4), Boston Public Library. Courtesy of the Trustees of the Boston Public Library/Rare Books.

United States. The announcement of the work of the Society by the *Atlantic Monthly* in 1875 had drawn the attention not only of women students but also of many others looking for ideas in educational and financial ventures. The Society had created a mass movement in correspondence education in the United States. The proliferation of other correspondence organizations was beginning to create serious problems for enrollment in the original correspondence organization. Ticknor and the Society were well aware of the effects of this rapidly growing movement. The earliest acknowledgement of the outgrowth of correspondence institutions actually occurred during the sixth term at the second meeting of the General Committee on January 10, 1879. The secretary recognized that “[v]arious societies are growing up which include in their schemes more or less of the points of ours, & your Secretary frequently receives prospectuses & constitutions of associations & clubs in different parts of the country.”¹⁰ There seemed to be little concern of competition from these new associations and, to some degree, a level of pride in the fact that these new organizations sought their input and approval. The tone of the conversation had turned by the eleventh term. In her report to the Annual Meeting Ticknor offered the following comment: “The Society of ours has ceased to be a unique and singular variety of the species, setting on a new and adventurous experiment; but we still have a distinct sphere of usefulness.”¹¹ As the fourteenth term came to a close, the exacerbation over the growth of other associations was clearly evident in the opinion of the Society that “we feel as if the world, in which we were once pioneers, had

¹⁰ Minutes of the Society to Encourage Studies at Home, Chamberlain Collection of Autographs, Ms.Q.Am. 1414 (3), Boston Public Library, 8. Courtesy of the Trustees of the Boston Public Library/Rare Books.

¹¹ Society to Encourage Studies at Home, *Eleventh Annual Report* (Boston: Rockwell & Churchill, 1884), 5.

become densely peopled in our lifetime.”¹² There was almost a lamenting of days past when the Society was the only organization working through correspondence, quietly beyond the eye of society. Her remorse over the profound growth in correspondence education was clear in the twentieth term. “In the beginning we were trying an experiment entirely new in this country, tried only by one other. Our work was at first tentative, for even our English exemplar was no guide; now we are merely an atom in the crowd.”¹³ By the twentieth term, Ticknor was willing to admit the effect the other organizations had upon her beloved Society. “Of course, the new competition of other societies and associations, schools and private teachers conducting instruction by correspondence had an effect upon us.”¹⁴ And indeed, the competition had taken its toll on the individual enrollment of the Society.

In addition to the loss of potential students to competitor organizations, a downturn in the economy seemed to cause a drop in the enrollment of students. The stock market crash of 1893, known as the Panic of 1893, would send the United States into the worst depression up to that point in its history. Stock prices dropped dramatically, and loan rates skyrocketed, damaging the stability of the urban business centers. Crop prices dropped, leaving the rural farmer with less than before to raise family and future wares.¹⁵ Two of the Society’s biggest draws in enrollment were hard hit by the turn in economic conditions – the well-off woman with time for studies beyond

¹² Society to Encourage Studies at Home, *Fourteenth Annual Report* (Boston: Rockwell & Churchill, 1887), 4.

¹³ Society to Encourage Studies at Home, *Twentieth Annual Report* (Boston: Rockwell & Churchill, 1893), 4.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 15.

¹⁵ “Panic of 1893,” *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* 8, No. 2 (1894): 252 – 256.

societal and domestic requirements and the woman geographically secluded on farms or other rural areas. During the twentieth term (1892 – 1893), the Society had registered 423 individuals; by the twenty-third term, the enrollment had dropped to 329, a cumulative decrease of more than 22% over the three year period. Was the Society losing its place in women’s adult education? A closer look begs the questions, Had the effects of competitive organizations and the Panic of 1893 been as devastating as it seemed? Had the overall enrollment really changed as much as it appeared? Was the situation as dire as the minutes and enrollment numbers seemed to suggest?

The Society had experimented with club enrollment since its inaugural year (1873 – 1874). The addition of the study circle in Hallowell, Maine, was a pioneer in correspondence education in such a format. Since then the world had caught wind of the works of the Society, and this particular version of correspondence education had swept the country. Regional, national, and international organizations marketed their own stolen versions of this form of education. Though the Society reportedly began officially enrolling clubs after the tenth term,¹⁶ it was not until the sixteenth term of the Society that Ticknor and the committee had decided to formally develop rules for clubs enrolling in the Society. The second Executive Committee meeting held on October 27, 1888, contained but one point of discussion - rules for admitting clubs. Two simple sentences are contained in the meeting minutes regarding this discussion. “Considered the need of rules for Clubs. The Secretary was directed to obtain data & opinions of the ladies most

¹⁶ Society to Encourage Studies at Home, *Twentieth Annual Report*, (Boston: Rockwell & Churchill, 1893), 15. There is no record of the decision to enroll clubs formally in the minutes of the Society during the tenth or the eleventh terms.

experienced in this part of the work.”¹⁷ By the third meeting of the Executive Committee on November 24, 1888, the first sketch of the rules for clubs had been drawn up and submitted. Based upon input from the committee members present and letters from correspondents, it was decided to give the requirements a little more thought and to adjust the rules accordingly. The adapted rules were presented to the Executive Committee during their fourth meeting on December 29, 1888. There these new rules were adopted and later sent to the General Committee to be ratified.¹⁸ Though no information is given about the general committee’s response to this addition, the result must have been positive, for clubs rules were put into place beginning with the seventeenth term.

A circular for clubs was printed for distribution to those who would be interested in enrolling their group. The rules were rather interesting, treating the club much the same way the Society would an individual who enrolled. “A club joins by one member who alone pays the fee.”¹⁹ For each club a single member was to be elected as their representative for one course of study. Should the club desire to enroll in a second course, a separate representative had to be elected for that course, and a separate fee paid. The representative was charged with reporting monthly on the work of the club, submitting her personal memory notes and exam questions, and reporting on the quality of reports and exam answers of the remaining members. Each representative of a club was assigned to a correspondent who directed the work of the club. The rules did allow

¹⁷ Minutes of the Society to Encourage Studies at Home, Chamberlain Collection of Autographs, Ms.Q.Am. 1414 (5), Boston Public Library. Courtesy of the Trustees of the Boston Public Library/Rare Books.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ “Society to Encourage Studies at Home Rules for Clubs,” Scrapbooks for the Society to Encourage Studies at Home, Chamberlain Collection of Autographs, Ms.fAM 1418(3), Boston Public Library, Boston, MA. Courtesy of the Trustees of the Boston Public Library/Rare Books.

for papers to be sent by someone other than the elected representative, if the club voted to do so, but this practice was discouraged by the Society, as is seen in the postscript of the circular for club enrollment:

P.S. – It is important that all written work sent in by a club should come from one mind, in order that the lady in charge may be able to form a proper estimate of the reports rendered. Alternate reports from different members make it difficult to form a correct judgment.

The lady in charge may, however, if in her judgment it is requisite, have one specimen of each member's work sent to her, that she may form an estimate of the general ability of the club.²⁰

Since clubs were enrolled based upon the enrollment of a single member, each club was counted in the total enrollment of the Society as a single member, regardless of the size of the club. A club that had twenty-five members, as some of them did, was counted in the statistics for the Society as one member. The numbers presented by the Society had been woefully understated.

Official statistics on the number of members from clubs were not collected until the eighteenth term. However, information on the number of clubs was reported beginning during the fourteenth term, prior to the development of rules for clubs enrolling in the Society. Eighteen clubs were corresponding with the Society in that term.²¹ In the first year under the new rules for clubs, thirty-four enrolled.²² Finally, during the eighteenth term, Ticknor and the Society began to report on the number of students enrolled through clubs in the Society. In that term, forty-one clubs with a total of 347 members had enrolled in studies. The Society reported a mere 510 students when

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Society to Encourage Studies at Home, *Fourteenth Annual Report*, (Boston: Rockwell & Churchill, 1887), 5.

²² Society to Encourage Studies at Home, *Seventeenth Annual Report*, (Boston: Rockwell & Churchill, 1890), 10.

in actuality there were 816 women studying courses through the Society.²³ Though individual enrollment continued to decline over the next few years, club enrollment increased, and with it total enrollment, through the twentieth term. As the Society celebrated its twentieth year, it could also rejoice in an enrollment close to that of the Society's peak eleven years earlier, approximately 900 students enrolled individually or through clubs.²⁴ Even club enrollment was not immune to the effects of the Panic of 1893, following which enrollment dropped. Including the forty clubs for that term, the total number of students enrolled for the twenty-first term was 757, still more than twice that reported.²⁵ And for the two years after, club enrollment would continue to exceed individual enrollment. It is certain that Ticknor and the Society underrepresented their own enrollment, beginning at least in the tenth term. It is very probable that the number of students in total enrolled for the tenth term would not have represented a decrease in numbers but rather an increase. Total enrollment numbers were likely to have surpassed the 1,000 mark in some of the larger enrollment years. The Society had really recovered from the loss of students created by the change in fees, and enrollment numbers had rebounded. Numbers rose until the crash of 1893, and the numbers had started to rise again slightly by the twenty-third term ending in 1896. The Society was not in peril by any means. On the contrary, it had allowed for an evolution in education that had created

²³ Society to Encourage Studies at Home, *Eighteenth Annual Report*, (Boston: Rockwell & Churchill, 1891), 6. The figure 816 is calculated by removing the 41 representatives from the 510 students reported and adding in the total membership for clubs: $510 - 41 + 347 = 816$. Total enrollment in the remaining years is calculated in the same manner.

²⁴ Society to Encourage Studies at Home, *Twentieth Annual Report*, (Boston: Rockwell & Churchill, 1893), 15.

²⁵ Society to Encourage Studies at Home, *Twenty-First Annual Report*, (Boston: Rockwell & Churchill, 1894), 10.

stability in numbers and possibly laid the foundation for future growth in an unexpected direction.

The calculation method used for total enrollment was an interesting, albeit ineffective, choice. No information is revealed as to why this was the method of calculation or to whom the decision for choosing such a method belonged. Not only did it underreport enrollment statistics, it decreased fee income. Since each club was enrolled as an individual, only one fee was paid for the many members a club may have had. The financial burden the Society felt possibly could have been alleviated by a simple restructuring of fees for clubs. Ticknor appeared to have noticed the egregiousness of the chosen method of calculation. Following a report on the enrollment statistics for the various courses during the twenty-third term Ticknor states: “The injustice of this mode of calculation falls on the regions where few are reported, while we know many are at work.”²⁶ Undoubtedly, she recognized that their method of determining enrollment was ineffective, but did she recognize the effect on fees that their policy had? And, if so, would she risk another seeming increase in fees to support the Society? Only the twenty-fourth term would tell.

There is no mention of what precipitated this change of heart regarding clubs. Ticknor and the Society, up to this point, had consistently reiterated their desire to educate the individual. Could it have been the need to draw more students? Yes. Could it have been the desire to continue the evolutionary process in which the Society consistently engaged in order to better serve its students? Absolutely, yes. As Ticknor remarked on the occasion of the Society’s twentieth year: “This is our twentieth

²⁶ Society to Encourage Studies at Home, *Twenty-Third Annual Report*, (Boston: Rockwell & Churchill, 1896), 7.

anniversary, and what have we been doing in those twenty years? We have been teaching, but we have also been learning.”²⁷ And learn they did, particularly that there was value to the education of women in a more social setting. It was Ticknor’s and the Society’s stance that their organization be designed flexibly enough to meet the needs of the students. Ticknor reminded the Society that “we advance and change with the demands of the times,”²⁸ a charge to all to know their students’ needs and seek to meet those needs. In the twenty-third year of the Society, Ticknor expressed the great benefit to opening enrollment to clubs.

We may, besides, recognize the social influence of these Clubs, as being perhaps greater, in spreading knowledge and its attractions, than that of individual members who may not reach more than their own households, though one who has social habits and gifts has often been known to interest a whole neighborhood or village.²⁹

As for passing on what was learned through the Society, the club had the largest potential impact on society. Though the expressed desire was for improvement of the home, the evidence indicates a desire to improve society in general. The club was an excellent vehicle for so doing.

In addition to formally admitting clubs, the Society made additions to their course offerings and continued to grow in the educational experiences offered to students. The first course, History, had grown to include courses in Ancient, Medieval, Modern, and United States History and Political Economy. The Political Economy course was an interesting one that came out of the needs of the students, particularly those of means, for

²⁷ Society to Encourage Studies at Home, *Twentieth Annual Report*, (Boston: Rockwell & Churchill, 1893), 4.

²⁸ Society to Encourage Studies at Home, *Twenty-First Annual Report*, (Boston: Rockwell & Churchill, 1894), 5.

²⁹ Society to Encourage Studies at Home, *Twenty-Third Annual Report*, (Boston: Rockwell & Churchill, 1896), 6.

skills related to the operation of philanthropic organizations. This course covered the theory and history of charitable organizations with the purpose of preparing women for charitable endeavors.³⁰ Not only did Ticknor and the Society espouse the use of one's talents for the benefit of others, they equipped women to share those talents through their course work. For the most part, it was Katharine Loring's leadership as department head which provided the drive for the History department's development. She remained the head of the department for the majority of the Society's years, leaving only for a brief period while caring for companion Alice James in England. In her absence, she still provided guidance and later returned as a correspondent before being reappointed as Department Head.

During the twentieth annual meeting, Ticknor reflected upon the inclusion of Science as a course for the Society with these words

In 1873 science was only partially recognized as an element in a liberal education, and the statement was publically made, and generally accepted, that, in whatever else women might aspire to distinction, scientific research was impossible for them.

It was, therefore, almost prophetic insight that led to our making a separate department of Science, and the immediate influence of that great teacher, [Louis] Agassiz, was never more directly felt than in its creation, while it was by his advice to us, and with his persuasion that the charge of it was taken at first, for two or three years, by the one woman who at that time surpassed most of us in her belief in the elevating and enriching power of the study of Natural Science.³¹

In the second course, Science, the initial development of courses was directed by Lucretia Crocker who was succeeded briefly by Cora Clarke. Once Ellen Richards took the position of Department Head in 1876, she never let it go, pushing the advancement of science education for women throughout the remainder of the life of the Society. The

³⁰ Society to Encourage Studies at Home, *Twentieth Annual Report* (Boston: Rockwell & Churchill, 1874), 7.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 8.

science course now housed studies in Zoology, Botany, Geology and Mineralogy, Mathematics, and Sanitary Science.³² To that list a course in Psychology was also added toward the end of the Society's time, though not fully given a chance to develop.³³ The science course had also acquired amazing supplies to share with its students. A herbarium existed for circulation of specimens among students to aid in botany studies, as well as a rock and mineral collection for geology and mineralogy students. A microscope was also purchased for circulating among the women who enrolled in Science.³⁴ These were truly amazing resources for students to have access to in their homes. It was even more amazing that these items moved between Society and students through the postal service without loss or damage. The Society and Ticknor made sure that education was not only available, but also supported through the supplying of the necessary items to fully engage in the course work. Ticknor's commitment to quality educational offerings was evident.

The third course was renamed Fine Arts in order to more fully describe the work done within this section. From a simple course most like art history, this course had grown to include offerings in art and music. Art included studies in history and criticism and music in theory, history, criticism, and the study of harmony.³⁵ Music was a bold choice for the Society since it could not offer the practical instruction on playing instruments and performing works, but like most everything Ticknor touched, this study

³² *Ibid.*, 9.

³³ Society to Encourage Studies at Home, *Twenty-Second Annual Report* (Boston: Rockwell & Churchill, 1895), 9.

³⁴ Society to Encourage Studies at Home, *Twentieth Annual Report* (Boston: Rockwell & Churchill, 1893), 9.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 10.

fit well into the programs offered. Another innovation in this department was the inclusion of the *traveling course* during the tenth term. “A specialty has been devised by which the study is in some cases arranged by countries, so that the student is travelling in imagination, with a systematic course of reading.”³⁶ Studies in art and architecture were arranged in such a way that the student took an imaginary journey through a country or region as she studied. It was a course for those who wished to travel the world but for whatever reason could not. Ticknor continued to extend the advantages granted her, and those like her, to women who did not have the health or wealth for travel abroad. It was also a course for those preparing to travel. “Another attractive feature of this department is its scheme of imaginary tours, by which, with a judicious selection of history, and art study, books of travel and fiction, a student makes journeys without expense or fatigue, and at the same time, as the experience of several of our students has proved, makes good preparation for actual travel.”³⁷ This study would remain an active part of the Society for the remainder of its existence.

