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Athens of the South: College Life in Nashville, A New South City, 1897-1917

Mary Ellen Pethel
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ATHENS OF THE SOUTH:
COLLEGE LIFE IN NASHVILLE, A NEW SOUTH CITY, 1897-1917

by

Mary Ellen Pethel

Under the Direction of Dr. Wendy Hamand Venet

ABSTRACT

The Progressive Era affected the South in different ways from other regions of the United States. Because Southern society was more entrenched in patriarchy and traditional social strictures, Nashville provides an excellent lens in which to assess the vision of a New South city. Known as “Athens of the South,” Nashville legitimized this title with the emergence of several colleges and universities of regional and national prominence in the 1880s and 1890s. In the first two decades of the twentieth century, Nashville’s universities solidified their status as reputable institutions, with Vanderbilt and Fisk Universities garnering national prominence. Within Nashville, local colleges, including Ward Belmont College, David Lipscomb University, Peabody College, Roger Williams University, and Meharry Medical College shaped and were shaped by the growing city. Higher education and urbanization created a dialectic that produced a new generation and a new monied class of young adults who thought and acted differently

from their parents. Moreover, women became more active participants in public spheres because of opportunities provided by higher education. In most cases, Nashville's women continued to use their husband's prominence to earn greater success. In regard to race, the city's African American colleges helped to produce men and women who formed the backbone of the rising black middle class and elite in the South.

Nashville endured great change, formally beginning with the 1897 Tennessee Centennial Exposition, whereby the city's trajectory followed a more modern approach, albeit southern style. Higher education played a large role in the direction of the city, both literally and figuratively. Shifts in attitude toward race, gender, and leisure combined to create a new youth culture. Young women and men socialized on and off campus through a variety of new forms of recreation. The experience of "college life" was more than attending classes but rather a fluid phase beginning with youthfulness and ending with adulthood. Social interaction increasingly became a major component of college life; the city of Nashville simply provided the stage. By U.S. entrance into World War I, Nashville had legitimized its position as a Southern urban center of entertainment and higher education.

INDEX WORDS: Education, Nashville, Tennessee, Gilded/ Progressive, New South, African American, Race, Gender, Leisure, Recreation, Urbanization, College, University, Vanderbilt, Belmont, Ward Belmont, Fisk, Meharry, Lipscomb, Peabody, College sports, Physical education, Women's education, Ryman Auditorium, Public parks, Entertainment, Suburbs, Curriculum

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By

Mary Ellen Pethel

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy
in the College of Arts and Sciences
Georgia State University

2008

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DEDICATION

I am blessed to have four living grandparents. They were children when World War I and the Progressive Era ended. Their parents struggled to raise children not in the city, but in the agrarian Georgia countryside. They also dealt with issues of race and gender – deep in the Deep South. All were educated with the basics, yet none had the money, time, and/or opportunity to go to college. My grandparents and great-grandparents were not part of the new money class brought by industry and education. They did not live in a New South city. They did not attend sorority dances or football games, and they did not take classes in chemistry or pedagogy. Yet, they are children of the Gilded/Progressive era; they are the by-products of post-bellum challenges and social change. I do not want to leave them out, even if they did not live within the demographic context of my research. So I hope they now enjoy reading this yarn I have spun, for with this dedication, they are now part of the story.

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Throughout my graduate school training, I have read hundreds of books and consulted hundreds more. I always read the acknowledgements of the author and wondered what I would write when it was my turn to put my appreciation into words. Now in retrospect, as the light grows bright at the end of the tunnel, I realize that my gratitude must be divided among more than most. Truly, this project is a reflection of the unmitigated support I have received over the past two years. My committee is at the top of the list, offering their time and suggestions, all the while allowing me the freedom to research and write with my own voice. In particular, Dr. Wendy Venet and Dr. Larry Youngs have served as my mentors, not only for my dissertation but also for the majority of my time as a graduate student. I could ask for no better role models, both in and out of the classroom. They epitomize all the excellence that higher education has to offer, and deserve my utmost admiration and affection.

My family and friends have also played an integral role, helping me set deadlines, reminding me to work even when motivation was low, and celebrating with me each step along the way. My parents, Dr. Stan Pethel and Jo Ann Pethel have always validated the value of education and have supported me, in countless ways, throughout my educational journey. Dr. Steve Blankenship lent invaluable insight into early chapter drafts and gave of his time, not because he was obligated, but because he remains a faithful colleague and friend. The Special Collections faculty and staff at Vanderbilt University, Belmont College, Fisk University, and Lipscomb University were always accommodating whether pulling a source, photocopying, or helping me navigate their school's rich history. Perhaps the leading urban historian for Nashville's history, Dr. Don Doyle graciously met with me in the early months of my research. His time and interest in my project motivated me throughout the research and writing process.

Other individuals that must be mentioned are William Traugher, Jenny Rushing, Polly Linden, Marie Byers, Christine Douglas, and Judy Williams. Countless others deserve thanks, but they are too numerous to name. I only hope that this work will reflect the magnitude of family and friends who have given much so that I could conclude this chapter in my career. I trust that they know, even without these acknowledgements, what they mean to me. As for my efforts, I hope they reflect the motto of the Ward Seminary Class of 1903. Alongside these women of the past, I also strive, “To be, not to seem.”

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1. Introduction

Nashville commemorated its state centennial in the spring of 1897, but lying beneath the parades and parties, residents experienced an assortment of subtle emotions. They celebrated the event and the attention it brought to the city, all the while partly clinging to the old southern order and partly relishing in Nashville's New South success. As the Centennial Exposition came to a close, another convention group gathered in Nashville to make a statement. The United Confederate Veterans moved from their meetings at the Union Gospel Auditorium (later the Ryman Auditorium in 1901) onto the streets of downtown. In the pouring rain, approximately 4000 men formed company lines and marched the three miles up Broad Street and West End Avenue to the Exposition. The march served as a symbolic reminder that northern notions of industrial progress could never replace the meaning of southern culture and tradition.¹ Even as President William McKinley arrived at Union Station to visit the Centennial Exposition that year, he was met and escorted by an honor guard composed of former Confederate soldiers.² As a veteran of the Union's Twenty-Sixth Ohio regiment, McKinley witnessed the continued devotion and loyalty to the "Lost Cause" and to southern regionalism, even as Nashville enjoyed the growth and prosperity that came with industrialization.

Nashville, from 1897 to 1917, represents a hybrid of northern and southern ideas of progress that juxtaposed antebellum traditions and modern notions. The usual power

¹ See: Don Doyle, *Nashville in the New South, 1890-1930* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1985) and Mike Ramirez, "The Lost Cause in a New South City; Nashville, 1890-1910," *Nashville as a Historical Laboratory* (1978). Nashville also served as publishing home to *The Confederate Veteran* that began in 1893 by Sumner Archibald Cunningham. It became the official magazine of the United Confederate Veterans and the United Daughters of the Confederacy. There was a second convention in 1904 in Nashville. In 1894, Mrs. C.M. Goodlet of Nashville founded the United Daughters of the Confederacy, and also served as the first president. In fact, seven Nashville businessmen were leading sponsors of both conventions. One such leader was Robert Love Taylor, a leading businessman, and later governor of Tennessee. As Ramirez writes, "He espoused a cross mixture of southern pride and the lost cause with business and industry. He said that men should turn in their swords for the pursuit of commerce."

² *Nashville Banner*, June 11, 1897.

players, older white men, continued to determine the city's direction, yet a new generation of historical actors began to shape the proverbial course. The people of Nashville were grappling with an evolving, collective identity throughout the Progressive Era. At the center of this socially constructed enterprise were white women and African American men and women who played a larger, more visible role in Nashville's New South vision. With greater numbers of young people attending colleges and universities, these factors combined to influence the trajectory of Nashville's urbanization and distinctiveness as the "Athens of the South."

This study proposes to link the themes of urbanization, education, gender, race, and leisure in Nashville from 1897-1917. Urbanization, as a category of analysis, reveals the continuities and discontinuities of life in the city while imposing a loose chronological framework to provide an overall narrative.³ Social and urban historiography reveals a limited focus on southern cities, compared to northern cities, during the Gilded/Progressive era. Moreover, there exists a lack of historical treatment regarding the interplay and interconnectivity of urbanization, education, and leisure for any New South city. Nashville, as a microcosm, not only serves as a city largely overlooked by post-reconstruction historiography, but also presents a fresh treatment of the cyclical nature of college life in a New South City for Nashville's young women and

³ Urbanization represents the movement into and growth of cities particularly after the Civil War. Yet, the concept of urbanization entails a much more complex definition and also produces many new trajectories connected to urban space and experience. Urbanization is also connected to concepts of modernity. Modernity in this study represents the transgression from separate Victorian spheres in regard to gender and the shift from classical to contemporary educational methodologies. Further modernity encompasses the emergence of commercialized recreation and leisure and the development of technology and organization of municipal government. As southern cities modernized, urbanization acted centrifugally upon past institutions and social norms and did produce more advanced ideas and services in regard to social interaction, educational institutions, transportation, and city planning and management. However, more "modern" ideas and services in turn created a new set of problems in regard to political, economical, and social systems. As such, another movement arose in the midst of urbanization and the industrial education. The Progressive movement attempted to reform many of the problems created by urbanization and industrialization. Progressivism remains in most cases an urban movement led by in part by municipal leaders and members of the middle class.

men. During this period, Nashville transitioned, emerging from a culture shaped by an antebellum heritage into a New South vision characterized by shifting expectations and institutions adopting novel solutions to new problems.⁴

Accompanying the development of well-respected colleges during the period remains the dramatic increase of women in higher education.⁵ Moreover, African Americans also began pursuing higher education in certain southern cities. The emergence of new colleges and universities combined with greater acceptance in the public sphere, significantly affected the class of young adults who could afford higher education. A new generation of women and men, both Caucasian and African American began to perpetuate the hegemonic southern order that remained rigidly set along lines of race and gender.⁶

Increased opportunities for women and experiences gained from a more autonomous and individualistic “college life” positioned Nashville’s generation of educated women from 1897-1917 to springboard into a southern version of the “New Woman” of the 1920s. However, these women also emerged as a hybrid between the

⁴ By 1897, the industrial revolution had not only created more jobs and incentive to move into the city but also spurred splinter industries allowing new forms of social interaction including streetcars, railroads, and commercialized leisure. The most comprehensive urban historiography of Nashville remains the superbly researched and written *Nashville in the New South, 1880-1930* by Don Doyle. His work provided much needed background and information that allowed this study to explore themes of urbanization and education. Doyle argues that Nashville did not truly become an “Athens of the South” until after 1920; however, this study will argue that many modern notions of education, urbanization, and leisure were set in motion by Nashville’s younger Progressive generation in the early 1900s.

⁵ See: Mabel Newcomer, *A Century of Higher Education for American Women* (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1959); and Nancy F. Cott, *The Grounding of Modern Feminism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987).

⁶ The term “gender” has not been well defined and continues to maintain a convoluted meaning based on the interpretation of both the author as well as the audience. Gender is often confused with sex. However, sex generally refers to biology and anatomy. People are said to be of the male sex or the female sex, as determined by three sets of characteristics: external sex organs, internal sex organs, and secondary sexual development at puberty. By contrast, gender refers to a set of qualities and behaviors expected from a female or male by society. Gender roles are learned and can be affected by factors such as education or economics. They vary widely within and among cultures. While an individual’s sex does not change, gender roles are socially determined and can evolve over time. This study proposes to focus in part on changes in education, leisure, race, and public space for women in Nashville. New opportunities as a result of “college life” involved men and women, both Caucasian and African American. Changes occurring for young men in Nashville included greater standardized education as well as opportunities for leisure, sport, and work. Women and African Americans will be viewed in terms that measure social changes in their role as the “other” in Nashville from 1897-1917.

Pre-Civil War southern belle and the liberated woman of the Progressive Era. More accomplished than their predecessors, some females pursued individual goals, while many others continued to enjoy their prosperity under the protective umbrella of their husbands and fathers. Likewise, Nashville's African American colleges helped to fill certain ranks of a previously non-existent elite/professional class in the South. Prejudice, segregation, and socioeconomic disparity did not dissipate from 1897-1917. However, the city experienced the significant growth of black business and education to a greater extent than most southern urban areas. Students attending local African American universities experienced "college life" in different ways. Nonetheless, black colleges provided sites of interaction that greatly affected the ideas and actions of the twentieth century's first generation of African American students. Nashville remained pivotal in the creation of a black middle class and black elite in the South.

The dialectic created by urbanization and education produced a shift that allowed a new youth culture to emerge, melding social interaction between men and women as well as collective groups of women both through on-campus and off-campus activities. Moreover, new forms of entertainment merged with traditional forms of entertainment, albeit in more socially acceptable public venues, that allowed both men and women to recreate differently from the previously rigid and confining Victorian standards experienced through much of the nineteenth century.⁷ In addition, by 1917 Nashville's downtown and surrounding areas provided parks, theaters, athletic fields, music auditoriums, and public transportation that further complicated social interaction between

⁷ For analysis on the shift from Victorian to Progressive values, specifically in relation to gender see: Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, *Disorderly Conduct: Visions of Gender in Victorian America* (New York: Oxford University, 1985). For more on the leisure revolution see: Dale Somers, "The Leisure Revolution: Recreation in the American City, 1820-1920," *Journal of Popular Culture* 5 (Summer 1971), 125-147.

men and women, white and black. Still, the emergence of new colleges and universities set the foundation for the formation of a college youth culture. These young men and women indelibly shaped new acceptable cultural norms from passive members within private spheres to active participants in public spaces.⁸

The Centennial Exposition provides an excellent point of departure for this study as many cities in the South began to industrialize at the turn of the century, after the Panic of 1893 and as the Gilded Age transformed into an era of Progressive reform. By the end of World War I, urban reform, education, leisure, and commerce had molded Nashville into a modern city, fueled by a new generation of young people better poised to embrace and solidify contemporary urban notions. The end of World War I and the 1920s also signaled the end of the Progressive Era that began at the turn of the twentieth century. Yet, Nashville's brand of southern progressivism from 1897-1917 set in motion the beginnings of bigger movements, ultimately increasing gender and racial equity from 1920-1970.

The City in Context

The "Lost Cause" narrative surfaced quite often in southern rhetoric following the Civil War. In a response to a Chicago magazine article entitled "Time to Call off Dixie?" *The Confederate Veteran* answered, "Time to call off Dixie? No! . . . Around Dixie turn our fondest memories . . . The Lady of the South receives recognition at any convention she attends, because she stands out in any company, and shows by every word and deed,

⁸ See also: Shirley Ardener, *Women and Space: Ground Rules and Social Maps* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1981).

her superiority.”⁹ Even as leaders in the South selectively followed the models of northern cities such as Boston, Philadelphia, Chicago, and New York, they continued to maintain their notions of “superiority.” These feelings represented the deep cultural loyalty that Tennesseans also experienced despite lower numbers of slaves and plantations and their distinctive role in the Civil War. Their pride in regional unity recreated a southern and northern hybrid between progress and tradition filled with change and contradictions, good intentions and variegated outcomes from 1897-1917.

After Tennessee’s secession from the Union, Nashville became the first southern city to be occupied by Union forces in 1862, after Grant’s occupation of Fort Henry and Fort Donelson. Thus, for the most of the war, Nashville remained under Union occupation and, in many ways, the city benefited. As other southern cities experienced destruction through fire, evacuation, and derailment, Nashville escaped such devastation. Emerging from the Civil War, the New South vision served to animate certain southern cities, designed to transform largely agrarian areas into industrial centers. Men such as Henry Grady carried the banner of industrialization in the South, focusing largely on Atlanta, Nashville, Memphis and Birmingham. Nashville remained poised to best follow this vision in the post-bellum South due to the city’s demographic, structural, and cultural composition.¹⁰

Nashville’s population nearly tripled during this era, growing from 43,350 in 1880 to 80,865 in 1900 to 118,342 in 1920.¹¹ The city represented a “blend of traditional

⁹ Ramirez, “The Lost Cause in a New South City; Nashville, 1890-1910,” *Nashville as a Historical Laboratory*, 5-6.

¹⁰ See also: Rober Wiebe, *The Search for Order, 1877-1920* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1967). Wiebe argues that during the Gilded/Progressive Era, urban areas grew and increasingly connected to smaller “island” communities. In Nashville, as the downtown grew suburban communities emerged such as Belle Meade, further extending the size and scope of the city. Likewise, outlying areas were more accessible to Nashville as the city grew, such as Murfreesboro and Lebanon, connected by railroads.

¹¹ U.S. Census Reports, 1880-1920.

Old South attitudes and the New South crusade to industrialize and follow the business policies of the North, . . . [and] was neither as tradition-bound as an old seaboard city like Charleston nor as embedded in the New South as was Birmingham.”¹² In other words, Nashville remained distinctive among other growing southern cities such as Atlanta because it was less affected by physical destruction that occurred in many southern cities during the Civil War and less entrenched in a rigid social hierarchy of race.¹³ The city industrialized on a larger scale in the 1870s and 1880s, but this characterized only part of its urbanization process. In the South, urban centers of commerce shifted from the seaboard to the piedmont because of their geographic position vis-à-vis the railroads. The cities of Atlanta and Nashville led the way as railroad centers had easier access to markets in the North, Mid-West, and West Coast. Nashville’s own Nashville, Chattanooga, and St. Louis Railway (NC&St.L) served as the major artery connecting the city to the rest of the nation.¹⁴

As early as 1885, Nashville was gaining recognition for its role as a city and cultural arts center. As the Memphis *Ledger* reported, “The village that has grown to be a commercial emporium, the *entrepot* of a rich, wealthy, tax-paying division of the State, and the educational center of the South. . . It is a place of solid growth, the Athens of the

¹² Mike Ramirez, “The Lost Cause in a New South City,” *Nashville as a Historical Laboratory*, 3.

¹³ Tennessee had the highest number of Unionists and those opposed to the Civil War than any other state that seceded to form the Confederate States of America. The city of Nashville in particular had fewer numbers of African Americans and immigrants than other New South cities. For more see two works by William Waller, *Nashville in the 1890s* and *Nashville, 1900-1910* as well as Don Doyle, *Nashville and the New South*.

¹⁴ For more see Don Doyle, *New Men, New Cities, New South: Atlanta, Nashville, Charleston, Mobile, 1860-1910*, (1990). See also: Lawrence Larson, *The Urban South: A History* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1990); Arthur M. Schlesinger, *A History of American Life, Volume XII: The Rise of the City 1878-1898* (New York: Macmillan Company, 1931); Edwin Mims, *The Advancing South: Stories of Progress and Reaction* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, Page & Company, 1926); and Raymond Mohl, *The New City: Urban America in the Industrial Age, 1860-1920* (Arlington Heights, Illinois: Harlen Davidson, Inc., 1985).

South, the home of ripe scholarship and a generous and refined people.”¹⁵ True, the city was becoming more modern in many ways; however, the cultural ties to the past would never be completely severed. The city could industrialize and urbanize, but it would always remain in the South, and its location continued to carry a passionate past as its citizens remained loyal to their cultural heritage in many ways. As such, an inimitable brand of progress, change, and reform sets Nashville apart as a model New South city.

Nashville’s Colleges and Universities

Nashville’s nickname, “Athens of the South,” regained popularity after the building of the full-scale model of the Greek Parthenon for the Centennial Exposition in 1897.¹⁶ During the late nineteenth century, Nashville, along with other southern cities, experienced a wave of new institutions of higher education. Some faltered and failed before World War I for lack of funding, enrollment, or both. However, five of these schools not only survived but emerged as regionally and nationally recognized colleges and universities by the turn of the century.¹⁷ Although many were chartered before 1880, the end of the nineteenth century marked an expansion of education nationwide, particularly in the South. Vanderbilt University, founded in 1873 with a one million dollar donation by Cornelius Vanderbilt, was located a mere four miles from downtown

¹⁵ *Memphis Ledger*, 1885, taken from *W.E. Ward’s Seminary Annual Announcement*, 1885-1886, 19. The rest of the quote states, “We are all proud of Nashville, not only on account of its historic associations, its commanding position, and political relations with the rest of the State, but for the intelligence, culture, and hospitality of the people.”

¹⁶ The actual centennial celebration took place in 1880, but the Centennial Exposition of 1897 was planned to formally honor the founding of Nashville.

¹⁷ This section will briefly introduce the colleges and universities that serve as the subjects of this study. They include Vanderbilt, Peabody, Belmont & Ward Seminary (to become Ward Belmont), Roger Williams, Fisk, Meharry, and David Lipscomb.

Nashville. The Commodore donated the money in order to establish an endowment for a university in the South that would be “comparable to any in America.”¹⁸

Because of his philanthropy, the school was named after its benefactor.

Vanderbilt represents a host of colleges and universities funded by northern philanthropy after the Civil War. Wealthy northerners saw higher education as a way to encourage the New South vision. Originally, the school began under the auspices of the Methodist Episcopal church in 1858 with the Shelby Medical School of Central University.

However, the school lacked financial stability under the Methodist Episcopal Church, and this instability helped lead to the donation by Cornelius Vanderbilt, who believed in the mission of the school and its emphasis on religion. In fact, the Methodist Episcopal Church remained at the head of the university until 1914 as a result of a dispute between the bishops and the administration regarding the appointment of the Vanderbilt Board of Trustees.¹⁹

Bishop Holland N. McTyeire, a distant relation to Cornelius Vanderbilt, secured the northern benefactor’s donation, served as the major force behind the planning and construction of the university, and headed the Board of Trustees. Landon C. Garland served as Vanderbilt’s first Chancellor and remained in this position from 1875 to 1893. Garland assisted McTyeire in establishing the curriculum, hiring faculty, and creating the policies and rules of the University. The student enrollment nearly doubled from 307 in 1875 to 754 in 1900. James H. Kirkland, who served as chancellor from 1893 to 1937, was instrumental in the development of Vanderbilt’s reputation as a university that offered programs in the liberal arts and sciences on the baccalaureate and graduate level.

¹⁸ Paul Conkin, *Gone with the Ivy: A Biography of Vanderbilt University*, (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1985), 23.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 7-34.

In addition, Vanderbilt offered several professional schools. In the foundation of the school, most assumed it would serve males only; however, the board never passed any formal resolution restricting women. Thus, at least one female attended each term at Vanderbilt from its inception in 1875, although most were categorized as special or irregular students, meaning that they remained on a non-degree track. In the 1890s, Vanderbilt women gained full equality with the exception of access to the dorms.²⁰ For Vanderbilt men, they continued to bear the banner of the southern gentleman, and they continually compared their curriculum, campus, and athletics with schools primarily in the North.

Meanwhile, Vanderbilt continued to earn the reputation as a premier private university in the South. By 1889, Vanderbilt had reformed its academic program, conforming its degree requirements to northern universities for all Bachelor, Master, and Doctorate degrees. Four years later, historian Paul Conkin argued that the “Academic Department had what is arguably the strongest faculty in its history.” And by 1915, Vanderbilt maintained a Law School, Medical School, Dental School, Nursing School, Pharmacy School, and College of Engineering. Vanderbilt University remained the leading college in the southeast, rivaled only by Duke University and Emory University, neither of which garnered the same prestige as Vanderbilt during this period.²¹

Peabody College also maintained a special relationship with Vanderbilt, although, the school emerged from the scattered histories of Cumberland College and the University of Nashville. Peabody was originally chartered by the colony of North Carolina and moved to Nashville in 1779 under the direction of Richard Henderson,

²⁰ Ibid., 133.

²¹ Ibid., 88-90, 102, 259-288.

James Robertson, and Thomas Craighead. By 1785 the school divided into Davidson Academy and Cumberland College and was supported in part by the Presbyterian Church. Philip Lindsley succeeded Craighead, as president of Cumberland College. By 1826 Lindsley had procured state financial support and changed the name of the school to the University of Nashville. Lindsley helped the school to purchase 120 acres of land and intended to expand the school into six associated colleges including an agricultural college and a teacher's college.²²

The University of Nashville struggled mightily from 1850 to 1875, during which the school offered classes and a proprietary medical school endured. In 1855, the university leased its property to the Western Military Institute that “offered both preparatory and college level instruction, but not up to the standards of the old university under Philip Lindsley.”²³ The University of Nashville reopened in 1867 but only to flounder, attracting few students and generating little money. Finally in 1875, the school reopened as the State Normal College of Tennessee with a gift from the Peabody Education Fund.

George Peabody, another wealthy philanthropist from the North, donated the money needed to establish an endowment. He was motivated in part by a desire for sectional reconciliation and in part to invest in the educational and economic opportunities of the New South. Peabody wanted the South's “moral and intellectual development to keep pace with her material growth . . . [and it was] the duty and privilege of the more favored and wealthy portions of our nation to assist those who are

²² For more on the founding of the University of Nashville see: John A. M'Ewen, *An Address Delivered at the Laying of the Corner Stone of The University of Nashville* (Nashville: John T.S. Fall, Book and Job Printer, 1853).

²³ Paul Conkin, *Peabody College: From a Frontier Academy to the Frontiers of Teaching and Learning* (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 2002), 73. The Western Military Institute closed its doors in 1862 during the Civil War. See also: J.L.M. Curry, *A Brief Sketch of the Peabody Education Fund Through Thirty Years* (New York: John Wilson and Son Publishers, 1898).

less fortunate.”²⁴ Still, the lack of standardization and actual level of instruction in higher education blurred definitions of legitimate “colleges.” The State Normal College was little more than a secondary school. In 1889, the school changed its name to the Peabody Normal College, and through 1911 the level of curriculum and instruction increased. Four-year graduates of Peabody Normal College could obtain a bachelor’s degree through the University of Nashville. Thus, graduates of Peabody were actually graduates of the literary department of the University of Nashville as the state chartered normal school had no authority to confer traditional degrees.²⁵

Curriculum changes occurred under William Payne who reorganized the school requiring certain courses and electives in order to earn particular degrees. Payne, with educational experience and methodology training in Michigan, required work in Latin, physics, chemistry, and biology along with four courses in pedagogy. The new reformulated B.A. (Bachelor of Arts) required Latin and Greek and several courses in the humanities and science. The B.S. (Bachelor of Science) degree also required Latin along with either French or German and several courses in math and science. The B.L. (Bachelor of Letters) served as a hybrid between a Bachelor of Arts and a Bachelor of Sciences and focused on Latin, Greek, other modern languages, English, history, and pedagogy. Still, Paul Conkin argues that all of the degrees rarely rose above the secondary level.²⁶ However, by 1894 Payne had ramped up curriculum and instruction to match that of a four- year college. Unfortunately, after Payne’s resignation in 1901, Peabody Normal College experienced a tumultuous decade of instability and change.

²⁴ *Proceedings of the Trustees of the Peabody Education Fund, from Their Original Organization, on the 8th of February, 1867* (Cambridge: John Wilson and Son, 1875), 1-7.

²⁵ Conkin, *Peabody College*, 111-116.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 133. Payne also heavily emphasized exercise and gymnastics and required student to spend at least three hours in the gender-segregated gymnasium under instructor supervision.

James Porter, his successor, hoped for early liquidation of George Peabody's one million dollars, but this did not happen until 1909 when it was decided that the campus would be moved from its downtown location, to a new campus near Vanderbilt University.²⁷

Porter, along with many Peabody administrators, faculty, and students, fought the move but to no avail. The school closed in 1911 only to reopen in 1914. Porter had resigned in 1909, realizing that the move was inevitable, but not without having fulfilled Payne's goal of making Peabody a premier four-year college with a highly decorated faculty, recognized degrees, and a sprinkling of graduate courses. When the college reopened in 1914 it was renamed George Peabody College for Teachers. The move also had mixed effects on other educational institutions, adding to the prestige of Vanderbilt but at a great cost to the University of Nashville. Although Peabody resisted in certain ways, the student population continued to shift to a greater percentage of females. In fact, many women already in teaching attended Peabody in the summer to further develop their content and methodology. After 1900, most of the male students pursued degrees in administration.²⁸

In 1866, the American Missionary Association (AMA) and the Freedman's Bureau chartered Fisk University, the city's first major African American institution of higher education. The school had as its mission, "the education and training of young men and women irrespective of color," and was named after General Clinton B. Fisk.²⁹ General Fisk, of the Freedman's Bureau, played a prominent role in aiding the AMA with the acquisition of land and the construction of early buildings. In 1870, under the leadership of Adam K. Spence, Fisk relocated to North Nashville but experienced the

²⁷ Ibid., 169-180.

²⁸ Ibid., 150-154.

²⁹ *AMA Proceedings*, 1865, n.p.

financial strain of many educational institutions in the South. With the school on the brink of closure, Professor George L. White assembled nine students, named the group the Fisk Jubilee Singers, and set off on an international fund-raising tour. The goal to raise 20,000 dollars was met and the university was saved, but more importantly the Jubilee Singers helped to cross racial lines and gain respect in both the black and white communities of Nashville.³⁰ In fact, at the centennial celebration parade in 1880, the Jubilee Singers were invited to march and sing in the parade alongside their white counterparts. World tours by the Jubilee Singers continued to aid the financial costs of operating the university, but after Booker T. Washington joined the board in the early 1900s, he helped the school to raise \$300,000 through donations from the General Education Board, the Julius Rosenwald Fund, J.P. Morgan, and other wealthy northerners.³¹

By 1900 Fisk's curriculum was still largely based on "imitation of the institutions that served the dominant caste."³² For example, their music department concentrated on classical European music rather than developing the African American music genre. Further, courses in history and sociology at African American colleges, including Fisk, were rare and exceptional until after World War I.³³ In fact, the General Education Board did not form a Committee on Negro Education until 1916 to address the inadequacies of funding through taxation for African American colleges. There was no official accreditation for African American colleges by the Southern Association of Colleges and

³⁰ Gustavus D. Pike, *The Jubilee Singers and their Campaign for Twenty Thousand Dollars* (Boston: Lee and Shepard Publishers, 1873).

³¹ Joe M. Richardson, *A History of Fisk University, 1865-1946* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1980), 55-70, and *History of Fisk University Presidents*. Nashville: Fisk University. Still, it would not be until Fisk President Fayette Avery McKenzie raised a one million dollars in fundraising from in 1919 to 1924, that Fisk gained true financial stability.

³² Frederick Rudolph, *Curriculum: A History of the American Undergraduate Course of Study Since 1636* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1977), 168.

³³ *Ibid.*

Schools (SACS) until 1928. However, in 1917, Thomas Jesse Jones, published a study for the Federal Bureau of Education, and found Fisk University and Howard University as the only two of thirty-two African American schools that offered college level work.³⁴ It was president McKenzie who raised the curricular standards and admission requirements after World War I, helping Fisk to earn credibility as a genuine college. He introduced new courses in science, music, mathematics, nursing, medicine and recruited faculty members retaining degrees from acceptable schools. As a result, Fisk helped to legitimize a new class of African American elites in Nashville and also produced a new generation of educated African Americans by 1920.³⁵

Two other institutions of higher education for African Americans existed in Nashville as well. Roger Williams University first held classes in 1864, even before Fisk University. Roger Williams provided courses that served as an equivalent to secondary education and some basic college training. The school produced many teachers for African American primary schools in the region and also trained African Americans in theology and practical subjects for the purposes of preaching and social work. The school struggled with poor facilities and lack of funding. After its campus, adjacent to Vanderbilt, was destroyed by a series of fires in the early 1900s, Roger Williams University eventually merged with Lemoyne Owen College in Memphis. To meet the demand of African Americans needed in medicine, Meharry Medical College emerged under the auspices of Central Tennessee College as its medical department. After 1900,

³⁴ James D. Anderson, *The Education of Blacks in the South, 1860-1935* (Chapel Hill: North Carolina University Press, 1988), 250.

³⁵ Fisk would not become officially accredited by SACS until 1930 but remains the first African American college in the nation to receive an A standing. In 1933, the Association of American Universities also gave Fisk an "A" standing. In both cases, accreditation most likely was delayed because Fisk was a predominantly African American college. The university's academic standings were standardized and highly reputable by 1920. For more on Fisk University presidents see: L.M. Collins, *One Hundred Years of Fisk University Presidents, 1875-1975* (Nashville: Hemphill's Creative Printing, Inc., 2002).

the school's name changed to Walden University and then Walden College in 1915. Funded largely by the Freedman's Aid Society and Freedmen's Bureau, Meharry Medical College operated in connection to Walden, but the school quickly garnered individual recognition as a separate entity. By 1920, Meharry separated completely to form an independent medical college training African American doctors, nurses, dentists, and pharmacists. The school's graduates attempted to fill the void of medical professionals in the black community.

Nashville Bible School, better known as David Lipscomb University, was founded in 1891 by preachers David Lipscomb and James A. Harding, who believed that no education was complete without dedicated training in the scriptures. David Lipscomb expanded its curriculum to include Hebrew, philosophy, German, French, natural science, music, and elocution by the 1896-1897 school year. The school's enrollment fluctuated with varied stability, in order to bring more stability, Harding declared, "We make no distinction between ministerial students and others; males and females, church members and non-church members . . . [they] are put in the same classes and taught the same way . . . The school is under the control of no church except as its teachers are controlled by their respective congregations."³⁶

David Lipscomb's main building, Harding Hall, was expanded in 1910, followed by the construction of a well provided the school with a new water system in 1912. By 1914, Nashville Bible School offered a B.A., B.S., B.L., as well as M.A. (Master of Arts) *certificates* in music, expression, and art.³⁷ The school had truly transformed itself from a meager Bible school, to a school offering several degrees. H. Leo Boles, named head

³⁶ Anderson, *The Education of Blacks in the South*, 7.

³⁷ Courses in expression contained instruction in public speaking, recitation, and etiquette.

of school in 1913, sought to ensure the recognition of degrees from the school; he also attempted to strengthen the faculty. By 1915, the faculty consisted of six males and six females, yet only three held standard degrees. Boles encouraged the faculty to take additional coursework at Peabody and Vanderbilt, and hired new faculty with standard degrees and graduate degrees. For the first time, in the 1916-1917 catalog, degrees held by faculty members were specified and included: B.L., B.S., B.A., M.A., and M.D.³⁸

David Lipscomb died in 1917, and the school changed its name in 1918 to David Lipscomb College in his memory. S.P. Pittman argues that the “change from ‘school’ to ‘college’ was evidently justifiable, for by this time the institution was recognized as a college.”³⁹ However, the high school and collegiate courses were not made to conform with the standards of SACS until 1920. Also as an accreditation component of SACS, faculty members were required to have degrees from other accredited colleges and universities. David Lipscomb College endured many years of financial instability, leadership and name changes, and shifts in the curriculum that expanded course offering and divided the curriculum in a way that created separate niches for men and women. Yet, by the end of the “Great War” and on the cusp of a new decade, David Lipscomb College finally emerged as an institution of higher learning, despite the school’s inability to gain regional accreditation until after the war.

The story of Belmont College also remains a unique history. Belmont originated in the form of two schools, Ward’s Seminary for Young Ladies founded in 1865 and Belmont College founded in 1890. In 1913, the two schools merged to become Ward-Belmont College and retaining the name of Ward-Belmont until 1951 when the Baptist

³⁸ Pittman, *Lipscomb’s Golden Heritage*, 23.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 24.

Association purchased the school and made it co-educational. Belmont College, established in 1890, left few records until its merge with Ward's Seminary. It was located on the present campus but began on the Belle Monte estate owned by the Adelia Acklen family. The original Belmont College offered elementary through junior college education for females. The college's vision was to provide the best in liberal arts education and professional education in a Christian community of learning and service. Although there was no official affiliation with a church denomination, like Ward Seminary, there remained an emphasis on moral living, bible study, and strict ethical policies.

By the late 1880s, Ward Seminary began to garner national attention as a reputable female school offering instruction from the primary level through the collegiate level. Ward Seminary championed the value of single sex education and accolades showered down from the North. As President Noah Porter of Yale College stated in 1885, "I have no objection to learned women, but I would have them remain women; and, if they were to be perfect women, they must be trained as women; and womanhood, even in girlish years, requires isolation and reserve, if nothing more."⁴⁰ The school was not accredited to confer Bachelor degrees, but after its merger with Belmont, Ward-Belmont College maintained a status equal to a junior college. The school relocated permanently near Vanderbilt and Peabody after its merger. Nearly all of Ward Belmont's students were young ladies from affluent families across the South, and they created a new image, partly based on custom and ritual and partly based on innovation and progress.⁴¹

⁴⁰ Porter quote was reprinted in *W.E. Ward's Seminary Annual Announcement*, 1885-1886, 2.

⁴¹ See also: Ivar Lou Myhr Duncan, *A History of Belmont College* (Nashville: Belmont College 1966); and Louise Douglas Morrison, *A Voyage of Faith: The Story of Harpeth Hall* (Nashville: Harpeth Hall, 1980). The Harpeth Hall School began in 1951 when Ward-Belmont College became a co-educational four year college. The secondary department of Ward-Belmont became The Harpeth Hall School at that time.

Educational reform paralleled multiple reforms during the Gilded/Progressive Era. The role of female and African American students helped to shed light on the need for greater opportunity and reform in higher education. African Americans attended colleges and universities for the first time after the Civil War, but they faced a multitude of challenges. They remained under the thumb of white-controlled agencies and authorities that continued to wrestle with the acceptable role of a new generation of African Americans. Regardless, higher education would provide a foot in the door for African Americans who sought to improve their lives and their communities.

More females attended colleges and seminaries as early as the late 1860s for several reasons. Not only did more institutions of higher learning open after the Civil War, particularly in the South, but also upper and middle class women (or their families) found value in gaining more than an elementary education. Still, education for females remained a controversial issue, especially in the South. Debates raged about the curriculum, the effect of education on women and their intellectual capacity, and the effect of women's education on the political, social, and personal spheres of the male dominated public and private space.

For the most part, education was not standardized. With the creation of the Department of Education in 1867, National Teachers Association (NTA) in 1867, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) in 1895, the Association of Collegiate Alumnae (ACA), and the Southern Association of College Women (SACW), educational reform began to take place in the South.⁴² Such standardization helped to

⁴² The NTA is today the National Education Association (NEA). However, the NTA absorbed three smaller organizations: the American Normal School Association, the National Association of School Superintendents, and the Central College Association. The NTA is actually credited with lobbying Congress for a federal Department of Education that it achieved in 1867, the same year the NTA officially established itself as a national organization. The NTA initially formed in 1857 with meetings in New York.

create admission, course, faculty, and degree requirements at the turn of the century, but the standards needed to define and assess the modern “college” would not truly begin until after World War I. In the South, SACS emerged as the sanctioned organization that set up committees to visit and regulate the legitimacy of schools conferring bachelor and master’s degrees.

The industrial revolution, the growth of urban areas, and the increasing democratization of education greatly influenced the reform in education on a national level.⁴³ Leading educators such as Charles Eliot at Harvard, Andrew White of Cornell, and John Dewey at the University of Chicago, challenged classical education. Certain reformers argued that higher education should “broaden the scope of their curricula to incorporate more science, technology, non-classical languages and other modern subjects.”⁴⁴ Others believed that education should shift completely to an industrial and pragmatic curriculum. Educators in Nashville, most partially supported by religious denominations or northern philanthropy, also embraced these trends.

At Fisk, Peabody, and David Lipscomb, in particular, administrators adopted curricula designed to produce graduates who possessed a trade or provided a service whether it be carpentry, teaching, or preaching. It remains important to note, however, that Fisk University resisted Booker T. Washington’s call to make African American colleges primarily industrial or vocational. Yet, in all of the Nashville colleges and universities, classical education – such as classic languages, poetry, and philosophy, was

⁴³ The democratization of education was not a new concept, but the emphasis on democratic education increased with the growth of government, immigration, women’s education, African American education, and the Morrill Land Acts of 1862 and 1890. For more on reform and pedagogical developments, John Dewey’s works must be consulted. See: John Dewey, *Democracy and Education* (New York: MacMillan Publishing, 1944); *Experience and Education* (New York: Collier Books, 1938); *Moral Principles in Education* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1909).

⁴⁴ Christopher Lucas, *American Higher Education, A History* (New York: MacMillan, 2006), 152. See also: Ronald K. Goodenow and Arthur O. White (eds.), *Education and the Rise of the New South* (Boston: Hall Publishing, 1981); and Warren H. Button and Eugene F. Provenzo (eds.), *History of Education and Culture in America*, 2nd ed. (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1989).

deemphasized. Instead, an emphasis was placed on courses of study in science, mathematics, medicine (including nursing), modern languages, engineering, and education. Ward-Belmont continued to issue many diplomas in literature, music, and education, however, as a single sex school, this was not uncommon. By adding courses in domestic science, business and secretarial work, and physical education, Ward-Belmont became recognized as a college preparatory school as well as a junior college by the end of World War I. Vanderbilt remained the most reputable university in the city with most of its graduates going into law, medicine, dentistry, and engineering. By 1917, Nashville had emerged as growing center of education in the region. This was possible because of local support as well as the “concerted efforts of northern philanthropic foundations to develop quality education in the South by concentrating their money in a select number of promising schools” in the late nineteenth century.⁴⁵

Aside from educational reform, the period from 1897-1917 produced a major period of social and political reform known as Progressivism. Progressivism served broad social conditions including interest groups of all shades and sizes - social, political, economic – who hoped to right certain wrongs caused by the industrial boom of the United States in the late nineteenth century. In larger cities such as Chicago, Boston, and New York, Progressives sought better housing, sanitation, labor and moral reform. In the South, reform followed some of the same patterns; however, it is misleading to say the South experienced the same type Progressive Era of its northern counterparts. Instead, the South laid claim to its own peculiar type of southern progressivism. Elizabeth

⁴⁵ Doyle, *Nashville in the New South*, 201. For a report on Tennessee’s colleges and universities just after World War I see: George F. Zook, *A Survey of Higher Education in Tennessee, 1924: By the United States Bureau of Education* (Nashville: Tennessee College Association, 1926).

Gilmore comments, “If southerners reformed at all, historians judged their programs to be too little, too late.”⁴⁶

To say the South did not experience progress is also a falsehood. Rather, the region’s attitude toward change and muddled tradition produced a cycle of challenge and reaction to change that trickled down from the North. The South resisted certain change that would disrupt the traditional social order and system of patriarchy and white superiority. Slowly but surely, their cultural heritage of the South would not be lost but rather transformed by urbanization, industrialization, and higher education. Additionally, these factors created change that was affected by gender, race, and modern notions of leisure which also shaped the city as it grew. The new youth culture that emerged in Nashville from 1897 to 1917 would leave an ineffaceable mark on this New South City.

⁴⁶ Gilmore, *Gender and Jim Crow*, 148. For broad treatment of the Progressivism see: Allen Davis, *Spearheads for Reform: The Social Settlements & the Progressive Movement, 1890-1914* (Camden, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1984).

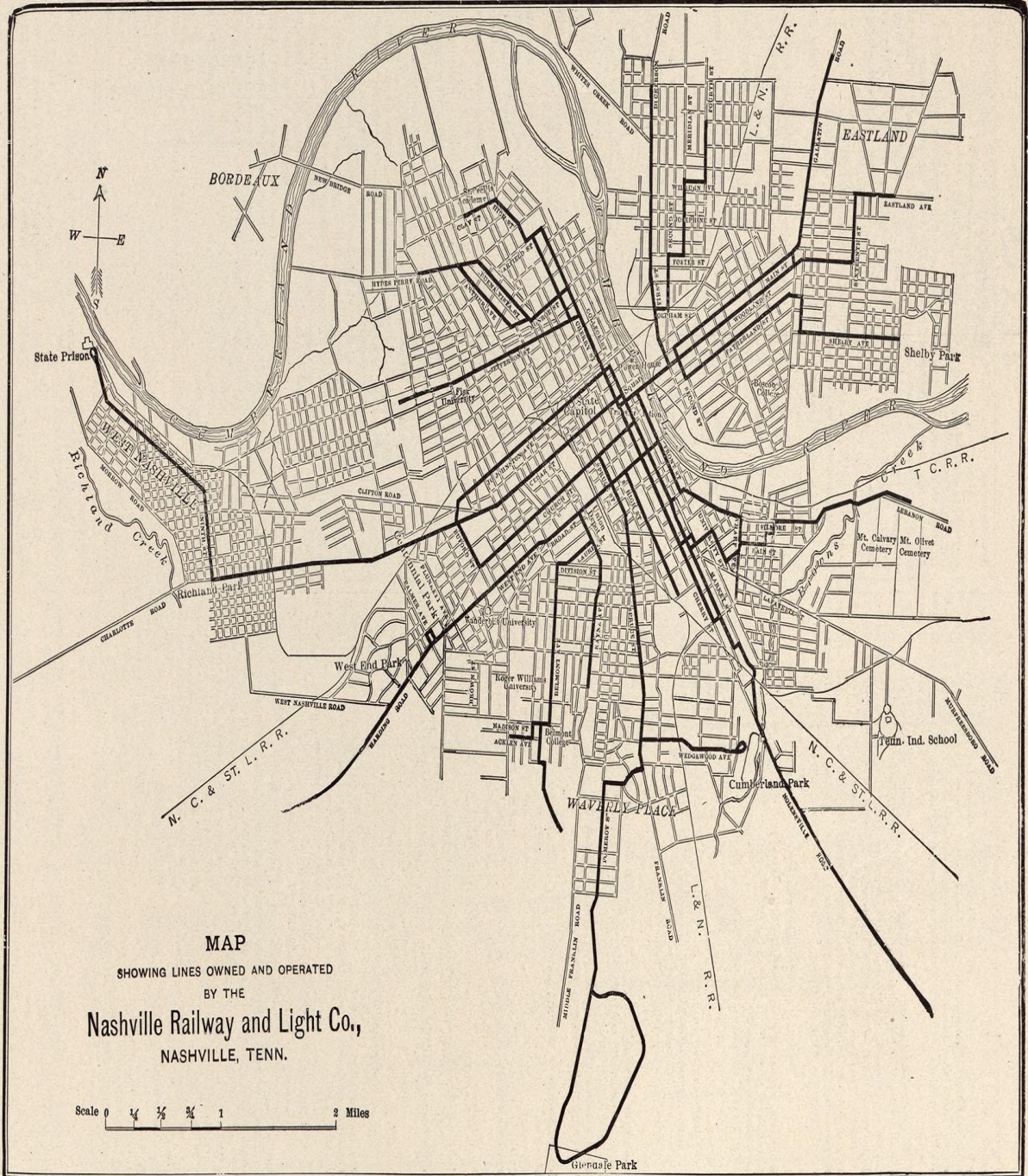


Figure 1. Nashville Railway and Light Company, Map of Nashville, 1913. (Photo Courtesy Metropolitan Government Archives of Nashville and Davidson County).



Figure 2. Postcard of the Tennessee Centennial Exposition of 1897 grounds. (Photo Courtesy Metro Nashville Tennessee Parks Board).



Figure 3. View of downtown from the State Capitol Building, 1864. (Photo Courtesy Metropolitan Government Archives of Nashville and Davidson County).



Figure 4. Merchants Avenue downtown Nashville, 1890s. (Photo Courtesy Metropolitan Government Archives of Nashville and Davidson County).



Figure 5. Downtown Nashville, Broad Street, 1915. (Photo Courtesy Metropolitan Government Archives of Nashville and Davidson County).



Figure 6. Vendome Theater, circa early 1900s. (Photo Courtesy Metropolitan Government Archives of Nashville and Davidson County).



Figure 7. Union Tabernacle, later renamed Ryman Auditorium. (Photo Courtesy Metropolitan Government Archives of Nashville and Davidson County).



Figure 8. Night view of the Centennial Exposition with Parthenon, Commerce Building, and Lake Wautauga. (Photo Courtesy Metro Nashville Tennessee Parks Board).



Figure 9. Gate Entrance of the Centennial Exposition of 1897. (Photo Courtesy Metro Nashville Tennessee Parks Board).



Figure 10. Rialto Bridge, Venetian gondolas, History Building, and Parthenon. (Photo Courtesy Metro Nashville Tennessee Parks Board).



Figure 11. Negro Building at the Centennial Exposition of 1897. (Photo Courtesy Metro Nashville Tennessee Parks Board).



Figure 12. Women's Building at the Centennial Exposition of 1897. (Photo Courtesy Metro Nashville Tennessee Parks Board).



Figure 13. Vanity Fair Ground was the entertainment portion of the Exposition with a Chinese Village, Streets of Cairo, and amusement rides such as the water ride, "Shooting the Chutes," and the "Giant Seesaw" seen in the near distance. (Photo Courtesy Metro Nashville Tennessee Parks Board).



Figure 14. The Hermitage Hotel downtown, shortly after its opening in 1908. (Photo Courtesy Metropolitan Government Archives of Nashville and Davidson County).



Figure 15. Josephine Pearson Anderson (left), anti-suffragist, at an Anti-Ratification rally held at The Hermitage Hotel. She poses with a Confederate veteran (seated) with a portrait of Rachel Jackson in view. (Photo Courtesy Tennessee State Archives).



Figure 16. May Day Festivals remained prevalent throughout the period. (Photo Courtesy The Harpeth Hall School Archives).

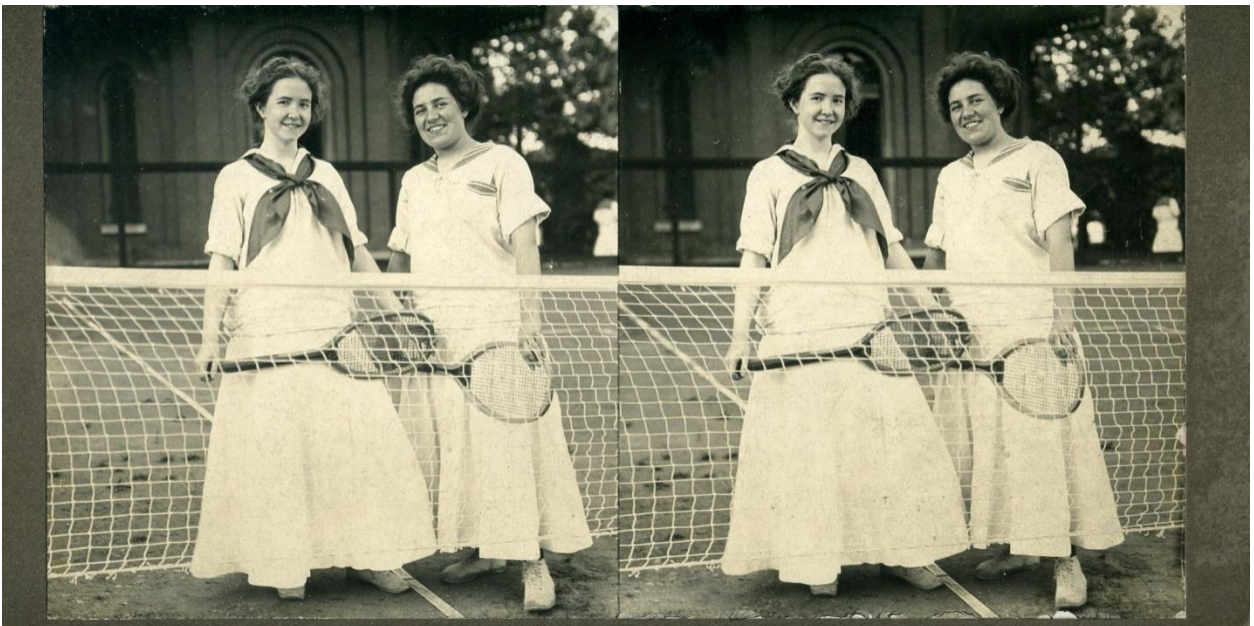


Figure 17. Women from all of Nashville's colleges wore uniforms, but uniforms became less restrictive by 1915. (Photo Courtesy The Harpeth Hall School Archives).



Figure 18. Ward Seminary class of 1911. (Photo Courtesy The Harpeth Hall School Archives).

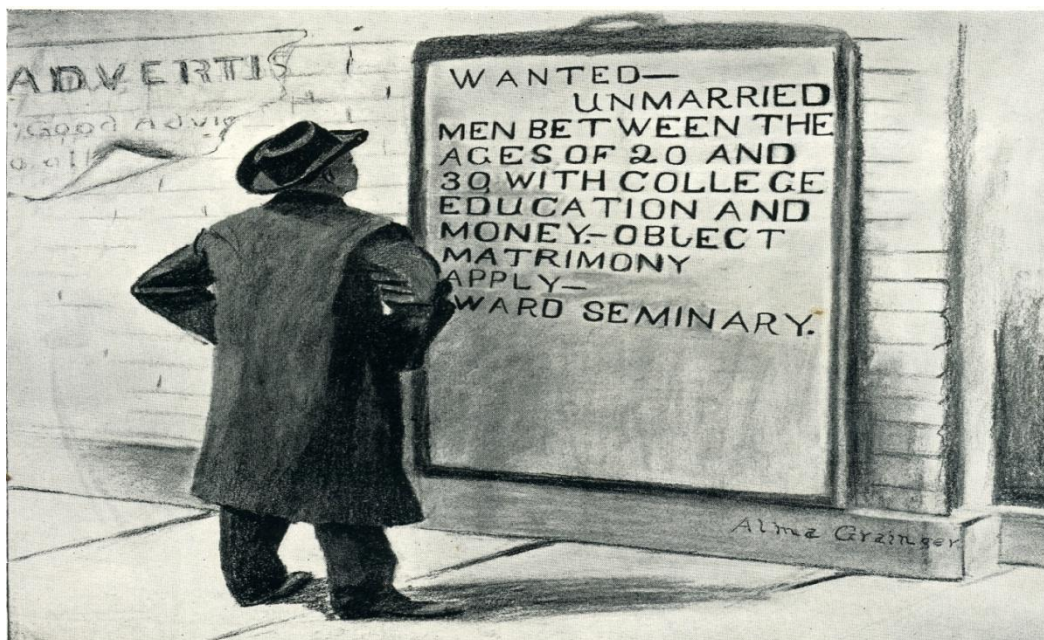


Figure 19. In 1903, *The Iris* of Ward Seminary shows that most local young women still viewed marriage and family as the ultimate goal. (Photo Courtesy The Harpeth Hall School Archives).



Figure 20. View of Ward Belmont campus, circa 1915. (Photo Courtesy The Harpeth Hall School Archives).



Figure 21. Group of Ward Belmont faculty including long time teacher Ida B. Hood, standing on the far right, circa 1900. (Photo Courtesy The Harpeth Hall School Archives).



Figure 22. Ward Seminary 1897 basketball team. (Photo Courtesy The Harpeth Hall School Archives).

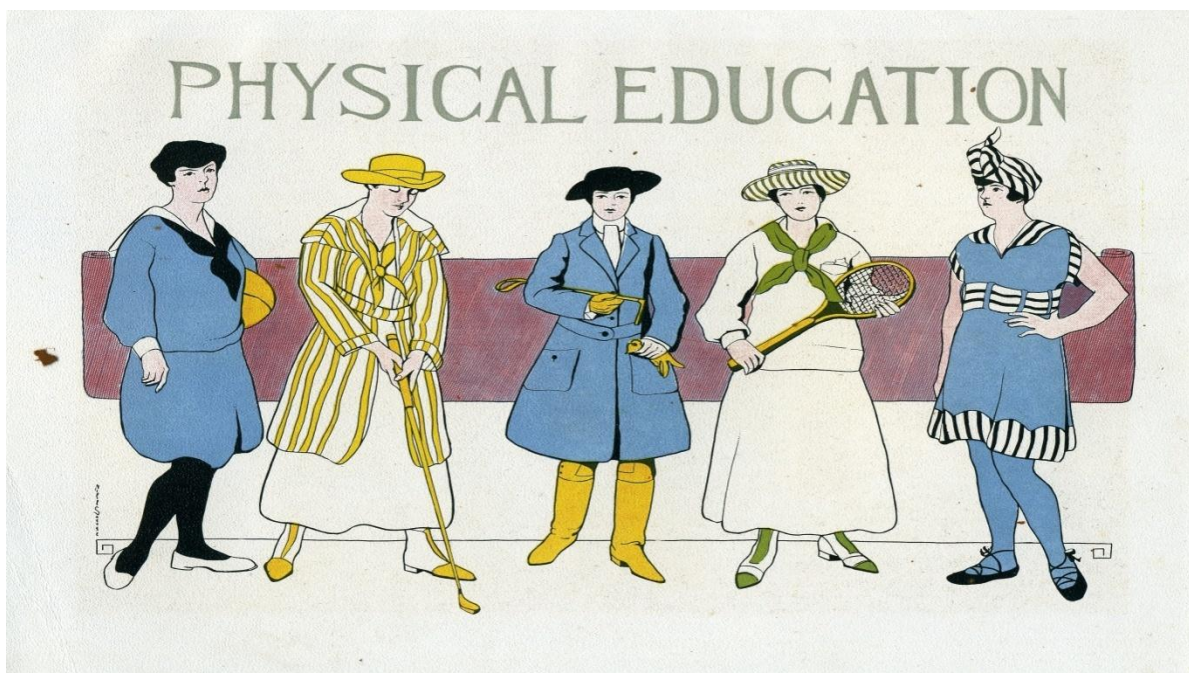


Figure 23. Changes in dress and recreation are apparent as shown in *The Iris*, 1916. (Photo Courtesy The Harpeth Hall School Archives).



