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Unheralded Historian: Mary Sheldon Barnes and Primary Source Material in History Books

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ACCEPTANCE

This dissertation UNHERALDED HISTORIAN: MARY SHELDON BARNES AND PRIMARY SOURCE MATERIAL IN HISTORY BOOKS, by JAMES A. CHISHOLM, JR., was prepared under the direction of the candidate's Dissertation Advisory Committee. It is accepted by the committee members in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy in the College of Education, Georgia State University.

The Dissertation Advisory Committee and the student's Department Chair, as representatives of the faculty, certify that this dissertation has met all the standards of excellence and scholarship as determined by the faculty. The Dean of the College of Education concurs.

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ABSTRACT

UNHERALDED HISTORIAN: MARY SHELDON BARNES AND PRIMARY SOURCE MATERIAL IN HISTORY BOOKS

by
James A. Chisholm, Jr.

In the latter part of the nineteenth century, Mary Sheldon Barnes emerged as a leading historical methods professor and history textbook author. Although men dominated the field, she wrote several articles and books alone or with her husband Earl Barnes about primary source materials and teaching. She lived during an era in United States history when education was evolving. Students studied traditional subjects such as grammar, mathematics, and Latin using rote memorization. Students who failed to learn classroom material faced varying degrees of punishment from teachers. Classroom pedagogy in the nineteenth century was teacher-focused and teachers often employed a considerable amount of physical fear.

Mary Sheldon Barnes developed her pedagogy and writing style using scientific history and German seminary style classrooms. As a teacher, she taught in a normal school, gender specific college, and a co-educational institution of higher learning and these experiences impacted her pedagogy. Barnes rejected the regimented, teacher-centered, memorization/recitation pedagogy of the nineteenth century. She preferred a teaching style that provided more student-centered, discussion-oriented history pedagogy.

This study utilizes biography as a format to explore Mary Sheldon Barnes as a pioneer teacher and author. Following her death, history textbook authors turned away from source material textbooks back to traditional chronological design and ignored her contributions to social education history. This dissertation provides an examination of her life and explores its influence on contemporary textbooks and pedagogy.

UNHERALDED HISTORIAN: MARY SHELDON BARNES AND PRIMARY
SOURCE MATERIAL IN HISTORY BOOKS

by
James A. Chisholm, Jr.

A Dissertation

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
in
Curriculum and Instruction
in
the Department of Middle-Secondary Education and Instructional Technology
in
the College of Education
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Atlanta, GA
2013

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Mary Downing Sheldon Barnes was an unknown person to me when I returned to graduate school in the fall of 2005. My career as a teacher began in 1971 teaching a variety of social studies classes in a high school in Dekalb County, Georgia. I left teaching to enter business for the next thirty-two years. When I returned in 2007 as a substitute teacher, Sheldon Barnes found me when I was reading the book *Bending the Future to Their Will: Civic Women, Social Education, and Democracy* edited by Margaret Crocco and O.L. Davis. In the book, there are several stories about leading educators and most of them I had only limited knowledge. There is a small chapter written by Dr. Francis Monteverde about Sheldon Barnes with references to her books.

I began seeking information about Sheldon Barnes when I entered the Ph.D. program at Georgia State University. The class was taught by Dr. Chara Haeussler Bohan about the history of education. There was very limited information about Sheldon Barnes in journals or textbooks and yet she had a chapter written about her as a social educator. I asked Dr. Bohan about her and she was familiar with her name but had only a vague idea about her life. She wrote her dissertation about another early University of Michigan graduate, Lucy Maynard Salmon, who had a similar career path and was a classmate of Sheldon Barnes. I soon discovered that there was very little printed biographical information about Sheldon Barnes beyond her teaching method or textbooks available in recent journals.

My online research about her found several sources of information available to me. The first location for her material I discovered was in the Special Collections of Penfield Library, State University of New York at Oswego, New York. Edward Austin Barnes, her father, has an extensive collection of materials including many letters to him and other family members from Sheldon Barnes. After Sheldon Barnes began to travel and live outside of Oswego her letters to family members increased in volume significantly. Her parents maintained these letters as part of their family history. In many cases, letters to Sheldon Barnes from family members do not exist. However, letters written by Sheldon Barnes provided hints as to the substance of the preserved material. The archival material provided by the Special Collections of Penfield Library staff and my subsequent inquiries were critical in starting my research about Sheldon Barnes.

The Penfield Library staff directed me to the Mary Sheldon Barnes Collection in the Sophia Smith Collection at Smith College in Northampton, Massachusetts. The materials located at Smith College were essential for providing a more complete picture of Sheldon Barnes and her life story. The material found in the twenty-one boxes contained pictures, letters, journals, copies of several of her publications among other materials that provided considerable insight into Sheldon Barnes, her husband Earl Barnes, and Dr. Mary V. Lee. Members of Earl Barnes' family gave these materials to the library after his death. The Sophia Smith Collection's staff has organized the material in an orderly manner that allowed me to easily access documents and pictures to tell Sheldon Barnes' story. Smith College provided me a travel stipend and I spent ten days researching and collecting valuable information used in this manuscript. I appreciate their financial and research assistance during my data gathering phase.

A third location of material for Sheldon Barnes was The Bancroft Library at the University of California, Berkeley, California. Information was not as plentiful as the

other libraries but supplemented information about Sheldon Barnes' teaching experience at Stanford University. There were syllabi and notes referencing her classes that confirmed her teaching style and textbook writing process. This material established that she used her college classroom to teach students how to use primary source material.

Finally, the Department of Special Collections and University Archives, Stanford University at Stanford, California provided valuable information to confirm the reasons for the Barnes' departure from the university. Published and unpublished material provided a conflicting story for their resignations and the information located in David Starr Jordan's papers resolved the issue.

My dissertation committee has been extremely helpful in my writing and research. They provided many suggestions to help move my research and writing along. When I returned to Georgia State University to regain my teaching certificate in social studies after thirty-two years, I took classes from Dr. Wendy Venet, Dr. Caroline Sullivan, Dr. Joseph Feinberg, Dr. Philo Hutcheson, and, of course, Dr. Chara Bohan for two reasons; first, their knowledge of subject matter was essential in providing me direction for my research. I may have wandered off into an unnecessary direction without their thoughtful and encouraging assistance.

The second reason this group was critical was that they provided needed assistance with my writing skills. As a businessman, I could write a clean, direct memo or letter for business purposes. My committee suggested another way to express myself within the academic guidelines of research and publication.

Dr. Bohan has been a great mentor, friend, and teacher. She was always available for assistance with my researching and writing. We made many presentations at a variety of locations and venues. She was always encouraging and pushed me beyond my academic comfort zone.

I, also, want to thank Ebony Gibson and the other staff members of the Writing Studio at Georgia State University. For the past three plus years, I have been going to their offices and reviewing my writing with them. They found flaws in sentences and organization that were not evident to me or my other "editors." My writing skills have improved as a result of these sessions.

I would also like to thank my fellow students within the doctoral program for taking the time to review my writing and conceptual ideas throughout the last four years. Especially, Heather Stevens, a fellow teacher and friend, has been a great source for editing and support to keep me going. There were many times I worked with her on class projects or papers and observed her skills as a writer while we collaborated. We have encouraged each other since the beginning of our doctoral program because we have been on the same timeline in our academic progress. In addition to our class assignments, we insure that we completed the necessary paperwork for Georgia State University on a timely basis so we did not miss any key submission dates or forms. She has been a great academic associate.

Finally, I have to thank my friends and family. They have helped me enormously with my academic trials and tribulations during the years since I returned to Georgia State University. My wife, Joyce, has been extremely patient during the last five years. We have been married for over four decades and she has been my partner, editor, and friend during my several educational adventures. She worked around my classes and writing schedule in order for me to achieve one of my life goals. I am forever grateful to her.

Also, my children, Jennifer and James, have been very supportive and kept me focused during this time. They have not allowed me to wander away from this challenge and kept my feet on the ground.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

OSNTS	Oswego State Normal and Training School.
Sheldon Barnes	Mary Downing Sheldon Barnes

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In the latter part of the nineteenth century, Mary Downing Sheldon Barnes (Sheldon Barnes) was a leading historical methods professor and history textbook author. She wrote several articles and books alone or with her husband Earl Barnes about primary source materials and teaching. She lived during an era in United States history when education was evolving. Students studied traditional subjects such as grammar, mathematics, and Latin. The preferred method of teaching required rote memorization. Students who failed to learn classroom material faced varying degrees of punishment from teachers. Classroom pedagogy in the nineteenth century was teacher-focused and teachers often employed a considerable amount of physical fear. Common teaching practices of lecture and passive rote learning moved slowly toward an approach where academics encouraged students to become more involved in the learning process.¹ Lecture and recitation were common teaching methods in the United States during the nineteenth century. “Teaching methods remained the universal drill, repetition, and memorization with ample doses of corporal punishment.”²

Barnes would develop her pedagogy and textbook writing technique using a Progressive Era style she either observed or participated in as a student or a novice teacher. She used a Socratic question-and-answer style and German seminary method in her classrooms. Her pedagogy required students to integrate prior knowledge along with

¹ Crocco and Davis, *Building a Legacy: Women in Social Education, 1784-1984*.

² Altenbaugh, *The American People and Their Education: A Social History*, 137.

new information to develop another higher level of either assimilation or accommodation of concepts. As a teacher, she was a product of both the normal school and college curriculum; both had a profound impact on her pedagogy.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of my biographical narrative of Sheldon Barnes is to provide insight and understanding of one of the pioneer writers of history textbooks. In the latter half of the nineteenth century, she advocated the use of visual documents and primary source material for the benefit of secondary school and college students. Sheldon Barnes' contribution to current textbooks is the use of pictures and primary source material as a method for helping students with content relevancy. Contemporary teachers try to relate classroom content to a student's prior knowledge using material found in books or photographs and video content found in multiple sources, such as on the internet. Writers occasionally fail to consider the readers who read their books.³ Sheldon Barnes created textbooks using primary source material and interjected relevancy for her readers, the students. She possessed an innovative writing style that placed her at the beginning of a group of Progressive Era writers. With the passage of time, her life and work has been lost.

Recreating Sheldon Barnes' life story in a biographical format is challenging. Woodward states "there is history in every biography, or should be, and it is subject to the same hazards of error."⁴ In other words, written material may have a different interpretation than the original recorder intended. Integrating nineteenth century society's

³ Woodward, *Thinking Back: The Perils of Writing History*.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 37.

cultural and political mores provides a holistic picture of Sheldon Barnes and the influences on her writing. Sheldon Barnes was aware of the limitations placed on females during nineteenth century. Realistically, she could neither vote nor provide a public impact on the political world in the United States in the late nineteenth century. She knew that in many states women could not own property. College educated women were limited in occupational opportunities. Her position on these contemporary issues would provide influence to future generations of women as society evolved. Sheldon Barnes' father, Edward Austin Sheldon, influenced her outlook as an educator within the contextual and cultural boundaries of the late nineteenth century. Her father was a well-known educator who established networks of devoted friends and admirers. She established a separate pathway for her creative talents using her writing and publishing skills to impact a generation of history students. Additionally, she made an impact on the next generation of college educated women through her teaching and participation in influential women's groups.⁵

Guiding Research Questions

The questions for my analysis and methodology are,

1. How did Sheldon Barnes' life story, pedagogy and textbook development influence educational practices in both the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century?
2. What challenges did Sheldon Barnes experience as a woman in higher education in the late nineteenth century?

⁵ Talbot and Rosenberry, *The History of the American Association of University Women 1881-1931*.

I chose these two questions because these provide the essence of telling a story about her life. She is not well-known in contemporary society but she was highly-regarded in academe prior to her death. Her pedagogy was different for post-Civil War educators. Her name is not one that appears as a major contributor to the Progressive Era American education. By looking at her life story in context with her pedagogy, social historians are able to observe the changes in textbook style we use today.

Theoretical Framework

I use a biographic method to explore the life of Sheldon Barnes and the world in which she lived. There is a considerable amount of historical material describing the early Progressive Era during the time Sheldon Barnes published her textbooks. As a writer of biography, my obligation is to present her story within the social and political context of the nineteenth century. Within the biography, I am limited to presenting the information as it appears through my research. Using the context of a patriarchal society and emerging feminist thought when Sheldon Barnes lived, I will provide a narrative of an active educator, professional teacher and textbook writer. As a biographer, I select from an assortment of details that may be available to the writer.⁶ I provide an inclusive picture of Sheldon Barnes' world that is available to me based upon the information that exists in her papers. In many cases, inclusion or exclusion of material is arbitrary. Why is the inclusion or exclusion of material so difficult? The use of available historic material, such as diaries, letters, especially for women, makes writing a biography complicated as much of the material is of a personal nature. Biographies of many nineteenth century male figures tend to stress public accomplishments. Women must integrate their private world

⁶ Nadel, *Biography: Fiction, Fact and Form*.

or sphere within the context of public accomplishments.⁷ To many women, especially in the nineteenth century, their private world dominated any public achievement because of cultural expectations.

The reality is that biographies of males during the nineteenth century are more concerned about outward perceptions than intimate thoughts about the results of their actions.⁸ Based on the primary source material, like letters or diaries, women's biographies may provide more information about daily, ordinary matters. These routine matters are integral to the complex story for women. As for men and their dairies or private papers, the discussion of household activities, typically, were not to be integral in their public sphere of accomplishments. Since women were usually responsible for the home, men created their world outside of the household to establish a sense of worth.

The interpretation of the public and private spheres of women and men in a biography require a writer to create an artwork. There is no specific design to present the material that is uncovered in historical research. The challenge for the biographer is to accurately use material that is available and integrate it into the life story to provide a better understanding of the subject without losing the essence of the character.⁹ All anecdotal records and research material are difficult to present in a manuscript because of the dearth of material available. In some cases, the information may not present the subject in the most positive perspective. The artistic aspect of the presentation of material is integrating known fact with analytical interpretation of supposition using contemporary historical events as the context. A biographer should not become overly enamored with

⁷ Hall, "Second Thoughts: On Writing a Feminist Biography."

⁸ Wagner-Martin, "The Issue of Gender: Continuing Problems in Biography."

⁹ Nadel, *Biography: Fiction, Fact and Form*.

the subject so that a person's life story is different than reality. The biographer does have an impact on the material by choosing and interpreting the data used in the story. Using the information in such a way that portrays the person in such a way as to create a fictional character is inappropriate, as well. The presentation of the life story should be consistent with both the subject and the context of the period and the life.

As the life story unfolds, the biographer is responsible for ensuring that the pertinent facts are real. As the biography develops along in a chronological pathway, the biographer needs to select those relevant facts to be included in the story. Any anecdotal information used in the biography should be illustrative of the person. Often times the separation requires the writer to separate fact from myth that may exist.¹⁰

For some subjects, there may be an extra level of challenges between the public and private spheres of their lives. The public images available for some women in biographies and history books and are hard to change and may be inaccurate. An example of that myth is the image of Betsy Ross sitting in a small cabin hand sewing the first American flag. Teachers provide elementary school children with the image, thus facilitating a potential myth in history. Whether she sewed or designed the flag has been debatable for over 200 years. To change the image of Betsy Ross would be a monumental task. Therefore, whether the flag controversy is a myth or factual is unknown. If some primary source material, such as a diary or letter from Betsy Ross detailed the process around the creation of the first American flag that disagreed with history books, then a new interpretation is available for historians. Without direct, historical evidence, the myth or anecdote continues in its current form. Thus, the dilemma of the biographer is to

¹⁰ Ibid.

separate fact from fiction. If historical materials support the public image of a person, then the anecdote or story should be included in the narrative. If not supported, the biographer either needs to address the lack of information or omit the myth.

In Leon Edel's work about biography, he discussed four basic principles for the biographer; first, the biographer needs to have an understanding of the people they write about and the contextual basis for their lives.¹¹ The biographer should understand how the social and cultural aspects subject impacted his or her pathway.

Second, the biographer can admire and hold the biographical subject in high esteem. However, there is a fine line between presenting the biographical material in a positive manner and providing an obsequious perspective to the subject of the biography. The biography should provide a balanced approach. Creating an obvious biased presentation, either positive or negative, will place questions in the mind of the reader about the authenticity of information in the biography. Was it accurate or complete? Did the author disregard material that created a more authentic analysis of the biographical subject? Why?

Third, the analysis of primary source material should enable the reader to develop a holistic picture of the biographical subject. The integration of primary and secondary sources in presentation of material allows the writer to contextualize the subject of the biography. Using the private material, such as letters and journals, that is available and integrating it with the biographical subject's thoughts enhances the quality of the biography. As an example, Sheldon Barnes used what she termed source material for her students, such as pictures. She rarely referred to Pestalozzi's name in her published

¹¹ Edel, *Writing Lives: Principia Biographica*.

writing. But in one of her letters home, she referred to one of her professors as “a perfect Pestalozzian in practice.”¹² As can be seen, Sheldon Barnes was thinking about Pestalozzi and his methodology in private but rarely referenced him in publications. She used her life experience as the basis for judging her professors. Can the analysis be free of subjectivity? Not completely, but by providing material that illustrates all sides of an issue, the author can show the reader the source of the analysis and allow the reader to agree or disagree with the analysis.

Finally, the biographer needs to present the material in a manner that is easily accessible to the reader. The use of timely anecdotes or unpublished material provides the writer with more opportunities to complete the story. In some cases, the use of a metaphor provides a better understanding of historical matters. The metaphor enables the writer an opportunity to bring historical and present day situations into a relative relationship for the reader.

Edel provides a design for my story of Sheldon Barnes. I present her as an educator within the patriarchal society of the nineteenth century by using her public and private writings to develop the narrative. The material presented allows the story to unfold in a compassionate yet open and honest structure. Sheldon Barnes' life (1850-1898) was during a significant and dramatically changing period in educational history. Based upon my research, a few gaps exist in the chronology, due to a lack of primary source material. However, there is a significant amount of information that she left behind for researchers that provide a clear understanding of her thoughts and

¹² Sheldon Barnes to Edward Austin Sheldon, 6 February 1872, Penfield Library Special Collections (referred to as Penfield Library).

contributions to educational textbook writing. There are no chronicles of her life story. Like all humans, she was a complex person and influenced by her academic contemporaries and society. Only two chapters of a book and a few other articles in magazines or journals describe her vision and impact on textbook writing.

Research Methods

The research methods used in this biography integrate aspects of nineteenth century historical and cultural customs and the life story of a progressive educator. As stated previously, a biography can be limiting due to the known facts of the subject and the historical setting when the subject lived. The biographical information available for Sheldon Barnes in secondary sources is limited as compared to the more extensive primary source information in her papers. Piecing her life story together will require using letters, journals, pictures from her and her family and friends.

Sheldon Barnes' papers are located in three places. The first and smaller collection of materials is located at the University of California, Berkeley in the Bancroft Library. In the Bancroft collection there are pictures, newspaper clippings, and correspondence of a limited nature. She taught at Stanford University for several years. The papers remained at Stanford University until transferred to the University of California, Berkeley. The Bancroft Library at the University is now the repository of these materials. There are two boxes of papers and one small folder of artwork that is unsigned and assumed to be her work.

The second and moderately larger collection is located at the Special Collections section of the Penfield Library located at the State University of New York, Oswego. In the Oswego collection, there are numerous letters to her parents and siblings because her

father was the founder and first administrator for the university. In this collection, there are many letters, poems and pictures. The documents cover the period from 1869 just prior to her death in 1898. Many of the documents in the Penfield Library Collection are retyped letters that someone created from Sheldon Barnes' original hand-written letters.¹³

The third and largest location that houses Sheldon Barnes' papers is located at the Sophia Smith Collection, Women's History archived at Smith College, Northampton, Massachusetts. This collection has many specific details of her methodology and her choice of primary source material in her textbooks. Within the Sophia Smith Collection, there are twenty-one boxes of material. The information available at the collection includes journals, correspondence, pictures, letters, and other miscellaneous material germane to Sheldon Barnes' life story. There is an unpublished, hand-written document that appears to be an autobiographical description of her life through college.

Historical Research

Much material is available to complete a life story of Sheldon Barnes within her papers located at the three respective archival sources. The materials chosen for this manuscript provide readers with a more complete understanding of Sheldon Barnes as person and textbook author. In some cases, the primary source documents substantiated her position as a Feminist pioneer within a generally male dominated profession. She was able to combine her educational background with Pestalozzian principles to develop a unique perspective for students and teachers. The research used to prepare this

¹³ The Great Idea Finder. Christopher Latham Sholes patented the typewriter on June 23, 1868. Sheldon Barnes probably did not get one until she moved to California.

manuscript incorporated original source material with the limited written biographical references available.

According to Merriam “Historical research is essentially descriptive.”¹⁴ I disagree. There is an element of description as Merriam states, but the challenge for the historical researcher is to present material in a way that provides interpretation, insight and appreciation of an event or a person. Historical interpretation of history needs to take into account the multiplicity of the proceedings surrounding an event and subsequent presentation of facts. French historian Marc Bloch speaks about history as “an endeavor toward a better understanding and, consequently, a thing in movement.”¹⁵ To better understand history, historians have to believe that the interpretation and analysis of the known information is subject to change in the light of new or different information. Sheldon Barnes had a history of heart issues from early childhood. Written information about her death alluded to an operation that was sound but experimental. The assumption was that her death was a result of the heart condition. However, upon review of her death certificate, uterine cancer was a contributing factor in her death, although the cancer was late in detection. Based on the new information, her physical condition that Earl Barnes and others described provides additional information to alter the presumed causes of her death.¹⁶

¹⁴ Merriam, *Qualitative Research: A Guide to Design and Implementation*, 47.

¹⁵ Bloch, *The Historian's Craft*, 15.

¹⁶ U.S. Bureau of the Census, Chart B 107-115. According to the life expectation in the census, the expectation for white females in 1900 was 48.3 years.

Bogdan and Biklen describe primary source documents as having three distinct characteristics; personal, official, and popular cultural documents.¹⁷ By popular cultural documents, the authors refer to instruments that are or were available within the specific time period. Each document has a specific history and use for the historical researcher. In this manuscript, many of Sheldon Barnes' letters, journal entries, and published books and articles provide a more complete picture and in her own words.

Sheldon Barnes' publications made the use of primary source documents easier for both teacher and students. The use of primary source materials is difficult for many because it involves hours of tediously examining old documents. Historical research is a challenge because of the difficulty that is present during the research process of discerning critical and abstract information.¹⁸ It is not a challenge taken lightly. Depending upon the information available, researchers can find the challenge beyond their means and capabilities.

Biography integrates historical research and storytelling to provide readers the benefit of discovering the human side of historical figures. The information developed in the biographical story should be accurate and documented. The biographer uses historical research to supplement any secondary source information that contextualizes the subject of the biography. However, the biographer needs to insure the contemporary information is historically accurate and interpreted appropriately.¹⁹

¹⁷ Bogdan and Biklen, *Qualitative Research for Education: An Introduction to Theories and Methods*.

¹⁸ Fish, "Just Published: Minutiae Without Meaning," A19.

¹⁹ Ibid.

Researchers have to be cautious about interpreting words or phrases in documents as contextual use has changed over time. For example, contemporary usage of the term “gay” describes a gender specific homosexual relationship that developed over time. However, in a letter to Sheldon Barnes’ mother, a classmate (unknown) inserted into the letter a note that refers to the writers about their mutual experience at the University of Michigan “as gay as can be.”²⁰ The classmate was referring to the exciting and pleasurable experiences they were having in Ann Arbor, not to any homosexual relationship between the writers.

The Role of the Researcher

It is not enough for the historical researcher to find “a stash of interesting material.”²¹ The telling and interpretation of the story becomes the task of the researcher. The researcher uses information located in the “stash” supplemented by outside sources and can bring insight because of the ability to view these materials from a wider perspective. Events in the past are always challenging for the contemporary researcher to understand. As Bloch reminds us “A historical phenomenon can never be understood apart from its moment in time.”²² Historical researchers must be fully cognizant of their interpretation of historical facts. The use of the proper explanation of the data is difficult for the researcher unless there is a comprehensive approach that uses primary and secondary resources.

²⁰ Sheldon Barnes to Francis Stiles Sheldon, 1870, July, Penfield Library.

²¹ Bogdan and Biklen, *Qualitative Research for Education: An Introduction to Theories and Methods*, 65.

²² Bloch, *The Historian’s Craft*, 35.

According to Sherri Colby, it is “the charge of historians – to safeguard the processes of historical research and reconstruction.”²³ In Sheldon Barnes’ situation, there are enough letters and other primary source documents to augment historical information that will provide a concrete basis for presenting her life story. My purpose is to reconstruct Sheldon Barnes’ life using the primary source material available. That said I provide a more complete picture of her than has ever been provided. My role as a historical researcher is to determine what information is significant and provide an appropriate, accurate voice. As a general rule, primary source information provides future historians with specific and detailed explanations for the documents. Historical researchers try to provide readers with a consistent, reliable analysis of documents and, thereby, integrate the documents into the known contextual facts. However, consideration of the original intent, creator, and current perspectives of the researcher will impact the interpretation and use of sources.

Instead of using a restricted number of sources, the historical researcher provides as Nadel states “the light of the evidence [that] must converge from sources of many different kinds.”²⁴ The researcher must present information discovered in its appropriate context. The biographer’s presentation of material does not mean that the researcher cannot challenge information. It does mean that the researcher needs to use a “method of cross-examination [that] must be very elastic” according to Bloch.²⁵ Elasticity allows the historical researcher to “sculpt” the data by choosing certain events or facts. However, the historical researcher needs to provide an accurate and complete picture. Considering

²³ Colby, “Contextualization and Historical Empathy,” 70.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 67.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 65.

the complete perspective, the historical researcher must be always be alert to new data and documents that will provide her with support or an opportunity to alter the original question. The historical researcher has an opportunity to be more fluid in perspective in both writing and researching. The viewpoint may be easier retrospectively as other primary source materials become available. Motives and circumstances can be explored that may not have been fully available in contemporary context.

Historical Records

The historical records that remain of Sheldon Barnes' life include her correspondence and other primary sources and serve as the basis for this research. Very little has been written about Barnes and much of the work in this biography required a review of unpublished correspondence. The use of Sheldon Barnes' letters may not provide a complete discovery of what Stanley refers to as "epistolary endeavor" of her life.²⁶ It does provide basic biographical information and, in conjunction with outside historical records, provided a more complete picture of her life. It is my challenge, as the historical researcher and biographer, to ensure that the information included in my study is accurate and provides significant details. I use her letters and journals to develop a more complete description of her as a person and text book writer/educator.

Correspondence Analysis

Reviewing Sheldon Barnes' letters requires a distinct focus for gathering primary information. There is little secondary information about her other than occasional references in a limited number of sources such as books by Crocco and Davis, Bordin, or

²⁶ Stanley, "The Epistolarium: On Theorizing Letters and Correspondences," 204.

Rogers and others.²⁷ Much of the information is anecdotal and provides only a brief look at Sheldon Barnes as a person. A considerable number of letters are available to provide a more extensive look at Sheldon Barnes and her perspective on family and other personal and professional matters.

Women used their writings to friends and family members or entries in journals as opportunities and, sometimes, as cathartic exercises for releasing pent-up emotions. Typically, they used these intimate writings of “dailiness” to relate to other females. Oftentimes, the writing may have little to do with any national or contemporary local public activity. Women would write about everyday events such as meeting neighbors, wearing apparel, births of babies, deaths of neighbors, or other miscellaneous events that may provide the original reader of the correspondence with a general perspective of their lives.²⁸ Generally, men during Progressive Era did not include “dailiness” in their correspondence unless there is a discussion personal or local activities impacting their public persona. Women addressed both public and private spheres during the nineteenth century letter writing. In retrospect, the information contained within Sheldon Barnes’ letters and journals provides a new focus to view her life story heretofore unknown to the general public. “Letters are not only a neglected source but also a deeply fascinating kind of writing” according to Stanley.²⁹ My research shows that other than Rogers’s investigation for her book in 1961 there has not been any published information using

²⁷ Bordin, *Alice Freeman Palmer: The Evolution of a New Woman*; Crocco and Davis, *Bending the Future to Their Will: Civic Women, Social Education, and Democracy*; Crocco and Davis, *Building a Legacy: Women in Social Education, 1784-1984*; Rogers, *OSWEGO: Fountainhead of Teacher Education*.