Little change occurred in the German and French Literature courses. No additional study areas were added. These courses also showed remarkable stability in leadership. German Literature was started by Elizabeth Perkins who stayed but one year. Johanna Hagen remained Department Head from the second term through the twenty-first term, after which she returned to her home country, Germany.³⁸ No information was given on who ran the course for the last three years of the Society. French Literature had

³⁶ Society to Encourage Studies at Home, *Tenth Annual Report* (Boston: Rockwell & Churchill, 1883), 17.

³⁷ Society to Encourage Studies at Home, *Twelfth Annual Report* (Boston: Rockwell & Churchill, 1885), 13.

³⁸ Society to Encourage Studies at Home, *Twenty-First Annual Report* (Boston: Rockwell & Churchill, 1894), 11.

only three department chairs in its twenty-four year existence. The first department chair was, of course, Ellen Mason, and the last, Elise B. Richards.

Ticknor's personal favorite in course work was the last course which had begun to be known as English and American Literature to reflect the growth in studies available to students who enrolled in the department. There were seven areas to choose from in the department which included Early English, Elizabethan, Queen Anne, 18th Century, and 19th Century English and American Literature, a course on the plays of Shakespeare, and English Composition and Rhetoric.³⁹ Generally, the courses fit the needs of a Society devoted to home and hearth, which sought only to broaden the view and strengthen the mind of the female students without damaging domestic life. The inclusion of rhetoric, a course which teaches the art of argument and persuasion, both written and oral, seems incongruent with this notion. Was Ticknor preparing students, women students, to agitate for long overdue changes, particularly as they related to women, in society in general?

With the growth in courses came a growth in the lending library. The library existed from the second term through the end of the Society and beyond, all the while circulating books and materials via the postal service. Annual circulation reached nearly 1,300 volumes in some years,⁴⁰ and the library amassed a collection of 2,651 volumes plus ninety-four volumes of photos and art portfolios. The library had become so large that the decision was made to donate some of their titles.

We have also been able to relieve our shelves of some volumes no longer needed, which were handed over to the Women's Education Association, partly as

³⁹ Ibid., 12.

⁴⁰ Society to Encourage Studies at Home, *Fourteenth Annual Report* (Boston: Rockwell & Churchill, 1887), 10.

permanent gift, partly as loan, to be used in the Travelling Libraries now sent by that Association to towns in Massachusetts, where they form a valuable auxiliary to the free libraries so universally established throughout the state.⁴¹

The Society's influence would now spread further throughout the state in the form of books available for others to read.

Not only would the influence of the library be spread to those with access to the WEA's traveling libraries, the Society library would open enrollment to those who would like to be reading members only. In the thirteenth year of the Society during the second Executive Committee meeting held November 28, 1885, *Reading Members* would be able to enroll. A reading member was a former student that had enrolled at least two years but was currently not studying in any department. She paid \$1 annually plus the regular daily charge and return postage for books as studying members, and was allowed to have books mailed to her from the Society's collection to engage in her own self-directed learning. Should she so desire, she could also have a reading list from a particular area of study to guide her research efforts for the price of \$0.50. A student who was enrolled could also add the privilege of borrowing additional books from an area of study outside her chosen course for that same \$1 cost.⁴²

This addition, to some extent, was a response to the decreased number of students enrolled. The Society actively looked for ways to increase its own enrollment and alleviate its financial burden. This particular avenue would not generate a great deal of income for the Society, as few students, current and former, took advantage of the offer.

The Society continued to look for areas of expansion and requested its membership to

⁴¹ Society to Encourage Studies at Home, *Twenty-Third Annual Report* (Boston: Rockwell & Churchill, 1896), 11.

⁴² Minutes of the Society to Encourage Studies at Home, Chamberlain Collection of Autographs, Ms.Q.Am. 1414 (4), Boston Public Library. Courtesy of the Trustees of the Boston Public Library/Rare Books.

submit ideas for spurring growth in the enrollment during the thirteenth term. During the fifth Executive Committee meeting on February 27, 1886, of that same term the minutes read, “The subject of diminution of the number of students was then discussed, first with regard to its causes, & second as to the course to be pursued to arrest it.”⁴³ In general the two causes attributed to the loss of students were the fee increase after the ninth term and the proliferation of other correspondence education organizations. Members were asked to bring ideas to the next meeting, but aside from the expansion of course offerings, further ideas seemed not to have materialized.

The one benefit of the slightly slower pace the Society appeared to find itself in was taking time to reflect on its own value and place in education during the last half of its existence, or during what Ticknor called its “green and sturdy age.”⁴⁴ The value of the Society was not in its numbers, rather it was found in the quality of work that students generated, as Ticknor asserted during the annual report of the tenth term. The Society would continue to reiterate its commitment to quality in studies throughout the last half of its existence. It was this quality that truly separated the Society from other distance education organizations, and Ticknor sought to silence its critics who might think less of an educational organization powered by volunteers.

Sometimes we hear it said, with no unfriendly meaning, ‘I suppose one can’t ask for very prompt and careful work from unpaid volunteers’; but we find the zeal of well-doing quite replaces the zeal of pay, and we do not intend that our work shall be poor because it is freely given. Indeed, we have reason to think that our standard of work is actually high, and we propose constantly to raise it to meet the demands for the higher levels of study, while we shall always be ready for those whose needs are elementary.⁴⁵

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Society to Encourage Studies at Home, *Fourteenth Annual Report* (Boston: Rockwell & Churchill, 1887), 4.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 11.

The Society was a quality institution that did not need high paid faculty members to offer excellence in education. It supported its educational ventures through quality volunteers who gave of self, time, and intellect for the growth and advancement of others.

Ticknor made certain to distinguish the Society from other organizations in which reading was prized. “To us still belongs the encouragement of study as distinguished from reading, united with the peculiar personal relation between one woman and another, opening many avenues of good through our regular monthly correspondence.”⁴⁶ It was real study that Ticknor and the Society valued, as opposed to simply reading. “We encourage *study* rather than reading; for reading which leaves little residuum and forms no useful habits, adds very little to the value of life.”⁴⁷ It was study in which the Society encouraged its members to engage. And the quality of study which they advocated was recognized for its rigorousness. Ticknor asserts that the Society

...might be associated only with superficial methods and inefficient discipline; but we claim that, as a whole, ours are not superficial methods nor inefficient discipline. Among other proofs of this we have one in which we take special pleasure, the fact that a certificate, - which we rarely give, for we have refused absolutely to give diplomas annually, knowing that they ought not be considered valuable, - a certificate such as we do give is sought not only at the South and West, but here at home, because our reputation for thoroughness gives it a real value.⁴⁸

Not only did students recognize the quality of the education that was earned through the Society, so did members of academia. A great source of pride for Ticknor came from recognition by Herbert Baxter Adams, historian and Johns Hopkins professor.

⁴⁶ Society to Encourage Studies at Home, *Eleventh Annual Report* (Boston: Rockwell & Churchill, 1884), 5 – 6.

⁴⁷ Society to Encourage Studies at Home, *Seventeenth Annual Report* (Boston: Rockwell & Churchill, 1890), 4.

⁴⁸ Society to Encourage Studies at Home, *Fourteenth Annual Report* (Boston: Rockwell & Churchill, 1887), 5.

A cause of real satisfaction to us was a notice we received last autumn, when Prof. Herbert Adams, of Johns Hopkins University, read a paper before the American Historical Association at Saratoga (which was printed in the *Independent* in September), on the subject of our teaching history, that being his own specialty. He says of our examination questions in the History Department, which he had before him as he wrote: "To have such papers passed successfully by all candidates for the degree of Bachelor of Arts would be a test at once honorable and gratifying to any classical department of an American College, whether for men or women."⁴⁹

Recognition of the quality of study had spread to the world of higher education, and one of the preeminent historians of the 19th century had taken notice of their work in at least this one department. Not only had he noticed, but he had shared his findings with the national body of the field, in which the most notable historians would have heard such a glowing review of the work of the Society.

Though it is unknown as to which tests Adams had access, other tests from this time period do exist. The philosophy of testing in the Society was that it was for testing the "quality of work done."⁵⁰ Testing was not to determine the quantity of learning achieved. Tests were given to students when the student was ready and were adjusted to suit the particular student. Ticknor asserts that examinations are "...not to trip the student up, nor to take the place of continuous work, but to show to the student and to us the truth, whether she has or has not mastered the subject at hand."⁵¹ It is with this philosophy in mind that exams were written, and the result of which was the positive review by Adams. An examination from the History course in Ancient History, covering the Ancient Egyptians, had ten questions, all expected to be answered thoroughly without

⁴⁹ Society to Encourage Studies at Home, *Thirteenth Annual Report* (Boston: Rockwell & Churchill, 1886), 9.

⁵⁰ Society to Encourage Studies at Home, *Fifteenth Annual Report* (Boston: Rockwell & Churchill, 1888), 6.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

the aid of books or others. The questions were a mix of essay and short answer, requiring both an understanding of the political, religious, social, and geographical conditions of the era and memorization of the major events and corresponding timeline. Questions asked include:

1. Describe the situation of Egypt & its divisions. What were some of the results produced by the peculiarities of its geography?
2. What are the chief monuments, who built them? What is their historical value?
-
4. Who was the founder of the 19th dynasty? What two kings succeed him, with what Bible history was one connected? When is the Exodus supposed to have occurred?
-
7. What did these kings for literature? What was one literary city, where, why named?⁵²

The questions required thorough knowledge of the readings and an understanding of something more than just the facts. Answers were expected to be a reflection of thoughtful study, providing complete and detailed answers from memory. This is but a portion of one test from a particular course of study. There were others for this course as well, and a student who completed them successfully would no doubt be thought of as well-educated on the subject of Ancient History. It is not a wonder that Adams gave such a positive evaluation for the Society and its work in the area of History education.

Not only did Adams notice the work of the Society, but others did as well. The University of Chicago and the World's Fair both took note of their educational endeavors. George Henderson, director for University Extension, sent a letter requesting information on the work of the Society, which was discussed at length during the second

⁵² "Society to Encourage Studies at Home. Dept. 1. Section III. Examination II." Scrapbooks for the Society to Encourage Studies at Home, Chamberlain Collection of Autographs, Ms.fAM 1418(3), Boston Public Library, Boston, MA. Courtesy of the Trustees of the Boston Public Library/Rare Books.

Executive Committee meeting during the twentieth term of the Society on November 26, 1892.

Careful discussion on the subject of a letter from Mr. George Henderson of the University of Chicago asking for the use of some of our working lists. A vote was taken and the Secretary was authorized to send the following documents: Reports since 1885, Circulars, Health, four lists for Dept. 6 [English and American Literature], General Directions for Study, Special Directions in Depts. 1 [History], 2 [Science], 3[Art], 6[English and American Literature], Letters to Associates Depts. 1 [History] & 6 [English and American Literature], List of Art Illustrations.⁵³

The work of University of Extension had only begun a few months earlier at the University of Chicago, under the watchful eye of President and prodigious scholar William Rainey Harper. It was the Society these educational leaders turned to for information and support on developing their new initiative to provide educational outreach in the form of correspondence education. The Society was not unaware of the growing university extension movement. Two terms earlier, Richard Moulton of the American Society for the Extension of University Teaching was invited to attend the third General Committee meeting on April 11, 1891, to talk about “the working of University Extension in England, and its place and prospects in the U.S. especially under the American Society at Philadelphia.”⁵⁴ Ticknor and the Society had become curious of this growing movement. Little did they know they would play a role in its expansion in the United States.

The same term that Ticknor received the request for information from the University of Chicago, a special meeting of the Executive Committee was called on

⁵³ Minutes of the Society to Encourage Studies at Home, Chamberlain Collection of Autographs, Ms.Q.Am. 1414 (5), Boston Public Library. Courtesy of the Trustees of the Boston Public Library/Rare Books.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

March 11, 1893, to discuss an invitation to provide a display at the Chicago World's Fair.

The minutes read:

This meeting was called on account of an invitation by the managers of the Woman's Building at the World's Fair to this Society to send an exhibit to that building. It was decided to prepare such an exhibit, the means of doing it were discussed and good suggestions were made by the ladies. Finally, the Secretary was authorized to procure whatever was necessary in the way of apparatus, to make all proper arrangements, and to report at the next Executive Meeting.⁵⁵

Ticknor shared the news of the request of the World's Fair with those in attendance at the annual meeting. "This year we were asked and consented to make some exhibit of our method and results in the 'Women's Building' in the Columbia Exhibition, and, in consequence of this, we have placed a second exhibit among those of the educational exhibits of Massachusetts in the Liberal Arts Building."⁵⁶ These exhibits included circulars, *Health*, and annual reports available for visitors to take, samples from the herbarium, mineral specimens, photos, and student reports in a glass display. People from around the United States and around the world would get a look at the methods and materials of the Society. The exhibit was described as a success: all documents were taken and the displays returned. The University of Chicago sent a request asking to retain the materials from the display for a pedagogy exhibit at their institution. Permission was granted for the exhibit to be housed there.⁵⁷ The Society spread its influence around the world once again with its exhibit, and it continued to be a source of educational inquiry for the University of Chicago.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Society to Encourage Studies at Home, *Twentieth Annual Report* (Boston: Rockwell & Churchill, 1893), 14, 18.

⁵⁷ Society to Encourage Studies at Home, *Twenty-First Annual Report* (Boston: Rockwell & Churchill, 1894), 11-12.

Ticknor continued her superior work in women's adult education quietly and efficiently, all the while upholding her philosophy of education through the work of the Society. She had put her vision into action and led an educational organization which supported the six tenets of her philosophy: education should be more than formal, flexible, attainable and available, holistic, creative, and relational. She continually sought to encourage students to see learning within their own environments. This was particularly true with the science courses, in which sanitary science converted a woman's home into her very own laboratory for experimentation and advancement, and Botany and Mineralogy opened a world of science in a woman's backyard. Ticknor kept the Society flexible, adding courses as students expressed need, such as the traveling course, the Shakespeare course, and even a course in pedagogy for five students during the seventeenth term.⁵⁸

Ticknor worked diligently to keep the Society available for all who wanted access to advanced education. The Society was designed intentionally to be open to all.

We never adopted the methods of the English society, whose similar name gave us, in 1873, the idea for ours. Instead of confining our offers of help – as the English society did at that time – to the wealthy class only, we at once endeavored to interest all classes, for we thought all needed us, though for different reasons, as all are liable to the consciousness of a deficiency, general or special, in their education, and all may feel the need of encouragement to overcome some obstacle, it may be in want of opportunity, or it may be in lack of energy to use existing opportunities.⁵⁹

Ticknor was always aware of those whose need for education was great as well as their obstacles. To these she felt much sympathy and worked to make the Society and its

⁵⁸ Society to Encourage Studies at Home, *Seventeenth Annual Report* (Boston: Rockwell & Churchill, 1890), 8.

⁵⁹ Society to Encourage Studies at Home, *Tenth Annual Report* (Boston: Rockwell & Churchill, 1883), 9.

quality education more accessible. Scholarships were often given to students of need, even in those years when the finances were lean relative to the expenditures. In the tenth term, the year after the increase in fees and subsequent decrease in enrollment, eight students received free tuition and book loans.⁶⁰ In response to those who called her organization philanthropic she replied:

In the outset of our work the question was once asked, “Is it eleemosynary?” and the prompt answer was, “By no means.”

Yes it is often alluded to as a charity. So it may be; but the charity in this case covers broader ground than most so-called charity, for it is meant to reach poverty or even restriction of mental resources, no questions being asked about material possessions, while it includes occasionally the ordinary form of charity, when we relinquish our fees and charges of all kinds.⁶¹

It was charity of the intellectual sort in that it served those lacking educational opportunity. Its benefactresses were those who gave of their own educational gifts instruction. Many of these scholarship students were also physically challenged or invalids. Ticknor felt a special concern for those who found themselves unable to leave the home. For these students, Ticknor said, “[W]e select special correspondents, the conditions requiring, even more than ordinary cases, a ready sympathy, and willingness to adapt the work minutely to the needs of the individuals.”⁶² Keeping education open to these was especially important to Ticknor, and she recognized the need to create for these special students an experience that would allow them optimal learning.