Figure 24. Ward Seminary students on the city's electric trolley streetcar. (Photo Courtesy The Harpeth Hall School Archives).

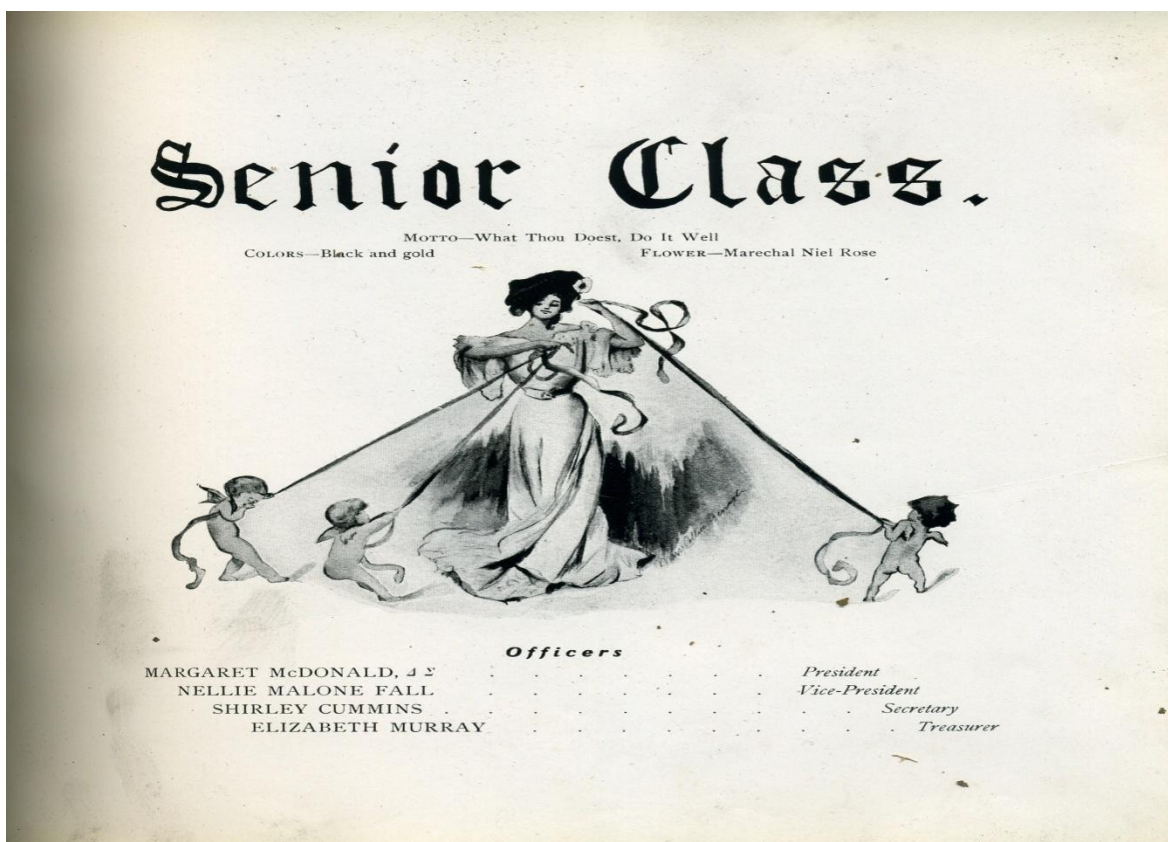


Figure 25. "The Modern Belle," senior page of *The Iris*, 1903. (Photo Courtesy The Harpeth Hall School Archives)

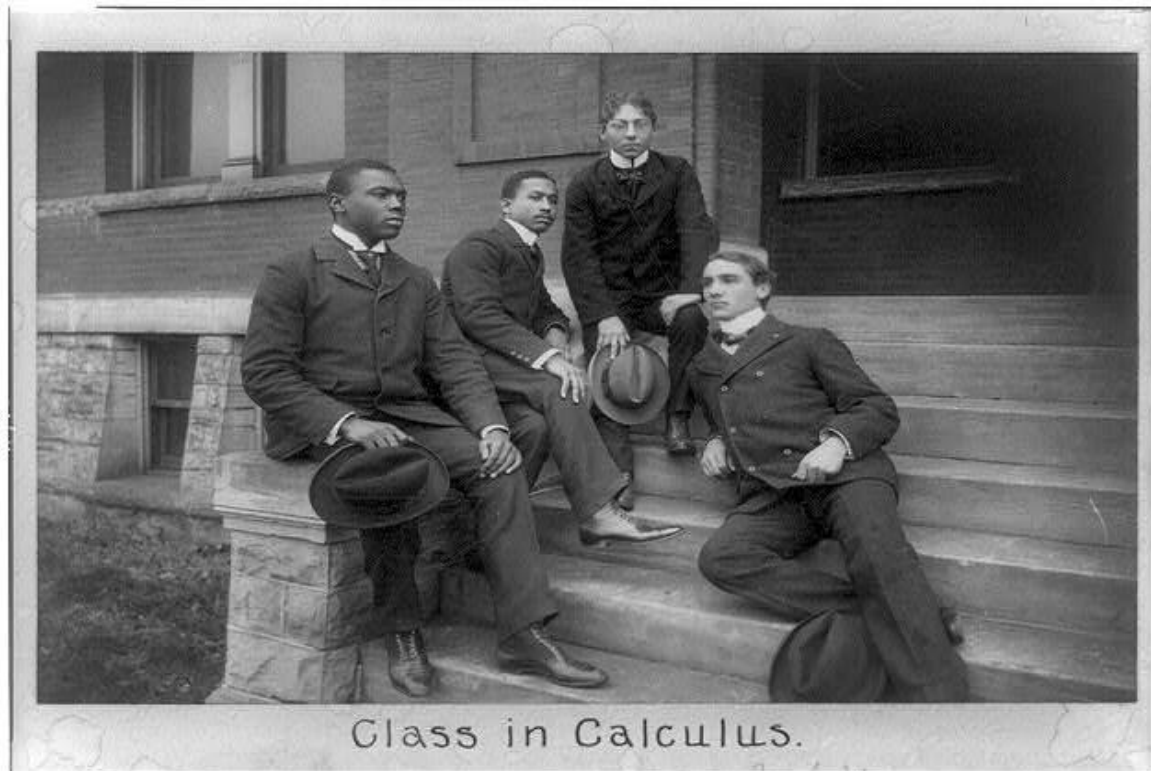


Figure 26. Calculus class at Fisk University, circa 1890-1906. (Photo Courtesy Library of Congress Photo Archives).



Figure 27. Fisk University Theological Hall, 1905. (Photo Courtesy Library of Congress Photo Archives).



Figure 28. Inside the library at Fisk University, 1900-1906. (Photo Courtesy Library of Congress Photo Archives). (Photo Courtesy Lipcomb University Special Collections).

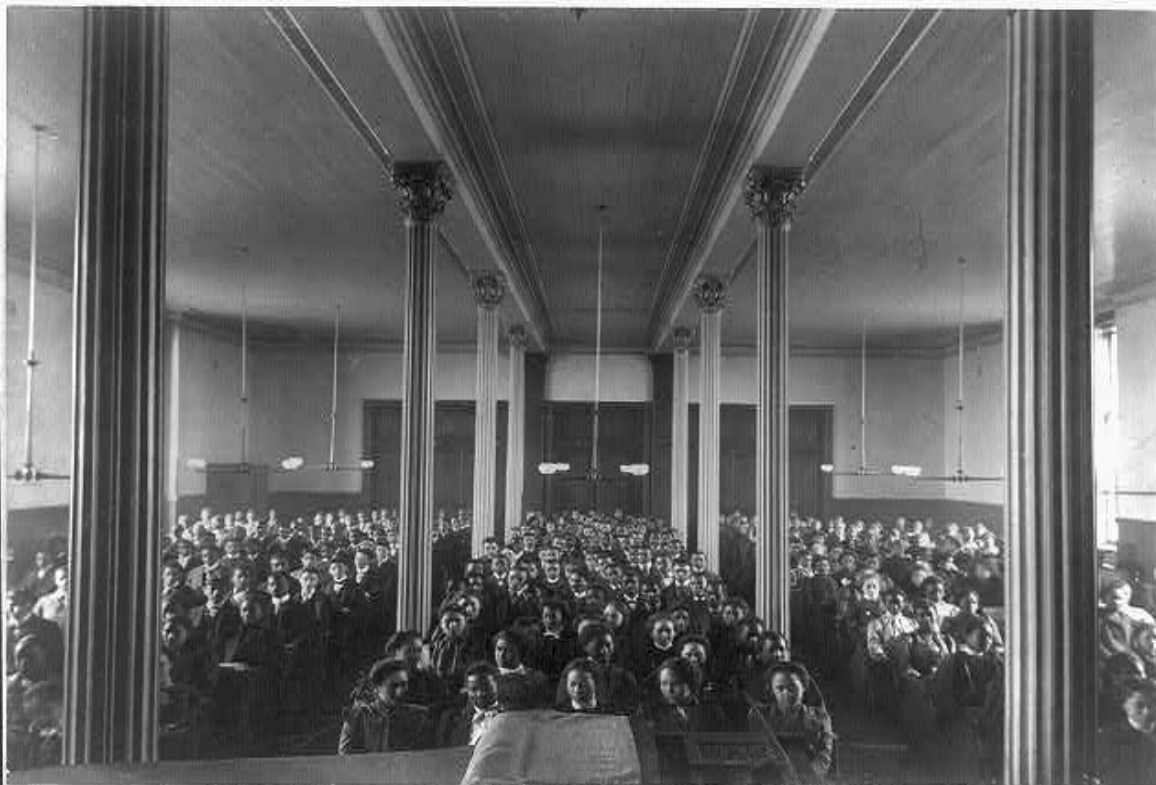


Figure 29. Early morning prayer service, Fisk University, 1900. (Photo Courtesy Library of Congress Photo Archives).



Figure 30. Peabody College Social-Religious building. (Photo Courtesy Tennessee State Archives).



Figure 31. Peabody College for Teachers, circa 1900-1910. (Photo Courtesy Tennessee State Archives).



Figure 32. Roger Williams University, Class of 1899. (Photo Courtesy Library of Congress Photo Archives).



Figure 33. Stella Vaughn (far left), alumnae, teacher, and Dean of Women pictured with 1908 Vanderbilt basketball team. (Photo Courtesy Vanderbilt University Special Collections).



Figure 34. Vanderbilt students, 1904. (Photo Courtesy Vanderbilt University Special Collections).



Figure 35. Vanderbilt football, circa 1900. (Photo Courtesy Vanderbilt University Special Collections).



Figure 36. Vanderbilt's Dudley Field, circa 1905. (Photo Courtesy Vanderbilt University Special Collections).

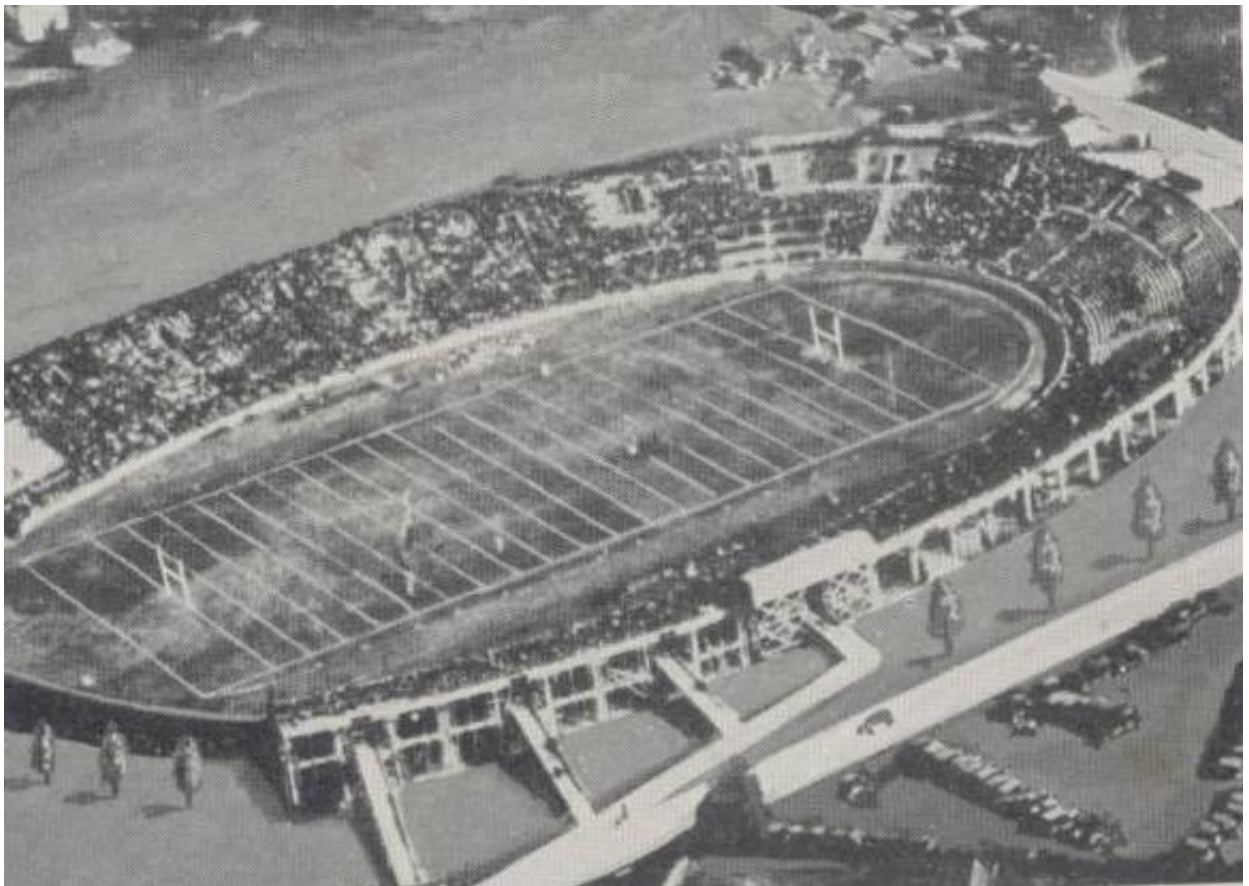


Figure 37. Vanderbilt's Dudley Field by 1922. (Photo Courtesy Vanderbilt University Special Collections).



Figure 38. Kirkland Hall, Vanderbilt University. (Photo Courtesy Vanderbilt University Special Collections).

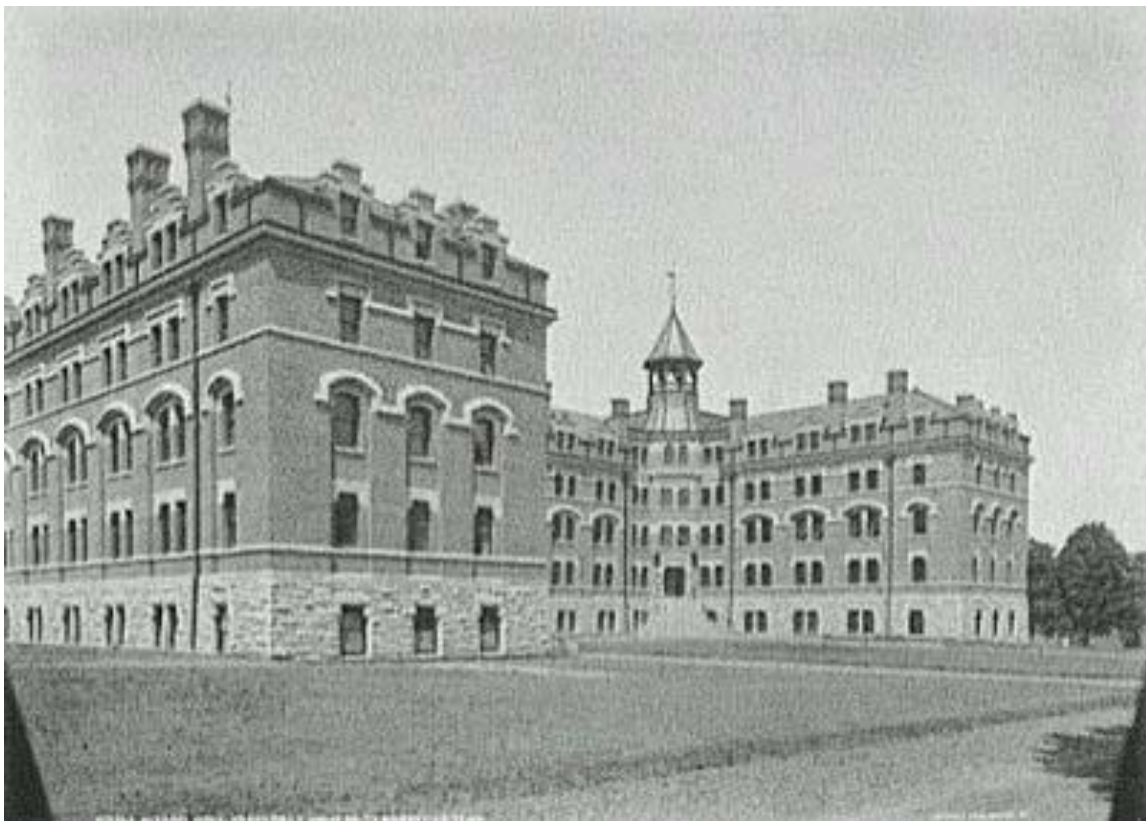


Figure 39. Kissam Hall, Vanderbilt University, 1900. (Photo Courtesy Vanderbilt University Special Collections).



Figure 40. Overview of Vanderbilt University campus, circa 1906-1915. (Photo Courtesy Vanderbilt University Special Collections).



Figure 41. Original building of Meharry Medical College, circa 1915. (Photo Courtesy of Fisk University Special Collections).

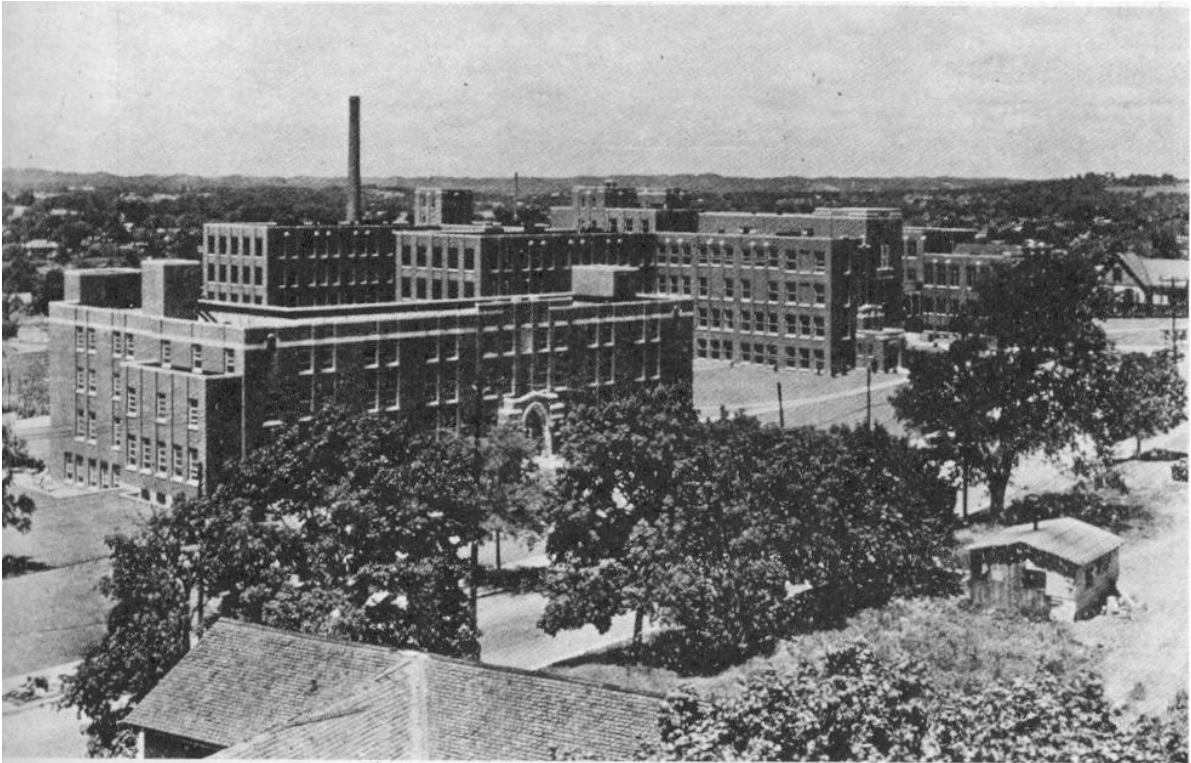


Figure 42. Meharry Medical College, 1940s. (Photo Courtesy Library of Congress Photo Archives).



Figure 43. Nashville Bible School Faculty (David Lipscomb University), 1914-1915. (Photo Courtesy Lipscomb University Special Collections).



CHEMICAL LABORATORY.

Figure 44. Chemistry class at David Lipscomb University, 1905-1906. (Photo Courtesy Lipscomb University Special Collections).



Figure 45. Tally-ho ride at David Lipscomb University, 1898. (Photo Courtesy Lipscomb University Special Collections).

2. Southern Style: Urbanization and Higher Education

“There is no city in the world where one can live cheaper, happier, longer; or where there is more opportunity for material prosperity than in Nashville.”

- Nashville Board of Trade, February 1912.

In 1914, when asked to describe the most important development in Nashville’s emergence as a New South city, a local businessman answered, “[We have] figured out that a university that has an average attendance of 1,000 is worth infinitely more to a city than a steel plant or an industry that gives employment to 1,000 men.”¹ Education firmly shaped the growth and development of Nashville from 1897-1917. Throughout the 1800s, Nashville was known as “Rock City” in honor of its rocky soil composition. Yet, as shades of progressivism swept the South following Reconstruction, Nashville’s new nickname shifted to “Athens of the South” reflecting local pride and the regional attention given for the many institutions of higher education in the city.

As Nashville’s boosters molded its New South image, education stood at the forefront as a symbol of progress as well as a driving force that fashioned a particular vision of modernity. In other words, Nashville’s colleges and universities served as both the benefactors of and the impetus for its developing urban ethos.² Such opportunities for higher education benefited white men and women as well as African American men and women. The growth of business would steer the local economy toward greater industrialism, and railroads kept Nashville on the map as a critical juncture between North, South, and West. Nashville fell behind Atlanta, Birmingham, and Memphis as an industrial hub, and its population grew more slowly than other New South centers. Yet, the city’s colleges and the accompanying outgrowth of interest in the cultural and

¹ *Nashville Banner*, June 29, 1914, 5.

² Ethos is used here to represent a distinguishing characteristic, sentiment, moral nature, or guiding beliefs of a person, group, or institution. In this case, it describes the cityscape of Nashville.

performing arts provided Nashville with a distinctive reputation and flavor. To a large extent, higher education guided the how, when, and where of Nashville's development during the first two decades of the twentieth century.

From 1897 to 1917, the "newness" of the "New" South began to fade, and with it, distinctions between antebellum wealth and post-bellum prosperity. Overall, new monied families in Nashville were not transplants but rather a new generation of young families who earned and used their wealth in different ways from their fathers and mothers. Progressive change and expansion in education, commerce, and culture transformed a younger generation prepared for a faster-paced world. Many in this new generation of young adults benefited from family money, but used their affluent background to attend local colleges and universities, and upon matriculation, both men and women ventured into new arenas of private and professional life. The men and women of the early twentieth century formed the vanguard of a more modern society in Nashville. In addition, new businesses and commercial interests helped solidify the city's place as a southern urban center. Nashville would not become the chief southern hub of business, but it remained a major player with several key railroads and other businesses that would rise to national prominence. The city's distinctiveness was marked by the role of education, business, and urban development as components of the equation that produced a certain kind of modernity – southern style.

In the wake of the Panic of 1893, Nashvillians attempted to restore vitality to the city's commerce while serving as Tennessee's centennial party host. In part, the national economic depression played a large role in the booster's decision to cultivate business

and tourism using the Centennial Exposition of 1897. As the Secretary of the Planning Committee, Colonel J.B. Killebrew, stated:

This exposition will bring about low rates, and people from all over the country will come to see the progress and development that is going on in Tennessee. Do these expositions pay? They most assuredly do. Atlanta, Philadelphia, Chicago, San Francisco, Paris, Vienna, and others have paid and increased the population and manufacturing industries of these places.³

Planning began as early as 1894 and the cornerstone of the Parthenon was laid on October 8, 1895. Nashville's civic leaders also hoped to use this opportunity to revitalize as well as refashion its city image as an urban center that served as a model of southern progressivism and modernity.⁴ In fact, solidification of Nashville as a center of culture remained a major reason why the Parthenon was chosen as the exposition's epicenter. Nashville first garnered the nickname of "Athens of the South" during the 1850s with already established schools such as Cumberland College, the University of Nashville, and University of the South in nearby Sewanee. However, city officials planning the centennial celebration hoped to add a more modern twist to Nashville's status as a southern center of higher education, culture, and the arts.

New colleges and universities certainly made this an easy sale with Peabody College, Vanderbilt University, Ward Seminary, Belmont College (later to merge forming Ward-Belmont), David Lipscomb University, Fisk University, Roger Williams University, and the medical division of Walden College (later to become Meharry Medical College) all opening between 1864-1875. The supply and demand of higher education in the South propelled several of these colleges into national prominence by the

³ Herman Justi, ed. *Official History of the Tennessee Centennial Exposition* (Nashville: Brandon Printing Company, 1898), 20.

⁴ Modernity is defined as a temporal period that is discontinuous with the past due to social and cultural changes. It does not dismiss tradition, but modernity does imply change, typically in the form of certain understandings of progress or improvement. Life is fundamentally different when measured by pre-modern and modern standards.

1890s, in particular Vanderbilt and Fisk Universities. Others such as Peabody, Ward-Belmont, David Lipscomb, Roger Williams, and Meharry helped to fill specific roles dictated either by expanded fields of service professions (i.e. teachers, ministers, doctors, nurses, social workers) or by minority status (women, African Americans). Only Fisk and Vanderbilt rose to the level of true colleges, offering traditional degrees for completion of undergraduate and graduate training.⁵

Together Nashville's schools reflected the local society's increased interest and a new enthusiasm and standardization of higher education as a means to better social mobility and professional opportunity. Of course, higher education exposed groups of white women and African American men and women to higher education.⁶ And yet, the urbanization of Nashville and the growth of higher education also mirrored more significant fundamental shifts within southern society. Emerging cities in the South relied on private and public funding as well as money from northern philanthropists and organizations to increase industry, develop railroads, increase public space, stimulate reform efforts, and fund education. Following the Civil War, the South experienced a kind of "physical and intellectual growth" whereby agricultural production continued to increase, but industry witnessed explosive escalation. With the growth of industry, cities increasingly became nerve centers as "the hubs of commerce, communications, cultural

⁵ According to Malcolm S. Knowles in *The Adult Education Movement in the United States*, the Land Grant College Act of 1862 and the Hatch Act of 1887 were pivotal to the development of a public system of higher education. In addition, the opening of collegiate instruction to women also shaped the system of both public and private colleges and universities. The Land Grant College Act was passed by Congress and signed into law by Abraham Lincoln. The grant gave 30,000 acres of public land to each state for the purpose of establishing colleges of agriculture and mechanic arts. As Knowles acknowledges, "This act laid the foundation for the establishment in the next half-century of a pattern of state land-grant colleges which has become one of the principal elements of our public education system . . ." (31). The Hatch Act enhanced the regulation and opportunities for agricultural education.

⁶ There also existed many seminaries designed for the extension of women's education before the Civil War, but many continued to operate more as finishing schools, providing only the equivalent of a high school diploma in most schools. Knowles acknowledges that by 1860, "there were sixty-one institution of higher education for women, [and] [a]bout half of these later developed into colleges," (31). In addition, many private colleges began opening their doors to female students with the first being Oberlin in 1833. Most public state universities would not begin to accept female students for degree tracks until the 1880s and 1890s.

opportunities, . . .” and institutions of primary, secondary, and higher education.⁷

Because higher education directly and indirectly affected the shape and form of urbanization, Nashville and central Tennessee provide exceptional examples of this process. Southern progressives continued to view society through a paternalistic lens, and solutions to social problems were many times met and addressed within the community and by community leaders who acted as “guardians” of the city.

Dewey Grantham notes in “The Contours of Southern Progressivism,” that the symbiotic relationship between education and reform served as a vital component of urbanization. As Grantham argues, “It is significant that progressives sometimes coupled education, which they emphasized as an instrument of material progress and social control, with the need to cleanse the political process and limit participation to those who were prepared for responsible citizenship.”⁸ In fact, the Centennial Exposition of 1897 alone reflects the importance and demarcation of the city’s commitment to education, culture, and the arts. Nashville urbanized in a way that preserved certain elements of southern heritage while creating new urban notions. Visitors to the 1897 Exposition stood in awe of the Parthenon, a symbol of culture, government, and philosophy that formed the enduring legacy of Greek civilization. Just as local colleges and universities were shaped by the growing city, the city was influenced by the augmentation of higher education and its substantial impact on Nashville.

⁷ Knowles, *The Adult Education Movement in the United States*, 34-35. In fact, over half the population lived in urban areas by the end of World War I.

⁸ Dewey A. Grantham, “The Contours of Southern Progressivism,” *The American Historical Review* 86 (December 1981), 1045. Further Grantham addresses the issues of social justice versus social control, For all of their emphasis on social order and their faith in social controls, many Southern progressives revealed a strong commitment to social justice, . . . [and] a growing number of Southerners were genuinely worried about the . . . increasing need for social services, and sensitive to the social roles and responsibilities opening up to them as part of an emerging class of trades people, professionals, and experts (1045).

Modern Notions

Nashville's colleges and universities, and the students and faculty connected to them, did not exist in a vacuum. Rather, they appeared on the larger stage of this changing city surrounding such institutions of higher education. In other words, the developing urban environment served as the stage that shaped – and was shaped by – higher education and college culture. Nashville would have experienced growth and change *without* local colleges and universities, but these schools played a key role in determining just how the city grew and expanded. Nashville's modern notions did not suddenly appear in 1897; instead the city's political, commercial, and social sectors laid the foundation upon which Vanderbilt and other schools would build.

The city's municipal government during the nineteenth century remained ahead of many other southern cities in terms of services and departments. In 1833, Nashville developed a water works system whereby a “steam engine pumped water from the Cumberland River to a reservoir and thence to dwellings via cast iron pipes.”⁹ In 1866, the city's first horse-drawn trolley system allowed for greater mobility throughout downtown. Nonetheless, until the 1880s Nashville was still considered to be a “walking city.” The conversion from animal-drawn streetcars to electric streetcars began in 1889 when the McGavock and Mt. Vernon Horse Railroad Company acquired six electric streetcars that ran out West End Avenue, and by 1890 the company ran lines completely powered by electricity.¹⁰ This first extension of public transportation westward would prove instrumental in the development of middle upper class suburbs to the West of

⁹ Blaine A. Brownell and David R. Goldfield (eds.), *The City in Southern History: The Growth of Urban Civilization in the South* (London: Kennikat Press, 1977), 75. Also see: Raymond A. Mohl, *The New City: Urban America in the Industrial Age, 1860-1920* (Wheeling, Illinois: Harlan Davidson, 1985).

¹⁰ William Waller (ed.), *Nashville in the 1890s* (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 1970), 4.

downtown; however, it is important to note that one major reason for the extension was to connect Vanderbilt and other colleges on or near West End Avenue. By 1897, the city streetcar system helped expand city boundaries without inconveniencing commuters and created new modes of transportation for laborers and business owners. Further, better public transportation also allowed better access to and from downtown and the campuses of Vanderbilt, Peabody, Ward's Seminary, Fisk University, and David Lipscomb. In addition, city authorities finished a complete overall of the sewerage system to accommodate growing numbers and population density in the city by the early 1890s.¹¹

Public transportation continued to play a major role in shaping Nashville's development from 1900-1917, connecting downtown business (as residential areas increasingly became slums only) with growing suburbs, city parks, and local colleges. By 1915, trolleys carried more than 100,000 people into and out of the city, but the final phase of the transportation revolution shifted commuters from public streetcar to private motor car vehicle by the early 1920s.¹² The combination of either public streetcars and/or private automobiles created the same socioeconomic force as the metropolitan city grew and factionalized along transportation lines. In the South, this remained especially applicable to white and black residences and businesses. As James Powell comments in his essay within the *Nashville as a Historical Laboratory*, "The trolley enabled whites to

¹¹ According to the *Nashville City Directory* for 1880, Nashville maintained thirteen wards; however the city was already experiencing growth and urban transition. Downtown still served as a major residential area with the white professional class living in Ward I surrounded by African American neighborhoods in Wards 2 and 4. Also close to the downtown center, Wards 3, 5, and 6 maintained a racial and socioeconomic mix. Wards 7-9 and 11, 12 served as home for much of the middle class and upper middle class. Ward 9 in particular maintained a large percentage of the German immigrant community. Finally, Ward 10 remained the predominantly African American neighborhood not located as close to the city center. By 1920 the city had expanded to over 25 City Wards. Like many growing cities in the South, no state or local laws existed to racially segregate the city; however, racial segregation could be defined through class and patterns of socio-economic segregation. Further, Nashville continued to mirror characteristics of the pre-industrial "walking city" with very few developed neighborhoods outside of city limits. For a comparison of Nashville's urban growth in 1880 and 1920 see: Jeanne A. Christian, "Suburbanizing Nashville, 1880-1920: Familial Differentiation within Economic Development," *Nashville as a Historical Laboratory* (1978), 9-19.

¹² James Powell, "Politicians and Public Policy in Nashville in the 1870s and 1920s," *Nashville as a Historical Laboratory* (1978), 30-31.

live in outlying areas and still be accessible to their work and downtown shopping, while black servants could commute from the city core to white areas.”¹³ A few of the Nashville elite bought cars after the turn of the century; although, even the first Model T Fords cost over 800 dollars when first sold off the assembly line in 1908.

The permanent shift from street trolleys to private automobiles occurred as the World War ended. By 1917, many cars cost less than 400 dollars, making them affordable for the middle class. By 1920, the cost of a Model T had dropped to nearly 300 dollars.¹⁴ As such, cities experienced a new wave of modernism in the 1920s and 1930s due to the automobile industry and all of the by-products and problems created by the latest technology of travel and convenience. Within a ten to fifteen year period, trolleys completely faded from Nashville’s city landscape, and by 1930, streetcars disappeared from the streets. Powell also notes, “Not only would cars change the face of the city’s maneuverability but also further reinforce the effect of transportation, and who could afford it, in the formation of white suburbia to Nashville’s Western sector.”¹⁵ As Blaine Brownell and David Goldfield identify, transportation development in southern cities dispersed certain groups from the city core while keeping these communities within commuting distance. In other words, beginning in the 1920s, the transformation was complete; Nashville neighborhoods were effectively identifiable according to race and socioeconomic rank.¹⁶

Another defining characteristic of urban order and southern styles of progressive reform remains the expanse of power and obligation of the municipal government and

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Statistics taken from the “Model T Ford Club of America,” September 1, 2008, <<http://www.mtfa.com/>>

¹⁵ Ibid., 35-36.

¹⁶ Blaine A. Brownell and David R. Goldfield, ed. *The City in Southern History* (Port Washington, New York: Kennikat Press, 1977), 134-136. Evidence of this pattern can be found in City Directories in the 1920s, particularly 1926, whereby the occupation and residence of business leaders and politicians can be noted.

community leaders to provide an array of modern services for its citizens. “Urban boosterism” is a phrase used to describe this growth of a new class of commercial [and] civic [minded] elites that emerged in northern and southern cities during the 1890s. This new class included merchants, politicians, insurance brokers, bankers, attorneys, doctors, and other businessmen. In Nashville, politicians and leaders of the city’s railroads, publishing companies, textile mills, educational institutions, and other members of the professional class represented this group of commercial-civic elites. Many of these men gained prestige through the accumulation of wealth through industry and growth occurring throughout the New South.¹⁷

Behind the priorities of managing a city and its budget, new and complex urban ills continued to establish a pattern of social order and social reform dictated by the commercial-civic elite. This group dominated politics in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, with their height of power peaking in the late 1920s. Leaders in Nashville such as Percy Warner, Joel Cheek, James Napier, and Dr. W.E. Ward, supported the principle tenets of order, unity, and growth in their vision for the city. Brownell notes that Nashville’s leaders “avidly cultivated an intense urban patriotism among local citizens, sang the praises of city life, and fashioned an ideal of a healthy, prosperous metropolis that was quite compelling.”¹⁸ By delving into the attitudes and actions of Nashville’s politicians and other local leaders, a fresh perspective on the changing notions of urban living can be better understood.

¹⁷ Amy Price, “Urbanization of Nashville from 1908-1917: The Role of Commercial and Civic Clubs,” *Nashville as a Historical Laboratory* (1978), 1-12.

¹⁸ Brownell, *The City in Southern History*, 145.

Expanding its power throughout the 1890s, the municipal government granted franchise rights to the newly formed United Electric Railway (UER) to operate streetcars on specified streets in the city, and in doing so, the company acquired the “properties of twelve street railroad companies, including the McGavock and Mt. Vernon.”¹⁹ By 1896, the (UER) acquired by Nashville Street Railway only to be bought by Percy Warner who merged the railway company with his own electricity company in 1903.²⁰ This merger brought electric transportation together with the residential and commercial supply of electricity under the auspices of the Nashville Railway and Light Company. However, southern progressivism in Nashville reflected the cooperation, and at times corruption, between business and politics. Such partnerships did accomplish reform within the city; however, much was determined by the white male vision of progress: better public transportation, more efficient labor and production, increased railroad routes, and promotion of the city. Interestingly and ironically, Nashville’s reputation and New South image remained largely driven by a sector outside of business and politics – flourishing culture and higher education.²¹

Birmingham reporters were sent to Nashville in 1914 to investigate and report on the city’s status as “Athens of the South.” In part, their findings were to be used to improve and increase colleges and universities in Birmingham, with Nashville as their model. After several days in the city, the *Birmingham Ledger* reported that “Nashville well deserves the title of the ‘Athens of the South.’ This city is an educational center.”²²

The reporter also noted that an estimated \$25,000,000 was invested in the various

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ *Nashville American*, December 11, 1896, as quoted from Waller, *Nashville in the 1890s*, 7.

²¹ Doyle, *Nashville in the New South*, 69-86, 91-100; Amy Price, “Urbanization of Nashville from 1908-1917: The Role of Commercial and Civic Clubs,” *Nashville as a Historical Laboratory* (1978); Julia Beach, “Belle Meade Country Club and Urbanization, c. 1900-1920,” *Nashville as a Historical Laboratory* (1978).

²² *Birmingham Ledger*, June 1914, reprinted in *Nashville Banner*, June 29, 1914, 5.

colleges and universities, showing that “The people of Nashville have figured out the financial side of the educational institutions as well as the refining influence of its colleges and schools.”²³ Understandably, Vanderbilt was reported to be the center of education in the city with other colleges complementing the university’s prestige as a school of “Southern Ivy” league status. As the *Ledger* stated, “Practically all of the other educational institutions of the city followed in the wake of Vanderbilt.”²⁴ Additionally, George Peabody College was noted as an institution famous nationwide for teacher training. The article clearly shows the acknowledgment, and perhaps envy, of other southern cities that desired the educational opportunities available in Nashville. Moreover, such commentary gave legitimacy to the notion that colleges and universities were prolific and advantageous elements of a progressive city.²⁵

Nashville’s progressive reform also followed the visions of two mayors who did much to shape the city landscape and trajectory. James Head, mayor of Nashville from 1899-1903, achieved more in regard to city services and progressive government than any other leader during this period. A new city charter expanded the mayoral powers to include the appointment of members to the Board of Education, the Board of Health, the Fire Commission, and the Police Commission.²⁶ The new charter also stated that members of the Board of Public Works would be elected by popular vote. In addition, all new businesses, mergers, and/or amendments originally granted by the city to utility companies had to be approved by Nashville voters. This section of the new charter served as a consumer and community response to a “growing fear that utility corporations

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ *Nashville City Directory* 1899, 1900.

and railroads were unfairly exploiting Nashville and interfering in local politics to protect their interests.”²⁷

Head took full advantage of his expanded powers by regulating the Nashville Gas Company in 1899, with an option for municipal ownership after ten years. He also gained a court settlement in 1902 that provided the city with the right to purchase the streetcar system in twenty years. As part of the settlement, Cumberland Light and Power agreed to improve railways, pave eighteen inches of street lining the tracks, pay royalties, and purchase the site of the Centennial Exposition, later to be given to the city. It would serve as Nashville’s first major free public park.²⁸ Head also developed a municipally owned light company to combat the monopoly of Cumberland Light and Power that supplied power to the city’s public buildings and street lamps downtown. Moreover, Head confronted the monopoly of Cumberland Telephone and Telegraph and challenged the power of the L&N Railroad. Although he was unsuccessful in his efforts to develop rival competitors in these two industries, Head’s public attacks pushed the Cumberland and the L&N to conciliatory internal reform. As author William Waller states, “Mr. Head a lawyer and former newspaper man, was a progressive, but not a reformer.”²⁹ Yet, Head did serve as a progressive reformer in the sense that he helped to breakdown monopolies and increase municipal control over utility and transportation services.

Nashville did incur certain levels of corruption, in the form of Mayor Hilary Howse who led an administration that maintained special interests while proclaiming change and reform. Howse served as Nashville’s next “progressive” mayor from 1909 to 1915. His long, sporadic tenure represents the city’s only true political machine, and

²⁷ Doyle, *Nashville in the New South, 1880-1930* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1985), 157.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 159.

²⁹ Waller, *Nashville 1900 to 1910*, 3.

Howse served as the city boss – manipulating politics and business to serve a personal and sometimes public good. However, he did follow through with certain aspects of municipal progressivism as reform took a more social turn in the form of urban liberalism through the improvement of parks, playgrounds, sanitation, sewage, and living conditions, specifically in the “Black Bottom.” The neighborhood known as the Black Bottom, located near the riverfront up to Fifth Avenue, served as the home to many of the city’s African Americans, as well as Irish and Jewish immigrants. Don Doyle argues that by 1905 the Black Bottom had become a “permanent sore on the edge of the downtown, described by one indignant citizen as ‘a conglomeration of dives, brothels, pawn-shops, filthy habitations . . . accompanied by the daily display of lewdness and drunkenness on the sidewalks and redolent with the stench of every vile odor . . .’”³⁰ In 1910, shortly after Howse’s election, he sponsored a clean-up campaign, with another in 1911, making many public trips to lower income neighborhoods, including Black Bottom. Howse’s reform also included free health dispensaries, milk stations, additions to the city hospital, raised salary raises, free textbooks for students, and the promotion of a new city high school, later to be called Hume-Fogg High School.³¹

Precisely because of his attention to minorities in poor neighborhood, he generated an African American bloc vote in his reelection. Howse helped ease the strains of urbanization in Nashville with better sanitation and health services and educational funding. Additionally, he allowed African Americans and immigrants to have a greater voice in municipal politics. Yet, he only accomplished these goals through the creation of a southern political machine modeled after political bosses in northern cities.

³⁰ Doyle, *Nashville in the New South*, 80. For more see all of Chapter Seven, “Progressive Nashville and the Rise of Boss Howse,” 143-182.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 168.

Eventually, Howse's practices caught up with him as a group of citizens tested the ouster law whereby a public official could be removed from office if he failed to enforce the law. Howse's failure to enforce the state's prohibition law resulted in his removal from office in 1915, although he would be reelected in 1911 and 1913 on the platform that he would not enforce the statewide prohibition law. In the *Nashville American*, Howse was quoted as saying that "all laws designed for the purpose of legislating goodness and morality into the people are destined to failure from the beginning."³² Howse would run for mayor again in 1917, losing by a narrow margin.³³

The Business of Money

When Theodore Roosevelt passed through Nashville on October 21, 1907 to pledge his support for the restoration of Andrew Jackson's home, "The Hermitage," he was served a cup of coffee. The Cheek-Neal Coffee Company produced the special blend coffee that gave the drink a distinctive taste and flavor. After rave customer reviews for the coffee at the prestigious Maxwell House Hotel, the hotel sold the coffee exclusively. As a result, Joel Cheek, owner of the company, renamed his coffee Maxwell House Coffee. As the president sipped the delicious coffee blend, he exclaimed, "This is the kind of stuff I like to drink, by George, when I hunt bears."³⁴ Ten years later, Cheek-Neal began using a new slogan to advertise Maxwell House Coffee claiming that as Roosevelt drank his coffee, he also added that it was "Good to the last drop," and asked

³² Papers of Mayor Hilary E. Howse, State Archives, Nashville, Tennessee.

³³ Howse was elected mayor again in 1923 and served until his death in 1938. He served eight terms total as mayor. By his death, Nashville was a financially sound city, despite the methods and misuse of funds during the many Howse administrations from 1909 to 1938.

³⁴ *Nashville Banner*, October 22-23, 1907.

for another cup.³⁵ Other commercial and civic organizations akin to the Cheek-Neal Coffee Company greatly affected the trajectory of Nashville's urban order through public and private programs and divisions. Granted, many businessmen sought and implemented reform in order to enhance their own interests and investments; yet, their efforts also reveal their commitment and concern for the wellbeing and planning needed for productive and prosperous city growth. The efforts of the Board of Trade as well as other community organizations did help to pave sidewalks and roads, improve sanitation through water, sewage, and housing reorganization, and maximize the benefits of transportation with intercity streetcars and commercial railroads.

During this period, an urban elite class emerged based more predominantly on new money rather than old. Still, many wealthy families who dominated the Nashville scene prior to the Civil War did make the transition to the increasingly industrial, post-bellum economy. Nashville grew because of its railroads, its location as a center of business, entertainment, higher education, and its proximity to other growing southern cities. As Louis M. Kyriakoudes contends in *The Social Origins of the Urban South*, Nashville could not keep pace with heavy industry found in other cities. In reality, Nashville did not have the natural resources to support heavy industries such as iron or coal. Instead, light manufacturing and the railroads were the city's biggest industries.³⁶ Memphis grew in large part because of its intersection with the Mississippi River and railroad connections; Birmingham became the center of iron production in the South, and

³⁵ Bill Carey, *Fortunes, Fiddles and Fried Chicken: A Nashville Business History* (Franklin, Tennessee: Hillboro Press, 2000), 168-213. Cheek-Neal Coffee Company sold to Postum Company, better known today as General Foods, in 1928 for \$42 million dollars. Maxwell House Coffee continues to claim this urban myth. Albeit enjoyable and nostalgic, it remains unproven by any historical document or account from 1907.

³⁶ Louis M. Kyriakoudes, *The Social Origins of the Urban South* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2003) 19-40. Kyriakoudes describes the major manufacturing industries in Nashville in great detail. The major manufacturing industries were wood products, grain milling, meat processing, and some textiles.

Chattanooga also grew in industry and population through iron manufacturing. Atlanta grew because of North/South and East/West railroads as well as burgeoning cotton and textile industries. Moreover, Atlanta also hosted three expositions to promote the city: The Atlanta International Cotton Exposition in 1881, the Piedmont Exposition in 1887, and the biggest of all, the Cotton States and International Exposition in 1895. As such, it remains important to analyze the origins of the New South ideology as it applies to Nashville and to investigate the motives, actions, and results of the city's political, business, and educational power players.³⁷

Social registers also reflect interesting patterns from 1896 to World War I. Published in 1896, Crozier's *Nashville Blue Book: Selected Names of Nashville and Suburbs*, gives the names, addresses, and professions of prominent families. *The Wayne Handbook of Nashville* of 1897 was compiled for the Centennial Exposition and listed over 100 clubs, societies, and related organizations such as music, literary, and professional groups. Finally, the *Nashville Society Blue Book* of 1907 reveals an updated list of prominent families in similar fashion to Crozier's *Nashville Blue Book*. In all of these sources, there exists a fairly obvious attempt to denote and distinguish between "old" and "new" money.³⁸ The new monied class emerged as a direct result of urbanization and industry. E. Digby Baltzell also explores the shift from old money as it "merged with a new and more conspicuously colorful world known as 'Society.'"³⁹ Baltzell contends that a new upper class emerged in the 1880s and solidified a wholly new definition of "Society" by 1940. The new elite also relied on higher education as

³⁷ Doyle, *Nashville in the New South*, 19-20, 47-48, 60-63; William Waller, *Nashville in the 1890s*, 16-41, 251-257.

³⁸ Crozier, *Nashville Blue Book: Selected Names of Nashville and Suburbs*, 1896; Dau, *Nashville Society Blue Book*, 1907; *The Wayne Handbook of Nashville*, 1897.

³⁹ E. Digby Baltzell, *Philadelphia Gentlemen: The Making of a National Upper Class* (New York: The Free Press, 1958), 385.

well as business to gain position and prominence on a local, and ultimately, a national scale. Although Baltzell does not treat the South specifically, it is clear that Nashville participated in this national movement, albeit with their own southern style.

The old elite in Nashville clearly wanted to distinguish between the quick money gained through rapid industrialization for the newly wealthy with their own family fortunes. These families earned through a system that symbolized the prestige and former glory of the Antebellum South. In 1896 and 1897 society registers show that nearly half of those listed were government officials, professionals, or big businessmen (or sons of big businessmen). Within a decade, fewer than 25% were listed in the new social register published in 1907.⁴⁰ Dau's *Nashville Society Blue Book* of 1907 also reveals greater diversification; however, most "new arrivals" were listed as lower level elites while the upper levels remained "relatively static."⁴¹ Nonetheless, members of social registers from 1896, 1897, and 1907 all shared certain trends in common. Increasingly, high society included more than just the accumulation of money; business power had also come to represent class position. Baltzell shows that members of the national upper class "were more likely to live in the more fashionable neighborhoods, to attend [certain] churches, to have graduated from the right educational institutions, and to have grown up in the city."⁴² Nashville's equivalent to Baltzell's model included neighborhoods such as Belmont and Belle Meade, Protestant denominational churches downtown, and schools such as Vanderbilt and Ward-Belmont.⁴³

⁴⁰ Susan E. Cox, "The Nashville Elite: 1896-1907," *Nashville as a Historical Laboratory* (1978), 8.

⁴¹ Ibid. The following source was also used to determine patterns in early twentieth century Nashville: Dau, *Nashville Society Blue Book*, 1907.

⁴² Baltzell, *Philadelphia Gentlemen*, 386.

⁴³ It is also important to note that just as Nashville participated in the making of a new national upper class, their cultural values as Southerners created a certain dichotomy between North and South. In the North, schools such as Yale, Princeton, Harvard, and Columbia served as the "right" schools to attend if one wanted to join elite networks. In

In 1969 C. Vann Woodward provided a masterful narrative of southern urban history with his book *Origins of the New South*. In this major historiographical work, Woodward argued that the Civil War altered the course of southern history. At the same time, there remained an undercurrent of consistency with regard to political policies and social structures, including the exclusion of African Americans, and to a large extent, white women.⁴⁴ Despite the conclusion of many southern leaders that change was necessary, the shift from an agrarian economy to an industrial one proved a slow, and sometimes halting, process. Southerners continued to struggle, even when spurred on or subsidized by northern interests, with an acceptable balance between social control and social reform. Leaders supported change, but only as long as it did not disrupt the strictures of southern tradition or culture. Even reforms in the last quarter of the nineteenth century were based on the certain notion of progress but continued to support an odd paradox. On one hand, the sons of the former planter aristocracy sought restoration of their family honor and fortune, and on the other, the Bourbon reforms rerouted and restructured the political system to better accommodate industry and commerce.⁴⁵ As a city before, during, and after the Civil War, Nashville identified with the desire to preserve the honor and wealth of the Old South, while local leaders carefully planned and promoted the city's New South status by 1897.

the South, they remained loyal and supportive of schools such as Vanderbilt, Duke, and Emory because they wanted a southern alternative to prestigious higher education. In other words, prominent families in Nashville did want to send their children to "Yankee" colleges, but sought to create their own equivalent institutions, thus preventing the loss of southern culture and pride. For more see Baltzell's Chapter Seven, "Education and Status Ascription," 292-334.

⁴⁴ C. Vann Woodward, *Origins of the New South, 1877-1913* (Baton Rouge, 1951).

Also see Dewey W. Grantham, "The Contours of Southern Progressivism," *The American Historical Review* 86 (December 1981), 1035-1059.

⁴⁵ For an essay on additional historiography regarding the New South and other works that further flesh out Woodward's important work see: Sheldon Hackney, "Origins of the New South in Retrospect," *Journal of Southern History* 38 (May 1972), 191-216.

Arthur Link and Richard L. McCormick made significant contributions to the histories of progressivism and urbanization, and also compared the South to the North during this period. Surveying the vast array of existing historiography, this seemingly unwieldy project ultimately produced the most succinct and effective description of the Progressive Era. Link and McCormick showed that their period from 1894-1916 was filled with challenge and reaction as well as inconsistent motivating factors and outcomes. Yet, they concluded that “[p]rogressivism was the only reform movement ever experienced by the whole American nation.”⁴⁶ Although southern states are largely ignored by progressive historiography, the South did participate in many reform movements including prohibition, sanitation, charitable aid, education, and even women’s suffrage to an extent. Moreover, Link and McCormick view southern progressivism as a phenomenon that remained dependent on agrarian reform as well.⁴⁷

Nashville’s business sector created The Board of Trade as early as 1855, but consolidated with the Commercial Club and renamed it the Chamber of Commerce in 1894. Finally, in 1908 the original name, The Board of Trade, reemerged after a merger between the Chamber of Commerce and the Retail Merchants’ Association.⁴⁸ In their 1907-1908 published yearbook, the group laid out their objectives. Ironically, although a commercial club, The Board of Trade maintained a progressive tone. The objectives and goals are stated as follows: “. . . to promote the commercial, manufacturing, and industrial interests of Nashville; to advance its sanitary conditions, educational and

⁴⁶ Arthur S. Link, Richard McCormick, *Progressivism* (Arlington Heights, Illinois: Harlan Davidson, Inc., 1983), 4.

⁴⁷ Another historian that added to urban historiography was George B. Tindall. Tindall contends that the New South did not truly emerge until 1913 and into the 1920s and 1930s. However, his analysis of the shifting southern economy from cotton to commerce and industry particularly in or near urban centers reflects a New South equation that easily includes Nashville. For more see: George B. Tindall, *The Emergence of the New South, 1913-1945* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1967), and David R. Goldfield, *Cotton Fields and Skyscrapers: Southern City and Region, 1607-1980* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1982).

⁴⁸ For the sake of consistency and clarity I will refer to the group as The Board of Trade for the entire period as that served as the group’s name for approximately half of the time period surveyed.

transportation facilities; to advertise Nashville and its advantages, and to advance the general welfare of Nashville and its people.”⁴⁹ The Board of Trade encouraged the opening or relocation of manufacturing companies, an emphasis on goods “Nashville Made,” employment in the city, and civic pride through continued efforts to beautify streets, parks, transportation, downtown, and suburbs.⁵⁰ In addition, the city improved the four major railroads that ran from and through Nashville. By 1912, Nashville had emerged as the “Gateway to the West” in terms of railroads and transportation. The Louisville and Nashville Railroad carried with it three lines through the city as did the NC&St.L Railway. Moreover, the Nashville division of the Southern Railway extended to Washington D.C. and New York while the Illinois Central Railway opened a Nashville Division that operated with Chicago. Nashville also convinced the Missouri, Kansas, and Texas Railroads to relocate their district offices from Chattanooga to Nashville. Thus, as the railroads transported goods, people, and ideas to and from Nashville, local businesses and institutions enjoyed promotion of their city as a prime intersection between New South industry, higher education, and progressive reform.⁵¹

It should be noted that not all reform efforts came through publicly funded channels. The Belmont suburb created an organization that both united and served the community. The purpose of the Belmont Civic Federation was to promote community service, improvement, and unity. Oddly enough, this group maintained a very traditional structure and approach as “this organization appeared to cling to all the old values, and

⁴⁹ Nashville Board of Trade, *Yearbook of the Nashville Board of Trade* (Nashville: Marshall & Bruce Co., 1907-1908), 4.