²⁸ Halldórsdóttir, “Fragment of Lives – The Use of Private Letters in Historical Research.”

²⁹ Stanley, “The Epistolarium: On Theorizing Letters and Correspondences,” 223.

Barnes' letters available in her personal papers.³⁰ The subject of Roger's book entitled *OSWEGO: Fountainhead of Teacher Education* is a history of the university. Rogers's narrative provides a brief review of Sheldon Barnes but the book does not use any of the available correspondence.

The letters in Sheldon Barnes' papers were subject to epistolarium analysis. This method, as Halldórsdóttir discussed, uses correspondence to analyze relationships or potentially, someone's emotional perspective *at a point in time*.³¹ The analysis considers the addressee of the letter, the general tone of the letter, or the information inferred from using external contextual clues. Stanley refers to the epistolarium approach as having three aspects; first, the epistolary essence of the existing correspondence, such as, the subject matter of particular correspondents or the overall mood of the writer when a letter was written. Without the complete set of letters between the correspondents, biographers have to infer the relationships using the correspondence without having a complete picture of the individuals. In some cases, it may be obvious, but there are many instances where the biographer has to make an educated guess as to who were the correspondent's friends, relatives, or lovers.

A second aspect of the epistolarium analysis is the general comparison between the current day and the original time period of the correspondence. Stanley refers to the

³⁰ Rogers, *OSWEGO: Fountainhead of Teacher Education*. Rogers' focus for her book in 1961 was about the university founded by E. A. Sheldon in Oswego, NY. She used a limited amount of material available at the Sophia Smith Collection at Smith College. Based on this assumption, she probably went to Massachusetts for research. Additionally, there notes in the files by someone named Charlotte Hunt in 1959. Hunt did not publish anything about Sheldon Barnes, so she may have been a research assistant for Rogers given the dates of her research and Rogers' subsequent publication.

³¹ Halldórsdóttir, "Fragments of Lives - The Use of Private Letters in Historical Research"; Richter, "The Ins and Outs of Intimacy: Gender, Epistolary Culture, and the Public Sphere"; Stanley, "The Epistolarium: On Theorizing Letters and Correspondences"; Annuk, "Letters as a New Approach to History: A Case Study of an Estonian Poet Ilmi Kolla (1933-1954)."

comparison as “post hoc public availability” of the information.³² Historians, generally, need to be wary about presentism or the inference of current concepts or cultural interpretation in the analysis because letters that (in Sheldon Barnes’ case) are more than one hundred years old. The Progressive Era culture and society in which she wrote her letters was considerably different than modern society.

Finally, Stanley has a concern that the biographer uses the proper interpretation of the letters in a story. The biographer should look at physical details of each letter from the type of paper used to the handwriting and valediction. The biographer should avoid too much selectivity in one aspect of correspondence and foregoing other equally compelling information. The use of words or the way the letters appear on the paper can infer anger, remorse, or other emotions. Occasionally, enough correspondence is available to see both the dialogical issues and physical remnants of the letters to provide the researcher with a complete understanding of an issue.

Any letters that do exist contain a dialogue of sorts between the writer and receiver. I do not have the complete set of letters between Sheldon Barnes and her recipients. Obviously, the challenge here is to develop a meaningful analysis of the material without having all the documents. Placing her letters chronologically is easy enough (if the date is available). In much of the correspondence that I have reviewed there are dates. However, there are many letters that do not have dates. The placement of the undated letters is dependent on the information contained in the letter. I use my analysis of the material contained in the letter to provide contextual details about family life or historical references to allow an approximation of the time period of the letter.

³² Stanley, *Critical Issues in Social Studies Research for the 21st Century*, 219.

Letter writers usually have a general understanding of contemporary events between both parties to provide outsiders with an opportunity to place the written dialogue within basic boundaries of time periods.³³ However, obtaining complete chronological dialogue between Sheldon Barnes and others may not be possible.

Sheldon Barnes opened a pathway into her thoughts and interests in her letters and journals. The formality or informality of the letter writing style can be an indication of a relationship between the two writers within the dialogue. The challenge is to place the appropriate emphasis on the relationships of the writers. There are many letters in her papers that have a general theme of dailiness of her life, about clothing she wore to a reception, or meeting a mutual family friend, or describing the daily activities she experienced, such as going for a horseback ride. These types of events by themselves may not appear to have much importance for her or her family. However, in many letters she refers to her physical health and moods to mollify her family's concerns. There are many letters from her husband, Earl, where he adds a postscript. These additional notes appear to be an attempt to provide her parents comfort about her delicate health conditions.

Hayden White uses the term "emplotment... [as a] more comprehensive and synthetic factual statement, as, rather, an *interpretation* [emphasis in original] of the facts."³⁴ Stanley uses epistolary practices, secondary sources, and historical records to develop a narrative that provides a chronological life story.³⁵ Both writers admonish researchers and writers to consider a multiplicity of sources to present an accurate

³³ Stanley, "The Epistolarium: On Theorizing Letters and Correspondences."

³⁴ White, "Historical Emplotment and the Problem of Truth," 376.

³⁵ Stanley, "The Epistolarium: On Theorizing Letters and Correspondences."

arrangement of material. Yet, it is the craftsmanship of the biographer as a writer to arrange the information for a holistic understanding of the life story.

Hermeneutics

One source of data available to historical researchers, especially for biographers, is the subject's own words. As I review Sheldon Barnes' textbooks and her other writings, I use hermeneutics as the basis of interpreting and providing images to understand the complexity of her books and her thought processes. The use of hermeneutics to explain the subject's perspectives is a powerful tool for the researcher.

According to Outhwaite,

the term 'hermeneutics' refers to the science, art, or technique of interpretation, paradigmatically of written texts but also, by extension, of human actions and other social phenomena. Hermeneutic or phenomenological approaches now coexist and are even combined with more structural conceptions of social science or ones modeled more closely on the natural sciences. Hermeneutics in a broader sense continues to exist as a major research tradition in the humanities, as well as a minority one in the social and behavioral sciences.³⁶

Historical researchers use hermeneutics routinely as an additional primary source for their research. Hermeneutics provides the researcher with a source to discover the intent and thought process of a subject to show interest in a variety of materials. In some instances, even the author may not realize the information she is providing to researchers.³⁷ In other words, during the writing of historical material, an author may write statements that, when analyzed at a later time, are more insightful than the author originally intended. When Sheldon Barnes speaks about the group of people that she

³⁶ Outhwaite, "Hermeneutics, History of" in *International Encyclopedia of the Social & Behavioral Sciences*, 6661.

³⁷ Crotty, *The Foundations of Social Research: Meaning and Perspective in the Research*.

knew or the “Bushmen” of Australia, was she racist or bound by the context of her own culture?³⁸

Hermeneutics allows researchers to have more insight into events and circumstances. The historical researcher may be able to gather information from multiple sources using written words to combine the material into a cohesive explanation of an event. Hermeneutics empowers the researcher to see both the event and the thought process that the author of the material placed on a specific event. The refocusing helps to bring the event and material into a perspective without having to rely on a presentist interpretation. Crotty calls refocusing an “*interactive* approach to texts [emphasis in original].”³⁹ The use of written material created by the subject of a biography provides the researcher an opportunity to interpret the meanings of the author’s words. However, the researcher must understand, as Gardner explains, that there were many facets of a person’s life that were used to create the one piece of writing before the researcher saw the material.⁴⁰

One of the purposes of using hermeneutics as a basis for understanding Sheldon Barnes is due to the limited amount of biographical information available. The details of her life provide a brief glimpse of social education in the nineteenth century. However, as Paul Ricoeur described the use of hermeneutics as “the very work of interpretation reveals a profound intention, that of overcoming distance and cultural differences and of matching the reader to a text that has become foreign, thereby incorporating its meaning

³⁸ Barnes, *Studies in Historical Method*, 47.

³⁹ Crotty, *The Foundations of Social Research: Meaning and Perspective in the Research*, 109.

⁴⁰ Gardner, *Hermeneutics, History and Memory*.

into the present comprehension of a man.”⁴¹ As time elapses between the biographical subject’s historical and cultural period, the researcher needs to use whatever materials are available to analyze.

Limitations of the Research

According to Lois W. Banner, the challenge of the biography is to bring a certain amount of empathy for the subject using historical references.⁴² A biographer knows the basic facts regarding the subject that includes such limited information of birth, death, and other public information. Weaving in the chronological process, he uses information gathered through research such as letters and published or unpublished documents. Using primary and secondary information, a biographer provides the reader with a more complete interpretation of the subject’s life. The use of primary source material becomes crucial in that the writer includes material that influences the reader’s perceptions of the subject.

The network of relationships and cultural mores that existed for Sheldon Barnes in the Progressive Era is complex. Situating Sheldon Barnes as a female educator within the predominately male higher education environment provides a rich setting for her life story. Limitations for my research are in three areas; presentism, correspondence analysis and hermeneutics. These areas serve as both positive opportunities and cautions for readers.

⁴¹ Ricoeur, *The Conflict of Interpretations: Essays in Hermeneutics*, 4.

⁴² Banner, “Biography as History.”

Presentism

Events in the historical past are always challenging for the researcher. Historical researchers must be fully cognizant of their interpretation of historical facts. The use of the interpretive explanation of primary source material can be difficult for the researcher because of societal and cultural changes. The context of an event or syntax of a certain document can alter the interpretation of the intent for a modern day researcher. The historical researcher must be aware of presentism or, as Moro-Abadia defines it as “a term employed to designate the influence of the present on the writing of history.”⁴³ Or as other explain it presentism is the application of current interpretation of data within a specific time period without understanding of the historical context of the totality of the situation.⁴⁴ All too often, historical researchers use current intellectual concepts when trying to understand past events. Presentism is sensible as current ideas usually started in earlier periods. Wineburg talks about “‘presentism’...is not some bad habit we’ve fallen into. It is, instead, our psychological condition at rest; a way of thinking that requires little effort and comes quite naturally.”⁴⁵ However, the fallacy is that the thinking in use today may not be the same during an earlier period in history. Earlier times and events are usually constrained by language, methods, and outside considerations that current researchers can easily overlook. If confusion exists, as Bourne describes, then the researcher cannot assume that what occurred in the past is the same in the present and

⁴³ Moro-Abadia, “Thinking about ‘Presentism’ from a Historian’s Perspective: Herbert Butterfield and Helene Metzger,” 35.

⁴⁴ Samuel S. Wineburg, “Historical problem solving,” *Journal of Educational Psychology* 83, no. 1 (1991): 73-87.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 466.

will remain so in the future.⁴⁶ The obvious changes that occur throughout history in technology and customs are usually noticeable but still create challenges for researchers.

A historian should be able to present material using new technology and an awareness of prior customs in readable format so it is understandable within a contemporary context. Moro-Abadia asks,

Why is it so erroneous to evaluate the past in terms of contemporary knowledge? Because this historiographical position stems from positivism, itself a misplaced conception of the nature of scientific inquiry... It therefore follows that scientific development is the cumulative process by which new discoveries and theories use an increasing corpus of knowledge. With such a conception in mind, the historian's main task is to determine how, when and by which pioneer a scientific fact can integrate the information correctly.⁴⁷

If the material presented is a collective process of historical and current scientific inquiry, the explanation should be evident to the reader.

Therefore, the historical researcher should provide an interpretation from the original source using a proper contextual basis. By juxtaposing historical documents through the lens of current interpretation, the historical researcher may misrepresent either the original documentation or the current interpretation of that data. The restructuring of historical material to provide readers with a more current interpretation is an acceptable format as long as there is a contextual understanding of historical information and a satisfactory presentation of historical facts and events.

⁴⁶ Craig Bourne, "A Theory of Presentism," *Canadian Journal of Philosophy* 36, no. 1 (March 2006): 1-24.

⁴⁷ Moro-Abadia, "Thinking about 'Presentism' from a Historian's Perspective: Herbert Butterfield and Helene Metzger," 60.

Hermeneutics

Hermeneutics is the basis for reviewing and interpreting Sheldon Barnes' published textbooks and articles. I interpreted the information within the context of nineteenth century cultural and historical standards. Gardner uses the explanation of "wholes and parts"⁴⁸ to explain the need to have a complete understanding of hermeneutics. Sheldon Barnes was a woman whose life intersected with gender and educational limitations and embraced an early feminist perspective.

Sheldon Barnes did not use the term feminism in her writings. However, she was very cognizant of her feminine perspective. When she entered the University of Michigan, she was a naïve young woman who understood that the issues women encountered in the workplace and home were changing. However, prior to graduation in 1874, her viewpoint changed dramatically. If she would have defined feminism based on her correspondence, she would have described it as the right of women to become educated within the same environment as men. Education would create an equal prospect for personal and professional growth, as well as long-term physical health improvements for women. She initially accepted her role as a woman with limited professional opportunities outside of teaching; but she developed other educational opportunities in the United States and England. She celebrated advancement for women's issues even in small incremental advances. A hermeneutical review of letters provided a special opportunity as a researcher to see her evolution through her life story.

Misuse or misunderstanding primary source materials that are available for Mary Sheldon Barnes would be a critical flaw. It is incumbent on me to provide the most

⁴⁸ Gardner, *Hermeneutics, History and Memory*, 43.

historically truthful interpretation of Sheldon Barnes' life and work. The difficulties with historical accuracy for researchers are the chronological gaps within archival papers and correspondence.

Correspondence Analysis

One of the main limitations of correspondence is the lack of complete records. Much of the correspondence that is available for Sheldon Barnes does not include both sides of the dialogue. These letters, if they existed at all, are in other files or destroyed. In some cases, the remaining letters provide a fairly good explanation as to what Sheldon Barnes was referring to when she created the letter. Sheldon Barnes has enough historical references or chronological entries to offer a reasonable guess of the letter's content and import between the correspondents. However, the challenge comes from understanding why she referred to a specific subject in the first place. There are limited detailed explanations as to why she may have been writing to her family members on any specific subject other than a normal, periodic writing exercise between the respective correspondents. Many of Sheldon Barnes' letters probably were for public reading or passed to other members of her inner circle of friends. In many cases the information is very general in nature.

Stanley writes that many of the historical letters that individuals wrote were for public reading by all family members. The letters were available to family members in order to bring everyone up-to-date on events without having to write about an event many times. Occasionally, Sheldon Barnes wrote to someone about a personal situation that was private. As an example of a private concern, Sheldon Barnes wrote to her sister Lizzie in the spring of 1873, while still a student at Michigan, one of these private letters.

She told Lizzie to look through their father's mail to look for any official letter from the University of Michigan. She expressly told Lizzie not to tell anyone about her search request. Sheldon Barnes wanted to keep any unfavorable Greek test grade to herself for the time until she could see her father. There is no further reference to the searching so we wonder whether the test letter arrived or not. She was a good student so maybe her concerns were unfounded. In any event she expressly forbids her sister from passing or reading the letter to other family members.⁴⁹

The above example demonstrates the limitations of historical research regarding correspondence. Without a complete set of letters, it is challenging to definitively interpret Sheldon Barnes' life story. Her sister, Elizabeth, or father saved some of her letters in Oswego. She and her husband moved around the country several times. As a result, saving correspondence was not a significant priority and made relocation easier and less cumbersome. Sheldon Barnes had no children and her husband eventually remarried. After her death, she left instructions for her husband to burn much of her material and this likely contributed to lost documents.

The purpose of this research is to provide a biographical narrative about Sheldon Barnes. As a pioneer in history textbook writing in the nineteenth century, she created a direction for later textbook writers and teachers. Her death in 1898 did not diminish the use or sale of her books. The limited academic world of female, college educated, academic leaders in the late nineteenth century were aware of her achievements; contemporary social educators have overlooked her contributions. This research provides an opportunity for historians and educators to learn, perhaps for the first time, the impact

⁴⁹ Sheldon Barnes to Lizzie Sheldon, 1876, Spring, Penfield Library.

she had within their educational community. Many educators today use a teaching method Sheldon Barnes pioneered with original source material and a scientific approach to their classrooms.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Little biographical information about Sheldon Barnes exists. In this narrative biography, her personal papers and documents were primary sources for this historical research. The articles discussed below are not an exhaustive list of material available on the respective subjects, but provide a comprehensive review that facilitates a better understanding of Sheldon Barnes and the world in which she lived.

I divided the literature into several categories. First, I review Sheldon Barnes' biographical articles. In the next section, I describe the relatively recent articles written about her original source methods or her pedagogy. There are only a few articles on Sheldon Barnes thus demonstrating the limited number of publications available about her life and work. The next segment provides a brief review about the importance of gender based historical research within the context of educational history. A brief look at feminine sexuality in the nineteenth century intertwines Sheldon Barnes and her complicated relationship with Dr. Mary V. Lee. The fifth part provides a limited examination of Pestalozzian concepts and the impact his methodology had on Sheldon Barnes' pedagogy. Section six includes a short review about source material within the nineteenth century due to the enduring controversy about its proper use *in* history and social studies curricula. Finally, a general description of Sheldon Barnes' books completes the literature review to place her work in perspective of nineteenth century educators.

Her textbook writing was a central factor in her professional life. She wrote two student history textbooks, two teacher versions of the history textbooks, and a methods book for teachers. The methods book explained and showed teachers how to use her textbooks with students despite teacher's level of expertise in the classroom.

Biographical Information

Sheldon Barnes provided a brief autobiographical sketch of her life up until 1887. In her narrative, her sense of humor is evident as she expressed the integration of her academic training in natural sciences and her chosen teaching field as she “revenge herself by applying scientific methods to history.”¹ Her initial educational experiences at the University of Michigan were in the natural sciences until she discovered her passion for history. Other than these six autobiographical paragraphs, she has left little published information that provides researchers with any self-portrayal outside of her letters to family and friends. In her papers, however, a handwritten, unpublished memoir entitled *A Mind's Story: The Autobiography of a College Girl* describes her life at the University of Michigan. The manuscript is an autobiographical sketch of Sheldon Barnes' life as she saw it at the university. The document provides insight into the challenges faced by a female entering into the male bastion of a coeducational facility in the earliest days of gender integration.

Two contemporary separate chapters by Francis Monteverde included a small amount of information about Sheldon Barnes' life and her teaching methods.² In these chapters, Monteverde provides information based on limited public details written by

¹ Sheldon Barnes, *Historical Sketches Relating to the First Quarter Century of the State Normal School at Oswego, N.Y.*, 160.

² Crocco and Davis, *Bending the Future to Their Will: Civic Women, Social Education, and Democracy*; Crocco and Davis, *Building a Legacy: Women in Social Education, 1784-1984*.

other authors including Hermann Krüsi, Jr, Robert Keohane, Will Monroe and others.³ Much of the public information written describes similar biographical details, like birth, death, family members, and a basic description of her teaching methods. Monroe called her a “pioneer” in source methodology in an obituary. He further credited her with broadening Pestalozzian concepts into the study of history in his brief description of her life in his book *History of Pestalozzian Movement in the United States*.⁴

Recent Writings about Sheldon Barnes’ Work

Sheldon Barnes was an innovator for history textbooks. Her distinctive approach combined primary source material and reflective questions and provided a teaching method teachers could adapt within their classrooms. An information and question format provided teachers with a practical basis to teach history regardless of the teacher’s level of expertise or classroom experience. Contemporary textbook publishers have incorporated her style using primary source material at all grade levels.

One of the first authors to credit Sheldon Barnes with her literary style was Robert E. Keohane who provided an overview of her life and teaching methods in two articles.⁵ Keohane’s articles presented Sheldon Barnes’ distinctive style and methods as groundbreaking. He discussed her use of original source material as an approach for challenging long-held practices such as rote learning and strict classroom management styles. The use

³ Krusi, Jr, *Recollections of My Life*; Keohane, “Mary Sheldon Barnes and the Origin of the Source Method of Teaching History in the American Secondary School, 1885-1896”; Keohane, “Mary Sheldon Barnes and the Origin of the Source Method of Teaching History in the American Secondary School, 1885-1896 - (Part II)”; Monroe, *History of the Pestalozzian Movement in the United States: with Nine Portraits and a Bibliography*.

⁴ Monroe, *History of the Pestalozzian Movement in the United States: with Nine Portraits and a Bibliography*.

⁵ Ibid.; Keohane, “Sheldon Barnes and the Origin of the Source Method of Teaching History in the American Secondary School, 1885-1896 - (Part II)”; Keohane, “Sheldon Barnes and the Origin of the Source Method of Teaching History in the American Secondary School, 1885-1896”; Keohane, “The Great Debate over the Source Method.”

of Sheldon Barnes' methods, according to Keohane, required teachers to be more knowledgeable about content and less structured in classroom environments.

The few recent articles written about Sheldon Barnes' pedagogy provided an understanding of the impact she had on twentieth and twenty-first century's classroom teachers. Welsh and Brooks conducted a hermeneutic inquiry into her body of work to gain a better understanding of her as a teacher and educator of teachers.⁶ They reviewed two articles that Sheldon Barnes authored regarding "savages" and children.⁷ These authors concluded that G. Stanley Hall and his interpretation of recapitulation theory or linear historicism influenced her pedagogical philosophy. Recapitulation theory, then generally accepted in many nineteenth century academic circles, created an image of men and cultures evolving.⁸ Welsh and Brooks' hermeneutic article placed Barnes among contemporaneous nineteenth century academics that held racist concepts. Based upon my research, I am unable to find any indication that Sheldon Barnes expounded racist theory; although she accepted the prevailing historical structure of cultural growth. Generally, American society in the late nineteenth century in the United States separated culturally along racial lines.⁹

Stuart A. McAninch wrote an article that criticizes Sheldon Barnes' teaching method as "reinforcing uncritical acceptance of the common and comfortable assumption

⁶ Welsh and Brooks, "The Con/Text of Sheldon Barnes (1850-1898)."

⁷ Sheldon Barnes, *Studies in Historical Method*. In the book, her chapters entitled "The Historic Sense among Primitive Peoples" and "The Historic Sense among Children" she compared stages children go through as they mature with cultural groups whom she classified as more primitive or the "Bushmen" of Australia.

⁸ Fallace, *Dewey and the Dilemma of Race: An Intellectual History 1895-1922*. Fallace argues that contextually the values in the nineteenth were racially divisive based upon contemporary interpretation.

⁹ Loewen, *Teaching What Really Happened: How to Avoid the Tyranny of Textbooks & Get Students Excited about Doing History*.

among white Americans [that] national progress was remedying racial discrimination.”¹⁰ He made several statements based upon his reading and interpretation of Earl and Sheldon Barnes’ book about their racial insensitivity. However, McAninch shows an element of presentism in his research. McAninch characterizes the Barnes’s selective use of race issues in their American history textbook to illustrate his portrayal of the book as a “blatant failure.”¹¹ He stated that in his opinion “the authors’ [Mary and Earl Barnes] treatment on the subject [race segregation] in effect legitimated the violence and suppression of rights by denying their existence.”¹² The difficulty in McAninch’s perspective, in my opinion, is his failure to look at the cultural and academic theories prevalent at the time. According to Fallace, “most scholars at the turn of the century subscribed to the recapitulation view that the stages of sociological growth corresponded with the psychological stages in child development.”¹³

Additionally, the failure to include a subject does not necessarily show an opinion of the subject either way. Using the two illustrations in their textbook as evidence of “blatant failure” to accept society’s ills seems to be an inaccurate indictment of the totality of the book. Could Mary and Earl Barnes use additional examples to illustrate racial challenges? Certainly, but a further review of the original material used in the book requires teachers and students to seek supplementary material outside of the book.¹⁴ The authors spent more time addressing the “Indian question” or immigration issues than African American race relations. Perhaps the Native American controversy, to the

¹⁰ McAninch, “The Educational Theory of Mary Sheldon Barnes: Inquiry Learning as Indoctrination in History Education,” 51.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 50.

¹² *Ibid.*, 50.

¹³ Fallace, *Dewey and the Dilemma of Race: An Intellectual History 1895-1922*, 106.

¹⁴ Barnes and Barnes, *Studies in American History*, 385. The Barnes' did ask questions such as, “What influences are at work to civilize and educate the negro [sic]? If he is poor and has a bad time, who [sic] is to blame?”

authors, was a more significant issue at the time. The Native American race issue referred to whether the Native Americans should assimilate into the predominant white society of the late nineteenth century. Both African American and Indian issues had racial implications. The Barnes's expectation was that teachers who used their book had knowledge of contemporary issues through primary sources, such as, magazines and newspapers.

McAninch was also critical of Sheldon Barnes' seminary method; although he considered it an improvement to recitation methods. According to McAninch, Sheldon Barnes' method enabled students to discuss historical topics and allowed students to bring peripheral facts into discussions and, thereby, progress to new conceptual understanding. McAninch acknowledged that Sheldon Barnes was a pioneer in textbook writing. In her pioneer status, McAninch placed her in the growing controversy between professors of history and new social studies professors.¹⁵ McAninch's critical comments about Barnes' teaching style differed from David Warren Saxe's analysis. Saxe categorized Barnes as a visionary among Progressive Era textbook writers.

Saxe reviewed Sheldon Barnes' source method as an alternative to common nineteenth century practices.¹⁶ Recitation and rote memorization of class materials were the standard teaching methods at the time. In his 1989 article, Saxe lauded Sheldon Barnes as "a woman of great vision concerning curricula."¹⁷ Saxe noted Sheldon Barnes' source method approach for teachers and students allowed students an opportunity to combine "the study of history as a culture base with the study of contemporary life."¹⁸ He

¹⁵ Evans, *The Social Studies Wars: What Should We Teach the Children?*

¹⁶ Saxe, "Mary Sheldon Barnes and the Introduction of Social Sciences in Public Schools."

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 200.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 200.

wrote that her *Studies in Historical Method* book was a resource for contemporary social studies teachers to guide students for building old information and new concepts. Saxe's perspective was that Sheldon Barnes was a significant textbook author overlooked by educational historians. His observation was that the oversight was probably due to the limited volume of her work and her death in 1898.

In another article, Saxe discussed the use of Sheldon Barnes' methods book as one where there is "an approach that she developed in earlier school texts, one that required teachers to know and understand a set of aims or goals prior to selecting a proper historical, investigative, and pedagogical method."¹⁹ Sheldon Barnes expected teachers to have access to more facts than her books provided. Any additional information would be relevant. According to Saxe, Sheldon Barnes expected any questions she used in the classroom would lead students toward a "pre-determined" outcome using an inductive method. Based upon her questions, students to determine how seemingly isolated facts fit into contemporary concepts and be more relevant and memorable.

Sheldon Barnes' pedagogical style and influence as a textbook writer analyzed in these articles provides social historians with only circumstantial evidence of her unique efforts. These articles cited do not fully address the influences that Sheldon Barnes' experienced personally and educationally. Her writing style was innovative in many respects. Her publications require analysis based on these influences.

Gender Based Historical Research

Several important articles discuss the approach and sources that biographers use when researching female subjects. Although many authors address feminine issues in

¹⁹ Saxe, "Establishing a Voice for History in Schools: The First Methods Textbooks for History Instruction 1896-1902," 486.

general, there is a similarity in feminist approaches to biographical research. Lawless describes her alternative biographic process as changing the construct of the life story to accommodate a gender specific story.²⁰ Oftentimes, women created their biographies based upon male expectations of a good story. According to Lawless, women's stories need to integrate other issues, such as children, marriage, friendships, and many other events within the context of the account. In Sheldon Barnes' case, there are questions of patriarchal influence in her publications. Additionally, sexuality issues outside of normal marital relationships with her husband add to a more complete story of her life. Although, her sexuality did not define her as a textbook writer, it does provide a more holistic picture of Sheldon Barnes. Her growth as a person outside the restrictions of the patriarchal society began when she discovered her attraction to another woman. The relationship with Dr. Mary V. Lee led her to develop a more vocal feminist perspective than she had expressed before their association.