⁶⁰ 1st Regular Meeting of the Executive Committee, October 14, 1882, Minutes of the Society to Encourage Studies at Home, Chamberlain Collection of Autographs, Ms.Q.Am. 1414 (4), Boston Public Library. Courtesy of the Trustees of the Boston Public Library/Rare Books.

⁶¹ Society to Encourage Studies at Home, *Twelfth Annual Report* (Boston: Rockwell & Churchill, 1885), 4.

⁶² Society to Encourage Studies at Home, *Nineteenth Annual Report* (Boston: Rockwell & Churchill, 1892), 5.

But education was not just for those in need. Ticknor reminded the Society,

It is still supposed by some persons, and has been stated in public print within a short time, that we devote ourselves altogether to women and girls who have no means of obtaining advantages in any other way, who live in secluded places and are poor. We joyfully work for these, it is quite true; but that we exclude others is not true. We have repeatedly stated our conviction that the rich need us as much as the poor; and, while we can do them good by stimulating them to self-improvement and helping them to rise above hindering environment, they can help us in using their leisure on our behalf, joining our staff and passing on to others what they have received from us.⁶³

Those of means had two possible relationships available with the Society, one as student and one as correspondent. Finding those willing to join the ranks of the correspondents was a fairly easy task as the Society found “a ready response to our appeals, and often an assurance that the request meets a previous desire to pass on the good already received.”⁶⁴ The idea of giving as one has received continued to permeate the volunteer system of the Society, an idea that began at the top.

Ticknor continued to support the view of education as a holistic experience through the publication and distribution of *Health* and the addition of Sanitary Science to the studies of the Society. Students were encouraged to balance healthy homes, families, and bodies with a healthy mind for optimal learning and long term mental health. Ticknor continued to encourage innovation from within the Society. Innovation was found in the advancement of course offerings and also in the overcoming of obstacles students faced in their studies. Adding a traveling library for those without books, traveling specimen and microscope for those without laboratory access, and photos and art portfolios for those far from museums were all creative ways to solve problems faced

⁶³ Society to Encourage Studies at Home, *Eighteenth Annual Report* (Boston: Rockwell & Churchill, 1891), 7 – 8.

⁶⁴ Society to Encourage Studies at Home, *Nineteenth Annual Report* (Boston: Rockwell & Churchill, 1892), 6.

by the Society's students. It was never a question of, can the Society do that? It was always a question of, what more can the Society do?

Most importantly, Ticknor maintained a dedication to the importance of relationship between instructor and learner in the learning process. This relationship was a cornerstone in the work of the Society. Ticknor stated, "Our work rests so essentially on the basis of individuality, the personal relation between one woman and another in our correspondence,- not dealing with private circumstances but depending greatly on moral and intellectual sympathy...."⁶⁵ Ticknor recognized the value of the relationship as a reducer of student attrition and supporter of student learning, professing "...to *encourage* our members, because we know how hard it is for most women, in the midst of the manifold interruptions apparently inevitable in their avocations, to persevere long enough in study for the pleasure and the habit of it to neutralize these interruptions."⁶⁶ It was in the encouragement between women that the learner could find the necessary support to overcome the interruptions of life upon studies and continue to develop her intellect. "Women's help for women is our essential character,"⁶⁷ Ticknor said of the Society. The results of this sisterly support and aid was a source of pride for Ticknor: "We are now seeing the fruits of the years that are gone; not only in the fact that our best teachers, those who help others best, are those who themselves received our help; but in the

⁶⁵ Society to Encourage Studies at Home, *Fifteenth Annual Report* (Boston: Rockwell & Churchill, 1888), 8 – 9.

⁶⁶ Society to Encourage Studies at Home, *Sixteenth Annual Report* (Boston: Rockwell & Churchill, 1889), 5.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

development of the women themselves, as we follow them in their later lives.”⁶⁸ The women they had raised up educationally had gone on to raise up others and to become better women. This was Ticknor’s ultimate goal.

At the age of seventy-three, Anna Ticknor could look back at a successful twenty-three years of educating women regardless of their condition in life, finances, or location. She had offered educational opportunities to women of all races and ages as well. The short-lived Louisiana branch had offered its services to Creole women, and the Society in general accepted African-American women without reservation into the Society. Ticknor had personally supported the education of an African-American woman who was writing a manuscript and reveled in its publication.⁶⁹ The average age of students enrolled had exceeded thirty years by this point in the Society’s existence, with many members over the age of fifty and one in her eighties.⁷⁰ Students stayed with the Society for extended periods of time, some enrolling for as long as twenty years.⁷¹ Ticknor had developed a Society that supported all women and encouraged lifelong learning. The hard work she had put in had paid off; she had a solid organization recognized as a leader in correspondence education. Her health though had begun to fade. Five years earlier she had given up her position as treasurer, allowing Ellen Richards to assume responsibility

⁶⁸ Society to Encourage Studies at Home, *Nineteenth Annual Report* (Boston: Rockwell & Churchill, 1892), 8.

⁶⁹ Society to Encourage Studies at Home, *Society to Encourage Studies at Home: Founded in 1873 by Anna Eliot Ticknor: Born June 1st, 1823, Died October 5th, 1896* (Cambridge, MA: Riverside Press, 1897), 104 – 105.

⁷⁰ Society to Encourage Studies at Home. *Twenty-first Annual Report*. (Boston: Rockwell and Churchill, 1894), 4.

⁷¹ Society to Encourage Studies at Home, *Twenty-Third Annual Report* (Boston: Rockwell and Churchill, 1896), 17.

for the finances of the Society.⁷² Though she stated this was done “in order to separate the offices hitherto held jointly by the Secretary,”⁷³ it is likely her health that forced her to reduce her role in the daily operations. During the nineteenth term Ticknor suffered an unrevealed illness that created interference in performing her duties. She referred to this illness in the annual report: “No disturbance came from the temporary disability of the Secretary on whom much work fell in days gone by, but who can apparently now be dispensed with for a time, so much has her place been made good by the efficiency of others.”⁷⁴ Ticknor appeared to find relief and comfort in knowing that her beloved Society could continue in her absence, at least in her temporary absence. But could it really continue without her? Soon, the world would find out the fate of the Society to Encourage Studies at Home without Anna Eliot Ticknor.

⁷² 3rd Regular Meeting of the General Committee, April 11, 1891, Minutes of the Society to Encourage Studies at Home, Chamberlain Collection of Autographs, Ms.Q.Am. 1414 (5), Boston Public Library. Courtesy of the Trustees of the Boston Public Library/Rare Books.

⁷³ Society to Encourage Studies at Home, *Nineteenth Annual Report* (Boston: Rockwell & Churchill, 1892), 5.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

CHAPTER VII
THE SOCIETY'S FINAL TERM AND THE ANNA TICKNOR LIBRARY
ASSOCIATION

The twenty-fourth term of the Society to Encourage Studies at Home began on October 1, as had all but the first term. Tragedy struck four days later. On October 5, 1896, Anna Eliot Ticknor, beloved founder and leader, passed away at the age of seventy-three at her summer home in Newport, Rhode Island, from an unreported cause. The news was a shock to all in the Society, Committee members, students, and even former guests at the annual meetings who supported her educational endeavor. Ticknor had a few years prior praised the Society's ability to move forward in its work during her brief illness. Would the Society be able to continue, following her permanent departure? The answer would come rather swiftly.

A special meeting of the Executive Committee was called by Ellen Richards on October 8, 1896, at Ticknor's home on Marlborough Street. Eleven members of the committee were present, but Samuel Eliot was not among them. During this meeting, Richards acted as Chairperson and for the first time, someone other than Anna Ticknor acted as Secretary. Longtime friend and Society leader Katharine Loring would stand in her place as Acting Secretary. Six motions were made and passed during the meeting. The first regarded the setting of the first regular General Committee meeting which was slated for October 17, 1896. The remainder regarded the future of the Society to Encourage Studies at Home:

Voted: that a committee of three persons be appointed by the Executive Committee to draw resolutions with regard to Miss Ticknor's death, to be presented to the General Committee. The committee of three to be named by the Chair: Miss Foote, Miss Morison, and Mrs. Dale were nominated.

Voted: that the work of the Society shall be carried on during this year on the lines already laid down.

Voted: it is the opinion of the members of the Executive Committee that the work of the Society should end with the close of this term in June 1897, and that the notice of Miss Ticknor's death and of the proposed dissolution of the Society should be sent to all present correspondents and students, and to all correspondents and students of the past three years.

Voted: that the Committee do not fill Miss Ticknor's place but that by virtue of Rule 3 of the bylaws that authorize them to fill vacancies, they should proceed to appoint an acting secretary to carry on the business of the Society.

Voted: that the Acting Secretary be appointed by the Chair and her name reported to the Committee at its meeting.¹

It was clear to the Executive Committee that the continuance of the Society without Ticknor was impossible. She had been their leader, secretary, advisor, and inspiration, but most of all she had been their friend. Their tremendous respect for her was evidenced in their refusal to replace her as secretary, choosing instead to fill the vacancy with an acting secretary. But there was no way to fill her loss to the Society and to those that had worked so closely with her, some for more than twenty years.

The Executive Committee met again for their first regular meeting of the term on October 17, 1896. There was no change in position regarding the termination of the Society; instead, discussion focused on what should be done with the library once the end arrived. The Executive Committee did discuss a tribute to the life of Anna Ticknor and "resolved to prepare a Memorial of Miss Ticknor to accompany the Annual Report."² With the resolution, the Committee adjourned and went immediately into the first regular session of the General Committee with the addition of the remaining General Committee

¹ Minutes of the Society to Encourage Studies at Home, Chamberlain Collection of Autographs, Ms.Q.Am. 1414 (6), Boston Public Library. Courtesy of the Trustees of the Boston Public Library/Rare Books.

² Ibid.

members. The resolutions of the Executive Committee, those of the special meeting regarding the dissolution of the Society and that regarding the production of a Memorial for Ticknor, were affirmed. The General Committee also added its note of sympathy to the proceedings.

Resolved: That the members of General Committee of the Society to Encourage Studies at Home desire to express their great sense of personal loss in the death of Miss Anna Eliot Ticknor. She was not only the founder of the Society for Home Study, and the inspiration of her fellow workers but has been the faithful and sympathetic friend of all who came within her far-reaching influence.

While she was in the best sense of the phrase a typical Boston woman, her broad interests and expressions of sympathy made her name honored and loved throughout her own country and across the sea.

While appreciating the peculiar gifts of mind and character so valuable to her work and to them, and always recalled with gratitude and affection, they wish to offer to her own family their recognition of the great vacancy left by the ending of a life so dear to them, the last of a generation of which it was a fitting close.³

This tribute to Ticknor and her greatest work was sent to her remaining family. But at this point in time, none of the Ticknor's immediate family remained. Her father, George, had died prior to the founding of the Society in 1871. Her mother had passed in 1885. And her only sister to survive childhood, Eliza, had died five years prior to her mother in 1880. She was indeed the last of a great generation. Those she left behind included her two nephews and two nieces, a brother-in-law, and a host of cousins of whom Samuel Eliot was one. Along with their own statement of grief, the General Committee shared the letters of sympathy that had begun to arrive from students and correspondents at the news of Ticknor's death. It was a time for quiet reflection on a life well spent in service to others, advancing women's education, and building a national movement.

There was some good news announced in the meeting. Ticknor's will included the Society in the distribution of her wealth. "A clause of Miss Ticknor's will made in

³ Ibid.

1885, gave the sum of \$6000 to trustees, the income to be used for the needs of the Society so long as it should carry on its present work.”⁴ Even in death, Ticknor continued to support her beloved Society, providing for its financial stability after her passing. The one thing she could not provide from the grave though was her leadership, something the Society desperately wanted in order to carry on her work and vision.

The second Executive Committee meeting held November 28, 1896, brought with it bundles of news; in fact, “two bundles of letters from correspondents and students expressing their regret at the closing of the Society and their wish for its continuance....”⁵ The news of the impending closure of the Society had been sent out by the Executive Committee, an attempt to assure all that the work of the twenty-fourth term would continue as planned. Instead, their notice generated a flood of letters requesting the continuation of the Society. The notice included a statement that the Society would continue its current term without change to methods or details already in place, but at the end of the term, its invisible doors would be closed. The brief missive acknowledged the fact that many other institutions now existed for similar purposes of educating women, reaching them in those places far from educational opportunity. But it reminded the reader of the characteristic that elevated the Society above the others, its dependency upon building a relationship between student and correspondent. Ticknor’s “deep personal sympathy for each member of the Society”⁶ was its greatest feature. One simple reason was given for the Society’s closure: “[O]ur loyalty to her is yet shown by

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.7

⁶ “Anna Eliot Ticknor Died at Newport on October 5th, 1896,” Scrapbooks for the Society to Encourage Studies at Home, Chamberlain Collection of Autographs, Ms.fAM 1418(3), Boston Public Library, Boston, MA. Courtesy of the Trustees of the Boston Public Library/Rare Books.

bringing it to a close with the close of her life.”⁷ Little did the Executive Committee know that this tribute to a life well-lived and well-loved would create a storm from within the Society.

The Executive Committee was seemingly inspired to rethink their decision to discontinue the work of the Society. Treasurer Ellen Richards reported that based on the previous year’s expenses, it would require approximately \$1,000 per year to continue the work of the Society. The current enrollment was only 224, including individuals and club representatives, which generated \$672 in fees, slightly short of the required income. Any chance of continuing would hinge upon the generation of appropriate income to meet the financial needs of the Society. It had a twenty-three year history of operating without solicitation of donations or operating beyond funds generated by fees. This legacy would not be imperiled by this committee. After some discussion, “[I]t was voted to send a circular letter to teachers and students to ask: “1st ‘Whether you desire to have the S. H. Society continued beyond the close of this term, and what is your reason for this wish?’ 2nd ‘If you desire to have it continued, what can you suggest as to increasing the fees from students and clubs in order to provide sufficient income?’”⁸ The seemingly easy decision made following Ticknor’s death now seemed less clear. The members of the Executive Committee began to research the possibility of continuing the work so lovingly begun in 1873. Aside from generating sufficient funds, the committee would have to face a daunting task in finding a leader with the abilities to lead the Society and help it to continually evolve. Based upon the financial numbers, this person would also

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Minutes of the Society to Encourage Studies at Home, Chamberlain Collection of Autographs, Ms.Q.Am. 1414 (6), Boston Public Library. Courtesy of the Trustees of the Boston Public Library/Rare Books.

have to be willing to execute the duties of a full-time college president, in essence, gratis. The expenses of the previous year did not include salary for Ticknor herself, for she had performed her duties of twenty-three years without financial compensation. Her pay was the success of the organization and the growth of her students. Someone to replace her under the necessary conditions would be most difficult to find.

The only other business handled at this meeting was the discussion of how to dispense of the library should the closure of the Society go through. Radcliffe College had heard of the potential closure of the Society, no doubt through Elizabeth Agassiz, the recently chartered college's president and Society founder and supporter. The librarian of Radcliffe sent a letter to the committee requesting the donation of the Society's lending library assets to Radcliffe.⁹ With the future of the Society now uncertain, the committee decided to take no action on the request. Should a reversal of the decision to close occur, the lending library would be a necessity of continued work. The library was a mark of the Society's dedication to its students and was an innovation that separated it from the other correspondence institutions that had grown up around it. No other known organization had developed a collection of books and educational tools that traveled to students via the postal service. Any decision regarding this first among educational institutions should be carefully considered.