⁵⁰ Price, “Urbanization of Nashville from 1908-1917,” *Nashville as a Historical Laboratory*, 3-5.

⁵¹ See also: Maury Klein, *History of the Louisville and Nashville Railroad* (New York: MacMillan, 1972); and Gabriel Kolko, *Railroads and Regulation, 1877-1916* (New York: WW Norton and Company, Inc. 1965).

tried to retain an agrarian view; all the while, being drawn by progress.”⁵² The group paid special attention to creating a neighborhood watch program and planning for proper landscaping and waste disposal. Clearly, the Belmont Civic Federation remained very serious about the beautification and safety of their neighborhood. Interestingly, each meeting closed with singing and a session of storytelling. Only in the South would the group have chosen the Uncle Remus dialect tale as their favorite.⁵³ The Belmont Children’s Club encouraged the area’s children to cherish their southern roots and manners. Upon reaching school age, many of the young women attended Ward Seminary, Belmont College, Ward-Belmont (after 1913), or Peabody College. Many of the young men attended Montgomery Bell Academy. The neighborhood consistently reinforced the importance of family and community, with many shopping at the small shopping center on Elliston Place. The Belmont Civic Federation went as far as prohibiting the building of fences between houses because they believed it took away from the neighborly and cordial atmosphere.

There exist central themes that set southern urbanization apart from its northern counterparts. Nashville specifically provides a unique lens revealing the “fascinating tensions between the traditions of southern rural culture and the new ways of life demanded by the city.”⁵⁴ As Don Doyle states, “In the South, where urban growth was generated mostly by domestic rather than foreign migration, the influence of rural traditions may be more tenacious than classical theories of urbanization would suggest.”⁵⁵ Leading up to the United States’ entrance in World War I, the business and political elite

⁵² Kathy L. London, “The Belmont Neighborhood, 1900-1920: Prevailing Southernism,” *Nashville as a Historical Laboratory* (1978), 6.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 7.

⁵⁴ Don Doyle, “Nashville as a Historical Laboratory,” 3-4.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

continued to be the most powerful group in the formation of municipal policy. This was not uncommon in many southern cities, and Nashville was no different in this respect. Despite an increase in manufacturing, educational institutions, and a rising black elite in the city, white businessmen maintained power through the allowance of growth and development on their terms. In other words, white leaders controlled the pattern through a decision making process that weighed their own interests along with community need.⁵⁶ Business and politics combined common interests at the expense of taxpayers and the working class. However, this combination of power and interest certainly played a large part in the urban order of Nashville during the Progressive Era.

The Centennial Exposition of 1897 continues to serve as a literal and figurative symbol of Nashville's announcement, proclaiming itself as a modern city and hoping to maintain its equivalency with Atlanta. However, in Nashville, the Exposition displayed "symbols of technological and social progress [that] were juxtaposed against a model slave plantation, an Egyptian pyramid, and the famous plaster replica of the Greek Parthenon," as a declaration of sorts, proclaiming the city as the "Athens of the South."⁵⁷ Although this self-assigned title projected visions of progress, a center of learning, and a city of culture, it remains important to acknowledge the continued agrarian nature of southern life. As Don Doyle notes, "the agrarians were not simply anti-urban; they wanted to preserve a special tone to the 'Athens of the South,' a haven for art, letters, and beauty amid a New South gone mad for progress."⁵⁸

⁵⁶ James Powell, "Politicians and Public Policy in Nashville in the 1870s and 1920s," *Nashville as a Historical Laboratory* (1978), 21. Examples include retail clothier owner, druggist, banker, owner of Gupton Undertaking Co., fireman, engineer of the NC&St.L Railroad, lawyers, doctors, but mostly merchants (43% in 1926) – also served as members of the Board of Ed., several banks, law firms, etc.—called high white collar jobs as opposed to 28% in 1880.

⁵⁷ Doyle, *Nashville in the New South*, 7.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 8.

Factoring in Race and Gender

In *The City in Southern History*, Blaine A. Brownell and David R. Goldfield trace the evolution of the emerging city within shifting definitions of southern identity. They explored the “twoness” of many cities such as Atlanta, Nashville, Birmingham, and Houston, arguing that there existed a “mixture of old gentility and new dynamism” that typified the best of nostalgic idealism with progressive notions of expansion and development. This “twoness” represented a selective use of “hospitality and violence, racism and tolerance, and ingenuity and fatalism,” all of which fell under the banner of southern culture without any serious challenge to inconsistency. African Americans and women certainly captured a certain angle of “twoness” as many sought to become more active and public figures in a region that honored their efforts as long as they continued to subscribe to traditional roles that kept them largely behind closed doors.⁵⁹ African Americans in the South were faced with new challenges as freedmen and women sought a more legitimate place in society while facing racial disenfranchisement, prejudice, and segregation. Nashville’s African Americans experienced the same discrimination and inequality. And yet, because of black business and higher education, Nashville was able to transcend certain disadvantages experienced by African Americans in other southern cities.

Women also struggled with their role in the New South as many younger women gained greater access to higher education, the workforce, and public service. Nashville provided opportunities that allocated teacher training and college coursework for young women. Education afforded greater experience in the public sphere for women, who in

⁵⁹ Blaine Brownell and David R. Goldfield, eds., *The City in Southern History: The Growth of Urban Civilization in the South* (Port Washington, New York: National University Press), 6-7.

many instances used their education as a springboard for greater change. However, many women, both young and old, ultimately sought change through the medium of the powerful men in their lives, perhaps because it was more effective or perhaps because many women still believed in the southern order of things.

Several historians have elaborated on Arthur Link's analysis of southern urbanization in the Progressive Era including Hugh C. Bailey and Jack Temple Kirby.⁶⁰ Bailey writes, in *Liberalism in the New South*, that the South was instrumental in producing a small but effective contingent of reformers who headlined national movements such as Walter Hines Page and Booker T. Washington. Bailey also focuses on race, revealing that social reform typically occurred through politicians who used the promise of continued racism to earn white votes. He quickly distinguishes between liberalism and racism, reflecting that the former did not necessarily include improvement of racial issues. Published in 1972, Jack Temple Kirby argued in *Darkness at the Dawning* that in addition to agrarian reform, the South experienced political, racial, and socioeconomic reform as well. Yet Kirby argues that reform for African Americans came only when it also benefited the white community in some way.⁶¹ In fact, Kirby argues that reform could only take place once issues of race met a resolution acceptable for whites. This resolution included consistent and creative disenfranchisement of African Americans. Such social control of blacks freed whites to focus on more comfortable reforms such as education, labor, temperance, and women's suffrage to a small extent.

⁶⁰ Arthur Link and Richard L. McCormick, *Progressivism* (Arlington Heights, IL: Harlan Davidson, Inc., 1983).

⁶¹ Jack Temple Kirby, *Darkness at the Dawning: Race and Reform in the Progressive South* (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott, 1972). See also: Kenneth W. Goings, Raymond A. Mohl, eds. *The New African American Urban History* (Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage Publications Inc., 1996).

Maureen A. Flanagan added gender to the progressive equation in *Seeing With Their Hearts* as she examined differing visions of reform in Chicago from 1871-1933. Even within the Progressive heyday of 1895 to 1920, Flanagan argues that progressive ideas for men differed from women. Following the Chicago Fire of 1906, men hoped to use industry and labor to create lake front property as parking lots and better housing in industrial areas. They sought to keep potential laborers from seeking work elsewhere after the fire. Men favored garbage collection, with the government contracting a private service and charging fees, so that government and private enterprise profited. On the contrary, women favored municipal control over garbage collection. Flanagan cites the critical years of 1895-1910 as “Chicago women created a new public sentiment and a new women’s politics through which they reconceptualized the primary role of the municipal government as directly providing for the welfare of its people.”⁶² With this, the progressive reform ferment created the context in which women would depart to pursue their own goals. African American women also participated in reform, and Flanagan contends, “[their] women’s activism was not shaped solely by concerns within the African American community itself, nor was ‘motherhood’ the singular underpinning of their activism.”⁶³ However, Flanagan quickly notes that in the South, cooperative efforts between black and white women was less likely because race continued to trump gender as a cause for solidarity.

Also dealing specifically with gender, Anne Firor Scott argues that women in the New South shifted from a quest for personal piety to a more communal cause of religious and social work. In fact, reform issues such as prohibition used the banners of social

⁶² Maureen A. Flanagan, *Seeing With Their Hearts: Chicago Women and the Vision of the Good City, 1871-1933* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2002), 59.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 50.

improvement as well as moral development.⁶⁴ Dewey Grantham also believes that women played an integral role in southern progressivism as he states, “The creative response of Southern women to the plight of the poor and disadvantaged was especially notable in the South’s uplift campaigns.”⁶⁵ One of the biggest outlets for southern reform promoting social justice was education, and in Nashville's case, higher education remained a key factor. As Grantham notes, “No aspect of social reform in the South during the Progressive era touched the immediate lives of more of the region’s inhabitants than the great educational awakening soon after the turn of the century.”⁶⁶ In particular, higher education helped young adults break through previous barriers such as affordability, lack of educational preparation at the secondary level, obligations at home, and/or the lack of local and regional colleges. Higher education also created new cyclical patterns that encouraged and raised the overall educational level of the states’ inhabitants. More colleges meant more professionals trained in business, law, medicine, social work, and perhaps most importantly greater numbers of better trained teachers to pass basic education onto future generations of southern students.

As the Tennessee Centennial Exposition of 1897 signaled the arrival of Nashville as a New South city, it also signaled the shifting of attitudes regarding the capability and acceptability of young college women as more active agents in the public sphere. Because the Exposition was located near all of Nashville’s major colleges and universities on the grounds of a former racetrack outside of the downtown area, students flocked with other Nashvillians to visit the wonders of the city’s biggest attraction. In

⁶⁴ Anne Firor Scott, “Women, Religion, and Social Change in the South, 1830-1930,” in Samuel S. Hill Jr., *et al.*, *Religion and the Solid South* (Nashville, Tennessee: Abingdon Press, 1972), 92-95.

⁶⁵ Grantham, “The Contours of Southern Progressivism,” *American Historical Review* 86 (December 1981), 1045.

Also see Dewey Grantham, *The Democratic South* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1963).

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

particular, one such day revealed the role of women in the slow but sure transformation of Nashville as an urban and educational center. The 28th of October was named “Ward’s Day” and began early in the morning as current students boarded streetcars and met hundreds of alumnae at the Exposition Auditorium. This contingency, donned with white and gold badges, assembled to hear two of their notable alumnae. One served as a professor at a southern normal school and another was a journalist for a popular magazine. Each extolled the excellence of Ward in “developing her character and making her strong for the battle of life.”⁶⁷

After these presentations, the girls strolled the grounds, marveling at the New York building, Commerce building, Streets of Cairo, and the Venetian gondolas in the lake. Yet, the girls from Ward focused their pride and joy on the Woman’s Building, not only because it represented the advances of women, but because the building itself was designed by alumnae architect Sara Ward-Conley.⁶⁸ As the day came to a close, senior Paralee McLester expressed her satisfaction stating, “As we look back over the beautiful grounds we see the last ray of the setting sun throwing a halo over the scene . . . [it] seems like fairyland.”⁶⁹

Views of women in the workplace and their marital status also began to shift. By 1914 the *Nashville Banner* reported, “A business woman doesn’t have to fib about her age nowadays, says the *New York Sun* . . . This is the day of the intelligent well equipped woman in the business world.”⁷⁰ In fact, many Nashville businesses and institutions preferred older women because of their dedication to welfare work, office work, and

⁶⁷ *The Iris*, 1898, 53-54.

⁶⁸ The Woman’s Building at the Columbian Exposition of 1893 was also designed by a woman. See: Erik Larson, *The Devil in the White City: Murder, Magic, and Madness at the Fair That Changed America* (New York: Crown Publishers, 2003).

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁰ *Nashville Banner*, June 1914.

employment as teachers and nurses. Although many jobs available to women continued to exist in fields that remained of little interest to men seeking employment, the proclivity of women holding full time jobs outside of the home continued to gain acceptance in Nashville. Yet, marriage and work in the home remained the preferred female occupation. The prevailing attitude toward workingwomen continued to view fulltime employment outside of the home as a necessity not a choice as most females in the workforce were unmarried.⁷¹

In reality, it seems likely that the above article attempted to find an acceptable way to explain the growing number of women in colleges, the workplace, and more visible roles overall in the public sphere. Not only did more single women, having graduated from local colleges, seek gainful employment for their own fulfillment and to improve their communities but even after marriage many continued to work fulltime. Regardless, such commentary by the newspaper indirectly acknowledges the positive contributions of women to urban growth as well as active agents of community progressivism. Moreover, with a noticeable shift of women listing their names as Ms., rather than Mrs. or Miss, signified a persistent deemphasis on marriage as a southern condition or social expectation for females.

The role of women in Nashville's urbanization increased dramatically from 1897 to 1917. The Centennial Club was organized specifically for middle class and elite local women in 1905. Their purpose remained "the cultivation of higher ideals of civic life and beauty; the promotion of city, town and neighborhood improvements; the preservation

⁷¹ See Chapter Three, "The Modern Belle" for more discussion on some women gaining autonomy based on individual accomplishments while many others achieved prosperity and reform because of the position of their families, either fathers, husbands, or other prominent male family members.

and development of landscape; the promotion of hygiene and sanitary conditions . . .”⁷²

In the written history of the socially-minded and community-oriented club, the ladies of Nashville proclaimed, “We shall never have clean cities until the women undertake the job, nor shall we know how to be good national housekeepers until the private housekeepers of the nation extend their hereditary function to public needs and duties.”⁷³

The Centennial Club worked both independently and in conjunction with The Board of Trade and other local service clubs. The Young Women’s Christian Association (YWCA), emphasized reform, housing, and recreation beginning in 1911. Leaders of the YWCA confronted city-wide challenges facing young women, such as abuses in the work place and prostitution, and the YWCA housed over 100 white and black women. By 1915, the YWCA offered a pool and gymnasium as well as classes in laundry and business.⁷⁴ Further, suffrage groups met through the YWCA beginning in 1916.

Nashville’s female leaders, most of whom had at least nominal support of their husbands, certainly improved the community through civic and religious clubs and organizations.

For African American men and women, the Separate Car Law of 1905 officially brought government sanctioned racial segregation to Nashville. Public pressure to segregate public transportation had mounted in Tennessee in the late 1890s, and such efforts clearly served to further stigmatize and polarize African Americans in the city. Irregardless, the new program went into effect in July of 1905, and immediately black leaders such as Dr. R.H. Boyd issued a call for “those of the race who are able, to buy

⁷² Amy Price, “Urbanization of Nashville from 1908-1917: The Role of Commercial and Civic Clubs,” *Nashville as a Historical Laboratory* (1978), 5.

⁷³ Charlotte A. Williams, *The Centennial Club of Nashville: A History from 1905-1977* (Nashville: Centennial Club, 1978) 13.

⁷⁴ Kryriakoudes, *The Social Origins of the Urban South*, 141-144.

buggies, and others to trim their corns, darn their socks, wear solid shoes and walk.”⁷⁵

Boyd, along with Preston Taylor, another member of the black elite, began organizing a boycott and eventually formed the Union Transportation Company, which was a noble but, flawed black-owned streetcar company. After the Union Transportation Company dissolved, the boycott also lost its fervor.⁷⁶

Nashville and other urban areas illustrate the height of southern racism, and the African American community did not yet have the racial solidarity or socioeconomic firepower to begin fighting disenfranchisement. Still, Nashville’s race relations differed in several ways from cities such as Atlanta, Memphis, Savannah, or Birmingham. Because Nashville’s white community remained a bit more tolerant and practical than whites in other southern cities, African Americans were not treated in the same offensive, thoughtless ways. White community leaders did address and provide for the well-being of African Americans more so than other growing urban areas, albeit improving city conditions primarily for the benefit of whites. Nashville was also different because of the development of black middle and elite classes, the city maintained Tennessee’s most prosperous black community.⁷⁷ These men and women used their economic success to invest in other businesses and venues that catered to their black constituents. In large part, this new class formation was due to the number of reputable institutions of higher

⁷⁵ Lester Lamon, *Black Tennesseans, 1900-1930* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1977), 24. Interestingly, Boyd also headed the National Doll Company which issued the first African American baby doll for sale by any company. Boyd believed it would help promote greater self-esteem if children could play with toys that resembled their own race and culture. James C. Napier complimented the positive and far reaching influence of Dr. R.H. Boyd as the head of the Baptist Publishing House in January 1910, “He has been in our city for a number of years and through his efforts the city of Nashville has become known all over the civilized world. The fact that the National Baptist Publishing Board is located here – keeps us constantly in the minds of 2,500,000 Negro Baptists almost daily and we are before 10,000,000 Negroes and many more millions, who look this way for information concerning the great denomination,” (*The Globe*, 1).

⁷⁶ For more see Neill Griffin, “The Jim Crow Streetcar Boycott in Nashville,” *Nashville as a Historical Laboratory* (1978), 1-15.

⁷⁷ Lester Lamon notes that black per capital income, job/educational opportunities, and political influence still paled in comparison to white Southerners.

education that trained teachers, doctors, nurses, businessmen, social workers, and preachers. Thus, Nashville's African Americans could still enjoy time for recreation and leisure without severely threatening their Caucasian counterparts. All the while, this new black commercial class continued to gain influence and respect in the first quarter of the twentieth century.⁷⁸

The Globe was as a Nashville newspaper, owned and distributed by African American leaders James C. Napier and Dr. R.F. Boyd.⁷⁹ The publishing company originated in 1905 and the newspaper circulated from 1906 to 1913 conveying vital information to the African American community. These two men were also instrumental in the founding and advocacy of the Negro Business League, which began in 1900 with the help of Booker T. Washington. In fact, both James C. Napier and Booker T. Washington served on the Board of Trustees for Fisk University for many years. In 1912, the business league transformed itself into the Nashville Negro Board of Trade. The Board of Trade helped to increase public space as well as programs aimed at improving the recreation and health of the black community. The Negro Board of Trade worked with white city officials to open a new city park for African Americans, promote outdoor carnivals and fairs, support booster clubs for young businessmen, and hire a new black nurse who served in the Nashville Health Department. Moreover, fundraising events were planned to raise money for continued health reform as well as relief committees for those hit by disease, fire, or flooding. Thus, in many ways, segregation in

⁷⁸ Lester C. Lamon, *Black Tennesseans, 1900-1930* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee, 1977).

⁷⁹ James C. Napier was born outside of the city limits, but called Nashville home for his entire life. He was educated at Wilberforce and Oberlin Colleges before earning his law degree at Howard University. He served on the city council in Nashville in 1870, and 1878-1884. In 1898 he ran for Congress but was unsuccessful. Beginning in 1903, Napier played a leadership role in the black business league and became register of the Treasury of the United States Bank. In addition to his role in founding *The Globe* Publishing Company, he also helped to start the One Cent Savings Bank, a bank predominantly for African Americans. Dr. R.F. Boyd was president of the Baptist Publishing Board, a division of the National Publishing Board. For more see August Meier, *Negro Thought in America* (Ann Arbor, Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 1963), 124.

the 1890s solidified the need and place for an African American “bourgeoisie of business and professional men who depended on the Negro masses for their livelihood and this group was gradually assuming upper class status.”⁸⁰ Likewise, this new black bourgeoisie was also responsible for providing effective leadership in city reform, social service efforts, higher education, banking, and other businesses.

By regional standards, Nashville remained relatively tolerant in terms of the racial treatment of African Americans. In large part, this distinction developed because of the progression of African American education through Fisk University, Roger Williams University, Meharry Medical College, and Tennessee A&I. These schools not only trained African American men and women to become a part of the professional and proletarian working class, but also trained hundreds of teachers, doctors, and public servants who helped to improve the lot of younger generations of African American children through better schooling, healthcare, and living conditions. Reflecting the rise of a black middle and elite class, *The Globe*, proclaimed on the eve of World War I:

True Nashville Negroes can boast of their publishing houses, their banks, furniture factories undertaking establishments, drug stores, also an up-to-date men’s furnishing store and a high class ladies’ millinery, but these do not cover the field: no, not by far . . . there is not a single shoe store, book store . . . other might be mentioned but these are sufficient to show that there is an abundance of room for Negro business enterprises in the city.⁸¹

Yet, Nashville’s Chamber of Commerce acted in a similar manner to other southern cities such as Atlanta, which promoted the positive aspects of urban and industrial growth while avoiding the admission of black slums, racial violence, and the reality of

⁸⁰ Meier, *Negro Thought in America, 1880-1915* (Ann Arbor, Michigan: The University of Michigan Press, 1963), 156. Also see: Henry Lewis Suggs (ed.), *The Black Press in the South, 1865-1979* (London: Greenwood Press, 1983).

⁸¹ *The Globe*, March 21, 1913, 4 For more see: Lester C. Lamon, *Black Tennesseans, 1900-1930* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1977). As Lester argues, “Nashville still offered the greatest potential for black resistance with four northern supported Negro colleges, fifty-seven black churches, and two publishing houses.” It would also soon obtain black banks and its own black newspaper (1).

segregation. As James C. Napier declared in his presidential address to the National Negro Business League in 1917, “Mob Law, the Jim Crow system, poor housing, poor and short-term schools, inadequate educational advantages, disenfranchisement and a general abbreviation of citizenship, are the things with which none of use are satisfied in this Southland.”⁸²

Urban Design

In 1890, the *Nashville City Directory* exclaimed, “What may be the future of this fifteenth child of Nashville! Let us call her Progress . . .”⁸³ In fact, the *Nashville City Directory* proclaimed in 1890 that “We can call Nashville a city.”⁸⁴ In 1905, the city annexed four new areas that included what would become West Nashville, Waverly Place, Lockeland, and Eastland. With these additions the city expanded from seven to fifteen square miles and included a modified population of 160,000. Nashville was deemed the third largest city in the South according to the census of 1890; however, the city’s growth did not match that of Memphis, Birmingham, or Atlanta. By 1920, Atlanta was the second largest city in the South, followed by Memphis fifth, and Nashville continued to come up short, ranking ninth.⁸⁵

From 1897-1917, Nashville outgrew its niche as a walking city, but modern residential patterns created greater problems for the city core as well. As residential areas in or near downtown grew increasingly more unsanitary and unsavory, the municipal

⁸² Brownell and Goldfield, *The City in Southern History*, 119. Yet, in 1917 there remained problems of racial violence. In response to several lynchings in Tennessee, the Law and Order League was formed in 1918. For more see Chapter Four in *The City in Southern History* as Howard N. Rabinowitz explores “Continuity and Change: Southern Urban Development, 1860-1900,” and focuses largely on race and municipal policies. See also: Doyle, *Nashville in the New South*, 87-142; and Eleanor W. Bryan, “The Negro in Nashville from 1900 to 1920,” *Nashville as a Historical Laboratory* (December 1978).

⁸³ James T. Bell, *Reports of Departments of the City of Nashville* (Nashville: Brandon Printing Company, 1889), 7-8.

⁸⁴ *Nashville City Directory* (Nashville: Brandon Printing Company, 1890), iv.

⁸⁵ U.S. Census Reports, 1920.

government was slow to act, mostly due to lack of funds, and private charity or clubs remained inadequate to meet real needs. Neighborhoods such as Black Bottom and Hell's Half Acre continued to maintain sordid reputations for vice, poverty, and disease. Of course, the majority of these neighborhoods consisted of African Americans combined with some immigrants (primarily German and Swiss). The white middle and upper classes made sure that their needs were met first, and believed that education and police services would provide the necessary forces of both social control and social justice.⁸⁶

As industry continued to grow rapidly in Nashville, downtown became more commercial and less residential. With the expansion of the railroad, adding new routes and rails, other industries also located themselves downtown to be close to Union Station and the Cumberland River for shipping and receiving purposes. In 1908, the May Hosiery Mill opened, representing just such growth. A German-born Jew, Jacob May, immigrated and moved to Nashville. He founded the Rock City Hosiery Mill in the former Church Street penitentiary, before moving to a newer location downtown. The mill employed men and women for approximately fifty cents a day.⁸⁷ Other similar industries akin to Rock City Hosiery, such as Jakes Foundry (iron), NC&St.L Railroad, Neuhoff Packing Company (meat), Lanier Mill Company (flour) and the city's many banks, publishing houses, and commercial grocers, forced the propagation of the middle and elite classes to look elsewhere for clean air and space.

The symbiotic relationship between the spatial organization of Nashville's urbanization and educational institutions certainly created a new generation of New South men and women. The location of Nashville's colleges and universities played a

⁸⁶ By 1910, most of the public service budget went to education; the next highest categories receiving taxpayer dollars were the fire and police departments. For more see City Directories and Annual Reports from 1897-1917.

⁸⁷ Daniel May Papers, May Hosiery Mill, Tennessee Historical Society (Box 9).

large role in the direction of downtown outgrowth and the subsequent suburban movement. Vanderbilt opened on its original campus in 1875 and by 1910, all of Nashville's white colleges had moved into the western perimeter of the city, closer to Vanderbilt than to downtown. After buying the former property of Roger Williams University, Peabody College for Teachers moved in across the street from Vanderbilt. Ward-Belmont was located just around the corner from Vanderbilt and Peabody while David Lipscomb University eventually moved its campus to its present location just two miles further out than Ward-Belmont. The city was figuratively turned inside out, and the changing cityscape molded the emergent college culture. College life for New South students was dependent on the city, but students helped to determine the spatial shape of the city.

Edgefield, Nashville's first suburb, earned its name because it was on the border of the Cumberland River and East of Nashville's city limits. It remains Nashville's first suburb, and until 1880, it remained a separate city, booming during the 1870s to become a neighborhood for Nashville's elite who built "flamboyant examples of Victorian and Queen Anne styles of architecture"⁸⁸ When Nashville annexed the neighborhood, many of Edgefield's residents were in favor of receiving additional public services and the possibility of a new, free bridge. After the annexation, Edgefield continued to grow and maintained a reputation of prestige; however, by 1900 Nashville's growth shifted from East to West. This occurred in large part because of the growth of Vanderbilt, and to a lesser extent, Peabody and Ward-Belmont on the western edge of the city. In 1916, a fire cemented the decline of Edgefield, or East Nashville, as an area of prominence. The

⁸⁸ Mark B. Riley, "Edgefield: A Study of Nashville's First Suburb," *Tennessee Historical Quarterly* 37 (1978), 139. This development was also made possible by the incorporation of the Nashville and Edgefield Street Railroad Company in 1866 that provided transportation to South Tenth Street in downtown Nashville.

fire started in a lumberyard near one of the African American sections called “Crappy Shoot.” It spread quickly as a result of high winds, destroying nearly 650 homes and businesses with damage estimated at 1.5 million dollars.⁸⁹ Nevertheless, East Nashville retained an important role in the Nashville’s urbanization, increasing the population of the city as well as causing the expanse of public transportation and private business. The annexation of Edgefield pushed Nashville beyond the definition of a “walking city,” a development necessary to join the New South city movement.

In 1905, the Belmont neighborhood was annexed into the city, with developer George Blair of the Belmont Land Company subdividing much of the former Acklen and Montgomery estates. It was the beginning of the suburbanization west of downtown Nashville and would be followed by Richland, West End, and Belle Meade. Adelia Acklen was the one of the Antebellum South’s richest women. Born into a rich family, she married three times, the second time to Colonel Joseph A.S. Acklen who tripled his wife’s fortunes by 1860.⁹⁰ After her death in 1887, her estate including the Belmont mansion was converted into a school for girls. This served as the origin of Belmont College that would merge with the more widely known and prestigious Ward Seminary to become Ward-Belmont College in 1913. As the neighborhood developed, it quickly became home to many in the white middle class, including teachers and businessmen.

⁸⁹ Ibid., 154.

⁹⁰ “After her husband died during the Civil War, Acklen faced financial ruin when the Confederate army threatened to burn 2,800 bales of her cotton to keep it from falling into Union possession. Acklen boldly rushed to Louisiana and secretly negotiated with both sides to save her fortune. She secured Confederate promises not to burn her cotton, while the Union army agreed to help her move the cotton to New Orleans. Acklen ran the Union blockade and sold her cotton to the Rothschilds of London for a reported \$960,000 in gold. Three weeks after Robert E. Lee’s surrender in 1865, Acklen and her children left for Europe to retrieve the money made from this cotton sale. In 1867 the fifty-year-old Acklen married Dr. William Archer Cheatham, a respected Nashville physician. Cheatham also signed a prenuptial agreement. The couple was married twenty years, spending most of their time at Belmont in Nashville. In 1886 Acklen sold Belmont, left Nashville and Cheatham, and moved to Washington, D.C., with three of her adult children. The exact cause of her separation from Cheatham is not known. Acklen died on May 4, 1887, while on a shopping trip to New York City. She is buried in Nashville’s Mt. Olivet Cemetery in a family mausoleum with her first two husbands and nine of her ten children,” (<http://tennesseencyclopedia.net/imagegallery.php?EntryID=A001>).

The Belmont area is perhaps the most steeply entrenched in Nashville's higher education heritage. The area was home to Roger Williams University until 1905 when a series of fires destroyed the buildings. Roger Williams University served as an African American "college" that produced mainly teachers and preachers. Following the temporary closure and move of Roger Williams University, Peabody College for Teachers purchased the land. There were also public primary and secondary schools in the area as well as nearby Vanderbilt University and David Lipscomb University.

Neighborhoods such as Belmont reflected changes for middle class women. Katherine P. Wright served as a member and secretary of the Belmont Civic Federation for over twenty years. As seen through her scrapbook containing articles, notes, pictures, and memorabilia, Wright embodied the "New Feminism" of southern progressivism. As she was "relieved of her household duties, she devoted herself to charitable functions, cultural investments, and because she lived in the South, activities which would help to preserve southern tradition for future generations."⁹¹ Although close to downtown, Belmont was certainly considered a suburb in 1897, and its design reflected anti-modern sentiments with many open lots, giving the neighborhood a "park-like aura." The area's residents were never considered part of the political or economic elite; however, Belmont developed as a site and space for the burgeoning middle class who desired to escape the social ills of living downtown. Still, many Belmont residents participated in social clubs and societies, as evidenced by their names in the Social Directory of 1911-1915.

The Richland-West End neighborhood originated when land was purchased in 1904 from the former estate of John Craighead. The area was known as "Craighead

⁹¹ Kathy L. London, "The Belmont Neighborhood, 1900-1920: Prevailing Southernism," *Nashville as a Historical Laboratory*, 9.

Corners” and as lots were sold in 1905, contracts restricted buyers stating that they could not use the land for a “store, factory, saloon . . . hospital, asylum . . . but the said property shall be occupied and used for residence purposes only”⁹² African Americans were also restricted from owning property in the area, reflecting efforts by middle class whites to exclude blacks in order to prevent the inevitable challenge to white domination and control of urban growth.

The Belle Meade suburb served as more than a neighborhood; it was created as an outlet and haven for the Nashville elite. Luke Lea bought the majority of the Belle Meade Farm estate in 1904, and developed two acre plots for residential use with a club at its center. Belle Meade was marketed as a spacious neighborhood with extensive opportunities for leisure with golf, hunting, tennis, riding, social balls, and other such events. Over the next fifteen years, more and more of Nashville’s new moneyed families relocated from the increasingly crowded and polluted downtown area into this new section on the edge of town. The accessibility of Belle Meade also remained a key factor in the development of this new elaborate and elite suburb as streetcars were extended into the western part of the city. In 1901, most residents in Dau’s Blue Book listing prominent members of local society still lived downtown or in Edgehill across the river in East Nashville. As the first two decades of the twentieth century passed, West Nashville developed, as “South Nashville and the downtown core no longer provided an escape from traffic and people.”⁹³

⁹² Cindy Young, “The Growth and Development of the Richland-West End Neighborhood,” *Nashville as a Historical Laboratory* (1978), 3.

⁹³ Julia Beach, “Belle Meade Country Club and Urbanization, 1900-1920,” *Nashville as a Historical Laboratory* (1978), 11.

In fact, by World War I, the location of Vanderbilt, Peabody, and Ward-Belmont campuses at the western edge of town first encouraged the middle class and elite white community to move in the same direction. The demographic that most heartily embraced Belle Meade were bankers and businessmen as well as the traditional professional class including doctors and lawyers.⁹⁴ The planning of Belle Meade further expanded the city, but also continued the trend of suburbanization of the early twentieth century and the decline of downtown residential space. Further, as Lawrence Levine suggested, neighborhoods and clubs such as Belle Meade became synonymous with wealth and served as a way for upper class whites to erect new boundaries that separated their life and leisure from other classes of whites as well as African Americans.⁹⁵ Belle Meade represents a southern city's example of the conscious creation of a buffer and insulation from undesirable characteristics of urban growth.

Conclusion

In 1907, former President Rutherford B. Hayes announced, "Nashville's importance as a strategic point during the Civil War forecasted her importance as a commercial center, and I believe you will live to see her a city of half million population."⁹⁶ In fact, census reports show that Nashville maintained just over 80,000 people in 1900, while other southern cities such as Atlanta, Memphis, and Birmingham had far surpassed Nashville as the largest populated southern urban centers.⁹⁷ Yet, Nashville's inimitability arose from a variety of factors that garnered the city national

⁹⁴ Most of the bankers who lived in Belle Meade after 1904 were in positions of authority and power. Moreover, businessmen were predominantly involved in manufacturing, sales, or printing. For more see: Susan E. Cox, "The Nashville Elite, 1896-1907," *Nashville as a Historical Laboratory* (1978).

⁹⁵ Levine, *High Brow, Low Brow*.

⁹⁶ *Yearbook of the Nashville Board of Trade*. (Nashville: Marshall & Bruce Co., 1907-1908), 10.

⁹⁷ *United States Census Report*, 1900.

recognition as “Athens of the South.” As such, Nashville emerged as one of the premier cities in which to live as well as a center for culture, commerce, and education. The 1897 Centennial Exposition simply announced to the world what many in Nashville already knew: the city catered to and provided opportunities for a comfortable and prosperous life for most of its citizens. For the next twenty years, Nashville’s urban vision, with an emphasis on education and progress, continued to expand through the end of World War I. Although the city would not avoid issues of poverty, socioeconomic racism, and political corruption, Nashville’s urbanization played a pivotal role in statewide, regional, and national progressive movements. Most importantly the urban and socioeconomic development in Nashville represents a microcosmic model that can be used to better define elements of southern progressivism with regard to layered issues of education, gender, race, and leisure. The city both set the stage and served as the stage for a new host of actors in Nashville – young men and women attending local colleges and universities.

From the 1890s through 1917, Nashville completed its New South city makeover. Many of the demographics found as early as 1890 shifted throughout the last decade of the nineteenth century and the early twentieth century, mirroring national urban trends. Downtown Nashville grew increasingly industrial, leaving only the very poor as full-time residents simply because they could not afford to move. In large part because of streetcar tracks and institutions of higher education, Nashville’s prominent suburbs developed to the city’s westside. Yet there were many other factors that led to the urbanization of Nashville as well. In addition to public transportation and the growth and prosperity of colleges and universities, the expansion of the city limits, promotion of the arts and city

parks, and an influx of industry and railroads – molded a new Nashville that symbolized the ideal southern city – at least on the surface.⁹⁸

Although problems of poverty and poor conditions endured in certain parts of the city, Nashville could aptly boast of its many redeeming characteristics and quality of life over that of many other urban centers in the South. Progressivism may have been judged and implemented with a uniquely southern lens; however, Nashville emerged in many ways as a model of reform and progress, cleaning up streets and improving city conditions in regard to municipal service. Moreover, the city bolstered several colleges and universities with most garnering a national reputation for academic excellence. Particularly, Ward-Belmont and Peabody College disseminated primary and secondary teachers and administrators throughout the South while Fisk and Vanderbilt graduates would later surface as a new generation of leaders and self-made men and women.

In 1897, 15% of prominent Nashvillians lived in the growing metropolis, with the largest suburb of East Nashville, or Edgefield, claiming 27% of the elite class. However, West Nashville began to attract upper middle class residents as more and more businessmen sought to escape the downtown pace and further separate their professional occupations from their private lives.⁹⁹ During the 1880s and 1890s, West Nashville had many desirable features that appealed to prominent families such as less noise, more space, and better sanitation. The biggest factor that drew Nashville's upper middle class out of the city remained the location of the city's institutions of higher education. Moreover, Vanderbilt maintained several graduate schools including a medicine,

⁹⁸ For more see: James F. Blumenstein and Benjamin Walter (eds.), *Growing Metropolis: Aspects of Development in Nashville* (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 1975).

⁹⁹ New railroad stations and warehouses such as Cummins Station, at the turn of the century, served as a major factors influencing the push toward Nashville's suburbs.

dentistry, engineering, and law. By 1913, all of Nashville's major colleges and universities were located West of Nashville's downtown area.

As industry and business continued to grow downtown in the early years of the twentieth century, West Nashville experienced its greatest growth. Not only did it offer a cleaner, safer haven in which to raise families, but it also provided an environment that encouraged higher education, ultimately leading to greater professional prospects. This growth included more women in the public sphere, as the females from Nashville and throughout the South found several opportunities for higher education within a five mile radius including Peabody College for aspiring teachers, David Lipscomb for aspiring missionaries, Ward-Belmont for music certification or two years of college work, or Vanderbilt for a bachelors or in rare cases a master's degree. The location of these colleges and universities directly affected the trajectory of West Nashville as the new home of the elite and professional class.

The colleges and universities of West Nashville made the area attractive for middle and upper class families; however the Centennial Exposition of 1897 also remained a key to Nashville's local westward expansion. Not only did the Exposition help bring the streetcar line to West Nashville, but after the Exposition closed the following year, the city bought the property to use as a park. In 1905, the city enlarged Ward Twenty One to include Vanderbilt and created two new wards in West Nashville.¹⁰⁰ Moreover, private societies and affluent neighborhood such as Belle Meade encouraged extremely wealthy families to move west past Ward-Belmont. With greater proximity to private colleges and universities, the emergence of several new public parks, and the

¹⁰⁰ *City Directory*, 1905. Even as East Nashville attempted to maintain its former prestige, businesses also began moving further West, making it inconvenient for business commutes.

“availability of swift, dependable transportation [downtown],” West Nashville cemented its reputation as the “most desirable residential area.”¹⁰¹ Such developments generated a symbiotic relationship whereby students, faculty, and other professionals, contributed to the vivacity of the area and in turn solidified West Nashville as the most advantageous and enviable place to live in the city. As this cycle continued, it remains clear that higher education not only led to an increase in the numbers of young people attending “colleges and universities” but also aided in the overall growth and prosperity of a city on the rise in the New South.

¹⁰¹ Susan E. Cox, “The Nashville Elite: 1896-1907,” *Nashville as a Historical Laboratory* (1978), 6.

3. The Modern Belle: Education and Gender

“The fair ones came, saw and conquered.” – *The Hustler*, March 9, 1900, Vol. 11 No. 19, 4.

“[One] paper explains why so many school teachers are old maids. It is because no woman of common sense is willing to give up a sixty dollar position for a ten dollar man.”

- *The Fisk Herald*, Vol. VI, No. 4, December 1888, 1.

In 1903 *The Iris*, the annual of Ward Seminary for Ladies, revealed an intriguing dichotomy in an editorial entitled “Two College Preparatory Girls: The Ideal and the Other.” Agnes Amis, treasurer of the senior class, stated, “My ideal is, like the other, preparing for college; but – O, the difference between them!”¹ Her submission firmly documents the shifting self-perception and self-projection of many women attending institutions of higher education in the Progressive Era. Interestingly, Amis describes two very different models of femininity, but in truth, most educated Southern women emerged as a hybrid between the two – a “Modern Belle” of sorts. Amis views herself as the ideal college preparatory student exhibiting pride as a more autonomous and independent woman. Yet, she also upholds the merits of the more traditional “other.” As Miss Amis wrote:

‘Miss Ideal’ is quite a studious girl, who is very fond of her books; stands high in her classes; and scorns with a ‘pooh!’ any mention of or allusion to a boy as a beau. . . She takes any caller she happens to have out and plays tennis or ball or runs races with him. She is very proud of her prowess in athletic sports; and, in fact, is fond of telling how she distanced one of her ‘beaux’ in a foot race. She spends much time on her books, and likes nothing better than to dream of Wellesley, . . . herself, in cap and gown, as part of the landscape. In personal appearance, she almost approaches the masculine; she wears her hair parted and pulled (or slicked) back; she has an entire disregard for ‘style’ . . . yet she has a distinct style of her own. In school, her manner is entirely polite, though cold and forbidding; while out of school, she is a jolly, good fellow all around.²

¹ *The Iris*, 1903, 70.

² *Ibid.*

In contrast Miss Amis describes the “Lady Other” as quite different albeit equally acceptable, especially in the South:

[She] is entirely different, for she is a graceful feminine creature; cares much for style- not “Miss Ideal’s” sort, however. . . Her desires and also herself are entirely opposite from “Miss Ideal’s.” The delights of her heart are [dancing] balls, beaux (really truly ones), and to be a real young lady . . . [S]he is the same in school as she is out . . . [S]he is seemingly very frivolous and light, but beneath that runs a strong current of the good and the noble though to the casual acquaintance she shows no good quality whatever. Taken all in all, they are very different, yet each quite attractive in her way; still, they form a striking contrast.³

Agnes Amis’s account of “Miss Ideal” and “Lady Other” reveals a shining example of the attitude garnered by many young women in the South. Yet, it also gives credit, in an almost reverent tone, to the traditional role of young women seeking propriety through marriage and strong feminine character. In her very words (and in retrospect, loaded words), Amis reflects the struggle of the South to come to terms with a more progressive image. Even as she portrays herself as the more progressive “Miss Ideal” she also seems to acknowledge that many in Nashville and other southern urban areas continue to see her epitome for women as unattractive and incompatible with the southern belle ideology. She describes “Miss Ideal” as “approaching the masculine” with slicked back hair, dreaming of autonomy gained through higher education instead of men and marriage. In contrast, “Miss Other” is a stylish “graceful feminine character” who desires dancing and dating and ultimately marriage as a “real young lady.” Thus, it remains apparent that women who viewed education as a means to gain autonomy were seen as more modern but also more masculine as they challenged previously limited roles for women as married ladies and dutiful mothers. Yet, it also remains clear that young females increasingly viewed education, and the social and professional mobility provided, as not

³ Ibid., 70-71.

only congenial but in vogue as well.⁴ Amis represents the paradox of what many females at the turn-of-the-century regarded as ideally “modern” with that of older generations and their “traditional” ideal. Though a shift was occurring regarding the value of women’s education and attitudes toward female autonomy in social and/or professional settings, the South remained profoundly traditional, perhaps even more so because such shifts occurred in the first fifty years following the Civil War.

Debates raged regarding the curriculum, women’s intellectual capacity and education’s effect on them, and the consequences of women’s education to the political, social, and personal spheres of the male dominated public and private space. In addition, education was not standardized to a large extent until after World War I.⁵ As education reform paralleled increased opportunities for women as well as more legitimate accreditation, such standardization helped to create admission, course, faculty, and degree requirements. Throughout the period, noticeable trends show that higher education became increasingly gendered. In other words, as higher education expanded, the culture and curriculum grew differently for men and women, divided along lines of gender, with particular classes designed for women such as domestic science and nursing. As such, curriculum reform also deemphasized classical education. Education did serve as a

⁴ This new image is similar to the national trend and image of the Gibson Girl that emerged in the 1890s. The Gibson Girl was seen as All-American, a female who could play sports and place an emphasis on education while still remaining rational and aristocratic. As Susan E. Meyer, author of *America's Great Illustrators* defines the Gibson Girl, “She was taller than the other women currently seen in the pages of magazines, infinitely more spirited and independent, yet altogether feminine. She appeared in a stiff shirtwaist, her soft hair piled into a chignon, topped by a big plumed hat. Her flowing skirt was hiked up in back with just a hint of a bustle. She was poised and patrician. Though always well bred, there often lurked a flash of mischief in her eyes,” (“Charles Dana Gibson and the Gibson Girls,” (<http://www.livelyroots.com/things/gibsongirl.htm>). See also: Carl J. Schneider and Dorothy Schneider, *American Women in the Progressive Era, 1900-1920* (New York: Anchor Books, 1993).

⁵ With the creation of the Department of Education in 1867, National Teachers Association (NTA) in 1867, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) in 1895, the Association of Collegiate Alumnae (ACA), and the Southern Association of College Women (SACW), educational reform began to take place in the South. The NTA is today the National Education Association (NEA). However, the NTA absorbed three smaller organizations: the American Normal School Association, the National Association of School Superintendents, and the Central College Association. The NTA is actually credited with lobbying Congress for a federal Department of Education that it achieved in 1867, the same year the NTA officially established itself as a national organization. The NTA initially formed in 1857 with meetings in New York.

springboard for upper class women in the South; however, the means and ends of their inclusion into higher education reflected an ongoing struggle. Issues involving women's education, and ultimately the role of such women in the New South, reveals an intriguing consociation whereby traditional limitations 1) were challenged, 2) encountered reaction in varying degrees, and 3) ended with some form of socially acceptable modification. Such modification of social mores resulted in women becoming more visible, if not also more active, in public spheres. Such cycles of challenge and reaction would continue to reveal a shift from Antebellum and Victorian values to a more modern, progressive vision of acceptable behavior for southern women. In Nashville, Vanderbilt University and Ward-Belmont exemplified both the momentum and inertia of change experienced by females wrestling with their roles as students, young women, and gentry in the New South as the New South itself struggled with redefinition and identity. This generation of educated young women emerged by the end of WWI not as traditional southern belles or autonomous women – but rather helped to create and shape a new trajectory. This new trajectory, abounding with contradictions, combined southern realities with reform, innovation, and industry. They emerged as a hybrid bridging the old with the new, partly melded and partly transformed as the “modern belle.”

With its prestigious academic status as a top-rated university in the South, Vanderbilt remained the greatest exception with classical instruction. Further, women were admitted to Vanderbilt by the same standards as male students. Those who graduated then entered society having received an education from a reputable college. This immediately gave such women a distinct advantage as vanguards of society upon graduation either as professional women themselves or community leaders as wives of

prominent men. Vanderbilt's female students remained a small but meaningful minority until WWI. In contrast, Ward-Belmont's curriculum never contained classical majors and instead issued most diplomas in literature, music, and education; however, as a single sex school, this was not uncommon. Still, by World War I, Ward-Belmont had added courses in domestic science, business and secretarial work, and physical education.⁶ The three remaining institutions of higher education in Nashville each played a unique role and served a more specific type of student. Peabody College served as a teacher's college and its female student body served in the majority from the late 1890s until WWI, reinforcing both the need for teachers and the shift of teaching from a male to female profession. David Lipscomb University first began as a school training men as preachers and women as missionaries funded almost solely by the Church of Christ denomination. However, by the early 1900s, the school followed similar national and regional trends in offering a wider range of elective classes geared for female enrollment such as literature, botany, voice, piano, French, and education. Fisk University specifically educated African American men and women, and although Fisk mirrored other colleges as its curriculum offered classes more in line with an industrial and/or practical education. Nonetheless, its distinction as one of the premier African American universities in the South separates Fisk from both its Caucasian and African American institutional counterparts.⁷

⁶ One common text used was Mollie Huggins, *Tennessee Model Household Guide: Practical Help in the Household* (Nashville: Publishing House Methodist Episcopal Church South, 1897).

⁷ For specific curriculum changes see the Annual Catalogues and Directories for Ward-Belmont, David Lipscomb University, and Fisk University from 1890-1917.

Changing Inclinations in Education

Educational reform paralleled multiple movements during the Gilded/Progressive Era, and Nashville experienced the same growing pains and cultural challenges to opportunities for women's education. During the 1897-1898 school year, several comparisons between Nashville and its regional neighbors, as well as national and international trends, were noted. For example, *The Hustler* documented that in Ohio one-third of all students were female out of 24,000 total students, while over 700,000 female students were pursuing higher educational opportunities in Spain.⁸ Yet, the United States, and the eastern seaboard in particular, maintained a distinctive statistical set. By 1897 there existed 451 colleges in the country, and only 41 remained closed to women.⁹ During the 1890s and early 1900s, Columbia University served as the paradigm for teaching progressive methodologies and training educators to use such new approaches as well. Daniel Bell's *The Reforming of General Education* examines the Columbia College experience as a progressive generation of teachers and students at Columbia University pursued new systems of learning and new curricula.¹⁰ Columbia University, along with the University of Chicago, Cornell University, Harvard University, Yale University, and Johns Hopkins University, served as models eventually producing modern universities. Although reform in these top universities occurred predominantly in the Northeast, such changes trickled down to southern schools. Particularly, Vanderbilt University kept a close eye on new programs, buildings, course offerings, and matriculation rates for the

⁸ *The Hustler*, Vol. 9 No. 30, June 1, 1898, 3.

⁹ *The Hustler*, Vol. 9 No. 14, January 13, 1898, 3.

¹⁰ Daniel Bell, *The Reforming of General Education: The Columbia College Experience in its National Setting* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1966). For other individual school histories that include analysis of curriculum and changes in accreditation, acceptance requirements, and faculty credentials see: Paul Conkin, *Gone with the Ivy: A Biography of Vanderbilt University*, Henry Morton Bullock, *A History of Emory University* (Nashville: Parthenon Press, 1936).

aforementioned universities.¹¹ David Lipscomb University, Ward-Belmont, and Peabody College also took special notice of regional/national trends, not only to measure their own standards and facilities, but to compete for students. Each of these schools relied heavily on tuition and other fees from out of state students to meet their budget.

In regard to women in higher education, Christie Farnham lends excellent insight and context for southern women in *The Education of the Southern Belle*. She argues that education did give southern women some empowerment, even if only more control over dating and marriage.¹² Still, education of the “modern belle” extends Farnham’s study to show women asserting and gaining more autonomy over the spheres of their lives. For the history of co-education, Carol Lasser edited a fine collection of essays in *Educating Men and Women Together*. In an essay by Linda K. Kerber and Patricia A. Palmieri, the authors argue that, as many institutions of higher learning became co-educational, a new feminine identity emerged.¹³ Moreover, the ideals of women’s education transformed throughout the nineteenth century whereby more opportunities existed, but only through a gender specific curriculum designed in many ways to reinforce women’s domesticity. For example, women at Oberlin did laundry on Mondays instead of attending class, much like students at Ward-Belmont attended lectures on cooking and new methods of sanitation. Additionally, Lynn Gordon provides an excellent examination of the effect of women’s education on social interaction and culture in *Gender and Higher Education in*

¹¹ Vanderbilt’s newspaper *The Hustler* regularly commented on events, improvements, and news at many top tier institutions in the North.

¹² Christie Farnham, *The Education of the Southern Belle* (New York: New York University, 1994).

¹³ Carole Lasser (ed.), *Education Men and Women Together* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1987). For more on the engenderment of education at specific universities see: Charlotte W. Conable, *Women at Cornell: The Myth of Equal Education* (London: Cornell University Press, 1977). For additional commentary on women’s changing roles and specific case studies see: Janet L. Coryell, et. al., *Beyond Image and Convention: Explorations in Southern Women’s History* (Columbia, Missouri: University of Missouri Press, 1998); Janet L. Coryell, et. al., *Negotiating Boundaries of Southern Womanhood* (Columbia, Missouri: University of Missouri Press, 2000); and Catherine Clinton and Michele Gillespie (eds.), *Taking off the White Gloves* (Columbia, Missouri: University of Missouri Press, 1998).

*the Progressive Era.*¹⁴ Gordon believes that while more women attended colleges and universities, most educated young women still married within five years after matriculation. Further, many women continued in large part as subordinates to the interests of their husbands. Still, such prominent works do not broadly treat the friction generated between young men and by southern women in higher education. These female students were placed into a dichotomy even more complex, steeped in tradition, chivalry, and class. Southern women met resistance that revealed less acceptance and greater preconceived notions regarding their feminine tendencies and the utility of additional education for their expected roles as wives and mothers.

From 1897-1917, white southern women were still largely still viewed as subordinate yet integral and hospitable “Southern Belles.” However, white women also searched for their place in a society whereby African American men and women now represented a new free social class. Even Tennessee’s southern neighbor, Georgia, mirrored trends of growing prospects for the educational advancement of women. As Rebecca S. Montgomery argues in *The Politics of Education in the New South*, upper class women sought greater opportunity to develop both personally and professionally in an increasingly industrial society. Such women in Georgia saw education as a way in which they could contribute more visibility either through classical, liberal arts, or professional training. Montgomery’s examination of women’s education and educational reform reflects the complexities of women who fought to open the doors of Georgia’s colleges and universities to women as well as the variegated results of female graduates

¹⁴ Lynn Gordon, *Gender and Higher Education in the Progressive Era, 1890-1920* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990). This book grew from her dissertation and an equally intriguing article entitled, “The Gibson Girl Goes to College: Popular Culture and Women’s Higher Education in the Progressive Era, 1890-1920” *American Historical Quarterly* 39 (Summer 1987): 211-230. Also, for initial views of women’s education see: Thomas Woody, *A History of Women’s Education in the United States* (New York: The Science Press, 1929) and Anna C. Brackett, *Woman and the Higher Education* (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1893).

ranging from teaching to clerical work to full economic independence. However, in many instances, this growth of female seminaries and colleges provided educational opportunities without severely threatening the patriarchal structure of higher education or the public sphere with educated/professional women.¹⁵

Until the 1910s, female seminaries and colleges as well as co-educational institutions, particularly in the South, continued to produce a majority of female graduates who either did not enter the work force or only remained in the public sphere until marriage. Further, most filled jobs considered socially acceptable for women such as education, social work, or clerical work. Many in the South did not oppose the expansion of women's higher education but did not desire large numbers of women entering the ranks of the professional working class. Thus, as proponents in favor of single-sex education or limited higher educational opportunities pointed out, 30,000 women had access to colleges whereby men were denied admission based on gender by 1897.¹⁶ Even as more traditionally male institutions became coeducational in the 1890s and early 1900s, many educators, parents, and community members continued to argue that single-sex education provided the best, and safest, channel by which to provide higher educational offerings for women. Historian Jill Conway documents the influence of women in higher education as well as effect of higher education on women in the nineteenth century. Conway argues that before the Civil War, colleges and universities in the Northeast, Midwest, or South encouraged women to use their education solely for

¹⁵ Rebecca S. Montgomery, *The Politics of Education in the New South: Women and Reform in Georgia, 1890-1930* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2006).

¹⁶ *Ibid.* Of the 451 colleges and universities in the United States at this time, 143 were closed to men because they were exclusively designed for females. Still, it is worth noting that many of such schools single sex or co-educational would not be considered accredited colleges or universities by current standards.

work related to domesticity or at most a marginal role in the public sphere.¹⁷ However, by the turn of the twentieth century, women's access to higher education allowed for marked gains and the desire for intellectual training began to pass marriage as one of the primary motives and goals for additional education. The South resisted this shift, and while more women were accepted into traditionally male institutions and more all-female colleges were opened, most female graduates married within a few years of their matriculation.¹⁸ Still, this first generation of female students and graduates in the South began a cycle of challenge and reaction in regard to women's opportunities and capabilities that would ultimately lead to greater autonomy and mobility for women by World War I.

Part of the additional delay of higher education development in the South lay in substandard primary and secondary training, producing ill-equipped students. Beginning in the late 1880s and 1890s, many in the North and South blamed the lack of college preparatory schools for girls that truly trained them for college work. In perhaps the most revealing evidence of the status and question of women's capabilities as well as the opportunity for higher education can be seen in an 1899 report on the nature of southern preparatory schools. The report acknowledges that "[f]or some time there has been a movement on foot to establish an academic school for girls in the South that would prepare them thoroughly for college courses."¹⁹ According to the article's findings, the lack of female students was largely due to the lack of quality education received at the

¹⁷ Jill K. Conway, "Perspectives on the History of Women's Education in the United States," *History of Education Quarterly* 14 (Spring 1974), 1-12. Conway begins her study with the first school to accept female students, Oberlin College, in the 1830s.

¹⁸ Conway notes that in her research she found that 60-70% of women who graduated from institutions of higher education (most notably in the Northeast) rejected conventional marriage and remained single. Many of such women entered either teaching or other service professions.