One of the most interesting subjects in American history in the nineteenth century was the evolution in women's rights and aspirations. During this period in history, women were subject to informal and formal rules placed upon them by cultural mores. William Thomas in 1907 described women when compared with men after Sheldon Barnes' death with derogatory characteristics. He wrote that gender and racial characteristics exemplified the differences between them in *The Mind of Woman and the Lower Races*.²¹ Thomas wrote how women were more cunning, secretive, and protective than men. Additionally, he portrayed women as less intellectually capable despite having similarities in brain size. He attributed much of the lower capabilities to women's

²⁰ Lawless, "Women's Life Stories and Reciprocal Ethnography as Feminist and Emergent."

²¹ Thomas, "The Mind of Woman and the Lower Races."

exclusion from educational opportunities. Thereby, women were comparable to lower socio-economic classes and non-Caucasian races due to the slow linear progression of gender. (Sheldon Barnes agreed that education was a critical path for women to achieve parity with men.) Therefore, Thomas wrote, without the educational experience men had achieved, women would not achieve equality with men. This article showed prevailing attitudes within middle and upper class white society. My research indicates that Sheldon Barnes used her academic credentials as a platform to dispel these kinds of beliefs. As one of the first women students allowed entry into the University of Michigan, Sheldon Barnes proved that she was an excellent student. She was able to use her connections from the university, both with professors and classmates, to open new pathways for herself and other women.

Sheldon Barnes lived during a time when paternalism prevailed. In one chapter of *Telling Women's Lives*, Linda C. Wagner-Martin describes the issue of writing a biography using historical information.²² She points out how in men's biographies it is more apparent that the author of a biography uses the public facts connected to their lives instead of the more intimate private moments. As for women, a biography comes from using both public and private information. Oftentimes, according to Wagner-Martin, critical private information may have been included in personal correspondence that has been lost or discarded over the intervening years. The use of Sheldon Barnes' correspondence provided me an image of her as a woman, daughter, wife, and textbook writer.

During the late nineteenth century, few opportunities were available to women to become educated beyond basic schooling. Although there was a need for teachers, there

²² Wagner-Martin, *Telling Women's Lives*.

was no need for them to be college-educated. Linda Eisenmann discusses the availability of women's opportunities evolving through circumstances afforded them in the world.²³ Women used the existing institutions of society to build networks with other women. For example, the women's clubs that developed during the nineteenth century provided considerable support and networking opportunities for women outside of the home. By looking at these alternative educational pathways women became better educated and developed relationships which moved their causes forward, such as the vote and alcohol prohibition. Sheldon Barnes' alternative educational pathway came in a similar manner. She developed a strong bond with her female classmates at Michigan and benefitted from her father's work as a leading educator of Pestalozzian principles. She also attended a normal school to prepare for a teaching career. Although a normal school education was not necessary to teach, the additional education improved her professional credentials. Although Sheldon Barnes was limited within the customs of patriarchal society of the time, she established her own identity in the educational hierarchy.

Halldórsdóttir and Stanley discuss the use of epistolary practices or using letters as primary source documents as an excellent resource within historical methodology.²⁴ Many of the examples these writers cite were women writing to others and there appears to be more emotional than male letters. Sheldon Barnes left a rich source of letters that illustrated emotional periods in her life. These letters provide a window into the emotional and physical difficulties she experienced throughout her life. Unfortunately, many of the letters only represent one side of her issues. The reader left with questions

²³ Eisenmann, "Creating a Framework for Interpreting US Women's Educational History: Lessons from Historical Lexicography."

²⁴ Halldórsdóttir, "Fragments of Lives - The Use of Private Letters in Historical Research"; Stanley, "The Epistolarium: On Theorizing Letters and Correspondences."

about the resolution of the situation in the short term but understands the challenges that arose daily in Sheldon Barnes' life.

Jacquelyn Dowd Hall writes about her challenges she encountered writing a biography on Lulu Daniel Ames.²⁵ In the article she notes that the public and private lives of women during the nineteenth and early twentieth century's had distinct frames of reference. She remarks that from a feminist perspective, similar to Wagner-Martin, women had to prove themselves both in public and private spheres; whereas men tended to be more concerned about their public lives because that was their focus and all they needed to justify their position.²⁶

Hall cautioned female writers about the struggle of interpreting historical information and interjecting their own feminist beliefs into an analysis. It is the responsibility of the biographer to make sense of the information provided in order for the reader to have a clear understanding of the life story presented and not include unwarranted interpretation. As a male writer and researcher, I do not necessarily have some of the same interpretation issues that Hall cautioned against; although there are similar issues I need to be aware of and avoid, such as, overemphasizing nineteenth century elaborate written language.

I define feminism as supporting the rights of women, politically, economically, and socially. Equality means ensuring that women are on an equal basis with men educationally, physically, and within the work place. I am aware of my feminist perspective in developing Sheldon Barnes' narrative biography. She was a first-wave feminist who was trying to find her way within a patriarchal society. My perspective as a

²⁵ Hall, "Second Thoughts: On Writing a Feminist Biography."

²⁶ Wagner-Martin, *Telling Women's Lives*.

male may differ from a woman's view because of gender; however, I am able to observe Sheldon Barnes' changing feminist perspective within my own feminist framework. Therefore, a reflection of Sheldon Barnes' place in educational history would not necessarily be within the accepted viewpoint of a typical nineteenth century woman.

Jane Martin notes in *The Hope of Biography: The Historical Recovery of Women Educator Activists* that biographers of historically significant women educators need to use a more thoughtful perspective.²⁷ Highly educated women in the nineteenth century had limited occupational alternatives. They made occupational choices that provided them with an alternative to marriage, in some cases. However, the fact that women educators were single or wrote letters to other women that appear to be very intimate should not infer anything beyond the sentiment stated. The biographer needs to contextualize women educators as part of the Gilded Ages restrictive structure. If biographers used different approaches, the chances are more likely that some older expectations of women educators, as being docile and accepting of their male counterparts, would be different. These underlying issues provide more opportunity for historical researchers to reacquaint biographers with female subjects. It is my intention to show in this narrative biography that in some respects Sheldon Barnes' life was complex and contained visionary goals for her and others within academe.

Gender Issues

The nineteenth and twenty-first century's female sexuality standards are dramatically different in scope and understanding with regard to friendships. The interpretations of expression between women in letters or in their journals using the language of an earlier period make contemporary meaning challenging to understand.

²⁷ Martin, "The Hope of Biography: The Historical Recovery of Women Educator Activists."

Carroll Smith-Rosenberg and Nancy Sahli discuss the intricate customs that women developed during the Progressive Era.²⁸ These customs may have included letters, gifts, and long intimate conversations that addressed all personal details of women's private lives.

As noted, writers have cautioned historians about their interpretation of private letters and journals with respect to women's relationships. These relationships may be nothing more than friendships, albeit intense, emotional friendships. Smith-Rosenberg contends that these relationships need individual analysis based upon the women's lives and socioeconomic status. Nineteenth century understanding of same sex relationships was not a choice between a "dichotomized universe of deviance and normality."²⁹ The relationships were complex within the limitations of the conservative Progressive Era. Sahli discusses the ritual that may have been more common at women's colleges called "smashing." Smashing was a process when one female sought a relationship using presents, letters, poems, and other items to gain the affection of another woman. The process had similarities to a courtship between men and women. The ultimate goal was not necessarily sexual relations but more than likely emotional and intellectual attraction.

Sheldon Barnes' sexual orientation has proven to be difficult to confirm. She was married at the time of her death to Earl Barnes and their relationship was customary based on all known reports. In some of her papers, there is a strong suggestion about her attraction to Dr. Mary V. Lee that may have been more involved than a smashing relationship. The relationship was significant for two reasons as a part of Sheldon Barnes'

²⁸ Smith-Rosenberg, "The Female World of Love and Ritual: Relations between Women in Nineteenth-Century America"; Sahli, "Smashing: Women's Relationships before the Fall."

²⁹ Smith-Rosenberg, "The Female World of Love and Ritual: Relations between Women in Nineteenth-Century America," 8.

story. First, the liaison lasted about ten years as she was becoming a writer and higher education professor. A second reason is that Lee provided Sheldon Barnes with a mentorship during her early feminist years. Her principles grew under the tutelage of a radical, independent woman.

According to Michelle Gibson and Deborah Meem in their 2005 article, there were different standards between women in the nineteenth century.³⁰ These authors speak about the Wellesley marriage that Palmieri also discusses in her book that allowed “academic women to continue their chosen careers.”³¹ These were alternative relationships between women that were open and honest within academe and social circles. They are careful not to describe the relationship between women as “lesbian” unless the women themselves use it or there is proof that a physical relationship existed between the respective parties. And as Sahli states, “words such as ‘lesbian’ and ‘homosexual’ did not come into use until the last decade of the nineteenth century.”³² Any pejorative association with these terms by Sheldon Barnes or Lee was unknown or ignored. Their relationship was one that was not uncommon for college educated women at the end of the nineteenth century.

Patricia Palmieri’s classic work discussed several aspects of relationships for women faculty at Wellesley College in this era.³³ Although she wrote mostly about the Wellesley College activities, much of the discussion within her book about women’s cultural activities to other female colleges or universities is speculation. However, women’s relationships at colleges and universities outside of Wellesley were, probably,

³⁰ Gibson and Meem, “Introduction. (Cover story).”

³¹ *Ibid.*, 3.

³² Sahli, “Smashing: Women’s Relationships before the Fall,” 18.

³³ Palmieri, *In Adamless Eden*.

fairly universal. Women were moving into educational environments dominated by men as both students and professors.³⁴

In Kate McCullough's article, she points out that a comfortable acceptance of female-female relationships existed throughout middle class mainstream America.³⁵ She and Palmieri explained the Boston or Wellesley marriage as a "long-term monogamous relation between two women [that] provided a socially sanctioned female space."³⁶

Sheldon Barnes was a teacher at Wellesley College and was familiar with many of the social values within the school. Sheldon Barnes was in an intimate relationship with Lee that probably began with the radical women associates she encountered at the University of Michigan.

Sheldon Barnes was comfortable with diverse sexual relationships. The Wellesley faculty developed a concept that they called "symmetrical womanhood." This concept was explained by Palmieri as a "healthy woman who moved through adolescence and into middle age without physical or psychological ailments; marriage would not necessarily be her supreme goal."³⁷ Women who grew up in a patriarchal world expected to move seamlessly from their parent's home into marriage and their husband's household. However, the traditional role model, especially for educated women, was changing. Women were moving away from their traditional roles as wife and mother into a more independent status that created some angst for middle and upper class families.

³⁴ "Historical Statistics of the United States: Colonial Times to 1970," 386. In 1870, women received 1,873 Bachelor's degrees. This represented, approximately, 15% of the total Bachelor's degrees granted that year. The year that Sheldon Barnes received her degree, 1874, there were 1,900 Bachelor's degrees granted or 16.5% of the total Bachelor's degrees.

³⁵ McCullough, "The Boston Marriage as the Future of the Nation: Queerly Regional Sexuality in Diana Victrix."

³⁶ Ibid., 68.

³⁷ Palmieri, *In Adamless Eden*, 148.

The changing role for women created difficulty for Pestalozzian educators such as Sheldon Barnes, as well. Pestalozzi suggested the role for women in the educational process as integral for children. As discussed below, in Pestalozzian exemplars, a mother could use daily activities around the house as teaching experiences. If the college experience moved women away from traditional family roles, an important tenet of Pestalozzian methods was tested. Women in the homes were integral in the early learning process for children. Outside teachers were replacing a traditional parental role with other women and, occasionally, men.

Pestalozzi's Methods and Philosophy

Johann Pestalozzi is the subject of many books and articles that focus on his philosophy and his influence on American educators.³⁸ Edward Austin Sheldon was one of the early educators in the United States who saw the benefit of his methods. Sheldon Barnes, as student and instructor in Oswego participated in Pestalozzian practices through her father and other educators. The teachers at Oswego State Normal and Training School (OSNTS) followed Pestalozzian methods. Sheldon Barnes based her pedagogy on object lessons and Socratic question-and-answer style she learned in high school, normal school, and used in her early teaching experience.

Edward Sheldon's curriculum included a religious element. During much of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, one of the primary purposes of education was to provide a proper training ground for religious leaders. As a result, many of the textbooks and teaching methods used for education possessed a Christian component. The use of

³⁸ Bowers and Gehring, "Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi: Century Swiss Educator and Correctional Reformer"; Barlow, *Pestalozzi and American Education*; Dearborn, *Oswego Movement in American Education*; Rogers, *OSWEGO: Fountainhead of Teacher Education*; Silber, *Pestalozzi: The Man and His Work*.

religiously oriented textbooks would change over time, but the influence of religion and higher education continued to have a considerable impact on early American educational practices. Oftentimes, teachers had to consider questions about religious orientation and Bible edition instead of concerns about teaching methodology.³⁹ In some instances, especially in Europe, religious tests eliminated potential students whose beliefs did not align with a particular college's religiously affiliated church.

Johann Pestalozzi (1746-1827) developed an educational philosophy and pedagogy placing children at the center of the learning process. He did not use lectures but provided learning opportunities using children's knowledge of items found in the household. The children knew these simple learning methods used within their families. He showed children how to precisely measure an item or teach them how to spell words. He put a significant emphasis on religious and moral principles. Johann Pestalozzi provided the basis for much of Sheldon Barnes' educational theory by using known objects, such as a speech of Julius Caesar, and helped students develop a newer understanding by discussing the speech in class. Pestalozzi's book, *Leonard and Gertrude*, expressed the majority of his principles.⁴⁰ He showed the relationship between the "mental, physical, spiritual"⁴¹ with all three providing a significant role in a child's education. It was his assertion that children use prior knowledge and experiences to build newer abstract concepts as they became older. Pestalozzi's ideas became the first explanation of his concepts known as "object methods, object teaching, and objective

³⁹ Beneke, "'Mingle with Us: Religious Integration in Eighteenth and Nineteenth-Century American Education.'" Many of the schools in the nineteenth century used Christian oriented textbooks. Pestalozzian philosophy placed mother at the center the moral training of children.

⁴⁰ Pestalozzi, *Leonard and Gertrude*.

⁴¹ Barlow, *Pestalozzi and American Education*, 15.

method.”⁴² Both Edward Austin Sheldon and Sheldon Barnes used his approach extensively in their pedagogy.

Pestalozzi placed the child at the center of the educational process.⁴³ He emphasized that children learn based on their own pace and will learn as they develop concepts using old knowledge and new information. Pestalozzi believed encouraging children to learn through what he considered a natural process using artifacts within the child’s sphere. The familiarity allowed children to be more efficient and effective within their own educational world. While Sheldon Barnes held similar beliefs, she did not completely match Pestalozzi. Since Pestalozzi lived in a nation without public schools and nonexistent curriculum standards, his students were limited to physical objects and artifacts within his restricted geographic environment. Edward Sheldon extended Pestalozzi’s methods by using materials and books he had in his classrooms or outside materials such as bugs located in the environment around the school. Sheldon Barnes further expanded Pestalozzi’s concepts using her textbooks and provided original source material such as pictures and texts for her students.

According to Barlow, Pestalozzi’s impact on American education was “not to alter the place that each person would assume in adult society, but rather to make him better able to function in that place thus enhancing his own life and the total life of the society in which he lived.”⁴⁴ Barlow offers the researcher a simple linkage between Pestalozzi and many progressive thinkers, including Edward Austin Sheldon, Sheldon Barnes, and John Dewey. Barlow shows the practicality of Pestalozzian pedagogy and

⁴² Ibid., 19

⁴³ Cohen, “Martin Buber and Changes in Modern Education”

⁴⁴ Barlow, 13.

child centered practices still used today in many educational settings, such as, juvenile justice centers for incarcerated youth.

Bowers and Gehring wrote about Pestalozzi as a “famous correctional educator”⁴⁵ who influenced generations of penal reformers about the need for inmates to use the opportunity given to them while incarcerated through education to improve their citizenship skills. Pestalozzi emphasized the importance between home and the educational environment of the school. Both environments should be a loving and respectful place for students and children. Pestalozzi was the role model and developer of what Bowers and Gehring have termed “family substitute institution”⁴⁶ or residential facility programs. Edward Austin Sheldon and Sheldon Barnes agreed with the Pestalozzian approach using education as a vehicle for taking poor children off the streets to educate them for the benefit of society in general.

According to Nathan Myers, multiple educators in the nineteenth century introduced and used Pestalozzian methodology in the United States.⁴⁷ Horace Mann, William Maclure, Edward Austin Sheldon, and Alfred Holbrook were instrumental in contributing pieces of the Pestalozzian methodology to different sections of the United States and each emphasized a different element for teachers. In Myers’ explanation, Edward Austin Sheldon and Horace Mann were the American educators that spread Pestalozzian philosophy more than others. Alfred Holbrook deserves additional credit for his work in Ohio and his emphasis on object teaching. Sheldon’s school in Oswego, New York provided a training ground for teachers to spread the methodology throughout the

⁴⁵ Bowers and Thomas, 316.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 314.

⁴⁷ Myers, “American Pestalozzianism Revisited: Alfred Holbrook and the Origins of Object-Based Pedagogy in 19th Century America.”

world. According to Myers, the critical element missing from Sheldon's version of Pestalozzian pedagogy is the moral and spiritual portion that was one of the key elements. I disagree with Myers because in Sheldon's daily curriculum there was a twenty-five minute period each day for moral training and prayer.⁴⁸ According to Rogers, "chapel was a sacred ritual" and oftentimes students and teachers held Bible studies in their living quarters.⁴⁹ Teachers provided students with Bible readings and interpretations to provide examples that did not leave any behavioral "moral ambiguities"⁵⁰ for the students.

Two other books provide researchers with a comprehensive background of Pestalozzi, his pedagogy, and its place in American educational history.⁵¹ Silber's book provides researchers with a complete look at Johann Pestalozzi from a biographical perspective. Silber points out that Pestalozzi, in addition to being an educator, was a reformer. By educating children, there was an opportunity to alter political and social progress.

Barlow's book provides a historiographical review at the key emissaries of Pestalozzian thought in the United States. Barlow did not mention Sheldon in his book directly but by implication. Edward Sheldon's impact was considerable as his students, such as Sheldon Barnes, moved throughout the world. One of the OSNTS's leading teachers was Hermann Krüsi, Jr. His father, Hermann Krüsi, was one of Johann Pestalozzi's chief assistants and teachers for many years. Krüsi, Jr. was able to use his father's fame to become an author and respected teacher in Pestalozzian methods in the

⁴⁸ Rogers, 17.

⁴⁹ Rogers, 66.

⁵⁰ Rogers, 67.

⁵¹ Silber, *Pestalozzi: The Man and His Work*; Barlow, *Pestalozzi and American education*.

United States.⁵² The information used in Krüsi's book provided educators with a more contemporary picture of Pestalozzian concepts.

Edward Austin Sheldon used his own "Americanized" interpretation of Pestalozzian concepts in the curriculum of the Oswego movement in educational history. Between the years of 1862-1886, graduates of Oswego Normal and Training School numbered 1373 men and women.⁵³ These teachers eventually spread throughout the United States and the world using the concepts learned in Oswego. Barnes was able to draw upon her training at the school to integrate these concepts into her pedagogy.

Historical Use of Source Material

One of the centerpieces to Sheldon Barnes' pedagogy was her use of primary source material in history classrooms. The use of primary source material allowed students an opportunity to review artifacts or text and make their own historical analysis. The use of the primary source material was initially encouraged by the Committee of Ten for teachers "on the need of proper apparatus for teaching history, such as maps, reference-libraries, historical pictures, and photographs."⁵⁴ The National Education Association (NEA) commissioned the Committee of Ten to develop a goal for improving educational curriculum and preparing students for higher education beyond high school.⁵⁵ Sheldon Barnes' first book, *Studies in General History*, published in 1885, fit the guidelines established by the Committee for teaching history. Other authors also employed the methodology as presented in Sheldon Barnes' first book.

⁵² Krüsi, Jr, *Pestalozzi: His Life, Work, and Influence*, p.vii. Krüsi, Jr, according to his book, was able to provide "testimony of many of the personal friends of Pestalozzi, and who holds in his [Krüsi's] possession records and letters of that period."

⁵³ Dearborn, *American Education: Its Men, Ideas and Institutions*, 30.

⁵⁴ *Report of the Committee on Secondary Schools Studies*, 31.

⁵⁵ Kliebard, *The Struggle for the American Curriculum: 1893-1958*; Bohan, "Early Vanguard of Progressive Education: The Committee of Ten, The Committee of Seven, and Social Education."

In 1894, Fred Fling, a contemporary of Sheldon Barnes, wrote an article about the use of primary source material in the teaching of history.⁵⁶ He described how experienced, knowledgeable teachers should use sources as Sheldon Barnes suggested and they should use the information provided in books like those that Sheldon Barnes had created. Fling's teaching method became known as the Nebraska method because he lived and taught at the University of Nebraska. According to one source, "nine-tenths of the Nebraska high schools now use the source method" Sheldon Barnes and Fling developed.⁵⁷ The use of primary source materials debate in history did not disappear. Despite the advocacy of source method by the NEA and the Committee of Ten, other groups disagreed with the Fling and Sheldon Barnes about the use of primary sources. In 1896, the American Historical Association (AHA) created the Committee of Seven to review structural guidelines for students, similar to the Committee of Ten. This group, comprised mostly of historians, suggested "the teacher should use a text-book...Without the use of a text it is difficult to hold pupils to a definite of work; there is a danger of incoherence and confusion."⁵⁸ Although the report did not mention Sheldon Barnes' type of book specifically, it did not alter her basic premise of having students use original source material in the classroom. Her textbooks continued to sell for twenty-five more years because of the relevancy of the primary sources she used in the books.⁵⁹

The material reviewed above is not a comprehensive review with respect to all aspects of Sheldon Barnes' life. As noted, Sheldon Barnes was a complex individual who

⁵⁶ Fling, "One Use of Sources in the Teaching of History."

⁵⁷ *Journal of Pedagogy*, "New Books on the Source Method in History," 253.

⁵⁸ "The Study of History in Schools: A Report to the American Historical Association by the Committee of Seven," 9.

⁵⁹ Keohane, 109. In his article, Keohane refers to *Studies in General History* selling 39,900 copies between the years 1885-1929 and *Studies in American History* selling 35,996 copies between 1891-1919.

influenced many people and ideas in the late nineteenth century. As her life unfolded readers will see the impact of Pestalozzian concepts, patriarchy, gender, sexuality, scientific methods, and original source material within her writing and teaching. The life story of Sheldon Barnes is exceptional.

CHAPTER 3

THE ORIGINS

Introduction

In this section of the manuscript I provide background about the origins of Mary Sheldon Barnes' pedagogy. She learned her teaching methodology from her father, Edward Austin Sheldon. He was superintendent of the Oswego school system and introduced Pestalozzian teaching principles while Sheldon Barnes was a student in elementary school. She continued in the normal school her father founded and became a teacher in the Oswego school system. This chapter provides background on those educators who preceded her and influenced the development of her unique brand of teaching.

The story of Mary Downing Sheldon Barnes began more than fifty years before her birth. Sheldon Barnes' training and development as an educator began with Johann Pestalozzi in eighteenth century Europe. Pestalozzi never wrote a book on teaching methods but his philosophy and methodology spread throughout Europe at the beginning of the nineteenth century. His philosophy and methodology travelled beyond his native Switzerland into Europe and the United States. Horace Mann and Bronson Alcott adopted Pestalozzian principles in New England. Edward Austin Sheldon in New York started the Oswego teaching movement by adjusting Pestalozzian methodology to an Americanized version of the pedagogy. Pestalozzian methods and "object teaching" would fall out of favor within the educational world near the end of the nineteenth century; however, a connection exists between Pestalozzian methodology and progressive teaching methodology. To better understand Sheldon Barnes and her pedagogy, a brief

summary of Johann Pestalozzi's and his teaching philosophy is provided. Additionally, the connection between Pestalozzi and Sheldon Barnes shows the epistemological basis for her methods.

Johann Pestalozzi

Johann Pestalozzi was born on January 12, 1746 in what is present day Switzerland.¹ Pestalozzi was a child who was loved by both his mother and his family's servant named Barbara Schmid. The long-term implications of his early years would result in placing a loving maternal figure in a central position for his educational philosophy. According to Silber, the educating of a child as "a mother does for her child is prompted by her instinct...and this difference [from other animals] lies [sic] the secret of human education and culture."² Accordingly, teachers should emulate the home of the child by providing a loving, nurturing environment for the students. Pestalozzi believed children would be better learners by insulating them from external difficulties that existed in a family's immediate world.

Pestalozzi discovered a natural affinity for teaching children during his period of trials and tribulations. Many of the children who came to him were poor with no expectation for education. Pestalozzi sought the support of the French government to create "schools in which instruction in manual labor should be combined with the ordinary mental and moral training."³ He wanted to establish free schools for these children with government subsidies. In Pestalozzi's school he wanted to provide intellectual, physical, and moral training. He combined his earlier theological training

¹ Silber, *Pestalozzi: The Man and His Work*; Barlow, *Pestalozzi and American Education*.

² Silber, *Pestalozzi: The Man and His Work*, 232.

and love for children to create an educational opportunity that would benefit poor children and society.

Pestalozzi's best known book, *Leonard and Gertrude*, became the basis for his methodology and philosophy. One of the more renowned teachers who worked with Pestalozzi was Hermann Krüsi.⁴ Other visitors to Yverdon were people like Dr. Charles Mayo and James P. Greaves (England),⁵ Joseph Neef and William Maclure (New Harmony, Indiana)⁶ and each wanted to become knowledgeable in Pestalozzian teaching methods. The Pestalozzian legacy is the development of an educational philosophy and methodology that altered the creation of lessons. Pestalozzi used books and articles to provide a set of common sense examples of his basic teaching philosophy.

Pestalozzian Philosophy

Johann Pestalozzi did not initially write books with the intent to create a new teaching methodology. He provided his readership a practical approach within the context of *Leonard and Gertrude* and *How Gertrude Teaches Her Children* demonstrating a simple process for teaching children. The approach he provided integrated home life into an educational setting. The twenty-fifth chapter of *Leonard and Gertrude* provided a metaphorical illustration in the appropriate use of language and mathematics in the daily activities of Gertrude's family. In the scenario, Gertrude provided instruction for her

³ Krüsi, Jr, *Pestalozzi: His Life, Work, and Influence*, 21.

⁴ Krüsi, Jr, *Pestalozzi: His Life, Work, and Influence*; Barlow, *Pestalozzi and American Education*. Hermann Krüsi was the father of Hermann Krüsi, Jr who worked for Edward Austin Sheldon in Oswego for over 30 years. Mary Sheldon Barnes was a lifelong friend with Krüsi, Jr first as a student of the normal school then a peer teaching in the normal school and, finally, as a fellow educator.

⁵ Ibid., Barlow. Mayo and Greaves, along with Mayo's sister Elizabeth, established The English Home and Colonial Infant and Juvenile Society. The purpose of the group was to spread Pestalozzian principles. Miss Margaret Jones worked for the Society for eighteen years before Edward Austin Sheldon reached out to the organization for assistance in establishing Pestalozzian practices in Oswego, NY.

⁶ Ibid. Maclure hired Joseph Neef to teach using the Pestalozzian method. Maclure was financially and administratively active in the New Harmony community. Neef moved to New Harmony to establish the educational system but his Pestalozzian principles were unacceptable for the New Harmony community.

children by reciting books of the Bible from memory as she completed her household chores. Another lesson showed Gertrude using her spinning wheel and having the children count the turns of the wheel. He wrote “this exercise [learning using basic objects known to children] in correct and distinct articulation was, however, only a subordinate object in her whole scheme of education, which embraced a true comprehension of life itself.”⁷ His objective was to place the mother at the core of education in the home. The mother integrated basic academic skills in a loving and secure setting. Children used their natural curiosity and intellect to ask questions about her process to better understand academic endeavors.