The next meeting of the Executive Committee was not held until the new year began. January 2, 1897, the two committees reconvened to address the future of the Society. The response from the questions as to continuing the Society and the methods for increasing income must not have been overwhelmingly convincing in the opinion of the committee members. Of the 138 letters sent to correspondents, eight-six replied and

⁹ Ibid.

of those forty-nine replied in the affirmative. Of the 224 students who received a letter, 114 answered and 111 answered in the affirmative. Suggestions for raising income ranged from increasing enrollment fees and advertising more to having correspondents and students pay for all postage. But these suggestions were not creative enough. The meeting minutes read:

It was voted to decide on the question of discontinuing the work. After some discussion it was voted: That this Committee conclude with much regret that the work of the Society should be discontinued at the end of the term for the following reasons.

1st. The difficulty of finding any leader who would carry on the personal influence exerted by Miss Ticknor.

2nd. The impossibility of paying the expenses without imposing too great a burden on the students or teachers.

3rd. The diminishing need of the Society as seen by the constantly lessening numbers of students.¹⁰

Though there was an outpouring of desire to continue the work of the Society, and the needs of many in its work were expressed, the committee determined that it would be impossible to continue the work without the leadership of Ticknor. It is unfortunate that the committee members did not perceive the gross miscalculation in numbers of students brought on by the method of counting clubs. Though membership suffered with Ticknor's death, it is possible that with some effort and restructuring of fees regarding club enrollment, the work could have continued without burdening students financially.

With the decision finalized on closing the Society at the end of the term, the next order of business would be the disposal of the library. A committee of three was chosen to determine how this should be done. Katharine Loring would take charge of this committee and pass on the office of Acting Secretary to Mary Morison who would

¹⁰ Ibid.

maintain this role until the Society's eventual end. It was to her house that the Society's office would move at 20 Marlborough Street, only a few blocks down from Ticknor's last residence. The library though would for the first time be separated from the office. It was moved to the home of another committee member at 60 Waverly Street in Brookline, a suburb of Boston. There it would stay until its future was decided.

Both the Executive and General Committees met a week later on January 9, 1897, in consecutive meetings. The main order of business for the Executive Committee was the development of an appropriate memorial volume for Ticknor. A little prior research had determined that the cost of producing the memorial would be between \$400 and \$500. The committee voted to press forward with this matter, electing to hire a clerk for preparing the materials and to create a committee to oversee its production. Samuel Eliot, Ellen Richards, Mary Morison, and Katharine Loring would form the memorial committee. Although the Society's work would end, the Executive Committee continued to look for avenues which would sustain its influence on women's education. "The question of bringing the working lists up to date was discussed and it was concluded that it would be wise to have them all in thorough order at the close of the present term, so as to ensure their future influence."¹¹ Even though there would be no more students to direct in studies, the Society was preparing to leave a lasting legacy in self-directed learning. By producing lists that could continue to be useful beyond the life of the Society, the committee provided for the continued education of women through their reading lists across the various courses of study currently offered. The question that arises though is what would become of these lists once the society ended its work and how would women gain access to them? This question would have to be addressed later.

¹¹ Ibid.

The General Committee meeting which followed affirmed the decisions of the Executive Committee. Loring did offer one comment that would foreshadow changes to come. She made the observation that “a possible future field of usefulness for the Society is a directing rather than an instructing body.”¹² Loring was formulating a new plan for the future of the Society, one not quite ready to be revealed to the committees. The rest of the General Committee meeting was much like the many that had preceded it; reports were read and the financial outlook was discussed and determined to be positive for the term. There was also a reading of newspaper articles regarding Ticknor’s death and work that had begun to appear which were read before the committee. Though she lived the life of an invisible woman, her legacy would not go unnoticed, at least not for the next few years.

The fifth and sixth meetings of the Executive Committee would bring yet another possibility for the future of the Society, a merger with another organization. During the fifth meeting on January 30, 1897, a letter from the Round Robin Reading Club of Philadelphia was discussed in which the possibility of a merger was suggested. The decision was made to have the Acting Secretary contact the organization and report back to the committee at a later date. During the sixth meeting on February 27, 1897, the discussion regarding the Round Robin Reading Club began again, this time ending with the decision to invite the head of the organization, Louise Stockton (1838 – 1914), to attend a meeting with the Executive Committee in order to discuss the possibility of a joint venture.¹³ And so it was done.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid

A special meeting of the Executive Committee was called on March 11, 1897, “in order to confer with Miss Stockton concerning any possible plan of cooperation between the Round Robin Reading Club and the Society to Encourage Studies at Home.”¹⁴ The committee spent time listening to the methods of the Club. Like the Society, it prepared courses of study for both individuals and clubs, though it was thought that individuals would be most interested in their work. Each student who enrolled received a “minute plan of study” that was between nine and seventeen pages in length, some being adjusted to suit the needs of the student. The differences lay in the fee structure and the production and execution of the plans of study. To enroll a student paid fifty cents for an initiation fee and \$3.00 for a six month plan of work. For a club of up to ten, each member paid the same initiation fee and then \$10.00 for a plan of study to be sent to each member of the club. Should the club have more than ten members, each additional member paid the initiation fee plus an extra seventy-five cents to have the plan of study sent. For a club of twenty-five, a size not unheard of in the Society, the total cost for enrollment would have been \$33.75.¹⁵ The cost of enrollment was potentially quite high and had the possibility of denying those clubs whose members had financial issues access to study.

There were very distinct differences in the production and execution of plans of study. All plans of study were prepared by “experts, largely college professors.”¹⁶ These experts were quite likely men and most definitely paid, much unlike the women who

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid. In 2010 dollars, this cost for an individual is equivalent to approximately \$90 and the cost for a club is equivalent to approximately \$875. This cost was for six months of study only, whereas the Society offered study over a ten-month term.

¹⁶ Ibid.

volunteered their expertise to develop plans of study and reading lists for the society. Students for the Club could also be formally examined by a compensated expert in their field of study. Other than this contact with an examiner, there was no attempt to develop a relationship of any kind between the expert and the student, neither was correspondence used in any manner, though there was a developing plan to incorporate correspondence as a component of the Club's study. According to Stockton, "[I]t was already proposed to make arrangements for closer personal relations between teachers and students, and she would be glad to have help from any competent persons ready to conduct regular correspondence."¹⁷ The Club also did not provide library services of any kind to its students, something the Society took great pride in so doing.

In order to facilitate a formal discussion by the committee, Samuel Eliot moved that the Society transfer students and correspondents "to the supervision of the Round Robin Club, and ...that the library of this Society should be open to students of the Round Robin Club."¹⁸ The discussion that followed was thorough and it was determined that the committee could not make promises on behalf of correspondents and students regarding services or enrollment, but that it could recommend the Club to those with whom it had contact. The committee further voted to table discussions of a cooperative venture until a committee could take a deeper look at the issues involved with such an action. The committee selected consisted of members of the History, Art, and English Literature Departments, the three most popular, and was charged to report at the next Executive Committee meeting their particular findings.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.

The next Executive Committee meeting was held March, 27, 1897. This meeting was to decide what would happen once the work of the Society was terminated at the term's end. The committee appointed to determine the disposition of the library was prepared to report and make recommendations, as was the committee appointed to determine if the Society should merge with the Round Robin Club. The committee on the library went first and a new idea was proposed "that a new society be organized to take charge of the library to be called the Ticknor Library and circulate books through the mail to former S. H. students and others to be specified later. The library should be organized strictly on business principles and not depend on volunteer help."¹⁹ Loring's idea of a directing body had begun to be articulated. She agreed to take charge of this library dedicated to the memory of her longtime friend. The library was a source of pride to Ticknor and an important component of the work the Society conducted. The departure from a volunteer run organization was incongruent with Ticknor's vision of women serving women, but the wish to produce a self-sustaining institution with the potential for longevity ran high among members of the Executive Committee. And, the committee knew from experience that volunteer-driven organizations needed a dedicated leader, something very difficult to find. Running this new organization on the principles of business as opposed to the principles of philanthropy could provide that solid fiscal foundation and open the search for leadership to a dedicated, salaried employee. The final decision on creating this new library was tabled until the April meeting of the Executive Committee in order to give the library committee time to develop a more detailed outline of what this business-driven endeavor would entail.

¹⁹ Ibid.

With the library committee's report finished, the merger committee made its report. Through this committee a recommendation from Stockton was made to form a "division" of the Round Robin Club for students of the Society under the supervision of correspondents from the Society. After some discussion and in light of the proposition put forth by the library committee, the motion was made and passed to *not* enter into a collaborative relationship with the Club.²⁰ No reason is given in the minutes, but it can be speculated that the differences were far too great and too much at odds with the philosophy of the Society and its founder regarding education. In addition, the prospect of building a new organization that could continue to influence the education of women via a new avenue generated much more enthusiasm and preserved the Ticknor name and honored her life's greatest work.

The last detail needing attention from the Executive Committee was a request from the University of the State of New York. The university needed help in correspondence education. The help was not requested in the form of the Society correspondents teaching students, but rather the Society correspondents teaching the university's correspondents on their methods. It was a tremendous compliment to the work the women did and the quality of that work. The decision was made to invite Melvil Dewey, university executive officer, New York State library head and developer of the Dewey decimal System for cataloging books, to the next General Committee meeting to discuss the university's training needs.²¹ The next meeting of the Executive Committee was slated for April 10, 1897. Melvil Dewey was unfortunately unavailable to

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid.

meet with the committee, but there was still work to be done. The library committee brought their formal recommendation regarding the lending library and moved that the committee place Katharine Loring in charge of the Library and create the organization she had in mind, “a Library Association” for the purpose of book and list circulation for courses of study.²² Those updated lists that earlier in the term were scheduled for revision by term’s end would now find a home in the new association and be used across the country for self-directed and guided learning. In order to support this new venture, the committee also voted to use a \$500 gift received by the Society over the summer of 1896 for the purpose of starting the new association. Later, the remainder of the treasury of the Society would also be added once all bills, including the costs for producing the memorial, were paid. It appeared that the association, with its business-minded approach, would be off to a solid fiscal start. Both recommendations were sent to the General Committee meeting that followed and both were approved. There was a new educational venture on the horizon.

Attentions of the executive committee now turned to the upcoming Annual Meeting, the last of the Society. The ninth meeting, held April 24, 1897, was dedicated to the redesigning of this event, Ticknor’s favorite time of the term. There would be some changes to this last annual event. The social that usually began the meeting would now be held at the end of the reports and addresses. Samuel Eliot would begin the meeting, followed by Acting Secretary, Mary Morison, and the annual report. The next portion of the meeting would be devoted to the new Library Association, including testimonials as to its value and potential. All past students, correspondents, and guests, as well as those associated with the current term, were to be invited. But the biggest change

²² Ibid.

would be the venue; for the first time the annual meeting would not be held within the walls of a Ticknor residence.²³

The last scheduled meeting of the Executive Committee for the twenty-fourth term was held May 29, 1897. The final details for the Annual Meeting were wrapped up, and a quote of \$530.00 for printing 1,000 copies of the memorial was discussed. The final discussion would be the hardest for the committee, how to formally close the Society. The minutes detail their resolutions.

A discussion followed on the best way in which to close the Society's work – it was Voted – to recommend to General Committee that all the business of the Society to Encourage Studies at Home be left in the hands of the Executive Committee with full powers to conclude the same.

Voted, to recommend to General Committee that the Treasurer be authorized to pay all bills incurred by the Society including those of the Committee on the Memorial.

Voted, to recommend to General Committee that all money remaining in the treasury after these expenses are paid, and all other property of the Society to Encourage Studies at Home be given to the Anna Ticknor Library Association.²⁴

The new library association now had its name, the Anna Ticknor Library Association. Ticknor's name and dedication to education would live on through the Association which carried her name, continuing the innovation which was a source of great pride, a fitting tribute to the woman whose great love of books and learning inspired an international movement in education. The meeting adjourned "subject to the call of the Memorial Committee,"²⁵ and in the General Committee meeting that followed, the motions of the Executive Committee were affirmed.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid.

The Twenty-Fourth Annual Meeting was held on June 3, 1897, at 2 Marlborough Street, the home of Executive Committee member Elise B. Richards. The Acting Secretary's Annual Report opened with a fitting tribute to their lost founder.

For the first time in the history of this Society, the Annual meeting is held without the presence of Miss Anna Eliot Ticknor, who was not only the founder of the Society, but its mainspring from the beginning. Whatever was done by her helpers was done, directly or indirectly, for her individually. Her personality dominated the whole Society, and, though the Heads of Departments were allowed to carry out their own ideas freely, yet the main lines of work were planned by her, and the Society has always been an expression of her individuality.²⁶

All previous annual meetings had as hostess, Anna Eliot Ticknor, but this year was different. Her absence was deeply felt, so much so that it permeated every facet of the Society. She had been the inspiration for the work of the Society, she had been its greatest supporter, and she had been the force that bound them all together in this great adventure.

From the expression of grief and loss, the Acting Secretary's report moved to the decision regarding the discontinuation of the work of the Society. Though the announcement of its closure had long since been made, the report detailed that decision and the committees' reasons for their decision.

It was necessary to take immediate action; the work of the term had to be somewhat rearranged, and it was necessary to find someone to take her office temporarily; it was felt at once that it was an impossibility to *fill* her place; anything done by another person must be done in another way. The regular Quarterly Meeting of the Committee was held about a fortnight afterward, and the members present endorsed the decision of the Executive Committee that it was best that this term should be the last of the Society to Encourage Studies at Home.

Sudden as this decision may have seemed to outsiders, it had long been felt by the chief workers that the Society must end with Miss Ticknor's life. There were many reasons for this; other similar societies had come into the field

²⁶ Society to Encourage Studies at Home, *Twenty-Fourth Annual Report* (Boston: Rockwell and Churchill, 1897), 4.

during the last twenty-five years, none offering precisely the same advantages as ours, but many having qualities which were more generally attractive.²⁷

Though initially the decision had been made to close prior to any formal meetings for the term, it was a long and agonizing journey for the committees to come to the final conclusion of closing the Society. And as for closing, the real action that was to take place could better be described as evolving, something in which Ticknor encouraged the Society to continually engage.

The strongest reason for closing was not the advent of competing agencies, but rather a lack of appropriate leadership. “The chief hindrance, however, to continuing the work on the same lines as heretofore was the personal quality which was at once the strength and the weakness of the Society, as no leader could be found who could command the same devotion from the corps of teachers.”²⁸ It was the relationship that Ticknor marked as foundational to a superior learning experience. She consistently encouraged the camaraderie between student and correspondent. It was the relationship that attracted many students to the Society, and it was the relationship that required the vast ranks of correspondents necessary to meet the intimate learning needs of the students. Whereas the cost of enrollment was kept at a minimum, this army of correspondents had to be made of volunteers. The need to solicit volunteers added to the difficulty in maintaining the Society beyond Ticknor’s life. She was not only the founder, but the great recruiter of volunteers. Without her and her ability to recruit and retain quality women in the ranks of the correspondents, there was a growing dread that the standard of work required would have to be lowered. Therefore, the committees

²⁷ Ibid., 4 – 5.

²⁸ Ibid., 5.

decide “[i]t is far better to lay it down before this dread should become an actuality.”²⁹

The great respect that Ticknor had earned from those who supported her work was such that the mere thought of reducing the quality of work, for which she advocated, was so detestable that ending the Society was the preferred option.

Little more was discussed regarding the Society’s term. Reports from the departments were read and the statistics were given. For the term, 261 students were officially included on the record, a lesser number likely on account of the instability without Ticknor at the helm and the impending termination of the Society. As in years before, this number underestimated the breadth of influence of the Society for the season. Twenty-five clubs had been connected with the Society, averaging fourteen students per club.³⁰ Using this estimate a truer enrollment number would have been 586 members. The Acting Secretary’s report lacked Ticknor’s enthusiasm for the details of work for which the Society engaged during the term. Of the twenty-four reports given, this was the shortest by far, shorter even than the first term in which there were only forty-five students enrolled.

Once the regular reports were finished, the meeting moved to the announcement of the new Anna Ticknor Library Association. The announcement began with “It is pleasant at this last meeting of the Society to be able to tell our friends that the work done for so many years is not to stop entirely, but rather to be renewed in another form.”³¹

The Society would be reinvented in a new form that would hopefully find greater relevance in a world filled with correspondence programs.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid., 5 – 6.

³¹ Ibid., 9.