¹⁹ *The Hustler*, Vol. 10 No. 20, March 17, 1899, 2.

college preparatory level. Speaking on behalf of southern colleges and universities able to confer bachelor's degrees, Vanderbilt argued that "while our [southern] universities have been opened to girls, there have been no schools in which they could get the necessary training for a collegiate course. . . [with] the result that they [are] very much handicapped, and many have been prevented from taking full courses for degrees because of a lack of preparation."²⁰ In fact, evidence presented in the article credits the success of the few female graduates from southern colleges with their earlier preparatory training at boys' schools. In a regional comparison, northern schools for women provided a more advanced level of instruction and a larger number of college preparatory courses, enabling graduates to continue on in traditional bachelor programs. Schools such as Vassar, Smith, Mt. Holyoke, Bryn Mawr, Barnard, Radcliff, and Wellesley had long offered a curriculum that prepared female students for advanced study in four-year universities. In fact, several of these schools, better known by 1927 as the "Seven Sisters," boasted the accreditation to confer bachelor's degrees by the end of the 1890s.²¹

Within this growing southern city, the elite Nashville community seemingly expressed a sincere desire in evening the playing field for women in the South. The Nashville Chamber of Commerce formed a committee in 1898 specifically commissioned

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ According to information provided by Mount Holyoke, "The Seven Sisters, a consortium of prestigious East Coast liberal arts colleges for women, originally included Mount Holyoke, Vassar, Smith, Wellesley, Bryn Mawr, Barnard, and Radcliffe colleges. Today five of the Seven Sisters remain women's colleges; Vassar became coeducational in 1969 and Radcliffe merged with Harvard, becoming the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study in 1977. The female equivalent of the once predominantly male Ivy League, the Seven Sisters originated in 1915, when Mount Holyoke, Vassar, Smith, and Wellesley colleges held a conference to discuss fund-raising strategies. This historic meeting led to additional conferences over the next decade, at Bryn Mawr, Barnard, and Radcliffe. By 1927 these seven elite women's colleges were known as the Seven Sisters and over the years have continued to meet to discuss issues of common concern, such as institutional goals, admissions, financial aid, and curriculum matters. The name "Seven Sisters" has its origins in Greek mythology. It refers to the Pleiades, the seven daughters of Atlas who, according to one myth, were changed into stars by Zeus," ("The Seven Sisters," *Mt. Holyoke College*, <http://www.mtholyoke.edu/cic/about/12812.shtml>).

to address the issue of women's education. At their monthly meeting in March of that same year, the committee begged leave to report:

1. We believe that the establishment of such a school would be productive of great good to our city, contributing largely to our commercial prosperity and adding to our reputation and influence as an educational center.
2. We believe at the present time opportune for this movement; it behooves us, therefore to act now.
3. The property known as Price's College [for Young Ladies] is well suited for this purpose, and can now be purchased for \$47,000 cash . . .
4. We believe that this enterprise would in no wise injure the other educational interests of our city, but will help them. It should therefore, have the undivided support of the whole community.²²

Speakers who concurred with the report also served as educational and community leaders in Nashville. Chancellor William Payne of the Peabody Normal College agreed that such a school for women should be under the auspices of Vanderbilt University. Its Chancellor, James Kirkland, did not disagree with the potential authority of Vanderbilt in establishing a women's college preparatory school; however, he warned that the \$40,000 to be raised by the citizens of Nashville should first be met before the university committed to the other \$27,000. Education for females already existed in Nashville with single sex institutions such as Ward Seminary and Price's College for Young Ladies as well as co-educational institutions such as Peabody College and Vanderbilt University. However, only Vanderbilt was considered a premier and reputable university while the others ranked closer to that of secondary schools unable to

²² *The Hustler*, Vol. 10 No. 20, March 17, 1898, 2-3. Price's College for Young Ladies served Nashville as a school teaching young women basic subjects as well as practical skills. The school served in many ways as a finishing school and by 1898 was under the threat of closure due to financial strain. The fifth part of the proposal states, "We have carefully considered the best method of conducting such a school . . . by making such a school an integral part of Vanderbilt University. Some of our reasons are: (a) The prestige of the university will draw more pupils . . . (b) The university offers to assume all expense of running the school . . . (c) The university agrees to raise \$7000 of the purchase money and all the funds necessary . . . (\$20,000 additional), provided the citizens of Nashville will raise \$40,000 toward the enterprise."

confer bachelor's degrees. In addition, Vanderbilt only maintained a handful of female students by the 1897-1898 academic year.²³

Still, prominent community members and educational leaders in Nashville maintained at least a nominal interest in awareness of national and regional changes in regard to women's higher education. Vanderbilt's newspaper, *The Hustler*, began continuous publication in 1888, and its coverage of athletic programs and events, particularly football, dominated much of its content. Yet, there remains fascinating evidence, tucked behind the headlines and game scores, that reflect the views of women and education at Vanderbilt as well as Vanderbilt's acknowledgment of increasing co-education and higher education for women both regionally and nationally.²⁴ As early as November 16, 1893, *The Hustler* recognized the academic achievement of Miss Bertha Lameur, graduate of Ohio State University where she became "the first woman in the world to receive the degree of electrical engineer" and not only represented the crème of the minority female crop but "led her class throughout the entire course."²⁵ The following spring semester, Vanderbilt acknowledged other regional gains in women's education:

²³ Ibid. Also see Paul Conkin, *Gone with the Ivy*, 130-133; 212-214.

²⁴ From 1888-1898 the Calumet Club, a local Vanderbilt organization, published *The Hustler*. However, the newspaper was funded and edited by the Vanderbilt Athletic Association from 1898 to 1917. Since 1917, *The Hustler* has been published by the students, under the supervision of a Publications Board through the University. Further, *The Hustler* began prior to 1888; however publication was intermittent. The newspaper has been published either weekly or bi-weekly since 1888, but for the time period of this study (1897-1917) the paper was only published weekly. It is also important to note that because the newspaper was published by the Vanderbilt Athletic Association throughout the time period of this study, much of its content is devoted to athletics; however, there remain very insightful editorials, articles, and announcements that show shifts in curriculum, attendance, and social interaction of women at Vanderbilt and in the greater Nashville area. Prior to 1900, the Cumberland Presbyterian Publishing House printed *The Hustler*. From 1900-1909, C.R. and H.H. Hatch printed the newspaper, and since 1909 the Benson Printing Company has produced *The Hustler* in print (information courtesy of the Vanderbilt University Archives).

²⁵ *The Hustler*, Vol. 5, No. 8, November 16, 1893, 4.

Cumberland University, in our neighboring town of Lebanon, has recently made a radical change by taking under its charge the Lebanon College for Young Ladies which will be known as the University Annex. The ladies will have the same instruction as the other students, but will be governed in the same manner as before.²⁶

Just two months later, on May 17, 1894, the newspaper reported in its miscellaneous “Clippings” section, “It is reported that Beloit College contemplates becoming co-educational and that next fall will see the steps taken.”²⁷ Such evidence reveals at least the cursory or marginal interest in the growing numbers of colleges throughout the United States who expanded to provide higher education for women. Vanderbilt University even acknowledged the positive influence of increased female enrollment in 1895, the same year that women officially gained more equitable access to buildings and courses. As *The Hustler* reported on the female freshman class, “The class of Ninety-nine is already famous for its Co-eds. So far as numbers and appearance go, and these are everything, the class is up to the limit.”²⁸ Yet, the Vanderbilt community along with other middle and upper class members in Nashville continued to struggle with the effect of women’s education on the antebellum notions of southern femininity within a still rather rigid patriarchal society.

Challenge and Reaction

In 1907, President E.Y. Mullens addressed a large crowd at the dedication for the opening of Tennessee College, a new institution of higher education for women in Murfreesboro just outside of Nashville. He likened the opening of a new school offering

²⁶ *The Hustler*, Vol. 6, No. 21, March 8, 1894, 2.

²⁷ *The Hustler*, Vol. 6, No. 31, May 17, 1894, 4. Beloit College is in Beloit, Wisconsin and remains active as a liberal arts college.

²⁸ *The Hustler*, Vol. 7, No. 8, October 10, 1895, 4.

collegiate level courses and degrees to females in middle Tennessee to that of an oasis in the desert. As Mullens mused, “I love to think of the long caravan of young women traversing the pilgrim path of life, with a thirst for knowledge, entering these walls to find not a mirage of the deserts, but waters crystal clear and abundant . . . for the slaking of intellectual and spiritual thirst.”²⁹ This type of sentiment reflected the growing attitude of many middle and upper class white families to provide formal higher education for their daughters. Such families hoped that higher education would afford better opportunities in an increasingly urbanized and professionalized New South in the early twentieth century. Yet, the mothers and fathers of such young women also hoped to use education as a tool for refinement and utility within the home and in society. Increased educational opportunities for women in Nashville did serve as an impetus that would lead to greater autonomy through economic and social independence by the end of World War I. Moreover, education afforded most women with specific training in particular subjects, engendered by educational curriculum that translated into jobs as educators, nurses, and secretaries. Certain female graduates even managed to become professionals as engineers, dentists, and lawyers.³⁰ However, symbolic notions desired by many men and women continued to reinforce the image of southern “belles” who would later become prominent society wives and mothers.

By the turn of the century most of Nashville’s present day institutions of higher education were in operation, holding class and conferring degrees. However, issues regarding accreditation, admission, curriculum, and faculty continued to be inconsistent and problematic. In fact, until World War I, Vanderbilt was the only college in Nashville

²⁹ *Tennessee College Magazine*, Vol. 1, No.1, November 1907, 3.

³⁰ As early as 1893, two female students were admitted into Vanderbilt’s Dental Department program, according to *The Hustler*, December 14, 1893, Vol. 5 No. 12, 4.

authorized to confer traditional bachelor degrees. Peabody College did confer bachelor degrees through the University of Nashville; however, David Lipscomb, Ward-Belmont, and Fisk issued certificates in specific subjects or offered some courses that would transfer to reputable four-year universities.³¹ Further, the greater emphasis on a patriarchal and class based society added additional hurdles for a New South region struggling to redefine antebellum notions in a post-bellum world.³² Thus, as more middle and upper class women sought education either for themselves or to uphold their family's status through marriage, certain previously all-male colleges began to accept limited numbers of females while new schools opened to accommodate women either in single-sex or co-educational settings. Although single-sex institutions would become a comparative minority by World War I, the late Victorian era would continue to reveal the popularity of all-female schools that shielded young women from the dangers of immorality while providing studies for their delicate minds.

As the Centennial Exposition of 1897 seemed to signal a shift in regard to the urbanization of Nashville as well as women's higher education, recognition of such shifts did not mean that a welcoming committee greeted women as they entered more prestigious institutions such as Vanderbilt. Despite the continued small female

³¹ "Under the leadership of the Reverend Phillip Lindsley, the college [Cumberland College] was revived in 1824, and the name was changed to the University of Nashville. . . In 1855, Dr. John Berrien Lindsley, who had succeeded his father Phillip as president, merged the Western Military Institute with the University of Nashville. With the approach of the Civil War, military instruction was added and became very popular. . . By 1867, John Berrien Lindsley also opened Montgomery Bell Academy, a college preparatory school for boys, better know as MBA. At this early stage, MBA included a two-year college program as well as a grammar and high school. Gradually the University of Nashville ceased operations, and its campus and buildings were given to Peabody College. Peabody attempted a "take over" of the remaining assets of the University of Nashville, including MBA, but the old trustees of the University were in control of the Academy and refused to permit the usurpation. The two schools thus gradually drew apart," ("Our Mission and History," *Montgomery Bell Academy*, <http://www.montgomerybell.edu/podium/default.aspx?t=3277>). MBA moved and operated independently although still under the auspices of the University of Nashville. The collegiate division of the University of Nashville was annexed, with its medical school merging with Vanderbilt University and its literary arts program merging with Peabody College by 1875.

³² I also intend to address issues of race; however, it will not be discussed solely in terms of race and higher education but also as a class-based issue.

enrollment at Vanderbilt at the turn-of-the-century, certain young women wasted little time in making their mark on higher education. In April of 1898, senior Celia Rich from Tennessee earned the prestigious Founder's Medal as recognition for graduating first in her class from Vanderbilt's dental school.³³ Two months later, graduating senior Miss Marion Palmer Kirkland was also noted as the class "historian, poet, prophet . . . and treasurer."³⁴ Moreover, the Vanderbilt community acknowledged that "[s]he has at all times been the inspiration of the class, urging on to higher and better things, sharing in its triumphs, and making less bitter its failures, and . . . one who always stood . . . first in her classes and first in the hearts of '98."³⁵ In fact, Kirkland also maintained membership in the Campbell Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution as well as Phi Beta Kappa, and also earned a Master of Arts from Vanderbilt in 1899.³⁶

The shift within the educational profession from male to female teachers also reflects the greater emphasis, interest, and need for women's higher education, despite the lack of standardization or the modern equivalent of a bachelor's degree. Thus, the predominantly female student body at Peabody Normal School (a school whose purpose remained to produce teachers) by 1897 serves as an example of both trends, more female teachers in the workforce and a significant increase of females attending schools beyond that required by the state. With larger numbers of students, both Peabody and the University of Nashville did not protest the financial benefit of admitting female students; however, the feminization of teaching did cause certain problems for Peabody Normal

³³ The Founder's Medal received by Celia Rich is not the same as the Founder's Medal given by the Society for the History of Natural History or as part of the Gold Medal prize awarded by the Royal Geographical Society. Rather it was an award given by Vanderbilt University as also bestowed by many colleges and universities as the highest honor within an institution for academic excellence.

³⁴ *Commencement Courier*, Vol. 5 No. 5, June 15, 1898, 3.

³⁵ *Ibid.*.

³⁶ *Catalog of the Vanderbilt Chapter of Phi Beta Kappa*. Phi Beta Kappa, 1914.

School. The largest problem created by this shift was reflected in the “long-term lower reputation for teachers and teacher education compared with other professions,” that also confirmed in the minds of many in the Peabody administration that their school would be viewed with a substandard reputation because of its majority female enrollment.³⁷ Yet, women’s enrollment in all of Nashville’s colleges and universities increased significantly after 1897, and the concern of the Peabody administration mirrored that of Vanderbilt. William Payne, president from 1887 until 1901, addressed many of these concerns after the death of Eben Stearns in 1887.

In reality, Payne was exactly what Peabody needed during such a critical juncture in regard to the standardization of education and producing teachers capable of educating younger generations. He was charismatic and personable, but maintained a reactionary view regarding female enrollment and women’s education. He believed that it damaged the reputation of the school and sought to restore the student body and faculty to a male majority. However, as Peabody Normal College transitioned into the twentieth century, the opinion of William Payne in regard to women’s education could not match the overwhelming numbers of women attending seminaries, colleges, and four-year universities. Moreover, Payne’s views could not withstand the larger societal shift of women entering a variety of professions, including education, and becoming more active participants in public spheres.³⁸

The growing trend of increasing enrollments in burgeoning institutions of higher learning also remained evident at David Lipscomb University. It began under a different name as the Nashville Bible School and was funded solely by a religious denomination,

³⁷ Sherman Dorn, *A Brief History of Peabody College* (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 1996), 11.

³⁸ Payne, *Peabody College*, 183, 210-220, 226, 241.

the Church of Christ. Further, the school accepted both male and female students from its inception in 1891. The school's mission was to provide training for preachers and for missionary work for the ladies. The school's location changed three times before 1893 when it purchased land and buildings on the site of the battle of Nashville. By 1896, Nashville Bible School served to educate 110 students, with 26 females. James A. Harding emphasized during the opening session that the school was not merely for training preachers but "designed to give musical, classical, and scientific courses, as well as Bible."³⁹ As the twentieth century approached, David Lipscomb University became a valid institution of higher education, by Victorian standards, with educational training geared toward religious instruction. The school offered bachelor and master's degrees by their own authority through the Church of Christ. The University of Tennessee and the State Normal School system recognized the school's courses. Nonetheless, as the school attracted students from across the nation, most courses still did not transfer to many four-year universities.⁴⁰

Nashville remained a haven for women's higher education as the city maintained more "colleges" than most southern cities, none of which were closed to women. Nonetheless, the regional and national reputation of such schools conferred greater prestige and distinction for women who earned academic success and recognition in Nashville's universities. By 1900, the number of honors received by females garnered

³⁹ S.P. Pittman, *Lipscomb's Golden Heritage, 1891-1941* (Nashville: Associated Ladies for Lipscomb, 1983), 6.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 10-23; *Annual Announcement of the Nashville Bible School, 1914-1915* (Nashville: McQuiddy Printing Company, 1914), 18-33. In fact, according to the school's history, "Lipscomb served as a junior college until graduating its first senior college class in 1948. The institution received its first accreditation by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools in 1954. In 1988, that organization's Commission on Colleges advanced Lipscomb's accreditation to the master's degree level," ("Brief History of Lipscomb University," *David Lipscomb University*, <http://www.lipscomb.edu/page.asp?SID=4&Page=2393>).

attention in Vanderbilt's *Commencement Courier* that complimented female achievements while bolstering the educational standards set by male students:

It is with a great deal of pleasure that we see such an increase among the co-eds this year over any former year. They were first admitted to Vanderbilt with fear and trembling on the part of the faculty, and the question was asked, "Would they be able to successfully cope with young men in their classes?" for on no other basis could they enter. But that fear has passed away, and now we tremble lest we be left behind in the race for distinction. Not only have they shown themselves equal in brain and endurance, but they have outstripped us in the contests for two medals this year. In the Pharmaceutical Department Miss Hunnicut won Founder's Medal, while in Third English Miss Pierce won the prize over some thirty strong intellectual men. This shows what they are capable of doing in the way of higher education, and the doubt that formerly existed has rightly passed away. We may expect soon to have them compete with us in the field of oratory and perhaps carry off the prize. All hail then, to the co-ed of the future . . . we will welcome without prejudice such worthy foes.⁴¹

The passage reveals intriguing phrases and words loaded with complicated and deep meaning. The male establishment acknowledged these women with "a great deal of pleasure," while they now admitted that female students could maintain equality in "brain and endurance." However, such compliments are lined with condescending overtones, such as the idea that women were "admitted with fear and trembling" which then leads to a more defensive tone as the men claim that women "outstripped us" to win certain prizes. Finally, the male view seems forced to acknowledge females but only as a "worthy foe" reflecting the attitude that educational success would be divided and recognized by gender. Thus, underneath the accolades, the tension created by women's success in higher education continued to perplex a southern patriarchy that desired certain progressive ideas of the North but met the practical reality with a begrudging courtesy.

Moreover, additional derogatory labels reflect the metaphorical association of college females and masculinity, particularly in reference to female athletes as

⁴¹ *The Commencement Courier*, Vol. 7 No. 4, June 19, 1900, 3. See footnote 20 for further explanation of the Founder's Medal prize.

“Amazons.” Yet, reporters of *The Hustler* confound the seeming contradiction that women participating in sports are masculine by generally proclaiming that opponents are “Amazons” while the Vanderbilt women’s basketball team is made up of respectful and courteous “girl students” who never “infringe on faculty regulations and always work hard.”⁴² Even on-campus, attitudes regarding women and physical fitness were met with subtle hostility lined with hints of inconvenience to the male student population. At the onset of the 1896-1897 school year, the first gym class was organized for female students just one year after the school issued the policy granting female students more equitable access to the campus. As one periodical commented, “[T]he class meets Wednesday at 8:45 a.m. to take Gym work; they will be instructed by Dr. Gwathmey and ‘Cyclop’ Gardiner. The Co-eds should be careful not to break our springboard and vaulting bar. Positively no admittance [permitted on this equipment]. The public need not to be alarmed to hear feminine screams issuing from our Gym; [it is] the Co-eds.”⁴³

In contrast, Ward Seminary for Ladies continued as an archetype of single-sex and gendered education through the early twentieth century. The standard curriculum included courses in Latin and Greek, piano, recreation, religion, literature, French, German, spelling, grammar, penmanship, and elocution. From the recognition of its charter by the Tennessee legislature in 1869, Ward Seminary offered few courses in mathematics and/or science. However, this all-girls school did maintain pace with certain

⁴² *The Hustler*, Vol. 22, No. 33, March 4, 1911, p 1. This article is advertising a game between Vanderbilt and the Columbia Institute of Columbia, Tennessee.

⁴³ *The Hustler*, Vol. 8 No. 2, September 30, 1896, 3. Two years later, *The Hustler*, Vol. 9 No. 19, March 3, 1898 reported, “Miss Rowena Reed of California is the pride of all college girls. She is the girl who broke the woman’s record for the broad jump at Vassar by clearing 13 feet 3 inches, and has won the 120-yard hurdle race and the running high jump doing 3 feet 8 inches. Miss Reed, who is a sophomore, is 19 years old, weighs 160 pounds, and is 5 feet 8 ½ inches tall. She can ride, swim, fence, row, wheel, run, jump, handle Indian clubs, play football and basketball with the best.” Although exulted by the paper, at least on behalf of college girls, Miss Reed is shown much more in the Gibson Girl manner (athletic, smart, still feminine) than other accounts of female accomplishments at Nashville’s co-educational institutions.

new academic disciplines in the social sciences as the new millennium ushered in modern notions of education and technology. In 1902, Ward Seminary awarded traditional women's degrees with certificates or diplomas that graduated thirty-eight students from its "Seminary Course," four students in "Elocution," seven students in "Piano," and four students in "Voice."⁴⁴ Although these certificates did not transfer to reputable colleges or universities, Ward Seminary did award several "College Preparatory" certificates that resulted in the admission of four women to Wellesley College and two students to Vanderbilt University. With one student hailing from Illinois, the remainder of females who went to four-year schools came from Tennessee. By 1909, Ward Seminary also added a certificate of "English" as well as "Practical Cookery" and from 1900-1910 maintained an average of approximately thirty graduates in their "Seminary Course" with smaller numbers graduating from "Piano," "Voice," and "College Preparatory" departments.⁴⁵

Trends in the South and across the United States revealed a rise in co-education in the late nineteenth century; however, in 1885 the administration and board of Ward Seminary offered a different interpretation of educating males and females together. The 1885-1886 Annual Announcement states that "co-education of the sexes has been tried in many places, but it is on the decline and we do not believe it best."⁴⁶ The Announcement defended this position by claiming that the commonly held argument for coeducation as a tool for making male students better behaved was an invalid point, "They say it refines boys . . . But what parent wishes to be put to such a use as refining boys, at the risk of the

⁴⁴ *The Iris*, Vol. 4, 1902, n.p.

⁴⁵ *Ward Seminary Bulletin*, Vol. 45, 1909-1910, 79.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 2.

loss of their own delicate and feminine qualities.”⁴⁷ Yet, the Ward Seminary of the late 1890s boasted of its equally challenging curriculum including courses in Latin, French, mathematics (up to trigonometry), elocution, history, geography, philosophy, physiology, literature, music, art, geology, government, physical science, chemistry, and even a course in mythology. By 1886 the school even offered post-graduate courses in poetry, elocution, voice culture, and English. Moreover, in a time where schools opened and closed for lack of funds or students, the Seminary maintained solid numbers with over 200 students by 1880 increasing to 591 students for the 1917-1918 school year with pupils from 38 states as well as the Alaskan territory and Canada.⁴⁸

By 1910, the catalog for Ward Seminary enticed students with its location as well as course offerings. The school noted that one of its major advantages lay in its location in a growing southern city that remains “within walking distance of churches, concerts halls, libraries, and other places of interest.”⁴⁹ Further, Ward’s administrators begin to recognize the advantages of educational instruction with life experience, revealing the growing acceptance of women in more casual public settings. As the catalog states, “No inconsiderable part of an education comes through the eye and ear of the thousandfold influences that originate outside of text-books.”⁵⁰ As the 1909-1910 school year serves as the midpoint between the Centennial Exposition and World War I, it remains important to recognize the changes of the school’s goals. Although Ward Seminary did not abandon the idea of women ultimately finding satisfaction with the home, family, and

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ *Ward-Belmont Bulletin*, Vol. 6, September 1918, 75.

⁴⁹ *Ward Seminary Bulletin*, 1909-1910, 8.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

community, the school recognized more modern goals of women's education and the desire of many students to continue their higher education:

The courses of study are adapted to meet the requirements of the present ideals of education. There is a Primary and Intermediate course, which prepares for the College Preparatory course. This latter course requires four years for completion. Students completing this course are admitted without examination to Randolph-Macon Woman's College, the Woman's College at Baltimore, Wellesley, Vassar, Chicago University, Vanderbilt University, and other institutions.⁵¹

However, in truth, a diploma from Ward Seminary equaled that of a high school education and not an accredited college or university until its merger with Belmont in 1913. After becoming Ward-Belmont College in 1913, the school became equivalent to a two-year college with "an outstanding reputation as a school not only for upper-class belles but also for academically aspiring young women, who at this time had few choices for higher education in the South."⁵²

To reveal a typical day in the life of a Ward Seminary student at the turn-of-the-century, the school's annual, *The Iris*, featured a submission written by an anonymous senior revealing certain shifts in the curriculum. In the typical senior schedule, this senior reveals that the day begins at 8:30 in the morning as the "gong sound[ed] twice" and students rushed to chapel only to find they were tardy and "already ha[d] the Christian soldiers begun their onward march."⁵³ The day proceeded with thirty minutes of literature where a typical lesson involved students discussing their reading of a "large, red book entitled *The Only Really Correct Way to Translate Cicero*."⁵⁴ Students attended the newly offered social science course of psychology from 9:45-10:45 in the morning

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Doyle, *Nashville and the New South*, 211.

⁵³ *The Iris*, 1903, 32.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 49.

where the senior author proclaims, “[W]e know that the mind is the subject to be discussed . . . [and] when we enter the classroom, to all appearances we have the wisdom of Socrates.”⁵⁵ Recess seemed to remain a favorite among students from 11:45-12:00 until French class commenced at noon, followed by History from 1:00-1:30 where the student writes two past test questions, “1. When did Rome fall? 2. Give the division of history with the dates.”⁵⁶ Finally, the courses for the day end at 2:00 in the afternoon.

The students of Ward Seminary attended different courses on particular days, but this schedule reveals the archetypal day in the life for a senior student. It is important to note that there exists an absence of courses in mathematics or science. The curriculum for the twelve seniors graduating from Ward Seminary in 1903 reflects the continued tension between classical education for men and new subject offerings for women that would provide training for employment in areas such as medicine, social work, engineering, or law. Graduates such as Anna Russell Cole, president of the class of 1903, or Bessie Lyons, vice-president of the same year, undoubtedly found themselves both empowered and yet wholly unprepared to pursue their further studies at four-year colleges or universities.⁵⁷

Just as one advantage to single-sex education remained the solidarity of an all-female student body, female students at most co-educational colleges were largely outnumbered and underrepresented. In Nashville, Vanderbilt offered a premier education, especially for the South, but female students were met with direct and indirect sentiments of doubt and animosity. In a rare glimpse, two editorials reveal the views of

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 32.

⁵⁶ *The Iris*, 1903, 33.

⁵⁷ Montgomery, *The Politics of Education in the New South*, 15-17, 22-28, 42-52. Similar trends occurred in Georgia, whereby opportunities for women’s education increased but southern women’s colleges remained inferior to traditional men’s schools. Also see Carol Lasser (ed.), *Educating Men and Women Together: Coeducation in a Changing World* (Urbana, Illinois: University of Illinois, 1987), 56-61.

co-education from both a male and female perspective. Interestingly, the female student serves as the first direct response that speaks to the legitimacy of women at Vanderbilt.

Lois Godbey, class of 1908, wrote:

In the last issue of *The Observer* was an editorial on co-education which states the case fairly from a boy's point of view. But I would like to present it as it appears to a co-ed. We agree that co-education at Vanderbilt has, under the existing state of affairs, many disadvantages. But the statement that it is not imperative that a girl go to Vanderbilt is debatable. It is understood that a girl has the right and also the need of education, and of as good an education as she can get.⁵⁸

Such direct sentiment reflects not only the views of Godbey but most likely other Vanderbilt co-eds as well. She writes with great articulation, yet her words convey a convoluted message. Writing in typical fashion for a young southern woman in the early twentieth century, she expressed her frustration with the many disadvantages of being a female at a predominantly male institution. Mostly likely her frustration stemmed from the limited number of spots in particular courses whereby males seeking a seat were selected before females.

Moreover, despite equitable access to most buildings (which occurred in 1895), the presence of the “co-eds” in the gymnasium, library, and study rooms continued to irritate many males students who resented restrictions caused by efforts to keep men and women separate in certain circumstances. Instead, they insisted on unlimited access to buildings on campus at all times. In addition, many males complained that having females in courses provided distraction. Godbey's frustration was partly due to the small number of females, with figures in the single digits for most entering freshman classes. However, this trend would not last as greater numbers of females sought higher education from accredited four-year universities and upon graduation filled professional “white

⁵⁸ *The Hustler*, Vol. 18, No. 28, May 16, 1907, p 2.

collar” jobs after 1910. Still Lois Godbey’s story shows that, even a decade after the Centennial Exposition which prominently featured a “Women’s Building,” Nashville and Vanderbilt continued to struggle with females seeking a “man’s education.” [Lois Godbey also played on the basketball team and on the alumni team after her graduation.]⁵⁹

By 1913, as World War I approached, the Vanderbilt student body maintained seventy-eight women or just over twenty percent of the academic enrollment compared to single digits at the turn-of-the-century.⁶⁰ In 1915, after the establishment in the same year of a YWCA chapter at the university, Vandy women began pushing for more equality. The spark that led to the formation of a committee to evaluate the status of women at Vanderbilt was the issue of whether the women’s basketball team should be allowed to travel to distant colleges to play games. Chancellor James Kirkland continued to question if coeducation benefited men and/or women and even suggested that the committee consider the non-admittance of women or be held to a certain percentage of the student body. Kirkland worried that if the numbers of women continued to rise, the status of the university would be jeopardized.⁶¹ However, the committee returned favorable results for women, including recommendations for a women’s dean, a separate house, and equality in all facets of curricular and extra-curricular activities. The committee did recommend that women’s athletics should not be intercollegiate but rather intramural only. Women’s sports would continue under Vaughn’s direction, playing schools in Tennessee and neighboring states. Nonetheless, women continued to fight their minority status on the court and in the classroom until the late 1920s after a major

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Conklin, *Gone with the Ivy*, 79-82.

⁶¹ Ibid., 213-214.

campaign led by Vanderbilt female students and alumnae that brought more equity to women on campus.

David Lipscomb University, as many private institutions without an endowment, relied on fundraising, tuition, and resources from the Church of Christ. In order to bring more stability, Superintendent James A. Harding who served as the superintendent declared, “We make no distinction between ministerial students and others; males and females, church members and non-church members . . . [they] are put in the same classes and taught the same way. . . The school is under the control of no church except as its teachers are controlled by their respective congregations.”⁶² In the early years, the Nashville Bible College (David Lipscomb) did not just accept women into the school, but rather taught males and females together in the same classrooms. In the late 1890s, this was not a common practice; however, the classes taken by males and females did differ beyond the required courses.

By 1903, with the school permanently situated on Granny White Pike in Southwest Nashville, the curriculum became increasingly gendered, with girls taking sewing, home economics, French, and additional courses in literature, while males were encouraged to take advanced classes in science, mathematics, and Latin. Further, female students were required to wear blue uniforms that distinguished them from the uniforms required of other schools such as Ward Seminary (Ward-Belmont) and Nashville College for Ladies. S.P. Pittman, an early student in the 1890s and later a teacher, stated that at the inception of Nashville Bible School the institution was almost exclusively a male

⁶² Pittman, *Lipcomb's Golden Heritage*, 7. The school was incorporated in 1901, naming David Lipscomb, W.H. Dodd, J.R. Ward, C.A. Moore, J.C. McQuiddy, and W.R. Chambers as incorporators. These men all served as prominent members of the Nashville community. David Lipscomb was a teacher and administrator who dedicated his career to the school. J.C. McQuiddy owned one of the main publishing houses in Nashville. Yet, Harding was opposed to the idea of incorporation and subsequently resigned.

institution, but by the thirteenth session, one-third of the student body consisted of females. Further, he argues that “this was not out of harmony with the wishes of the founders nor did it run counter to the popular trend in education.”⁶³ As the 1903 catalog also emphasized:

Mixed schools when properly conducted are much better for both males and females; each has a refining power and strengthening influence upon the other. Still, the young ladies are not allowed to receive calls from the young gentlemen nor will any association of the sexes be permitted out of the classroom except in company with the member of the faculty.⁶⁴

Still, most females attained degrees in either the arts or literature. The introduction of a home economics course further gendered the curriculum in 1914. It remains important to remember, however, that degrees attained by students from the Nashville Bible School before World War I were largely unaccepted by other, more traditional academic institutions.

Much like David Lipscomb and Peabody, who also maintained large numbers of females in a co-educational setting, Fisk University continued to emphasize the enrollment and achievements of male students; however, attention toward a curriculum more tailored for females was underway. The year 1897 marks the first official instance whereby Fisk outlined the purpose of its program of study for female students. As the 1897-1898 catalog states, “Fisk University aims to properly qualify its students for the duties and responsibilities of home and social life, as well as for those of the school-room. Hence the establishment of this special department for the supplemental education of young women.”⁶⁵ This description served as an introduction to the department of

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 11.

⁶⁴ *Annual Announcements of the Nashville Bible School, Inc.* (Nashville: McQuiddy Printing Company, 1903), n.p.

⁶⁵ *Fisk Catalog 1898-99*, 67.

domestic science with classes in nursing/hygiene, sanitation, cooking, dressmaking, and sewing. With the turn of the twentieth century, and the establishment of Domestic Science, the numbers of women continued to increase significantly with twelve women out of thirty-three students in the graduating class of 1909. Such African American female graduates not only taught in primary and secondary schools but also worked in the community and for municipal governments as health and sanitary inspectors helping to improve conditions in predominantly African American neighborhoods.

Ironically, even with the nearly fifty percent female graduate ratio by 1910, the focus of Fisk University remained gendered as simplified by President James Merrill's motto for Fisk in 1908: "the development of Christian manhood in an education for service."⁶⁶ Still, increases of female students at Fisk continued to place women into the gendered curriculum that relegated most females into a particular set of majors resulting in a clear-cut set of professions. African American women also faced a different set of circumstances from their white counterparts. Middle and upper class white females attended local colleges and universities to gain the education needed for greater professional opportunity. Nonetheless, higher education at such institutions also secured their place in "society" and although many used their education in the workplace, many did not. For white women, working in the public sphere was less about necessity and more about individual capability and productivity. African American women in the Progressive South would never have such options, instead they led their sector of "society" by creating a force designed to improve the living conditions of the black community. Even at Fisk University, women were given more industrial and teacher

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 63.

training than male Fiskites in order to help fight illiteracy, health problems, and inadequate municipal services.⁶⁷

Certain black women did use their education for individual and collective gain. Marian Hadley, wife of an African American businessman, helped to establish the Blue Triangle YWCA during World War I. Hulda Margaret Lyttle-Frazier attended George W. Hubbard Hospital's Training School for nurses and later served as the head nurse, shaping the development of the school's medical programs. Georgia Gordon Taylor was one of the original Fisk Jubilee Singers who continued to volunteer her talents in the black community until her death in 1913. In the early twentieth century she joined her husband's efforts in the establishment of a mortuary and cemetery for African Americans as well as Greenwood Recreational Park for Negroes. Willa Ann Hadley Townsend taught in Nashville's black public schools and Roger Williams University. All of these women served the community and broke through barriers of race and gender to reach the ranks of higher education.⁶⁸ And although they did help shape a new black middle class, but unlike their white sisters, they were not "belles." Instead these African American women were met with modest realities of teaching, municipal service, community organizers, and homemakers. Their life's work remained both a necessity and a service.

⁶⁷ Richardson, *A History of Fisk University*, 60. See also: Nancie Caraway, *Segregated Sisterhood: Racism and the Politics of American Feminism* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1991).

⁶⁸ Bobby L. Lovett and Linda T. Wynn (eds.), *Profiles of African Americans in Tennessee* (Nashville: Annual Local Conference on Afro-American Culture and History, 1996), 12-13, 81-82, 121-122, 131-132. It is also important to note that Mary Church Terrell and Ida B. Wells were also native Tennesseans (Memphis). Both publicly spoke advocating women's rights and education for African Americans while denouncing segregation and lynching. Their efforts and causes made them leading figures in several national movements.

Faculty

The world of higher education also struggled with the reallocation of women as educators over male faculty. This remained most evident when Peabody College for Teachers reopened its doors in 1914.⁶⁹ The first president after the school's reopening, Bruce Payne, also attempted to reverse the obvious shift from male to female teachers occurring in primary and secondary schools across the nation. Bruce Payne, much like William Payne, felt that too many females would tarnish the reputation and prestige of the college.⁷⁰ Instead of limiting the number of females admitted each term, Bruce Payne attempted to attract more young males to the profession of teaching. He did so by “recruiting a well-known, largely male faculty and encouraging the development of a school administration program, more likely to attract male students than would pre-service teacher education.”⁷¹ Although the expansion of programs did attract men seeking jobs in higher education and educational administration, Peabody continued to enroll high numbers of women. Societal responses that hoped to limit and/or control the advancement of women in the professional arena were overpowered by the waves of women seeking to expand the spectrum of social mobility. Women continued to view higher education as the catalyst for such change, albeit gradual, allowing them to pursue life as more progressive, autonomous women. One disadvantage for women faculty at Peabody and almost all other colleges remained unequal pay, based on no other factor than gender. At Peabody, the board members prudently offered male teachers at

⁶⁹ The State of Tennessee chartered the new, independent George Peabody College for Teachers in 1909 even though the college conferred diplomas and degrees until 1911. The move of George Peabody College for Teachers also had good and bad effects on other educational institutions, adding to the prestige of Vanderbilt but at a great cost to the University of Nashville. The University of Nashville officially closed its doors in 1909 after eighty-three years of operation.

⁷⁰ William Payne served earlier as President of Peabody College, 1888-1901. William Payne expected women to pursue the L.I. (Licentiate of Instruction) certificate that only allowed women teacher certification for primary or secondary education.

⁷¹ Conklin, *Peabody College*, 12.

University of Nashville and Montgomery Bell Academy almost double the salaries of female teachers such as Ms. Sears and Ms. Cutter in the normal school. Even in the normal school, “women teachers were not equal to men, for they never held an administrative position or received comparable salaries, at least in the early years.”⁷²

In 1895, an excerpt from the periodical *Bachelor of Arts* reveals an interesting position of women’s education by citing the potential fiduciary benefits of all female school. The article notes that women’s colleges were sound investments and remained a better financial speculation than men’s colleges. In addition the article notes a lower faculty budget and higher tuitions because “women professors, it seems, get lower salaries than men professors, while the yearly bills that students pay the college are usually much larger when the students are girls than if they are men.”⁷³ As such, Ward Seminary rose as a premier school for girls, established in 1865 and chartered in 1869 by the corporate powers of the Tennessee legislature, and its budget remained higher than smaller and more rural girls’ schools. Although individual salary records do not exist, the 1885-86 annual announcement registered only \$160,000 paid to faculty in its first twenty years. With an average of approximately thirty-five faculty during these years, the average salary was just over \$200 per year, although these figures do not reveal discrepancies in pay between male and female faculty members.⁷⁴

Although there are no statistics revealing pay discrepancies at David Lipscomb University, there are other undeniable realities regarding female faculty. At David Lipscomb, the ratio of male to female faculty averaged 4 to 1 through the period. Moreover, no female from 1897-1917 ever held a teaching position in a classically

⁷² Conkin, *Peabody College*, 119. Some male teachers were more qualified in regard to their academic resume.

⁷³ *The Hustler*, Vol. 7 No. 13, December 19, 1895, 3.

⁷⁴ *Annual Announcement of Ward Seminary for Ladies*, 1885-86.

academic subject such as math, science, history, English or religion. Instead, women such as Miss Effie Anderson (1903-1910), Miss Lydia Burcham (1914), and Mrs. Ida Noble (1908-1914) taught instrumental music, French, and voice culture, respectively.⁷⁵ The closest academic position held by a female was language, English grammar, literature, and foreign languages, French typically. By 1910, most colleges had created domestic science departments, as did David Lipscomb on the cusp of war in Europe. Yet, this department still did not represent a promotion of women faculty to the ranks of traditional departments. In fact, perhaps more than any other course created for female students, domestic science created a gendered curriculum for women, offering practical science to be used in the home and community.

Vanderbilt's Stella Vaughn helped to usher in such changes through the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century and reveals the issue of equity in terms of pay, access, and recognition both as a female student and female faculty member. Vaughn, a native of Alabama, moved to Nashville with her family after her father, William Vaughn, took a position as a professor of mathematics at Vanderbilt. After attending Ward Seminary, Vaughn first entered Vanderbilt as a female student who was granted admission "by courtesy" in 1892, allowed to earn a degree despite women's unofficial enrollment at the university. After graduation in 1896, Vaughn assumed a more permanent role at Vanderbilt both as the school's first female instructor as an instructor of the newly formed physical education department. By 1897, she organized the first women's intramural basketball team that played a game that year against local

⁷⁵ *Annual Announcement of the Nashville Bible College, Inc.*, 1903-04, 1909-1910, 1914-15.

opponent, Ward Seminary for Young Ladies.⁷⁶ Surprisingly, Vaughn held this position until 1905 without pay. Thereafter she earned \$100 per year, and her salary would not be raised for another eight years when Chancellor James Kirkland proposed:

I recommend that Miss Stella Vaughn be given \$200 instead of \$100 for her work with the young ladies. It is of great value to the young women studying at the university, and she has not measured her services by the time demanded of her according contract. She has not only taught them in the gymnasium, but has supervised their sports and in a general way has acted as advisor and friend.⁷⁷

Yet, Vaughn's achievements or the Vanderbilt women did not come without many personal frustrations. As female students "garnered more academic honors during the early 1900s, questions about women's proper role on the campus arose."⁷⁸ Vaughn also founded the Vanderbilt chapter of Kappa Alpha Theta sorority and served as the club's advisor for many years. By the start of World War I, the "women outpaced the men with an academic average of 81.72 percent compared to the men's 71.47 percent" and won many academic honors.⁷⁹ Kirkland continued to question the role of women and coeducation in general, even though Vaughn had long been considered the unofficial Dean of Women. The title and position would become official in 1925. For over sixty years, Vaughn housed female students in what was later renamed the Vaughn house. Even as Kirkland insisted in that same year that Vanderbilt's "general tone and atmosphere is that of a college for men and will probably so remain," he could not disparage the important role and legacy of Stella Vaughn, spanning more than fifty

⁷⁶ Bill Traugher, "Stella Vaughn Pioneered Women's Sports," *Commodore History Corner*, January 31, 2007; *Tennessean*, October 24, 1960, 21. Ward Seminary maintains the claim of organizing the first women's basketball team not only in Nashville but also in the South. This claim is disputed by other schools in the South that also claim to have formed female teams before 1895.

⁷⁷ *Vanderbilt University Board of Trust*, June 1913.

⁷⁸ Traugher, "Stella Vaughn," *Commodore History Corner*, 3.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

years.⁸⁰ Yet, Stella Vaughn earned her title as the “Grand Old Lady of Vanderbilt University” with undoubted sacrifice, devotion, yet little recognition.⁸¹

Daughters of the Rich

Attitudes towards expanded opportunities in women’s higher education paralleled greater concerns for many Southerners during the Gilded/Progressive era. Many Southerners, male and female, remained steeped in traditional social strictures and feared that this new generation of women would utilize education, either deliberately or unintentionally, as a springboard into previously limited areas of public and professional life, thus disrupting the gendered social hierarchy. In essence, many Southerners believed that higher educated women would produce a new class, one whereby men were not needed in their traditional roles as economic providers. Moreover, the schools that allowed women, both co-educational and single sex, remained very attentive to the types of women they accepted as students as well as the types of women they produced from their instruction and guidance. As a result, Tennessee as most southern states, continued to resist certain changes, in particular the public funding of women’s education. However, as historian Paul Conkin notes, “In relative terms, . . . few of these [Peabody and the other private colleges in Nashville] students were poor. More accurately, the whole South was poor. Typical incomes in the eleven former Confederate states were only half the national average.”⁸² Still, a new symbiotic relationship emerged for middle

⁸⁰ James Kirkland, *Commencement Address of the Fiftieth Anniversary of Vanderbilt University*, 1925. Miss Vaughn also wrote a personal history of Vanderbilt, although no complete draft remains, this was one of the earliest historical accounts written about the university.

⁸¹ *Tennessean*, October 24, 1960, 21.

⁸² Conkin, *Peabody College*, 141. Conkin continues by stating that “[e]ven discounting blacks, who were not eligible, the poorest white families were almost never in a position to provide even an eighth-grade education for their children, who at a young age had to go to work on a farm or in a cotton mill. In areas of poor soil, counties had not even made

and upper classes in the 1890s that increased southern wealth in Nashville. Not only was there the creation of a new group who gained prominence through industrialization and urbanization, but also the solidification of an existing class that mixed old money from the plantation economy with new investments in transportation, shipping, printing, and other business interests.

Public versus private education grew as one of the defining issues in southern education. Like most southern states, Tennessee supported very few public state institutions of higher education. In fact, the system of publicly funded and regulated secondary schools remained in the developmental stages. In a 1904 article, a report was given regarding an assembly held on Vandy's campus where students presented written essays. The author of one article, Vanderbilt student Charles Gray Burkitt, commented on, "Progress in the Education of Women" narrating the history of women's education from the Middle Ages to 1904 and ended "with the advocacy of advanced education for both sexes at the expense of and under the supervision of the state."⁸³ Burkitt seemed to recognize that the issue remained especially controversial in the South as he commented on the presenter's call for state-supported women's education, "Doubtless this condition will ultimately prevail in the South, as it already does in all other sections of the United States, when two obstacles shall have been overcome, namely: a sparse population and the [backwardness] of state legislatures, of which that of Tennessee is most conspicuous in this respect."⁸⁴ Such strong statements show that even as a student, Charles Burkitt

public schools available in all too many districts or townships. Compulsory school laws lay ahead, as did the creation of high schools in most rural areas," (141).

⁸³ *The Observer*, Vol. 15, No. 19, March 3, 1904, 3.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, The term "backwardness" was substituted for the original wording of the passage that used the term "niggardliness." This term of course insinuates race into a loaded term implying that African Americans are inferior and ignorant. I have chosen to substitute for the original term because its removal does not change the meaning of the passage or the purpose of the quote; however, it does remove a rather offensive word from the main body of the text.

recognized that prevailing southern ideology continued to impede the fundamental shift needed to overcome primary and deep-seated trepidation regarding the spectrum of potential change for women and men both individually and collectively. As such, it remains unsurprising that most educational opportunities for women existed through private educational institutions, excluding those who could not afford tuition and including young ladies with middle to upper class backgrounds.

Ward Seminary for Young Ladies serves as a prime intersection of education, gender, and class. From its inception, Ward Seminary catered to women from prominent families, both in Tennessee and other southern states. The school was located on Spruce Street on the edge of downtown before moving further West of downtown. Its purpose and level of instruction for its middle and upper class students was first outlined in the mid 1880s:

In 1865 it was conceived that the want of the country was a more thorough preparation of *our* daughters for the duties of life. To this end a free classic course was inaugurated, and a full course in all other departments. . . [The Seminary] has surpassed all other schools in the South in numbers and facilities, as shown by the report of the Commissioner of Education, at Washington, for years past. There are many excellent schools for girls in the United States, but we believe they do not offer a wider range of instruction and observation, nor greater attention to accomplishment and good manners, than this Seminary.⁸⁵

Themes of class pervade not only Ward Seminary, but are also revealed in other schools in Nashville. Throughout the 1890s and early 1900s, the Nashville educated elite struggled with the question of women's higher education and the paradox created by young women poised to join the ranks of professional working class while still expected to fulfill traditional promises of motherhood and female piety.

⁸⁵ *Annual Announcement for Ward's Seminary for Young Ladies*, 1885-1886. 1.

The issue of class seemed particularly sensitive for elite families in the South in the early twentieth century. One article in *The Hustler* entitled “Daughters of the Rich” reflects the consternation, and yet, the conflicted views of higher education (and the supposed autonomy gained) for women of the middle and upper class:

No class of women are more to be pitied than the daughters of rich men, who, having real force and energy of character, have no vent for it, because fashion requires them to sit still and fold their hands. It does not require this of their brothers. They are applauded when they grow restive under it, and, breaking their bonds, interest themselves in a manly way in something besides mere pleasure. But let a daughter try it, and immediately the awful Mrs. Grundy starts up and . . . bids the daughter of the millionaire still her pulses and close here eyes and ears to the possibilities, and think of nothing but husband-hunting. We never can know how many real heroines are behind the wall of restriction ‘till what is called “adverse” fate sets them free to stand upon their own feet, and to use their own hands, and know their own powers, which had been dwarfed almost to extinction by inaction.⁸⁶

Such a passage remains indicative of the extremely sensitive question of woman’s place in the private and/or public spheres in Nashville. Further it points to the controversial nature of a nascent cycle, warning southern society that higher education for this new generation of twentieth-century females would not only lead to greater autonomy and more confident women but also to questionable moral/ethical standards and “masculine” women incapable of fulfilling their roles as wives and mothers. Instead, the article noted that the daughters of the elite are held to an even higher standard and expectation of refined, traditional behavior, as the house mother Mrs. Gundy reminds such young women to “still her pulses” and “think of nothing but husband-hunting.” Yet, despite the article’s loaded words and passages, the author delicately encouraged women to “know their own power” and “use their own hands.” The following year, another gender

⁸⁶ *The Hustler*, Vol. 17, No. 19, March 15, 1906, 3. Mrs. Grundy was one of the supervisors of female students at Vanderbilt University.

sensitive comment surfaced. Its author commented that fourteen of the forty-nine Vanderbilt female graduates in 1907 were already married by the following fall, wrote, “The student body joins *The Hustler* in the heartfelt wish that many more will go and do likewise. Here’s success to the Co-eds.”⁸⁷ Although the comment is masked with a congratulatory tone, traditional roles are the main object of applause as the predominantly male student body reaffirmed the primary role of women as wives and equated success and desirability with marriage as a young adult. It remains quite clear that southern society continued to encourage prominent young women to use their education to enhance their primary position as wives and mothers of prominent men.

Similar messages can be observed throughout Nashville’s collegiate culture, reinforcing the class hierarchy that women should be satisfied with careers of subsidiary service, either in the home or school house. President William Payne of Peabody College (1887-1901) never stated that he maintained a bias against female students or their enrollment at Peabody Normal College, however, “gender entered into his analysis.”⁸⁸ The L.I. (Licentiate of Instruction) degree that awarded certification to teach was designed specifically for women and the few men who did not garner aspirations to ultimately pursue a bachelor’s degree. With required courses in pedagogy, these women were well prepared for teaching but not administration or leadership positions. Payne also believed that “because of the nurturing aspects of their gender, they were the best teachers in grades one through five.”⁸⁹ He also held the position that females need not be trained to take or teach higher levels of math or science because “women’s minds were not fitted to such abstract subjects” and that their careers would only last until they

⁸⁷ *The Hustler*, Vol. 18, No. 10, October 1906, 2.

⁸⁸ Conkin, *Peabody College*, 136.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

married and began families.⁹⁰ Despite William Payne's disposition in regard to females and education, both as students and educators, female students continued to dominate class rolls and serve prominently in the faculty ranks. It is true that most female Peabody graduates ceased to teach after marriage and children, but many did remain unmarried, teaching for decades and following the "path of their mentors- Miss Sears, Miss Bloomstein, Miss Jones, and Miss Carpenter,"⁹¹ Although these lifelong educators dedicated their lives and careers to "teaching teachers," few ever reached an administrative position or were viewed as part of the social elite of Nashville. In the South, marriage still seemed to serve as a prerequisite to high brow circles, even though many unmarried and married (to men without money) women served in the community in various ways.

Dr. W.E. Ward of Ward Seminary for Ladies remained a prominent figure in the Nashville community as well as within the world of higher education. Dr. Ward's views reflected larger regional and national issues facing many educational institutions in regard to a rising new class of educated women and notions of acceptable behavior for Nashville's elite women. In a speech entitled "The Coming Woman," Ward reveals his anxiety and reservation regarding the growing autonomy and independence of women. His most direct attacks focus on national and regional trends regarding the shifting role of prominent young females in society as volunteers, educators, wives, and mothers. Yet the following passage also reflects the reluctant acknowledgement that Dr. Ward recognized that throughout the country and in the South, certain trends were already in motion:

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Conkin, *Peabody College*, 137. Julia Sears taught at Peabody for thirty years, retiring in 1907. Her portrait, hung in the chapel, was the only female among the college's other prominent male presidents and leaders.

The coming woman ought not to be, but I fear she is aiming to make herself, independent of man. Just as far as she does this she contravenes the law of the Almighty, who made her for a help-meet for man. . . Woman is dependent on man; she is weaker; she ought never to be educated out of that idea. Independence perforce destroys sympathy, and sympathy is the subtle, all-pervading, and omnipotent energy that binds all mankind together. If the coming woman is to come to that, let her never come.⁹²

Dr. Ward's comments reflect the still prevalent ideology that women should seek education solely to better themselves for ultimate roles as wives, mothers, and advocates of social benevolence representing middle and upper class interests. His words are not atypical of southern society in the late nineteenth century as he presented his post-bellum vision for an "improved" Southern Belle who still knew her place in the home and in society. Ironically, Dr. Ward acknowledged that the coming woman will be more autonomous and use her education for her own betterment. Ward feared that higher education would indeed serve as a springboard whereby women would become more dynamic individuals within political and professional arenas. He, like many Southerners, believed that distinctively male and female characteristics were mutually exclusive. In other words, such views preclude that women could be both independent as well as sympathetic. Dr. Ward felt particularly strong about the "coming woman" because the young ladies at Ward-Belmont were precisely the group of women who would push the envelope as daughters of middle and upper class families in the South and across the nation. Mirroring the unofficial mission of Ward Seminary to produce refined young ladies, the school's patronage remained closely tied to wealthy families in Nashville and neighboring states. As such, the 1904-1905 student directory shows that of approximately 330 students, nearly one-third of the girls' fathers retained positions as

⁹² W.E. Ward, "The Coming Woman," *Annual Commencement of W.E. Ward's Seminary for Ladies* (1885-1886), 25.

either judges, lawyers, doctors, professors, clergy, or high ranking military officials.⁹³

Although Dr. W.E. Ward hoped that this new class of women would never come, it remains clear that by World War I, women became more comfortable as individuals, with or without marriage.

Lois Godbey, female graduate from Vanderbilt class of 1908, did not deny the ultimate goal of middle and upper class women as prominent members of the community and as wives and mothers of prominent men, but defended the desire of women to attend Vanderbilt. She admitted that Vanderbilt University remained the most prestigious educational institution in the South in the early twentieth century. As such, the best and brightest of the female elite in Nashville, who desired true undergraduate and/or graduate coursework had no other option unless they moved to New England and attended one of the “Seven Sisters.” Godbey crafted a very well-worded argument as she emphasized the importance of opportunities in higher education for southern women:

It is true that there are many good women’s colleges in the United States, but there are but two first-class colleges for women in the South . . . [n]either of these rank as high as Vanderbilt. They offer us no subjects that Vanderbilt does not, but Vanderbilt offers many that they do not. And the elective system of Vanderbilt gives us an opportunity to consult our individual tastes. It is true that we could go to Vassar or Wellesley, which are as the [Ivy League] colleges for men, but we do not go to them for the same reason that the Vanderbilt boys do not go to Harvard and Yale.⁹⁴

Godbey made an interesting observation in which class and regionalism trumps gender by comparing the preference of women to attend Vanderbilt in order to stay in the South just as the men chose Vanderbilt over the likes of Harvard and Yale. Godbey cloaked her

⁹³ *Ward’s Seminary Bulletin*, Vol. 20, 1904-1905, 51-59. It is impossible to precisely determine the number of lawyers, as names in the directory are not denoted with the degree of Juris Doctorate (J.D.). Still, their mothers, presumably widows, list very few students, yet there remain a handful that have no apparent sponsor or parental funding. Ward’s Seminary did award several scholarships each year beginning in the 1880s.