The goal for teachers and parents was to provide children with an opportunity to learn and prepare for adulthood using different teaching methods than generally in practice. Pestalozzi was well aware of the contemporary learning environment a typical teacher used in schools for teaching elementary school students. According to Krüsi, Pestalozzi saw children moving from a happy, secure, and protective environment in a home around five years old to “badly ventilated rooms: [where] they are doomed for hours, days, and years to the contemplation of dry, monotonous letters.”⁸ In these difficult circumstances, children lost their natural inquisitiveness and created behavioral issues for teachers. Pestalozzi’s alternative method departed from lecture and memorization of words and facts. He used a method involving sensory-impressions or “anschauung.”⁹ His simple concept allowed teachers to develop relationships between known objects and knowledge to more abstract terms or concepts. Using what Pestalozzi

⁷ Pestalozzi, *Leonard and Gertrude*, 131.

⁸ Krüsi, Jr, *Pestalozzi: His Life, Work, and Influence*, 154.

⁹ Pestalozzi, *How Gertrude Teaches Her Children*, 7.

referred to as “Form, Number, and Language” teachers moved students in a natural progression based on their own pace.

The natural progression used all three parts of each human being “mind, body, and soul.”¹⁰ These human qualities required each person to develop an individual learning experience. As a result, each child created a learning mode based upon their individual learning ability, style, and readiness. Pestalozzi had his students observe known objects, such as a ball or piece of cloth, within the learning environment. The place could be in the home or school room. The child examined the object’s shape, size, color, and other physical characteristics. The observation provided students an opportunity to classify new information within the student’s current frame of reference. According to Barlow, the terms that eventually would be associated with Pestalozzian methods such as “object methods, object teaching, and objective method appear to have been largely synonymous terms applied to this type of teaching.”¹¹ One of the basic tenets of Sheldon Barnes pedagogy was the use of original source items or objects as Pestalozzi suggested.

Dissemination of Pestalozzian Principles

Pestalozzian methods circulated throughout Europe as word spread about its effectiveness for teaching children. In his book, *History of the Pestalozzian Movement in the United States*, Will Monroe gave credit to Switzerland as the first country to adopt Pestalozzian methods on a large scale despite Pestalozzi’s personal unpopularity.¹² Other teachers and associates facilitated the use of Pestalozzian methods around Europe as they

¹⁰ Barlow, *Pestalozzi and American Education*, 14.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 19.

¹² Monroe, *History of the Pestalozzian Movement in the United States: with Nine Portraits and a Bibliography*.

moved to additional locations. One of the most prominent Pestalozzian disciples was Hermann Krüsi. His son, Hermann, Jr., eventually moved to Oswego, New York and worked at OSNTS for Edward Sheldon. Sheldon Barnes was a student and peer of Krüsi as she progressed through the normal school and eventually taught at the school.

As Pestalozzi's reputation expanded in continental Europe, there were individuals in England looking at alternative teaching methods outside of the generally accepted teaching method called the Lancastrian system.¹³ The Lancastrian system used extensively in public education classrooms provided large numbers of children opportunities in a monitorial setting and a limited number of teachers. By using fewer teachers, costs for operating the schools were minimal and students used rote memory skills. Students memorized large sections of books to show their teachers "understanding" of the material. Although any long term retention of memorized passages usually did not translate into comprehension of the same material.

Pestalozzian concepts spread initially to the United States about the same time as the concepts arrived in England in the late 1830s. One of the early educators who embraced this new educational philosophy was Bronson Alcott, a superintendent of a local school district in Massachusetts.¹⁴ Alcott was familiar with Pestalozzian concepts because he read *Leonard and Gertrude* and other Pestalozzi books. Alcott started a school in which he "*adapted* rather than *adopted* Pestalozzian concepts [italics in

¹³ Kliebard, *The Struggle for the American Curriculum: 1893-1958*; Silber, *Pestalozzi: The Man and His Work*; Krüsi, Jr, *Pestalozzi: His Life, Work, and Influence*. There is some dispute as to whether Joseph Lancaster or Andrew Bell developed the system. According to Silber, both educators introduced similar methods the same time in England. Lancaster's name has been associated with the method.

¹⁴ Barlow, *Pestalozzi and American Education*.

original].”¹⁵ Alcott and Horace Mann, superintendent of all Massachusetts schools wrote and spoke about Pestalozzian methods as alternative teaching processes.

During his tenure as superintendent of the Concord schools, Alcott tried to introduce his adapted principles of Pestalozzian concepts. Alcott stated in a letter to Hermann Krusi, Jr. in 1875 that “more than to other educators of modern times I am indebted to Pestalozzi.”¹⁶ Although, Alcott adapted Pestalozzi’s philosophy, he believed the basic ideas and concepts of his own pedagogy extended Pestalozzian philosophy in Massachusetts. Alcott’s implemented his methodology in his school district in the 1830s. Through his occupation as a teacher and administrator, he developed a professional and personal relationship with Horace Mann.¹⁷

When Horace Mann became the Secretary of the Massachusetts Board of Education in 1837, he knew the conditions of common schools in his state were deficient in standards and methods. In his official function as Secretary, Mann visited all of the common schools in Massachusetts and provided the Board of Education with annual reports. According to Paul Monroe in 1940, Mann’s seventh annual report became “the most important single influence in spreading Pestalozzian ideas of method, discipline, school management, and curriculum throughout the United States.”¹⁸ Mann toured Europe with his second wife for six months. He noticed the success of schools using Pestalozzian concepts. It was in Prussia where Mann found what Krüsi, Jr. later called

¹⁵ Ibid., 130.

¹⁶ Krüsi, Jr, *Recollections of My Life*, 238.

¹⁷ Barlow, *Pestalozzi and American Education*. Alcott's school was open from 1834-1839. Mann was the Secretary of the Board of Education in Massachusetts beginning in 1837. A teacher in Alcott's school was Elizabeth Peabody, the sister of Horace Mann's second wife.

¹⁸ Monroe, *Founding of the American Public School System: A History of Education in the United States*, 384.

“the true secret of success in the process of education.”¹⁹ Mann considered the Pestalozzian German schools to be the model of success.

The impact Mann had on education in normal schools is without question.²⁰ Mann opened two normal schools for the purpose of developing teachers. Normal schools had been in existence in Europe for many years but the idea had been ignored in the United States until Massachusetts opened the first schools in 1839.²¹ Teachers in these schools became familiar with Pestalozzian philosophy through their curriculum. The success of Mann’s normal schools gained wide acceptance and became a model for Edward Austin Sheldon as he developed his normal school in New York.

The Oswego Movement

Edward Austin Sheldon’s use of Pestalozzian concepts as a teacher and administrator developed slowly in his schools. Edward Sheldon’s journey into teaching was haphazard, at best. He originally planned to attend theology school but became concerned about the lack of education of poor children after he completed an informal survey in Oswego, New York. The survey results estimated that approximately fifteen hundred people in Oswego were poor and uneducated.²² These survey results prompted him to make a proposal establishing a school for the “ragged, profane children romping the streets.”²³ The community leaders accepted his proposal only if he agreed to become the teacher. He agreed to the offer. At the time of this first school, he was unaware of Pestalozzian concepts.

¹⁹ Krüsi, Jr, *Pestalozzi: His Life, Work, and Influence*, 235.

²⁰ Altenbaugh, *The American People and Their Education: A Social History*.

²¹ Barlow, *Pestalozzi and American education*, 65.

²² Sheldon, *Autobiography of Edward Austin Sheldon*, 74.

²³ *Ibid.*, 75.

On January 14, 1849, Edward Austin Sheldon opened the Orphan and Free School in Oswego, New York with 70 “scholars.” Sheldon’s concern was for children between “eight and ten years old, who could not read their A,B,C!”²⁴ There were many Oswego children who were orphans who barely survived with little material goods. His premise was that by educating them, he would improve their general socioeconomic status.²⁵ After meeting with community leaders, the group decided to open a school to teach students basic educational skills. He was the initial instructor with an annual salary of \$300.00. He had no previous formal training to teach nor had he ever taught a class.²⁶ In a letter to his sister Dorliska Sheldon in 1848, Edward Sheldon expressed his concern for the children’s lack of clothing and poor living conditions. Additionally, Edward Sheldon wanted the children “to be taught moral as well as mental precepts.”²⁷ Sheldon’s vision for his scholars was very similar to Pestalozzi’s philosophy of addressing children’s physical, moral, and academic needs.

The school progressed through the 1850s and Sheldon’s status changed. He became the first Secretary of the Board of Education in Oswego (similar to contemporary school district superintendent). The state of New York in 1853 mandated the new administrative position for Oswego.²⁸ With his new responsibilities, Sheldon wanted to develop a uniform professional development process for all teachers in the Oswego school system. Teachers were not required to have degrees beyond graduating from high school. In order to create a unified faculty, Sheldon expected teachers to attend weekly

²⁴ Ibid., 75.

²⁵ Sheldon Barnes adopted a similar perspective as she observed the socioeconomic status of women in society. Her feminist views placed education as a key for improving and creating opportunities for women within the patriarchal society of the late nineteenth century.

²⁶ Sheldon, *Autobiography of Edward Austin Sheldon*, 75.

²⁷ Ibid., 75.

²⁸ Ibid., 93. Sheldon moved to Syracuse, NY to lead the school system for double the salary but returned to Oswego in 1853.

faculty meetings. Oftentimes these meetings were for administrative purposes but professional development classes were included. Teachers discussed successes and failures in both lessons and methods. Sheldon used these meetings to discuss his observations from other school districts that he had seen in his travels.

Part of Sheldon's leadership responsibilities included visiting other schools around the state with the purpose of observing a variety of teaching practices. In September 1859, Sheldon visited Toronto, Ontario, Canada. During the visit, he saw a conglomeration of materials or "objects" collected for students' benefit by the Canadian school officials. Sheldon arranged to purchase all of the objects for \$300.00. His reasoning was that through these objects he would be able to teach teachers and students using a new and more effective teaching method. When Sheldon started his school in Oswego, he knew of the importance of the educational work done by the Home and Colonial Infant and Juvenile School Society in London, England.²⁹ The Society had been responsible for several books and pamphlets on Pestalozzi and object lessons. He therefore saw the practicality of the exhibition in Toronto. His next objective would be the proper introduction of the lessons and concepts into his school district.

According to Krüsi, Sheldon "is due the honor of the first introduction and systematic application of the reformed methods in public schools."³⁰ There was a distinct difference in teaching methods for students in the Oswego State Normal and Training School (OSNTS). Teachers were learning how to engage students in the classroom using the object teaching format [see Appendix A]. The object lesson was a direct linkage to Pestalozzian principles by using children's perceptions and senses to establish a basic

²⁹ Sheldon, *Autobiography of Edward Austin Sheldon*.

³⁰ Krüsi, Jr, *Recollections of My Life*, 242.

concept. Sheldon was far more successful in using Pestalozzian concepts than other pioneers, such as Neef or Maclure. His introduction of Pestalozzian concepts started slowly in 1860 after the Oswego schools had been active for almost eleven years. The methods introduced initially for first grade students and gradually moved up to the higher grades. In most cases, Sheldon needed to prepare his teachers in these new concepts based on their willingness to alter their existing methods.

Sheldon's innovative school system created a challenge for him. Teachers were leaving his schools for higher paying school systems throughout the state. Sheldon's teacher training and the overall effectiveness his methods in Oswego public schools became well known. As a result, teachers moved to positions in other school districts for more money than he could pay. He and his board of education decided to establish a normal school for teachers within his district. The school curriculum required teachers to spend time teaching children (student teaching) and taking classes in educational basic teaching methods. Thus, a second distinction for Sheldon's educators was a student teaching component along with object lessons as a unique blend of practical instruction and preparation. In essence, Sheldon wanted to develop his own teachers using his own resources. If he was unable to employ his normal school graduates and they found other teaching opportunities, children benefitted from their teacher's education. The challenge, as he saw it, was finding a lead teacher to integrate Pestalozzian concepts, object lessons, and his vision for his future teachers.³¹ Although he had read about Pestalozzian concepts and had instituted changes, he did not feel as adept with the methods as he wanted to be.

Sheldon turned to the Home and Colonial Infant and Juvenile School Society in England for an experienced teacher. Miss Margaret E. M. Jones was that individual who

³¹ Sheldon, *Autobiography of Edward Austin Sheldon*.

temporarily moved to Oswego to teach Sheldon and his staff. She agreed for a period of one year to help Sheldon develop the teacher training program that has since been called the Oswego Movement. By the time Miss Jones arrived, most of the Oswego teachers were generally familiar with the Pestalozzian concepts Sheldon had developed. Jones' impact was the refinement of object lessons and teacher development.

The Sheldon's modifications to the original Pestalozzian concepts were not exceptional. With the guidance of Miss Jones, Sheldon developed a blend of practical lessons with relevance for children. According to A.P. Hollis in 1898, there were ten normal schools in existence when Sheldon established his unique brand of teacher education programs. However, OSNTS was the "Mother of Normal School."³² Hollis' accolade was a major distinction considering Horace Mann's two normal schools had opened in 1839 and preceded Sheldon's by twenty years.

According to Dearborn, by 1886 graduates of OSNTS had placed teachers in forty-three states and six countries.³³ OSNTS graduated 2,148 students between the years 1862–1886.³⁴ Some of these graduates found positions teaching in sixteen new normal schools throughout the country. The influence of Edward Sheldon and his school was significant for Sheldon Barnes as both a student and a teacher. The ripple effect of Edward Sheldon and the Oswego Movement had noteworthy implications for the mid-nineteenth century educators. The use of object lessons and child-centered methods were two reasons for OSNTS's enrollment and subsequent success.

³² Hollis, 15.

³³ Dearborn, *Oswego Movement in American Education*. In 1886, Hawaii was a foreign country. As a result, three teachers were outliers for the United States category.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, The 2,148 students represented 45 states and 13 foreign countries.

Object Lessons

Sheldon's curriculum placed emphasis on moral training. He established guidelines similar to Pestalozzi that emphasized an ethical element within the classroom that was an important part of teacher and student education. As a devout Christian, Sheldon wanted to emphasize the importance of moral teaching either in established classroom lessons, Bible study, or whenever teaching moments became available. He wanted children's academic progress to follow a "*natural order of its [children's] development* [italics in original]."³⁵ The sensory learning format used in teacher lessons, such as, form, colors, and physical features made more sense to him. Sheldon knew children arrived at school each day with basic knowledge which allowed teachers to use the knowledge and develop newer concepts. Finally, teachers placed more emphasis on "stimulation and development of powers of observation, and the spirit of inquiry"³⁶ instead of teacher oriented lecture methods. These lessons were distinctly child-centered as opposed to standard teacher-centered lessons widely used in schools.

Sheldon was aware of object lessons from the pamphlets he had read from the Home and Colonial Infant and Juvenile School Society and, probably, was aware of Elizabeth Mayo from her 1839 book entitled *Lessons on Objects*.³⁷ Prior to Sheldon's trip to Canada, Mayo published her book in multiple editions. Sheldon later published his own version of the book in which he acknowledged changing language style to accommodate an American audience.³⁸

³⁵ Ibid., 119. Sheldon is quoting in his autobiography from an unidentified brochure published by the Home and Colonial Infant and Juvenile School Society.

³⁶ Ibid., 13.

³⁷ Mayo, *Lesson on Objects*.

³⁸ Jones and Sheldon, *Lessons on Objects, Graduated Series; Designed for Children between the Ages of Six and Fourteen Years: Containing, also, Information on Common Objects*.

In 1862, Edward Sheldon addressed the Oswego Educational Convention. The title of his paper was “Primary Instruction by Object Lessons.”³⁹ In his comments, Sheldon stated that there are good teachers in abundance throughout the country. These teachers have been “preparing the way for the introduction of these principles [object lessons], embodied into a *system of primary education* [italics in the original]....It is this feature which we claim as new in this country.”⁴⁰ He claimed the use of object teaching “will *make teaching a profession* [italics in the original] – a title it has yet to earn.”⁴¹ If teachers wanted to improve their salaries and their teaching credentials, object lessons were the method. The results showed the community-at-large that teachers could show the impact on the children’s learning opportunities.

Sheldon gave most of the credit for the system he used to Pestalozzi. He agreed with Pestalozzi that the basis for teaching children is “*faith and love*”⁴²[italics in the original] and if teachers used the concepts, children would grow intellectually. It was Sheldon’s hope that students would see the benefits of object teaching and become eager to learn. Teachers needed to understand that their pedagogy included a place for divine assistance. “Man’s method, to be effective, must follow God’s method.”⁴³ Sheldon believed that God provided students with an ability to perceive, learn, and assimilate knowledge into their daily lives at an individual pace. Sheldon “modified – Americanized – to meet the peculiar characteristics of our people and country.”⁴⁴ The differences were more about language and exemplars than conceptual differences. Similarities are more

³⁹ “Proceedings of the Educational Convention held at Oswego, NY, February 11, 12, and 13, to examine into a system of Primary Instruction by Object Lessons.” (See Appendix C).

⁴⁰ Ibid., 3.

⁴¹ Ibid., 4.

⁴² Ibid., 5.

⁴³ Ibid., 10.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 11.

dominant than the differences and Sheldon allowed that differences existed and the exceptions were subject to refinement as necessary. The general idea is to build on concepts students have previously learned, as Pestalozzi professed. Thus, teachers developed a direct, natural learning opportunity for students using practical teaching skills.

Mayo had cautioned in her book and Sheldon agreed that some teachers would attempt to implement object lessons with little or no training. Mayo admonished,

teachers making use of these Lessons [sic] are earnestly advised to read carefully the introduction to a series [level of conceptual understanding] before they commence the lessons which it contains, and to endeavor to understand, and then to act up to the principles and aim set forth. They should guard against mere mechanical work, or allowing this in their pupils; the latter, after having heard a few names, will often, without thought or observation, apply them indiscriminately. Neither should the lessons be slavishly followed in all that is set down ; they should rather be used as affording suggestive hints; and variety should be sought for—the children often themselves indicate what their minds require.⁴⁵

Taking into consideration the contemporary period in history and lack of teaching certification requirements, their admonishment provided an interesting perspective. His school provided the necessary training for teachers to integrate object lessons into their classrooms. Sheldon Barnes, a student in OSNTS, agreed with her father about object lessons. Her books provided teachers with “source material,” as she labeled it, for instruction in the classroom.

Object Lessons and Source Material

In Mayo’s 1839 innovative book, she illustrated practical materials and different activities teachers could use with students that provided object lessons. The pictures

⁴⁵ Sheldon, *Lesson on Objects, Graduated Series*, 7.

enabled children to use their sensory skills that related to the lesson. The text that accompanied the picture was simple enough to demonstrate the point even for teachers who lacked more than an elementary education. Sheldon's edited 1868 book did not include any illustrations. Both books used fictional dialogue between teacher and students to enhance her concepts.

Mayo's book was more suitable for elementary school children because the concepts were more fundamental, such as explaining the origin of salt. Sheldon's book, written in 1868, attempted to reach teachers for all levels of school children, such as explaining the characteristics and origins of milk beyond the cow. Sheldon Barnes' books would be in line with high school and college level curriculum that used etchings, maps, letters, book excerpts, and pictures as "source material."

Summary

The classroom teaching methodology for Edward Sheldon and Mary Sheldon Barnes integrated Pestalozzi's principles of allowing the student to learn using their senses. Subsequently, a student will build based upon their own speed for absorption of new material with old concepts. The use of object lessons by students provided an opportunity to achieve academic success without memorization of passages. Teachers gave students a chance to see how reading source documents impacted history. A student analyzed and synthesized information instead of a teacher telling him how it impacted history. Sheldon Barnes always connected object lessons and source material as part of her pedagogy.

Sheldon Barnes used Johann Pestalozzi and his successors as guides in object teaching methods for her classroom and textbook writing. She provided research to

support her methodology using scientific history and seminary style in her classrooms. She quantified her process that provided teachers, albeit simplistically, based upon her understanding of Pestalozzian principles.

CHAPTER 4

MARY SHELDON BARNES' EARLY YEARS

Introduction

In this chapter I will provide an examination of Sheldon Barnes' family and early life as a normal school student and teacher. Great turmoil existed in the United States during the years that Sheldon Barnes attended elementary school through high school, 1855-1866. The pre-Civil War period and Civil War were formative years for Sheldon Barnes. Her father supported Abraham Lincoln and the Union but was physically unable to sign up for the army.¹ However, as an educator, especially one using Pestalozzian principles, he probably used newspapers and other materials for discussions in his classrooms and home. Unlike many children in the United States in the pre-Civil War period, Sheldon Barnes was an early reader. Sheldon Barnes' roots in an active learning environment, such as Edward Sheldon's normal school, provided her a more complete understanding of events and places.

Oswego and Roots

Sheldon Barnes' birthplace of Oswego, New York, had an interesting history. It served as a British outpost prior to the American Revolution. The fort and surrounding community transferred to the United States in 1796. The local area was the setting for *The Deerslayer* by author James Fenimore Cooper in 1841.² The city of Oswego incorporated in 1848. In 1850, Oswego, the county in upstate New York, had a

¹ *Historical Sketches Relating to the First Quarter Century of the State Normal and Training School at Oswego, NY.*

² Cooper, *The Deerslayer: Or The First War-Path. A Tale*. This book is part of the Leatherstocking Tales written by Cooper as a five book series. The book, written chronologically last, is actually the first in the series providing background information on Natty Bumppo, the hero. The book is very descriptive of life and topography in the frontier of Western New York in the eighteenth century that Eleazar and Laura Sheldon probably experienced.

population of 62,198.³ The city of Oswego was composed of 12,205 people and considered the fifty-fifth largest city in the United States in 1850.⁴

One major national issue at this time was the new set of national laws known as the Compromise of 1850. A critical piece of the compromise was the Fugitive Slave Law. Oswego was one of the largest ports for transportation and trade between Canada and the United States. In addition to farm products and manufactured goods passing through Oswego many slaves fled into Canada via Oswego. Because of the commercial traffic passing through the city, Oswego became a natural conduit for the Underground Railroad from 1835 onward.

As polarizing as slavery was in the United States, Edward Sheldon made only a brief mention about its impact on his community in his *Autobiography of Edward Austin Sheldon*.⁵ Along with many other national events that transpired around the Sheldon family, Sheldon made passing mention about personal events in his book. He only mentioned the birth of his first daughter, Mary Downing Sheldon, briefly.⁶ Edward Sheldon's book was a good source of material for finding information about Sheldon Barnes' early but sketchy childhood. The absence of the material was probably

³ U.S. Bureau of Census, Table I, 91. The report states that there were 61,983 Whites and 215 Free Colored. There was no reference to any slaves living in Oswego County.

⁴ Ibid., The city was behind Hartford, CT (13, 555) and Lancaster, PA (12,369) but ahead of Springfield, MA (11,766) and Fall River, MA (11,524).

⁵ Sheldon, *Autobiography of Edward Sheldon*, 95–98. The story tells about the events Sheldon witnessed while his family resided in Syracuse, NY. He summarized the events of an alleged slave captured by a slave catcher and the community turned on the slave catcher. He described the law as "abominal." The alleged slave was released and the "southern gentleman of noble blood! has been arrested as a kidnapper."

⁶ Ibid., 91. Edward Sheldon stated that the location for the birth of Sheldon Barnes was in the US Hotel in Oswego and he and his wife occupied a room.

intentional. Sheldon Barnes was the editor of her father's autobiography and only edited material she received.⁷

Edward Austin Sheldon and Francis Anna Bradford Stiles were Sheldon Barnes' parents. Each parent was a professional educator. Edward Sheldon was born in Perry Center, New York (near Oswego) on October 4, 1823. His father, Eleazar Sheldon, was born in New Marlboro, Massachusetts on May 15, 1792. His mother was Laura Austin who was born in Sheffield, a town nearby, on April 9, 1788. Both parents lived in Berkshire County in western part of the state. They migrated to upstate New York for a better life in 1819. Eleazar Sheldon was a "pioneer and a farmer" and his wife raised the family in the traditional family custom of nurturing children.

Eleazar Sheldon wanted to be a doctor as he was growing up but his mother was more practical and had him learn the trade of shoemaker. Prior to his marriage, Eleazar Sheldon had spent one year teaching in Massachusetts. Upon relocation, he became a farmer and used his shoemaking skills to supplement his income as a farmer. Edward Sheldon describes his mother as "never a well woman" who ministered to "the sick and needy in the neighborhood."⁸ Both parents lived long lives despite the challenges of early life in Western New York. His mother was ninety-five years old (died 1884) and his father was eighty-five years old (died 1878) at the time of their deaths.

Frances A.B. Stiles lived in Perry Center, New York where the Sheldon family resided. Francis and Edward Sheldon knew each other since Edward was a college student at Hamilton College (Clinton, New York) near the Stiles family household. Her family was originally from Connecticut and she was born in Windsor, a small village at

⁷ Ibid., Sheldon's book is used throughout this manuscript as a source for clarification and historiography for Pestalozzian principles used by Sheldon Barnes in her pedagogy.

⁸ Ibid., 8.

the time, outside of Hartford on April 9, 1826. She was the daughter of a well-known abolitionist in the early nineteenth century in Connecticut, Ezra Stiles.⁹ The Stiles of Connecticut were an old established prominent family that first established roots there in Connecticut in 1635.¹⁰ The Stiles family was one of the original founders of Connecticut and Francis Stiles's relatives included educators, clergy, and legal scholars.¹¹ Francis A. B. Sheldon, along with her brothers taught school. She stopped teaching upon her marriage to Edward Sheldon and became a homemaker, as was the custom for women teachers of the period.

Upstate New York in 1850

By the time Sheldon Barnes' ancestors arrived in western New York there were multiple philosophical and human rights movements that impacted her parents and other groups in and around the area that was known as the "Burned Over District."¹² There was considerable turmoil with a number of issues that transformed the population throughout the area beyond the abolitionist efforts of reformers. In 1801, the "Second Awakening" began as a religious movement in which people began to talk to God directly. People converted from non-believers to a variety of religious denominations.¹³ Each denomination was determined to convert people so the saved souls avoided eternal damnation. The competition of the newly arrived settlers in western New York was brisk.

⁹ Ibid., 215. According to Sheldon Barnes and her father, much of the success of Edward Sheldon was because of his marriage. She provided "social graces...great fortitude of character, wide and warm intellectual interests, and an unusual education for a woman of her generation."

¹⁰ Stiles, *The Stiles Family in America*.

¹¹ Ibid. The Stiles family included Oliver Ellsworth, third Chief Justice of the United States (lawyer), Ezra Stiles, President of Yale College (theologian and educator), and her father, also named Ezra Stiles (educator).

¹² Cross, *The Burned-over District*

¹³ Wilentz, *The Rise of American Democracy: Jefferson to Lincoln*, 142. According to Wilentz, religious believers were as high as eight in ten people.

Additionally, Seneca Falls was only thirty-eight miles from Oswego. The meeting for women's rights in the United States had recently taken place in western New York and papers in the area wrote about the issue. The Sheldons had to be aware of the subjects being written about in the local papers and discussed in their community. Sheldon Barnes was a beneficiary of both religious fervor and women's rights movements taking place in this part of the country. The impact of these changes along with the temperance and abolitionist movements in the United States set in motion a series of changes that provided an opportunity for Sheldon Barnes.

Sheldon Barnes' Early Years

On September 15, 1850, Sheldon Barnes was the first child born in the Sheldon household. Her place of birth was born Oswego, New York.¹⁴ At this time, the Sheldon family lived in the United States Hotel.¹⁵ The building became the site of the Oswego Normal School (now known as State University of New York at Oswego) where she attended and taught in later years. Eventually, a newer building replaced the original one but some of her memories of the building included the rooms, teachers, and elementary classrooms.

In 1851, the three members of the Sheldon family moved from Oswego to Syracuse, New York where Edward Sheldon became the Superintendent of public schools for two years. He left Oswego for monetary purposes.¹⁶ He had been founder of the Orphan and Free School in Oswego but the position did not provide an adequate income for a married father to support his family. His vision was that the new position in

¹⁴ Commire and Klezmer, *Women in World History: A Biographical Encyclopedia*.