During the last few years there has been a growing demand for lists of study without instruction. The teachers of the Society have been much impressed by the continually increasing number of women's clubs demanding courses of reading, but objecting to oversight. Too often these women's clubs have been hampered in their work for want of books; there is no way to borrow books away from literary centres, and yet there are many people who would be glad to pay a moderate charge for the use of books, who do not wish to buy them. With the aim of satisfying this demand, the Anna Ticknor Library Association has been formed.³²

The world would now know of the new Association. And much like the Society from which it sprang, its purpose was to fill a perceived need of women to find education wherever they are. Its purpose was also to honor Ticknor's work by continuing it, though in a new form. No longer would Ticknor remain the invisible leader.

Loring spoke on the formation of this Association, describing the requirement to make it financially self-sufficient and soliciting additional funds for the purchase of more books. She also went on to describe the design which would grace each bookplate of the new Association.

The design represents a youth bowed in despair before a statue unfinished for want of light, while unseen by him, a friendly hand pours oil into the dying lamp. The original bas relief, from which this drawing is copied, was given to Miss Ticknor's father by a well-known sculptor, in memory of the moment when he was on the point of abandoning his art, but encouraged by timely help from Mr. Ticknor, he renewed his work and conquered success. The story seems typical of the help given so long by the Home Study Society, which it hoped will be continued by the Anna Ticknor Library.³³

Not only would the new Association commemorate the life of Anna Ticknor and continue her work, it would, through its logo, highlight the love of both father and daughter for shedding the light of education in the lives of others. It is apropos that these two lives could be featured in a library venture that sought to bring education to those far from it. From father to daughter the torch had been passed to share educational advantages with

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid., 10 – 11.

those who were without. Through the work of the Society and the future Association, these advantages could be passed on through the lives that had been enlightened.

The final Annual Meeting ended with the appropriate remarks spoken by their feature guest, George Palmer of Harvard, and finally Chairman Samuel Eliot. Palmer spoke “of the interests which [the Society] had kindled and the possibilities it had shown.”³⁴ The Society had shown the world what education could become and opened the door to continued innovations in bringing education into the lives of all regardless of their situation, be it geographically, financially, or physically limited. Samuel Eliot closed with a few brief remarks regarding the importance of the Society to his cousin, Ticknor. “Through it she had helped others and the work had been its own great reward. But for it she would have been alone the last years of her life, for the Society was to her, father, mother and family.”³⁵ The Society had been her life’s greatest work, and that fact showed through everything she did to support and nurture it. Eliot ended this last meeting with a reminder to all saddened by its end: “The work can never end. The seed is planted, and from its growth more growth will follow.”³⁶

On November 30, 1897, the Executive Committee was called together one last time to hear the final report on the memorial to celebrate Ticknor’s life. The meeting was held in Tyler Hall at Trinity Court in Boston, the new home of the Anna Ticknor Library and the offices of the Anna Ticknor Library Association. The Memorial Committee reported that 500 copies of the memorial had been printed, of which 146 had been shipped to fill mail orders. The final cost for producing the memorial volume, including

³⁴ Ibid., 11.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid.

the services of the hired clerk, advertising, and printing, had amounted to \$758.59.³⁷ The memorial was not just a recollection of the Society, but a tribute to the life of its founder. It included letters between Ticknor and her students, as well as letters from students and correspondents sent upon the news of Ticknor's death. Her philosophy, motivation, and work were remembered through this volume. She was described as the

ideal leader in the movement. She was quick in temperament, and ambitious of usefulness far more than of any distinction. While appreciative of the restrictions which she wished to remove, she was desirous to gratify, if possible, the aspirations of the large number of women throughout the country who would fain obtain an education, and who had little, if any hope of obtaining it. She was very highly educated herself, and thought more and more of her responsibility to share her advantages with others not possessing them.³⁸

Ticknor's desire was to help women who lacked opportunity for education, whether denied by access geographically, financially, or societally. She understood and appreciated the value of her own excellent education and wished to share that with other women. Though she never expressly railed against the male-dominated culture which denied women educational advantages, she very subtly undermined the system by empowering a larger force of women with an excellent education. "Well was it called 'the silent university,' for its quiet unobtrusiveness was no less worthy of admiration than its efficiency."³⁹ It was very efficient, both in its work educating women and in its subtle efforts to tear down the barriers that women of nineteenth century America faced.

³⁷ Minutes of the Society to Encourage Studies at Home, Chamberlain Collection of Autographs, Ms.Q.Am. 1414 (6), Boston Public Library. Courtesy of the Trustees of the Boston Public Library/Rare Books.

³⁸ Society to Encourage Studies at Home, *Society to Encourage Studies at Home: Founded in 1873 by Anna Eliot Ticknor: Born June 1st, 1823, Died October 5th, 1896* (Cambridge, MA: Riverside Press, 1897), 2.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 6.

Ticknor wore many hats in the Society. Though the role she appeared to hold was that of Secretary/Treasurer, the memorial volume reveals that she served in far greater roles. “She was at once secretary, treasurer and president, writer of reports, framer of courses and of book lists, purchaser for the library and active in all sorts of details.”⁴⁰ Ticknor dedicated her life from age fifty until her death to service within the Society. She filled every role needed to make the Society a success and to provide a quality education. She was not just a figurehead, as her cousin Eliot was, she was an active leader, the Society’s most active volunteer. She had done all of this out of respect for the gift she had received in her own education and an understanding that those who had much, had much to give.

Those who came into contact with this life that so freely gave were touched. Students and correspondents responded to news of her death with a tremendous sense of loss. One student of many years wrote: “I feel that I have lost my best friend. Miss Ticknor’s kind words and counsel first came into my life when I was an unformed girl struggling with disappointment, poverty, sorrow and trouble, and her friendship abided with me during all the changes and chances of twenty years, helping me beyond computation....”⁴¹ She continued the letter noting the effect Ticknor and the Society had had upon her development: “[W]hatever is worthy in my character or daily life, whatever is my success as a teacher, is largely due to her....”⁴² Ticknor had a profound impact not only on the education of many women, but their personal development as well. Letters

⁴⁰ Ibid., 3.

⁴¹ Mrs. A.S.B. to Society to Encourage Studies at Home, October 22, 1896, in Society to Encourage Studies at Home, *Society to Encourage Studies at Home: Founded in 1873 by Anna Eliot Ticknor: Born June 1st, 1823, Died October 5th, 1896* (Cambridge, MA: Riverside Press, 1897), 143 – 144.

⁴² Ibid.

also poured in at the news of the Society's closing. Women were disappointed and some angry that the work of the Society was to be terminated. Their letters expressed their grief while acknowledging the great benefits received studying through the Society. "In giving up the S. H., I feel as if I had lost a home, for almost continuously for thirteen years have I studied with it,"⁴³ writes a longtime student of the Society. This long term commitment to the Society was not unusual among the students. It fostered the notion of lifelong learning, and many of its students reflected this very ideal in their longevity in enrollment. Another student speaks to the relationships found within the Society as "There is no society that I know of which aims to maintain so high a standard, which has a well-educated corps of teachers, and which establishes so friendly a relationship between critics and pupils. This latter point is one of peculiar merit, as the poor in mind or education, quite as much as the poor in purse, need the friendly companionship of those who endeavor to help them...."⁴⁴ There was no doubt that this organization with the intent to foster a very special relationship between correspondent and student could never be replicated or replaced. As one student and college graduate observed, "A keen sense of loneliness steals over me, for I know this source of improvement and culture can never, never again be supplied."⁴⁵

⁴³ Miss A. T. to Society to Encourage Studies at Home, November 8, 1896, Society to Encourage Studies at Home, *Society to Encourage Studies at Home: Founded in 1873 by Anna Eliot Ticknor: Born June 1st, 1823, Died October 5th, 1896* (Cambridge, MA: Riverside Press, 1897), 144 – 145. The initials "S.H." were used to represent Studies at Home and were printed on the envelopes sent by the Society to obscure the sender's identity for protection of the student who received it.

⁴⁴ Mrs. A.G.D. to Society to Encourage Studies at Home, December 5, 1896, Society to Encourage Studies at Home, *Society to Encourage Studies at Home: Founded in 1873 by Anna Eliot Ticknor: Born June 1st, 1823, Died October 5th, 1896* (Cambridge, MA: Riverside Press, 1897), 148 – 149.

⁴⁵ Miss M.M.D. to Society to Encourage Studies at Home, February 15, 1897, Society to Encourage Studies at Home, *Society to Encourage Studies at Home: Founded in 1873 by Anna Eliot Ticknor: Born June 1st, 1823, Died October 5th, 1896* (Cambridge, MA: Riverside Press, 1897), 165 – 166.

Though during her service to the Society, Ticknor had prevented any advertising on the Society's behalf, advertising was a component of the association which bore her name. Work immediately began on the new association. The funds remaining on the Society coffers, after the memorial bill was paid, amounted to approximately \$800, \$270 of which came from Ticknor's bequest. With funds transferred, there was no other work for the Society to complete. The last words of the minutes for the Society to Encourage Studies at Home read: "Voted, that the Society be now formally dissolved. Adjourned – sine die."⁴⁶

Though there were no more meetings to be held for the Society, the Association was ready to move forward in its new endeavor to send books, materials, and reading lists via the postal service to those who paid a subscription. The constitution and bylaws for the Association and been developed prior to the end of the final term for the Society. The last Society annual report included a copy of these guidelines. The official name given to the Association was "The Anna Ticknor Library Association, in grateful memory of Miss Anna Eliot Ticknor and her services to education in organizing and conducting the Society to Encourage Studies at Home."⁴⁷ The bylaws listed the purposes for the new Association to guide it in its endeavors: "The object of this Association shall be to maintain and increase the Anna Ticknor Library as long as it is self-supporting; to make use of whatever material may be given to it by the Society to Encourage Studies at Home; and to act as a bureau of information for former Home Study correspondents and

⁴⁶ Minutes of the Society to Encourage Studies at Home, Chamberlain Collection of Autographs, Ms.Q.Am. 1414 (6), Boston Public Library. Courtesy of the Trustees of the Boston Public Library/Rare Books.

⁴⁷ Society to Encourage Studies at Home, *Twenty-Fourth Annual Report* (Boston: Rockwell and Churchill, 1897), 21.

students.”⁴⁸ Materials available for distribution from the Society included books, art portfolios, and reading lists, basically the same items available to Society students to support their studies. The difference now would be that the Association would act as a facilitator of self-directed learning. Ticknor’s premise that education was supported through the relationship of learner and correspondent would be tested, just in its logical inverse. Would the depth and breadth of learning that Ticknor sought to encourage through the supportive environment of the Society occur here within the facilitated, self-directed learning environment of the Association?

The bylaws established the polity of the Association. Provisions were made for general membership, an Advisory Board, and an Executive Board. All who made a donation became part of the general membership. For those who made less than a five dollar donation within the first two years of the Association’s formation, membership was limited to voice in matters only, no voting or office holding privileges were extended. For those who were able to contribute five or more dollars, full membership was granted including voice and vote in all meetings and the ability to be elected into an officer’s position. The officers were to be two Managers who maintained the library and its holdings on a regular basis, Secretary, Treasurer, and Chairman. The two Managers, who were elected to two-year terms, along with the Chairman, who was elected for a one year term, constituted the Executive Board. The Advisory Board was formed by the officers of the Association. It was to consist of at least five members and was charged with advising on purchases of books and illustrations, preparing reading lists, and generally advising on other areas of library work. All officers and advisory board

⁴⁸ Ibid.

members were elected at the Annual Meeting of the Association to be held the second Saturday of each November.⁴⁹

Interestingly, the bylaws use the pronoun “she” in reference to all officers in the new Association. Though the Society was designed for women and run by women, its nominal chair had been a man for its entirety. This reference to an all-woman organization was a big step. The Association took that big step, electing Lucy Elliot Keeler as its first president. Keeler (1864 – 1930) was a distant relative of Ticknor and cousin to president Rutherford B. Hayes. She had been a longtime student turned correspondent in the history course for the Society. Now she had become the first chair, the first female chair in name, for the Association that would carry Ticknor’s name and continue her work. Mary Morison, who had been Acting Secretary for the Society during the last few months of its existence, would now hold the position as Secretary, Ellen Richards would continue in the role of Treasurer, and Katharine Loring would be one of the two Managers. The remainder of the positions were filled by women who had been active members or active supporters of the Society.⁵⁰ Twenty-four years later, this new Association would not need the cover of a male leader to give it credibility and protection in society.

The announcement for the new Association was sent and advertised, and its work officially began September 1, 1897. The notice described it as “[s]omething distinctive

⁴⁹ Ibid., 21 – 22. The 2010 value of \$5 in 1897 is approximately \$130.

⁵⁰ Minutes of the Anna Ticknor Library Association, Scrapbooks for the Society to Encourage Studies at Home, Chamberlain Collection of Autographs, Ms.fAM 1418(3), Boston Public Library, Boston, MA. Courtesy of the Trustees of the Boston Public Library/Rare Books.

in libraries.”⁵¹ And distinctive it was. No other known library system existed which would deliver books and materials to support study to one’s door via the postal service. The Association recognized this uniqueness, capitalizing on it in advertisements and seizing the opportunity to remind others of its heritage.

It is hoped that the magnificent National Library at Washington will eventually send books throughout the country, but in the meantime this is preparing to be done by the Anna Ticknor Library Association, at Trinity Court, Boston, Mass.

This Association is the outgrowth of the Society to Encourage Studies at Home, founded twenty-four years ago by Miss Anna Eliot Ticknor, of Boston, a correspondence school, which carried gratuitous inspiration and guidance to thousands of women. Since its organization almost unlimited opportunities have opened for the higher education of women, and with Miss Ticknor’s recent death the work of the Society was deemed practically accomplished.⁵²

The Association acknowledged the organization which gave it life, but also placed the Society and Ticknor in history as advocates for women’s education. It is interesting that the Association pronounced the work of the Society “practically accomplished” with the tremendous growth in women’s higher education. Ticknor herself publically stated that the Society was not to be a college equivalent; no diplomas or degrees were every issued. Ticknor even denied the request to direct correspondence education on behalf of the Harvard Annex, which would become Radcliffe College, on the grounds that the Society found it burdensome to direct work so that a particular quantity of education was gained. For her it was quality that counted. But Ticknor did work to empower women through education, and though she never directly supported the growth of college opportunities for women, her work through the Society laid the foundation for women to agitate for greater opportunities in education and in society.

⁵¹ “The Anna Ticknor Library Association,” Scrapbooks for the Society to Encourage Studies at Home, Chamberlain Collection of Autographs, Ms.fAM 1418(3), Boston Public Library, Boston, MA. Courtesy of the Trustees of the Boston Public Library/Rare Books.

⁵² Ibid.

The new Association received some support from at least one of the educational opportunities now open to women, the University of Chicago, Extension Division. In a letter to students, the university ended the brief letter announcing their new term with the following note: "Arrangements have been made with the Anna Ticknor Library Association to extend its privileges to students of the Correspondence-study department. In many courses it will be possible to obtain valuable reference books at a slight cost."⁵³ The Association had made its first alliance with the University of Chicago which had long been an admirer of the work of the Society and had sought its expertise in the area of correspondence education. Now the Association could continue to support the work of correspondence education through this new venture.

The Association also continued to support correspondence education through its own ranks, though this was unofficial. A letter sent to correspondents of the now defunct Society from Mary Morison, Society Acting Secretary, requested those who wished to continue correspondence work to submit their names to be placed on a list for students who wanted to continue their work. There was a caveat included: "It is understood that the Association assumes no responsibility for the instruction or any expense connected with it; it simply agrees to give any student asking for help the name of a teacher who will correspond with her."⁵⁴ A fee of fifty cents was charged to receive the name of a willing correspondent. That fee was to be forwarded on to the correspondent to offset her postage expenses. The use of books and lists would still require the subscription rates of

⁵³ University of Chicago to Student, October 18, 1897, in Scrapbooks for the Society to Encourage Studies at Home, Chamberlain Collection of Autographs, Ms.fAM 1418(3), Boston Public Library, Boston, MA. Courtesy of the Trustees of the Boston Public Library/Rare Books.