⁹⁴ *The Hustler*, Vol. 18, No. 28, May 16, 1907, 2.

final words with patriarchal overtones reinforcing traditional images of femininity despite their higher education:

There are local reasons. Most of our girls are from Nashville and the adjoining territory. If we were to go so far away we would miss the influences and lose the house- wifely instruction which we enjoy by remaining at home. “The tendency to make women masculine and to rob her of that gentle touch which makes her queen of the home” seems very slight at Vanderbilt.⁹⁵

Godbey claimed that by staying in the South, young women such as herself were less likely to be too progressive or “masculine” and that an education at Vanderbilt would not disrupt the cult of domesticity in which women remained primarily in the private sphere. In other words, Godbey either knowingly or unknowingly articulated the paradoxical definition of the construction and meaning of the “modern belle” in the first decade of the twentieth century. Interestingly, Lois Godbey not only rebutted an editorial which attacked the legitimacy of women at Vanderbilt, her view of co-education at Vanderbilt remains the only one of its kind in print for any of the university publications from 1897-1917.

Peabody College for Teachers also reveals issues of class and gender as a school with sub-collegiate status, training mostly women to enter the field of primary or secondary education. Interestingly, Peabody also serves as an illustration that shows the growth of institutions of higher education specifically designed for a particular job. Moreover, the fluctuation of Peabody’s enrollment, economic stability, and accreditation also shed light on inconsistencies regarding the standardization of higher education in the South through private institutions funded largely by northern philanthropists. The Peabody Normal School accepted female students through the University of Nashville

⁹⁵ Ibid.

following the Civil War. However, no evidence exists showing that the University of Nashville considered allowing female students before 1875. As Paul Conkin notes, “[T]he university board had trouble coping with the new, and to it [the University of Nashville Board of Trustees] radical, coeducational reality.”⁹⁶ Still, it remained undeniable that by the turn-of-the-century the profession of teaching had largely shifted from a male to a female occupation. The feminization of education began in the late 1880s, a trend mirrored in both the North and South. For Peabody College, operating under the auspices of the name State Normal College, this shift occurred a decade before the Centennial Exposition of 1897 under the leadership of Eben Stearns.

Stearns served as president from 1875 until 1887 and remains largely responsible for establishing the trajectory that Peabody College would follow into the 1920s.⁹⁷ Stearns attempted to standardize admission requirements at the onset of his tenure, even if only by Peabody’s standards, not regional or national standards.⁹⁸ Enrollment remained low in the early years of the [Peabody] State Normal College, despite the admittance of twelve females, including several prominent daughters of Nashville families including Stearns’s daughter, the daughter of Berrien Lindsley, a descendant of John Sevier, and the daughter of a prominent botanist in Tennessee.⁹⁹ By 1877, eight

⁹⁶ Conkin, *Peabody College*, 119.

⁹⁷ Eben Stearns hailed from Massachusetts and left the Robinson Female Seminary in New Hampshire in order to accept the position of president at Peabody College.

⁹⁸ The catalogue stated that admission to Peabody College required a minimum age of sixteen years old, good character, passage of an examination in elementary subjects, and a signed commitment to the education profession upon graduation. Most importantly, the college required tuition payment in full; however, many student received some type of financial aid from the school even though many remained unavailable to women, particularly during the tenure of William Payne. For more see: *Catalogue of the Officers and Students of the University of Nashville, including the State Normal, Montgomery Bell, and Medical Department, 1875-1876*, Vanderbilt Special Collections.

⁹⁹ Conkin, *Peabody College*, 118. John Sevier was one of the original pioneers and founders of Tennessee. He also represented the Tennessee and North Carolina territories before the Revolutionary War. After his leadership during the American Revolution, Sevier became Tennessee’s first governor. John Berrien Lindsley is less well known but perhaps more influential to the development of Tennessee during and after the Civil War. He was the son of Philip Lindsley who founded the University of Nashville and also had strong ties to Vanderbilt University and Peabody College. At the University of Nashville, Berrien Lindsley began a medical department in 1850 and remained a professor in chemistry

students graduated, five of them women. Lizzie Bloomstein, one of these graduates remained for the rest of her career, teaching history and geography.¹⁰⁰ It is important to note that “these original students were not poor girls seeking a chance to teach, but young women from affluent Nashville homes seeking a secondary-level education and a profession.”¹⁰¹ Stearns introduced a three-year curriculum that was divided in junior, middle, and senior classes; however, this system remained hard to regulate and administer.¹⁰² By 1880, he changed this unaccredited degree program to one whereby graduates would earn a Licentiate of Instruction (L.I.), “a degree by then offered by a few northern normal schools.”¹⁰³ Stearns also maintained a predominantly female faculty during his tenure that mirrored the student body consisting of more than sixty percent females.¹⁰⁴

David Lipscomb University, or Nashville Bible College, did not advertise for or attract the same type of student as Vanderbilt, Ward Seminary, or even Peabody. With three teachers, thirty-two male students, and two female students, the school charged approximately thirty dollars for instruction, room and board throughout the 1890s. By

until 1873. He succeeded his father as chancellor of the university in 1855 and helped restore the University of Nashville to its pre-war status in terms of budget, course offerings, and campus buildings. He also revitalized the literary department. In addition he also played a significant role in secondary education with the founding of Montgomery Bell Academy (1865) (which remains a prestigious boys preparatory school), was selected as Superintendent of Nashville Public Schools (1866), led efforts to form the Tennessee College of Pharmacy (1870), and served on the Tennessee Board of Education (1877-1897).

¹⁰⁰ Ibid. Paul Conkin clarifies the status of women during this period whereby the State Normal College of Tennessee (Peabody College), the University of Nashville, and the all-male Montgomery Bell Academy (MBA) maintained a “partnership” that both Boards wavered on the question of coeducation. As he writes, “I have found no suggestion that anyone connected with the University of Nashville ever considered admitting women before 1875,” (119).

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 119.

¹⁰² The general curriculum under this three-year program included primary subjects in the first year, early secondary subjects in the second year, and advanced secondary subjects in the third year. An example of this progression can be seen as follows: First year-English, arithmetic, geometry, geography, American history, hygiene, rhetoric, and bookkeeping; Second year- algebra, philosophy, physics, botany, world history, English literature; Third year- calculus, astronomy, U.S. Constitution, classic literature, theory and art of teaching, observation of teachers at Montgomery Bell Academy. For more see Chapter Five, entitled “The State Normal College of Tennessee, 1875-1887,” in Conkin, *Peabody College*.

¹⁰³ Conkin, *Peabody College*, 118.

¹⁰⁴ Julia Sears (no relation to the educator and policymaker Barnas Sears) remained a prominent teacher until her retirement in 1907 whereby she received the first Carnegie retirement in Tennessee and lived until 1929. For more see: Conkin, *Peabody College*, 119.

1900, the school's tuition had risen modestly, but female students were required to pay additional funds for supplies, clothing/uniforms, and linens that were deemed "unnecessary" for male students. Still, the school continued to recruit female students because they were more likely to come to an unaccredited religious college and the school needed the funding provided by the tuition from female students. Although the college began primarily as a school to train men as preachers and women as missionaries, two of the school's faculty leaders, James A. Harding and David Lipscomb, began to publicize the school in ways that showed the overall quality of education. The reason for this decision was more economic than theological as they realized that many young people did not consider attending Nashville Bible College because they saw it only as a school for would-be preachers and missionaries. However, the school attracted a broader cross-section of students and offered more courses in general and industrial education. Still, the tuition remained drastically less expensive than any other local school intended for Caucasian students from the 1890s to World War I. As such, females who attended Nashville Bible College, dressed in uniforms that distinguished them from other female school uniforms, were not seen as an extension of elite social class. Instead, the college remained second tier to female students at Ward-Belmont, Peabody, or Vanderbilt.

As public primary and secondary schools opened in large numbers in the 1880s and 1890s, another derivative of class structure was added to the equation. Race, when viewed from certain standpoints, is synonymous with class. As such, Fisk University also sought to provide able teachers for new African American primary and secondary schools. In 1896, as the planning of Nashville's Centennial Exposition took place, the landmark case of *Plessy versus Ferguson* legalized systematic segregation. The legal

precedence set by “separate but equal” situated Fisk University as a major provider of educators. African American women served as a double minority as students of higher education in a racially segregated society. With the shift from male to female teachers firmly set by the early twentieth century, African American women who sought to become teachers were forced to wait behind several closed doors. First, African American women, particularly in the South, had to find a school that could give them elementary instruction. Moreover, these young women had not only to find a secondary school which had room to accept them, but also had to find some sort of funding or financial aid. Finally, even if educated and trained for teaching or another profession, African-American women typically filled the remaining positions after Caucasian women and African American men had found gainful employment.

Conclusion

World War I produced many advantages for young women attending colleges. As their male counterparts served at home or overseas in the military, women rose to fill the leadership and student enrollment quotas left empty by the absence of men. Although male students returned from the war to reassert many positions, the war served as a springboard for women. They began to assert themselves in ways that previously seemed unapproachable in regard to access to public spaces on and off campus, gymnasiums, student organizations, and athletics. Thus, the coming of World War I allowed women, albeit temporarily, to make marked gains in leadership positions.

In the summer of 1917, Vanderbilt began forming a Student Army Training Corps (SATC) as did many colleges and universities throughout the United States. This

transformed the university into a military campus, yet the school continued classes for nonmilitary students that included a record number of women, along with men unfit for military service. In fact, the senior class had but one male, and women made up the majority of both the sophomore and junior classes as well. Senior class president Ednelia Wade served as the first female class president in 1918-1919. Although men resumed most leadership positions after the war, women continued to serve as class officers and in other student organizations. In part, Vanderbilt women used the war period as a springboard to bring more equity between the sexes on campus. Because of this, Kirkland did set a quota for female students in 1921. Yet, increased equity from 1915-1920 also separates Vanderbilt from other colleges during the period because women attended the same courses and followed the same curriculum as men from 1880-1920. In the 1908-1909 Vanderbilt University Catalog, issues of gender were directly addressed as the "Requirements for Admission" stated, "Young women will be admitted upon the same conditions as young men."¹⁰⁵ It remains evident that qualified women were still equals of their male counterparts but with different rules, housing accommodations, and limited access to physical education and sport. The curriculum would become more gendered in the 1920s and 1930s; however, female graduates of Vanderbilt were still allowed to pursue any course of study in which they qualified.¹⁰⁶

Like the co-eds at Vanderbilt, women became the majority of the student body at Fisk University during World War I, when 600 African American men mobilized much of the campus as a military base. After the war, the ratio of majority men to women again returned. From 1897-1917, however, Fisk mirrored the trends found in other

¹⁰⁵ *Vanderbilt University Annual Catalog*, 1908-1909.

¹⁰⁶ As course offerings and academic majors expanded, nursing, education, domestic science, languages and literature were largely encouraged as acceptable majors for females. See Conklin, *Gone with the Ivy*, 276-277, 290-303.

Nashville colleges with regard to women. Perhaps more importantly, the number of females attending the university during the war caused many African American families who had emerged as middle class by 1917, to question the continued standard of safety for their daughters at Fisk. In a *Fisk University News* article entitled “Is Fisk Safe for Girls?” the university addresses the inquiries regarding the level of supervision and protection afforded female students, especially during World War I as the United States Receiving Camp began to welcome soldiers bound for training and/or service. The writer admits, “One father has put the fears of many into a letter to the President of the University.”¹⁰⁷ After Fisk University officials reprinted a letter intended for all parents of female students that addressed in detail the attitude and precautions taken by the university, many worries regarding female safety subsided.

During this twenty-year period, Vanderbilt played an important role in defining the scope and spectrum of women’s education. The school first passed two official measures of gender equity, first in 1895 just before the Centennial Exposition and again in 1915 prior to the official entrance of the United States into World War I.¹⁰⁸ From 1897 until 1914, Vanderbilt continued to struggle with the issue of women’s education in regard to admission, leadership positions, degrees allowed, and athletic functions; yet the school took great care to keep abreast of regional and national trends. Vanderbilt remained unique in Nashville because it existed as the only true four-year university that conferred nationally recognized bachelor and master degrees, despite the fact that degrees on all levels never equaled today’s current degree requirements. Serving as an exception

¹⁰⁷ *Fisk University News*, 1917, 3.

¹⁰⁸ Although Vanderbilt participated in discussions with Peabody College and the Nashville Chamber of Commerce to open a college preparatory school for girls to be administered under the authority of the university, such a school was never established. Nonetheless, the university did have ties to the Nashville College for Young Ladies. As with most colleges and universities budding in the New South after the Civil War, the call for substantial community funding mostly likely remains the primary reason for the plans failure.

for the Gilded/Progressive era and the South as a region, Vanderbilt's curriculum did not grow increasingly gendered nor did it create majors with the intended purpose of attracting female students.¹⁰⁹ Although the number of female graduates remained small throughout the period studied, numbers did increase as well as the respect, recognition, and achievement of many female students. Most impressive is that female graduates from Vanderbilt before 1920 earned their degrees based on the same standards as males but with much less prior preparatory education and overall less support on and off campus.

World War I less directly affected Ward-Belmont and Peabody Colleges, as their student populations were dominated by females before the draft and United States' entrance in 1917. The male students who did attend Peabody were mostly older than thirty and married with children. Although no current students of Peabody died due to service in World War I, five Peabody alumni were killed in action. Ironically, Peabody gained in many ways as it housed and rented rooms to fifty-five SACS men stationed in Nashville. Paul Conkin also notes that "[f]or the first time, tuition payments from Vanderbilt exceeded those Peabody paid to Vanderbilt, since 114 students in the Vanderbilt SACS took their coursework at Peabody. . ."¹¹⁰ Further the Peabody women enjoyed new avenues of socialization provided by the young male recruits, many of whom were not from Nashville. However, the war ended quickly in 1918 as did efforts to sell war bonds and organize war mobilization activities. In 1917, President Bruce Payne began a funding campaign to raise a half million dollars to secure an endowment. The General Education Board offered \$200,000 if Payne and the school could raise the

¹⁰⁹ See also: Barbara Kuhn Campbell, *The "Liberated" Woman of 1914: Prominent Women in the Progressive Era* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1979).

¹¹⁰ Conkin, *Peabody College*, 198.

remaining \$300,000. Payne ultimately turned to the citizens and businesses of Nashville to help generate the funds.¹¹¹ This represented the first time that local donations directly served one of Nashville's institutions of higher education, and by 1920 the Peabody endowment was secured at \$2,395,699.¹¹² Moreover, Peabody College for Teachers matched educational standards set by other legitimate institutions of higher education at the dawn of this new decade, with a creditable college-level curriculum, faculty, and degree program.

By the end of World War I, Ward-Belmont boasted nearly 600 students from thirty-six states, Alaska, and Canada although most students hailed from Tennessee and neighboring southern states. One course of study included the classical course that was six years of study where many graduates typically finished their course work at four year institutions. Another course of study was the general course, consisting of four years of study whereby graduates did not intend to further their education at another college, and specialized "degrees" in piano, expression, voice, home economics, physical education. Moreover, Ward-Belmont College issued certificates of completion for first-year college, college preparatory, high school, organ, piano, voice, art, expression, home economics, domestic science, domestic art, business and secretarial, and arts and crafts.¹¹³ Still it remains quite clear that while Ward-Belmont offered a first rate education for its students, the equivalent of their degree most closely resembled that of a junior college or associate degrees until 1951. Further, most students from Ward-Belmont either taught and never married or married and did not work outside the home except in cases of

¹¹¹ Ibid., 197-198.

¹¹² "Report of the President to the Board of Trustees of George Peabody College for Teachers, June, 1920," *Reports of the President: George Peabody College for Teachers*, vol. 2, 2-3.

¹¹³ *Ward-Belmont Bulletin, 1919-1920*. (Nashville: Ward-Belmont, 1920), 74-77.

volunteer work or events related to the various social clubs in Nashville. Thus, it depends on what standard one uses to judge either the progressive or traditional nature of Ward-Belmont. It is true that females received a quality education, and several continued onto other educational institutions to earn bachelor and master's degrees; however, Ward-Belmont's course offerings remained principally gendered with few "hard" sciences or mathematics and several "soft" sciences such as psychology or botany but chiefly offered courses in the humanities and foreign language. Though increasingly advanced for its time, Ward Seminary for Young Ladies, or Ward-Belmont (1913), merely improved the depth and breadth of their education. They offered greater insight into community issues such as health, sanitation, and public education and provided a first-rate education, albeit an engendered curriculum containing many "soft subjects."

In conclusion, World War I served as perhaps the biggest catalyst for female students who gained a more visible place both on and off campus measured by their own prominence and achievements rather than through relationships determined by dating and domesticity. Even so, most women relinquished their leadership roles and academic slots when the war ended. However, the advances achieved by female students in Nashville's educational institutions during WWI would not have been possible without a road paved by prior young women in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Moreover, female enrollments continuously rose throughout the late 1890s and early 1900s. It remains true that all institutions of higher education in Nashville continued to emphasize the importance of social networking and marriage, giving these young women the tools to do great things but encouraging them to use their knowledge only in limited, socially acceptable ways.

Many women did follow such a prescription, exercising their education with limited means until they married and using their status to maintain influence in clubs, organizations, and charities. Nonetheless, women as a collective whole entered public and professional arenas as more visible participants, but in limited areas. Thus, from 1897-1917, Nashville reflected larger trends found in other southern states and growing cities. The South maintained a view of women and higher education that remained an oxymoron of sorts. Views of female intellectual ability, confrontations of education to femininity, and roles of women after graduation continued to serve throughout the period as an ideological contradiction combined with a pragmatic reality. As such, local southern communities maintained and reinforced southern notions not of a modern “woman” but rather of a modern “belle.”

4. The “Race” for Education: Creating the Talented Tenth

“Nothing awakens desires and creates want like educational institutions . . . They are fountain heads that send forth streams of influence, . . . refreshing [new] generations.”
- G.D. Pike, *The Jubilee Singers*, 1873

Fisk graduate W.E.B. DuBois spent much time in and around Nashville in the late 1880s and 1890s. Rising to national prominence, DuBois would later make the issues of race, education, and equality his life’s work. In his renowned text, *The Talented Tenth*, he spoke of the needed direction of African Americans in the South stating, “Education and work are the levers to uplift a people. Work alone will not do it unless inspired by the right ideals and guided by intelligence. Education must not simply teach work — it must teach Life.”¹ DuBois rightfully viewed education as the key that would eventually open previously closed doors, allowing African Americans to rise within white America. As such, Nashville’s image as “Athens of the South” in the early twentieth century also drew from the prestige of several African American schools. Nashville’s colleges and universities not only shaped a new generation of Caucasians, but the city also served as home to several institutions of higher education designed to educate emergent black middle and elite classes.

Although men led the way, women also played an important role both as active agents in the community and as wives of prominent men such as James Napier, Booker T. Washington, and Arthur M. Townsend. In particular, Fisk University, Meharry Medical College, and Roger Williams University would carry the torch for African American higher education. These schools produced professionals and intellectuals who led the “second civil rights movement” in an effort to bring greater stability, equity, and

¹ W.E.B. Dubois, “The Talented Tenth,” *The Negro Problem: A Series of Articles by Representative Negroes of Today* (New York), 1903. The opening quote is taken from G.D. Pike, *The Jubilee Singers and Their Campaign for Twenty Thousand Dollars* (Boston: Lee and Shepard Publishers, 1873), 26,28.

empowerment to the black community. They authenticated DuBois' message designating the need for a "Talented Tenth."

At the Third Annual Conference of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) held in the summer of 1911, the attendees did not sing old spirituals but rather hymns of a new sort. One hymn professed in the title "Did not old Pharaoh get lost?" while in the final verse of another chorus, the biracial group sang, "Shout you children, shout, you're free . . . For Christ has bought this liberty, All I want is a little more faith in Jesus."² Undoubtedly, the Gilded/Progressive Era brought positive change to the African American community in the South, particularly in Nashville. However, attitudes toward change in regard to sociopolitical equality, professional opportunity, and education moved sluggishly in the South. Both African Americans and Caucasian Progressives viewed the Civil War, and subsequent constitutional amendments and legislation, as part of a process.³ Nonetheless, racial and class based progression was still just a goal, yet to be achieved, and well short of full integration in American society.

As early as the 1880s and through the 1920s, many in the African American community held the fundamental belief that education was the principle avenue for healing the nation's racial divide and improving the status of blacks in the South. Following Reconstruction, black communities in the South experienced a backlash of political and economic enfranchisement, as whites reassumed positions of power and

² *Third Annual Conference of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People* (New York: Allied Printing, 1911), 218-219.

³ The terms white and Caucasian are to be viewed as synonymous terms throughout this chapter as well as the terms black and African American. The amendments and laws referred to in this passage include the 13th Amendment abolishing slavery, 14th Amendment setting up standards of equal protection and due process under the law for all citizens, the 15th Amendment ensuring African American men the right to vote, the Civil Rights Act of 1866 that established criteria for the improvement of racial equity, and the Freedman's Bureau created by the government to aid African Americans with the attainment of land and access to basic education and employment.

used that power to limit and sequester the advancement or even equitable assimilation of African Americans. The reinforcement of older cultural parameters in a new era and century reflected a sort of status quo ante and relegated blacks to second-class citizenship at best. Even so, from 1897 until 1917, Nashville served as a prominent center for a different brand of African American opportunity and community development. The city was home to Fisk University, the most prestigious African American university in the South, and Meharry Medical College, one of the only reputable southern colleges offering degrees in medicine, dentistry, pharmacology, and nursing to African Americans.

Compared to neighboring states of the “Deep South,” Tennessee maintained a different set of historic and demographic statistics, as the first Confederate state to be occupied by the Union and never matching the black population of Georgia, South Carolina, Alabama, or Mississippi. As such, Nashville would emerge as a center of higher learning for African Americans across the nation, and as a result, students and graduates of the city’s black colleges garnered many accolades and accomplishments as a new generation of African American leaders in the twentieth century. Hundreds of African American women and men graduated from local colleges and universities from 1897-1917 and continued on as teachers, nurses, doctors, lawyers, businessmen/women, and the like. These successful individuals not only garnered personal achievement but also brought greater stability and progress to the entire community as their “talents” trickled down to those less fortunate. Because of the city’s institutions of higher education Nashville was instrumental in educating the “Talented Tenth.” This new generation would make significant gains in improving and serving the black community

while modifying the acceptability of a new class of African Americans within a racially segregated and increasingly urban society.

By 1910, Tennessee's population had reached the two million mark, with approximately 21% of its population African American. Of the nearly half million African Americans, 97,927 were children six to fourteen years of age compared to 357,723 Caucasian children in the same age group. As the Bureau of Education stated in 1917, "The inequalities between the appropriations for white and colored schools are probably not as great in Tennessee as in states where the Negro population constitutes a larger percentage of the total."⁴ Nationally, the Bureau recognized that citizens of both races and from both regions (North and South) exhibited concern regarding the lack of equity and funding for the "improvement of the Negroes" and remained convinced that education for African Americans was the best, most efficient answer. However, figures reveal major discrepancies with nearly 29 million dollars expended on the state's primary/secondary schools and colleges of which only three million was allotted to "colored schools."⁵

In reality, a significant number of white southerners did not oppose some education for their racial counterparts as they believed it would both help African Americans improve their communities internally as well as educate and train them for work that did not disrupt the racial and social hierarchy. Yet, make no mistake; white southerners across the region, as well as in Nashville, vigorously opposed the infiltration of blacks into their white world. In other words, educating younger generations of

⁴ Department of the Interior, Bureau of Education, *Negro Education: A Study of the Private and Higher Schools for Colored People in the United States (Prepared in cooperation with the Phelps-Stokes Fund under the direction of Thomas Jesse Jones, Specialist in the Education of Racial Groups)* (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1917), 527.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 1. The funding was not provided by the federal government but rather denominational and private educational boards and by individuals.

African Americans helped ease the conscience of white southerners while preventing them from becoming either a burden or a threat. Still, whites typically only approved of education that would ensure greater security and health for the entire city. White intentions regarding African American education were not altruistic or truly progressive. Instead attitudes toward racial improvement were distinctly southern. Leaders of the white community dictated all aspects of African American education, from funding to accreditation to curriculum.

Specifically, in Nashville's Davidson County, the population in 1910 was just over 110,354 with 73,831 Caucasians and 36,523 African Americans. Out of these totals, there lived 12,119 whites between the ages of six and fourteen and 5,538 African American children. Nashville maintained twenty-two primary and secondary schools for whites compared to twelve for "colored" students, which is proportionate to the numbers of school age children. Still, the subsistence and need of African American education remained clear as only 1.9% of the white population was illiterate while 22% of all African Americans could not read or write. The Bureau also acknowledged the existence of institutions of higher education, of which Nashville boasted four.

Founded in 1866, Fisk remained the only school "equipped for college work" and managed to ward off pressure to shift to a more industrial/vocational curriculum. Established two years earlier, Roger Williams University initially offered training for the pulpit and classroom but was never considered a collegiate institution as it offered only a few college level courses and fought financial strain. Meanwhile, in 1912, the State Agricultural and Industrial Normal School opened, later known as Tennessee Agricultural and Industrial State Normal School (Tennessee A&I), offering training for

the farm and factory. Additionally, what would become Meharry Medical College first opened in 1876 as the medical department of Central Tennessee College, changing its name to Walden University in 1900. The school's dental and pharmacy departments began in the late 1880s and in 1910 the nursing department was established. In 1915, Meharry separated to form an independent institution, located downtown on First Avenue where it remained until 1931 when it moved to a new campus adjacent to Fisk University.⁶

One of the major forces underlying the direction of African American higher education was the issue of funding. Consequently, the funding of black "colleges" and "universities" led to arguments over the mission and purpose of each school in regard to the type of curriculum, training, and subsequent employment within a racially divided South. In *Educational Adaptations*, which recounted the history of the Phelps-Stokes fund in African American education, author Thomas Jesse Jones noted that four groups should learn from the Bulletin of Negro Education, compiled in 1916: "1- all Negroes 2- all the white South 3- all philanthropists who are supporting Negro schools or all boards and agencies acting for these donors and 4- all denominational bodies which are conducting colored schools."⁷ Southern schools for African Americans continued to struggle with questions of "ownership, administration and boards of control – white or black, southern or northern, philanthropic or denominational."⁸

Religion played a large role in the African American community as well as Tennessee's historically black colleges. All four institutions received funding from

⁶ James A. Summerville, *Educating Black Doctors: A History of Meharry Medical College* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1983).

⁷ Thomas Jesse Jones, *Educational Adaptations: Report of Ten Years Work of the Phelps-Stokes Fund, 1910-1920* (New York: Phelps-Stokes Fund, c. 1920), 27.

⁸ Jones, *Educational Adaptations*, 27.

Christian denominational churches or organizations. Of Tennessee's 473,088 African Americans in 1910, nearly 40% officially maintained membership in Protestant congregations, with the Baptists claiming 56% and the Methodist church 37% of those who actively participated in church.⁹ As such, many religious organizations, both white and black, felt the civic obligation and Christian responsibility to give funding to African American institutions of higher learning. However, not all religious leaders agreed, as many in the South believed that higher education would lead to greater problems once a new educated generation of African Americans entered the public sphere. One Mississippi minister noted that southern blacks remained a menace to white society and claimed, "we cannot and we will not extend to him the aid he needs," because by allowing or encouraging education, a black male would have the opportunity to "prove himself a man" and then he would "demand the rights of a man."¹⁰

As James D. Anderson notes in *The Education of Blacks in the South, 1860-1935*, "From the Reconstruction era through the Great Depression black higher education in the South existed essentially through a system of private liberal arts colleges . . . [and] involves largely a study of the interrelationship between philanthropy and . . . black leaders . . ." ¹¹ Many schools were funded by multiple financiers and non-profit organizations. The budget for Fisk University included monetary support from the American Missionary Association (AMA), endowment funds, Slater Fund, Phelps-Stokes Fund, tuition, and periodic fundraising campaigns conducted by the Jubilee Singers. In addition to tuition, Meharry Medical College received its primary funding from the

⁹ Bureau of Education, *Negro Education*, 62.

¹⁰ *The Crisis*, Vol. 3, No. 1, November 1911, 63. The author is not listed; however, all writers connected with *The Crisis* were members of the NAACP and advocated African American rights and equality. Most writers at this time were also male.

¹¹ James D. Anderson, *The Education of Blacks in the South, 1860-1935* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988), 238-239.

Freedman's Aid Society while Roger Williams University obtained much needed, yet woefully inadequate, funding from the ABHMS, a Baptist organization. Anderson also notes that only nine land-grant colleges for African Americans existed by 1890, but with openings of schools such as Tennessee A&I in 1912, the number rose to sixteen by 1915. Although cooperation improved, the Bureau of Education still reported that "Democracy's plan is in the combination of the best thought and the deepest sympathy and the most abiding faith of . . . the philanthropies of northern people, desires and struggles of the colored people, and the . . . daily contacts of the southern white people."¹²

Accreditation served as the other imperative issue vital to the success or failure of African American schools. In truth, the creation of accreditation agencies served as a major concern for all institutions claiming to offer collegiate work or confer legitimate degrees regardless of race, gender, or other defining characteristics. In the South, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) was formed in the late nineteenth century, and as its standards, requirements, and evaluations became more uniform and consistent, many African American "colleges" and "universities" were stripped of their title because they did not measure up to collegiate standards. In 1900, W.E.B. DuBois performed an unofficial study of black schools and generously determined that thirty-four schools could be considered "colleges" with a total enrollment of 726 students. In a more prudent evaluation ten years later, DuBois concluded that only Fisk, Howard, Atlanta University, Morehouse, and Virginia Union were "First-Grade Colored Colleges." In addition, two other organizations formed to help support, regulate, and improve African American schools. The National Association of Teachers in Colored Schools

¹² Bureau of Education, *Negro Education*, 22.

corresponded in purpose and organization with the National Educational Association as well as the Association of Colleges for Negro Youths that aimed to encourage the maintenance of college standards, administration, and curriculum.¹³

By the United States' entrance into World War I, the Bureau of Education revealed a respective "status" assigned to each African American school, ranking them on a spectrum ranging from a true college institution to a special school. As such, the report served as "not only the 'Who's Who' in Negro schools, but . . . also a 'Doomsday' book showing who is not who."¹⁴ The report's main author, Thomas Jesse Jones, provided a harsher evaluation and classification of African American schools claiming that only Fisk and Howard were worthy of the claim "university."¹⁵ However, in one sector of the report Meharry was referenced with Fisk and Howard as a college. In reality, Meharry was still not on par with the two schools; however, it remained distinctive in nature because of its role as a medical college.¹⁶ The Bureau of Education noted the special circumstance of Fisk University with its "proximity to all the so-called 'black belts' of Negroes and in the progressive educational ideals of the large white institutions of Nashville with which Fisk maintain[ed] friendly relations."¹⁷ Many black colleges would ultimately gain accreditation, such as Meharry Medical School and Tennessee A&I, but not until the 1920s and 1930s. Even so, it remains important to note

¹³ Ibid., 21. The report also notes that "greater public cooperation with classes on race questions in white colleges were held by the YMCA and Southern Sociological Congress and Southern University Race Commission," (21).

¹⁴ Jones, *Educational Adaptations*, 27.

¹⁵ In the Bureau of Education's 1916 report, Howard University was listed as the most reputable black college: "Howard University is already of university proportion. In plant and support it surpasses all other institutions of college grade. Its location at the national capital and its close relation to the national government make possible the use of extensive government resources to illustrate and to extend class instruction," (64). For more on accreditation standards see Anderson, *The Education of Blacks in the South*, 238-278. Anderson also lists the requirements that Jones used to determine a school's status as a college: 1- At least six departments of professorships with one professor full-time, 2- Annual income must be enough to maintain professors with advanced degrees, 3- Adequate library and laboratory equipment and facilities, 4- No attachment of a secondary school under its same name.

¹⁶ Bureau of Education, *Negro Education*, 59.

¹⁷ Ibid., 64.

yet another issue of control. Not surprisingly, it became apparent from 1897-1917 that African American institutions in Tennessee and the entire South “were compelled to seek admission to the society of standardized colleges and on terms defined by all-white regional and national rating agencies.”¹⁸

Caste Prejudice

Largely ignored by historiographical study or spotlight, Adelene Moffat remains an extraordinary figure in Tennessee and American history. Her story reinforces overarching themes of race in the South. The myriad of forces at work in her life reflects the nexus between North and South, male and female, and black and white. Moffat’s experiences provide a lens that supersedes the constraints of regionalism, gender, and race. As part of a white family settling in the South during Reconstruction, Moffat moved with her parents and four siblings to the Nashville area in the 1870s. The family quickly settled in the city, and Moffat began school at age eleven. Five years later, she left Nashville to continue her education in Pennsylvania. However, from 1884-1888 Moffat returned to the South to teach art and elocution just outside of Nashville at Howard Female College in Gallatin, Tennessee. She also taught at Harrison College in Cynthiana, Kentucky. After the turn of the twentieth century, Moffat traveled abroad, gaining experience in art as well as archaeology. By the time of her death in 1956, she had visited over forty-four countries while continuing to remain active in art, writing, and archaeology. Additionally, she maintained pertinent interests outside of the classroom including race and education. Living predominantly in Boston, she served on the

¹⁸ Ibid., 251. Also see the “Introduction” of Kenneth W. Goings, Raymond A. Mohl (eds.), *The New African American Urban History* (Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage Publications Inc., 1996).

executive board of the NAACP for several years and was named “best friend of race” by the Boston Literary and Historical Association in 1912.¹⁹

Perhaps the most defining and enduring reform effort of Adelene Moffat’s public career remains an address at the NAACP Conference of 1911. In her speech, “Views of a Southern Woman,” Moffat reveals an atypical source of southern progressivism.²⁰ Four decades after the Civil War, she spoke of continuing issues of racism and regionalism, “Having been brought up in the South and having lived the latter part of my life in the North, I find myself a Northerner in the South and a Southerner in the North.”²¹ Moffat, born during the Civil War, spoke from a vantage point that rose above regional views and instead treated the present status of African Americans in the South as an issue for all: “The distinctive traits of the colored people, those in which they seem to surpass the other nationalities . . . [h]as America so many of these qualities that it can afford to cavil if the gift comes to it wrapped up in brown paper instead of white?”²² In other words, Moffat ideally removed race as a category that distinguishes one American from another. Instead, she viewed the socioeconomic needs of African Americans identical to other ethnic and racial groups. Yet, Moffat was careful to place causation for such problems on the category of class over race because of the low economic status automatically passed onto freedmen and freewomen who emerged from slavery with virtually nothing.

¹⁹ Fran Paden, “Moffat, Mary Adelene, 1862-1956” (Grundy County History, 2004. Revised 2008) 1-2.

²⁰ According to Adelene Moffat’s great great niece Fran Paden, Moffat retrospectively wished she had given her address a different name. She felt that it was misleading to describe herself as a southern woman because she did not live in the South during her adult life. Still, it proves very valuable because Moffat did live in Tennessee for approximately eight years and Kentucky for two years in her adolescent and early adult years. She could easily be compared to the Grimke sisters who of course helped led the abolition and women’s rights movements. In fact, Moffat was also an advocate for women’s suffrage as well as kindergarten movement.

²¹ Adalene Moffat, *Third Annual Conference of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People* (New York: Allied Printing, 1911), n.p#.

²² Ibid.

Ultimately, she held firm the belief in the caste prejudice created by the South in a post-bellum society.

Moffat also identified the reason that Southerners continued to combine and separate groups of people based on a complex and often contradictory criteria involving race and class:

On this race question we seem to be unable to reach real issues because we are to so great a degree governed by phrases rather than by facts; and most of the facts are new and most of the phrases old. We think we have race prejudice in the South, but we have not; we have only caste prejudice; the race prejudice is in the North, and the caste prejudice is growing . . . [and both] the Southerner . . . and Northerner stands amazed and helpless before the . . . lack of logic [of the other]. . . . The artificiality of the barrier between the two races . . . creates the problems and . . . [t]he problem is a common problem of humanity – bad housing conditions, bad sanitary conditions, bad political conditions, bad industrial conditions, insufficient education, of both white and black.²³

With such poignant words and phrases, Moffat outlined the real issues plaguing southern states and aptly melded racial discrimination and disadvantage with the more appropriate label of caste prejudice. She acknowledged that problems persisted in African American communities, but Moffat was also quick to show that problems such as dreadful sanitation/housing standards, poor working conditions, inequitable educational opportunities, and political disenfranchisement existed for many southerners. In fact, much of the South lived in poverty and with little social mobility. Yet, poor white southerners continued to emphasize old notions. Thus, the “artificiality of the barrier” remained the color of one’s skin, allowing lower and middle-income whites to maintain their “superiority” while ensuring that African Americans could never break down such a barrier based on congenital characteristics.

²³ Moffat, *Third Annual Conference*, n.p#.

As Moffat noted, the real racial prejudice lay in the North. Lugenia Burns Hope, wife of Atlanta University president John Hope, ventured north to attend the Chicago Exposition of 1893. Lugenia Burns Hope's significance remains voluminous, but her historical credit was sparse until the publication of a biography by Jacqueline Rouse. As Rouse argues, Hope was a pivotal figure in the education and community service infrastructure of Atlanta during the Gilded/Progressive Era. Yet while Hope was in Chicago to visit the White City, she realized that African Americans were not allowed entrance into the exposition. Meanwhile, several prominent African American men including Frederick Douglass and James Loudin (of the Fisk Jubilee Singers) published a pamphlet entitled "The Reason Why the Colored American Is Not in the World's Columbian Exposition." Circulation quickly rose to over 10,000 copies, and ultimately the exposition's manager bowed to the wishes of the African American community. In his statement explaining his decision to name August 25th as Negro Day, the manager cited widespread interest in "Black issues." Such instances reveal Southern-style realities regarding the best way (according to whites) to achieve racial harmony in a new political and economic system. Just as the South was forced, in theory, to recognize constitutional and legal equality for all, the North was confronted with cultural challenges in living with larger African American populations residing in the region's urban areas.²⁴

Although Adelene Moffat spoke as a southern born woman, commenting on issues of race and class, she applied her message to both the South as well as the North. Problems concerning the relationship between black and white communities also pervaded Tennessee, and in particular Nashville, whose African American population

²⁴ Although this paragraph seems a bit out of place, it is my hope that it serves to show the difference between Moffat's claim of racial prejudice in the North as opposed to caste prejudice in the South.

grew steadily with increased urbanization. Published prior to the twentieth century but addressing major concerns from 1897 to 1917, *The Fisk Herald* reiterates the troubling paradox that lay before southerners of both races. The editorial rightfully claims:

A New South with old ideas, old customs, [and] old prejudices . . . with respect to a certain class of its populace is one of the inexplicable problems of the age. . . Old wines should not be put into new bottles. . . Records of enmity and hatred should not be refreshed in the hearts of the present generation. . . Here and there a desperate blow is aimed at every attempt to educate and thus raise to a higher plain the moral, social, civil, and political standard of the masses. . . [A]ll liberty loving and law abiding citizens among us, are puzzled to see the application of the assumed name [of the New South].²⁵

Yet again, themes of a lingering antebellum perspective pervade the passage. With artful phrases, the author lends an analogous description that “old wines should not be put into new bottles.” Likewise, African Americans in Nashville hoped that, as the twentieth century approached, modern notions of education, industry, and city life would help to create a more enlightened attitude towards African Americans as a new class of citizens. Moreover, the editorial notes that better education would lead to a more moral and civically minded African American community. Yet, even as the black community attempted to follow the guidelines of good citizenship as set by those historically in power, they were met with opposition or a “desperate blow.” There remains a tone of reverent desperation in the passage, encouraging the new generation of the twentieth century to approach life in an interracial society with an open heart and mind.

Although lynchings, institutionalized segregation, and class/race prejudice would continue in the new century, the rise of a black middle class and a small contingent of black elites did improve conditions and set a new course for socioeconomic opportunity in the African American community. New black-owned business, housing/sanitation

²⁵ *The Fisk Herald*, Vol. VI, No. 5, January 1889, 9.

reform, and higher education all served to increase solidarity among blacks, and allowed the black middle class to prosper individually as they also provided much needed services for the entire community. As one southern official commented in 1900, “To bring about better relations between the races we need more education, both of the whites and the blacks, men must be educated to broader views of the relations they bear to each other.”²⁶ Education remains the key factor in the creation of an elevated class of African American leaders who worked as specialized laborers, entrepreneurs, professionals, teachers, and community servants.

Industrial and Vocational Education

Booker T. Washington served on the Board of Trustees for Fisk University and as the President of Tuskegee University in Alabama. He became a prominent symbol of African American higher education. W.E.B. DuBois was a graduate of Fisk University and established the department of sociology at Atlanta University, present day Clark Atlanta University. Both of these men serve as household names and are recognized as the torchbearers for the advancement of African American education despite their differing viewpoints. Although equally influential, Thomas Jesse Jones remains far less recognized.²⁷ His background and significance remains equally fascinating and offers important new insights for scholars interested in differing views of African American education. Jones was born in Wales to a white family, but he traveled to the United

²⁶ *Race Problems of the South: Report of the Proceedings of the First Annual Conference Held under the Auspices of The Southern Society for the Promotion of the Study of Race Conditions and Problems in the South at Montgomery, Alabama* (Richmond, Virginia: B.F. Johnson Publishing Company, 1900), 37. The printed transcript of this conference contains more than a dozen speeches made by local officials who served across the South in larger town and industrializing cities. Their opinions range across a wide spectrum of feelings about race and class in the South. This quote is not representative of all views presented.

²⁷ For more on leaders in African American education see: Donald Johnson, “W.E.B. DuBois, Thomas Jesse Jones and the Struggle for Social Education 1900-1930,” *The Journal of Negro History* 85 (Summer, 2000), 71-95.

States for his education and remained there for his professional career. Educated at Washington and Lee University, in Virginia, and Marietta College in Ohio, Jones continued his post-graduate work at Union Theological Seminary in New York City and ultimately at Columbia University, where he received his Ph.D. in sociology.

With a Ph.D. added to his already impressive resume, Dr. Jones became a supervisor at the University Settlement in New York City. Later he accepted the position of Associate Chaplain and Director of Research and Sociology at Hampton Institute in Virginia. Jones was placed as the primary author of the “Negro section,” of the United States Census of 1910, directing both the gathering and compiling of Negro statistics. In 1913, he became the Educational Director of the Phelps-Stokes Fund and a specialist in the Bureau of Education, in charge of the Division of Racial Groups. While in this position, he conducted a survey of colored schools. It was for this study that the Grant Squires Prize was awarded by Columbia University in 1920.²⁸

Jones’s studies and reports on African American education were more widely read than any other in the nation, perhaps because he was Caucasian. His predisposition regarding the “place” of African Americans kept him from being a true advocate of the black race. He believed that by offering a practical education that would lead to a job, African Americans were fulfilling their prescribed role in society. Once again, the direction of education would largely be influenced by a white man’s definition of the purpose, scope, and expected outcome of education for blacks. After his death in 1950, the *Journal of Negro Education* stated, “To say that Jones did not accomplish some good . . . would be far from the truth. [But] he would have achieved greater success if he had

²⁸ Thomas Jesse Jones, *Educational Adaptations*, 4. The Grant Squires Prize corresponds to the Pulitzer Prize in Literature and is awarded by the National Geographic Society.

not been so narrow-minded [and] short-sighted. . . .”²⁹ Still, Jones’s influence cannot be denied in the development of all levels of African American education (primary to collegiate).

Thomas Jesse Jones strongly advocated for the improvement of education for African Americans, yet he did not believe that education should serve as a means to an equal end. He believed that education was the tool for racial improvement; however, his findings show that he believed in the standardization, funding, and improvement of practical education over a white man’s classical education.³⁰ In other words, Jones wanted better primary/secondary education for children as well as industrial/vocational training for young adults, but not at the expense of disrupting the hierarchy of social control. Jones remained a strong advocate for the Hampton model, preferring to create a productive labor force over a new class of African Americans desirous of leveling the playing field between white and black professionals. Yet, Jones also argued that federal and state governments must be a part of the process for racial improvement in order to ensure racial harmony. Albeit, it was a racial harmony that largely prevented African Americans from making marked gains that would infringe upon the political and economic domination of white southerners:

²⁹ C.G. Woodson, “Thomas Jesse Jones,” *The Journal of Negro History* 35 (January 1950), 107-109. By “narrow-minded and short-sighted” the author is referring to Jones’s belief that African Americans should be assimilated into society and productive workers and second class citizens. See Johnson, “W.E.B. Dubois, Thomas Jesse Jones and the Struggle for Social Education,” *The Journal of Negro History*, 78-81.

³⁰ Jones believed that his views and the trajectory of African American education were in fact progressive. As he wrote in his report, “Some of the industrial schools for colored people may be ranked as among the most progressive institutions of the country in their provision for teaching the physical sciences, physiology and hygiene, civics, and teacher-training subjects.” (Bureau of Education, *Negro Education*, 43).

[D]emocracy's plan for the solution of the race problem in the Southland is not primarily in the philanthropies and wisdom of northern people; nor is it in the desires and struggles of the colored people; nor yet in the first-hand knowledge and daily contacts of the southern white people. Democracy's plan is in the combination of the best thought and the deepest sympathy and the most abiding faith of these three groups working with mutual faith in one another.³¹

Herein lay the major groups able to affect change on the trajectory of African American education, and thus, black mobility and opportunity. Ironically, the differences between each group in regard to attitudes and resources made it very difficult to present a unified plan. The consensus reached involved the money of northern philanthropists, the ambition of African Americans, and the limited tolerance of white southerners. Most northern philanthropists and denominational organizations funded schools in the South, but they hoped that African American graduates would fill the ranks of a new labor force in the South while becoming more productive and more responsible citizens. White southerners resisted any increase in the power and influence of the African American community. However, many did not oppose an education that would produce better farm and factory laborers and prevent whites from having to serve in positions as teachers, doctors, or social workers for the black community.

Throughout the 1890s and early 1900s, most African Americans followed the industrial model, many because they had no alternative. Although African American schools in Nashville produced many graduates who pursued industrial or vocational careers, Nashville served as a center that did not quite fit the model as northern industrialists and white southerners had hoped. Although from 1897-1917, Tennessee A&I was designed for industrial/vocational education; Fisk University and Meharry Medical School (to an extent) produced leaders rather than laborers.

³¹ Bureau of Education, *Negro Education*, 22.

Still, there is much merit in exploring the influence of industrial/vocational education as well as the validity of funds given to Nashville's black schools designed to create and maintain industrial/vocational departments. The Phelps-Stokes Fund remains one of the most influential programs for minority education funding. Caroline Phelps Stokes was one of the first female philanthropists and used her wealth to provide resources and support for the underprivileged.³² Booker T. Washington and Thomas Jesse Jones were instrumental in the direction and allocation of the Phelps-Stokes Fund that helped support African Americans, Native Americans, and even Africans (particularly in Liberia).³³ Through the Phelps-Stokes Fund, Jones was able to allocate and distribute funds needed to provide job training for many African Americans throughout the South, particularly in Georgia, Alabama, and Tennessee.

Fisk University, in Nashville, received much needed financing from Phelps-Stokes from 1911-1917. However, the nature of the fund's mission encouraged Booker T. Washington's vision of industrial and vocational training, which did not match the mission of Fisk University. The school opened in 1865, but because few African American colleges existed before 1900, the school had no choice but to forge a new path and trajectory hoping to use education for socioeconomic empowerment and egalitarianism. Although Fisk attempted to maintain a curriculum closely mirroring typical four-year Caucasian universities, it also offered some practical courses and

³² Stokes was born in New York into a wealthy philanthropic and reform-minded family. Her father founded the American Bible Society and New York Peace Society while her mother was an abolitionist as the director of the New York Colored Orphan Asylum. Caroline Phelps Stokes traveled across the country as well as the world, giving of her time and money. She also spent a great deal of time in the South, and donated generously to Hampton Institute as well as Tuskegee. Although the endowment was not formed until 1911 after her death in 1909, the fund bearing her name has sponsored educational surveys and research for over one hundred years.

³³ In fact, Miss Stokes's grandfather (Anson G. Phelps) was instrumental in helping to establish the Republic of Liberia, and according to the family, the first Liberian flag was sewn in their home. He was president of the New York Colonization Society (11).

certificates.³⁴ The university carefully stated that “Fisk University, since its first days, has steadfastly had as its chief aim the higher education of the colored people, . . . [I]t believed in industrial education but chooses to leave that work to other institutions which have that as their end.”³⁵ Still, the school created an Industrial Department that offered training in printing, carpentry, mechanics, nursing, hygiene, cooking, and sewing. Students were required to devote an hour a day “to such manual work as may be required of them.”³⁶ By 1897, the university had erected Livingstone Hall as a library as well as laboratories for industrial education; however, the administration continued to boast that Fisk would enter industrial work only to the extent that it remained harmonious with higher education. In the words of the administration, “The College work is first, industries second.”³⁷

Still, the school benefited from subsidization that aided its industrial department for both men and women. Further, the position of the Phelps-Stokes Fund continued to claim that many colleges “seem to have more interest in the traditional forms of education than in the adaptation to the needs of their pupils and their community.”³⁸

³⁴ Such practical certificates were a part of the industrial or vocational education movement. Industrial education did not involve bachelor degree tract programs; however, vocational education encompassed some professional employment categories. According to the *Administration of Vocational Education*, compiled by Dr. Arthur F. Payne in 1924, “Vocational education is any form of education, whether given in a school or elsewhere, the purpose of which is to fit an individual to pursue effectively a recognized profitable employment, whether pursued for wages or otherwise,” (12). Further, industrial or vocational education could be divided into nine categories according to the U.S. Census Report of 1916. The following list shows the categories as well as the percentage of Americans employed in each classification: 1) manufacturing/mechanical (30.8%), 2) agricultural/forestry/animal husbandry (26.3%), 3) trade/commerce (10.2%), 4) domestic/personal service (8.2%), 5) clerical (7.5%), 6) transportation (7.4%) (7). professional service (6.25%), 8) extraction of mineral (2.6%), 9) public service (1.75%). For more see: Arthur F. Payne, *Administration of Vocational Education: With Special Emphasis on the Administration of Vocational Industrial Education under the Federal Vocational Education Law* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1924), 3-17.

³⁵ *The Fisk Herald*, Vol. VI, No. 6, February 1889, 1.

³⁶ *Catalogue of the Officers and Students of Fisk University, 1885-1886* (Nashville: Wheeler, Osborn and Duckworth Manufacturing Company, 1886), 37.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ Jones, *Educational Adaptations*, 51. Fisk did publicly promote the value of industrial education periodically. For example in an article entitled, “The Objects of Manual Training in Schools and Colleges,” student William A. Bartley wrote, “To train the hand and the eye, and to put into practice what one is learning are as important functions in one’s education as the study of the theory itself. . . In order to carry out the above idea, manual training has been made an

Jones suggested less emphasis on Latin and other foreign languages as well as higher mathematics, instead focusing more attention on subjects such as sociology, education, economics, theology, and domestic science.³⁹ With his strong belief in the Hampton model, Jones most fervently advocated subjects that would improve the black community from a practical standpoint – greater literacy and basic arithmetic, better living conditions, and higher moral standards. Jones was mostly concerned with small and more immediate changes and largely disinterested in changing the bigger picture. He seemed to be at odds with Fisk University because it continued to emphasize a classical education. As the editor and primary author of *Negro Education*, he wrote:

The colleges have been further handicapped by the tenacity with which they have clung to the classical form of the curriculum. They have had an almost fatalistic belief not only in the powers of the college, but in the Latin and Greek features of the course. The majority of them seem to have more interest in the traditional forms of education than in adaptation to the needs of their pupils and their community.⁴⁰

Not surprisingly, the 1916 Bureau of Education report, which heavily endorsed the value of more practical education, lists the following as recommendations: “1. That the institution be adequately financed so that it may strengthen its work as a central institution for college training and social service. 2. That increased provision be made for teacher training, manual training, and the theory and practice of gardening.”⁴¹ Clearly, the Phelps-Stokes Fund was essential to the stability of Fisk University and encouraged the study of subjects that would train young African American men and women to pursue a specific vocational calling. However, it is important to note that the university did not

important part of one’s education by the majority of the educational institutions of the North and in many institutions of the South,” (*The Fisk Herald* Vol. 9 No. 4, December 1891), 13.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 50-51.

⁴⁰ Bureau of Education, *Negro Education*, 51.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 538. It is also important to note that Fisk also received funding from the Slater Fund, another northern philanthropic organization that promoted industrial education. For example, the industrial kitchen funding was donated to Fisk for the women’s department.

follow the path of many other African American colleges and continued to maintain a higher level of academics, including advanced study in language, math, and science.⁴²

Tennessee Agricultural and Industrial State Normal School (Tennessee A&I) was founded in 1912 and was the first only African American school to be controlled and funded predominantly by the state of Tennessee.⁴³ In fact, by 1900, Tennessee remained the only state to have legalized and institutional segregation without providing a public college for African Americans living in Tennessee.⁴⁴ It served in similar capacities to other African American schools such as Walden College and Roger Williams University, educating primarily on elementary and secondary levels. Tennessee A&I's secondary curriculum was centered around a four-year "academic" set of courses with the option of continuing with additional coursework under the status of "junior" and "senior" classes. The school opened with 245 students, enrollment topped 400 by 1916, and by the 1920s, the student population had exploded to over 2000.⁴⁵ As the growth in student population reveals, for many African Americans in the South, industrial education was the most affordable and accessible route to higher education and gainful employment.

Although the school taught the usual basic subjects, there was an emphasis on industrial and vocational training. Tennessee A&I offered courses in bookkeeping, masonry, woodworking, and construction-related fields for the boys, while offering sewing and cooking for the girls. The State Normal School, audited annually by the state

⁴² Writing in 1920, David Spence Hill, President of the University of New Mexico in the 1920s, continued to defend vocational education as the methodology that would help make education truly democratic. He cites collectivism over individualism, cooperation over force, progress against obstacles, and a need for reorganization and humanism as reasons to pursue a more practical curriculum and educational purpose and scope. For more see: David Spence Hill, *Introduction to Vocational Education: A Statement of Facts and Principles to the Vocational Aspects of Education Below College Grade* (New York: Macmillan Company, 1920), 12-20.

⁴³ Tennessee Agricultural and Industrial State Normal School became Tennessee State University in 1968.

⁴⁴ "Tennessee State University," *Tennessee Historical Society Online Edition*: Nashville Tennessee, 2002), <http://tennesseencyclopedia.net>.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

government, operated on a budget of approximately \$40,000 and its land was worth an estimated \$193,915. Many of the students remained on some type of financial aid since tuition only accounted for less than 10% of the school budget. Funds were also received from the federal government as well as African American and white churches. The Bureau of Education recommendations for Tennessee A&I included two telling statements regarding the emphasis on industrial education at a school for all of Tennessee's African Americans. The first recommended an "increase in teachers qualified to teach agricultural and mechanical education," while the second suggested "that the large attendance from Nashville be discouraged unless the pupils come for courses not available in city schools."⁴⁶ The school would eventually offer college courses in addition to industrial and vocational training, but not until 1922.

Many northern philanthropists and organizations continued to encourage industrial education in order to produce a labor class that would not challenge racial and cultural boundaries because their class status would not fundamentally change. In other words, if African Americans were kept in low paying jobs with little opportunity for advancement, their class status would remain synonymous – as well as inferior – with the color of their skin. As Anderson suggests, "[T]he needs of the South's racially segregated society were to determine the scope and purpose of black higher education, not the interests and aspirations of individual students or the collective interests of black communities."⁴⁷ For whites in the North and South, this seemed a comfortable solution that allowed African Americans to be good workers and citizens without truly disrupting the racial hierarchy. In the minds of many, industrial education offered both social

⁴⁶ Bureau of Education, *Negro Education*, 542.

⁴⁷ Anderson, *The Education of Blacks in the South*, 248.

justice as well as social control. Unfortunately for whites who maintained allegiance to the Hampton Model, it proved more expensive to build and maintain facilities for vocational/industrial training than to teach traditional subjects. Moreover, the Hampton Model of industrial education was too scripted and confined, and impractically expected millions of African Americans to conform to a predetermined pigeonhole in society.

Historically, efforts to increase vocational and industrial training remained noble; however, the industrial model would give way to the lure of joining the new black middle class. Many African Americans realized that in order to affect individual and collective socioeconomic mobility, they would have to break through the ranks of the professional world that included skilled labor, medical and legal service, and business. Education was the most likely means to achieve their professional goals. As such, African Americans sought increased inclusion into the world of business, social services, education, law, and medicine.