¹⁵ Sheldon, *Autobiography of Edward Austin Sheldon*.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 92. In his first year in Syracuse his salary was \$600. He received a raise in 1852 to \$750.

Syracuse provided him an opportunity for additional income to comfortably begin his family and yet stay near both families' roots.

Syracuse was only forty miles from Oswego; however, in the mid-nineteenth century travel between the cities was a day's journey. He later called the move his "digression to Syracuse."¹⁷ In 1853, he returned to Oswego as the first leader of the Oswego Board of Education. He and his wife would remain in Oswego for the remainder of their lives. The Sheldon family used Oswego as a centerpiece of the family tree that eventually expanded to include Charles Stiles (1856), Francis Elizabeth (1857), Anne Bradford (1861), and Laura Austin (1867). When he returned to Oswego, he had the opportunity to create the public schools within his long-term vision for poor and other uneducated children.



Figure 1
Sheldon Family
Photo courtesy of Penfield Library

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 89.

Sheldon's challenge of developing a unified school district from among different individual schools was going to be difficult, at a minimum.¹⁸ However, to help him in his cause the state of New York authorized Oswego to organize a "free" school system.¹⁹ He moved his family back to Oswego for the beginning of the new school term in 1853.

Sheldon Barnes' memories do not include movement back and forth between Oswego and Syracuse. Her first memories were of looking into the sky with her mother and thinking about "infinite life – space."²⁰ Even at an early age, she was thinking about matters outside the present circumstances of her existence. She spoke about the vastness of space outside of her world but also about the enormity of knowledge within her world of literature and "books of travel endless" that she was yet to experience.²¹ Although intrigued and inspired by space, Sheldon's first career choice at the age of seven was to be an artist.²² She acknowledged the importance of her father throughout her life as a guide and central figure as well as her academic career.

Family concerns about Sheldon Barnes' health and gender sheltered her from outside influences as a child and young woman. Her move to Ann Arbor, Michigan to attend college must have been exciting. She originally envisioned traveling both in the United States and Europe to provide a meaningful relationship for her reading and personal, first-hand experience of distant places and times. As the daughter of a prominent educator, Sheldon Barnes had access to many books and people who

¹⁸ Ibid., 99.

¹⁹ Ibid., 92. He became the "secretary" of the board at the sum of \$800 annually. According to Sheldon, he was unaware of the proceedings until everything was in place and he offered the position.

²⁰ Sheldon Barnes, *A Mind's Story: The Autobiography of a College Girl*, 1.

²¹ Ibid, 1.

²² *Sheldon Barnes Journal, 1868*, Sophia Smith Collection. The journal entry is not dated but later ones indicate she started the journal in 1868 upon her graduation from OSNTS. She appeared to be reminiscing about her thoughts as a child. In later entries, she provided dates to give a perspective to the manuscript.

journeyed to Oswego to observe Dr. Edward Sheldon's methods. Her unpublished autobiography and journals that remain from her childhood described visitors to OSNTS and teachers who placed seeds of wanderlust into her imagination.²³ Many of the classical books written by authors such as Homer, Spenser, Milton and others captured her imagination of distant times and lands that fascinated her.²⁴ Her enrollment and eventual graduation from college provided her with additional opportunities to attain her goal of travel to places that she dreamed about through literature. Sheldon Barnes was prepared to combine a life of world travel and teaching school to elementary or high school children.

The life of a nineteenth century educator was less romantic than typical movie portrayals. Oftentimes, the visual image of teachers in the nineteenth century may be like Washington Irving's character, Ichabod Crane, as a quiet, inept person depicted in *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow*. Or another version of a teacher was teaching well-behaved students in a one room classroom and bestowing knowledge on eager minds, such as the characters on the television shows *The Little House on the Prairie*. The reality was the nineteenth century teachers were poorly paid. The schools were poorly constructed. The children were often unruly.²⁵ Many children did not complete elementary school but achieved minimal ability for literacy. Sheldon Barnes' life was the antithesis of the

²³ Sheldon Barnes, *A Mind's Story: The Autobiography of a College Girl*.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Altenbaugh, *The American People and Their Education: A Social History*, 33. Teachers, initially, tended to be male and longevity as a teacher was, approximately, two years. Oftentimes, men took teaching positions as a less attractive alternative for other jobs while they were seeking positions.

typical teacher because of her father's position within the educational hierarchy.²⁶

However, she developed her own aspirations for education.

Sheldon Barnes' vision of the future was "separating from the common herd, who [sic] either from indolence or necessity were [sic] choosing easier and shorter courses."²⁷ She was differentiating herself early in her school years from the majority of boys and girls who wanted to complete the minimum amount of school work. Less arduous school work allowed students passage into higher grades until they graduated or parents allowed them to leave. By comparison, Sheldon Barnes' classes included more rigorous mental activity, like Latin, French, Greek and mathematics in preparation for a more challenging life after her school days. One of her first teachers she described as person with "finished education" who she wrote about in glowing terms.²⁸ Interestingly, she described her next teacher as a "genius and an opium-eater" who could command both classroom issues and detailed knowledge of the Greek language and philosophy. Although she thought his genius was apparent because of the knowledge he shared with the students, "the terrible opium curse was drawing him closer and closer to its maelstrom center."²⁹ He left one day and never returned to her class. Her description of his pedagogy and knowledge placed him as a good teacher but as a questionable man with an unfortunate addiction. As a student and, later a teacher, she was able to empathize with teachers in classrooms from an early age. She saw her teachers as human beings. Sheldon Barnes was one of the few children who entered elementary school being able to read. In one memory she described

²⁶ Sheldon Barnes, "Biographical Sketch of E.A. Sheldon." Edward Sheldon dropped out of Hamilton College to pursue other opportunities but he earned his A.M. degree in 1869. Additionally, in 1875, the Regents of the University of New York awarded him a PhD.

²⁷ Sheldon Barnes, *A Mind's Story: The Autobiography of a College Girl*, 2.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 2-3.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 6.

how she “was called up to explain something to some boy that seemed very tall. How when then pride of superiority would swell her [Sheldon Barnes’] little heart.”³⁰

She was proud of her scholarship. Her father encouraged her intellectual development with his object lessons. Sheldon Barnes’ childhood memories include being her father’s “assistant” in developing a bug collection. She helped her father locate and preserve insects. As a Pestalozzian scholar, Edward Sheldon used the collection as a method to engage Sheldon Barnes as well as the other students in the classes to move from the known to the unknown Pestalozzian tenet. She later called Pestalozzian methods as the “easiest and most inviting entrances to the whole domain of organic life.”³¹ She later gravitated to science at the University of Michigan. To Edward Sheldon and Sheldon Barnes’ way of thinking, the use of science and bugs was a natural progression for children and education for Pestalozzian methods. Her textbooks reflected her father’s methods to engage student’s interests.

Edward Sheldon was aware of the challenges facing teachers since he had been working as an educator since 1849. His first pedagogical methods were probably similar to those he was familiar with in his youth; teacher-centered, large, disparate classes with children of all age levels within one room. In 1859 he went to Canada and “discovered” Pestalozzian methods [See Chapter Three] and became an instant convert to his pedagogy. The impact of Edward Sheldon’s conversion on Sheldon Barnes’ educational experience was immediate and lasted throughout her lifetime as woman, student, teacher, and writer.

³⁰ Sheldon Barnes Journal, 1868. Sophia Smith Collection.

³¹ Sheldon, *Autobiography of Edward Austin Sheldon*, 219.

Sheldon Barnes and the Oswego Normal School

Sheldon Barnes grasped the challenges of women and teachers in the nineteenth century due to her position as a daughter of teachers (father and mother), an administrator (her father), and a woman (her mother). Additionally, she was cognizant of her position in society as a white, middle class, college-educated woman. Patricia Hill Collins speaks about how “intersectionality explores how these systems [gender, race, class] mutually construct one another.”³² Caroline Eick discussed Collins’ framework in her article about oral histories when she wrote “the intersectionality analytical approach examines the ways in which social markers of difference (race, gender, ethnicity, sexuality, generation, class, religion, and nationality) intersect to shape situated experiences, and places the historian within her own social position.”³³ Early in Sheldon Barnes’ emerging feminist viewpoint, she developed an understanding of her outlook that was different from the social mores of the time. Suffice it to say, that in some cases, she accepted her place as it gave her access to certain privileges, such as a teaching position at Wellesley College. There were other instances in which she helped move women’s rights along further through her academic accomplishments.

During the Progressive Age, few women had opportunities to become educated beyond basic schooling. There was no need for them to be college-educated. Linda Eisenmann discusses the availability of women’s opportunities evolving through circumstances afforded them in the world. Women used existing institutions of the

³² Collins, “It’s All in the Family: Intersections of Gender, Race, and Nation,” 63; Collins, “The New Politics of Community,” 7–30; Shields, “Gender: An Intersectionality Perspective,” 301–311.

³³ Eick, “Oral Histories of Education and the Relevance of Theory: Claiming New Spaces in a Post-Revisionist Era..,” 161.

nineteenth century society to build networks with other women.³⁴ For example, the women's clubs that developed provided considerable support and networking opportunities for women outside of the home.³⁵ By looking at these alternative educational pathways, women became better educated and developed relationships which moved their causes forward. Sheldon Barnes' educational opportunities came in a similar manner and included her parental lineage. She attended a normal school to prepare for a teaching career that improved her professional credentials. Although Sheldon Barnes' opportunities were limited, she was able to break out, in a small way, into the educational hierarchy of the era. Her family name was a prominent factor that assisted her within the educational community.

Normal schools and colleges began accepting women at the beginning of the nineteenth century as a first step in the long process of higher education for them. Oberlin College was the first college to admit women in 1837.³⁶ At the time, there was considerable controversy about the goals of college education for women. Studer-Ellis wrote about "unresolved issues about the form of women's colleges included whether the aim was to develop independent women or 'Republican Mothers,' whether the sexes ought to be segregated or integrated, and whether a liberal or practical education ought to be provided for women."³⁷ Once young women graduated from college, limited opportunities existed except for the teaching profession.

Sheldon Barnes was aware of the challenges that came with attending institutions of higher learning, such as, primarily male student body, limited prospects for post-

³⁴ Eisenmann, "Creating a Framework for Interpreting US Women's Educational History."

³⁵ Woysner, "Teaching the Women's Club Movement in United States History."

³⁶ Studer-Ellis, "Springboards to Mortarboards: Women's College Foundings in Massachusetts, New York, and Pennsylvania."

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 1053.

graduate work, and minimal teaching prospects at coeducational schools. She had been attending schools administered by her father and graduated from her high school at the age of sixteen.³⁸ Her father and her teachers' rigor prepared her for higher learning. Her early teachers spent many hours preparing for classes and, according to Edward Sheldon's autobiography, he met with the teachers in the Oswego school system each week on Saturday to review weekly progress.³⁹ The purpose of these meetings varied from teaching basic educational principles to applications of theory using the teacher's experiences in the classroom. These sessions set the pattern for both teachers and students for developing learning models that worked to improve their rigor of respective disciplines. In the mid-nineteenth century, teachers had to be versed in a variety of subject areas, so in these extra meetings aspiring teachers usually discussed educational concepts instead of content analysis.

In 1861, Edward Sheldon created the Oswego Primary Teachers' Training School that developed into what was the springboard for the Oswego teaching movement. The first class of thirty-nine students, including Edward Sheldon, completed their coursework on April 10, 1862. In the original resolution for development of the Training School, the board of directors required students to have a high school "certificate" from Oswego schools or the equivalent. The original curriculum for students included classes in botany, zoology, mineralogy, linear drawing, moral philosophy, and reading. Edward Sheldon based the order of the classes on his understanding of a natural progression of knowledge and adjustments to conform to his interpretation of Pestalozzian principles. Additionally, classes in "theory and practice" of educational concepts would be interspersed with

³⁸ Crocco and Davis, *Building a Legacy: Women in Social Education, 1784-1984*, 25.

³⁹ Sheldon, *Autobiography of Edward Austin Sheldon*, 133.

content classes. The expectations of Edward Sheldon and the board was that the students would be able to complete these classes within a two year period. Upon completion of the classwork, students at OSNTS graduated with a diploma or certification of graduation. The cost of the program would be eight dollars per term and “payable in advance.”⁴⁰

In 1865, OSNTS became an institution of higher learning but was not quite a college level institution. However, the reclassification provided Sheldon with a mechanism for developing teachers using Pestalozzian methods. The objective that Edward Sheldon and the Board established was to integrate Pestalozzian ideas and methods. However, he did not want OSNTS students to receive a certificate without proper assimilation of theory and application of educational concepts. He believed “*that any method can teach school* [italics in original]... [but the] chief toil of the teacher should always be with himself, to make himself a larger and better man, a sweeter and stronger woman. Then good methods will become second-nature and the expert will be forgotten in the gracious teacher, doing all the finest way.”⁴¹ In other words, it was the intention of Edward Sheldon to develop a superior group of teachers who would spread the methodology throughout the world for the benefit of children. The objectives of the school were to develop a “radical change in (1) subject-matter, (2) methods, (3) and spirit, which occurred in the instruction.”⁴² He wanted teachers to change their methodology from teach-centered to student-centered thereby making the educational experience meaningful for the student.

⁴⁰ *Historical Sketches Relating to the First Quarter Century of the State Normal and Training School at Oswego, NY*, 22–23.

⁴¹ Mayo, A.D. "The Normal School in America," 87–88.

⁴² Hollis, *The Contribution of the Oswego Normal School to Educational Progress in the United States*, 37. According to Hollis teachers were educated to teach the “three R’s” but from the perspective of nature (known) to the “spontaneous interest” (unknown) of children.

As teachers changed their methodology, the practice school became different physically. Teachers separated students based on grades or levels of knowledge. Observations of “Teachers-in-training” and their lessons and/or methods were routine and based upon teaching principles taught by other experienced teachers.⁴³ Supervising teachers were usually college graduates.

In 1867 the school added Greek, Latin, and German into the Classical Degree program for teachers who pursued an Advanced Degree. The first group of students who attained the new degree graduated on February 6, 1867. Sheldon Barnes graduated in the tenth class of OSNTS with the Classical Degree on July 8, 1868, or approximately two years after receiving her high school diploma. She stayed in OSNTS to complete the Advanced Degree in the eleventh graduating class on February 3, 1869. Her favorite classes were French, Geometry, and the Philosophy of Education. The addition of the higher level classes provided Sheldon with an extension of her knowledge in classical subjects. Also, knowledge of these subjects would be critical as she progressed into her upper level classes at the University of Michigan. The classical degree at Michigan, when Sheldon Barnes began her collegiate life, had considerable emphasis on languages such as Greek and Latin that she studied at OSNTS.

Sheldon Barnes’ enjoyment of erudition and desire for higher learning provided her with a direction after graduation from high school. She attended the Oswego normal school for three years from 1866-1869. She graduated with a normal school diploma and a state teaching certificate only granted to “superior graduates.”⁴⁴ Life at OSNTS, even for family members including Edward Sheldon, required “observing with scrupulous

⁴³ Ibid., 38.

⁴⁴ Crocco and Davis, *Building a Legacy: Women in Social Education, 1784-1984*, 25; Rogers, *OSWEGO: Fountainhead of Teacher Education*.

conscientiousness the rules of punctuality and regularity in attendance, at the morning devotions and at lessons.”⁴⁵ Normal schools were relatively inexpensive compared to colleges. For Sheldon Barnes, her classes at OSNTS became an extension of her learning that transformed from student to student-teacher trainee. Furthermore, the location of OSNTS was convenient.⁴⁶

Females comprised many normal school’s faculties and tended to support the suffragists movement.⁴⁷ Teacher preparation was the original goal for most normal schools.⁴⁸ Students were encouraged to stay in a normal school by providing a diploma that showed a record of accomplishment after two years.⁴⁹ Many normal schools evolved into four year colleges that provided a broader range of courses. When Sheldon Barnes enrolled in her father’s school, her objective was teaching school. Normal schools were places women attended in order to earn higher degrees when other traditional colleges would not accept them.

After graduation from high school, Sheldon Barnes was ready for additional education. As she stated, “the boys were ready for Harvard and Yale. I was equally so, but Harvard and Yale were not ready for girls.”⁵⁰ In other words, she was aware of gender limitations and accepted the ceiling placed upon her. As a sixteen year old high school graduate, she would not challenge the paternal restrictions and probably felt no urgency to do so at that point in her life.

⁴⁵ Sheldon, *Autobiography of Edward Austin Sheldon*, 244. Herman Krüse included the statement to show that Edward Sheldon had high expectations for all students and teachers who attended OSNTS.

⁴⁶ Bohan and Null, “Gender and the Evolution of Normal School Education: A Historical Analysis of Teacher Education Institutions,” 6.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*; Ogren, *The American State of Normal School: “An Instrument of Great Good.”*

⁴⁸ Ogren, “Rethinking the ‘Nontraditional’ Student from a Historical Perspective,” 642.

⁴⁹ Rogers, *OSWEGO: Fountainhead of Teacher Education*, 18.

⁵⁰ Sheldon Barnes, *A Mind’s Story: The Autobiography of a College Girl*, 7.

According to Dorothy Rogers' book about OSNTS after the Civil War most normal schools increased the age of entrance from sixteen to eighteen.⁵¹ Sheldon Barnes was sixteen when she entered OSNTS. Her father was obviously familiar with her intellectual abilities and made an exception for her, if there was a minimum age requirement at OSNTS. Sheldon Barnes lived in her parent's house during her time in OSNTS as there were no formal dormitories. Students who attended OSNTS either lived with their parents or in the community at quarters such as a quasi-official housing unit called Welland. The price was reasonable at the boarding facility (\$2.50 per week) and some students shared rooms or worked to defray the cost. For girls who came from a more rural life, these living quarters exceeded their previous farming lifestyle. An alternative arrangement was renting a room from a local family. In most cases, girl's preference for group housing was a primary concern over boy's preferences because of the decreased cost and cultural restrictions.⁵² The restrictions on women students were typical throughout the United States. For example, women were required to have chaperones when meeting with men outside of the classroom.

Since Sheldon Barnes probably lived in her parent's home, she was able to focus on her studies and receive additional support from her father and his faculty, like Hermann Krüsi, Jr. He was one of Edward Sheldon's distinguished teachers with considerable knowledge of Pestalozzian principles. Krüsi and other faculty members were regular visitors in the Sheldon home. Sheldon Barnes was able to extend classroom discussions.

⁵¹ Rogers, *OSWEGO: Fountainhead of Teacher Education*, 59. Probably, Edward Sheldon waived the age requirement for Sheldon Barnes, if Oswego had an age limit.

⁵² *Ibid.*; Ogren, *The American State of Normal School: "An Instrument of Great Good."*

Teachers acted as surrogate parents. In some cases, older students had lived away from home prior to attending OSNTS. However, restrictions and rules applied to all students. Prayer meetings and/or chapel were required for students. Physical exercise usually occurred separately with women engaging in less strenuous activities than men. Women would take long walks in segregated groups instead of the gymnasium activities required of men. These separate activities would gradually change for students. However, within the OSNTS during the tenure of Edward Sheldon, only minimal change occurred. Sheldon Barnes probably had a more restrictive standard because of her stature as the daughter of the top administrator.⁵³

As an aspiring teacher, Sheldon Barnes began her career at the normal school in 1866. Her first year teaching at OSNTS, she taught “gymnastics” and later expanded to subject matter that included botany and Latin.⁵⁴ OSNTS and Edward Sheldon had a national reputation. Sheldon Barnes reaped the benefits from her father’s success.⁵⁵ Her course of study began in the Classical Course.⁵⁶ In 1867, the school added an enhanced curriculum called the Advanced Course.⁵⁷ Sheldon Barnes graduated from the Advanced Course in 1869 and received her teaching certificate upon graduation. Students received a certificate of achievement only for those graduates based on scholarly standards rather

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ “Mrs. M.S. Barnes Dies in London,” *Oswego Daily Times*.

⁵⁵ Sheldon, *Lessons on Objects, Graduated Series; Designed for Children Between the Ages of Six and Fourteen Years: Containing, Also, Information on Common Objects*.

⁵⁶ *Historical Sketches Relating to the First Quarter Century of the State Normal and Training School at Oswego, NY*, 22–23. In the classical course the subject matter included Botany, Mental Philosophy, Zoology, Linear Drawing, Mineralogy, Moral Philosophy, and Reading. These courses were over three terms that lead to a diploma or certificate.

⁵⁷ Ibid. The advanced course included Latin, German, and Greek classes. One advantage of completing the Advanced Course work was acceptance into many colleges throughout the United States without examination.

than routine practices.⁵⁸ In an essay for graduation, Sheldon Barnes made grand statements about God and the universe. She felt she was being directed to some purpose that was outside her control but worthy of her efforts. Her academic efforts at OSNTS introduced her to many people whom Sheldon Barnes maintained as lifelong friends. One of these friendships, in a class behind her, was Mary Alling who corresponded with her throughout life.

In June 1869 Alling wrote to Sheldon Barnes about their friendship and new educational opportunities at the University of Michigan. Alling wanted Sheldon Barnes to see herself at the “meridian only *former friends* – looking through glasses ... will see *thee*; *others* only thy *splendor* and *influence* and may misjudge thee, but at the grand twilight *all* will *know thee* and feeling thy spirit be thankful that *thy life* was *so glorious* and wish that their lives like thine” [emphasis in original].⁵⁹ In other words, Alling thought that Sheldon Barnes’ outward meek and unassuming demeanor was misleading upon first impression. Once people came to know Sheldon Barnes, their opinions about her would change to an image of strength and resolve.

Despite the concerns about her health issues, Francis and Edward Sheldon allowed their daughter to apply to the University of Michigan. Sheldon Barnes accepted an invitation for entrance exams and travelled to Ann Arbor in the fall of 1871. Sheldon Barnes was a member of one of the first classes to admit women. In her class of seventy-

⁵⁸ Monteverde, “Mary Downing Sheldon Barnes,” 25.

⁵⁹ Mary Alling to Sheldon Barnes, 14 June 1869. Sophia Smith Collection. In a letter to Sheldon Barnes, Alling seemed to be trying to boost Sheldon Barnes’ self-confidence. The original letter to Mary Alling from Sheldon Barnes is not available but the tone of her reply indicated that Sheldon Barnes concern about her forthcoming enrollment at the University of Michigan. Alling became a school teacher and author of *The Children’s Own Work, Vol. I & II* and *An Experiment in Education: Also, the Ideas Which Inspired It and Were Inspired by It*.

two incoming students, twelve were women.⁶⁰ Eventually, Alice Freeman Palmer (1876) and Lucy Maynard Salmon (1876) became classmates, but they were not in the same graduating class. Palmer became a well-known educator and, later, President of Wellesley College. Salmon became a professor at Vassar for many years. With the exception of two women from the incoming class (who died prior to graduation), the remaining ten women graduated. The 100% graduation rate is a remarkable statistic, especially considering the dropout rate for men in the same group was 50%.⁶¹

In 1871 Sheldon Barnes began her new life away from her omnipresent parents and family. She was twenty-one years old with a solid educational background and two years of teaching experience in Oswego schools. She now entered into university life dominated by men both as students and professors. The culture change was significant, but she was confident in her abilities and background. She wrote in her journal “I start a new life – the long wished for university.”⁶² It was her time and she wanted to take full advantage of the opportunity.

Summary

Sheldon Barnes was a product of a family that had roots in the Oswego, New York area for many years; Western New York was wilderness when her parents arrived. Her parents and grandparents had varying degrees of experience as educators. Her father, Edward Austin Sheldon, became a significant figure in education using Pestalozzian principles. A group of local business and city leaders challenged him to develop a school system for children. This school evolved into one of the most progressive educational and training facilities for teachers in New York and the United States.

⁶⁰ Bohan, *Go to the Sources: Lucy Maynard Salmon and the Teaching of History*.

⁶¹ Bordin, *Alice Freeman Palmer: The Evolution of a New Woman*.

⁶² Sheldon Barnes Journal, 15 September 1871, Penfield Library.

The development of the OSNTS provided Sheldon Barnes with an opportunity to achieve a childhood goal of teaching children. A normal school education provided an important alternative for Sheldon Barnes' educational growth. She preferred attending a university with more challenges. She accepted her position until an unconventional opportunity was available. Fortunately, an alternative presented itself at the University of Michigan.

CHAPTER 5

MARY SHELDON BARNES' COLLEGE AND EARLY CAREER

Introduction

In this chapter I examine the middle part of Sheldon Barnes' life beginning with her college career through her teaching experience at Wellesley College. She experienced highs and lows, as all people do. She developed relationships that would influence her personally and professionally. Sheldon Barnes' innate learning ability and optimistic disposition allowed others, like James Angell, the President of the University of Michigan, to recognize an academic leader in school and later in her professional career. Her father's reputation as a well-known educator enhanced her standing in the educational community. She was anxious for her life to begin in an environment heretofore exclusively male oriented.



Figure 2
Sheldon Barnes
Circa 1870
Photo courtesy of Penfield
Library

College Life

Sheldon Barnes chose to attend a coeducational college in the Midwest (University of Michigan) instead of single gendered one in the East (Vassar). There is no indication that she considered a women's college. It appears that she wanted to go to a college that was at the forefront for coeducation and in the vanguard for both the temperance and suffrage movements.¹ She did not specifically address these issues in any preserved correspondence but it appears that she sought an education that was a departure from the female educational model available. As a teacher at her father's school, she probably was aware of alternative educational settings that were opening for women. She was almost twenty-one, petite with blue eyes but unafraid of any obstacles she might encounter at Michigan.

Sheldon Barnes began her college career with a sense of excitement mixed with trepidation about her forthcoming journey. In her journal entry from September 10, 1871, she described it as "a new strange life; I must now be the steersman of my own boat and alone."² She knew that she was at the beginning of a significant time in her life. Sheldon Barnes' pre-collegiate experience became like a "dream" and the new direction held both promise and joy of her new, independent activities.

College became a bridge for her aspirations as a teacher and eventual world traveler; more importantly, college facilitated her transition from her life as a young, shy, naïve girl to a young woman. Although she did not describe her passage in those terms, she did address her expanding world vision. She described a vivid memory for her upon reading a passage in a book about the college career for women. In her unpublished

¹ Edwards, *Angels in the Machinery: Gender in American Party Politics from the Civil War to the Progressive Era*.

² Sheldon Barnes Journal, 10 September 1871 Sophia Smith Collection.

autobiography, she wrote about the change. She originally planned to travel to Europe for a higher education; but immediately refocused her attention on the University of Michigan upon hearing about the school's change in policy to admit women.³

Higher Education and Women's Opportunities

Career opportunities for college educated women were expanding. Normal schools and colleges began opening to women at the beginning of the nineteenth century. To many the concept of "true womanhood" that idealized four traits for the female gender of "piety, purity, domesticity, and submissiveness" conflicted with education outside of the home.⁴ The segregation of women from men outside of family life would remain controversial. Additionally, in 1873, many teachers, parents, and students were concerned about the health and long-term impact of college on women.

Dr. Edward H. Clarke addressed these concerns with a book published in 1873 entitled *Sex in Education; or, A Fair Chance for the Girls*.⁵ The book was less than two hundred pages in length and became very debatable during a time when women were just beginning to enter colleges. Clarke based his claims of female inferiority within on physiological differences between men and women. The book began by stating that "man is not superior to woman, nor woman to man."⁶ However, he wrote about the "irrepressible woman question" that debated in society in general and educational circles directly in 1873. A health concern was whether women should be educated differently than men since higher learning institutions were the creation by and for men. Clarke's perspective was that since women had monthly "periodical movements" or what he

³ Sheldon Barnes, "A Mind's Story: The Autobiography of a College Girl," 12.

⁴ Palmieri, *In Adamless Eden: The Community of Women Faculty at Wellesley*, 5.