⁵⁴ Mary Morison to Correspondents, July 19, 1897, Scrapbooks for the Society to Encourage Studies at Home, Chamberlain Collection of Autographs, Ms.fAM 1418(3), Boston Public Library, Boston, MA. Courtesy of the Trustees of the Boston Public Library/Rare Books.

the new Association.⁵⁵ The fee for borrowing books was set at two cents per day plus return postage. One could borrow five books for a period of three months for a flat rate of five dollars. Regardless of the payment plan chosen, books had a time limit from as little as ten days to as long as ninety days, and the cost of overdue books was five cents per day.⁵⁶ The work of the Society had not truly ended. There were those who still wished to carry on its work and those who still wished to receive the benefit of education within the relationship between correspondent and student.

There is little evidence remaining of the work of the Association other than the annual reports. The officers remained relatively static, as Keeler, Loring, Richards, and Morison continued to execute their roles and earn re-election. The first Annual Meeting held November 12, 1898, reported 2,971 volumes housed in the library. For the first year, circulation was 546 volumes, and in addition, 430 reading lists were sold. Receipts for the year totaled approximately \$900, but expenses were \$1,600. The Association was able to meet its financial burden due to money given at the close of the Society, but if the financial situation continued as such, its requirement to remain self-sufficient would be impossible to meet. However, it was thought that expenses should decrease greatly since less advertising and printing would be needed during the second term. The Association also felt that the Spanish-American War had interfered with the number of books circulated in some manner. “The circulation of books had been diminished by the war, but the managers feel that there is a great and growing need for such a library as this, and that it requires only to be well known to be widely used. It is hoped that each member of

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Scrapbooks for the Society to Encourage Studies at Home, Chamberlain Collection of Autographs, Ms.fAM 1418(3), Boston Public Library, Boston, MA. Courtesy of the Trustees of the Boston Public Library/Rare Books.

the Association will make a personal effort to spread the knowledge of its aims and methods.”⁵⁷ The members of the Association felt hopeful that growth would ensue once more knew of their work.

The Association’s constitution required that it be self-sufficient. The war had officially ended at the end of 1898 and the peace treaty with Spain ratified in early 1899, but the numbers did not grow sufficiently. By 1899 it was evident that continuation in the current condition was not possible. In October 1899, Loring sent out a report to all members of the Association, providing details on the current state of the Association and soliciting input from the general membership on continuing the current work or terminating the fledgling Association. Loring explains in her report:

Now, after two years of experiment, we find that the library has not been self-supporting, nor is it likely to be so in the immediate future. At the same time it is evident, from one season to another, that the usefulness of the library to the educational institutions of the country is increasing, especially to the members of women’s clubs, art classes in public and private schools, and to teachers and lecturers.

The circulation of our books is slowly growing, we sell more lists, and we make more special programmes for club work.

Lately we have been asked to join a Committee of the Massachusetts Federation of Women’s Clubs in preparation of programmes for “home-talent days,” and a Committee of the National Women’s Alliance to prepare lists for “study meeting.” Although these lists do not bring in directly any money to our treasury, they are accompanied by a note stating that books recommended can be obtained from our library, and our co-operation incidentally endorses our reputation.⁵⁸

The Association’s work was needed and was recognized for its quality, but the funds were not generated in sufficient quantity to support future work. Somehow the

⁵⁷ “Anna Ticknor Library Association First Annual Report,” Scrapbooks for the Society to Encourage Studies at Home, Chamberlain Collection of Autographs, Ms.fAM 1418(3), Boston Public Library, Boston, MA. Courtesy of the Trustees of the Boston Public Library/Rare Books.

⁵⁸ “To the Members of the Anna Ticknor Library Association,” October 1899, Scrapbooks for the Society to Encourage Studies at Home, Chamberlain Collection of Autographs, Ms.fAM 1418(3), Boston Public Library, Boston, MA. Courtesy of the Trustees of the Boston Public Library/Rare Books.

Association needed to create a way to generate more funds or else face the very real possibility of ending its work.

Morison called a special meeting for the spring of 1900. The purpose of the meeting was to amend the bylaws, specifically that which required self-sufficiency. She stated, “As the library is not likely to be self-supporting, but is, apparently, very useful, the amendment is to strike out ‘as long as it is self-supporting’ and, possibly, to substitute other conditions.”⁵⁹ No details of this meeting remain, but by June 1900 a report was printed and sent regarding the continuation of work. It had been voted during the previous Annual Meeting to continue for at least three more years provided that \$1,000 dollars could be raised annually and the special meeting held in March confirmed this decision and set the Annual meeting of 1902 as the date to re-evaluate their efforts.⁶⁰ The Association had a reprieve and sufficient time to investigate whether it could become self-sufficient. A letter sent to the membership by Morison in October of that year, announcing the fourth annual meeting of the Association had an urgent appeal. “Matters of special importance are coming up for considerations and all members are urgently requested to be present.”⁶¹ The Annual Report included these ominous words: “It seems as if the time has come to consider the future of the Association. The facts show us that

⁵⁹ Mary Morison to members of the Anna Ticknor Library Association, March 19, 1900, Scrapbooks for the Society to Encourage Studies at Home, Chamberlain Collection of Autographs, Ms.fAM 1418(3), Boston Public Library, Boston, MA. Courtesy of the Trustees of the Boston Public Library/Rare Books.

⁶⁰ “Anna Ticknor Library Association,” June 14, 1900, Scrapbooks for the Society to Encourage Studies at Home, Chamberlain Collection of Autographs, Ms.fAM 1418(3), Boston Public Library, Boston, MA. Courtesy of the Trustees of the Boston Public Library/Rare Books.

⁶¹ Mary Morison to members of the Anna Ticknor Library Association, October 21, 1901. Scrapbooks for the Society to Encourage Studies at Home, Chamberlain Collection of Autographs, Ms.fAM 1418(3), Boston Public Library, Boston, MA. Courtesy of the Trustees of the Boston Public Library/Rare Books.

our circulation of books has been practically the same each year....”⁶² The Association was just not growing. It appeared that the library was in financial distress. In April 1902, an announcement was circulated and published regarding the fate of the Association.

The Executive Committee of the Anna Ticknor Library Association regrets to announce that the circulation of books and photographs will cease after June 1st, 1902.

The library has been supported since the Fall of 1897 chiefly by kind gifts of friends who wish to carry on, in some way, the work of the Society to Encourage Studies at Home. The increased number of correspondence societies and public libraries has been such as to diminish the demand for our books, and the expenses have so far exceeded the receipts that it seems best to discontinue our work.⁶³

The Association met the same fate as the Society, a lack funds and a perceived change in societal need that made it impossible to continue in the same manner. But this time was different in that there was no attempt to evolve or create something new so that work could continue. The art works of the Association were given to the Fort Worth Carnegie Public Library in honor of the many women in clubs from that area who had studied with the Society and now the Association. The collection was to be known as the Anna Ticknor Collection.⁶⁴ The collection of books and artifacts of the Association were given to the Boston Public Library, as evidenced by their holdings. The books of the Association would be closed forever, and Anna Eliot Ticknor’s legacy would soon be lost to history.

⁶² “The Anna Ticknor Library Association. Annual Meeting, Nov. 9, 1901.” Scrapbooks for the Society to Encourage Studies at Home, Chamberlain Collection of Autographs, Ms.fAM 1418(3), Boston Public Library, Boston, MA. Courtesy of the Trustees of the Boston Public Library/Rare Books.

⁶³ “Anna Ticknor Library Association,” Scrapbooks for the Society to Encourage Studies at Home, Chamberlain Collection of Autographs, Ms.fAM 1418(3), Boston Public Library, Boston, MA. Courtesy of the Trustees of the Boston Public Library/Rare Books.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

CHAPTER VIII
THE INSPIRATION FOR A NATIONAL MOVEMENT AND THE INFLUENCE
UPON THE FIELD OF ADULT EDUCATION

In writing about the state of the field of adult education and its historical literature, Susan Imel states, “One of the hallmarks of a profession is an understanding and appreciation of its history and how that history fits into the general social and political context.”¹ The misfortune for the field is that there has been a lack of scholarly research on the contributions of women to the field’s historical development. Jane Hugo proclaims, “Adult education history suffers from gender bias.”² The contributions of women such as Dorothy Canfield Fisher, Kate Kimball, and Anna Eliot Ticknor conspicuously lack the depth of research that many of the male figures have garnered. The literature of adult education has done little more than offer a passing nod, if any recognition, to the contributions of Ticknor and the Society to Encourage Studies at Home. Of the five comprehensive American history texts in the field of adult education, only two mention the Society to Encourage Studies at Home, Knowles’ *The Adult Education Movement in the United States*³ and Kett’s *The Pursuit of Knowledge Under Difficulties*.⁴ Of these two texts only Kett mentions Ticknor by name. Knowles provides but a brief description of the Society directly quoted from a second source by

¹ Susan Imel, “Trends and Issues in Adult Education,” (1988): 7 – 8, Education Resources Information Center database, Accession No. ED303678 [Accessed July 20, 2009].

² Jane M. Hugo, “Adult Education history and the Issue of Gender: Toward a Different History of Adult Education in America,” *Adult Education Quarterly* 41, no.1 (Fall 1990): 1.

³ Malcolm S. Knowles, *The Adult Education Movement in the United States* (New York: Holt, Rhinehart, and Winston, 1962), 38.

⁴ Joseph F. Kett, *The Pursuit of Knowledge Under Difficulties: From Self Improvement to Adult Education in America, 1750 – 1990* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1994), 160.

Noffsinger.⁵ At best the information cited is incorrect. The Society is described as meeting its death due to ineffectiveness in meeting the abilities and needs of its students.⁶ This is in direct conflict with the reported decision of the board to close the Society not for lack of participation but instead for lack of Ticknor's leadership following her death. The description as ineffective also contradicts the adjusted enrollment numbers when clubs are included, as previously discussed, that indicated stability in student participation in the Society. Kett provides only passing information on the Society, choosing instead to focus on Chautauqua's Literary and Scientific Circle as a greater and more influential movement in correspondence and adult education. The remaining historical texts, Grattan's *In Quest of Knowledge*,⁷ Stubblefield and Keane's *Adult Education in the American Experience*⁸, and Adams' *Frontiers in American Culture*⁹ mention neither Ticknor nor the Society. Ticknor and her Society should be included among the historical figures examined in Adult Education history, if only for the simple fact that this was the first correspondence education venture in the United States, for the influence they exerted upon the development of correspondence education, university extension, and library holdings nationwide, and for their role in further development of educational opportunities for women, particularly in higher education. To this list of accomplishments that make Ticknor and the Society worthy of inclusion in the historical

⁵ See John S. Noffsinger, *Correspondence Schools, Lyceums, and Chautauquas* (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1926).

⁶ Ibid, 5.

⁷ C. Hartley Grattan, *In Quest of Knowledge* (New York: Association Press, 1955).

⁸ Harold W. Stubblefield and Patrick Keane, *Adult Education in the American Experience: From the Colonial Period to the Present* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1994).

⁹ James Truslow Adams, *Frontiers in American Culture: A Study of Adult Education in a Democracy* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1944).

research of the field should be added that they were the inspiration for the establishment of the largest movement in Adult Education history.

Ticknor's inspiration for her Society was the English Society which she frequently mentioned in the annual reports of the Society and is also included in the first stories printed by the *Atlantic Monthly*. Though the organization inspired her to create a society in the United States that offered educational opportunities to women at a distance, the addition of regular correspondence to a distance education initiative was her own innovation. It was Ticknor who dared to imagine the exchange of ideas between facilitator and learner via the exchange of letters. Ticknor's Society to Encourage Studies at Home was not only the first correspondence school in the United States and the first known institution worldwide to include regular correspondence as a method of instruction; it was also the inspiration for a national movement in adult education, though credit has been denied for more than a century by educational historians. It is Ticknor's Society whose methods were appropriated without acknowledgement by "the first integrated core program of adult education in this country on a national scale."¹⁰ Historians have described this institution as a "pioneer" in correspondence education for adults,¹¹ and some have gone so far as to credit the advent of correspondence education in the United States to this particular institution.¹² In fact, it was Ticknor's unacknowledged Society which began the correspondence movement in the United States, and it was her ideas of education that reached beyond the walls of formal institutions and became the

¹⁰ Malcolm S. Knowles, *The Adult Education Movement in the United States* (New York: Holt, Rhinehart, and Winston, 1962), 37.

¹¹ James Truslow Adams, *Frontiers of American Culture: A Study of Adult Education in a Democracy* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1944), 151.

¹² Edwin G. Dexter, *A History of Education in the United States* (New York: Burt Franklin, 1971), 545.

muse of John Heyl Vincent and the model for the Chautauqua Literary and Scientific Circle and the Chautauqua University.

The larger Chautauqua Assembly, today the Chautauqua Institute, was founded in 1874 by inventor and philanthropist Lewis Miller and Methodist minister, later bishop, John Heyl Vincent as a summer program for Sunday School teachers, aimed at engaging men and women in Bible study and educational methods.¹³ Lewis (1829 – 1899) was born in Ohio and made his fortune inventing and improving agricultural machinery. He had a longtime interest in both secular and sacred education, serving on the Board of Education for four years and as the Sunday School Superintendent for the Methodist Episcopal Church for several years in Akron. He was recognized for his innovative work in Sunday School education, including building design to facilitate that education.¹⁴ His obituary describes him as the “Father of Chautauqua” and shares that he “evolved the idea of the Chautauqua Assembly. This was in 1874, and after laying his plans before Bishop John H. Vincent and other clergymen, they were placed in operation.”¹⁵ The newspaper of the Assembly, the *Chautauqua Assembly Herald*, relayed Miller’s importance to the work of the summer program. “We wonder what we would do at Chautauqua without Lewis Miller. He is one of the two men always here. His wonderful business abilities, his great generosity and his fund of fresh and original ideas, make him a very pillar of strength to the movement. As a man of ideas and a man of organizing

¹³ Jesse L. Hurlbut, *The Story of Chautauqua* (New York: G.P. Putnam’s Sons, 1921), 20 – 21.

¹⁴ *Ibid*, 19 – 20.

¹⁵ “Death of Lewis Miller,” *New York Times*, February 18, 1899. An interesting side note, Miller was the father-in-law to another famous inventor, Thomas Alva Edison.

power, he had no superior.”¹⁶ Miller was the first president for the Assembly and remained in this office until his death in 1899.

John Heyl Vincent (1832 – 1920) was born in Alabama but relocated to the northern United States at the age of five. He became a circuit preacher for the Methodist Episcopal Church at the young age of sixteen. As his ministry matured, so did his preaching assignments, eventually serving churches in New Jersey and Illinois. His work was well noticed, particularly in the area of Sunday school education, and he was tapped to become the editor of *Sunday School Quarterly* in 1865, which would later be known as the *Sunday School Teacher*. In 1869, the Methodist Episcopal Church transferred Vincent to New York to become the General Agent of Sunday Schools, assigned to organize sacred education throughout the world on behalf of the church.¹⁷ When Lewis and Vincent met, the chemistry was magical. Lewis, the idea man, and Vincent, the preacher and Sunday school coordinator, began to conspire to create what would become the Chautauqua Assembly, a summer camp hosted annually on the shores of Lake Chautauqua in New York.

The Chautauqua Assembly was well-received and grew rapidly. But Vincent was concerned about the disconnection between those who attended summer workshops, known as Chautauquans, during the off season. He wanted to create a program that would maintain the relationships between Chautauquans, while furthering their intellectual, spiritual, and moral development. The new development he came up with “to hold these people together, deepen their loyalty, and enlarge and enrich Chautauqua’s

¹⁶ “Chautauqua Facts,” *Chautauqua Assembly Herald*, Vol. IX, July 1884.

¹⁷ Jesse L. Hurlbut, *The Story of Chautauqua* (New York: G.P. Putnam’s Sons, 1921), 12 – 16.

ministration”¹⁸ was the Chautauqua Literary and Scientific Circle, aka the CLSC. The organization was created to engage as well as attract and hold students to Chautauqua and its programs. Friend and fellow Methodist Episcopal minister, Jesse Hurlbut (1843 – 1930) recalled the evening Vincent came to tell of the innovation for Chautauqua.