Training Professionals

In 1896, Henry L. Morehouse first coined the phrase the “Talented Tenth” to describe a plan that would produce a new middle and upper class of African Americans.⁴⁸

In 1900, W.E.B. DuBois would further the reality and significance of the “Talented Tenth” as he stated that collegiate level institutions in the South had “trained in Greek and Latin and mathematics 2000 men; and these men trained fully 50,000 others in

⁴⁸ Morehouse College is a private black men's liberal arts college in Atlanta, Georgia. Morehouse College was first founded in 1867 as a seminary but renamed in 1913 after Henry Morehouse who served as an administrator. The college offered programs in the fields of business, education, humanities, and the sciences. It is part of an educational consortium of six institutions, including Spelman College (for women). The school's most notable alumna is Martin Luther King Jr.

morals and manners, and they in turn taught the alphabet to nine millions of men.”⁴⁹

Thus, education served not only as a major step toward increased African American professionalism, but the fruits of their educational labors also gave thousands of poverty stricken blacks in Tennessee the tools to become more educated and productive members of society. Education would not immediately serve as a springboard to elevated racial or class status, but it could provide basic instruction and skills needed to improve measures within the African American community. As a by-product, higher education moved a small minority of African Americans into leadership positions that garnered individual success as well as efforts to improve the collective whole through service in business, health related fields, law, and education. In large part, this “Talented Tenth” grew from the ranks of institutions in Nashville, Tennessee.⁵⁰

Without doubt, Dr. Thomas Jesse Jones strongly believed in industrial/vocational training remained very similar to Booker T. Washington’s industrial model, yet Jones recognized that the African American community needed a professional class of its own:

More and more the leadership of the race is devolving upon its strong and capable men and women. Successful leadership requires the best lessons of economics, sociology, and education. The race must have physicians with real skill and the spirit of service to lead against the unsanitary conditions that are threatening not only colored people but also their white neighbors. . . they must have teachers of secondary schools who have had college training in the modern sciences and in the historic development of civilization. . . . If college education is necessary for wise guidance of any group, surely the Negroes should have the benefit of that education.⁵¹

⁴⁹ W.E.B. Dubois, *The Talented Tenth*, 1903.

⁵⁰ As early as 1889, Fisk self-proclaimed, “Fisk University is, without a doubt, the most widely known school for colored people in the world,” (*The Fisk Herald* Vol. VII No. 3 October 1889), 1. For more on Fisk graduates see: Reavis Mitchell, *The Loyal Children Make Their Way: Fisk University Since 1866* (Nashville: Fisk University Press, 1995).

⁵¹ Jones, *Educational Adaptations*, 50.

Because of Nashville's advantage as an already established center of higher education, many believed that Nashville was best poised to form a "cooperative relationship with the progressive southern people in the improvement of the condition of the colored race."⁵²

Nashville was poised to produce many who would serve as leaders in black communities across the region.

According to the Bureau of Education's 1916 report, Fisk University served as the only institution of true collegiate status with an "emphasis on teacher training and physical and social sciences."⁵³ Further, the Bureau notes, "[T]he geographical location and progressive management are unusually favorable to the development of a strong central institution for college training and social service."⁵⁴ Under President Dr. E.M. Cravath, Fisk enjoyed relative prosperity and growth from 1875 to 1900, also aided by the fundraising efforts of the Jubilee Singers, who by 1900 had received worldwide acclaim. By the turn of the twentieth century, Fisk University had solidified its place as the top African American university – south of the Mason Dixon line. Although majority male, female students formed a part of the student body from its inception. Its curriculum included multiple years of study in Latin, Greek, mathematics, English, history, sociology, psychology, and literature to obtain a bachelor's degree.⁵⁵ Moreover, Fisk also maintained a normal department offering pedagogy and teacher training as well as a theological curriculum that included additional courses intended to give instruction

⁵² Bureau of Education, *Negro Education*, 64.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 536.

⁵⁴ Bureau of Education, *Negro Education*, 536. Although the American Missionary Association (AMA) is usually credited with the school's initial establishment, the report notes additional support given by the Western Freedmen's Aid Commission.

⁵⁵ According to several catalogs from the late 1890s and early 1900s, the curriculum remained virtually the same. A sample curriculum included: Freshman year- Latin, Greek, mathematics, English, history; Sophomore year- Greek, science (physiology and botany), history, rhetoric, mathematics; Junior year- Latin, science (physics and astronomy), German, Greek, English literature; Senior year- Psychology, English literature, science (chemistry), political economy, ethics, sociology, logic, geology; Except for the Senior year, six weeks a year dedicated to study of the Bible.

and credentials to future ministers. Like many “colleges,” of its day, Fisk also gave instruction to younger students in its college preparatory and grammar schools. But perhaps most impressive was the offering of a master’s degree by Fisk University as early as the late 1890s.⁵⁶

The college department grew slowly throughout the last quarter of the nineteenth century, and by the 1897 Fisk maintained approximately fifty students taking college level courses. Fisk also began to attract students from other southern states as well as other regions. Perhaps the university’s most famous graduate remains W.E.B. DuBois, who came to Fisk from Massachusetts in the mid 1880s. After graduating in 1888, DuBois continued his education at Harvard, becoming the first African American to receive a Ph.D. from this premier ivy-league school. However, DuBois had learned much from Fisk, forming many of his ideas about racial inequality and prejudice and finding his voice, both literally and figuratively during his years in Nashville.⁵⁷ In fact, he claimed that at Harvard “he found no better teachers, only teachers better known.”⁵⁸ Not only did DuBois gain education in the classroom, he also gained an education outside of the classroom – as a black man living in the South. He was able to experience first hand, regional differences in regard to race, custom, and culture from that of the

⁵⁶ The master’s degree offered at Fisk does not compare with the requirements of a modern master’s degree. Further, there were no specific academic fields in which students received their degree. Still, this was not atypical of most colleges in the United States, especially in the South. Degree requirements became more standardized after WWI when accreditation agencies along with the Bureau of Education formulated a more specific outline of requirements. The full description of master’s degree requirements at Fisk in the 1904-1905 catalog is as follows: Conferred on BA of Fisk or other colleges on the presentation of evidence that they have made satisfactory progress in liberal studies after graduation. In general, the requirements will be the equivalent of a year of systematic study, not professional. Each professor is authorized to arrange with any graduate of the Classical Department a course of advanced work in any of the lines of study included in his professorship. After conferring with the student, he will determine the authors to be studied, fix the limit of time of preparation, and arrange for the examinations. Each professor will submit his conclusions to the Faculty for approval, and when the aggregate of approved work by any students shall be considered equivalent to a year of regular study, he will be recommended for the Degree of Master of Arts, (*Catalog of Fisk University, 1904-1905*), 20.

⁵⁷ W.E.B. DuBois began his public speaking while at Fisk and served as *The Herald’s* editor (school newspaper) for one year.

⁵⁸ Richardson, *A History of Fisk University*, 49.

New England. These experiences were crucial in the solidification of DuBois's philosophy that racial equity could only be improved through racial elevation. It is not surprising that the school encouraged and fostered such ideas. For even as the industrial/vocational movement met the needs of many African Americans without severely threatening the white community, Fisk University continued to resist recommendations and suggestions that it switch to a curriculum more tailored to simply train students for jobs. Instead, the administration and faculty continued to promote a classical education that would produce students with critical thinking skills, strong character, self-confidence, individual ambition, and community spirit.

Fisk graduates continued to exhibit such qualities and affected change in small waves from teaching behind the podium, preaching from the pulpit and through music, social work, and health-related fields.⁵⁹ Prior to the outbreak of World War I, Fisk maintained approximately 500 students.⁶⁰ The male to female ratio remained in perfect balance, averaging 250 of each. Such numbers speak to the prestige of the university as well as the appeal of Nashville as an accommodating city for African Americans.⁶¹

Even as students, Fiskites saw themselves as the "Talented Tenth" and collectively disapproved of Booker T. Washington's "Atlanta Compromise" or "Hampton Model," which argued that the best plan for African Americans remained their fulfillment of blue collar jobs, tenant farming, or factory work deemed undesirable by most whites.

As Joe Richardson notes:

⁵⁹ Many graduates continued their education elsewhere. A consistent number of Fisk graduates went onto Meharry Medical College and later practiced medicine, dentistry, pharmacy, or nursing. Others went to schools in the Northeast. Most Fisk graduates who continued their education beyond Fisk were male.

⁶⁰ Bureau of Education, *Negro Education*, 536.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 537. Further, as a whole, from 1910-1917 the school's budget, including income and expenditures, hovered around \$50,000, while the property of the school was valued over \$525,000. Eighty-five of the students hailed from Nashville, but an estimated 150 traveled to Fisk from other parts of Tennessee and an astounding 266 came from out of state or abroad.

After the political gains of Reconstruction disappeared, blacks could be assured of an improved standing only in the field of education. The pursuit of education, therefore, became one of their great preoccupations. . . . Moreover, with increased segregation, professional people and leaders were more needed than ever. Fisk was a logical place to go.⁶²

Fisk graduates entered many professional fields such as law, religion, politics, education and medicine. However, most received additional education or training at other colleges before entering law or medicine. Still, Fisk graduates not only helped to give Nashville a slightly different feel from other southern cities, but also sent its graduates out into professional fields in Georgia, Alabama, North Carolina as well as other southern states. Moreover, some Fisk graduates continued their education in the North or pursued professional careers in northern cities. *The Reports of the Freedman's Aid Society of 1869* unknowingly foreshadowed the next half century for aspiring African Americans. The report stated, "The halls are crowded with students preparing to teach school, *practice law or medicine*, or teach the glorious Gospel."⁶³

In the 1840s, Samuel Meharry found himself lost in middle Tennessee. Desperate with hunger and fatigue, he happened upon the crude cabin of a slave family. The family took him into their home, and fed and housed him until he was well enough to travel. When he left, he prophetically turned to the family and said, "I have no money, but when I can, I shall do something for your race."⁶⁴ Samuel Meharry fulfilled his promise, and in 1875 he and his brothers founded a medical department through Walden University. Meharry remains one of only two predominantly and historically black medical schools.

⁶² Richardson, *The History of Fisk University*, 47-48.

⁶³ *Reports of the Freedman's Aid Society*, Third Annual Report, 8.

⁶⁴ Frances Meharry, *History of the Meharry Family in America* (Lafayette, Indiana: Lafayette Printing Co., 1925), 369.

It is not surprising that the other is Howard University, in the District of Columbia.⁶⁵ In many ways, Fisk and Meharry grew as partners, with many medical graduates coming from the ranks of Fisk alumni. Both schools maintained a vision to produce graduates who would “attack the vestiges of slavery, poverty, and excess morbidity” through education and service.⁶⁶ And both schools sought to close the gap and “make up for years of education lost, to catch up in a rapidly moving industrial society, and to adjust to an ambiguous status assigned them.”⁶⁷

The need for African American doctors, dentists, nurses, and pharmacists remained great. In fact, many whites believed that the race problem would resolve itself through epidemic disease resulting in the near extinction of African Americans; tragically some whites even preferred this result. Meharry Medical College would help the black community to provide for the health care of its own. Nashville was an ideal place for the creation of a health care network, not only because of its promise as a New South city, but also because of the dire need for improved conditions in the area. As James Summerville comments, “The institution would be national, but its setting was a bankrupt city that had the fourth worst health statistics in the world.”⁶⁸ Interestingly, it was the efforts of two unlikely friends that molded Meharry into a reputable school. George W. Hubbard was a former Union soldier who would attain his medical degree from the University of Nashville after the Meharry’s founding, and William J. Sneed,

⁶⁵ Although Morehouse College in Atlanta maintained a rigorous curriculum and emerged as a major competitor with Fisk and Meharry in the 1920s and 1930s, the Morehouse School of Medicine was not established until 1975. Morehouse did regularly compete with Fisk much earlier; however, the academic standards/programs and reputation of Fisk continued to surpass Morehouse College until later in the twentieth century.

⁶⁶ James Summerville, *Educating Black Doctors*, ix.

⁶⁷ Summerville, *Educating Black Doctors*, ix.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.* Summerville also notes that many objected to the work of the Meharry brothers rather than applauding it.

who served as a surgeon and physician for the Confederate army.⁶⁹ Together, these two men were instrumental in the development of Meharry Medical College.

The school began as a separate medical department within the already established Walden University.⁷⁰ Walden was created in 1865 and funded largely by the Freedmen's Aid Society with buildings provided by the Freedmen's Bureau. By 1916, the school operated as an elementary and secondary school with approximately 140 students and seventeen teachers, nine white and eight African American.⁷¹ However, the Bureau of Education reported that the school, operating on a budget of only \$8,400 a year, lacked adequate equipment, furniture, and instruction. The four brick buildings were too small to accommodate students and remained in dire need of repair and upgrading even to make conditions sanitary.⁷²

From the outset, the purpose of Meharry remained the training of African American professionals in medicine and would become the premier medical school for blacks in the South, training both men (doctors, pharmacists, dentists) and women (nurses).⁷³ After Reconstruction, the inception of medical training for newly freedmen served two major purposes. First, Meharry helped train individuals and provide medical care and health care for the poor and underprivileged. There existed a great necessity for such services as Nashville maintained the unenviable position as one of the leading cities

⁶⁹ Ibid., 10-18.

⁷⁰ Walden College began first as Central Tennessee College and was renamed after a prominent bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church North in 1900. The Freedman's Aid Society also funded the school. In 1915, the school changed its name from Walden University to Walden College.

⁷¹ Bureau of Education, *Negro Education*, 543.

⁷² Ibid. Walden offered subjects that served as preparation for collegiate work including Latin for four years, foreign language for two years, mathematics and English for three years, and science for two and a half years. In addition, the school offered sociology, psychology, Greek, and philosophy.

⁷³ Summerville, *Educating Black Doctors* (1983). Moreover, according to the Historically Black Colleges and Universities Network, today Meharry Medical College is the largest private, historically black institution exclusively dedicated to educating health care professionals and biomedical scientists in the United States. Meharry Medical College has graduated nearly 15 percent of all African American physicians and dentists currently practicing in the United States ("The History of Historically Black Colleges and Universities," http://www.hbcunetwork.com/The_History_Of_HBCUs_Timeline.cfm).

for infant mortality. The largest group affected by poor sanitation, poverty, and disease remained African Americans in the city proper. In fact, one southern lawyer stated that by his calculations, the progress of diseases such as tuberculosis and cholera would affect so many blacks that they would eventually become extinct.⁷⁴

By 1912, the local community had erected the Hubbard Hospital, designed to meet the medical needs of the African American community as well as a teaching hospital for the university. In addition, Meharry's graduates helped to create a new middle and elite class of African Americans, along with rising businessmen. George Whipple Hubbard, better known as Dean Hubbard by students and the Nashville community, was a former Union soldier. Although born in New Hampshire, Hubbard received his medical degree from the University of Nashville. Hubbard's untiring devotion and effort in establishing and managing a medical school for African Americans became his life work serving on Meharry's faculty from 1876 to 1921. Yet the school was plagued by accusations that standards were not on par with the medical standards set by the American Medical Association. Even by 1916, the main recommendations for Meharry Medical College encouraged the school to carry out its plan for more effective entrance exams and requirements.⁷⁵

Despite the accomplishments of Meharry and its graduates, most African Americans attending some type of college did not enter the medical field. In 1911, *The Crisis* reported that of the approximately 5000 African American college graduates 54% served as teachers, 20% were ministers, 4% practiced law, and 7% entered the medical

⁷⁴ *The Crisis*, Vol. I No. 6, April 1911, 23.

⁷⁵ In addition, the report suggested that an outside examiner from either Vanderbilt University or Peabody College be used to implement the same standards for admission that would mirror the same scrutiny of other Nashville colleges and universities.

profession.⁷⁶ In particular, females entered the teaching ranks in staggering numbers. By the end of World War I, nearly 80% of all African American teachers were women, despite discouraging conditions and wages. Ironically, wages were low not just because these teachers were women, but because the entire community remained politically disenfranchised. In fact, by 1905, the average annual salary for Caucasian teachers was \$156 while African Americans earned \$107 per year, on average.⁷⁷

Roger Williams University and Fisk University remained the chief schools in Nashville producing African American teachers, as many of their graduates served as primary and secondary teachers throughout the South. The need for African American teachers was immense, with over 40% unable to read or write through the 1860s. Higher education was the starting point, training teachers who could in turn provide basic education to the masses. In 1867, Fisk University gave voice to this need, “Ten thousand colored teachers are needed in the South, to-day, to give the bread of knowledge to those who, with out-stretched hands and pleading hearts, are famishing for the want of it.”⁷⁸

Roger Williams University was to African Americans what David Lipscomb University and Peabody College were to whites, training students to teach, preach, or perform mission work.⁷⁹ The school conferred its first bachelor degree in the mid 1870s and relocated very near Vanderbilt University. The Nashville Normal and Theological

⁷⁶ *The Crisis*, Vol. III No. 1, November 1911, 62.

⁷⁷ Elizabeth Gilmore also notes the exponential growth of white female teachers and credits this growth with the expansion of African American primary and secondary education.

⁷⁸ *Fisk University Catalog*, 1867-1868, 19.

⁷⁹ Most funding for the school came from the American Baptist Home Mission Society (ABHMS). In 1866, the school was officially renamed the Nashville Normal and Theological Institute and also officially affiliated with the Baptist denomination. Roger Williams University merged with LeMoyne Owen College in Memphis who also traces its roots back to 1862 when classes were first taught by men and women of the American Missionary Association (AMA). Thus, either through the origin of Roger Williams University or its eventual partnership with LeMoyne, the school can be considered the first African American “college” in the South. According to the College Board Annual Survey of Colleges the first five historically African American schools are: 1. 1837 Cheyney University of Pennsylvania, 2. 1854 Lincoln University of Pennsylvania, and 3. 1856 Wilberforce University (Ohio), 4. 1857 Harris-Stowe State College (Missouri), and 5. 1862 LeMoyne-Owen College (Memphis, Tennessee).

Institute received a charter and incorporated as Roger Williams University in 1883 and began offering a master's degree as early as 1886. The university operated without interruption from 1883 through 1905, albeit with smaller numbers and less stature than their counterparts in Nashville's white colleges or black competitors at Fisk. Fisk also maintained a short-lived partnership with Peabody College after the closure of Roger Williams University. Ironically, the land was sold to Peabody College in 1911, passing the valuable property from the hands of a black teachers' college to that of a white teachers' college after a series of fires whose cause remained undetermined.⁸⁰

Like a phoenix, Roger Williams University literally rose from the ashes, albeit on a different campus in 1908. Its classes were held close to streetcar lines but adjacent to African American neighborhoods, thus making it convenient to the black community without threatening the suburban white community. The Bureau of Education reported that after its reopening in 1908 until the report in 1916, Roger Williams University continued to serve only as a school offering elementary and secondary education with a few "ministers of meager education" studying theology.⁸¹ During these years, the school maintained approximately 100 students, 60% male and 40% female. The school's main funding continued to come from the American Baptist Home Mission Society (ABHMS) with the rest coming from tuition and other denominational and benevolent societies.

The "university" operated on a total budget of roughly \$5000, and its property, including land and buildings, was valued at an estimated \$98,000.⁸² Roger Williams offered an academic curriculum with limited college training and included the study of Latin and English for four years and at least one year of mathematics, science, history,

⁸⁰ Lovett and Wynn (eds.), *Profiles of African Americans in Tennessee*, 106-108; Conklin, *Peabody College*, 164.

⁸¹ Bureau of Education, *Negro Education*, 539.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 540.

Greek, Bible, and foreign language. In addition, the school offered several courses in industrial education including teacher training, cooking, sewing, millinery, construction, theology, and bookkeeping.⁸³ The Bureau of Education recommended “[t]hat the institution be made to serve chiefly as a secondary school for rural and small town communities of the surrounding country.”⁸⁴

Fisk University served as a major training center for African Americans who wanted to enter the education profession. Even students who did not graduate entered the ranks of the teaching profession, as standards to teach were less about certification and more about being in demand and being dependable. The most common scenario involved a rural community or small town writing to Fisk expressing their need for a teacher. Many students who accepted positions in such areas became much more than classroom teachers. Upon accepting a position in South Georgia, one Fisk graduate found herself as the “Sunday school Superintendent, janitor, and moral leader of the community as well as an instructor.”⁸⁵ In fact, over 700 Fiskites served as teachers by 1900 even though they were unable to complete degree requirements at the university.⁸⁶ By 1915, roughly 50% of graduates served as teachers or administrators in schools across the nation, and an estimated 75,000 children in the South learned under the tutelage of Fisk graduates.⁸⁷ In fact, Fisk produced more teachers than any other African American institution in the New South, falling second only to Howard University in Washington D.C.⁸⁸

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Richardson, *A History of Fisk University*, 54.

⁸⁶ Ibid., 53.

⁸⁷ Ibid., 160.

⁸⁸ Ibid., 161.

Gender

In the 1895-1896 *Fisk Catalog*, the administration and faculty officially took a position on women's education:

Fisk University has from the first recognized the absolute necessity of the *right education* of the girls and young women of the race, whose elevation and advancement it was founded to promote. . . In the classroom they have equal advantages with the young men and can pursue any one of the courses of study established in the University.⁸⁹

With such a statement, Fisk University also showed its leadership among the female faction of the "Talented Tenth." Of course, idealistic notions do not always yield realistic results, and most Fisk women did not take the same strenuous academic load as men at the university. Beverly Guy-Sheftall sheds important light on the education of African American women with her study of Spelman College in Atlanta, Georgia, and Bennett College in Greensboro, North Carolina. Guy-Sheftall recognizes that as single sex schools, the major priorities remained training black female leaders and teachers. Fisk also produced many female teachers and leaders; however, Spelman and Bennett particularly focused on creating a special sisterhood that "stressed the importance of Black women serving their communities and the nation."⁹⁰

Women were also a part of Fisk from the outset of the school's establishment. In fact, the first group of Jubilee Singers that organized and toured included seven women and four men. Yet, within the student population, women remained in the minority with only three women, out of nearly fifty, in the graduating class of 1889. As historian Sally

⁸⁹ *Fisk Catalog*, 1895-1896, 38.

⁹⁰ Beverly Guy-Sheftall, "Black Women and Higher Education: Spelman and Bennett Colleges Revisited," *Journal of Negro Education* Vol. 51 No. 3 (Summer 1982), 280. Bennett College is located in Greensboro, North Carolina and first opened in 1873. The school was first a co-educational institution, becoming a women's college in 1926. Spelman College was founded in 1881 in Atlanta, Georgia. Barber-Scotia and Tillotson were also initially black women's colleges that became co-educational colleges. See also: Cynthia Neverdon-Morton, *Afro-American Women of the South and the Advancement of Race, 1895-1925* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1989).

Schwager comments, “While coeducational schools for southern blacks had proliferated after the War, and black families placed extremely high value on the education of both their sons and daughters, black men began to outnumber black women in higher education. By 1890, Perkins writes, only thirty black women held BA degrees, compared to over 300 black men and 2,500 white women. Educated black men also increasingly gained greater options in employment; black women were confined almost exclusively to elementary and secondary school teaching.”⁹¹ Still, by 1900 Fisk claimed over 400 graduates, though most were males.⁹² As historian Joe Richardson notes, “This record sounds even more impressive when . . . only 1 percent of blacks in the United States, or less than 23,000 persons, were in professional service in 1900.”⁹³

African American female students at Fisk garnered attention as early as 1889 when *The Fisk Herald* reported that female enrollment was over 100 with all southern states represented as well as students from Illinois, Indiana, Missouri, and Minnesota.⁹⁴ Further, the article notes that many of the girls taught in the summers or held summer jobs in order to pay tuition and that others need not question their character, as female students accounted for a large percentage of the congregation each week at the 9 a.m. Sabbath service held on campus. Most aspired to become teachers, but the report states that “one pleasing feature is that so many are entering our advanced classes” and “a few even aspire to enter other professions.”⁹⁵ Industrial courses were also offered in cooking, nursing, and sewing. The sewing department, in particular, gave female students the

⁹¹ Sally Schwager, “Educating Women in America,” *SIGNS* 12 (Winter 1987), 336-356.

⁹² According to Joe Richardson, of those still living in 1900, 8 were college professors, 46 were school principals, 165 were teachers in either normal/high schools or grammar schools, 20 were ministers, 9 were lawyers, 16 were in professional schools, 13 were in business, 9 worked for the federal government, 2 were editors of newspapers, 1 served as a college president, and 45 were housewives.

⁹³ Richardson, *A History of Fisk University*, 53.

⁹⁴ *The Fisk Herald*, Vol. VI No. 7, March 1889, 10.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

experience and certification necessary to pursue work beyond the home. By 1889, the Industrial Department boasted that the sewing class consisted of 100 young ladies, including both boarders and day pupils, who devoted an hour a day to the art of making and mending linens for the kitchen, bed, and bath. All such work was completed on the sole sewing machine owned by the university.⁹⁶

Throughout the 1890s, commentary regarding the nature of black women's education seemed to mirror closely that of white women studying at Ward-Belmont. In an article entitled "Training Our Girls for the Responsibility of Life" the male author echoed antebellum notions of gender but addressed it to African American women:

Evidently, God intended woman to be queen of the home. . . Man's power is to determine, not so with woman's; her power is not active, progressive, and defensive, but to guide, direct, and teach. . . Her past condition and training have been such that her training is a very vexed question. She has to labor against many disadvantages.⁹⁷

Although both white and black women enjoyed greater opportunity for higher education and limited professional prospects, the colleges they attended often perpetuated conventional female roles. Particularly in the South, women were expected to serve and nurture. Both were expected to create a clean and healthy home environment and to use their time outside of the home in the service of the community. However, there remains a subtle, yet critical, difference in the roles of Caucasian women and their African American counterparts.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ *The Fisk Herald*, Vol. VII No. 10, June 1890, 6-7, 10-11. Also like Ward Belmont and David Lipscomb, Female Fiskites were required to wear uniform designed and approved by the faculty in 1904-1905. The following is a description: navy blue shirt waist suit, to be bought and made in Nashville for public appearances, more expensive at \$12.50. Daily uniform was white shirt-waist suit, skirt and waist without trimming except tucks. This suit can be made at home. Hats furnished and no other hats allowed. No silk or satin dress skirts or waists, no silk or ribbon sashes. Elaborate and expensive trimmings are forbidden, (*Fisk University Catalog 1904-1905*, 22).

The service of black women was not just benevolent or charitable, as with white women, but instead necessary for survival. The service of black women was much more demanding and unappealing. Meanwhile, the charitable and community service of white women remained more altruistic or philanthropic. African American college women differed from Caucasian college students because they did not aspire to become “black belles.” Although many black women garnered individual accomplishments and gained prominence through their husbands in the formation of a black elite, African American women dealt with issues that remained far more severe and devastating than that of white women. Further, the black community remained more dependent on the vision and funding of rich whites as they carved out a post-bellum niche. They played a vital role in the improvement of conditions in the black community not only as actors but as mediators within a racial hierarchy less threatened by black women than black men. The efforts of African American women remained necessary for the continued existence and improvement of their community, in an attempt to raise them out of poverty.

After the turn of the century, the progressive nature of the era had in some ways filtered down to African American women. However, it became apparent that improvements in the black community in regard to health and sanitation remained dependent on the elbow grease of women. The *Fisk Catalog* of 1904-1905 divided the nature of female education into several categories including cleanliness, industry or thriftiness, cooking, and sewing and darning. Further the description (from a male perspective) of the purpose of women’s education at Fisk emphasizes the responsibilities of black women at home as well as in employment fields of service:

Scrubbing a floor, or washing a disk thoroughly . . . should be taught and compelled to do everything well, even the very smallest thing. Life is made up of small things, and these done well make life a success. . . The mother of the father of this Country was not an educated woman, but she was plain and ordinary.⁹⁸

This passage illustrates the differences between black and white women. While African American women were trained to scrub floors, wash dishes, and do laundry; white women at Ward-Belmont took classes in embroidery and dressmaking. Although domestic science classes taught both races about healthy and practical living, the education of white women remained tailored to a life in middle class suburbia. When the industrial kitchen was completed at Fisk University in 1895, black female students received lessons in cooking, nursing, and hygiene so that they might “render great service to society by teaching truer and healthier ways of living, and more rational methods of caring for the sick when they enter upon their life’s work among people.”⁹⁹

Education served African American women in different ways than both African American men and Caucasian women. Although they were trained to be leaders in their communities much like their male counterparts, the ways in which women led remained much more subtle. They led not as businessmen, doctors, or lawyers, but rather as teachers, social workers, and nurses. Like white women, black leaders such as Lugenia Burns Hope in Atlanta, gained their prominence through their husbands. Hope used her status as wife to John Hope, president of Atlanta University, to create the Neighborhood Union in 1908, a community education and service organization. Unlike Atlanta University, Fisk and Meharry would not have an African American president until 1947 and 1953, respectively. Roger Williams University did have a strong African American

⁹⁸ *Fisk University Catalog 1904-1905*, 10-11.

⁹⁹ *Fisk Catalog*, 1895-1896, 37. The industrial kitchen was furnished and funded by the John F. Slater Fund, which like the Phelps-Stokes Fund gave money towards developing industrial education.

husband/wife team. Willa Hadley Townsend was the wife of Arthur M. Townsend, a physician and professor, who served as President of Roger Williams University from 1913-1918. Willa Townsend taught at the university and directed the music and choral programs; she also served on the Sunday School Publishing Board that produced the *Baptist Standard Hymnal*. Townsend was active in the community as a member of the National Baptist Convention, the Women's Auxiliary of the Nashville Medical Association, and the NAACP.¹⁰⁰

Wives of the rising black middle/elite class taught classes in hygiene, childcare, reading, sewing, and the like. However, unlike white women, African American women still faced a triple minority of sexism, class/racism. Many graduates of Fisk and Meharry served as teachers or nurses in dilapidated schools or noxious hospitals. The education and health care systems for African Americans remained overcrowded, understaffed, and underfunded. Black women were an integral part of any improvement that occurred in Nashville's neighborhoods such as "Black Bottom." Further, with Nashville's unique position as home to two reputable black colleges and a major source for African American leaders, "black women discovered fresh approaches to serving their communities and crafted new tactics designed to dull the blade of white supremacy."¹⁰¹

If progressivism in the South did include women, black women played a peculiar yet effectual role in the improvement of African American status. Whites did not intend to include black women into their definitions of progress, yet, as Elizabeth Gilmore

¹⁰⁰ Lovett and Wynn, *Profiles of African Americans in Tennessee*, 131-132. It is also important to note that although mostly associated with Memphis, Tennessee, Ida B. Wells-Barnett did attend summer sessions at Fisk University in the 1870s. Moreover, Nettie Langston Napier, wife of prominent black businessman James C. Napier was also active in the community. She was a pioneer for impoverished black children, forming Nashville's Day Home Club in 1907 (Lovett and Wynn, 95, 137).

¹⁰¹ Elizabeth Gilmore, *Gender and Jim Crow: Women and the Politics of White Supremacy in North Carolina, 1896-1920* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996) 147.

points out, “Black women fought back after disenfranchisement by adapting progressive programs to their own purposes, even while they chose tactics that left them invisible in the political process.”¹⁰² It is important to recognize the differences in purpose between white and black women reformers. As during the antebellum period, most white women continued to choose race over gender from 1897-1917. Gilmore describes the contrasting goals of race, gender, and power, “white middle-class women lobbied to obtain services *from* their husbands, brothers, and sons; black women lobbied to obtain services *for* their husbands, brothers, and sons.”¹⁰³

African American women were able to have greater influence on political and social reform than African American men in many circumstances. Black women utilized religious and community organizations to combat immediate and long term problems for many African Americans living unemployed, in poverty, and without basic education or services. In North Carolina, the Women’s Baptist Home Mission Convention began in 1884 and utilized resources to fund and organize community programs that taught better methods for healthful living. The AME Zion church also played a large part, founding a program in 1909 for teenaged girls who “took on social service work, nursed the sick, visited the elderly, and presented public health programs.”¹⁰⁴ In Nashville, similar

¹⁰² Ibid., 149. For discussions of white women and gender hierarchies in the Confederacy see: Drew Gilpin Faust, *Mothers of Invention: Women of the Slaveholding South in the American Civil War*. Faust argues that the underscores of gender and racial ideologies during and after the Civil War left women in peculiar positions. They could not assert too much power or autonomy because the white patriarchy was already in jeopardy with newly freedmen. Women were caught in an old construct with a new regional context in the 1870s and 1880s. By the 1890s, certain rigid restrictions began to change such as greater opportunity for higher education and leisure. For discussions of gender and race in the early Antebellum era, Catherine Clinton in *The Plantation Mistress* describes white women’s allegiance to race over gender in the 1820s and 1830s. Although seventy years removed, the ultimate loyalty of women in the South still sided with race over gender as evidenced by segregated clubs, societies, and causes. There existed a greater crossover of both white and black women in regard to certain issues (city conditions, sanitation, food relief) but most efforts remained separate, even if such efforts remained dualistic in nature. For more see: Catherine Clinton, *The Plantation Mistress* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1983).

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 155. For more on the role of women in the African American church see: Evelyn Higginbotham, *Righteous Discontent: The Women’s Movement in the Black Baptist Church, 1880-1920* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press,

examples show the network and influence of African American women's groups, who worked to improve conditions in their community. One organization that operated in a similar capacity in Nashville was the Woman's Missionary Union that maintained membership from many female students and faculty wives from Fisk University and Meharry Medical College. It remains important to note the elevated status of Nashville as Fisk and Meharry trained women who not only served the Nashville community but also found their calling in cities and towns across the nation.¹⁰⁵

There were a small minority of African American women who led a life of service from an elevated professional status. Georgia Esther Lee Patton completed the normal course at Central Tennessee College (later Walden University) in 1890. She immediately began taking courses in the Meharry Medical Department that same year. Upon graduation, she became the first African American woman in Tennessee to receive a license to practice medicine and to perform surgery. Patton's career took her to Liberia in Africa, before she returned to marry in 1897 and practice medicine in Memphis.¹⁰⁶

Another female graduate of Meharry Medical College was Bellina A. Moore, who graduated as valedictorian of her pharmacy class in 1897. In her commencement address to the class, Moore declared, "[Home was the] best and highest field for women, but not for all women. [Men had] held the heights so long that they were selfish and wanted women to stay on the lower levels . . . [but] women [were] entering every profession and

1993). Higginbotham analyzes the crucial role played by black women in the church as well as the community. She also points out the role of black women as liaisons to white leaders, both male and female, to affect social and political change. Women worked through the church to help create programs and efforts to improve conditions in the black community from the inside out including food and clothing benevolence, school construction and support, and other welfare services. Her study addresses issues of class, race, and gender and shows the interconnectivity between them.

¹⁰⁵ For more see: Richardson's Chapter Thirteen "Alumni" in *A History of Fisk University*, 160-175; Summerville, *Educating Black Doctors*, 40-60.

¹⁰⁶ Summerville, *Educating Black Doctors*, 32.

succeeding in all.”¹⁰⁷ Although women such as Georgia Patton Washington and Bellina A. Moore were exceptions, they proved that African American women could achieve exceptional things. Many other women passed through the halls of Meharry Medical College between 1897-1917; while only a few emerged as doctors and pharmacists, the majority earned degrees in nursing, but all of them led the way for life long service.

Contradictory Christianity

The South operated on a system of beliefs that continued to contradict Christian principles with practice throughout the period from 1897 to 1917. As such, white southerners remained conflicted on the purpose, extent, and expected outcome as to the development of higher education for African Americans. Even as most African American “colleges” and “universities” existed as such in name only, the politics of southern culture dictated a system that desired to limit the opportunities of education. Limited opportunities were used as a means to justify black inclusion and enfranchisement into a Caucasian society that continued to control political and economic power. Moreover, religious values that paralleled ideas of a Judeo-Christian work ethic were used as banners for both races. The white community argued that African Americans should “know their place” and accept their inferiority as “God-given” while African American leaders challenged the artificiality of professed Christian principles. As one article in *The Crisis* suggested, “How long is practical Christianity going . . . to survive its own hypocrisy? How long is the world going to . . . profess a system . . . of lofty ideas, which it does not pretend to practice? If the augurs [priests] of Rome laughed

¹⁰⁷ *Commencement Address*, Meharry Medical College, 1897.

at each other as they passed, how long at the present rate will Christian ministers be able to keep straight faces?”¹⁰⁸

In addition, issues of race also produced alternative spectator communities that reinforced racial/ethnic hierarchies in the South as well as the North. Grace Hale in *Making Whiteness* reveals the “Deadly Amusements” of spectacle lynchings.¹⁰⁹ Hale argues that there was something new during this period about lynching and racial violence. By 1910, freedoms for African Americans had “virtually ceased to exist in most of the Southern states. . . . [and] the number [for lynching] from 1890-1910 exceeded 2,000.”¹¹⁰ Beginning around the turn of the century, lynchings were set in public, attended by thousands, and reported widely in papers and photographs. People even tried to get a souvenir or a ticket for the “lynch train” as these events were promoted and sold as a form of spectator entertainment. Participants of lynch mobs were made up of men who adhered to Christianity. Wholly contradictory and misguided by racial hatred and fear, politicians, law enforcement officials, and religious leaders also took part in lynchings.

In 1911, *The Crisis* revealed a disturbing postcard and picture from Alabama with a group of approximately sixty white men posing with the corpse of a black man. The postcard was addressed to a Unitarian minister in New York, John H. Holmes, who vocally campaigned against lynching. Holmes’s call for renewed government intervention by the North in the South was met with an aggressive response, “This is the

¹⁰⁸ “Christianity Rampant,” (*The Crisis*, Nov. 1911), 25. The full definition of augurs is a group of ancient Roman religious officials who foretold events by observing and interpreting signs and omens.

¹⁰⁹ Grace Elizabeth Hale, *Making Whiteness: The Culture of Segregation in the South, 1890-1940* (New York: Vintage Books, 1998), 199-227. See also: Jacqueline Royster (ed.), *Southern Horrors and Other Writings: The Anti-Lynching Campaign of Ida B. Wells, 1892-1900* (New York: Bedford/St. Martin’s, 1996).

¹¹⁰ Lance G.E. Jones, *The Jeanes Teacher in the United States, 1908-1933: An Account of Twenty-Five Years’ Experience in the Supervision of Negro Rural Schools* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1937), 7. Whites were also lynched but in far fewer numbers, 626 for the same 20 year period.

way we do them down here. Will put you on our regular mailing list. Expect one a month on average.”¹¹¹ In the same year, another account entitled “Jesus Christ in Georgia,” told the story of a black man who was falsely accused of attacking a white woman and was immediately hung without any formal charges being filed. The picture reveals a group of men displaying their feat, holding the man’s feet as he hung, as one would pose with a slain animal after hunting. These unsettling examples reveal the discord between ideas of social justice and class control cloaked in religion. As Michael J. Pfeifer writing in *Rough Justice: Lynching and American Society* states, “Whether Christianity served as context or contradiction for lynching, primary sources are generally silent on how the religiosity of lynchers . . . may have . . . influenced their understanding of collective murder.”¹¹² It is apparent that “good Christian people” supported lynching, not necessarily in the name of God, but in the name of morality and justice. Preserving and protecting morality and justice reaffirmed white patriarchy and control through quick, public lynchings. Pfeifer argues that from the late nineteenth century to the mid-twentieth, there existed an ongoing “battle between rough justice and due process.”¹¹³ Moreover, W.E.B. DuBois called spectacle lynching the new “white amusement” and added to this comments about the exclusion of blacks from popular amusements such as amusement parks and beaches.¹¹⁴

In Nashville, Kate Herndon Trawick, a white woman, spoke to the issue of lynching in the city. In her speech, Trawick revealed and analyzed some of the

¹¹¹ *The Crisis*, Vol. I No. 4, February 1911, 109-110.

¹¹² Michael J. Pfeifer, *Rough Justice: Lynching and American Society, 1874-1947* (Urbana, Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 2004), 60. Pfeifer does cite two exceptions. One Iowa minister publicly backed a lynching by citing popular sovereignty while Reverend Robert A. Elwood, a Presbyterian pastor in Delaware actually incited the lynching of George White, accused of rape and murder of a white woman (59-61).

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 116.

¹¹⁴ *The Crisis*, March 1911.

motivations behind the crime, and pointed out the inconsistencies of many of the arguments used to justify lynching. She described the belief that the Caucasian community held; the African American community was an instinctively criminal class. However, she remained a sign of her times, arguing that obedience (meaning in part the responsibility to obey law) was not a natural instinct but must be taught in the home and school. Thusly, Trawick concluded, “The average Negro has a very defective training in both places, and Negro criminals (as of other races) are most often under thirty years of age.”¹¹⁵ As such, Trawick linked education with better conditions and more responsible living. She believed that African Americans, as “born criminals,” could be trained to be responsible through additional education, and in turn, would pass along these same values to their children and community.¹¹⁶

Trawick made two other insightful arguments. First, she dissembled the notion that African Americans were the only group of men who rape. She noted that in 1914, there were 620 rapes in the South, and of that number, “450 white and 170 colored.”¹¹⁷ However, her most intriguing argument maintains progressive ideals. Trawick addressed the misconception that a murder committed by lynching served as a deterrent or in any way improved either class or race in Nashville and in general. She argued that lynching did not prevent crime, but rather provoked greater tension and criminality:

¹¹⁵ Kate Herndon Trawick, “The Exposure of Womanhood through Lynching,” *Fisk University News*, Vol. VIII No. 1, October 1917, 27-28. Trawick was the general secretary of the YWCA.

¹¹⁶ In fact, most African American colleges such as Fisk University, enforced very strict rules on their students to combat such thinking. In the 1904-1905 catalog it states: “No profanity, betting and gambling, use of ardent spirits as beverages, and the use of tobacco; also card-playing and dancing. No weapons or fireworks, no traveling on the Sabbath,” (*Fisk Catalog*, 21).

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 29. She also gives the statistic that “The number of rapes by Negroes 1.8 per 100,000 of the population. Rape by whites was 0.6 per 100,000.” (29). It is unknown where Trawick drew her information.

For every black criminal put to death at the hands of a mob, hundreds of white criminals are made. Lynching for one crime leads to lynching for others, and furnishes ground for an appeal to public sentiment to condone the practice. It is resorted to to terrorize and restrain, but instead, it arouses race prejudice and deepens race hatred. . . Often after a public lynching there are new . . . outbreaks in the same neighborhood, aggravated by racial antagonism and suspicion.¹¹⁸

Here, Trawick made a major ideological breakthrough, exposing the true effect of lynching in regard to racial tension. Writing in 1900, Hilary Abner Herbert, a former Confederate soldier and eight term United States Congressman from Alabama echoed, “Lynch laws but add to race hatred; it begets the feeling that injustice has been done because a trial is denied.”¹¹⁹ Both statements expose the notion that lynching serves as a deterrent, and the reality that such brutal and undue crimes serve to incite greater and more frequent violence on the part of both whites and blacks. By rejecting the justification that whites are keeping their community and women safer by hanging African Americans without fair arrest or trial, Trawick revealed the more disturbing cause. White men sought to control black men with acute action, if threatened white men could end their life without repercussion.

Conclusion

In 1895, Booker T. Washington called for cooperation between the races, and in some places “his message, like the seed in the parable, fell on good ground and brought forth much fruit; elsewhere the ground was stony and the seed was choked. The South heard, but the South was divided.”¹²⁰ Many southerners continued to fear that education would lead to the rise of a self-supporting African American population, and whites

¹¹⁸ Trawick, “The Exposure of Womanhood through Lynching,” *Fisk University News*, 28.

¹¹⁹ *Race Problems of the South: Report of the Proceedings of the First Annual Conference Held under the Auspices of The Southern Society for the Promotion of the Study of Race Conditions and Problems in the South at Montgomery, Alabama* (Richmond, Virginia: B.F. Johnson Publishing Company, 1900), 37.

¹²⁰ Lance G.E. Jones, *The Jeanes Teacher in the United States, 1908-1933*, 7.

likened such a rise to that of a flood, creating an uncontrollable force of change. Middle class Caucasians feared for their economic security if blacks gained the skills necessary to replace the white worker at a lower cost. Because of such fears, the “Negro was called upon once again to pass through the valley of the shadow,” and remained confined to limited and monitored educational opportunity, social mobility, and political enfranchisement.

It is not to say that Nashville escaped similar trends found throughout growing southern cities. The Separate Car law of 1906, relegating African Americans to the “back of the bus” and conditions in the “Black Bottom” neighborhood paralleled racial segregation and inequity occurring throughout the South. Even by World War I, it remained apparent that success for African Americans was still dependent on white cooperation and tolerance as well as the acceptance of second-class citizenship for blacks. In an interesting article entitled, “Do Not Rock the Boat,” one Fiskite attempted to cloak problematic issues of race into concepts of national patriotism: “The United States is at war. . . It is not the white man’s war; nor is it the black man’s war. All of us are together in the same boat on the sea of war; [and] . . . every American is under the highest obligations to his country to say to those who think not, ‘Do not rock the boat!’”¹²¹ Yet throughout the period, the city maintained a distinctively different role as a center of African American education. When Booker T. Washington visited Nashville in 1909 he stated, “Nashville presents a noteworthy example of what education has done

¹²¹ *Fisk University News*, VIII No. 1, October 1917, 1-3. The full quotation is as follows: “The United States is at war. . . This is not the North’s war; nor the South’s war; nor war of East nor West. It is not being waged along by the Democratic Party; nor by the Republicans; nor Socialists; nor Independents; nor Progressives. It is not the white man’s war; nor is it the black man’s war. It is not being prosecuted by the wealthy; its burdens fall not alone on the poor . . . This is the war of the people of the United States; for all of them are being asked in one way or another to carry some of its burdens. All of us are together in the same boat on the sea of war; and since if the boat is overturned by criminal thoughtlessness of those who insist on rocking it, all will perish together, every American is under the highest obligations to his country to say to those who think not, “Do not rock the boat!”

for the Negro, [and] [n]owhere in the South is the average of intelligence and literacy among them higher than here.”¹²² Washington attributed much of this progress to the existence and accomplishments of Fisk University, Roger Williams University, and Walden College (which included Meharry Medical College).

As a result, Nashville served as an example for other southern cities to follow. Washington also drew attention to racial cooperation of black and white leaders and laborers. He argued, “The white people who know and are proud of the progress of their black neighbors contributed to it in almost as great a degree.”¹²³ Groups such as the Jubilee Singers of Fisk University help to illustrate the degree of public recognition and of racial elevation and even cultural appreciation of racial accomplishment. Many in the Caucasian community begrudgingly accepted the idea that Nashville’s African American schools produced not only more productive and industrious citizens but also generated a new black middle class. Washington made note of the economic and social gains made by African Americans in Nashville:

[Education] has made the Negro population stable, law-abiding, and industrious. They are respected by the white inhabitants, and racial friction is rare. Property and commercial interests of the Nashville Negroes are large, and rapidly increasing. . . . Many of the Negro residents are well up to the average dwellings in the best white residence districts. The total of all the taxable property held by Negroes has a value of several millions. They have two banks, a hospital, and several publishing houses . . .

In fact, Nashville served as a location crucial to the construction of a new black middle class as well as a black elite that would disseminate throughout the South. Some, like

¹²² Booker T. Washington, *Some Reports of a Trip Made by Booker T. Washington of Tuskegee Institute through the State of Tennessee, November 18-28, 1909* (Reprinted From the New York Evening Post, n.d.), 13.

¹²³ *Ibid.* 13. He notes that even in his address racial cooperation is evident as R.L. Jones, state superintendent of public instruction, and Hilary Howse, mayor of Nashville, were in attendance.

W.E.B. DuBois would even rise to national prominence and affect change in ways that would plant the seeds for the Civil Rights movement.

5. College Youth Culture: Leisure and Recreation

“First floor full. . . Gallery gorgeous with gala galaxy of girls.
Balcony bristling with blustering boys. . . Vendome Theater the place. . .
It was an audience full of college spirit.”
- *The Hustler*, Vol. 22 No. 25, December 21, 1910.

In 1902, a young lady from Ward Seminary met a young man from Vanderbilt on their way to each respective school. After several weeks, they found themselves leaving earlier and earlier for class to spend more time together on their shared path before separating. After a squabble, the young man ran into the young lady getting off the streetcar, and as she dropped her books in the rain, he began to apologize for his recent behavior. Five minutes later, the “smiling Senior and the beaming Sophomore were blissfully unconscious of the mud beneath and the water above . . . For two people, at least, the weather prophecy was incorrect for that day. The weather was perfect.”¹

With increases in student enrollment and college attendance at Nashville’s numerous colleges, a new class and culture of young adults emerged at the turn of the twentieth century. This new youthful generation also helped augment recreation and leisure as expressions of greater individual and collective social freedoms. Many students did not have much money, but as they passed through their years of college, students enjoyed the autonomy of time away from classes without the burden of supporting a family or maintaining full-time employment. Young men and women attending “colleges” and “universities” from 1897, when the Centennial Exposition began, to 1917, when the United States entered World War I, were directly responsible for shaping the increased social activity among students on-campus as well as between

¹ *The Iris*, 1902, Vol. IV, (Annual of Ward Seminary, 1902), 57-58.

students from different institutions off-campus. For them, the “weather was perfect” to mix the business of school with new forms of recreational pleasure.

Nashville served as an “Athens” for its many educational and cultural offerings, yet the city also mirrored a modern cultural center in regard to leisure, urban identity, sport, and socialization. The opening of the Tennessee Centennial Exposition on May 1, 1897 proved to be the pivotal moment when Nashville embraced commercialized leisure with an eclectic mix of industrial marvels and classical architecture. The replica of the Parthenon stood as the focal point, outlined with electric lights, with an array of buildings and a pyramid surrounding the Athenian centerpiece. Below, a man-made lake swarmed with gondolas giving guests rides while others enjoyed the wonder of the Streets of Cairo or the Chinese Village. The 1.8 million total visitors also enjoyed the Vanity Fair section offering rides and exotic animals. The Exposition lasted six months and epitomized commercialized leisure and the notion of paying for fun and excitement. Conveniently, the Exposition grounds were also in very close proximity to all of Nashville’s colleges.²

While the Centennial Exposition gave Nashville’s leisure industry a jumpstart, college students took full advantage of the momentum through surging entertainment opportunities. Moreover, by the turn of the century, college life included a burgeoning of public spaces where young men and women could pursue relationships without the traditional restraints of strict chaperonage or rules of courtship. Suddenly, men and women interacted more because of education, even if it was not within the same school walls. Specifically, women enjoyed greater accessibility and acceptance into public spaces with less risk to their reputations or challenges to their virtue. Higher education

² Herman Justi, ed., *Official History of the Tennessee Centennial Exposition* (1898).

served as a key component and reflected new ideas of homosocial and heterosocial interaction.³

It is not to say that chaperonage, supervision, and rules of behavior desisted at any of the colleges or universities, but there was a noticeable shift in increased autonomy and venues for social recreation. Local institutions of higher education experienced the creation and growth of on-campus societies and clubs, both academic and extracurricular. The materialization of college football and other sports quickly gained popularity and drew large crowds. By 1910, the emergence of fraternities and sororities led to increased social functions, particularly dances and parties. None of these developments would have been possible without the transformation of attitudes regarding acceptable behavior within Nashville's urban community, as well as the creation of new leisure venues. New spaces for college interaction ranged from theaters to parks and from football games to country clubs. There remained some concern over such developments as many older adults feared that new forms of recreation would bring immorality and disorder. Adults and reformers worried that young people would only associate "a good time" with cheap thrills and other vices such as alcohol and sex.⁴ Yet, Nashville handled such changes

³ The terms homosocial and heterosocial are relatively new to academic language; they describe social relationships and groupings that grew increasingly prevalent in the Gilded/Progressive Era. Homosocial simply refers to single sex groups, e.g. athletic teams and sororities, while heterosocial refers to groups of men and women who interacted more freely and casually, e.g. club dances and sporting events. The terms are not meant to imply sexual orientation. Instead, they are intended only to describe social groupings with heterosocial involving social relationships (non-sexual) between members of the opposite sex and homosocial relating to social relationships based on single sex membership or participation. The two most influential works that define heterosocial and homosocial relationships are Kathy Peiss, *Cheap Amusements: Working Women and Leisure in the Turn-of-the-Century New York* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1986), and Lynn D. Gordon, *Gender and Higher Education in the Progressive Era* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1990). Other important works include: John C. Spurlock and Cynthia A. Magistro, *The Transformation of American Women's Emotional Culture* (New York: New York University Press, 1998), Kevin White, *The First Sexual Revolution: The Emergence of Male Heterosexuality in Modern America* (New York: New York University Press, 1993), Karen Lystra, *Searching the Heart: Women, Men, and Romantic Love in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989).

⁴ For more on the working class, gender, and leisure see Georgina Hickey, *Hope and Danger in the New South City: Working-Class Women and Urban Development in Atlanta, 1890-1940* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2003). Hickey argues that working class men and women participated in new forms of leisure through the operation of many dance halls, theaters, and parks in Atlanta.⁴ Yet, southern notions more heavily connected to patriarchy and protection

with greater grace and control than many other growing cities. Colleges and universities played a major role in regulating its students' immoral or questionable behavior. Because of the number of colleges in central Tennessee, the young men and women of this era solidified new spaces for homosocial and heterosocial activity and redefined notions of leisure, recreation, and sport. As a result, a new youth culture emerged that benefited from leisure in ways unlike their parents, serving as a symbol of modernization.⁵

In Nashville, a preponderant shift emerged caused in large part by a more modern generation, made up of Caucasian and African American men and women, who took advantages of the time and space provided by new recreational opportunities. New "leisurely leanings" particularly affected women. M. Deborah Bialeschki writes of the interplay of race, class, gender, and leisure in the New South. As she notes, the examination of leisure from the female perspective helps to "understand better the role of leisure in reshaping their worlds, developing class consciousness, and building social constructions of community institutions."⁶ As historical actors, these new groups helped to establish, not a new social order, but rather a new collective social identity. However, they were not the sole participants of an emergent New South notion. The advent and development of commercialized leisure in Nashville grew at a faster pace because of the number of theaters, dance halls, social clubs, and the music industry. College sports also

of women's morality and safety led to government intervention. Led by Atlanta police chief James Beaver and middle class reformers, many amusements and dance halls were shut down and criminal charges were created to control and regulate women's behavior (such as the charge of lewd behavior). Thus, social justice in this case led to social order and control at the expense of leisure for women.

⁵ For more see: Gunther Barth, *City People: Rise of the Modern City Culture in Nineteenth Century America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980). Barth argues that as the nineteenth century progressed, a new urban culture developed alongside the growing cities. Much like Stephen Hardy, Barth believes that all "city people" held commonalities, regardless of their socioeconomic class, gender, or race. New institutions brought in part by industry and in part by reform and modernity included city parks, sports, theater, and even public transportation. These commonalities were based primarily on spatial arrangements and work/leisure. Barth mostly analyzing norther urban centers from the 1840s-1890s.

⁶ M. Deborah Bialeschki, "You have to have some fun to go along with your work: The Interplay of Race, Class, Gender, and Leisure in the Industrial New South," *Journal of Leisure Research* (January 1998), 2-3.

grew at an astounding pace. Further, the Exposition of 1897 helped to bring regional, national, and international entertainment to Tennessee's capital city. This event served as an impetus for social interaction as well as public spaces (including city parks) designed and maintained by the city for the purposes of leisure. Thus, from the Centennial celebration until the end of World War I, southern definitions of acceptable conduct and interaction based on gender, class, and race dictated the acceptability of new forms and new participants for on-campus and off-campus recreation.⁷

Leisurely Leanings and Urban Identity

Historiography surrounding the commercialization of leisure reveals a broad treatment of national urban trends, particularly in northern cities such as Boston, New York, and Chicago. The overarching themes show that the commercialization of leisure transformed relaxation into a commodity and created a new symbiotic relationship – if leisure cost money, then the more money spent, the more fun experienced.⁸ Also, the commercialization of leisure influenced changes that redefined meanings of class, gender, and community. By 1900, growing urban centers in the South also began to experience the effects of commercialized leisure. Although most existing historiography treats urban centers in the North, the category of leisure, recreation, and youth culture is certainly applicable to the South, and to Nashville specifically. Major urban trends reflect the values and venues of commercialized leisure, reactions to the commodification of the

⁷ Bialeschki, "You have to have some fun to go along with your work," *Journal of Leisure Research*, 5-6.

⁸ See also: Richard Butsch (ed.), *For Fun and Profit: The Transformation of Leisure into Consumption* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1990). For more on the influence of women as independent consumers consult: Liette Gidlow, *The Big Vote: Gender, Consumer Culture, and the Politics of Exclusion, 1890s-1920s* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004).

recreation industry, and the role(s) of a new youth culture in shaping different notions of community and urban identity.