⁵ Clarke, *Sex in Education; or, A Fair Chance for the Girls*.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 13.

termed “periodicity,” these monthly cycles diverted blood from the brain and created other physical difficulties that directly impacted learning.⁷ Clarke used anecdotal samples in his book to support his concerns about women being educated in co-educational schools such as the University of Michigan. Initially, co-educational institutions comprised an overwhelming male faculty and student body. These demographics and the rigor of the curriculum made it difficult for women overcome inherent obstacles. Clarke famously remarked “educate a man for manhood, a woman for womanhood, both for humanity.”⁸ In other words, both sexes have a distinct position in society and each needed to be educated differently. Placing male and female students together would not further their specific roles in society. Dr. Clarke’s expectation was that during the critical educational years of high school and college, the sexes would separate and curriculums would be taught independently.

A variety of groups supported and protested Clarke’s assertions. *The Massachusetts Teacher* in 1873 published a review of his book and stated that “unless the physiology is at fault, [Clarke’s assertions] must lead to some modification of the high school course, and become an important element in the question of the co-education of the sexes in our colleges.”⁹ Many responses to Clarke’s book espoused dramatically different assertions. Julia Ward Howe compiled some of these responses in her book entitled *Sex and Education, a Reply to Dr. E.H. Clarke’s “Sex in Education”* later in the

⁷ Zschoche, “Dr. Clarke Revisited: Science, True Womanhood, and Female Collegiate Education.” Zschoche discussed health issues that Clarke raised in his book and provided a historiographical perspective of his argument with the impact it had on women’s higher educational aspirations. Her conclusion was that despite Clarke’s work and responding denials by early Radicals, the fact that the elephant in the room was finally recognized and the “apparition had been merely illuminated, rendered less frightening by its utter familiarity.”

⁸ Clarke, *Sex in Education; or, A Fair Chance for the Girls*, 19.

⁹ Anon, *The Massachusetts Teacher: A Journal of School and Home Education*, 467.

same year.¹⁰ In her book, Howe stated that “[Clarke’s book] seems to have found a chance *at* the girls, rather than a chance *for* the girls [emphasis in original].”¹¹ The contributing authors of Howe’s book were particularly upset that Dr. Clarke proclaimed himself to be an expert on women’s physiology while being a member of the opposite sex. Howe wrote that “we [women and girls] do not feel compelled to regard him as a supreme authority on the subjects of which he treats.”¹² The book included several testimonials from prominent members of the society and educational circles, like Mrs. Horace Mann, who disagreed with Dr. Clarke. Howe also included letters from college representatives to assure parents that schools, like the University of Michigan and Vassar College, reported no difficulties for female students. In the case of Vassar College, Alida C. Avery, the resident physician, explained that the curriculum of her school took into consideration the monthly menstruation cycle when involving students in physical activities.

Eventually, the Association of Collegiate Alumnae (ACA) developed its first research project in 1882 in direct response to Dr. Clarke’s book. The organization developed research on the physical education activities for young women.¹³ Annie G. Howes and a committee of ACA members developed a questionnaire asking about any physical issues associated with college attendance by women. The questionnaire polled all 1,290 members. Seven hundred and five members, or 58%, responded to the questionnaire. The final paragraph of the report stated, “in conclusion, it is sufficient to

¹⁰ Howe, *Sex and Education. A Reply to Dr. E.H. Clarke’s “Sex in Education.”*

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 6.

¹² *Ibid.*, 8.

¹³ Talbot and Rosenberry, *The History of the American Association of University Women 1881-1931*. The Association of Collegiate Alumnae was the name of the original organization founded by many prominent college educated women in 1882. Lucy Stone, Alice Freeman, and Alice Blackwell were only a few of sixty-five founding ACA members. The ACA eventually became the American Association of University Women.

say that the female graduates of our colleges and universities do not seem to show, as the result of their college studies and duties, any marked difference in general health from the average health likely to be reported by an equal number of women engaged in other kinds of work, or, in fact, of women generally without regard to [an] occupation [women] followed.”¹⁴ As critics of Dr. Clarke stated, the college experience had no impact on women’s health. John Dewey further addressed the women’s health concerns in an article in *Science* magazine. His summary of the ACA report as the “general conclusion [no impact on women college student’s health] may be allowed to stand.”¹⁵ Certainly Dr. Clarke’s book and subsequent responses did little to abate apprehensions of Sheldon Barnes’ family. They were more anxious about her heart issues than “periodicity.”

During the late nineteenth century, coeducational college attendance was just beginning. These first women usually hailed from the middle or upper classes. Bryn Mawr College accepted its first class of students in 1885.¹⁶ The first dean, and eventually president of the college, Martha Carey Thomas believed the purpose of women’s education was to prepare women for life outside of marriage. She demanded and received highly qualified faculty and students. According to Roberta Wein, the students who attended Bryn Mawr during Thomas’s tenure, 11% accepted college teaching positions and only 45% of the graduates married after graduation.¹⁷ Based on Wein’s analysis,

¹⁴ *Health Statistics of Women College Graduates: Report of a Special Committee of the Association of Collegiate Alumnae* 78. Annie G. Howes was an original member of the ACA and graduate of Vassar (74) became the chairman of the committee to develop a questionnaire that the ACA mailed to its members.

¹⁵ Dewey, “Education and the Health of Women,” 341. Dewey had concerns about the methodology of the study but determined the conclusion reached by Howes was valid. He believed additional work on the subject was a possibility and additional conclusions needed to be developed. He wanted the “conditions” of the study to address data collection and suggested questions to enhance the conclusions.

¹⁶ Wein, “Women’s Colleges and Domesticity, 1875-1918,” 34.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 37.

Thomas' objective of preparing young women for a lifestyle outside of the traditional, patriarchal boundaries was at the basis of his book. Thomas' goal was not necessarily anti-male as it was pro-female in structure. Women had few outlets available to them because of family restrictions and general confusion about the impact of education on women. Given these societal norms, women often became educators.¹⁸

The Wellesley College philosophy was different. The school opened its doors in 1875. Ninety-eight percent of the graduates did not pursue a separate career, such as teaching at the college level.¹⁹ Additionally, 57% of Wellesley students married after graduation. This is twelve points higher than Bryn Mawr's rate. Wellesley's philosophy was oriented more towards the private sphere and was encouraged by Alice Freeman Palmer when she became president of the college.²⁰ Palmer was "committing herself to training women first as *women* ... [rather than scholars] that included her students development – social, moral, as well as intellectual [emphasis in original]."²¹ Henry Durant's religious principles were evangelical. As a result, Wellesley's code of conduct and his expectations for teachers and students were more restrictive than other women's colleges.²²

Occasionally, the role of a woman educator should include preparation for life's events beyond the academic world in the same sense of the Wellesley model. Many women, although not formally labeled as educators, served in the role of "educators" in a

¹⁸ Starrett, *After College, What? For Girls*.

¹⁹ Wein, "Women's Colleges and Domesticity, 1875-1918."

²⁰ Palmieri, *In Adamless Eden: The Community of Women Faculty at Wellesley*. Freeman Palmer was a significant guiding hand at the end of Charles Durant's leadership at Wellesley College and the transformation of the school into an important women's college. She was a classmate of Sheldon Barnes in the class of 1876 at the University of Michigan.

²¹ Wein, "Women's Colleges and Domesticity, 1875-1918," 41.

²² Palmieri, *In Adamless Eden: The Community of Women Faculty at Wellesley*. Henry Durant and his wife founded the school for women as an alternative to the male colleges.

broad sense. Christine Woynshner provides additional perspective when writing about the purpose of female education during the Progressive Age.²³ She noted considerable debate over the proper role for girls and women during their school years. Woynshner suggests historians redefine the term of female educators to include a broader definition to include those who prepared women as role models in family life. Based on Woynshner's redefinition, women like Jane Addams of Hull House need to be included as educators in their roles as social activists. Joan Marie Johnson writes that the college experience introduced women to settlement clubs and volunteer work in a similar manner as Addams.²⁴ Yet Sheldon Barnes did not seem to be active in clubs other than a reading group.

Sheldon Barnes was yearning for an opportunity to be educated beyond the secondary school level in order to use her educational studies into professional careers outside of the home. For many women, returning home to their previous way of life with men provided little interest. If a woman chose teaching, spinsterhood was a real possibility. Although, professional jobs for women were limited, Sheldon Barnes was able to use her natural abilities and familial ties to improve both her academic and career choices. However, she was prepared to lead a solitary life of an unmarried teacher, if necessary. She was a product of her father's patriarchal household but also experienced a strong influence from her mother, a former teacher.

Early College Experiences

Sheldon Barnes could have applied for a college that accepted women before she enrolled at the University of Michigan in 1871. However, reading about the school

²³ Woynshner, "Recent Scholarship and Directions," 11.

²⁴ Johnson, "Job Market or Marriage Market? Life Choices for Southern Women Educated at Northern Colleges, 1875-1915."

having just opened its doors to women provided her with an opportunity take a new “road” that she called “worthy” of her long-term dreams.²⁵ She wanted a degree in natural science and the University of Michigan met her requirements. During the summer of 1871, her excitement and impatience about moving to Ann Arbor increased. The university presented the prospect for breaking the constraints of her family and a new independence. She loved and enjoyed her family but her letters and autobiography indicated a strong desire to be on her own. A bachelor’s degree would fulfill her life expectations away from Oswego and she could teach science at an institution of higher learning.

Her first sight of the campus was inspiring. The buildings were larger than she expected. She heard chirping birds in the trees all around the campus. She knew the campus atmosphere was a place that she would be comfortable, and she was attracted to this new environment. After she strolled around the campus, she returned to her boarding house and met her roommate and other students. While they waited to move into their rooms, Sheldon Barnes and the other women students began their friendship with a “grand discussion of Darwinian theory [sic].”²⁶ Her recollection of this conversation provides insight into Sheldon Barnes’ expectations of college life. She wanted serious discussions beyond those she experienced at OSNTS. Anticipation changed to reality as she prepared for her entrance examinations.

As a candidate for entrance into the University of Michigan, she was required to take several examinations to establish her academic qualifications as a freshman (or sophomore). The examinations included several areas of study: English Grammar,

²⁵ Sheldon Barnes, *A Mind’s Story: The Autobiography of a College Girl*, 12.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 15.

Geography (Modern, Ancient, and Physical), History (Modern, Ancient), Latin, Greek, and Mathematics (Arithmetic, Algebra, Geometry). Her description of the examination process showed what student life was like prior to women students arriving on campus. Sheldon Barnes described the process that followed her arrival in Ann Arbor the previous weekend as intense.

[The] next day [Monday and Tuesday] examinations began. The campus was no longer the quiet, deserted plain, but was stirring with anxious freshmen and busy, officious sophomores ... we were not only freshmen, but freshmen girls, and enough of a novelty to excite remark[s], curiosity and generate unrest. On my mathematic examination, I remember turning to a window, by some instinct of presence, and seeing half-a-dozen sophomore noses flattened against the pane with their curious eyes watching to see if girls would cry before the awful pressure.²⁷

Despite the element of interest and distractions, Sheldon Barnes remained composed. One of her most difficult examinations was with a mathematics professor named Olney. Later she remembered him fondly, but at the time of the exam she was fearful. She passed the exam and left the examination room as quickly as possible for fear that she had made a mistake. After leaving the classroom, she encountered James Angell, President of the University. Sheldon Barnes remarked on the conversation, although brief but interesting as Angell inquired about her father. Her father's acquaintance with Angell provided her with hope that her academic knowledge and family name would be sufficient enough to enter the school. She passed all ten exams that allowed her to enter first year classes. Her studies began almost immediately on the following Thursday.

The atmosphere on campus was challenging from the first day of classes. Initially, some frustration and rivalry between the freshmen and sophomores developed. The freshmen wanted to enter the classrooms and begin their studies. However, the upper

²⁷ Ibid., 19.

classmen continued taunting and hazing that was, perhaps, part of a rite of passage for all new students. The day began with a trip to the campus chapel and the sophomore boys began chanting a verse:

Sophomore and freshmen they had a fight,
They fit [sic] all day and they fit [sic] all night,
And in the morning both were seen,
Rolling down the bowling green.²⁸

The hazing and shouting continued even before the announcement of the names of students who had passed their entrance examinations. As the opposing groups of students were finding their seats in the chapel, the noise volume increased. When the twelve women entered the room the men separated and allowed them to find a seat. Apparently, the respite was only a momentary pause because the chanting and shouting began again. Students threw hymnals across the room. Her description of the scene was one of “a perfect furor of savagery.”²⁹ Then a hymn began and the loud cacophony of shouts became musical sounds. Once again noise abated and anticipation built. Academic leaders prayed and then distributed the results of the entrance exams. The dreams of the incoming class became reality and the hostility in the room cleared. Sheldon Barnes was overjoyed. The passing of entrance exams allowed her to “enter upon vast fields of culture.”³⁰

Sheldon Barnes’ first enrolled in Latin, Greek, and Mathematics. She wanted to enter school in the sophomore class because of her achievement in normal school. Technically, she entered as a freshman because she had not completed the Greek requirement; however, she finished this course by the end of her first term. She achieved

²⁸ Ibid., 20.

²⁹ Ibid., 30.

³⁰ Ibid., 22.

sophomore standing by the end of the term. She knew a college required focus and diligence, but believed that graduation from college was reachable.

Sheldon Barnes progressed in her education further than she had hoped possible. She knew her parents had few doubts about her academic abilities. Their apprehensions centered on the challenges and stresses of entering coeducational classes; especially for a woman with a congenital heart problem.

Her fellow female classmates set high standards. Sheldon Barnes and the other women candidates formed a bond from the beginning and supported each other academically and socially. Of the group, two female candidates puzzled her as one expected marriage within her freshmen year. Sheldon Barnes found this goal odd because she could not understand why she wanted to attend college if she wanted to marry and would be required to leave school. The women in the group tried to discourage the marriage until after graduation. Sheldon Barnes was empathetic towards the second woman because both women had experienced lifelong health difficulties. The second woman was one of two who died before graduation.

These pioneer female students knew they represented one of the initial groups of women. "People will say you know that we break down under hard study- and on and on."³¹ Sheldon Barnes believed that some male students did not behave appropriately toward the female students but she accepted it as part of her educational experience.³²

Men occasionally made remarks that she found in poor taste but as a general rule the

³¹ Sheldon Barnes to Mary Alling, 18 September 1871. Penfield Library Special Collections (hereafter cited as Penfield Library).

³² Sheldon Barnes to Elizabeth Sheldon, 22 September 1871, Penfield Library. Sheldon Barnes described the emotions as she "felt as if I am here among so many boys simply by sufferance, and I am perfectly sick of so many masculines." She stated later in the letter "I wish there were not so many boys here. I don't like them. I feel very much out of place. But, Lizzie, one has to endure some things for the sake of education."

males acted as expected and asked her for tutoring help occasionally. She knew the university life was going to be challenging from both educational and social expectations.

Sheldon Barnes was a serious student but was aware of social aspects of college life, as well. There were social functions and church activities that she integrated into her classes and study time. She was “uneasy” in some social settings but Sheldon Barnes evolved into her new social role. Her insecurity dissipated as her confidence in her academic studies increased. She was able to use the university’s social opportunities to her advantage by developing new friendships. As was the custom of the day, she always attended group functions with her female friends. In one of the first social functions of the year, she found an opportunity to meet and speak to James Angell’s wife. As she wrote to her mother, “the other girls might have had the same privilege...but I shall be more crafty...and have a conversation with... Mrs. Angell.”³³ She realized there was more to the academic process than classwork and examinations. The realization of social occasions provided beneficial long-term rewards when she needed references or introductions in academe.

As a daughter of a college president, and an older student, Sheldon Barnes’ perspective about college was different from many of her incoming classmates. She was better prepared scholastically and had prior teaching experience. She regarded two of her professors, Professor Coit Tyler and Professor Edward Olney, as Pestalozzians. She enjoyed their question-and-answers and was deft at responding to these professors. Yet, she did not think their questions allowed students enough discretion and latitude to label

³³ Sheldon Barnes to Francis Sheldon, October 1871, Penfield Library. Sheldon Barnes used this social function as an opportunity to meet and get to know the wife of the President of the University and one of her professors. Mrs. Angell focused on Sheldon Barnes during the conversation and Angell told Sheldon Barnes that President Angell was impressed with her as a new student at the university.

the professors as ideal Pestalozzians. She thought the professors should only guide discussions instead of leading them. Her educational philosophy and pedagogy used within her classroom set the standard for Pestalozzian teachers throughout her academic career.

Sheldon Barnes had high regard for Professor Tyler. She mentioned him many times in letters home. She calls him “a perfect inspiration... [and it is] a privilege of learning of [sic] such a man.”³⁴ Tyler and Olney inspired and reinforced her desire to direct her educational efforts in the “Natural” sciences. Science was the most sophisticated program of study and she had no desire to study other disciplines.³⁵ She planned to use her college experience to develop her Pestalozzian principles within the scientific world.

She did not return home for the Christmas vacation during her first year because there was not enough time to travel by train to Oswego from Ann Arbor during the break. Final exams commenced immediately after the first of the New Year in 1872 and she preferred to remain at school to study. She longed to return home but thought it more prudent to stay and avoid any additional expenses. She was successful and passed her exams. The examinations included written tests and oral sections. She was pleased with her grades but particularly happy with the results of her fellow female students. “The girls have all done splendidly, too, fairly outshone themselves to say nothing of the boys.

³⁴ Sheldon Barnes to parents, May 1872, Penfield Library.

³⁵ Sheldon Barnes to Father and Mother, 15 May, 1871. Penfield Library. Sheldon Barnes wrote home “I want to become a naturalist in the department of Zoology and furthermore a specialist in the department of radiates.”

Tears of pride come into my eyes to think how magnificently they [the girls] have done.”³⁶

As the spring of 1872 began, Sheldon Barnes put aside her studies as she thought about the prospects of going home for the summer. She experienced bouts of homesickness and depression but persevered through the year. However, in springtime she stated “what do I care for dead languages and their perished speakers?”³⁷ There were many other activities for her to do, such as the county fair and other social gatherings. In her unpublished biography, Sheldon Barnes wrote descriptions of people coming out into the springtime for renewal of their existence. Sheldon Barnes passed all her spring classes (Latin, Greek, Mathematics, English Literature, and Rhetoric) as she hoped. She returned home with a profound sense of accomplishment.

Love of Scientific Studies

Her first year was completed and she professed her love of science. She described the 1870s in which she lived as “predominately [in] a scientific age.”³⁸ Sheldon Barnes elaborated to her parents that the contemporary period was one in which “science is reserved for us.”³⁹ Science was the key to the future. Teachers of Greek, Latin and History were plentiful but science needed “those few who can add to a fine education a genuine love of nature and patience to investigate the actual *things* [emphasis in original].”⁴⁰ In other words, scientific studies and teaching required a special person. Her perspective about science changed eventually.

³⁶ Sheldon Barnes to mother, 10 February 1872. Penfield Library. Her gender pride and early radical views began to appear during the fall term of 1871.

³⁷ Sheldon Barnes, “A Mind’s Story: The Autobiography of a College Girl,” 31.

³⁸ Sheldon Barnes to parents, 15 May 1871, Penfield Library.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

In the fall of 1872, Sheldon Barnes enrolled in Physics, Greek, History, and Speeches. The study of physics captivated her imagination. She viewed the power of the universe, light, and astronomy as fascinating. Physics combined science and “abstract mathematics [that] must guide the eyeless thought which must deal with masses and forces that play in distances so infinitesimal that the mind must enlarge to its new conceptions before it can begin its dealings.”⁴¹ Her description of the vastness of the universe is interesting because of the depth of her religious training and background. She did not abandon her religious beliefs, but in her writing she integrated religious ideology with these new academic concepts. She questioned her conception of God because “was it divine love itself that this held worlds and beings to their orbits, in what philosophy could explain it? The world was no more common; the conception of dead gross matter vanished. The very ground was instinct with universe [sic] life.”⁴² The introduction of physics created dissonance between science and her religious beliefs as she tried to make sense of a God who created all things in heaven and earth with Darwinism and physics.

The conflict Sheldon Barnes experienced was not dissimilar to that many people experience when science competes with religion for hearts and minds. Her knowledge of science expanded her frame of reference beyond religious beliefs. The new conceptual framework did not obviously alter her beliefs. She wanted to use teaching for “the remainder of my life to work in the class-room and by my pen, giving its whole force against false methods of teaching and false ideas of *God's* nature [emphasis in

⁴¹ Sheldon Barnes, *A Mind's Story: The Autobiography of a College Girl*, 61.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 64.

original].”⁴³ She wanted to be in a leadership position to develop appropriate methods for new and enriched scientific concepts. This struggle in her unpublished autobiography.

this mystery and might of attraction. This blind force was instinct with mind; and matter simply its impress on our senses and intelligence. Was not the universe not so much Divine as Divinely and were not the old words, ‘in whom in live and move and ...our being’ literally and deeply true? Were we not already in a spiritual universe.⁴⁴

The conceptual conflict continued throughout her life. As she grew older, she made less reference to spiritual matters. Perhaps, like many people she still had her strong beliefs in God but placed her enthusiasm in a more reserved place.

Sheldon Barnes wanted to use her scientific training and knowledge. She decided in the fall of 1872 to continue to be a teacher and “not to marry at all... I know right well, that if I should marry I devote myself fully to making a home. I feel as if God had fitted me, by nature and education for a different work...I follow out my plans, after I finish here... and devote the remainder of my life to work in the class-room and by my pen.”⁴⁵ Her outlook eventually changed about marriage but her gift for teaching and writing remained. For many women teachers in this time period who married while teaching, they resigned because they had signed contracts to remain single.⁴⁶

Her fascination with physics and natural sciences continued as other scientific theories were evolving in academic circles. Evolution was a topic that Sheldon Barnes was familiar with prior to arriving at the University of Michigan. On her first day in Ann Arbor, she and one of her boarding school roommates discussed Darwinian theory. The theory was debated regularly “among the students [and] it met many and ardent friend, as

⁴³ Sheldon Barnes to parents, 22 October, 1872, Penfield Library.

⁴⁴ Sheldon Barnes, *A Mind's Story: The Autobiography of a College Girl*, 66.

⁴⁵ Sheldon Barnes to parents, 22 October, 1872, Penfield Library.

⁴⁶ Altenbaugh, *The American People and Their Education: A Social History*, 115.

well as many an ardent foe.”⁴⁷ These debates usually occurred on Sunday afternoons after church services. Discussions oftentimes developed about answering the weighty question about the meaning of life. Students tried to assimilate new knowledge into their preexisting belief systems. These discussions generally did not create animosity among the students, only a sense of additional thoughtful curiosity.

The student discussions contributed to her interest in natural history. She was not interested in obtaining a degree in Biology but held some interest in the subject. Sheldon Barnes had only a limited interest in the medical school. She attended a dissection of a body by one of the medical professors. The professor opened the skull and Sheldon Barnes was enthralled with the process. She was not necessarily enthusiastic about the physical aspects of the dissection but about the metaphysical aspects of viewing the brain where human thought processes took place. Many of her Sunday afternoon discussants were present during the dissection. They used the opportunity to view the inside of a brain as a springboard about God, evolution, and the meaning of life. According to Sheldon Barnes, some of these students involved in these weekly discussions went on to study psychology in order to have a better understanding of the mind and its’ relation to the soul.

Sheldon Barnes seemed conflicted between theology and science. On the one hand she believed that God, through Jesus Christ, had spoken to mankind. Theology told her that God created and reigned over heaven, the world and its inhabitants. However, science, “told us of the mysterious power of law sweeping boundless through the universe, sustaining, inspiring, and ruling as absolute intellect alone could rule.”⁴⁸ To a

⁴⁷ Sheldon Barnes, *A Mind's Story: The Autobiography of a College Girl*, 69.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 82.

scientist, Sheldon Barnes was uneasy with the theological approach and “was much inclined to say, mankind should acquire eternal truths by reason and conscience, through science and philosophy.”⁴⁹ In other words, Sheldon Barnes used rational scientific theories for the universe over ideological theology. She accepted that there were many philosophical arguments that explained many unexplainable human behaviors, such as individual interaction between men and women. In comparison, science provided a more rational explanation about the origination and subsequent evolution of the human species. She did not deny her theological philosophy, however, she was now open to alternative explanations for the development of the universe.

As she worked these metaphysical concepts through in her mind, the end of the spring term in 1873 arrived; she passed all her classes including, French, Latin, History, Chemistry, Astronomy, and Speeches. One of her favorite professors, Tyler, left his teaching position. Before leaving, Tyler offered to help her “any time.” He was one of her Pestalozzian teachers whom she admired and she was grateful for his guidance. She accepted his departure but was saddened as she looked to the fall. Generally, she was happy that the semester was over. Sheldon Barnes could return home and rest while she regained her strength.

The end of the term provided a respite. She had been sick intermittently throughout the term and her doctor placed her on a diet. She was unspecific about her illnesses and the continuing pattern of health matters plagued her. These illnesses required Sheldon Barnes to send notes of assurances to her family regularly during the term. In one letter, she stated that she wanted to be sure “to tell Grandma that I am ‘much

⁴⁹ Ibid., 84–85.

better-looking' than I was before I was sick."⁵⁰ A few days later she wrote her sister Lizzie and included a note to her mother that "I wonder if I can impress it thoroughly upon your mind that I am *perfectly* well, and better than I have been for years [emphasis in original]."⁵¹ Despite the health concerns she was active with her classmates on social gatherings and diligent in her studies. She was confident that she had developed a strong understanding about her skill as a scientific researcher. The science classes provided her with an opportunity for the first time to combine history and science that she would synthesize in her teaching and writing.

Senior Year 1873-74

The fall of 1873 was relatively uneventful for Sheldon Barnes. Her classes included Chemistry, Speeches, Philosophy, Astronomy, and Latin. She passed these courses with little anxiety. Yet, her family had continued concerns about her health. She expressed to her father that she is well and that her friends told her they had "never seen me so well and *truly* I am *very* well in every respect [emphasis in original]."⁵² A letter in the fall showed her frustration with her parents about her health issues. In this letter, she enclosed a "certificate" of her own creation attesting to her wellness. No records of letters Sheldon Barnes received from her parents about her health were located. However, her repeated attempts to assuage fears, make it apparent that her fragile health was a lifelong concern to her family and friends. Sheldon Barnes was always an optimist regarding her own health but the concern appears to be valid on her parent's part. Apparently, she

⁵⁰ Sheldon Barnes to Edward Sheldon, 11 March 1873, Penfield Library.

⁵¹ Sheldon Barnes to Lizzie Sheldon, 15 March 1873, Penfield Library.

⁵² Sheldon Barnes to Lizzie Sheldon, December 1873, Penfield Library. Sheldon Barnes wanted Lizzie to tell her father that everything is fine but there is a tone in the letter that expresses frustration with her father and his concern about her health. She wanted Lizzie to assure him that she would write when she was sick.

physically wore down easily and became more susceptible to colds and other flulike illnesses that impacted her heart issues.

Despite her health issues, an emerging topic of discussion for Sheldon Barnes was her new found radical perspective. In an 1874 letter to Mary Alling, Sheldon Barnes expressed her evolving views. Her perspective came from a lecture in which she heard Dr. Dunster speak. He showed specimens of “monstrosities” such as a body deformed from birth. The experience had a profound impact on her views about the differences between the sexes. The point she made to Alling was that women

must enter fully into the life of men, and that men and women must be one in work... I tell you my eyes are now open, Mary, and I know on the one hand, how weak, how powerless women are, and on the other, I see how strong we may be, yes, how strong we are... so many of our sex must come in contact with things that are worse than unpleasant... [and] our sex should come in contact with these things from the side of knowledge and power?⁵³

She specifically addressed a lecture about the deformed body; she saw an implication that was broader than the classroom experience. In some instances, women faced adversity whether these circumstances were physical or social injustices. Women addressed these issues just as men did but they needed additional knowledge. Sheldon Barnes was beginning to advocate for gender equity. She understood physical differences such as strength and child-bearing characteristics. But she now realized that male power often was an educational difference and not an intellectual distinction.