We sat in front of the fireplace in his study, and I listened while for an hour he talked of a new organization which he proposed to launch in the coming season, to be named *The Chautauqua Literary and Scientific Circle*; with a course of study to be carried through four years, with forty minutes as each day’s task, for nine of ten months of each year, in the various branches of knowledge, analogous to the four years of college study. He was so full of his theme and so eloquent upon it that I could only listen to the outpouring utterances. The general purpose was clear before him, but not the details of its operation. Dr. Vincent’s eyes were ever set upward toward the mountain tops glorious in the sunlight, and he did not always think of the thickets to be cut and the path to be made from the lower plain to the summit. I could see some difficulties in the way, some obstacles that must be overcome, and sagely shook my head in doubt of the scheme. It was a radical departure from the earlier ideals, for thus far everything on the Chautauqua program had been along the line of Sunday School training, and this was a forsaking of the well-trodden path for a new world of secular education.¹⁹

Vincent had a tremendous passion for the new venture in which he was about to engage. Though his confidant offered caution and concern, he would not be deterred. Vincent was moved by his “own intellectual needs” to create the CLSC.²⁰ He had wanted to go to college as a young man and earn a degree, but his financial situation would not allow for such an extravagance. He had long regretted not obtaining a college education, and wanted to offer to others like him an opportunity to obtain a college-type education. Hurlbut described Vincent’s CLSC as “the masterpiece of his lifetime, and it might

¹⁸ Harrison John Thorton, “Chautauqua – Adventure in Popular Education,” [1929 – 1952], unpublished manuscript, The Chautauqua Institution Archives, Chautauqua, NY, 271.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 122.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 116.

worthily be so, for it launched a movement in education, the most influential and wide-reaching of any in the annals of the nation.”²¹

Vincent announced the opening of the CLSC on August 10, 1878, at the Chautauqua Assembly. He proposed his four-year plan of study with a reading program and diplomas for those who completed the course of study.²² This plan of reading would provide for a general background in literature, natural and social science, art, and religion.²³ The process of learning as dictated by the CLSC included not only the required readings but also memoranda or outlines to be filled out, regular reports to be sent by the students, and notes on the readings to be provided to the students.²⁴ During Vincent’s announcement speech, it was stated that the CLSC “aims to give the college student’s outlook upon the world of thought, by the studies of primers of literature and science, by the reading of books, by the preparation of syllabi of books read, by written reports of progress, and by correspondence with professors of the several departments, who shall consent to occupy the chairs which we shall invite them.”²⁵ Vincent’s vision was one that provided a college-type experience with appropriate text and professors. He even included diplomas and graduations in the processes so that the college experience could be more fully granted to those who were seeking it. Vincent “felt the importance and practicability of providing a course of popular reading which should open the college

²¹ Ibid., 125.

²² Harrison John Thorton, “Chautauqua – Adventure in Popular Education,” [1929 – 1952], unpublished manuscript, The Chautauqua Institution Archives, Chautauqua, NY, 281.

²³ Jesse L. Hurlbut, *The Story of Chautauqua* (New York: G.P. Putnam’s Sons, 1921), 119.

²⁴ John H. Vincent, *The Chautauqua Movement* (Boston: The Chautauqua Press, 1886), 79.

²⁵ Ibid., 85 – 86.

world to the people deprived of college learning.”²⁶ He further felt that this opening would “likely lead to college pursuits.”²⁷ Vincent’s speech also provided a list of advantages gained from studying through this new venture in education. It helped grow the intellect, develop taste, improve the home and support public school studies, improve the lives of the poor and working classes, counter the ill effects of popular, low-quality literature, bring the scholarly into contact with the less so, build an appreciation for the sciences, and improve the church and the individual’s spiritual life.²⁸ With such a compelling argument for enrolling, few in attendance could resist. Though hoping at least ten would enroll, approximately 700 enrolled immediately following the announcement. Enrollees were asked to write their name and address on a slip of paper and hand it to someone on the platform from which the announcement was made. Vincent was not prepared for the overwhelming response that his announcement generated, so much so that no paper had been provided and no circular with directions for enrollment or study, fees, or membership requirements was prepared. Those who enrolled wrote on any piece of paper that could be found.²⁹ For the first term more than 4,000 students enrolled and the ratio of women to men was approximately five to three.³⁰ Over its lifetime, the CLSC would be heavily female in its enrollment with an average student age of approximately thirty. Less than half of those who enrolled that first year would be able to persevere through the required reading spread across four years. By

²⁶ Ibid., 76.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid., 87.

²⁹ Jesse L. Hurlbut, *The Story of Chautauqua* (New York: P.G. Putnam’s Sons, 1921), 134 – 135.

³⁰ C. Hartley Grattan, *In Quest of Knowledge* (New York: Association Press, 1955), 176.

graduation, known as Recognition Day, of the first cohort, only 1,718 had completed their studies and earned diplomas,³¹ yielding a graduation rate of just over 40%. The ratio of women to men in the group of graduates was three to one.³² Women were not only more likely to enroll but also more likely to persevere, perhaps a reflection of the lack of educational availability for women at that time, particular those age thirty and above.

It was not only the students of the CLSC that struggled with perseverance in their endeavors. Those who taught through the CLSC struggled to maintain the plan of work initially laid out due to the overwhelming response. Citing the *Chautauquan* and the *Chautauqua Handbook*, historian Thorton notes that “[t]he monthly reports of progress, catechisms of important events to be memorized, and the annual examinations eventually fell by the wayside.” He further asserts, “It is clear that all details of the original plans projected by the founders at the outset did not survive, and that less ambitious modifications were subsequently made.”³³ The system Vincent developed could not effectively support the burden created by the massive number of students. As such, the system itself had to be changed, simplified to reduce stress upon those who administered the courses of study, resulting in more of a reading program than a study program. As a result, the individual departments of study and the professors were moved to a new venture in Chautauqua education, university extension. It was within this division that true correspondence education took place at Chautauqua. The ranks of professors included the likes of William Rainey Harper and Herbert Baxter Adams. In 1885, the

³¹ John H. Vincent, *The Chautauqua Movement* (Boston: The Chautauqua Press, 1886), 112.

³² C. Hartley Grattan, *In Quest of Knowledge* (New York?: Association Press 1955), 176.

³³ Harrison John Thorton, “Chautauqua – Adventure in Popular Education,” unpublished manuscript, The Chautauqua Institution Archives, Chautauqua, NY, 287 – 288.

state of New York officially granted Chautauqua the right to confer degrees through what would become known as the Chautauqua University with Chancellor Vincent at its head.³⁴ It was to be a college executed via summer courses and correspondence, but it did not flourish, and in 1889 the university became essentially a university extension program again. It seems likely that the growth of universities nationwide hindered its ability to grow a student population sufficient to support its continued development. The Morrill Land-Grant Act of 1862 had enabled states to build public universities that were more accessible geographically and financially. The more than twenty-five years that had transpired since the Act had given states ample time to grow colleges nationwide. This growth stole potential college students who beforehand would not have had access to a college education, like Vincent himself. The increase in educational opportunities would also spell disaster for the CLSC. The decline of Chautauqua's greatest educational venture was spurred by these increases as well as the growth of book clubs and industrialization and professionalization of the United States economy.³⁵ Though the CLSC still exists today, it operates as a book club using exceptional literature as its material. The correspondence work that it included at inception ceased to exist shortly after it began.

Historians describe the Chautauqua Institute as “the most innovative venture in popular education for adults.”³⁶ It is the CLSC that historians point to as its premiere component in adult education. “The Chautauqua Literary and Scientific Circle, of which

³⁴ Jesse L. Hurlbut, *The Story of Chautauqua* (New York: P.G. Putnam's Sons, 1921), 227 - 228.

³⁵ Harrison John Thorton, “Chautauqua – Adventure in Popular Education,” unpublished manuscript, The Chautauqua Institution Archives, Chautauqua, NY, 439.

³⁶ Harold W. Stubblefield and Patrick Keane, *Adult Education in the American Experience: From the Colonial Period to the Present* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1994), 136.

Vincent was the inventor and prime mover, became the core-institution of the whole setup as far as serious adult education was concerned.”³⁷ A Vincent biographer confirms Vincent as the inventor of the CLSC stating, “It was never John Vincent’s way to arrogate anything to himself. He preferred to extol, in his fluent and emphatic manner, the achievements of other men. If he claimed, as he did, the invention of ‘The Chautauqua Literary and Scientific Circle,’ he undoubtedly had a right to do so.”³⁸ The CLSC was the brain child of John Vincent, one of his greatest achievements. The Chautauqua Institute describes its program for correspondence as the “prototype for book clubs, study groups and university extension courses.”³⁹ As historians have been wont to claim, his invention changed the world of adult education in the United States, having repercussions on access and delivery of education through to modern day.

Though the idea of adding the Chautauqua Literary and Scientific Circle to the Chautauqua Institute was certainly Vincent’s idea, the form it initially took and that would later support the work of the Chautauqua University, was most definitely not his original thought. Vincent took his model for extension of education from Anna Ticknor and the Society to Encourage Studies at Home. It was truly Ticknor’s work that sparked one of the greatest movements in adult education history in the United States, the CLSC. The evidence clearly supports the claim that Vincent borrowed the Society’s model and applied it to his own organization without crediting his inspiration. The basic facts

³⁷ C. Hartley Grattan, *In Quest of Knowledge* (New York?: Association Press 1955), 172.

³⁸ Leon H. Vincent, *John Heyl Vincent: A Biographical Sketch* (New York: MacMillan Company, 1925), 132.

³⁹ Chautauqua Institute. Chautauqua Literary & Scientific Circle: Founded in Chautauqua, New York, 1878: Book List 1878 – 2007. <http://www.ciweb.org/storage/education/CLSC%20historic%20book%20list%202009.pdf> [accessed May 4, 2009], 4.

provide circumstantial support. The Society was founded in 1873, five years prior to the founding of the CLSC. News of the Society was released, including an overview of its methods, by the *Atlantic Monthly* in 1875, three years prior to the founding of the CLSC. News stories about the Society flourished following the initial report by the *Atlantic Monthly*, including reports that appeared in the *New York Times*. Vincent resided in nearby Buffalo, New York, during the early years of Chautauqua.⁴⁰ It is almost certain that he would have seen or heard of the work of the Society considering the publicity and his proximity to the papers that were releasing stories. It also seems highly likely that someone in Vincent's position at the Chautauqua Assembly, an educational venture, would stay abreast of innovations in education.

In addition, Vincent was a longtime "friend" and supporter of the Society, as evidenced by the final annual report of the Society. In the *Twenty-Fourth Annual Report* is found, "Dr. Vincent has always been interested in our Society, and has expressed within a few months his regret for its discontinuation."⁴¹ Though the term "always" can be construed to mean something other than the entire existence of the Society, in this case it very nearly does mean as such. The minutes of the second General Committee meeting held January 10, 1879, read,

Another Society, embracing the whole country & including men as well as women, is starting with a wide-spread success. It unites elements of ours with some of the Schenectady & some of its own original. Its central work is done by the Clergyman who founded it with one clerk & of course no continuous correspondence is attempted; but local circles, as they are called are to keep up the interest, and general examinations will be made by a Committee. Rev. Dr. Vincent, the organizer, has written to the Secretary at various times & obtained

⁴⁰ Harrison John Thorton, "Chautauqua – Adventure in Popular Education," unpublished manuscript, The Chautauqua Institution Archives, Chautauqua, NY, 237.

⁴¹ Society to Encourage Studies at Home. *Twenty-Fourth Annual Report* (Boston: Rockwell and Churchill, 1897), 8.

our Circulars, Reports & lists & called here on New Years Eve. He says that the present plan grew from, or was grafted upon a summer school for teachers in Sunday Schools.⁴²

Vincent was in contact with Ticknor and collecting data on her work with the Society. The timeframe is not completely clear from these minutes, but it is likely that he began investigations quite earlier than when these events were mentioned. Friend, confidant, minister, and fellow Chautauqua administrator Rev. Jesse Hurlbut supports this hypothesis in his recollection of the founding of the CLSC.

The Chautauqua Circle was not planned for specialists, seeking full knowledge upon one subject, but for general readers. Before it was inaugurated there was already established in Boston the Society for Encouragement of Home Study. The student who desired aid through this useful organization was expected to select some one department of knowledge, and then a list of books or articles would be sent to him, with suggestions, questions, and an examination.⁴³

Clearly, Vincent and those around him at Chautauqua were well-familiar with Ticknor and her society, and aware prior to the announcement of the CLSC. The recognition that the CLSC was designed for breadth rather than study of a specific topic indicates that those involved in the creation of the CLSC knowingly chose an alternate route for their version of education via correspondence.

It was not just Vincent and Ticknor who shared a connection. Both William Rainey Harper and Herbert Baxter Adams had Chautauqua connections and had work that intersected with that of the Society. Adams reviewed the History department of the Society and declared it a good measure of the knowledge of any bachelor's student, and Harper's University of Chicago sought information from the Society on executing

⁴² Minutes of the Society to Encourage Studies at Home, Chamberlain Collection of Autographs, Ms.Q.Am. 1414 (3), Boston Public Library, 10. Courtesy of the Trustees of the Boston Public Library/Rare Books.

⁴³ Jesse L. Hurlbut, *The Story of Chautauqua* (New York: P.G. Putnam's Sons, 1921), 119.

correspondence courses as an expansion of their pioneering university extension program and later sent students to the Anna Ticknor Library Association for resources. The timing of the men's first knowledge of the Society is unknown. But there is no doubt that their work intersected that of the Society. Harper, who was one of the first to teach via correspondence for Chautauqua, is most likely to have been aware of Ticknor's work and influenced by it in his own teaching and later in the development of university extension at the University of Chicago.

Vincent's CLSC and Ticknor's Society to Encourage Studies at Home shared some strong similarities. Their statements of purpose seem very much related. Ticknor's Society states that its purpose is "to induce young ladies to form the habit of devoting some part of every day to study of a systematic and thorough kind. Even if the time devoted daily to this use is short, much can be accomplished by perseverance; and the habit soon becomes a delightful one."⁴⁴ Vincent's CLSC professes "to promote habits of reading and study in nature, art, science and in secular and sacred literature in connection with the routine of daily life."⁴⁵ Both expressed a desire to integrate daily life with study. The CLSC however opened this study to men and women, while the Society focused solely on women. Both also expressed the need to encourage the development of "habits" in daily study. This applies both to regularity and to the quality of the study in which students were expected to engage. Vincent's organization differed from Ticknor's

⁴⁴ Society to Encourage Studies at Home, Programme of Studies, No. 1, Scrapbooks of the Society to Encourage Studies at Home, Chamberlain Collection of Autographs, Ms.f.AM. 1418 (1), Boston Public Library, Boston, 1. Courtesy of the Trustees of the Boston Public Library/Rare Books.

⁴⁵ "The Chautauqua Departments," *The Chautauqua Assembly Herald*, Vol. IX, July 1884.

in that it professed to be a “Home College,” “a ‘college for one’s own house.’”⁴⁶ To this end he issued diplomas and held graduation for those who completed the course of study. The Society never gave diplomas, only the occasional certificate, though that practice was rarely exercised. The Society never wished to assert that any particular quantity of learning had been achieved. Ticknor herself stated in reference to the goals of the Society, “We hope to do some good even if it is on a very small scale, by assisting women to form habits of study, without professing anything technical or learned.”⁴⁷ The Society was about lifelong learning for the improvement of self, home, and society. As such were her beliefs, no diplomas were ever issued and no parallels to a college education made. In fact, the Society encouraged all to continue their studies, students and correspondents alike, throughout a lifetime. No diploma could measure a lifetime of learning. Whereas Vincent’s vision of education had a termination point, the completion of the plan of study, Ticknor’s Society continued to evolve offering more opportunities for education and encouraging all who enrolled to seek those opportunities across a lifetime.

Second, both included groups who studied as adjuncts of their organizations. Ticknor’s Society hosted its first group in its inaugural year at Hallowell, Maine, though not by design but by chance. It took time for her and the rest of the Society to embrace this idea for education, but she eventually did, enrolling groups and clubs in her Society officially beginning in the tenth term though she never appears to have denied enrollment during the previous nine terms. Ticknor felt that the work of the individual was to be the

⁴⁶ “The Chautauqua Literary and Scientific Circle,” *Chautauqua Assembly Herald*, Vol. IX, July 1884.