Stephen Hardy, author of *How Boston Played*, describes a “structural triad” that served to shape relationships within growing urban areas as well as notions of leisure, recreation, and sport. Hardy believes that this triad describes humanity in its rawest forms: body (physical), mind (social), and soul (state of mind).⁹ At the turn of the century, this association of community structures consistently regenerated to spin additional sub-structural webs, thus constantly producing new meanings and communities for organized and unorganized leisure and urban space.¹⁰ This occurred in Nashville most predominantly on college campuses through leisure activities: academic clubs, social clubs and societies, and sport that took place in parks, theaters, and football fields.

As Hardy addressed urban identity and space in Boston, Lawrence Levine added an instrumental piece of historiography in his study of northern cities in *High Brow, Low Brow: The Emergence of Cultural Hierarchy in America*. In the late 1800s and early 1900s, a shift in demographics occurred in many cities, particularly in the North with its influx of immigrants and dramatic increase in industrialization. The reaction of middle and upper classes sought to erect cultural boundaries as an insulation that defined acceptable and unacceptable behavior reflected in recreational choices. As Levine concludes, if their public spaces were to be invaded, the elite wanted to set rules, dictate

⁹ Steven Hardy, *How Boston Played: Sport, Recreation, and Community, 1865-1915* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2003). In a more specific description, the first examines the city’s physical structure (e.g. Irish ghetto in Boston’s North end created by immigration, roads, parks, municipal districts). The second deals with social structures and the physiology and interaction between individuals and groups (e.g. transportation patterns, public transportation, shopping districts). The third community structure Hardy describes as “state of mind” or identity/loyalty (e.g. Yankee, Red Sox, Bostonian). For more on urban space and gender see: Sarah Deutsch, *Women and the City: Gender, Space, and Power in Boston, 1870-1940* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000).

¹⁰ Communities created in urban areas did not reflect a response to the time and space parameters of leisure as dictated by an industrial economy but rather working and middle classes participated in the process. The community remained an active agent in shaping its own notion of modern leisure. Driving this commodification remains the influence of a youth culture produced in large part by the expanse of higher education and shifts in acceptable behavior for women.

tastes, and control access. Certainly immigrants made up a major part of the working class, but another defining feature of labor production and cultural consumption was the emergence of a new middle class. This “middle brow,” if you will, participated within public spaces both as the more privileged arm of the labor class as well as an agent of reform for the social ills and immoral leisure activities of urban areas.¹¹

Nashville reflects the shift of wealth with old money families and businesses being challenged by the rise of a new middle class, both white and black. As leisure was commodified, many in the middle class found neutral ground whereby some forms of recreation were acceptable (certain social clubs, parks, etc) while certain other behaviors were not, such as gambling, drinking, and prostitution. These changes were set in motion by industrialization and the rise of consumer capitalism. On many levels, Nashville also mirrored this transformation of leisure and the fragmenting effect on social class and development.¹² Areas such as Belmont and Belle Meade represented new suburbs and former neighborhood clubs that were unofficially based on higher socioeconomic status. Therefore, cultural barriers were created to keep the poor out and to guard the middle class and wealthy from the city’s vices. Developing streetcar lines also created artificial barriers that separated different demographics, and new suburbs further removed middle class and elite whites from the urban ills of downtown wards.

Certain venues became stigmatized and the reputation of certain streets and establishments allowed the high brow to limit interaction with the low brow of Nashville. Part of the 1915 Ward-Belmont rules included that students could go shopping in pairs on

¹¹ Lawrence Levine, *Highbrow, Lowbrow: The Emergence of Cultural Hierarchy in America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988).

¹² Thus, changes in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century reflect a broader social pattern of segmentation and commodification of the broader American society.

weekends, but they could not pass through certain parts of the “Arcade” which was an area known for shopping, but also known for its nearby bars, games, and gambling. Likewise, “Jack’s Alley” grew from an alley behind Broadway (Nashville’s “Main Street”) into a backstreet full of music bars and halls.¹³ Several billiard halls catered to the middle and upper classes such as the Olympic Bowling Alley and Billiard Parlor, which claimed it was a “Gentleman’s Place of Amusement, Vanderbilt men must come see us as we have six tracks and seven tables.”¹⁴

The influence of mass entertainment and leisure in a comparatively agrarian region, reveal differences in southern notions of recreation. Larry Youngs writes in “The Sporting Set Winters in Florida” that Florida served as an outlet for the conspicuous consumption of Northerners in resorts such as Palm Beach and St. Augustine. Yet, it also created a leisure industry in the South revolving around golf courses, tennis courts, and beaches.¹⁵ New clubs and carefully planned parks also encouraged the growth of a leisure industry tailored to the rich. Although homegrown, an outgrowth formed in Nashville as middle and upper class whites began moving away from downtown and many of them settled in new suburbs toward the West of downtown. With these new developments, residents had more land, more room, and desired leisure activities not connected with the mass populace.

¹³ For more on other entertainments for mass audiences see: John Kasson, *Amusing the Millions: Coney Island at the Turn of the Century* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1978). Amusement parks served as another major outlet of heterosocial leisure provided by entrepreneurs driven to gain profits by offering an exciting escape from the working world. John Kasson in *Amusing the Millions* contends that Amusement parks emerged as laboratories of the new mass culture. Amusement parks reflected the changing cultural mood with new mechanical amusements and exotic settings that created huge crowds of pleasure seekers. Kasson concludes that it represented an “artificial distraction for an artificial life” whereby the age of scarcity had transformed into a fake world of abundance (10). Parks such as Coney Island stirred in reformers a complex response. It centered on an ambivalence that went to the heart of progressive reform. Progressives stressed the malleability of human behavior and the social environment that created it for “good or ill.” Many reformers condemned dance halls and amusement parks because of their commercial nature and the regressive character of their activity.

¹⁴ *The Hustler*, Vol. 21 No. 17, March 3, 1910, 4-5.

¹⁵ Larry Youngs, “The Sporting Set Winters in Florida: Fertile Ground for the Leisure Revolution, 1870-1930,” *Florida Historical Quarterly*

As early as 1890, two prominent businessmen, James C. Warner and Overton Lea each had a golf course on their estate. The first golf club was chartered in 1901 and included opportunities for hunting, tennis, riding, as well as other outdoor activities. The club and its grounds moved approximately five miles from Vanderbilt, Peabody, and Ward-Belmont to Cherokee Park in 1907.¹⁶ Clearly, the elite remained anxious to create a controlled space, away from cheap amusements, to protect their status and secure their exclusivity. After the clubhouse was built, both male and female members could mix and mingle informally or officially socialize at planned party events. Another club ventured west when Belle Meade developer Luke Lea convinced his fellow club members that a move further west was advantageous, both as an outlet for leisure and a haven for residential living. In 1914, 144 acres of the Belle Meade development were transferred to the club that was renamed the Belle Meade Country Club in 1921.¹⁷ In doing so, Nashville's elite further controlled who had "arrived" in society. Other social clubs included the Hermitage and Centennial Clubs, which met downtown. All such social clubs also served to define a new generation of adults and the formation of youth culture in Nashville. Youth groups, many associated with local colleges, met at Belle Meade and other country clubs and societies and formed the backbone of the upper middle and elite white class.¹⁸

¹⁶ As the *Nashville Banner* reported, "Grounds on the West Nashville car line near the new penitentiary were first secured and the Old Cherokee Park pavilion leased for a clubhouse. The club started off with a membership of 15 [June], one month later it had grown to 38, and by the middle of October 65 names were on the list," (*Nashville Banner*, June 1907).

¹⁷ The first public golf course did not open until 1924 when Nashville added a course to Shelby Park. For more on Nashville's golf courses see: Ridley Wills, *Belle Meade Country Club: The First One Hundred Years* (Nashville: Hillsboro Press, 2001), and Julia Beach, "Belle Meade Country Club and Urbanization, 1900-1920" *Nashville as a Historical Laboratory* (1978), 1-3.

¹⁸ Various reports found in *The Hustler*, *Nashville Banner*, and Ward-Belmont social programs show that many events were held at the Belle Meade Country Club, the University Club, and The Hermitage Club. Accounts of events held at local social clubs can be found in scrapbooks of Ward-Belmont and Vanderbilt students in particular. For examples see: Marguerite Griffith Witherspoon Scrapbook 1916-1918, *Belmont Special Collections*, and Rosalyn Kirsch Scrapbook 1918-1919, *Belmont Special Collections*. It is also important to note that the Hermitage and Centennial

In 1897, the symbiotic nature of leisure and the growing city blossomed with recreational opportunities, allowing young men and women to enjoy increased camaraderie off-campus. As the Ward's Seminary Annual Announcement stated, "Young ladies pursuing their education in a large city enjoy many advantages that cannot be obtained elsewhere. . . [because] cities are becoming more and more the centers of culture and refinement."¹⁹ Students at all of Nashville's colleges and universities benefited from the growth of entertainment venues, local parks, and off-campus events. Many "entertainments" enjoyed by college students remained of the respectable sort and included evangelists, politicians, academic lecturers, authors, and medical doctors. However, the latest trends in recreation soon replaced attending a lecture with leisure of a different kind.

One such popular seasonal activity was roller-skating at the Hippodrome Skating Rink. The rink remained conveniently located, just west of Vanderbilt, on West End and opened in the early 1900s. Many school clubs and societies held skating parties, but the rink also attracted many single men and women who came in homosocial groups as well as couples. It was a typical sight to go to the rink and see "A large and jolly crowd skat[ing] to the music of a brass band. . ."²⁰ *The Hustler* gives an insightful account into the alteration of commercialized leisure, new urban space, and heterosocial interaction:

From the number of boys that are seen leaving the campus going in that direction every afternoon and after supper there certainly must be a fascination with a pair of skates on that one does not get from any other source of pleasure. . . It is worth going over to see the crowd and the girls, even if a fellow has not the nerve to put on the seemingly uncontrollable wheels. . ."²¹

Clubs were located downtown, and clubwomen often sponsored social events such as an annual ball and regular dinners.

¹⁹ *Ward's Seminary Annual Announcement 1896-1897*, 42.

²⁰ *The Hustler*, Vol. 19 No. 17, March 5, 1908, 3.

²¹ *The Hustler*, Vol. 17 No. 20, March 22, 1906, 6.

Other non-school sponsored entertainments allowed recreation and social interaction outside of the classroom. The Coliseum operated as a racetrack just outside of downtown, and although it could attract unsavory patrons, many families and young adults went to the Coliseum to watch horse, bike, and running races. In fact, racing events were many times used to raise money for charitable societies.²² Before college and club team sports in Nashville, horse racing was one of the most popular forms of mass entertainment. Cumberland Park opened in 1891 and regularly hosted horse races, but the track was closed in 1906 when the state passed laws that made betting and gambling illegal. Sulphur Dell served as another ballpark where organized as well as unorganized games were played. In addition to theaters and music halls, Nashvillians flocked to all of these venues. The city's leisure industry would continue to grow on such fertile ground.

The factors of commercialized leisure, new recreational space, and increased numbers enrolled in local colleges created a consociation whereby Nashville's emerging youth culture helped to create and shape new definitions of leisure as it also fueled the growth of new venues for stage entertainment.²³ It was during the 1890s and early 1900s that Nashville became the center for theatrical and musical exposition in the South.

²² William Waller, ed., *Nashville in the 1890s*, 118-139.

²³ Regardless of when and how Americans relaxed and used their free time, it remains apparent that leisure joined other industries to become part of a new age where capital consumption becomes the norm. Americans would now pay to relax in many cases, and specific types of leisure (e.g. boxing match with John L. Sullivan, Navy Pier in Chicago, or Harmony Hall) would reflect not only willingness but also an ability to pay. The concept of paying for leisure forms a connection between consumption and recreation/free time. Paying for leisure represents a symbiotic (mis)understanding between the value and cost of leisure versus the worth and satisfaction of consuming that leisure. In other words, individuals began to believe, that the amount of money spent determined the amount of fun experienced. Leisure could be bought, and the price reflected its supposed quality.

In downtown Nashville, there were several theaters that served as places of entertainment, culture, and social interaction.²⁴ On January 8, 1894, the well-known opera singer Adelina Patti performed at the Vendome and according to Nashville's newspaper, the *American*, "Every seat was taken, every box, and there were five hundred to six hundred standing in various parts of the theatre. It was a triumph of the greatest sort."²⁵ The Grand Opera House (which began as the Adelphi in 1850) boasted one of the largest stages in the nation, and the *Nashville American* described its grandeur as "a temple to the muses clothed in the splendor of Aladdin's Palace."²⁶ Male and female students alike enjoyed regular tours of musical groups and theatrical troupes that frequented Nashville during the 1890s and early 1900s.²⁷ Students from local colleges and universities either rode streetcars or sometimes loaded up on horse drawn wagons to go downtown to visit one of the city's theaters. It was the most popular and most acceptable form of entertainment for young men and women, provided that they still sit in separate sections.²⁸

Either on or off campus, the number of performances by musical artists and theater troupes continued to increase dramatically for the next twenty years, as new

²⁴ The Adelphi opened in 1850 and later changed its name to the Nashville Theater and then finally the Grand Opera House. Other theaters included the Olympic (renovated in 1875), Masonic Theater (also renovated in 1875), the New Park Theater (1884), the Vendome Theater (1887), and the Union Tabernacle Auditorium, later the Ryman Auditorium (1892) all hosted a variety of plays, concerts, shows, and lectures.

²⁵ *Nashville American*, January 9, 1894 as quoted in Waller, *Nashville in the 1890s*, 122-123. For more on the development of theater see Lawrence Levine, *Highbrow Lowbrow: The Emergence of Cultural Hierarchy in America* (1988).

²⁶ Lewis Smith Maiden, *Highlights of the Nashville Theater, 1876-1890* (New York: Vantage Press, 1979), ii.

²⁷ However, the theater industry experienced its first major expansion in the city before 1890. In *Highlights of the Nashville Theater, 1876-1890*, Lewis Smith Maiden, gives a factual and chronological account of performers, shows, and theater attendance during the fourteen-year period. Maiden argues that by 1890 Nashville's combined theaters could hold over 6000 people; impressive for a city whose population hovered at 76,000 and when large venues were not common. Maiden also recounts the popularity of the playhouses and theaters, particularly in 1887 when the Vendome Theater opened. With the Vendome, Nashville now claimed three large theaters, all carrying full schedules and performing to packed houses even during the week. The Vendome also reflected the latest technology of the day with steam heat and electric lighting. For more, see Maiden's chapter, "Vendome: Temple of the Muse!" 120-128.

²⁸ In addition, William Waller also touches on entertainment and leisure in Nashville in his two texts, *Nashville in the 1890s* and *Nashville, 1900-1910*. The only authentic historiography that deals with Nashville's burgeoning leisure industry is found within Don Doyle's *Nashville in the New South*.

venues opened and demand for entertainment increased with national trends of commercialized leisure.²⁹ One of the smaller theaters, The Crescent Theater, remained a popular downtown site for all types of stage productions and off stage entertainment including singing, dancing, and the “latest movie pictures.” The management boasted that they were “Always the Best,” especially at ten cents per ticket, and marketed to college students and young adults by promising “an absolutely clean, nice refined show” in local student newspaper advertisements. Its most interesting show featured Dorothy Mitchell, referred to as the “tiny tot,” who danced and sang to the audience’s amusement, followed by a demonstration of its “mental telepathists” where a member of the company was enclosed in a cabinet and was able to call off numbers “written on a slate by anyone in the audience up to many millions.”³⁰ Entertainment had certainly been transformed during the 1890s and early 1900s to attract and allow young men and women who were willing to pay for their fun.

Yet no theater shaped the trajectory of Nashville’s urban identity more than the Ryman Auditorium. Lula C. Naff, manager of the Ryman Auditorium from 1915-1919 once asked, “Who wanted to see Billy Sunday when they could go see Mary Pickford for a dime?”³¹ Her question was timely. During the first two decades of the twentieth century, mass entertainment in the South distinctively reflected a shift from the religious

²⁹ *Ward’s Seminary Annual Announcement 1896-1897*, 42. *Nashville Banner* Advertisements, 1917. Peabody hosted “The Original Ben Greet Woodland Players” who performed *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, *As You Like It*, and *The Tempest* over a weekend. Tickets were .50, .75, and \$1 for single shows, but with a little more cash you could buy tickets for the series ranging from \$1.25 to \$2.25, again reflecting the commodification of leisure, or paying money to relax. Many events, even school sponsored, were held off campus in downtown theaters, while some colleges brought the entertainment to campuses such as Ward-Belmont, Peabody College, Vanderbilt University (and Fisk University for certain events targeting African Americans). By 1897, Nashville’s theaters featured many plays and concerts including “Taming of the Shrew” starring Hannibal A. Williams and “Merchant from Venice” starring Irving and Terry.

³⁰ *Nashville Banner*, July 1917. *The Hustler* also regularly ran advertisements for the Crescent Theater beginning around 1908.

³¹ William U. Eiland, *Nashville’s Mother Church: The History of the Ryman Auditorium* (Nashville: Opryland USA, Inc., 1992), 35.

to the secular. The Ryman Auditorium was no exception, first opening as the Union Tabernacle Auditorium in 1892 with the goal that the building should be used for “strictly religious, non-sectarian, non-denominational and for the purpose of promoting religion, morality and the elevation of humanity to a higher plane . . .”³² The Auditorium, as it was called, served as a perfect example of the intersection of muscular Christianity and commercialized recreation. It combined social space, intent on purporting the Protestant message of work and moral reform, and social interaction that ultimately shifted from religious to more secular in nature after 1900.

The Auditorium, situated in the heart of downtown, grew popular in the 1890s when evangelists and preachers such as Sam Jones, who held revivals widely attended by Nashvillians and those who came from the countryside to listen to him preach. By the turn of the century, Union Tabernacle Auditorium was renamed the Ryman Auditorium, after the namesake of Thomas Green Ryman, the local businessman who pushed for its initial construction and funding. Religious events at the Ryman did not disappear; in fact, the interior space still looked more like a church than a theater. Throughout the first decade, opera and theater companies as well as musical artists began to flood the bill.

From 1901-1917, the Ryman Auditorium, and other similar venues, reflected the evolution of the entertainment industry with the city’s growth to make Nashville a national landmark of music. More specifically, the first two decades of the twentieth century set the stage for the Grand Ole Opry, which officially began in 1925, and the recording industry that followed, to make Nashville the home of country music. It began with the Metropolitan Opera of New York City, which performed for the first time in Nashville at the Ryman in 1901. Nashville locals were willing to pay, and “tickets to the

³² Ibid., 13.

opera did not come cheap.”³³ Still, the Ryman played to packed houses for the events as well as most acts that came to town during the period. Local colleges also maintained a large role in solidifying the notoriety of the Ryman Auditorium as the place to go for entertainment. As Rosalyn Kirsch, student at Ward-Belmont recalled:

Whenever we went to the Ryman, the whole school went. We had special streetcars that broke down at every corner. We didn't have to wear hats or gloves when we went, and you can imagine what a bunch of roughnecks we looked like. As soon as the car stopped we all jumped out and dashed at full speed to the Ryman a block up the street.³⁴

Not only did they give patronage to artists and groups from across the nation who came to perform in Nashville, students from all of Nashville's white colleges attended school-sponsored events at the Ryman. Ward-Belmont College and Vanderbilt University sponsored a musical series for several years and sponsored events, featuring prominent lecturers and open to the public.

Clearly, from 1900-1915, college students enjoyed the freedom from campus and even though female and male students sat in separate sections, going to the Ryman mixed entertainment with social interaction.³⁵ The Ryman became a must stop destination for many artists, politicians, musicians, and other orators. Nashville had grown into the cultural and intellectual center for the South, and college students unknowingly enjoyed what would become Music City, USA. The cultural connotation of what would become

³³ Eiland, *Nashville's Mother Church*, 26. Many in the Nashville community, including college students, flocked to events with an international flair such as the musical sensations of the Royal Dresden Orchestra of Germany accompanied by a Hohenzollern Prince which came to the Ryman in 1917. Conducted by the immortal Wagner, the performing group included 65 players, 6 opera stars, and vocal host of 200 voices. Matinee tickets cost between .25-1.00, while night tickets cost .75-\$2.00 (*Nashville Banner* Advertisement, 1917). See also: Alyce K. Holden, "Secular Music in Nashville, 1800-1900," Thesis, Fisk University, 1940.

³⁴ Rosalyn Kirsch Scrapbook, 1916-1918, Ward Belmont Special Collections.

³⁵ Other notable events that college students attended in large numbers from 1904-1920 were concerts by the esteemed female singer Adelina Patti, the Italian baritone Giuseppe Campanari, the "world's greatest violinist" Jan Kubelik, the Russian composer Rachmaninoff, the virtuoso pianist Ignace Jan Paderewski, the American Ballet Theater in *Swan Lake*, comedian Will Rogers, the great Irish tenor John McCormack, and even a speech by President Theodore Roosevelt in 1907. When Theodore Roosevelt complimented the Vanderbilt football team in 1907, Ryman officials unsuccessfully attempted to quiet the Vanderbilt section as they "hooped" and hollered for over a minute. For commentary on these performers and more see: Eiland, *Nashville's Mother Church*, 25-46.

the Grand Old Opry first began when the WSM launched a weekly Saturday night program entitled the “Barn Dance.” In reality, such musical contests and exhibition had been held fairly often at the Ryman as early as 1902. The coin was termed in 1925 when the radio program host, Judge Hay, commentated, “For the past hour we have been listening to music taken largely from Grand Opera, but from now on we will present ‘The Grand Ole Opry.’”³⁶

For the new college generation in the late 1800s, dances and parties became more common, although still with chaperones. Particularly interesting were “nutting parties” where young college students and young adults met in wooded areas to search for chestnuts, walnuts, and pecans. They then finished off the night with fellowship while roasting their nuts. Also picnics and holiday events, such as the annual Easter Egg hunt, occurred on a regular basis. These forms of leisure cost very little, but it allowed young people to interact more casually and with less supervision. The other new form of recreation that also served as exercise was spurred by the cycle craze of the 1890s.

Nashville was also bitten by the bicycle bug:

To the ladies *Chat* would say adopt the wheel. It brings roses to the cheeks and a sparkle to the eye, and the devotions of many a cavalier have been won by just these simple attributes. They need not be startled by the fiery bloomers which the pretty girl of our frontispiece has donned . . . for this is merely her holiday attire and on week-days she sports a milder variety.³⁷

As Nashville continued to modernize at the end of the nineteenth century, a new generation of young adults, many of them students at local colleges and universities, began to change the social and cultural norms of this New South city. Students from

³⁶ Ibid., 48. For after World War I see: Pamela Grundy, “‘We Always Tried to Be Good People’: Respectability, Crazy Water Crystals, and Hillbilly Music on the Air, 1933-1935,” *The Journal of American History*, 81 (March 1995), 1591-1620.

³⁷ *Chat*, May 11, 1895 as quoted in Waller, *Nashville in the 1890s*, 128.

Ward's Seminary, Peabody, and Vanderbilt mingled at Vanderbilt football, basketball, baseball, and track events. Vanderbilt men, in particular, hosted fraternity dances attended by ladies from Peabody and Ward's Seminary that occurred in downtown locations. One account from David Lipscomb's periodical, the *Havalind Acts*, also depicted the shift from Victorian to more modern notions of acceptable social behavior between the sexes. The periodical noted, "All students who so desired, were allowed to go to hear "Gipsy" Smith at the Ryman Auditorium."³⁸ Nashville also attracted other celebrities as the music and movie industry continued to grow exponentially from the 1920s onward. Thus, by the end of WWI, urbanization and more progressive attitudes of the New South allowed Nashville's generation of young adults to recreate and socialize through changing mores that afforded more independence and social outlets with less supervision and restriction.³⁹

Antimodernism remained one reaction to industrialization and urbanization by progressives and elites. T.J. Jackson Lears argues in *No Place of Grace* that there existed an antimodern alternative to the emerging cultural order ushered in by the industrial revolution.⁴⁰ The elite and middle classes responded to changes brought by urban-industrial transformation by attempting to return to premodern impulses of autonomy and individualism but instead mostly served to undergrid the premises of modernity rather than to undermine modernity. In other words, antimodernists sought to reform problems

³⁸ *Havalind Acts*, November 1920, Vol. 6, Number 5, 12.

³⁹ It remains difficult to gauge the off-campus activities of African American students in Nashville. Many were restricted from going to the bars and pool halls located in black neighborhoods, just as their white counterparts. One of the most notorious bars was called the Bucket of Blood Saloon. However, because African Americans were not allowed in white establishments unless performing, such as the Fisk Jubilee Singers performed often at the Ryman Auditorium. Further, black entertainment establishments are lesser known and documented. *The Fisk Herald* is also difficult to probe for leisure off campus, as most of its content was limited to more serious issues of race, politics, education, upcoming campus events, and occasionally club/society news. The sparse treatment of leisure for African American students is not by preference, but unfortunately due to a lack of sources.

⁴⁰ Lears, *No Place of Grace*, 3-47; 103-130. For a poignant primary source see: Joseph Lee, *Plays and Playgrounds*, American Civic Association, Department of Public Recreation, Leaflet no. 11, January 1908.

brought on by industry and new forms of behavior, including leisure, through such means as the pastoral atmosphere of parks. These efforts actually transformed their intentions into outcomes that sometimes furthered modernization, and as a by product, furthered the commercialization of leisure. For Nashville, the Centennial Exposition of 1897 serves as a prime example whereby space created for a city park was transformed into a site designated to generate funds through the sale of tickets to exhibitions as well as food, drinks, electric lights, and entertainments (mechanized and non-mechanized).

The end of the Exposition served as the impetus for the city's development of parks and recreation. Not only did it alert the community to the need for pastoral, protected areas, but also the city had to decide what to do with the Exposition grounds. Nashville's park system was another response to rapid industrialization and urban growth. The creation of public city parks established space for recreation and leisure that encouraged good health, natural settings, and social interaction.⁴¹ Problems created by urban growth and increased population led to pollution as well as overcrowding and sanitation problems. People needed to create a space in which to literally get a breath of fresh air. Nashville followed the model of many other cities albeit on a smaller scale. Nashville's park system developed through a seemingly unlikely source, the railroad. Initial interest to create parks and playgrounds throughout the city started with the end of the Centennial Exposition of 1897. Ironically, the NC&St.L Railroad Company was also the celebration's biggest contributor, with many on the committee either directly or indirectly tied to the railroad industry. Of course, motivation for railroad companies to

⁴¹ The National Recreation Bureau was formed in 1906, while the National Park System began in the same year through the establishment of Yellowstone Park. New York City opened legendary Central Park in 1851 becoming the first city to establish a municipal park and ensured no further development on the property. See also: David Schuyler, *The New Urban Landscape: The Redefinition of Urban Form in Nineteenth-Century America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986).

invest in public space for recreation and leisure was not altogether altruistic, as railroads and trolleys earned a great deal of profit from fares going to and from public parks. After the success of the Centennial Exposition, community leaders and railroad executives agreed that the Parthenon replica should be made permanent. In 1901, Mayor Head appointed members to serve on the Board of Park Commissioners.⁴²

Over the next fifteen years, the Board succeeded in acquiring the Exposition grounds as a permanent park, owned by the city, and established new parks in each major residential sector of Nashville. Some of the land was gained through court action, some deeded from the railroad, and other property purchased from individuals. Mirroring the argument of Lears, the parks quickly became sites of mass entertainment hosting annual Easter Egg hunts, Groundhog's Day celebrations, and group picnics. Other groups, such as bird watching clubs and garden clubs, also used parks for a little educational leisure. Centennial Park featured a swimming pool as well as tennis courts by 1917. In addition, for several years, the park sponsored free summer opera performances, and by the start of World War I, park officials hung a screen to show free outdoor movies. Many of the social functions sponsored by colleges and universities were held in Warner Park, Centennial Park, or Shelby Park. Other parks maintained a more specific purpose and fueled the notion of commodified leisure. Morgan Park attracted thousands of Nashvillians and tourists because of mineral springs located there. People paid a small fee, and in return, they could sip from "Nashville's Fountain of Youth" whose water bubbled forth to bring health and happiness to the rich and poor alike," and many

⁴² Johnson, *The Parks of Nashville*, 21-43. The members of the Park Board all served on the committee that organized the Centennial Exposition. They were Major F.P. McWhirter, R.M. Dudley, Ben Lindauer, Colonel S.A. Champion, and Major E.C. Lewis. All of the Commissioners on the board served voluntarily.

believed the water held healing powers.⁴³ However, the best example of commodified leisure remains the story of Glendale Park.

Glendale operated as an amusement park from the 1880s until Percy Warner, president of the Nashville Railway and Light Company, purchased the park in 1907. Warner had long been an animal lover with eccentric tastes, and he quickly moved his flock of pheasants onto the property. Over the next year, Warner purchased many animals and began a zoo. He even purchased a buffalo from Buffalo Bill himself, when Bill's Wild West Show came through town. A trip to the zoo cost fifteen cents, five for the trolley and ten for a ticket. College students flocked to the zoo, many times for a date on Saturday or Sunday afternoon or in homosocial groups, hoping to mix and mingle with the opposite sex while there. The zoo was an acceptable site of social interaction and was not considered unsafe or immoral for college students. However, it is important to note that had the zoo opened before 1907, most groups would have had chaperones. With the shift toward greater autonomy for young adults during the first decade of the twentieth century, students from Ward-Belmont, Vanderbilt, David Lipscomb, and Peabody were able to act and interact more independently.

There was no official law or rule that barred African Americans from the city's parks; however, there remained an unspoken understanding that blacks should not visit parks created predominantly for whites. Yet, Nashville's Board of Park Commissioners recognized the need for parks designated primarily for African Americans. As a result, Hadley Park was dedicated in 1912 specifically to the city's African Americans. Commissioner McWhirter stated that the park was not created "because of any law prohibiting anyone of whatever race or color from visiting any city park," but because

⁴³ Neylan, "The Development of Nashville's Park System: 1901-1935," *Nashville as a Historical Laboratory*, 15.

African Americans had “never visited or shown any desire to visit, the public parks.”⁴⁴ Hadley Park was the first park purchased and designated specifically for African Americans by any city in the South. As the *Globe* announced, “In all of the Southland there is no such city nor state that there is such good will and brotherly interest which exists between the black and white people of Nashville and Tennessee.”⁴⁵ Nashville continued to exhibit progressive notions of race, compared to the mindset of most southerners from 1897-1917.

Students of Sport

College sports have been a dominant feature of southern culture and identity throughout the twentieth century. From the 1960s to the present, many loyal fans did not graduate from the institution they supported or even set foot in its classroom doors. The roots of this cultural shift occurred in the 1890s and early 1900s as southerners, in some part, replaced their allegiance to the Confederacy with an allegiance to southern colleges, and in particular, collegiate sport. Sports provided a new battleground whereby participants and audiences could represent “their” school over “other” regional schools as well as colleges from across the nation, especially above the Mason-Dixon line. Male sports also reinforced subordinate images of women as mere spectators who watched to support their school and to “root” for their men.

The Hustler regularly reported scores from their “rival” schools such as Princeton, Yale, Harvard, Chicago, West Point, Columbia, and Michigan.⁴⁶ Ideas of proving one’s

⁴⁴ *Nashville Globe* (July 12, 1912), 1. For more parks in lower income areas see: Johnson, *The Parks of Nashville*, 73-78.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ One sample to reflect the attention given to football prowess are the scores listed in October of 1900: At Princeton – Princeton 12, Lehigh 5; At New Haven – Yale 30, Tufts 0; At Cambridge – Harvard 12, Bowdoin 0; At Chicago –

masculinity as well as “Muscular Christianity” reinforced programs such as the YMCA, YWCA, club sports, and varsity athletics.⁴⁷ *The Hustler* regularly placed high stakes of southern pride on the line such as the promotion of an upcoming game, “If Vanderbilt beat Sewanee we will close the season with flying colors and will gain be accorded the championship of all ‘Dixie’ in the world of college baseball.”⁴⁸ College spirit had reached a new height that demanded loyalty and support that far exceeded that of the classroom and other clubs. Nonetheless, it remains important to note that such loyalty and pride was based on men’s teams. Women’s teams continued to operate as an undertone that received much less recognition than men who defended their school’s “honor” through sports.

As a form of leisure, collegiate sport offered not only excitement and athletic prowess for a mass audience, but also grew into a major recreational commodity. Ticket sales, food/drink sales, merchandise, and promotion all served to create a new avenue of participation and spectatorship directly sponsored by institutions of higher education.

Athletic events were not just about watching the game, but rather a variety show of sorts.

At an 1897 basketball game the program included: “1. Overture by Orchestra, 2.

Leaping, high dive, and Spring board Somersaults, 3. Triple acrobatic acting by two

Chicago 17, Purdue 15; At New York – Columbia 12, Wesleyan 0; At West Point – 0, Pennsylvania State College 0; At Ann Arbor – University of Michigan 11, Kalamazoo College 0; At Minneapolis – University of Minnesota 27, Ames 0. The scores were listed to show that the dominant teams perhaps received a little favoritism by officials because they were the home team, and that most of Vanderbilt’s competition was winning but only beating smaller, lesser-known schools. The paper printed regular reports each year, comparing scores and records of northern schools from 1892 through the 1920s.

⁴⁷ Organized and unorganized leisure activities and sporting events could be construed positively for the white middle class through ideas such as muscular Christianity. As Robin Bachin explains in *Building the Southside*, the overall atmosphere of many venues (parks, fields, stadiums, tracks) used for sporting events encouraged less than desirable behavior in terms of drinking, gambling, fighting, and unchaperoned heterosocial interaction.⁴⁷ Collegiate sport for the masses was not the only site of questionable moral versus immoral leisure and consumption for men and women that set off social alarms for elite and middle classes. Other forms of leisure existed such as dance halls, amusement parks, and cinemas that also served to challenge traditional class/gender boundaries, morality, and government reform/regulation. As previously mentioned, Nashville was no exception, boasting several theaters and dance halls by 1900.

⁴⁸ *The Hustler*, Vol. 13 No. 28, May 15, 1902, 2. See also: Frederic L. Pratt, “The Rise of Sport,” *Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 4 (September 1917): 143-168.

teams from Nashville Athletic Club, 4. First half of Basketball game, 5. Indian Club swinging, 6. Last Half of Basketball game.”⁴⁹ Even student newspapers reflected the commodification of leisure through an array of advertisements for stores such as Gray and Dudley Hardware selling “bicycles, sweaters, and athletic goods.”⁵⁰ Additionally, Vanderbilt, Fisk, David Lipscomb, and Ward-Belmont all featured women’s athletic teams; although women’s sport would develop carefully under the umbrella of education. Many of the men’s teams competed with a basketball team formed by the Nashville Athletic Club, a semi-professional league that emerged in 1895 as a result of increased leisure time and money for young professional men.⁵¹ Colleges justified sport as the physical exercise component needed to help increase the overall well-being of its students. As one local article stated, “Athletics have become a very important and useful element in developing character and manhood in the University.”⁵²

With the advent and ascension of college sport in the United States, collegiate identity and pride cultivated loyalty and pride from the larger community as well. Vanderbilt believed that athletics promoted school unity along with a pride in the campus by allowing visitors to “see the beautiful athletic field, the building, and breathe the University spirit.”⁵³ Perhaps football, more than any other sport, superseded demographic differences. Students who paid tuition to attend represented the sons and

⁴⁹ *The Hustler*, Vol. 7 No. 16, February 4, 1897, 1. For more on Muscular Christianity, see: Harvey Green, *Fit for America: Health, Fitness, Sport, and American Society* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1986). For general works about the rise of sport in American, see: Foster Rhea Dulles, *American Learns to Play: A History of Popular Recreation, 1607-1940* (Glouckster, Massachusetts: Peter Smith, 1963); Steven A. Riess, *City Games: The Evolution of American Urban Society and the Rise of Sports* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1991); and Benjamin Rader, *American Sports: From the Age of Folk Games to the Age of Spectators* (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1983).

⁵⁰ *The Hustler*, Vol. 5 No. 28, May 7, 1896, 2.

⁵¹ In an 1899 program, gymnastics were performed before the basketball exhibit, and the program reported, “the entertainments given were noted for their high class and cleanliness in every respect,” (Nashville Public Library, unprocessed). This alludes again to the influence of “muscular Christianity” and efforts to keep sports and sporting events free from dishonesty and violence.

⁵² *The Hustler*, Vol. 5 No. 9, November 23, 1893, 1.

⁵³ *Ibid.*

daughters of mostly the upper middle class, but community members of all socioeconomic backgrounds (including men and women) came out to watch and cheer for local college teams. In Nashville, Vanderbilt's first football season was played in 1891. They played Sewanee and Washington University of St. Louis twice each at the Nashville Athletic Club field downtown with a couple hundred fans on hand.⁵⁴ By the turn of the century over 5000 attended football games at the newly constructed Dudley Field. The construction of Dudley Field was approved in 1892 after the administration realized that playing on a field located on campus could bring huge revenue to the school. Vanderbilt followed the leads of Yale, Harvard, and Princeton after they realized that games averaged over 14,000 in attendance and each school netted approximately \$12,000.⁵⁵

Particularly in the South, college sports were in dire need of regulation and uniform enforcement of standard rules. Football remained the most disputed. Some opposed the violent nature of the game. In 1897 the state of North Dakota even introduced into its state legislature a bill to make playing football a misdemeanor.⁵⁶ Other believed that football promoted promiscuous behavior, drinking, and gambling. Many argued that sports venues were not acceptable for women. Vanderbilt administrators and faculty called for the prohibition of football from 1892 until 1900 when they realized that college football would remain a permanent fixture of student culture. With athletes receiving pay and some playing beyond four years, games were

⁵⁴ The team was coached by Elliott H. Jones with the following record: @ Sewanee (W, 22-0), Washington-MO (L, 24-6), Sewanee (W, 26-4), @ Washington-MO (W, 4-0). The first game was played the previous year, 1890, against the University of Nashville, but was the only game of the year, and considered more as an exhibition.

⁵⁵ *The Hustler*, Vol. 9 No. 19, March 3, 1898, 4. Eight years later, as Vanderbilt began to charge more consistently for tickets they set a range of prices. College game tickets were no less than four cents and no more than \$1.12. At first, the school lacked a standard ticketing system where spectators could be admitted with whatever money they were willing to pay; however, the school quickly remedied the inconsistencies and quickly began generating revenue from its home games.

⁵⁶ *The Hustler*, Vol. 8 No. 16, February 4, 1897, 4.

many times challenged. The desire to win blinded many college's programs as to the integrity of the game.

As early as 1902, *The Hustler* called for reform, "In the South, there is need of a readjustment in the Inter-Collegiate Athletic Association, which will save us from criticism that now falls on account of a confusion of ideas as to the interpretation of certain rulings."⁵⁷ As the author continues, "Who does not honor the institution that gets out a winning team? While it is good to have a winning combination, it is far better to have a pure combination free from ringers, semi-professionals, and those who have received pay for play."⁵⁸ Corruption of the game was not the only fear of colleges as Vanderbilt experienced first hand the intensity of football when combined with drunken spectators and large crowds. In 1909 after Vanderbilt defeated Auburn, the student portion of the crowd that included mostly males and a few females wandered to Kissam Hall. After a couple of hours, the students went from taunting to truly rowdy behavior, "Like Sherman's March through Georgia, the surging crowd started a campaign through the streets of Nashville."⁵⁹ Although such instances were rare in Nashville, it did give legitimacy to the concerns of the college and community regarding the effect of competitive school-sponsored athletics.

Other sports also solidified the arrival of collegiate athletics as a major component of college life. Teams were formed in response to the popularity of sports for both participants as well as spectators. In 1896, Vanderbilt hosted a track meet, referred to as "Field Day," and competed against fifteen other colleges that belonged to the newly

⁵⁷ *The Hustler*, Vol. 13 No. 14, January 1902, 1.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹ *The Hustler*, Vol. 21 No. 6, November, 4, 1909, 1. It is likely that females involved in this event were not Vanderbilt students but rather the dates of male students.

formed Southern Inter-Collegiate Athletic Association. Some of the schools included Auburn University, the University of Kentucky, the University of Georgia, and Tulane. There were so many participants that the track had to be widened at Dudley Field. The attraction of basketball also increased quickly, and the city formed a basketball league in 1903, citing the growing interest in Nashville as the cause. The league consisted of Vanderbilt, Y.M.C.A., Nashville Athletic Club, and Tennessee Medical and Dental Departments.⁶⁰ However, college games and meets were far from sophisticated. When the basketball team traveled to Mobile, Alabama to play, the court was lined with chicken wire to distinguish out of bounds. It was not uncommon for teams to play several games on an extended road trip against teams in Mobile, Birmingham, or Atlanta.

As college and professional sport continued to expand in popularity in the first quarter of twentieth century, African Americans also saw it as an opportunity of several sorts. Patrick Miller quotes an editorial from the Howard University campus newspaper to reflect earlier sentiments regarding race, student culture, and the growth of sport. The editorialist proclaimed, "Athletics is the universal language."⁶¹ Fisk University, along with other black colleges and universities, used athletics as a means to instill additional pride and loyalty to the school and community. In addition, sports spurred a belief by many African Americans that athletics could be used to build relationships with the white community and "provide powerful lessons in 'interracial education.'"⁶² As early as 1906,

⁶⁰ *The Hustler*, Vol. 15 No. 10, November 19, 1903, 3. The first public basketball game at Vanderbilt occurred in December of 1901, with the sophomores beating a pre-selected team of five, 13-4. Although the newspaper account reported that attendance was very poor, the half time show consisted of a boxing match and fencing exhibition, and it was "on the whole a good game," (*The Hustler*, Vol. 13 No. 12, December 12, 1901), 1.

⁶¹ Howard University, *Hilltop*, April 1924. Taken from: Patrick B. Miller, "To 'Bring Race along Rapidly': Sport, Student Culture, and Educational Mission at Historically Black Colleges during the Interwar Years," *History of Education Quarterly*, 35(2) (Summer 1995), 111.

⁶² Miller, "To 'Bring Race along Rapidly,'" *History of Education Quarterly*, 111-112.

the prominent African American educator Samuel Archer relayed his belief that sports extolled the “qualities of self-reliance and self-control that it was said to inculcate.”⁶³

In other words, the development of college sport could literally help even the playing field for a new generation of both athletic and academic African Americans. If white Americans could recognize and accept the sporting accomplishments of blacks, then perhaps they could begin to also acknowledge the assimilation of educated blacks in the professional and political world. Clearly African American sport did not bring equity to the black community in Nashville by World War I. However, the academic prestige garnered by Fisk University, the accomplishments of the Fisk Jubilee Singers, and the athletic victories of the school’s football and baseball teams did prove to Nashville’s white community as well as the entire region that African Americans were worthy of admiration and respect.

From 1895 to 1920, Hasan Kwame Jeffries writes, “black colleges served as the primary mediums for black athletic expression.”⁶⁴ Jeffries argues that Atlanta served as the epicenter of black college sport with Atlanta University and Morehouse College forming football teams in the 1890s. Nearby Clark College and Morris Brown College had established baseball programs by 1896. Morehouse College formed a track team in 1907, and by 1913 leaders from Atlanta’s black colleges met to create the Southern Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (SIAC) to set up official conferences. Fisk University remained at a slight disadvantage due to the fact that other local African American colleges such as Roger Williams University or Meharry Medical College

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Hasan Kwame Jeffries, “Fields of Play: The Mediums through which Blacks Athletes Engaged in Sports in Jim Crow Georgia,” *The Journal of Negro History*, Vol. 86, No. 3 (Summer, 2001), 264-275. See also: S.H. Archer, “Football in Our Colleges,” *Voice of the Negro* 3 (March 1906), 199-205.

maintained limited athletic programs. Therefore, Fisk traveled regularly to Georgia as well as other states to play football, baseball, and participate in track meets. Fisk first formed a football team in 1893-1894 and earned the nickname “Sons of Milo” after President Erastus Milo Cravath. The team was “coached” by Charles Snyder, who also served as the team captain and star player. Soon after, they changed the team’s mascot to the “Fisk Bulldogs,” but college athletics still needed much structure to become more competitive and with more coherent rules and regulations. In fact, during the first years of the new century, the Fisk players coached themselves.

The success of Fisk football began almost instantaneously, losing only one game from 1899-1904. By 1907, football combined with music as the team’s coach, John W. Work, also conducted the Jubilee singers. Acting as a show-like spectacle, the team and the singers toured, playing four games and singing over twelve concerts.⁶⁵ As World War I approached the team was disbanded but resumed again in 1919. Still, Fisk claimed the Southern Football Championship in 1910, 1912, 1913, and 1915. Although some questioned the effect that football would have on the integrity of the school, sports did increase pride, school loyalty, and student enrollment. Unlike Vanderbilt and Ward Belmont, Fisk women did not have official athletic club teams, instead, they supported the university through support of male teams.

Black colleges were plagued by the same inconsistencies and foul play as many white institutions. Fisk was listed as one of the schools in need of reform, especially after the football career of “Jumping” Joe Wiggins who played one year at Virginia State, two years at Atlanta University, and then three years for the “Fisk Bulldogs” in the 1920s.

⁶⁵ Richardson, *A History of Fisk University*, 157. Fisk began a basketball team in 1903, but it remained strictly intramural until 1926. In addition, no women’s athletic teams were formed from 1897-1917.

Still, sport at Fisk was seen as a way to garner respect through athletic accomplishment. As the *Fisk Herald* stated in 1894, “. . . we do believe that not only the brain but also hands and feet ought to be cultivated. For well has it been said that only strong arms can make men and nations free.”⁶⁶ Jackie Robinson, a southerner raised in Georgia, would break the color barrier in Major League Baseball in 1951, three years prior to *Brown vs. Board of Education* and thirteen years before Lyndon B. Johnson signed major civil rights legislation. Black sport did not remove racial barriers in Nashville or in the South in general, but it remains evident that college athletics allowed African Americans, individually and collectively, to begin to even the playing field.

For both black and white students, exercise and sport was seen as an important aspect of education. Regardless of popularity of football and other male varsity sports, in general, most viewed any form of physical exercise as a positive influence on young men and women. Only Fisk and Vanderbilt maintained major varsity programs, but all of the schools experienced an increase in the number of recreational outlets and opportunities provided students from the late 1890s through the end of World War I. By 1900, Vanderbilt was already sponsoring “class games” in which respective teams formed based on their year in school.⁶⁷ A golf club was begun, but once again, denied women membership. In the same year, Peabody had a gym class and offered some intramural activities, David Lipscomb focused on baseball, basketball and tennis, and Ward-Belmont offered a variety of sports and recreational activities such as bowling, walking, basketball, and rowing. The focus seemed to emphasize male physical activity over females in regard to building a healthy body and mind:

⁶⁶ *Fisk Herald*, Nov. 1894.

⁶⁷ *The Hustler*, Vol. 11 No. 19, March 9, 1900, 4. Although they were limited to male student participation directly, men and women who did not play cheered for their classmates.

When a student reaches college it is certainly time that he should have some faint conception of what a great part the care of his health and physical development must play in his life . . . First of all a man should have a strong body before he hopes to have a great mind . . . Physical work that one so much enjoys that he takes exercise unconsciously does him good. . . It would be folly to leave this side of your life uncared for while in college.⁶⁸

This passage also alludes heavily to the concept of “Muscular Christianity” and the Protestant work ethic as it encouraged each student to build their body as well as their mind. It also parallels the idea that both mental and physical hard work was necessary in order to be successful.⁶⁹ Interestingly, notice that the passage does not even vaguely mention women students.

In another article entitled, “The College Man and the World,” the author explains the shift he sees happening in education, “On the gridiron, on the diamond, in the debating society he comes to realize the meaning of the word competition . . . Today the college man meets the world with well-trained muscles and mind sharpened and strengthened by competition with the best and brightest minds of the American youth.”⁷⁰

The Female Athlete

Women made remarkable athletic strides with increased opportunities in education. In fact, education represented a convenient strategy whereby women used education as a springboard to propel themselves into otherwise unacceptable public spheres. In doing so, this new generation of educated women helped mold new definitions of acceptable behavior, occupation, sport, and leisure for women and between

⁶⁸ *The Hustler*, Vol. 11 No. 3, October 12, 1899, 3-4.

⁶⁹ Edward Ward Carmack, *Character or The Making of the Man* (Nashville: McQuiddy Printing Company, 1909). This text used widely in Nashville and purports the tenets of “Muscular Christianity.” Dudley A. Sargeant also contributed to this doctrine. See also: Dudley A. Sargeant, *Health Strength and Power* (Boston: H.M. Caldwell Company, 1904).

⁷⁰ *The Hustler*, Vol. 11 No. 8, November 16, 1899, 3.

men and women in public urban spaces by the end of WWI. One specific area for women that developed under the umbrella of education remains the evolution of physical activity. Some of the early trends emphasized the importance of health and began in the era of the Victorian woman. Between 1897 and 1917, young women made definite progress toward a new image that included physical education and sport.⁷¹ Although sports and physical education seemed to gain overall cultural approval in some respects, women struggled with the traditional relationship of personal health, domestic femininity, and the newly introduced role of the female athlete.

Ellen Gerber argues in *Innovators and Institutions in Physical Education* that education served to provide the major opportunity for the organization and advancement of women's sports.⁷² College physical education, which included walking, tennis, gymnastics, and basketball, allowed girls to exercise as well as to compete for the first time.⁷³ Pamela Dean suggests that the growth of physical education and athletics reflects the "strategies New Women in the New South adopted and some of the tensions and anxieties they faced as they negotiated the contested ground of gender redefinition at the turn of the century."⁷⁴ Higher education served as an acceptable mediator between acceptable female behavior and the evolving notions of gender in the New South.

In part, changes in clothing and style led to the transformation allowing more autonomous women and athletes to emerge. At the turn of the twentieth century, fashion

⁷¹ For more on health and body image see Margaret A. Lowe, *Looking Good: College Women and Body Image, 1875-1930* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003). Lowe argues that body image had shifted from women actually working to gain weight as opposed to present standards where most women want to be thinner.

⁷² Ellen W. Gerber, *Innovators and Institutions in Physical Education* (Philadelphia: Lea and Febiger, 1971).

⁷³ For more on the history of physical education and activity see: Bruce Bennett (ed.) *The History of Physical Education and Sport* (Chicago: Athletic Institute, 1972), Mabel Lee, *A History of Physical Education and Sports in the U.S.A.* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1983), and June A. Kennard, "History of Physical Education," *Signs* 2(4, 1977): 835-842.

⁷⁴ Pamela Dean, "'Dear Sister' and 'Hated Rivals': Athletics and Gender at Two New South Women's Colleges, 1893-1920," *Journal of Sports History* 24 (Fall 1997), 341. Dean writes about the evolution of physical education, basketball, and gender at North Carolina's Normal and Industrial College and Newcomb College, also in North Carolina.

and expected dress began to change. Clearly, clothing restricted women's participation in many activities, athletic or not. In particular, the middle and upper classes were affected as they wore long dresses, skirts, petticoats, layers of underclothing and corsets. Such clothing largely contributed to the development of the sidesaddle before the Civil War, allowing respectable women to ride horses.⁷⁵ Instead of changing the style of dress in order to exercise and recreate, men and women had to alter sports to accommodate a woman's restrictive clothing. In addition to views of femininity and domestic roles of women, this also helps to explain the reasoning behind the approval of certain sports, and the discouragement of other traditionally masculine sports for females. In short, women simply were not dressed to play; yet American culture did not view any other style of dress as acceptable.⁷⁶ The clothing of women reinforced the violation of social norms by females who took part in sports that were physically challenging or required great physical exertion.

In the 1890s, the new trend of bicycling became immensely popular and found wide participation by women. Many saw the activity more as entertainment than exercise, but middle-class women in particular also noticed that bicycling gave them a more socially approved form of physical activity. With long skirts and several layers of underclothing, the dress of women became particularly burdensome while bicycling. The emphasis placed on health also aided the transition of clothing because medical findings officially discovered that the daily wearing of tight and restrictive corsets by women

⁷⁵ Reet Howell, "Generalizations on Women and Sport Games and Play in the U.S. from Settlement to 1860," *Her Story in Sport*, ed. Reet Howell (New York: Leisure Press, 1982), 91. For early commentary on women and sports see: Elizabeth Barney, "The American Sportswoman," *Forthnightly Review* 56 (1894); Sylvester Baxter, "The Economic and Social Influences of the Bicycle," *Arena* 6 (1892), 578-583; and Henry Garrigues, "Woman and the Bicycle," *Forum* 20 (January 1896), 578-587.

⁷⁶ For more see Nancy G. Rosoff, "'Every muscle is absolutely free,': Advertising and Advice about Clothing for Athletic American Women," *Journal of American Culture* 25 (Spring 2002), 25-31.

directly led to health problems such as headaches, back troubles, and fainting spells.⁷⁷

The invention of elastic in the 1880s also allowed women to wear fewer layers of underclothing as well as promoting the popularity of bloomers, a new style of pants that soon became the preferred alternative for active women. By the turn of the century, the style of acceptable athletic clothing for women transformed into a new look consisting of a middy blouse, bloomers, and long, dark woolen stockings.⁷⁸ In addition, skirts became shorter, underclothing was minimized, and many women eliminated corsets. In 1901, an article entitled “The American Girl of Today” stated, “it is interesting to note that while forty-seven percent of the girls enter schools wearing corsets, these are given up, in consequence of advice and teachings of the instructors in physical training.”⁷⁹

The changes that occurred in the United States from 1897 to World War I reflect a social scene that maintained a definite correlation to changes in dress that in turn led to more opportunities for participation in sport as well as the appropriate clothing to enjoy physical activity. This new freedom helped women to “throw off the building restriction of the nineteenth century attitudes and fashions.”⁸⁰ During these early years in a new century, as the concept of the New Woman developed, social acceptance of strenuous exercise for women began to parallel changes in clothing. In 1903, a journalist for *Colliers* magazine commented, “The time is not far distant when the clothed of women will help to keep them vigorous and active, and not waste their energy; will encourage

⁷⁷ Barbara N. Noonkester, “The American Sportsman from 1900-1920,” *Her Story in Sport*, ed. Reet Howell (New York: Leisure Press, 1982), 178-179.

⁷⁸ A “middy” blouse was a loose-fitting top with a large, navy style collar, and “bloomers” were considered knee-length, baggy pants similar to “knickerbockers” worn by young men.

⁷⁹ Geo J. Engelmann, “The American Girl of Today,” *American Physical Education Review*, March 1901, 35-66. See also: Anne O’Hagag, “The Athletic Girl,” *Munsey’s Magazine* 25 (August 1901), 730-737.

⁸⁰ Maxwell Howell, Reet Howell, “Women in Sport and Physical Education in the United States, 1900-1914,” *Her Story in Sport*, 157.

instead of hindering natural action and development.”⁸¹ As early as 1897, Vanderbilt called for the creation of a Bicycle Club because “it would add much to the pleasure and profit of cyclists in this university to have certain times appointed for spins to different points of interest [in the city].”⁸²

Although the image of this new generation of college women brought with it new attitudes about femininity, independence, education, clothing, and physical health and exercise; the conservative South was slow to change. Still thought to prefer “Ladies’ Amusements,” southern women enjoyed social pleasures where ambition and vanity remained the focus. Karen Kenney notes, that before 1900, the typical southern female “was not interested in playing games for her own sake, nor did she participate in sports where she had no male companion.”⁸³ Southern women participated in certain physical activities such as walking, horseback riding, and dancing although they were socially active in many other ways. Even as basketball, gymnastics, and tennis gained popularity in the early 1900s, many advocates emphasized the assets that sports could lend to a new and improved form of femininity in a more modern society. As Pamela Dean suggests, “Making a basket was not the point; form, poise, and grade while doing so were.”⁸⁴ Men and women in favor of sport for females used such arguments as justification, along with other arguments that physical exercise resulted in better health and reproductivity. Yet, women’s sports also signaled new space whereby women were entering the public sphere to a greater extent.

⁸¹ “Editorial,” *Colliers*, 7 Nov. 1903, 5.

⁸² *The Hustler*, Vol. 8 No. 25, April 14, 1897, 1.

⁸³ Karen Kenney, “American Women in Sport and Physical Activity, 1850 to 1900,” *Her Story in Sport*, 108.

⁸⁴ Dean, “‘Dear Sisters’ and ‘Hated Rivals,’” *Journal of Sports History*, 351.