In the Alling letter, Sheldon Barnes provides considerable insight into her growing radical thought telling her friend that “some of us [women] must be strong and even masculine ... and stand by our ...Amazonian defenders firmly, even if in the heat of the conflict and in the hot indignation against wrong and slavery, they have flung off the

⁵³ Sheldon Barnes to Mary Alling, 1874, Penfield Library.

graceful ways of the shepherdess and assumed the firm tread and ringing voice of the warrior.”⁵⁴ She voiced her new perspective as a woman who had been sheltered, but who had opened the door with education. Early letters to her father and family were ones that showed an acquiescent, immature relationship. Often she asked for her father’s advice in most matters, from class selection to fiscal concerns regarding how she spent money. In the Alling letter, a more confident woman broke free of her self-imposed restraints. Her new point of view provided her with higher expectations about her future.

Dr. Mary V. Lee

Sheldon Barnes’ newly discovered radical thoughts were part of her growth as a college student; the ideas did not happen by accident. She had renewed a friendship with Dr. Mary Victoria Lee, an older medical student at the University of Michigan. Lee was familiar to the Sheldon family. She had spent the spring of 1862 at OSNTS when Sheldon Barnes was twelve. She enrolled at OSNTS under the direction of the superintendent of her school district in Connecticut so she could learn Dr. Edward Sheldon’s Pestalozzian teaching method. When Lee arrived in Oswego, the school’s student population was small. Even as a child, Sheldon Barnes most assuredly interacted with Lee.

Lee was born in 1837 in Connecticut. She lived in a rural area in North Granby outside of Hartford. She was a “robust,” capable farm girl who was a bright student. Rural students in the mid-nineteenth century attended school as long as it did not interfere with farm duties. Lee was able to gradually complete her lower level schoolwork and wanted to become a teacher. She enrolled at the Connecticut Normal School and graduated in 1860. Lee lived in Connecticut, Iowa, and Minnesota for the next twelve years. Her friends and family experienced several health-related issues that left her

⁵⁴ Ibid.

unprepared to assist them, so, she decided to pursue a medical degree and become a doctor. Lee knew the need for female physicians was great. She started classes in the medical school at the University of Michigan in 1872. She completed her medical degree in 1874, the same year Sheldon Barnes completed her undergraduate degree.

Lee was an enormous influence on Sheldon Barnes. During Sheldon Barnes' senior year, they renewed their friendship around Thanksgiving, 1873. In a letter to her father, Sheldon Barnes told him that she was a little surprised by one of Lee's mannerisms of crossing her leg over the other when she sat down, "like a man." Sheldon Barnes described Lee (and another woman named Anna Ballard) in a later letter to Mary



Figure 3
Dr. Mary V. Lee
Photo Courtesy of Sophia Smith
Collection, Smith College

Alling in 1874,

For once, I realized to the full that student-life of which I have so often read, which is strong, self-reliant, restless but full of hope for the future and determination to be with it. Yet, Mary, I am afraid that you wouldn't like to be intimate with either of the two most admirable ones, Mary Lee and Anna Ballard. This last one they call George Washington and they are both famous throughout town for their short hair, short dresses, manly strides and masculine gestures and a certain freedom and independence which has impressed itself upon their faces as well as upon their carriage and their manners... I used to wish they would change some of their ways, and perhaps for the sake of our sex just how, it might be well, and yet, for their own sakes, I would not have them change. They are grand but rugged, and my admiration finds all the more points by which it attaches itself to their courage, honesty and strength.⁵⁵

Sheldon Barnes again addressed the issue of feminine diversity. She was impressed with Lee both physically and personally. They created a bond that lasted for many years. Lee provided Sheldon Barnes with encouragement to voice her nascent radical thoughts. Sheldon Barnes' radical perspective held that education was the key for women toward equality. She thought education would also improve their financial independence, physical health, and democratic representation.

Graduation 1874

Sheldon Barnes was capable in all classes although she was more confident about some than others. During her final Mineralogy class, her professor Dr. Hilgard congratulated her on attaining the highest grade (98) in the class. Simultaneously, her laboratory professor was impressed with her analysis work. He wanted her analytical laboratory form in all his classes. Academic leaders reinforced her scientific approach in all subjects, including history. She was very pleased with her accomplishments. Yet, she assured her mother that she "needn't be afraid of my getting proud or conceited."⁵⁶

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Sheldon Barnes to Francis Sheldon, March 1874. Penfield Library.

Sheldon Barnes' academic success and newly developed friendship with Lee provided her with more self-assurance. She wrote several letters in 1874 about mundane concerns and provided assurances to her family about her health. However, in one particular letter to her mother, she wrote about her evolving radical perspective.⁵⁷ On the day before writing to her, Sheldon Barnes met with Lee. She wrote her mother a summary of their discussions regarding women's place in society. She stated that she was seeing the world through a new and different lens based on her maturity, academic knowledge, and new friendships. She found

[herself] in a state of fusion in which my old ignorances, prejudices and weaknesses were being fast swept away. I am only just beginning to be in rapport with some of the strongest, most radical and earnest women here, and I have a deep feeling of regret that my associations here have not a longer time to ripen. I am actually beginning to get interested in the *live* world of men and women and to see that there lies a grand sphere of work; if only God gives me some of it to do. I *know* I shall be satisfied [emphasis in original].⁵⁸

Sheldon Barnes provided her mother a different perspective into her evolving beliefs. She explained that as a young girl arriving on campus, her world did not include a radical perspective. Education provided her with an opportunity to see how the real world operated. She continued

Not only have I received a new religious impulse, but I have had a thorough conversion in my ideas of my own sex. When I came here I confess I had but little faith in women's power intellectually, and no patience whatever with women in short hair and independent mien, who, stern and earnest, had none of that respectful belief in masculine superiority, which I thought every woman should have....But now everything is changed. No one has talked to me or tried to convert me.... I see now that there are deeper reasons why women should be in the professions [physicians, lawyers]....There is a stern necessity, for the good of humanity, that women should be able to meet injustice, cruelty, bestiality, and falsehood, not only on the ground of humility, simplicity, and purity, but that not

⁵⁷ Sheldon Barnes to Francis Sheldon, Spring 1874, Penfield Library.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

losing these powers, she should also meet them from the standpoint of knowledge, sagacity and power.⁵⁹

Although she claimed that she had developed these ideas on her own, radical women, like Lee, impacted her. She now believed women should have a place within the professions, such as, doctors and lawyers. Sheldon Barnes wanted women to go outside beyond their expected societal roles. She wanted

our knowledge and power must be coextensive with his [men], or else our weakness will bring upon us manifold wrongs which men do not intend, but which must necessarily follow inequality. At the same time, I have come to believe that everywhere our *ability*, other things being equal, is equal to that of men. College education alone has given men an immense intellectual advantage over us....I am beginning to appreciate my own sex, and better understand her needs. A great light has come into my mind on the subject and I am clear and sure of the ground on which our most radical defenders stand.... As for Dr. Clark [sic], you have seen adequate replies. We Michigan girls would like him to come and see us....He will find a "fact" in his way [emphasis in original].⁶⁰

She now realized that women were just as strong intellectually as men. The group of women who were her classmates at Michigan disproved of Clarke's analysis previously discussed. She was proud of what she and her friends had accomplished. Sheldon Barnes used were strong words but she was coming of age and thought her mother would understand.

Sheldon Barnes had grown from a naïve twenty-one year old into a woman who developed independent concepts about the world. Some of her beliefs differed from her parents' perspective. Despite her protestations about outside influences, she developed an alternative belief structure coincided with her re-acquaintance with Lee. Her new found radical perspective about education as the great equalizer impacted many of her decisions throughout the rest of her life. She placed an emphasis on equality between men and

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

women in her academic and personal relationships. Additionally, she disagreed with Clarke. Sheldon Barnes ultimately reveled in female achievement.

In May of 1874 before her final exams and graduation, Sheldon Barnes wrote a letter to her father regarding her expectations about her life after Ann Arbor. She knew she would return to Oswego to begin teaching at OSNTS. In response to a letter from her father that she classified as a “business letter,” she explained to her father that her salary should be the same as William Aber, a teacher at OSNTS who earned one thousand dollars annually in 1873.⁶¹ This salary placed her income above her friend Mary Alling’s salary of eight hundred dollars (who had been teaching at OSNTS while Sheldon Barnes was in college). As a college graduate, she believed she deserved the higher amount. Her new found radical concepts of equality regarding gender issues, especially work, allowed her to assert a position of equal pay for equal work with male teachers at the school.

In the same letter, Sheldon Barnes explained to her father her expectations for her teaching assignments when she returned to OSNTS. She preferred to teach Botany and Natural Philosophy.⁶² She further explained that Mary Alling would be a better choice for a drawing class and Sheldon Barnes could teach History, *if she had to do it* [emphasis added]. The History choice was only a concession to entice Mary Alling into giving up the Science classes. She warned her father “I know nothing about it [History], absolutely nothing about it....You needn’t tell me that I want to know U.S. history because I don’t. I shall have no earthly use for it in my future studies and know I shall make it very stupid,

⁶¹ Sheldon Barnes to Francis Sheldon, Spring 1874. Penfield Library. Sheldon Barnes expressed her new found expectations of gender equality that she restated her position of her previous letter of May 7, 1874 requesting salary equality.

⁶² Sheldon Barnes to Edward Sheldon, 7 May 1874. Penfield Library. In her letter, Sheldon referred to natural philosophy or the study of nature and the physical universe or in our modern terminology as physics.

because I can't get up enthusiasm whatever about it for myself or anybody else."⁶³ In retrospect, her comment is amusing. Obviously, once she started teaching the subject her perspective changed dramatically. Sheldon acquiesced and accepted teaching "Latin, Greek, botany and history, instead of a range of sciences; [but] revenges [sic] herself by applying scientific methods to history."⁶⁴ Negotiations with her father about her future progressed in an acceptable manner.

Sheldon Barnes continued classes through the spring term in 1874. The classes included Moral Philosophy, Greek, German, Zoology (Anatomy), and Speeches. She passed these classes as she had done throughout her academic career. In her three years at Michigan, she enrolled in five Greek classes, four Latin classes, four Speeches classes as well as the common core of classes. She had only two History classes during her studies. She did not refer to these classes in her correspondence but they were likely history of a general nature.

Her excellent overall academic performance and stellar reputation with her professors, including President Angell, earned Sheldon Barnes a brief, five minute speech to the graduating class as part of the commencement ceremonies; her address was entitled "Math in Nature." No record of her remarks was located. Her mother made the difficult trip on the railroad across country to attend the ceremonies. The graduation took place on June 24, 1874. She graduated in a class of ninety-four students of which she was one of eight women.⁶⁵

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Anon, *Historical Sketches Relating to the First Quarter Century of the State Normal and Training School at Oswego, NY*, 160.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

Finally, her student academic career came to an end. Sheldon Barnes returned home for the summer in preparation for her teaching duties in Oswego. She had been very successful. Despite her parental concerns about her health, she used her undergraduate studies to her full advantage. Her academic performance was superior and the relationships she developed with her female classmates, as well as her professors, would be invaluable in her future.

Sheldon Barnes graduated at the age of twenty-four with a more mature understanding of herself and a decidedly radical perspective. The new radical thought provided her with a more determined attitude about impacting future generations. She had a more thorough understanding of the sciences. She enthusiastically integrated Darwin and evolution into her conceptual framework. Her awareness of the universe beyond the biblical narrative had progressed considerably. Her love of a scientific approach to knowledge continued to develop throughout her lifetime in her writing and teaching.

Teaching at Wellesley College

When she returned home to Oswego in the summer of 1874, she genuinely expected to teach science for the rest of her life. She was not concerned about marriage. Lee was an exemplar of the new found independence that Sheldon Barnes hoped to emulate. Sheldon Barnes' friendship with Lee would be critical as she moved away from the student academic life into her professional teaching occupation. Besides acting as a mentor for Sheldon Barnes, Lee taught physiology initially at OSNTS; however, Lee's course load changed over the years. She became a key teaching professional at the school

until her death. In the meantime, these two women's lives and careers intersected for the next ten years.

When Sheldon Barnes graduated from college women's suffrage and equality issues were in the press routinely. Some small political parties attempted to attract potential voters by advocating for women's issues.⁶⁶ She returned to OSNTS with her desire to prepare women for higher educational aspirations. She enjoyed teaching at OSNTS but knew there were other teaching opportunities available.

In 1875, Wellesley College opened its doors under the guidance of Henry Durant. Durant created the school as another opportunity for women to elevate their learning beyond high school. As a college for women, he hoped Wellesley would rival Vassar, immediately, and Harvard in academic achievement. According to many of the students and teachers, his "vision" in 1875 initially exceeded reality.⁶⁷ The school's educational philosophy included Durant's evangelical religious beliefs. As such, there were many strict rules placed on the first female students and teachers. His strict code of conduct divided the school and forced out a few teachers.

Durant used the University of Michigan's curriculum as a guide. A review of the basic curriculum for Wellesley in 1875 reflected a similarity between it and Michigan's classic curriculum. The curriculum placed a heavy emphasis on classic languages such as, Greek, and Latin along with sciences like Chemistry, Zoology, and Physics. According to Katherine Lee Bates, Durant sought "strong Ann Arbor women [as teachers], recommended by President Angell, to whom Mr. Durant so often appealed."⁶⁸ Durant

⁶⁶ Edwards, *Angels in the Machinery: Gender in American Party Politics from the Civil War to the Progressive Era*.

⁶⁷ Palmieri, *In Adamless Eden: The Community of Women Faculty at Wellesley*, 13.

⁶⁸ Bates, "Wellesley's Fifty Golden Years of Achievement," 8.

expected to employ University of Michigan graduates to develop a similar educational institution.

In mid-1876, Durant offered Sheldon Barnes a professorship in chemistry at Wellesley College. With the relationship between Angell and Durant may have asked Angell for recommendations for women graduates in science.⁶⁹ Sheldon Barnes' name was an obvious choice. Angell knew of her abilities since he was one of her professors and she had impressed other faculty members with her scholarly efforts.

The Sheldon name was well-known by many educators. Durant contacted Edward Sheldon about the position. Sheldon wanted to assist his daughter. He wrote and requested information about the school from Jenny Stickney, one of his former students. Stickney was teaching in a normal school in Boston and was knowledgeable about the prospects of Wellesley. Stickney's letter in response to his inquiry provided both with a bit of caution. She stated that,

there is no doubt that it [Wellesley College] is strictly and sensitively Evangelical, but among Evangelical divisions it is not *sectarian*. Mr. Durant is a man of so intense a nature and so tremendous a will that I sh'd [sic] think it doubtful if the place could be tolerable to anyone who greatly differed from him (whether there would be a need for difference would be a personal matter)...As a *high high* school I think the institution will take a good rank perhaps – it will be some time before it will really add anything of dignity to the word college [emphasis in original].⁷⁰

Stickney was concerned about the school's overall academic standing because of its recent opening. Sheldon Barnes declined the offer in the Chemistry department; although the offer, according to Stickney, appeared to be an excellent one.⁷¹ Everyone

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Jenny Stickney to Edward Sheldon, 4 October 1876. Penfield Library.

⁷¹ Palmieri, *In Adamless Eden: The Community of Women Faculty at Wellesley*, 106. Her exact salary is not known, however, as a full professor in 1885, the "benchmark" salary used at Wellesley was \$1,500 and it had been the rate for several years.

was unaware that Sheldon Barnes' interest had changed dramatically to history. Her family and friends advised her to take the position but she refused.⁷² Apparently, Henry Durant was determined to recruit her; he changed the offer to professor of History. She accepted the new offer.

Prior to arriving at the school to begin teaching, she contacted a former professor from the University of Michigan, Martin L. D'Ooge. He was one of her literature professors. She wrote for general advice about her career.⁷³ Sheldon Barnes asked about her prospective history curriculum. The curriculum combined her pedagogy of scientific methods and history. Since he was a professor in literature, he reviewed her methods with Charles Kendall Adams, a historian, who was still on the faculty at the university. Both Adams and D'Ooge agreed that Sheldon Barnes' "fundamental idea is a good one for the studies of the facts of history.... the method you propose is doubtless [sic] excellent, and the principles, the generalizations....you would expect the pupil to deduce."⁷⁴ Her methodology was practical within the scientific history format Adams taught. Sheldon Barnes moved to Massachusetts and worked at Wellesley for about two and a half years.

Sheldon Barnes published an article in the Massachusetts Teacher Association describing the method she used in her teaching that was the basis for public schools to address the ever increasing student population in the United States.⁷⁵ She explained that the use of the scientific method was the best way to approach historical concepts. The

⁷² *Historical Sketches Relating to the First Quarter Century of the State Normal and Training School at Oswego, NY*, 161.

⁷³ M.L. D'Ooge to Sheldon Barnes, 5 October 1876, Penfield Library.

⁷⁴ M.L. D'Ooge to Sheldon Barnes, 4 December 1876, Penfield Library.

⁷⁵ *Historical Statistics of the United States: Colonial Times to 1970*. Chart Series A 1.5. Historical summary of public elementary and secondary school statistics: Selected years, 1869–70 through 2007–08, National Center for Education Statistics. According to the charts, the population increased by over ten million people or 26% between 1870 and 1880. The student population increased from an estimated 7.562 million to 9.867 million or approximately 30% within the same period.

early units of man were the Greeks and Romans or Eurocentric studies. Therefore, many of her ideas used the roots of these previous cultures for the basis of an evolving process. She considered other cultures, such as the Chinese, as “fossils” and used these other cultures only to understand their relationship to European history. Students could see how, through time, governments and cultures had grown from simple units for the benefit of tribal units to more complex institutions that incorporated contemporary society. She equated the evolutionary process as similar cell growth from simple single cell organisms such as amoebas to complex human beings. The changes took centuries to develop and mature. As she proposed, “we must place before our students, the words, the deeds, the creeds, the constitutions of the great Aryan people.”⁷⁶ She ignored any other civilizations outside of the Eurocentric framework she had studied. In her mind, Darwin’s theory of the “survival of the fittest” applied to European thoughts and concepts.

How did she propose to integrate the Eurocentric framework into her classroom? Students in elementary schools should have basic concepts of history using heroes and geographical studies to prepare them for the higher learning. Children had basic elements of history that made it easy for her to integrate higher level, analytical concepts into a secondary school history class. She provided “without comment, photographs of its [the specific cultural object being studied] art, extracts from its literature and laws, abstracts from its organization; without comment, but with plenty of questions, whose answers they must find for themselves in the given material.”⁷⁷ A concept or artifact required students, individually or in groups, to think about the new material and how it fit into previous knowledge. The purpose of the analysis and assimilation of information was to

⁷⁶ Sheldon Barnes, “Can History Be Taught as a Natural Science?” 101.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 103.

train students to think independently. Edward Shaw documented the process and subsequent discussion by students for an article in 1884 (See Appendix D).⁷⁸

At Wellesley College, Sheldon Barnes developed her skills as a scientific historian and teacher. She was more concerned about the relationship with her students than the administration. She was not enthralled with the school because of issues between the students, faculty, and administration, such as turning off lights at a certain time or talking to boys. In January 1877, Sheldon Barnes responded to an inquiry from her sister, Lizzie, about attending the school as an undergraduate. She wrote “whatever else you do, don’t come to Wellesley.”⁷⁹ She thought it would be fine to visit but not to attend as a student. Sheldon Barnes thought the place was too much like a “nunnery.” Additionally, she thought the incoming students ill-prepared for a college setting because there were few places in the Boston area for women to prepare for advanced scholarly work.

Durant and the administration left her disillusioned.⁸⁰ She agreed with Stickney’s earlier observation that the school was not the same caliber as coeducational schools such as the University of Michigan. She thought Wellesley’s location was a lovely location for the college but was problematic for students and teachers because of the tension within the school’s academic and social structure. At one point, Sheldon Barnes wrote about Durant’s restrictions on her teaching methods. Durant cautioned her about teaching the students “the more difficult and complex period of history.”⁸¹ She assured him that it was

⁷⁸ Shaw, “Normal Teaching.”

⁷⁹ Sheldon Barnes to Elizabeth Sheldon, 10 January 1877, Penfield Library.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.* Sheldon Barnes gave an amusing example of the rules that were in effect for teachers and students. They had to turn off lights at 9:35 PM every night for everyone including teachers. She argued for an exemption to this rule because she went to bed at 9:00 PM every night. The exemption was given but she became an outlier for the rule and stated that she would tell Lizzie other “inconsistencies” that Durant established when they saw each other.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

her intention to teach historical method and provide students with a process to analyze history on their own as qualified women scholars.

In February 1878, Sheldon Barnes was beginning to have reservations about her time at Wellesley. She still had a relatively good relationship with Durant but cracks were evident. She wrote to her father that she needed to be open and honest with Durant on the affairs of the college. She stated that, "I am unwilling to let Mr. Durant think that I am in sympathy [with all of the school policies] when I am not and he distinctly stated that as one of the things [support] he desired in every teacher."⁸² She wrote her father that she provided "honest" responses to Durant and the students when asked. She was an independent woman who had opinions about the college and its policies. She was uneasy about her teaching career at Wellesley although she expected rehiring in the fall. In the long run, she had confidence in Wellesley and its prospects for educating women. However, issues developed with Durant that proved too difficult.

Sheldon Barnes expressed concerns during her time at Wellesley, first, she believed Durant's religious beliefs turned some of the students away from the Bible and religion in general. Sheldon Barnes described Durant as "not only Christian, he is orthodox Presbyterian, and not only that, but he is a Puritan of the type of the men of two or three centuries back."⁸³ However, Durant's religious beliefs did not concern her as much as the paternalistic, orthodox beliefs that he espoused and expected others to follow. Despite these differences, Sheldon Barnes was confident of her position for the next year but the tension that existed at the school created challenges for her personally and professionally.

⁸² Sheldon Barnes to Edward Sheldon, 1878, 4 February 1878, Penfield Library.

⁸³ Sheldon Barnes to Edward Sheldon, 15 May 1878, Penfield Library.

Durant told Sheldon Barnes in September 1878 that she could no longer teach the senior class using her scientific methods. She thought he was forcing her to choose between staying at the school and submitting to his expectations and standards or leave her position. If she would not be able to teach the senior class, then “goodby [sic] to Wellesley; the last, the only tie....will be broken.”⁸⁴ She enjoyed her experience but the rigidity of the administration was taking its toll on her health.

Sheldon Barnes’ health, always a concern, required her to take time off for rest and recuperate. At one point, she returned home to be around family and Lee. Other times, she reduced her weekly teaching duties to rest. During one of these recuperative breaks, she tried an “electric” therapy that was available at the time. This therapy sent electrical charges through her body. The purpose was to relieve her headaches and reenergize her. These therapeutic sessions did not provide the relief she expected and only maintained her already weak physical state. Eventually, she moved out of the main building on campus. She received special permission from Durant to move into a boarding house in the city of Wellesley in 1879. The move seemed to rejuvenate her for a period but only briefly. Durant was still pleased with her teaching and wanted her to remain on the faculty for another year. She wrote to her father in March that she “may accept your invitation home, I sometimes fear that the college is doing a graver [service] than physical harm to me and that my character may suffer from it.”⁸⁵ The offer of rest and recovery in Oswego overcame her fidelity to Wellesley College. She enjoyed the students, especially the seniors, but the stringent policies impacted her health. She

⁸⁴ Sheldon Barnes to Elizabeth Sheldon, 14 September 1878, Penfield Library.

⁸⁵ Sheldon Barnes to Edward Sheldon, March 1879, Penfield Library.

returned home and remained there for a year before venturing in another direction to reinvigorate her health.

Summary

Sheldon Barnes' life in college was rich experience for her. As a child, she had lower expectations of an education beyond the normal school level. Although she always wanted to attend college, she was aware of the limitations placed upon women by society. She entered the University of Michigan as a shy and naïve woman who was concerned about making the best decisions to please her father. She left school as a confident young woman who knew she could perform on an equal basis with men within academe. Her perspective about herself and women had changed. The experience of college and knowing she had excelled within the academic world provided her with more assertive perspective for women's rights.

Upon her return to teaching at OSNTS, she expected to teach science for the rest of her life. As previously noted, science was where discoveries were taking place and she wanted to be part of it. However, since others were teaching science at the school, she accepted the history assignment as a temporary placement. The change was fortunate for her because she developed her passion for history. As she stated in her short autobiographical essay published in 1888, she "revenge herself by applying scientific methods to history."⁸⁶

Sheldon Barnes was not the kind of woman who like Susan B. Anthony would lead a march into the streets for women's rights. However, in her quiet unassuming way, she tried to make a difference for women through education. She knew her Achilles heel

⁸⁶ Barnes, *Historical Sketches Relating to the First Quarter Century of the State Normal and Training School at Oswego, NY*. 161.

would always be her health. From her undergraduate days through her experience at Wellesley College, she believed she was making an impact on women's lives by educating young minds for a different kind of society.

CHAPTER 6

SHELDON BARNES' CREATIVE YEARS

Change of Direction

At the end of 1879, Sheldon Barnes' professional life changed upon leaving Wellesley College. She returned home to Oswego, New York and rested for several months. She enjoyed her life as a college professor although the impact on her health was considerable. In Oswego, she was under the watchful eyes of her parents and friend, Dr. Mary V. Lee. Prior to her return to Oswego, the two women corresponded and discussed a trip to Europe. Once Sheldon Barnes returned home they developed their plans. The journey eventually stretched to almost two years and encompassed multiple countries from England to Egypt.

Sheldon Barnes saved some of her generous Wellesley salary while she was in Massachusetts. So, between the two women's savings and her father's support, they were able to plan on a lengthy trip. Sheldon Barnes had always wanted to visit Europe especially after her professional interest changed to European history. Another reason for the trip was to allow Sheldon Barnes to rest as the women casually toured and visited many historical landmarks, museums, libraries, and schools. Lee would be a great companion because of her medical training. Ever since attending the University of Michigan, Sheldon Barnes had admired Lee as a woman and mentor. Furthermore, the trip gave them the opportunity to travel and expand their relationship.

Sheldon Barnes and Sexuality

Since the nineteenth century, interpretations of female sexuality standards have dramatically changed. Carroll Smith-Rosenberg and Nancy Sahli discussed the intricate

customs that women developed during the Progressive Era.¹ These customs included letters, gifts, and long intimate conversations that addressed all personal details of women's private lives. These customs are present today, but they were more prevalent in the nineteenth century. The language used in letters and journals was more elaborate than contemporary writing.

Writers have cautioned historians about interpreting the elaborate language used in private letters and journals concerning women's relationships as nothing more than friendships. Smith-Rosenberg contends that these relationships need individual analysis based upon the women's lives and socioeconomic status within society prior to interpreting relationships, possibly erroneously. Nineteenth century understanding of same sex relationships was not just a choice between a "dichotomized universe of deviance and normality."² The relationships were complex within the limitations of the conservative Progressive Era. Sahli discusses the ritual that may have been more common at women's colleges called "smashing." Smashing was a process in which one female sought a relationship using presents, letters, poems, and other items to gain the affection of another woman.³ The process had similarities to a courtship between men and women. The ultimate goal was not necessarily sexual relations but more than likely emotional and intellectual attraction.

¹ Smith-Rosenberg, "The Female World of Love and Ritual: Relations Between Women in Nineteenth-Century America"; Sahli, "Smashing: Women's Relationships Before the Fall."

² Ibid, 8.

³ At the end of her senior year at the University of Michigan, Sheldon Barnes received several poems from a woman named Jo Anderson addressed to her. The poems used romantic language and style. In a later letter from Lee to Sheldon Barnes, there was a reference to another woman and her flirtatious poems addressed to Sheldon Barnes and "such poems as she writes."