⁴⁷ Anna Ticknor to English friend, September 29, 1873, in *Society to Encourage Studies at Home. Society to Encourage Studies at Home: Founded by Anna Eliot Ticknor: Born June 1st, 1823, Died October 5th, 1896.* (Cambridge, MA: Riverside Press, 1897), 8.

focus of the Society and not the group. Remarkably similar, Vincent felt that the work of the individual could not be replaced by group work and designed the CLSC to be for individuals as well as circles.⁴⁸ The circles were meant to supplement the work of the CLSC. As this was to be a college experience, the purpose of the group was to support and provide that element of fraternity that is an indelible part of college life. Interestingly, these support networks did not have staying power. The “mortality rate among circles based on the four year period was high.”⁴⁹ Even though these groups were encouraged as a base for education, the connections made were not strong enough to maintain group stability. On the other hand, those groups connected with the Society seemed to show remarkable perseverance, many such as the Hallowell, Maine group and the Fort Worth, Texas Woman’s Wednesday Club continuing their studies over several years.

Methods also supply a source of similarity between the two organizations. The Society used reading lists, supported by instructions and notes from the correspondent, memory notes produced by the student, annual examinations that were later replaced by regular examinations, optional annual papers to be submitted to the annual meeting, and regular correspondence. The CLSC, according to William Rainey Harper used three “indispensible pedagogical tools” for correspondence at Chautauqua: an instruction sheet, an exam, and an examination sheet.⁵⁰ Students also produced “Outline Memoranda,” which were made up of a series of questions to be answered by the student over the

⁴⁸ Harrison John Thorton, “Chautauqua – Adventure in Popular Education,” unpublished manuscript, The Chautauqua Institution Archives, Chautauqua, NY, 376, 380.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 460.

⁵⁰ C. Hartley Grattan, *In Quest of Knowledge* (New York?: Association Press 1955), 173.

readings for the year.⁵¹ Different from tests, these could be completed using one's books and notes. Regular correspondence was initially to be a component of the CLSC but could not be implemented given the large size of the organization. These methods were subsequently used for the development of the extension component of the Chautauqua University. Basically, the components of the two institutions are the same. Students were sent instructions and notes on readings provided by the institution, they were asked to complete some sort of outline or summary of their reading (the Society requested this be done from memory and the CLSC by completing an open-book question sheet), and students were asked to complete an exam over the material they studied. The Society supported this work via correspondence as did the Chautauqua University, whereas the CLSC used the circle and the magazine of the CLSC, *The Chautauquan*, to provide student support. There was also a slight difference in scope of readings covered. The Society had its students focus on particular branches of study. The CLSC had students study a broader range of topics, so as to have students become "general readers" as opposed to experts in a particular area of study.⁵²

The Society and Ticknor recognized the similarities in the two organizations, as well as the competition for students the opening of the CLSC created. Ticknor often mentions the CLSC by name and its mass appeal in the United States, and there appears to be some growing tension between the two organizations as they both continued to grow in the new field of correspondence education. Ticknor mentions during the third General Committee meeting held April 18, 1879, a speech given by one of the Chautauqua lecturers and its reference to her organization. "The Rev. Joseph Clark

⁵¹ Jesse L. Hurlbut, *The Story of Chautauqua* (New York: P.G. Putnam's Sons, 1921), 150.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 119.

alluded to us in a Monday Lecture as preface to an announcement of Dr. Vincent's Chautauqua Circle, and his language was highly laudatory although he put us in the past tense altogether, if the report in the Daily Advertiser is to be trusted."⁵³ It seems that though flattered by the glowing reference, Ticknor was somewhat taken aback by the reference to the Society as a former organization rather than the flourishing society it was. In later years she refers to "the great popularity of the Chautauqua Circle"⁵⁴ and the growth of other similar organizations as a cause of the Society's decline in individual enrollment. Regardless of how popular the CLSC became, Ticknor recognized that the quality of educational experience she offered through the Society was greater than that offered by the CLSC. The Society provided depth and rigorousness in study that the CLSC could not maintain, it provided an experience that went beyond reading books, and it provided a supportive relationship through correspondence. It also provided a creativity in instruction that was unmatched. The lending library which operated via the postal service was an ingenious invention which supported learners by providing materials where none existed or finances were tight. The Society also managed to offer a wide range of laboratory science courses, something Vincent's CLSC intentionally omitted,⁵⁵ likely due to the perceived difficulty in providing access to appropriate equipment and materials for study, something the Society easily accomplished.

⁵³ Minutes of the Society to Encourage Studies at Home, Chamberlain Collection of Autographs, Ms.Q.Am. 1414 (3), Boston Public Library, 33. Courtesy of the Trustees of the Boston Public Library/Rare Books.

⁵⁴ Fifth Executive Committee Meeting, February 27, 1886, Minutes of the Society to Encourage Studies at Home, Chamberlain Collection of Autographs, Ms.Q.Am. 1414 (4), Boston Public Library. Courtesy of the Trustees of the Boston Public Library/Rare Books.

⁵⁵ Harrison John Thorton, "Chautauqua – Adventure in Popular Education," unpublished manuscript, The Chautauqua Institution Archives, Chautauqua, NY, 376, 291.

In the Society's Twenty-Fourth Annual Report, the Acting Secretary included a statement that reflected the Society's understanding of the differences between the two organizations, stating "The main differences between the Society to Encourage Studies at Home and the Chautauqua Literary and Scientific Circles are that in the former all the work has been done as far as possible without publicity, the teaching has been entirely gratuitous, and great stress has been laid on the personal relations brought about by the correspondence between teachers and students."⁵⁶ The Society's operation was far different from that of the CLSC in that it was established as a volunteer organization. The CLSC was run as a business, paying its teachers for their services and generating income through students. The fee for joining the CLSC was relatively inexpensive at fifty cents per person, later raised to one dollar. But in order to increase funds, the CLSC sold the books for the year to members, and there was no lending library. Book costs for the year were initially set at \$7.50, and then reduced to \$5.00 per set when the cost of membership was increased.⁵⁷ There was also the expense of subscribing to the *Chautauquan*. In order to have access to the supplementary readings, one had to pay another dollar for a subscription. Even at its least expensive, the cost of enrolling and having access to the full set of materials would have been \$7.00⁵⁸, a fairly large amount of money for the late nineteenth century and far more expensive than the flat \$3.00 fee for joining the Society plus the half cent per day cost of borrowing books. It wasn't just that the CLSC sold books to the students, they published and even wrote many of the

⁵⁶ Society to Encourage Studies at Home, *Twenty-Fourth Annual Report* (Boston: Rockwell and Churchill, 1897), 7.

⁵⁷ Harrison John Thorton, "Chautauqua – Adventure in Popular Education," unpublished manuscript, The Chautauqua Institution Archives, Chautauqua, NY, 376, 290.

⁵⁸ The sum of \$7.00 in the late nineteenth century in today's money values is roughly equivalent to \$150.

books they sold. Vincent's own works often appeared in the reading lists in the first ten years of the CLSC. In the 1883 – 1884 term Vincent's works made up nearly one-third of the required reading.⁵⁹ This is in sharp contrast to Ticknor's Society which sought to provide quality reading from a wide range of sources and not just create a market for the Society's own work and ideas.

The most distinguishing factor of the Society was the relationships built between student and correspondent. It was the cornerstone of the educational system that Ticknor developed. One student and later correspondent wrote following Ticknor's death, "it seems to me to do a personal work that other societies do not do."⁶⁰ Only Ticknor and the Society she developed so carefully could do the type of personal education that was offered to women around the world. Their offer of education connected one woman to another, regardless of class, geography, financial ability, or physical limitation. The same correspondent wrote of one of her own students, one she offered to continue teaching even after the close of the Society.

In reply to one of my students, asking if she could obtain the lesson leaflet for next year, I told her that I would continue the work with her through the course, and she replies: "Thank you very much for your offer to help me...I shall appreciate it very much," etc., and adds, "I doubly appreciate the Home Study, as my deafness debars me from the Chautauqua Circle or any other literary society." I do not doubt that this Society reaches many who are reached in no other way....⁶¹

⁵⁹ Chautauqua Institute, "Chautauqua Literary & Scientific Circle: Founded in Chautauqua, New York, 1878: Book List 1878 – 2007," <http://www.ciweb.org/storage/education/CLSC%20historic%20book%20list%202009.pdf> [accessed May 4, 2009], 7 – 10.

⁶⁰ Miss MWB to Society to Encourage Studies at Home, December 10, 1896, in Society to Encourage Studies at Home, *Society to Encourage Studies at Home: Founded in 1873 by Anna Eliot Ticknor: Born June 1st, 1823, Died October 5th, 1896* (Cambridge, MA: Riverside Press, 1897), 152 – 153.

⁶¹ Ibid.

There was a special connection established between many a correspondent and student as reflected in this letter. This was what Ticknor hoped to accomplish in support of the education offered to students of the Society. This sisterly relationship that undergirded the learning environment increased persistence and offered the one element that society in general denied women in regards to their education, encouragement to succeed. In a time and place where women were discouraged from furthering their own serious academic achievements, when even physicians claimed harm to a woman's health as a repercussion of advanced education,⁶² one woman, Anna Ticknor, offered strength to those who would go against the grain of society and seek intellectual stimulation of a greater caliber. In addition, the reaching out of correspondent to student allowed the Society to accomplish easily, something that the rest of the nation would continue to struggle with over the next century, the overcoming of socially imposed boundaries. For the Society, one's race or class did not matter, all correspondents and students found themselves equal under the Society's umbrella. Segregation and distinctions based upon wealth existed within all other avenues of education and society. The Society, cloaked in silence, was able to circumnavigate the restrictions of polite society and invite into the educational experience *every* woman who wished to learn.

Though the Chautauqua Literary and Scientific Circle may have created the largest wave in adult education history, it was the Society to Encourage Studies at Home which made the first splash. It was the first correspondence school in the United States, and it provided both inspiration and model for the educational venture that swept the

⁶² Edward H. Clarke, MD in his book *Sex in Education Or A Fair Chance for Girls* stated, "It has been reserved for our age and country, by its methods of female education, to demonstrate that it is possible in some cases to divest a woman of her chief feminine functions; in others, to produce grave and even fatal disease of the brain and nervous system; in others, to engender torturing derangements and imperfections of the reproductive apparatus that imbitter [sic] a lifetime." See Edward H. Clarke, *Sex in Education Or A Fair Chance for Girls* (Boston: James R. Osgood and Company, 1874), 116. Google Books.

United States. As such the Society should have a significant place in the history of adult education. If its designation as first is not enough to solidify its position, the fact that the Society was uniquely, in intent and execution, adult education should. In Schroeder's typology of adult education, the Society would be marked as a type I institution. It was one that was designed with adults in mind and strictly for adults.⁶³ It was not meant to be a home college or a college replacement as was the CLSC. The Society was meant for the improvement of the individual over a lifetime of learning.

Ticknor's Society also models many of the ideals of the modern field of adult education well before these ideals were articulated. Considered the Father of Adult Education, Eduard Lindeman wrote *The Meaning of Adult Education* in 1926 and articulated the first definition of adult education and laid out the foundations of his own philosophy of adult education. In this landmark piece, Lindeman asserts, "The whole of life is learning, therefore education can have no endings. This new venture is called *adult education* – not because it is confined to adults but because adulthood, maturity, defines its limits."⁶⁴ Ticknor espoused this same belief in education more than fifty years before Lindeman wrote his own philosophy of adult education. Not only did she express a belief in the value of learning across a lifetime, she put that belief into action through the Society encouraging and supporting women of all ages who enrolled, some more than eighty years old.

⁶³ Wayne L. Schroeder, "Adult Education Defined and Described," in *Handbook of Adult Education*, ed. Robert M. Smith, George F. Akers, and James R. Kidd (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1970), 37.

⁶⁴ Eduard C. Lindeman, *The Meaning of Adult Education*, 4th ed. (Norman, OK: Printing Services, The University of Oklahoma, 1989), 4 – 5.

Ticknor's work through the Society also models many of the accepted "Principles of Effective Adult Education."⁶⁵ Jane Vella's 1994 book *Learning to Listen, Learning to Teach* outlines these effective principles. More than a century earlier, Ticknor had put many of these good practices to work. Vella suggests that good practice in adult education includes, among other traits, a safe learning environment, solid relationships between learner and teacher, praxis or learning through doing followed by reflection, respect of learners as effective decision makers in their own learning, and accountability in learning.⁶⁶ All of these traits can be found within the activities of the Society. Ticknor placed high value in creating a safe environment for the women who enrolled to learn. She protected their identities and was sure to operate the Society in general in a way so as not to draw negative public attention. Ticknor valued the relationship between learner and correspondent as a key component of the learning transaction. She encouraged the correspondents to build relationships that would support and encourage the women with whom they exchanged letters. The Society encouraged learners to actively apply learning to their own worlds, particularly in the area of science. Ticknor procured specimens and laboratory equipment which was loaned to students for the purpose of hands-on study in their own part of the country. She also encouraged them to create new samples and specimens to be shared with other learners in the Society. This encouragement showed great respect for these women as learners. Ticknor further demonstrated respect through course offerings and course adjustments to meet the needs and desires of the students. Courses were developed for students who expressed interest outside the available

⁶⁵ Jane Vella, *Learning to Listen, Learning to Teach: The Power of Dialogue in Educating Adults*, Revised ed. (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2002), 4.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

offerings and courses were modified to suit the particular learning needs of student where necessary. This is evidenced primarily through the expansion of course offerings, but also through Executive Committee reports reflecting modifications for students with different needs than what was available at that time. Though the learning was delivered through correspondence, Ticknor and the Society found a way to hold students accountable for their learning through memory notes, reports, and essays. Students were required to submit regularly memory notes and reports which were corrected, critiqued and returned to support further learning. Essays at the end of each term were encouraged for students to use in demonstrating their growth in their area of study. Ticknor and the Society have much to offer the field of adult education on good practices in adult education through their delivery of correspondence education in the 19th century.

Adams, who attempted the first comprehensive study of adult education history in the United States, asserts that it was women of the nineteenth century who promoted the idea that adults could and should be educated and that education was a lifelong process with a purpose to “broaden and enrich”⁶⁷ the lives of those who engaged in lifelong learning. He further makes the bold statement:

By and large, as I see the picture of American life in the nineteenth century, I would say that the real beginning of the idea of Adult Education must be credited to women – motivated often by merely frustrations and the desire for social advancement, sometimes by deeper and nobler yearnings, even when they wore blue stockings – rather than to the high-brow and dignified educational institutions.⁶⁸

It was women who began the movement towards adult education as it is known in modern times. Ticknor was one of those 19th-century women who suffered the

⁶⁷ James Truslow Adams, *Frontiers in American Culture: A Study of Adult Education in a Democracy* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1944), 138.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 138 – 139.

oppression of limited access to a formal, higher education because of her gender. But, she would not let that missed opportunity prevent her from sharing the private education she had received from her father with those who would, otherwise, never have access to such an advantage. Motivated by her own frustration and a sense of service in response to what she had received, she mobilized an army of women to change the educational availability for women in 19th century America, opening study through the work of the Society to all women. As a result, she changed the potential for education forever. Bergmann states, “By providing an alternative mode of education, the society helped to enlarge the notion of what adult education *could* be”⁶⁹ [emphasis added]. Anna Eliot Ticknor and the Society to Encourage Studies at Home have held a place in adult education history much like the place each held in its contemporary society – one hidden from the scrutiny of the public eye. Anna Eliot Ticknor sought neither accolades for herself nor publicity for the Society she nurtured. As such, she may have contributed to her own absence from adult education history. Regardless of the factors that have kept this invisible woman and her silent university out of the literature of the field, each should now hold a significant place in the history of adult education.

⁶⁹ Harriet F. Bergmann, “‘The Silent University’: The Society to Encourage Studies at Home, 1873 – 1897,” *The New England Quarterly* 74, no. 3 (September 2001): 477.

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