Carl E. Klafs contends in *The Female Athlete* that many of the first participants in college sports were not widely viewed as athletes. As early as 1898 Vanderbilt began to recognize the accomplishments of female athletes, even if it presented such women as being atypical from other females:

Miss Rowena Reed of California is the pride of all college girls. She is the girl who broke the woman's record for the broad jump at Vassar by clearing 13 feet 3 inches, and has won the 120-yard hurdle race and the running high jump doing 3 feet 8 inches. Miss Reed, who is a sophomore, is 19 years old, weighs 160 pounds, and is 5 feet 8 1/2 inches tall. She can ride, swim, fence, row, wheel, run, jump, handle Indian clubs, play football and basketball with the best.⁸⁵

Curiously, she is also described as the “pride of all college girls” even though the account of her athletic feats makes her sound quite masculine, especially considering the average height and weight of most women at that time.⁸⁶ However, over the next decade women playing sports slowly gained acceptability and a sense of normalcy. In 1898, interest in basketball was reflected by regular meetings between Ward Seminary and Vanderbilt as one report stated, “School girls are almost as enthusiastic over the game as the men.”⁸⁷ By 1910, young women had solidified teams in basketball, rowing, and tennis, even if only on a club or intramural level.⁸⁸ The organization of athletics and physical activity coincided with greater numbers of women in higher education that led to changes in health awareness, clothing reform, and lifestyles of social independence.⁸⁹

⁸⁵ *The Hustler*, Vol. 9 No. 19, March 3, 1898, 4.

⁸⁶ The average height of white women in the United States in 1895 was approximately 5 foot 3 inches and weighed an average of 125 pounds.

⁸⁷ *The Hustler*, Vol. 9 No. 15, February 3, 1898, 1.

⁸⁸ Carl E. Klafs, *The Female Athlete* (St. Louis: The C.V. Mosby Co., 1973).

⁸⁹ Elizabeth Halsey, *Women in Physical Education* (New York: G.D. Putnam and Sons, 1961), 5-100. To examine the connections between physical activity and physical appearance for women consult: Margaret A. Lowe, *Looking Good: College Women and Body Image, 1875-1930* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins university Press, 2003). For a more specific treatment of women's physical education and sport in a college setting see: Adam R. Hornbuckle, “Women's Sports and Physical Education at the University of Tennessee, 1899-1939,” Thesis, The University of Tennessee, 1983. As

Although a minority in the student body, Vanderbilt women actively participated in student culture, “from a woman editor on the *Observer* to a reporter on the *Hustler*, from a basketball team that never lost a game for several years to a girls’ club, which they formed in 1909.”⁹⁰ Such participation mirrored national trends reflecting greater interest in women’s clubs and sports. As the “Here and There” section of the Vanderbilt student newspaper reported in 1895, “The colleges for women are beginning to take a very active interest in athletics. Fencing is greatly in vogue at Smith College. At Vassar there was much excitement over the Fall Field Day, while since then basket-ball has become the popular pastime.”⁹¹ Ward Seminary also maintained an early interest in athletics, although largely non-competitive and under the title of “physical culture.” The 1902 basketball team maintained eight members and provided a commencement exhibition that included exercises such as the “hoop drill, German Bell exercise, Swedish gymnastics, fancy march, and combination bell and wand drill.”⁹² The team appeared less like a modern basketball squad and more like an acrobatic dance team. Yet, their visibility and participation still signaled a shift to more serious exercise and sport for women. In the same year, Ward Seminary students announced, “Regardless of criticism, she adopts the divided skirt,” in order to ride horses just as the men rather than side-saddle.”⁹³ It only seems natural that Tennessee’s prominence in women’s sports began at the turn of the twentieth century. Less than one hundred years later, female student-athlete programs at colleges in Nashville and Knoxville would be considered the best in the nation.

with the professionalization of academic disciplines and professional and academic associations, women also gained from this movement with the founding of the Advancement of Physical Education (1885), the *American Physical Education Review*, and George Dudley’s and F.A. Kellor’s *Athletic Games in the Education of Women* (1909).

⁹⁰ *Observer*, 213. The *Observer* served as a published periodical of Vanderbilt while *Hustler* was the school’s weekly newspaper. Also, the girls’ basketball first formed during the 1896-1897 school year.

⁹¹ *The Hustler*, Vol. 7, No. 12, December 12, 1895, 3.

⁹² *The Iris*, Vol. IV, 1902, 83.

⁹³ *The Iris*, Vol. IV, 1902, n.p.

In 1897, the Vanderbilt women's basketball team, still a club sport, began receiving coverage in the student newspaper. However, the reports remained less than attractive for these young women and reflected a very Victorian attitude. The male reporter apparently achieved covert access to the game:

In spite of the precautions and vigilance of don't-let-a-man-come-in girls . . . I gained admission to the gymnasium and hid myself in a corner. Soon the crowd began to gather, consisting of the girls' schools and old and young ladies. On the faces of the sweet schoolgirls were not seen the usual "bewitching" smiles. Something was lacking. What was it? It could not have been a girl friend, for all kinds of femininity were there. It must have been the absence of the college boys, whom, alas, the teachers had excluded from the rare sight of seeing girls play basketball.⁹⁴

Herein lay the typical view of college age men, always believing that if something seemed lacking on the faces of women, it must be that male attention or admiration was missing. Instead, it seems fairly apparent that the women did not bear "bewitching" smiles but rather a mindset of competition and focus. Before the game between Ward Seminary and Vanderbilt commenced, the doors were locked and the windows covered. The male student anticipated what was to come, "Now, . . . we will see some scratching and hair-pulling and hear a half dozen screams, . . . [and] I was not deceived; they showed that they were still girls."⁹⁵ Yet, he was also surprised to see a new side of his female counterparts, "The agility of some of them was really surprising, as they got around after the ball in a manner that would put some of our gym graduates to shame."⁹⁶ The game ended in a loss for Ward Seminary, 0-5.⁹⁷

Even by the 1909-1910 season basketball games were still played behind guarded doors. Ada Raines, captain of the 1909-1910, proudly admitted that co-ed team "always

⁹⁴ *The Hustler*, Vol. 8 No. 22, March 17, 1897, 1.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

⁹⁷ *The Hustler*, Vol. 8 No. 22, March 17, 1897, 1. Reporting final scores would not be a regular trend, as women's teams never reported final season record.

had a way of winning their games under the excellent coaching of Miss Stella Vaughn,” but the season’s wins and losses were not officially recorded, while the men achieved a 10-3 season record.⁹⁸ As men’s competition grew more intense, women’s competition was underscored at best. While men played before large crowds, women played behind closed doors. All of these things allowed women to play sports in a way that allowed the community to “deny the emerging reality that southern college women were in fact learning to be strong, self-reliant, and competitive, as well as graceful, loyal, and cooperative.”⁹⁹

David Lipscomb University fielded a women’s basketball team and tennis team by 1910, although they rarely competed against outside schools and mainly competed intramurally. The witty basketball team motto was “Aim at the Goal” and the team was divided into two intramural teams, with five each on “Haughty Hits” and “Dandy Doers” and six girls listed as “Scrubs” to substitute for either team. The tennis club also found a pun to spice up its image, as the team yell was “First come, first served!”¹⁰⁰ It also maintained about twelve to twenty members annually from 1910-1917. Likewise, several schools allowed females to play tennis. In part, tennis remained a more feminine sport, with players exhibiting grace and poise. In the early 1900s, several schools held an annual girls’ tennis tournament that included students from Peabody, Ward Seminary, Belmont, and Vanderbilt. They played before a “large and enthusiastic crowd” on the

⁹⁸ Bill Traugher, “Vandy’s Men’s and Women’s 1909-1910 Seasons,” *Commodore History Corner* (February 6, 2007), 3-4.

⁹⁹ Dean, ““Dear Sisters” and ‘Hated Rivals,’” *Journal of Sports History*, 353.

¹⁰⁰ Nashville Bible College, *The Ark*, Vol. 1, 1910, 11-68.

grounds of the Nashville Tennis Club in Centennial Park. However, athletic contests that exhibited females as spectacles of sport remained rare.¹⁰¹

Another example of the stifled nature of co-ed campus interaction in the late 1890s can be seen in the begrudged acceptance and gendered curriculum of gym class at Vanderbilt University. On a Friday in early mid March 1897, a note appeared on the bulletin board that informed male students to avoid the gym that afternoon. A general consensus arose among male students, “Never was the importance of physical exercise so forcibly realized as when the object of this notice was discovered.”¹⁰² The male students responded to this notice with considerable complaint especially when learning that they were being reprimanded from the gym in order to allow the young co-eds a period of separate instruction. Ironically, the men took issue with the fact that women and men could not exercise together and also harbored ill-will toward the ladies for having the audacity to accept such terms in a way that inconvenienced or limited male access to “their” gym. As one student commented, “We kindly submitted this time but hope this will not be repeated. . . We are perfectly willing to share with the co-eds, . . . but our only objection is to the exclusion of either sex at any time. Let us have co-gymnastics or let us have our gym.”¹⁰³ Most male students did not seem to oppose women’s physical education, exercise, or sport; however, they did mind when their time and space was infringed upon. Yet, physical education classes would not be held with both male and female students together until the 1930s, and many schools would not adopt co-education for gym classes until the 1950s and 1960s. Neither the nation nor the region was ready to

¹⁰¹ *The Hustler*, Vol. 17 No. 28, May 17, 1906. Many other reports reveal the rise of tennis and golf through club teams; however, most seem to either be limited to men or do not specifically mention women as participants.

¹⁰² *The Hustler*, Vol. 8 No. 22, March 17, 1897, 1.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*

place hormonal young adults in circumstances that increased their “physical” education more than already allowed under school policy.¹⁰⁴

Without a doubt, the acceptance and worth of women becoming more active increased dramatically after 1900. In the *Ward Seminary Bulletin* of 1911, the school announced:

Physical culture is made a special feature of Seminary life. The gymnasium and bowling alleys afford abundant indoor exercise. Lessons in swimming are offered throughout the session. In addition, . . . the extensive campus at Ward Place furnishes abundant facilities for tennis basketball, croquet, field hockey, and other outdoor sports. . . All these means of recreation . . . are free to the boarding pupils.” Likewise, Ward’s Seminary introduced a three year course in Domestic Science to its curriculum, stating that better knowledge of housekeeping would contribute “greatly toward simplifying life and adding to its comfort.”¹⁰⁵

The emphasis placed on sports by most educators, however, remained focused on girls playing purely for exercise and enjoyment. The school curricula and classes offered in Knoxville and Knox County subscribed to the outline issued in 1915 by Department of the National Education Association. This outline set standards in sports for girls and stated the purpose of play:

Physical activity is necessary for growing bodies. The joy in natural play activities is of great value to persons of all ages. If all girls and women engaged in active sports could say, ‘I play because I enjoy playing,’ one of the most valuable results of play would be realized.¹⁰⁶

As in other areas, change remained slow in regard to the willingness of mainstream culture to accept and foster women’s capabilities that contradicted traditional views of women’s roles and capabilities. Even by 1920, females were largely encouraged to participate based on principles of exercise, recreation, and enjoyment.

¹⁰⁴ Bruce Bennett (ed.), *The History of Physical Education and Sport* (Chicago: Athletic Institute, 1972).

¹⁰⁵ *Ward Seminary Bulletin* 1911, 63.

¹⁰⁶ *Standards in Sports for Girls and Women*, (Washington D.C: AAHPER, 1915), 16.

Most school girls were not accustomed to intense physical workouts that required coordination, agility, strength, and perspiration. To the general female student population, these physical demands still remained extreme and associated only with basketball. The desirability of reinforcing or encouraging “womanly qualities,” continued to serve as an issue; however, the main argument focused on whether the playing of sports could occur without a serious challenge to a young woman’s femininity.¹⁰⁷ Female athletes answered this question in Nashville by revealing that they were not girls obsessed with the assumed masculinity of sports. Many of the girls participated in other extra-curricular activities and maintained an active status in other areas such as health, art, literature, and other subjects of academia. From the first game in 1896 to the 1917 season it is apparent that interests concerning health and competitive athletics grew alongside increasing support of the student body and community. Sports also grew increasingly popular among women, especially at Ward-Belmont. Students seemed to view athletics as inspiring loyalty and unity. Student Rosalyn Kirsch penned a popular poem among the girls in her memory book:

There’s a school in Tennessee,
Where we all just love to be.
Everyone should want to see,
The sports at W-B.
We’ve tennis in the spring and fall,
In winter we play basketball.
We stand together one and all,
And loyalty is our call.¹⁰⁸

This is not to say that women’s sports received strong encouragement, and the girls who competed from 1900 to 1917 continued to be part of the minority student population.

¹⁰⁷ Shelia Scraton, *Shaping Up to Womanhood*, 1992, 29. See also: Martha Verbugge, *Able-Bodied Womanhood: Personal Health and Social Change in Nineteenth-Century Boston* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988).

¹⁰⁸ Rosalyn Kirsch Scrapbook, 1920, *Belmont Special Collections*.

Still, they served as the first generation of female athletes. Although traditional principles of femininity were in one sense a barrier for women during this time, this ideology turned on itself by allowing women to participate in more physical activities. Once these girls stepped foot in the door of athletic sport, their successful participation in sportive activities necessitated a practical change in clothing, which over time reinforced the propriety of the activity. Certain attitudes persisted about women, such as the view that emotionality and the physical weakness of females remained too great for a balance between the feeling and action needed for sports.¹⁰⁹

On-Campus Coalescence

In the spring of 1900, Vanderbilt University held its Annual Oratory Contest on campus. Earlier in the day, the invitation committee received a phone call from a faculty chaperone from Ward's Seminary stating that one hundred young ladies would be in attendance for the contest. As the contest hour drew near, the young men anxiously awaited "the fair ones" whose presence "stimulated the speakers almost to the point of intoxication."¹¹⁰ Despite the almost childish enthusiasm with which the account is written, there exist larger insights into an emerging modern youth culture within, between, and outside of collegiate campus life:

The point on which we desire to lay stress is the interest manifested by Ward's in Vanderbilt affairs. They do us the honor to attend both our athletic and forensic contests. . . . Wherever a Vanderbilt man goes he should be unstinted in his praise of Ward's, who have been so enthusiastic in their loyalty to Vanderbilt. Ward's is unquestionably in the forefront of female education in the South, and richly merits

¹⁰⁹ Nonetheless, women's sports could not have survived the anti-competition philosophy put into place in 1923 by the women's Division of the National Amateur Athletic Federation (WDNAAF) whereby competition was minimized in women's athletics through the late 1960s, without the strong foundation first built by this earlier era of productive, versatile girls. It was not until the feminist movement of the 1960s, and the pressure of the federal legislation in the 1970s in the form of Title IX, that women returned to competitive high school intercollegiate sports.

¹¹⁰ *The Hustler*, Vol. 11 No. 19, March 9, 1900, 4.

the splendid prestige and patronage that it maintains . . . Here's to them, three cheers and a tiger!"¹¹¹

This passage precisely illustrates the evolvment of a youth culture grounded in higher education. Although Ward Seminary and Vanderbilt University existed as separate institutions, students knew one another and supported each other's activities and events. There did exist a special bond between Ward and Vanderbilt because of the socioeconomic backgrounds of most of its student families; however, it was not uncommon for students from David Lipscomb or Peabody to attend a lecture sponsored by another school or to mix and mingle at a tennis tournament. Together the college students were bound by two shared experiences, the challenge and opportunity provided by higher education and an urban environment that fostered social interaction through sports, clubs, and cultural arts.

During the first two decades of the twentieth century, sororities and fraternities served to lay the groundwork, along with varsity sport, for the modern collegiate social experience in regard to extracurricular activities and recreational pursuits. The Greek system of fraternities and sororities remained instrumental in the shift of increased acceptability for social interaction between male and female students. Although such groups were not coeducational and limited membership to either males or females; their homosocial nature turned heterosocial when hosting parties, dances, or events. Entertainment and leisure for college students continued to commodify with membership dues and entrance fees to events. At Vanderbilt, the faculty and administration fought fraternities throughout from 1876-1883, referring to them as secret organizations, and "evil." However, the persistent demand of students won out, and there were eight

¹¹¹ Ibid.

fraternities by 1886.¹¹² On the female side, Phi Kappa Upsilon sorority formed in 1897-1898 while the Theta Delta Theta appeared two years later in 1900.¹¹³

David Lipscomb University did not have national or an official Greek system; however, many of its club names came from the Greek language. By 1906, literary societies and clubs began to emerge, but they operated as less exclusive and less organized fraternities and sororities. All females were required to join Sigma Rho, which later split in 1913 into Kappa Nu and Sapphoneans, and all males were required to join either Calliopean or Caesarion; the latter was renamed Lipscomb. Peabody and Ward-Belmont were also the same, maintaining several literary societies but no national fraternities or sororities. Female students from Peabody and Ward-Belmont many times accompanied Vanderbilt men to their fraternity functions. In addition to literary societies, Ward-Belmont maintained many extracurricular clubs by 1917 including the Twentieth Century Club, the Tri-K Club, and the Ayopa Club among others, but no nationally affiliated sororities until the 1990s. In fact, by 1915, the school even maintained a regular “club hour” each Friday evening. Peabody men were members of clubs such as the Agatheridian Society, while many women were members of the Peabody Literary Society. Although they did not have an official Greek system, these societies were essential to the extra-curricular activities of students.¹¹⁴

¹¹² Immediately the fraternities became competitive, and even hazing incidents pushed the administration to wonder why it had agreed to allow such student led organizations. But it was out of their control; fraternities remained very popular and also helped to ease the loneliness of which many students complained. It also helped to generate school spirit and offered a different kind of loyalty on campus (Conklin, *Gone with the Ivy*, 76-80).

¹¹³ *The Hustler*, Vol. 12 No. 3, October 11, 1900, 3. The sorority began with nine members who initiated four more women into the sorority that year. Although both began solely as local sororities, Phi Kappa Upsilon merged with the nationally recognized Kappa Alpha Theta in 1904, and in 1909 Theta Delta Theta became a part of Delta Delta Delta national organization. *The Hustler* also announced the initial beginnings of Theta Delta Theta, “The colors are magenta and cerise, and the flowers are red and pink carnations. The pin is kite-shaped with the letters Theta Delta Theta in black on a red scroll across the top. In the lower point is a sun.”

¹¹⁴ Marguerite Griffith Scrapbook, 1916-1918. After graduation, Griffith married Harry Witherspoon at the age of eighteen. Belmont College Special Collections.

For African American male students, at Fisk, most extracurricular activities were academic. In addition to the Jubilee Singers, perhaps the most accomplished and well-known club remained the debate team. This highly competitive group participated in the annual “Triangular Debate” with Atlanta and Howard Universities and carried with it a great deal of school pride, and of course, bragging rights for the year.¹¹⁵ There were several literary societies including Union Literary Society, The Dunbar Club, Extempo, and the oldest – Excelsior, founded in 1894. Many of these clubs would transform into fraternities as the Greek movement finally reached campus in 1928. One other club was the Fisk’s black chapter of the YMCA. The well-respected Professor Adam K. Spence brought the YMCA concept to campus as early as 1887, and Rodney T. Cohen argues that many believe “Fisk was the first black college in the country to host a YMCA group.”¹¹⁶ With a YMCA chapter and strong student participation, Fisk seemed to buy into the notion of “muscular Christianity” as a means to gain respect with the Caucasian community.¹¹⁷

For black females, opportunities and venues for leisure brought with them a different definition of recreation. While white women seemed to enjoy leisure primarily for the sake of having fun, “African American women transformed recreation and leisure

¹¹⁵ The debate team only boasted four members, so most Fisk men, opted to pursue other club societies.

¹¹⁶ Cohen, *Fisk University*, 30.

¹¹⁷ For other issues regarding race and leisure from the perspective of African Americans as spectacles rather than spectators see: Janet Davis, *The Circus Age: Culture and Society Under The American Big Top* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 15-36; 142-192. Davis argues that commercialized leisure created a national and regional sense of “otherness” for African Americans and ethnic minorities. She also discusses the intersections of leisure and race/ethnicity in *The Circus Age*. She contends that changing notions of leisure and technology allowed the railroad circus to present to its audiences a spectator’s delight that mirrored the WASP’s (White Anglo-Saxon Protestant) position in the modern world. The circus certainly operated as a business, much like amusement parks, employing over 1,000, but the lure of the circus’s diversity was often illusionary because the circus used “otherness” not to celebrate diversity but to defend the human differences of racial/gender/ethnic hierarchies.¹¹⁷ Circuses used railroads such as Nashville’s NC&St.L railroad to bring myths of the Wild West and the non-western worlds to cities/towns across America.

experiences into a vehicle for social change based on race and class issues.”¹¹⁸ For example, there were no Fisk sponsored sororities until 1927-1928; however, many female Fiskites were members of city sororities or organizations. The primary work of such organizations was not to sit and socialize but rather to discuss and plan how best to serve the community. Even female members of the Jubilee Singers found themselves in the line of service as their entertainment provided funding for the university.

On campus, Fisk women could join one of three club societies. The Decagynian Club was the oldest literary club, founded in 1899, and sought to study important issues both literary and practical.¹¹⁹ Many times issues discussed revolved more around eminent problems in the city rather than the plot of their latest book. Athlea Brown, a Fisk student, began the DLV Club in 1900. The name stood for Duodecem Literae Virgines, representing twelve young ladies studying the classics as well as science. By 1917, the club allowed more than twelve members and changed its focus more toward preparing women for service and leadership. In 1905, the Harmonia Club emerged as a musical club for women only that studied music history, composition, and also sang at certain school functions.

Not all clubs at Nashville’s colleges were serious in nature. The girl’s club Sigma Rho at David Lipscomb University had the audacity to perform a “man-less wedding” in 1912. Groups of the more jovial nature existed such as the Old Maid’s Club and Lunch Pail Club at Ward Seminary, the Sewing and Skillet Club at Ward and David Lipscomb, David Lipscomb’s Red Headed Club, and the State Clubs whereby students joined

¹¹⁸ M. Deborah Bialeschki, “You have to have some fun to go along with your work,” *Journal of Leisure Research* 30(1) (January 1998), 95-101.

¹¹⁹ Rodney T. Cohen, *Fisk University* (Charleston, South Carolina: Arcadia Publishing, 2001), 44. The Decagynian Club defected from the Lyceum Club, the only other women’s club at that time. As Rodney T. Cohen recounts, “When approached by the members about a name, Professor Chase replied humorously with ‘Call yourselves the Decagynians – the ten married women,’” (44).

according to the state where they lived before moving to Nashville for higher education. Until the early years following the turn-of-the-century many of these clubs and societies remained single sex, and some remained that way through the 1920s. However, there are illustrations of heterosocial clubs as early as 1905 with David Lipscomb's Red Headed club, music club, and art club.¹²⁰

As the new century neared the 1910 benchmark, there remains a noticeable move toward open and outward accounts of social events carried out by sororities and fraternities and toward chaperones losing their official role in the social circles of college student functions. Earlier reports of parties or events always listed participants and chaperones by name. By the 1910s, this tradition was antiquated, and with more social freedom and autonomy, college students were overall left to their own devices. The affordability of automobiles also literally provided new avenues of leisure and social interaction. Theta Delta Theta sponsored one of the popular co-ed "tallyho rides" where students loaded up in cars, leaving campus for the afternoon to drive out to the country past Belle Meade. Later that fall, Kappa Alpha Thetas hosted a party where the "lawn was a sea of brightly colored Japanese lanterns and in the absence of the harvest moon, cast their mellow light upon the young people beneath."¹²¹ Attending the party were "Vanderbilt's handsomest men . . . and with oodles of charming girls."¹²² In another instance, thirty-five Vanderbilt men and their dates left Union Station on a private car chartered specifically for the Kappa Alpha Theta party. They traveled to "Craggy Hope" a station in the mountains, visited the city, hiked, picnicked, spent the night, and returned

¹²⁰ *The Iris*, 1905-1917; *The Ark*, 1910; *The Zenith*, 1914, 1916. For more on changing social interaction in the Gilded/Progressive Era see Carroll Smith Rosenberg, *Disorderly Conduct: Visions of Gender in Victorian America* (1985); Kathy Peiss, *Cheap Amusements: Working Women and Leisure in Turn-of-the-Century New York* (1986); and Randy McBee, *Dance Hall Days: Intimacy and Leisure among Working Class Immigrants in the United States* (2000).

¹²¹ *The Hustler*, Vol. 21 No. 1, October 1, 1909, 5.

¹²² *Ibid.*

the next day. The overnight trip most likely had a chaperone, it is clear that male and female were interacting with much more freedom and with much less restriction.¹²³

Male and female interaction could occur formally and informally, as couples or as groups, through traditional dates, clubs, dance halls, sporting events, and amusement parks. Randy McBee argues in *Dance Hall Days*, that commercialized leisure did shape gender roles, sexuality and culture but it did not entirely restructure the nature of homosocial and heterosocial relationships.¹²⁴ Dancehalls, McBee argued, served as an outlet for men (but especially women) that allowed behavior unsuitable in streets and amusement parks and challenged progressive goals of morality and self-control in regard to drinking and promiscuity. Nashville's downtown did feature a few dance halls; however, most college students were strictly prohibited from going to dancehalls because they were deemed promiscuous or even dangerous. The largest group that frequented downtown dancehalls was the working class. But to say that college students did not dance remained far from the truth. Most college students emerged from the middle or upper class and created a new niche through societies, clubs, sports, and the Greek system that grew more acceptable during the first twenty years of the twentieth century. Many Vanderbilt and Ward-Belmont students attended debutante and youth society balls at local country clubs. However, school clubs, primarily fraternities and sororities, sponsored the majority of the dances for this rising adult generation.¹²⁵

Vanderbilt maintained the largest number of Greek chapters of any Nashville college, and the numbers of sponsored dances and other outings increased dramatically,

¹²³ *The Hustler*, Vol. 17 No. 5, October 26, 1905, 4.

¹²⁴ Randy McBee, *Dance Hall Days: Intimacy and Leisure among Working Class Immigrants in the United States* (New York: New York University Press, 2000).

¹²⁵ Various accounts of school and social club dances can be found in *The Hustler*, 1905-1917. Also Marguerite Griffith Scrapbook, newspaper clippings. Also see: Doyle, *Nashville in the New South*.

with events occurring regularly (at least one a month per chapter) from 1910-1917.¹²⁶ Dances were held even in the 1890s, but the nature of dances and social interaction evolved decidedly after 1900. In 1906, dances began mixing with college sports. After the Vanderbilt-Michigan baseball game, both teams met a host of other young men and women at the school's University Club where the "local boys had a chance to take a back seat, and Michigan men were decidedly the rage."¹²⁷ Yet, events were held on all of the college campuses as well as in local theaters and clubs. In 1916, a trio of Ward Belmont clubs, Penta Taus, Osiron, and the Twentieth Century Club sponsored a dance. In addition, Vanderbilt's sororities and fraternities often joined forces to co-sponsor activities and dances. When petitioning for permission to hold a dance, college students remained resourceful and creative. They made use of upcoming holidays, sports events, or themes to justify a party. Themed dances were very popular, allowing students to dress up, role-play, or venture to an usual location. The F.F. Club at Ward Belmont hosted a matinee dance at the Golf and Country Club in Belle Meade.¹²⁸

As Nashville neared the year 1917, the official roles of chaperones virtually disappeared; however, most on-campus functions did have some faculty member present. Still, it remains vitally important to recognize the role of education in shaping a more modern, autonomous generation of young adults. Educational administrators surely did not intend for colleges to serve as the foundation for heterosocial and homosocial leisure outside of the classroom. Yet, as notions of leisure, gender, and education became more

¹²⁶ For an example of the enthusiasm of Greek life at Vanderbilt, the totals for fraternities and sororities for 1909 are as follows: Phi Delta Theta- 35, Kappa Sigma- 33, Sigma Alpha Epsilon- 34, Kappa Alpha- 26, Beta Theta Pi- 20, Delta Tau Delta- 13, Sigma Nu- 22, Alpha Tau Omega- 29, Delta Kappa Epsilon- 31, Sigma Chi- 41, Phi Kappa Psi- 18, Phi Kappa Sigma- 29, Kappa Alpha Theta (sorority)- 14, Theta Delta Theta (sorority)- 11. These numbers show that the majority of male and female students were members of a fraternity or sorority.

¹²⁷ *The Hustler*, Vol. 17 No. 25, March 26, 1906, 3. There were chaperones at the dance.

¹²⁸ Marguerite Griffith Scrapbook, 1916-1918. *Ward Belmont Special Collections*. Although many dances had themes, certain functions maintained an odd and peculiar twist. Sponsored as a "kid party" all attendees dressed in the style of children's clothes, nibbled on candy and peppermint, and danced to the Vito orchestra in the school's gymnasium.

modern, colleges and universities had no choice but to allow their students to test out new Progressive waters – as long as they did not tip the boat of southern culture too drastically.¹²⁹

New opportunities to recreate varied greatly as did the social norms that prevailed the late 1800s. It remained both common and expected for young men and women to interact only at planned events or outings and only if chaperones were present. From the late 1890s until approximately 1910, most social events continued to maintain a heightened sense of propriety and order. In 1900, the Woman's Club at Vanderbilt University hosted one of its "entertainments":

The ladies of the campus, always having the happiness and pleasure of the students at heart, have for years given one or more entertainments during each year especially for the students. . . It will be in the Chapel . . . and the principal feature will be the reading of "Esmeralda" by Professor Merrill . . . After the chapel entertainment all are expected to adjourn to the society halls for a social time during the remainder of the evening . . . Every student has the privilege of bringing any young lady whom he chooses – with her consent."¹³⁰

The tone of the announcement remains stiff and confined, steeped in patriarchal overtones. The women hosted the event, provided the refreshments, and hoped to be invited by one of the male students. Female students could not bring their significant other; they could only go as a date, dependent on the male asking. These types of events and restrictive gender and recreational roles began to change as the first decade of the twentieth century passed. By 1909, the Woman's Club no longer existed, but in a new club arose to fill its void. Members of the Girls' Club were a stark contrast to their

¹²⁹ Conklin, *Gone with the Ivy*, 76-80, 218-219. Vanderbilt's administration did not desire social clubs or the Greek System. In fact, several attempts were made by Chancellor Landon Garland to disassemble student publications as well as fraternities and sororities. He believed that too much student control and socializing (especially between men and women) was "worse than every other youthful indulgence or vice," (76). Other schools such as Ward-Belmont and David Lipscomb discouraged clubs that existed for socializing purposes only. Fisk also remained hesitant to allow too many student clubs. The only consistent clubs encouraged by administrators at all of the school were the literary clubs and music (glee) clubs.

¹³⁰ *The Hustler*, Vol. XI No. 15, February 8, 1900, 1. See also: Peiss, *Cheap Amusements*.

predecessors, holding meetings on topics such as suffrage, politics, co-education, and college life and hosted at least two theatrical plays per year. Ten years prior, male students could bring a specific date, but by 1910 men and women alike showed up alone or with a casual group and mingled once there. Heterosocial interaction was on the rise. New forms of entertainment generated greater enthusiasm by the students, in part, because of relaxed standards of social activity between men and women. In 1907, one student said that a new excitement remained apparent after Phi Delta Theta dance. He credited this with the “delightful ease and informality of the occasion that added greatly to the charm.”¹³¹

Conclusion

Some things never change, such as the desire for young men and women to spend time together, with many eventually finding a spouse while attending one of Nashville’s universities. Colleges continued to serve as a site for matchmaking; however, the nature of dating and interaction between men and women did transform for several reasons. First, more women attended college, with many even going to school with the men. Moreover, women became more culturally accepted into public spheres, although still relegated to certain roles. As such, women grew into modern “belles” and exhibited greater confidence, independence, and autonomy over their own affairs.¹³² Yet, it was the commercialization of leisure and sport that would drastically change the social

¹³¹ *The Hustler*, Vol. 19 No. 2, October 10, 1907, 4.

¹³² Although men and women gained autonomy and used it to socialize with one another on and off campus, a skeleton of Victorian and Antebellum values persisted into World War I. One Ward-Belmont student received a note from her best friend’s beau who wished to send a note to his girl before his eventual deployment to Europe, “Tonight about 9:30 p.m. will you put both arms around Bernice, squeeze her real firmly but gently, and kiss her on each cheek, and then tell her it was for me . . . Say why can’t you be our chaperone when I come to Nashville next. If you will, I’ll take you to a show and buy you a big feed?”¹³² Thus, chaperonage was still common and expected, particularly for official dating within the upper class (Mary Daly McWilliams Scrapbook, 1918, Belmont Special Collections).

landscape. Combining factors led female students to be more overt and vocal in their dealings with male complements. Women entered the public sphere and the world of sports, dancing, and theater as both participants and as spectators. Women perhaps participated and watched in different ways, with fewer women playing sports, gambling and drinking, but their presence was powerful.¹³³

Movies and automobiles replaced theaters and streetcars to a large extent from 1910 to 1917, although they would not completely supercede the former until the 1920s and 1930s. In the South and in Nashville, the majority of women still held men in high regard but pursued them in a more direct fashion. As Rosalyn Kirsch, a Ward-Belmont student who graduated in 1921, admitted in her memory book:

This is about the most lovesick bunch of girls I have ever known. Their motto is undoubtedly, ‘Anything for a man!’ In the movies on Saturday night, in the exciting love parts . . . [t]hey yell and scream and clap and stamp. And when the final close up is flashed on the screen, the shouting back and forth would certainly make the hero’s ears burn. . . Most of the girls’ favorite expression is ‘He could have me in a minute’ (Like every man on earth is just dying to have them.) They sit up in the windows and flirt with the men who pass in cars.¹³⁴

As World War I ended, college students spent more and more of their free time pursuing movies, cars, sports, and dances – rather than studying. College life grew more distracting, but also more exciting with commercialized leisure and venues for recreation. In 1912, *The Hustler* ran advertisements on the front page of the paper proclaiming, “Take your girl to the game in a Main 200,” accompanied by a picture of a proud student driving his car, decorated with Vanderbilt colors and signs with his arm around his

¹³³ Sarah Mercer Judson also makes a very good point in her study of Atlanta’s women during the same time period. As she concludes, “The combination of women’s increased engagement with the city and Atlanta’s developing commercialized leisure economy create new settings for women to explore and experience. The many dance halls and cheap theaters lining the streets of Atlanta’s downtown commercial districts provided enticements to young women with money to burn, time on their hands, and the freedom that comes with urban anonymity,” For more see: Sarah Mercer Judson, “Leisure is a Foe to Any Man: The Pleasures and Dangers of Leisure in Atlanta during World War I,” *Journal of Women’s History* 15(1) (2003), 94.

¹³⁴ Rosalyn Kirsch Scrapbook, 1920, *Ward Belmont Special Collections*.

date.¹³⁵ Clearly, college culture had shifted in the twenty-year period, both in societal values as well as technological advancements.

Nashville's first moving picture theater was opened in 1907, but movie theaters as popular destinations for college students would not be acceptable until World War I. However, when movies and movie theaters did gain approval from middle and upper classes as acceptable, they quickly became popular for local students. In 1918, actor and comedian Charlie Chaplin even came for a visit to tour the city. While visiting, he found the time to go to Ward-Belmont to talk to the girls. As one student commented, "He is nice looking isn't he, and didn't he seem to enjoy himself? You are not accustomed to having a gentleman bow twice and then fall down in the midst of five hundred girls are you?"¹³⁶ Doubtless, Chaplin fell as a stunt to entertain, his typical on-screen personality and style, but his celebrity status reflected the solidification of movies as a newer, cheaper alternative to theater and shows. In a reprinted article from the *McClure Newspaper* in the *Nashville Banner* the topic of movies was addressed, "There is nothing pernicious about moving pictures – any more than there is about grand opera. In fact, a good, well-ventilated moving pictures theater would be a decided asset in a place like this."¹³⁷ Nashville would not lose its theater industry to the movies, like many other cities, because of the sturdy foundation the theaters such as the Ryman Auditorium and cultural appeal of Nashville as a center for musical and theatrical arts. Yet, movies, cars, and parks allowed students to spend their leisure time with even less supervision.

Commercialized leisure and recreation served as important by-products of the industrial revolution, but also raised concerns in the urban community. This was in large

¹³⁵ *The Hustler*, 1912, 1.

¹³⁶ Mary Daly McWilliams Scrapbook, 1916-1918.

¹³⁷ *Nashville Banner*, July 4, 1914, 1.

part fueled by the new up and coming generation of young adults attending local schools, colleges, and universities. As a result, a new youth culture emerged, but commercialized leisure, increased heterosocial space, and college extra-curricular activities were not all about changing the nature of having fun. Many in the older generation as well as the college generation of the early 1900s saw this shift as a threat to the morality of southern society in Nashville. Particularly females sought to reform the social ills brought by new venues of recreation through reform and control. Gambling, sexual immorality, and drinking remained a concern to white and black women alike, who helped to spearhead reform efforts to clean up the city. As Sarah Mercer Judson writes of commercialized leisure in Atlanta during and after World War I, “White club women pursued a politics of respectability that tied women’s citizenship to public displays of chastity [while] African American clubwomen focused more closely on utilizing public spaces in the city to protect black Atlantans from sexual and racial assault.”¹³⁸

College students forged a new youth culture that many would continue to oppose. With new forms and ideas about leisure and recreation, young men and women increasingly had greater opportunity to dance, drink, and socialize without the supervision of chaperones or family. Three consistent forces continued to define and redefine the direction and growth of new forms of recreation, 1- the creation of new spaces (both public and private), 2- leisure as a commodity to be consumed, and 3- participation of college students and young adults in leisure.¹³⁹ College students were

¹³⁸ Sarah Mercer Judson, “Leisure is a Foe to Any Man: The Pleasures and Dangers of Leisure in Atlanta during World War I,” *Journal of Women’s History* 15(1) (2003), 92. Moreover, Judson states, “Since the turn of the twentieth century, African American and white middle-class women had voiced concerns about the ‘new’ modern lifestyle, in particular the experiences of young women in the urban environment,” (93).

¹³⁹ For more on working class women and leisure consult: Kathy Peiss, *Cheap Amusements: Working Women and Leisure in Turn-of-the-Century New York* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1986). Peiss argues that working class women gained access to public space but not necessarily for reasons of individual or collective empowerment.

interacting more often and with less supervision and less formality. With the growing recreation industry in an increasingly urban society, these factors combined to create a ripple effect, as a new youth culture emerged. The shift of cultural values and eagerness of college students to embrace new forms of fun would set in motion trends that produced the modern college experience. This generation of young adults indelibly shaped the world of leisure and social interaction, just as they were shaped by it, by a continual process of societal challenge, reaction, and modification.

Women began to work as telephone operators, store clerks, and secretaries and also began to attend institutions of higher learning. Coinciding with new labor opportunities, the organization and structure of work changed, decreasing hours of labor. As a result, an increase in free time brought with it co-sex leisure for men *as well as* women who had more time, more money, and more ways to spend both. As Peiss contends, the ability of women workers to bring money into the family economy also led to more autonomy for young women. However, this is also true for college women. Although single sex and coeducational schools maintain fairly strict rules, these young women still enjoyed greater opportunities to develop social relationships both on and off campus. Also, for a more intricate look at the burgeoning movie industry see: Lauren Rabinovitz, *For the Love of Pleasure: Women, Movies, and Culture in Turn-of-the-Century Chicago* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1998).

6. Epilogue: Prohibition and Women's Suffrage

In 1919, a parade marched down Broadway through Nashville's downtown, celebrating the return of Nashville's World War I veterans. It marked the end of an era in the South that began with industrialization, notions of modernity, and a new century. With the end of World War I and the Progressive Era, the New South entered the 1920s. At that time, two major reforms culminated in constitutional amendments, in which Tennessee played a major role. Neither prohibition nor women's suffrage were new movements, their origins tracing back to the 1830s and 1840s. By 1909, Tennessee passed state level prohibition, and women in Nashville voted in municipal elections. But on a national scale, Nashville, as the state capital and as a major urban center, provided pivotal turning points for these amendments. The Eighteenth and Nineteenth Amendments would further shape Nashville generation of young men and women as they graduated from college and began the responsibilities of adulthood.

Prohibition remained a controversial issue in Nashville and the state of Tennessee. Even at the Centennial Exposition of 1897, controversy swirled over the sale of alcohol on the fairgrounds.¹ Throughout the 1880s and 1890s, Nashville's downtown featured the "men's quarter." This area was notorious for gambling and drinking that catered to middle class men. Included in the "men's quarter" were the Southern Turf, Climax Saloon, and Utopia Saloon. This area's reputation forced "[r]espectable women wishing to dine at the Maxwell House Hotel [to] avoid this masculine turf by using the lady's entrance on Church Street."² It was no secret that many Protestant denominations

¹ Hilary Hoover, "The Tennessee Centennial Exposition: Nashville Tennessee, 1897," *Nashville as a Historical Laboratory* (1978), 6. For more on Nashville beyond World War I see: Don Doyle, *Nashville since the 1920s* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1985).

² Doyle, *Nashville in the New South*, 82.

consistently condemned alcohol and its related vices. In 1897, the Tennessee Baptist Convention declared, “The saloon is the enemy of all good, the friend of all evil.”³ Tennessee’s Anti-Saloon League continued to gain support and advocates of temperance finally earned a small victory in 1907 with the passage of the Pendleton Act, which made consumption and distribution illegal in larger cities. Yet, Nashville remained resistant, with the city, led by Hilary Howse as mayor, who turned a blind eye to the enforcement of this new state law. In many ways, “Howse served as a nullifier of state prohibition.”⁴ Howse admitted he did not enforce state liquor laws because the “great majority of the people” of Nashville opposed the laws.⁵

In the following year, prohibition became a gubernatorial affair as candidates for governor picked sides in the controversy. Edward Carmack, from Nashville, who had never been a prohibitionist before the election, made prohibition his defining cause. Although he lost the election, he did not rescind from the public eye. Carmack became the editor of Nashville’s newspaper, *The Tennessean*, and continued his campaign against the sale and consumption of alcohol. Carmack used the newspaper as a mouthpiece to publicly criticize Malcolm Patterson, the newly elected governor, and his advisor, Duncan Cooper. In 1908, as tensions rose, Carmack met Cooper and Patterson one Nashville morning near Union Station. Shots were fired, and Carmack was killed. Although Carmack used prohibition for personal gain against his political adversaries, he quickly became a martyr for the prohibitionist movement.⁶

³ Tennessee Baptist Convention Minutes, 1897, 25.

⁴ Hilary Hoover, “The Tennessee Centennial Exposition, Nashville, Tenn., 1897,” *Nashville as a Historical Laboratory* (1978), 3.

⁵ Doyle, *Nashville in the New South*, 167.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 162-164. See also: Isaac, *Prohibition and Politics*, 100-140.

Tennessee passed statewide prohibition the following year with many still proclaiming Carmack's legacy. In 1909, after the passage of a statewide prohibition amendment, Luke Lea, owner of *The Tennessean*, proclaimed, "Tennessee had been redeemed."⁷ However, the enforcement of prohibition, on a local level, failed in Nashville. By 1912, the city returned licenses to liquor dealers, and only closed bars on Sunday. Mirroring the national trend, rates of sale and consumption actually rose in Tennessee.⁸ Prohibition would remain a central issue from 1900-1918, but the state ratified the Eighteenth Amendment with relative ease.⁹

In a myriad of ways, prohibition had an effect on college students in Nashville. The use of alcohol crept onto campuses, particularly Vanderbilt, where Greek society functions and sporting events seemed to invite the vices of alcohol and social interaction. Officially, Vanderbilt's students maintained a high moral ground, purporting the evils of alcohol through clubs such as the YMCA and YWCA.¹⁰ Fisk University continued to enforce strict policies, and between 1917-1923 several students were dismissed for alcohol related incidents. As Joe Richardson argues, "Rules at Fisk were even more rigid than other black schools." Drinking offenses for Fisk students were even more serious because African Americans feared white retaliation for rowdy public misbehavior.¹¹ Students at both David Lipscomb University and Ward-Belmont also favored state and national prohibition. This is not surprising considering the religious nature of David

⁷ *The Tennessean*, January 13, 1909.

⁸ Paul E. Isaac, *Prohibition and Politics: Turbulent Decades in Tennessee, 1886-1920* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1965).

⁹ Ben Hooper, who served as governor from 1911-1919, was elected on a prohibitionist platform.

¹⁰ Conkin, *Gone with the Ivy*, 303-314. Various issues of *The Hustler*, 1905-1921, reflect ideas of "Muscular Christianity" in which morality dictated the success and strength of character.

¹¹ Richardson, *A History of Fisk University*, 86-88.

Lipscomb and the support of most middle and upper class women for the ban of alcohol.¹²

The role of the Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) remained the link between suffrage and prohibition. The organization did not have collegiate chapters and were not sponsored directly by local colleges. Regardless, many prominent women, young and old, educated and uneducated, maintained membership in the WCTU. The WCTU formed its first chapter in 1876, and in 1887 the national convention met in Nashville. By 1908, one year before the passage of state prohibition, the WCTU maintained over 4,000 members. All WCTU members supported national prohibition to improve the moral standing of the urban environment. Not all WCTU members supported women's rights, but many "Union" women advocated women's suffrage.¹³ In part, these women believed that the right to vote would further social reforms and continue to improve overall conditions in Nashville. As such, prohibition and women's suffrage were intricately connected. As Marjorie Spruill Wheeler notes, "[P]articularly in large Southern cities such as New Orleans, Memphis, Nashville, and Louisville, . . . the formidable influence of the brewers and distributors – and widespread public sentiment against prohibition – proved costly for women's suffrage."¹⁴

In 1887, Congress debated the passage of women's suffrage on the House floor. Women would not see Congressional debate on the issue again until the start of war in Europe. As Nashville's World War I veterans returned home to a parade down Broad Street in 1919, tensions regarding state and national prohibition and federally supported women's suffrage remained high. In the South, the question of women's suffrage

¹² S.P. Pittman, *Lipscomb's Golden Heritage*, 25-40.

¹³ "Temperance," *Tennessee Encyclopedia of Culture and History*, <http://tennesseeencyclopedia.net>.

¹⁴ Marjorie Spruill Wheeler, *New Women of the New South*, 11.

remained even less popular than in the North. It was not just men, but also women who feared the destruction of southern culture. Many Southerners maintained a heightened awareness of the political enfranchisement of women, alarmed that it would put an end to ideas of family and subordinate southern belles, further complicate the restoration of white supremacy with black women now demanding rights, and permanently alter what remained of antebellum notions of order. Though not completely unfounded, such fears failed to match the consequential reality of women's suffrage in 1919 and its effect in the 1920s. Election results suggest that most women continued to vote as their husbands or fathers and most white women in the South remained true to the Democratic Party.¹⁵

Tennessee played a vital role in this national movement leading up to the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment. The state's ratification of the federal amendment showed that Tennessee's patriarchal authority and social hierarchy was not as deeply seeded as in other southern states. Moreover, as one of its most populous and modern cities, Nashville remained a driving force behind the state's actions. Referred to as the "perfect 36," the Tennessee legislature voted to approve the amendment. Their vote tipped the scale, granting the needed majority of states to pass a constitutional amendment.¹⁶

The suffrage movement of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries served both as an impetus and motivator for women across the United States, including Nashville and the New South. The suffrage movement in Nashville existed as a strong but subtle movement within many female college/adult societies and clubs. The women

¹⁵ See also: Karen J. Blair, *The Clubwoman as Feminist: True Womanhood Redefined, 1868-1914* (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1980); Paula Baker, "The Domestication of Politics: Women and American Political Society," *American Historical Review* 89 (June 1984), 620-647; and Rebecca Edwards, *Angels in the Machinery: Gender in American Party Politics from the Civil War to the Progressive Era* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997).

¹⁶ Three-fourth is the majority needed to pass a federal constitutional amendment. The United States maintained 48 states at the time of ratification, giving Tennessee the role of making or breaking the number needed for passage at that time.

of Nashville who led the suffrage movement were women of privilege coming from reputable middle class and elite families, many with at least some college training. Unfortunately, from the perspective of college publications, the issue of women's suffrage remains largely undocumented in local newspapers and municipal records from the period. The main documentation for the suffrage and anti-suffrage movements is found through the writings and publications of individual women as well as two major organizations, the Southern States Woman Suffrage Conference (SSWSC), a regional division of the National Association (NAWSA), and the National Woman's Party, led by Tennessean Sue Shelton White.¹⁷ Their actions and the historical context of Nashville reveal that connections did exist between social and educational shifts occurring for women 1897-1917 and the political landmark that marked official government recognition of women as equally enfranchised citizens.

There are glimpses of women's groups in Nashville's colleges and universities, but they remain buried beneath sports scores, social announcements, and other tidbits of campus news. The earliest example came from Dr. J.S. Ward's 1886 commencement speech at Ward Seminary, "The Coming Woman." Ironically, he begins with a list of things that "the Coming Woman ought not to be." Ward contends that "she ought not to seek to come to the political arena, where the rougher man contends, quarrels, and fights. She ought not, therefore, to want the ballot."¹⁸

A decade later, shortly after the matriculation of women at Vanderbilt, the student newspaper noted the growing interest of women regarding the question of political enfranchisement. Male students did not know quite how to react: "It is rumored that a

¹⁷ See also: Jean V. Matthews, *The Rise of the New Woman: The Women's Movement in America, 1875-1930* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2003), 3-95.

¹⁸ W.E. Ward, "The Coming Woman," *Annual Commencement of W.E. Ward's Seminary for Ladies* (1885-1886), 25.

Woman's Rights Club has been organized by the co-editor with special regard to the Gymnasium [and other issues]. We understand they have carried their point . . . we'll not tell on them, but we admire this display of co-ed pluck."¹⁹ Although most suffragists were middle/upper class females who had the time and money to remain active in non-profit activities, most Vanderbilt alumnae did not directly participate in the movement. In 1907, one student stated, "A large percent of the women alumnae are mistresses of their own homes, and many of the others. . . do much to raise the standard of culture in their own communities. . . . As for 'women of the world,' I have not been able to find in the roll of Vanderbilt alumni the name of any woman who is a participant in any political movement."²⁰

Actual arguments used by antisuffragists were of the usual variety: women's minds were not capable of such important decision making, the southern family would be disrupted with mothers losing their priorities, and that if black women received enfranchisement many counties and states would go under "colored rule." Most white males and females agreed, that women's suffrage was less important than white supremacy; in the South race would continue to trump gender. In fact, anti-suffragists posed with Confederate veterans because over the underlying principles of loyalty to the tradition, the "Lost Cause," and the Old South. One prominent example pictured a Confederate veteran sitting between two of Tennessee's most fervent anti-suffragists, Miss Josephine Anderson Pearson and Mrs. James S. Pinckard. Pearson served as the President of the Tennessee Division for the "Southern Women's League for the 'Rejection of the Susan B. Anthony Amendment,'" while Pinckard served as the overall

¹⁹ *The Hustler*, Vol. 7 No. 2, September 30, 1896.

²⁰ *The Hustler*, Vol. 18, No. 28, May 16, 1907, 2.

leader of the League. Interestingly, Pinckard was a niece of John C. Calhoun, United States Senator from South Carolina and prominent proponent of States' Rights.

Many African American women were in favor of women's suffrage but realized that their political voice would not be heard until all African Americans were legitimately included in the political process. Unlike black women in the North, African Americans in the South faced higher levels of racism and sexism. White women, particularly in the South, achieved their goal with the Nineteenth Amendment. Historian Rosalyn Terborg-Penn argues in *African American Women in the Struggle for the Vote* that suffrage for African American women in the South was affected by black suffrage and white racism as most could not exercise the right to vote due to white supremacy. Moreover, white southern suffrage groups did not even consider the inclusion of their African American sisters. To do so would undermine the driving force behind southern politics – race. Terborg-Penn notes that “African American, not white, suffragists continued to use strategies in support of universal suffrage, whereas white women for the most part campaigned for their own enfranchisement.”²¹

In 1920, an anti-suffragist rally was held at the Ryman Auditorium entitled, “To Save the South.” Individuals in attendance continued to tout that suffrage would lead to racial and gender disruption, eventually destroying southern culture and social roles.²² Women in favor of suffrage rarely included black women in the movement or even supported universal suffrage. Certain southern suffragists preferred state legislation so that the issue of race could be controlled without federal intervention. One meeting

²¹ Terborg-Penn, *African American Women in the Struggle for the Right to Vote*, 9.

²² *Mass Meeting Tonight*, 1920, Tennessee State Library and Archives Broadside Collection.

focused the fears of whites in regard to greater political participation by African Americans. The 1920 broadside, entitled, *The Truth about the Negro* reads:

For the sake of southern civilization, for the sake of womanhood, and for the sake of the welfare of the Negro race as well as the white race, the Susan B. Anthony movement should be defeated. Nowhere on earth have two races lived in the same territory with such harmony as has always existed between southern whites and Negroes. . . . This amendment will not only hurt women into political competition and battle with men, but it will and must involve political warfare between the races – a thing that no thinking American, black or white, should advocate.²³

Couched in paternalism, such commentary reflects the attitude of most white men and many white women who desperately sought to keep patriarchy and white superiority as the prevailing ideology of Tennessee. Nashville may have been progressive – southern style – but its white citizens did not intend to bring equity to the black community.

Regardless, black women, and some black men, proactively advocated suffrage on their own behalf. Most women active in the black suffrage movement, like their white counterparts, were part of the middle or upper class. Many had attended institutions of higher education. Interest in women’s rights did surface at Fisk University three decades before the passage of the constitutional amendment. *The Fisk Herald* writes of the Ladies’ Reading Room, reporting its frequent and intense use by female students. Unknowingly the article also makes subtle connections between the activism and personal growth of women in education with eventual political empowerment. The author states that “some do not have a chance to learn the news of the day, and as the day is coming when women will vote, it is well for the young ladies to be well posted on all important political questions.”²⁴

²³ *The Truth about the Negro*, 1920, Tennessee State Library and Archives Broadside Collection.

²⁴ *The Fisk Herald*, Vol. VI, March 1889, 9.

One Fisk alumnae ultimately became a leading spokeswoman for the African American community and women's rights. Ida B. Wells attended Fisk during summer sessions and eventually settled in Memphis working as a journalist. Wells promoted women's political mobilization and actively campaigned against lynching. After being forced to flee Memphis and her paper *Free Speech* she joined the Women's Suffrage Association of Illinois.²⁵ Another prominent community organizer was Mary Church Terrell. Church was raised in Tennessee, and served as the first president of the National Association of Colored Women that formed after a merger between the National League of Colored Women and the National Federation of Afro-American Women at the turn of the century.²⁶ Terrell remained a popular speaker and activist for women's rights as well as civil rights. She was also a founding member of the NAACP.²⁷

African American women operated as a sizable contingency within one of Tennessee's largest cities. They also played a vital role in the community and exercised their right to vote after the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment. African American women in Nashville voted in substantial numbers after receiving the vote. In 1920, over 2,500 black women voted in the elections held in November.²⁸ After a period of increased violence against African Americans in the first two decades of the twentieth century, black women began the 1920s with "new economic and political hope that urbanization and industrialization, stimulated by war," would lead to greater prosperity and equity. Still, political victories were met with racial realities in the South and most

²⁵ Terborg-Penn, *African American Women in the Struggle for the Right to Vote*, 59.

²⁶ Other women who were leaders in the community and advocated universal women's suffrage include Lugenia Burns Hope of Atlanta (see Ch. 4) and Adella Hunt Logan, professor at Tuskegee Institute in Alabama.

²⁷ Lovett and Wynn, *Profiles of African Americans in Tennessee*, 128-129.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 162.

black men and women continued to fight for a legitimized voice through World War II and the Civil Rights movement.

In *New Women in the New South*, Marjorie Spruill Wheeler argues that women played a major part in the restoration of southern values after Reconstruction, “but as a *muse*, not as a direct participant.”²⁹ An influential fear among the majority of southern society after the Civil War remained violent acts of black men toward white women, specifically rape. A significant number of lynchings occurred because of charges by white women of attempted rape or rape. These white women either claimed such an act had occurred or did not deny it to a satisfactory extent. Even though such fears were not practically spelled out, it remained the driving concern and justification behind keeping blacks “in their place” so that white men could “protect” the female virtue while ensuring their social dominance. White women could not reinforce white supremacy through voting. In fact, it remained precisely the opposite; white men needed them to be fragile and unprotected because white women gave them cause to justify their actions. As Wheeler contends, “[T]he more her purity and virtue were celebrated, the more fraud and violence could be justified in her name.”³⁰ Thus, the defining feature that separated the suffrage movement in the South from those in the West or North remained the race factor. With the interplay and complexity of race, states’ rights, temperance, and women’s suffrage, Tennessee’s role lends perspective on Southern Progressivism before World War I and into the 1920s.

²⁹ Marjorie Spruill Wheeler, *New Women of the New South: The Leaders of the Women Suffrage Movement in the Southern States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 18.

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³⁰ *Ibid.*, 19.

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