In some cases, family and friends accepted the close relationships between women without judgment.⁴ Females may have used their religious beliefs to integrate their spiritual and physical love. In many cases, these women were married but developed an attraction to other women. The women embodied their “earthly love....with heavenly love”⁵ as a way to interpret Christian principles. Sheldon Barnes’ early religious beliefs, as demonstrated in her letters and journal entries, did not create any dissonance in her correspondence with others. In Ann Arbor, she began to develop strong feelings for Lee that were emotional and probably physical.⁶

However, Sheldon Barnes’ sexual preference has proven to be difficult to confirm. She was married to Earl Barnes at the time of her death. Their relationship was a loving one and appears to be authentic, based on the letters and journal entries that exist. Although an 1885 letter from Lee to Sheldon Barnes, suggests there was a strong relationship between the two women that went beyond smashing. According to Michelle Gibson and Deborah Meem, there were different standards between women in the nineteenth century.⁷ These authors wrote about the “Wellesley” marriage that Palmieri discusses in her book, *In Adamless Eden*, which allowed “academic women to continue their chosen careers.”⁸ Palmieri’s book reveals several aspects of relationships for women faculty at Wellesley College.⁹ Although she wrote in her book specifically about Wellesley College activities, many of the ideas were similar at other single-sex colleges and universities. Alternative relationships between women were open and honest within

⁴ Vicinus, “‘The Gift of Love’: Nineteenth-Century Religion and Lesbian Passion.”

⁵ *Ibid.*, 244.

⁶ Lee to Sheldon Barnes, 7 January, 1885, Sophia Smith Collection.

⁷ Gibson and Meem, “Introduction. (Cover Story).”

⁸ *Ibid.*, 3.

⁹ Palmieri, *In Adamless Eden: The Community of Women Faculty at Wellesley*.

academe and social circles. Sahli states, “words such as ‘lesbian’ and ‘homosexual’ did not come into use until the last decade of the nineteenth century.”¹⁰ Gibson and Meem were careful not to describe the relationship between women as “lesbian” unless the women themselves used it or there is proof that a physical relationship existed between the respective parties. During the period of the Sheldon Barnes and Lee relationship the term was unknown. Their relationship was one that was not uncommon for college educated women.

Women students and teachers moved into educational environments dominated by men. Kate McCullough pointed out that a comfortable acceptance of female-female relationships existed throughout middle class mainstream America.¹¹ McCullough and Palmieri explained the Boston or Wellesley marriage as a “long-term monogamous relation between two women provided a socially sanctioned female space.”¹² Sheldon Barnes, as a professor at Wellesley College was familiar with the social values at the school. The Wellesley faculty developed a concept that they defined as “symmetrical womanhood.” The Wellesley marriage was about a “healthy woman who moved through adolescence and into middle age without physical or psychological ailments; marriage would not necessarily be her supreme goal.”¹³

Perhaps, the relationship between Sheldon Barnes and Lee was an intimate and deep friendship. The trip to Europe solidified their long-term friendship that would last for almost twenty years. Even the marriage to Earl Barnes did not break ties completely.

¹⁰ Sahli, “Smashing: Women’s Relationships Before the Fall,” 18.

¹¹ McCullough, “The Boston Marriage as the Future of the Nation: Queerly Regional Sexuality in Diana Victrix.”

¹² *Ibid.*, 68.

¹³ Palmieri, *In Adamless Eden: The Community of Women Faculty at Wellesley*, 148; Soloman, *In the Company of Educated Women: A History of Women and Higher Education in America*.

The European trip strengthened their friendship and allowed both women to achieve a long-term goal of travel and seeing places they had discussed for years.

The European Tour

The European tour began in New York City in August, 1880. Sheldon Barnes and Lee stayed in New York City briefly prior to embarking on the ship. Sheldon Barnes described her journey as “beginning of the realization of the air castles of childhood.”¹⁴ She wanted to travel to Europe since her introduction to classical literature as a child. With her health issues and a need for time away from teaching, the trip presented a perfect opportunity for rest. She wanted to remember her trip and general impressions. Thus, letters sent to her family throughout the travels were often between ten and twenty pages long; occasionally including pictures or sketches. These letters provided considerable detail about the people and the places they visited.

The trip to England took about eleven days. Lee was seasick for nine days. Sheldon Barnes did not experience any seasickness and provided observations about the people on board. They landed in England on August 30, 1880 but needed a few days to regain their strength to begin their journey. England made a favorable impression on Sheldon Barnes. Throughout her travels in Europe with Lee and her later travels with her husband Earl, England became a home base for subsequent trips to the continent.

Over the next twenty-two months, the two women visited France, Italy, Germany, Switzerland, and Egypt. They were frugal with expenditures often staying in private

¹⁴ Sheldon Barnes to family, 19 August - 2 September 1880, Sophia Smith Collection. Sheldon Barnes wrote many “circular” letters home to tell her family and friends about their travels and these letters covered multiple days. These letters were for family reading and are very detailed about the daily events the women experienced. Many of the letters are general in substance about the places they visited. However, occasionally either Sheldon Barnes or Lee included private notes or comments directed to specific family members and were private or confidential.

suites of rooms in houses with friends, family, and even distant family members. The women tried to pace themselves.

However, Sheldon Barnes became tired occasionally and had to rest for extended periods. On December 15, 1880, Lee sent a letter to the Sheldon family to provide updated medical information.¹⁵ Lee explained that Sheldon Barnes had been very good about her health issues until they arrived in France. She was very active during the initial tour of the country and extended herself too much. The women made their way to Cortina, Italy and spent many days that allowed Sheldon Barnes to recover from exhaustion.

In March, 1881, the women decided to travel to Egypt. The trip was not part of their original schedule but they were able to secure reasonable prices for tickets and accommodations. The trip provided Sheldon Barnes with pictures and first-hand



Figure 4
Sheldon Barnes and Mary Lee in Europe
Photo Courtesy of Sophia Smith
Collection, Smith College

¹⁵ Mary V. Lee to Edward and Anna Sheldon, 15 December 1880, Sophia Smith Collection.

knowledge that she used in her initial book.¹⁶ After returning from Egypt, Lee wrote another medical update to the Sheldon family. Sheldon Barnes's health had improved during their Egyptian trip, but Lee was again overwhelmed with seasickness. The two rested in Italy in order to regain strength before traveling to Germany.

In Germany, the women visited public school classrooms, one in Munich and another in Berlin. Sheldon Barnes made several observations she passed along to her father for the benefit of OSNTS. First, both schools used a Pestalozzian curriculum. Students participated in singing and physical activities. Both classrooms merged the principle of taking familiar concepts and objects and scaffolding them to higher level concepts. "Everywhere we find the Pestalozzian principle the mainspring; everywhere we find gymnastics, and singing and playing games....a most admirable ideal spirit of education. *But we can do better.* [Emphasis in original]"¹⁷ She was appreciative of the schools because they used Pestalozzian principles but she wanted to develop an enhanced curriculum for OSNTS.

A second distinguishing factor she noted was that the children in Germany were required to attend school for ten years. Since children entered the school system at the age of six or seven, that meant they had to stay in school until they were sixteen or seventeen years old. Additionally, as students became older, classes separated based on gender. Beyond the core curriculum of subjects such as language, science, and history, girls enrolled in sewing or knitting classes. Boys did not attend these classes. Also, in Berlin, all students studied religion. Religious beliefs separated the classes, so that Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish teachers taught based on their specific doctrines.

¹⁶ Sheldon Barnes to Sheldon family, March. 1881, Sophia Smith Collection.

¹⁷ Sheldon Barnes to parents. June 1881, Sophia Smith Collection.

Finally, she noted elementary school children who were enrolled in public schools had one teacher and as many as fifty students in a classroom. Teachers usually remained with the same students for two years. If students could not afford to pay for education, the government paid the fees for them. The schools usually had a gymnasium for physical exercise that was part of the regular curriculum. These German educational concepts intrigued both women. Sheldon Barnes expected that her father would integrate these concepts or improve them for Oswego schools.

Sheldon Barnes expressed frustration with the German system for the older girls. She thought the normal schools in Germany were similar to those in the United States except girls had only two choices. If they chose to attend a clothing design school, the girls went to “a school which trains them very thoroughly and exactly for the best positions in great cutting, fitting, sewing and fancy-work establishments; [or] the [an]other [choice] is a school in which they are trained to become teachers in the schools of Female industry!”¹⁸ An alternative choice for girls was teaching and “pupil teachers” learned female skills, such as sewing, in order to teach elementary school girls. Although she thought these girls and young women received adequate instruction, the tone of her observations suggested mild dissatisfaction about limited opportunities for girls in Germany.

In the fall of 1881, the two women had returned to England and Sheldon Barnes attended Cambridge University for two terms. She was excited about her enrollment because she would study with Sir John Robert Seeley, the Regis Professor of Modern

¹⁸ Sheldon Barnes to Edward Sheldon. May 1881, Sophia Smith Collection. Sheldon Barnes observed that the girls spent two years in a normal school similar to OSNTS the girls then diverged into more defined training for teaching or female industries.

History at Cambridge University.¹⁹ Seeley, like many historians of the period, had a low opinion of women as students and scholars. Seeley did not allow women in his seminars. Sheldon Barnes was most impressed with Seeley and was able to secure an educational opportunity based upon a letter of introduction from Dr. Angell. Her previous scholarship and academic connections opened educational doors for her. Sheldon Barnes met weekly in his home instead of a classroom because of the exclusion of women in his classes. Sheldon Barnes wrote essays and Seeley had “personal interviews with him [on] each one, in which he tells me how he differs with me and will, in general, assist me with his criticism, his opinions, and his advice.”²⁰ At the end of the term in December, Seeley sent a note to Francis Sheldon revealing that he thought her eldest daughter was “pretty ‘smart.’”²¹

At the beginning of her second term in January 1882, Sheldon Barnes sent a note to her father about her forthcoming plans to return to Oswego in a few months. Previously, her father had written and suggested she stay and study in England for another year. However, she rejected his suggestion. She had been developing plans for a history textbook because her friends and she agreed that there was lack of original source material for history classes. She wrote that

by the end of the year [1882], I shall have quite enough to warrant me starting in upon a first draft of my book...I have the highest ambition to make a text-book in general history so good, so in accordance with the principles of teaching and methods of science, so accurate and well proportioned [sic] in its material, that is may become a classic in its way.²²

¹⁹ Bell, “Unity and Difference: John Robert Seeley and the Political Theology of International Relations.”

²⁰ Sheldon Barnes to family, 29 October 1881. Sophia Smith Collection. The lectures were entitled Colonial Empire of Great Britain. Additionally, she took classes in Political Philosophy (Mr. Browning) and The Modern History of Europe in the 17th and 18th Centuries (Mr. Prothero).

²¹ Sheldon Barnes to family, 11 December 1881. Sophia Smith Collection.

²² Sheldon Barnes to father, January 1882. Penfield Library.

Sheldon Barnes made a very positive impression upon Professor Seeley. The individual lectures or meetings with Sheldon Barnes set a precedent for him, although the meetings required a chaperone be present. In March 1882, Sheldon Barnes wrote home with a considerable amount of excitement and pride about a recent session with Seeley. He had made statements like “very well written... [or] very well expressed.”²³ Sheldon Barnes wanted him to provide criticism of her recent essay or paper but he could not criticize her work because he found the work to be so well done. Later that day, one of the other female “historical” students discussed with Sheldon Barnes what many of the Cambridge students perceived to be astounding news. The other student explained that Professor Seeley had just announced that he was going to give “an hour a week to all the historical... girls.”²⁴ Sheldon Barnes believed that she had opened up a door for women with Professor Seeley. Her scholarship had created an opportunity for other women and she hoped they would take advantage of the change.²⁵

In June 1882, the two women returned to New York City. The experiences they shared bound their friendship until Lee died in 1892. Sheldon Barnes had used the time away from the United States to restore her health under the attentive eye of Lee. She also had time to reflect on the prospects for writing a history textbook. Earlier in the spring, Sheldon Barnes’ father had written to her expressing his desire, upon her return, to teach at OSNTS. He wanted to change the structure of classes for the curriculum in history, literature, and science. Sheldon Barnes’ stature in the academic world by her father had increased considerably during the past few years. He was comfortable having Sheldon Barnes reorganize OSNTS to reflect contemporary educational concepts.

²³ Sheldon Barnes to family, 6 March 1882. Sophia Smith Collection.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid. She added that Professor Seeley “has never taken much stock in girls' brains.”

In the fall term, Sheldon Barnes taught literature and history at OSNTS. She worked on her general history textbook and her life returned to normal. She moved back in with her parents; only now Sheldon Barnes shared a room with Lee. She was happy about returning to teaching her classes but her relationship with Lee was about to change.

Earl Barnes and Mary Sheldon

Her European tour now completed, Sheldon Barnes was ready to settle down in Oswego. Teaching and writing her first textbook were her objectives for the fall of 1882. There was one other personal situation that complicated her life. After leaving Wellesley and prior to leaving for Europe, she wrote her sister, Lizzie “I have a new friend. His name is Earl Barnes. Do you know him? We have a bargain to see each other just as much as possible...but he is only nineteen.”²⁶ Sheldon Barnes was referring to Earl Barnes, a student at OSNTS who was eleven years younger than herself.

Sheldon Barnes decided during her college days that marriage was probably not a



Figure 5
Earl Barnes and Sheldon Barnes
Photo Courtesy of Sophia Smith
Collection, Smith College

²⁶ Sheldon Barnes to Elizabeth Sheldon, 1880, 11 February 1880, Penfield Library.

choice she would make in order to focus fully on teaching. Also, she lived on a period in which there were more eligible women than men due to the casualties in the Civil War. When the war ended with more than 630,000 soldiers were dead. Upon her return from Europe, Sheldon Barnes reacquainted herself with Earl Barnes.

Earl Barnes was born on July 15, 1861 in a small town outside of Oswego. Barnes, along with his older sister Ida, attended OSNTS beginning in 1878. Sheldon Barnes was teaching at Wellesley when he initially enrolled so the two probably did not meet right away. Since she made trips home from Wellesley she asked about him in early 1880. Earl Barnes was not a fulltime student at OSNTS because of his family obligations on the farm. Since he was a part-time student, he took almost four years to complete the course work.²⁷

She renewed their friendship with him when the fall term began in 1882. She wrote that she had the “nicest history” class in which the young men and women interacted in the class. In a letter to her sister, Lizzie, she asks “you remember Earl Barnes, don’t you? My nice, big country boy – and just full of strange ideas.”²⁸ Earl Barnes was a student in one of the classes she taught. They met regularly out of class to discuss issues of the day. Sheldon Barnes described his prominent characteristics as being pessimistic and “bad.” By bad she meant he tried to create an image as a smoker and drinker because that was opposite of the smart, “wishy-washy” boys who were always good. In one of their meetings, Sheldon Barnes remarked about their relationship that “on his [Earl’s] own confession, [she had] to have just now the strongest influence over him. And it’s a heavy responsibility to have such a big, splendid fellow believe all you say and

²⁷ Griggs, *Earl Barnes: A Life Sketch and an Address*.

²⁸ Sheldon Barnes to Elizabeth Sheldon, 24 February 1883. Penfield Library.

do all you want.”²⁹ Earl Barnes meant more to her than just a regular relationship between student and teacher. Sheldon Barnes influenced Earl Barnes for the next fifteen years as both a scholar and wife.

Earl Barnes graduated after the spring semester in 1884 from OSNTS. He moved to Hoboken, New Jersey and began teaching History at the German Academy. In September 1884 he wrote to Sheldon Barnes expressing his desire to be nearer to her. His letters and diary entries show a deepening of his feelings toward her. Sheldon Barnes responded to him using language that provided him an opportunity to show their relationship was progressing beyond teacher and student. They had fallen in love and were making the best of the long distance situation.

Sheldon Barnes used her letters to provide him more details about her life away from school activities. In the fall of 1884, Sheldon Barnes had an opportunity to attend a Lillie Devereux Blake lecture. Blake was a leading radical and suffragist speaker of the period and she spoke in Oswego. Sheldon Barnes was integral in organizing a series of lectures for Blake at the school. She and her father spent several hours putting printed notices around Oswego to draw people to the lecture. As she described the lecture in a letter to Earl Barnes, Sheldon Barnes thought “the lecture seems to have been a success and liked by the Normals and so I am glad. Those that didn’t wholly like her were the more discerning.”³⁰ Sheldon Barnes expressed her suffragist, radical perspective to Earl Barnes and he supported her position.

Sheldon Barnes knew Earl Barnes to be a scholar of the first magnitude. She

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Sheldon Barnes to Earl Barnes, 1884, September 26, Sophia Smith Collection. The subject of the lectures were “Is It a Crime To Be a Woman”, “The Progress of Freedom,” “The True Republic,” and “The Love of Country.”

wrote to him that she expected of a man's scholarly attributes to be significant but

[a] man's curiosity must be aroused; but I despise a man when curiosity alone is aroused in questions then answers in all making...[sets] himself from humanity, sets himself a kind of superior being, when his true human business is to choose a side and fight for it, to give his strength of his thought and history to what he believes in. That makes the misery of this campaign then is no hero in it when men can follow without reservation as a true man.³¹

She expected Earl Barnes to develop a curiosity about life and the natural sciences. Then he should proclaim his position even if it was contrary to accepted public positions or policy.

As for Sheldon Barnes, she expressed her support of Darwinian theory or the "survival of the fittest." She also voiced her belief "that greatest and by far the gravest contest – between competition and cooperation – [was] individualism and socialism."³² She supported cooperation of men against nature to advance humanity and culture. She wanted Earl Barnes to understand her intellectual viewpoint clearly as their relationship developed. According to Sheldon Barnes, "I was born to be a socialist – and now I am one."³³ If he did not support her, she expected him to stand up for his position instead of raising questions and retreating into a cloistered academic existence. He was supportive of her socialist beliefs. Sheldon Barnes knew she was the biggest influence on Earl Barnes's belief structure, both personally and professionally.³⁴

By December 1884 Earl Barnes had asked Sheldon Barnes to marry him and she had accepted. Sheldon Barnes was concerned about the proposal because of her complicated relationship with Lee. There is no record of the letter Sheldon Barnes sent to

³¹ Sheldon Barnes to Earl Barnes, 1884, November 2, Sophia Smith Collection.

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid. In this letter, Sheldon Barnes referred Earl Barnes to the writings of Henry George, an American economist who advocated for a redistribution of land values to help all citizens, and his book "Social Problems." Also, she wrote that she admired William Morris, a socialist and artist in the late nineteenth century.

³⁴ Griggs, *Earl Barnes: A Life Sketch and an Address*, 13.

Lee in early January, 1885 when she announced her engagement. However, Lee sent a letter to Sheldon Barnes on January 7, 1885 about the engagement and its impact on their relationship.³⁵ The letter had a tone of a jilted lover filled with recriminations and pleas. Lee's letter to Sheldon Barnes is angry in tone and reveals specific citations from previous Sheldon Barnes' letters and recollection of conversations.

According to a letter written in 1874, while they were still at the University of Michigan, Sheldon Barnes had asked Lee to marry her. The marriage was never completed but there is the implication that their relationship grew beyond a smashing connection. During their travels in Europe, they stayed in the same rooms and were for the most part inseparable. However, there were a few occasions when they followed separate agendas. On one occasion, Sheldon Barnes wrote a letter reassuring Lee of her passion for her. According to Lee's 1885 letter, Sheldon Barnes wrote her in July 1883 a note that "yes indeed sweetheart I shall sleep in a minute with you. Don't I always sleep and make with you?" In another letter in the same month, Sheldon Barnes wrote again "that I love you *no end* and think with *rapture*, yes with *rapture* of seeing you again [emphasis in original]." Lee accused Sheldon Barnes of having "falseness and folly" in their relationship for ten years while they were living "intimately."³⁶

Clearly, the language in this letter is suggestive that the relationship between Sheldon Barnes and Lee was both emotional and physical. As a matter of record, Sheldon Barnes' relationship with "Victor" (the nickname Sheldon Barnes used for Lee) was not revealed in her professional writing or teaching responsibilities. During the early years of their relationship, Sheldon Barnes had expressed her belief that she would forego

³⁵ Mary V. Lee to Sheldon Barnes, 1885, January 7, Sophia Smith Collection.

³⁶ Ibid.

marriage to concentrate on teaching and scholarship. Sheldon Barnes was focused on her writing for her first textbook, *Studies in General History*, during this period when this alteration in their relationship took place.

In the end, the women agreed to maintain their friendship and move on with their respective lives. Earl Barnes understood the relationship between the two women and accepted it. Perhaps, he was not completely aware of the intimacy between them. Although Earl Barnes was apologetic for intervening in their friendship, he expressed his love for Sheldon Barnes and planned on marrying her. In his subsequent letters to Sheldon Barnes until Lee's death, he always spoke affectionately of Lee. Until the end of her life in 1892, Lee remained at OSNTS as an unmarried woman and a strong academic force on the faculty.

In the spring and summer of 1885, Sheldon Barnes was busy with wedding plans and the publication of her first textbook, *Studies in General History*. She had originally proposed her book to the publisher Ginn, Heath, & Company. Daniel Collamore Heath (D.C. Heath) was a partner with Edward Ginn in the publishing business until 1885. D.C. Heath decided to start his own publishing company and Sheldon Barnes was one of his first authors. He contacted Sheldon Barnes in May to tell her of his separation from Edward Ginn. In his letter, he asked Sheldon Barnes to provide him with advice about classroom teaching in order for him to keep abreast of current trends. Additionally, he asked to publish her textbook.³⁷ Initially, Sheldon Barnes rejected the offer and as she wanted to stay with Ginn. Ginn made a persuasive argument for her to remain with his publishing house because of his experience in selling textbooks. Ginn argued his

³⁷ D.C.Heath to Sheldon Barnes. 6 May 1885, Sophia Smith Collection. In the letter, Heath asked for Sheldon Barnes' assistance in order to "make me [Heath] famous" in publishing circles.

company had the financial ability to handle publication costs of the book.³⁸ Sheldon Barnes eventually changed her mind and used D.C. Heath. The publishing relationship with D.C. Heath encompassed all her books, as well.

Sheldon Barnes probably had a difficult spring and summer, both personally and professionally. Despite these issues, she completed her textbook and finalized plans for her wedding. Sheldon Barnes' and Earl Barnes concluded their courtship with their marriage on August 6, 1885. The wedding ceremony held at her parent's house called Shady Shore, just outside of Oswego. The guests outside of Sheldon Barnes's immediate and extended family included long-term friends like Mary Williams (Michigan classmate) and Lee. After the wedding, the couple moved to Hoboken, New Jersey where Earl Barnes taught for a second and final year at the German Academy.

Scholarly Meandering

During the academic school year of 1885-1886 in Hoboken, Earl Barnes applied for and received a scholarship to attend Cornell University in Ithaca, New York. Barnes entered the school as a "special student" that indicated the school acknowledged his previous academic work at OSNTS. After completing the academic school year, the Barneses moved to Ithaca in order for him to begin work on a bachelor's degree.

The couple became acquainted with Andrew Dickson White who was the president of Cornell University, and George Lincoln Burr, who was a history professor there, as well. Burr was a friend and confidante for White. The two academics were in the

³⁸ Edwin Ginn to Sheldon Barnes, 1 July 1885. Sophia Smith Collection. Ginn estimated the initial publication costs to be \$2,000-\$3,000 and he expected to produce 3-5,000 copies. The costs were significant but he expected to use his agents, already in place, throughout the country to contact schools already using previously published history textbooks by Ginn, Heath, and Company.

process of gathering material for a book White eventually wrote.³⁹ The relationship between the four of them became significant for both Barnes's careers.

Burr and White recognized the unique abilities of the Barneses and offered them an opportunity to assist Burr for an upcoming trip to Europe. The couple accepted the offer because they could travel to Europe. Sheldon Barnes enjoyed travel and could share the opportunity with her husband. A second reason would be the opportunity to work with Burr and by extension White. The relationship extended their network of friends and mentors to a group of influential academicians from Cornell.

Their research trip lasted almost eight months beginning January 1, 1888. The researchers visited eight countries from England to Switzerland. The abbreviated description of the trip (in comparison to her earlier letters during her trip with Lee) reveal a number of personal outings along with an official research agenda.⁴⁰ The research experience provided Earl Barnes with an opportunity to learn how to conduct historical research first-hand. Sheldon Barnes was already familiar with scientific historical research methods from her previous trip to Europe. However, Earl Barnes had never completed any historical research. Earl Barnes took advantage of a learning experience while receiving a stipend and paid expenses.

The researchers returned to Ithaca for the fall term of 1888. Earl Barnes resumed his studies and Sheldon Barnes started work on her second book. Earl Barnes left New York briefly to return to Oswego to be near his family because of his grandmother's illness. While in Oswego he was attentive to his family and Mary Lee who was ill at the

³⁹ White, *The History of the Warfare of Science with Theology in Christendom*.

⁴⁰ Sheldon Barnes Itinerary, Sophia Smith Collection, n.d. During the trip, Sheldon Barnes met with Professor Seeley, Herman Krüsi, Jr., and Margaret Jones. Krüsi was the teacher from OSNTS. Jones was the woman who helped Edward Sheldon develop his Pestalozzian curriculum and teaching methods at OSNTS and later published a book with him.

same time. He was able to provide assistance to both women and work on his studies while he was away from Ithaca.

Just before Earl Barnes returned from his trip to Oswego, Sheldon Barnes experienced another heart problem while alone in Ithaca. She felt it was due to the strain of their recent European travels the previous year and not getting enough rest. She stated in early January, 1889, "I have managed to live for three or four weeks without suffering an hour's pain with it, or feeling weak from it, which is more than has happened before for eight or ten years."⁴¹ She was aware of her weak heart conditions but had ignored them for several years. Now that she was married, she was more mindful of the ailment and its impact on her marital relationship. After his return from Oswego, Earl Barnes often added postscripts in letters to assure the Sheldon family about her health. Since there was little surgically or prescriptively available for her, she usually reduced her schedule and rested during any distressing health episodes. Her father, Edward Sheldon, suggested a visit to a "Christian Scientist" might help but Sheldon Barnes deferred, instead trusting the regular medical doctors at Cornell.

Sheldon Barnes' health issues aside, Earl Barnes continued his studies. He was interested in psychology especially as it related to children. President White had recommended him to David Starr Jordan of Indiana University for the Chairman of the History department even before his graduation from Cornell University. Jordan was the president of Indiana University and he was looking for young, upcoming scholars to improve his faculty. Earl Barnes was initially hesitant to accept the position because of his inexperience in American history. However, in a letter he sent to David Starr Jordan on May 1, 1889, he thought he could grow into the position because of "what I have

⁴¹ Sheldon Barnes to Edward Sheldon. 17 January 1889, Penfield Library.

already done with Mrs. Barnes at my right hand.”⁴² Jordan requested that Earl Barnes take a leave of absence for fifteen months from his studies and teach in Bloomington. He agreed to Jordan’s proposal and expected to return to Ithaca after the contract was completed.

Earl Barnes began his work with Indiana University students in the fall 1889. The school was coeducational and Jordan had been president for approximately four years when the Barneses arrived. There were about thirty professors on the faculty. He expected to increase the faculty and student body despite the location of the school. Bloomington was south of Indianapolis in a small, rural community.

Sheldon Barnes impression of the location was both critical and enthusiastic. Her description of the social life in Bloomington was “simple and modest.” The biggest challenge she found was finding dependable help for her small housing unit. The help had to have acceptable manners.⁴³ Despite these small inconveniences, Sheldon Barnes settled into the role of a faculty wife by socializing, entertaining, and helping her husband with students. She was very pleased with Earl Barnes’ introduction using the “scientific methods in History when they have been applied never before [sic].”⁴⁴ Sheldon Barnes’ behind the scenes influence in both subject matter and methods gave her husband standing as an effective teacher who related to his students.

Interestingly, Indiana University conferred a Bachelor of Arts degree on Earl Barnes in the spring of 1890. The time he spent at Cornell University, graduation from

⁴² Earl Barnes to David Starr Jordan, 1 May 1889, Sophia Smith Collection.

⁴³ Sheldon Barnes to family, 29 September 1889. Penfield Library. The tone of the letter is one of frustration with local customs when she was more comfortable with the lifestyle in the East. Previously she described herself as a socialist but the tone showed dissonance between the rural class of workers in Indiana and her lifestyle expectations in the East. Hired help was difficult to find in Indiana and were marginal workers, at best, and “public caterers” were nonexistent to manage dinners or parties for entertainment.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

OSNTS, and his research in Europe provided him with enough credit hours to receive his A. B. in Pedagogics. His success in Bloomington, both personally and professionally, was very satisfying for Sheldon Barnes. She wrote her mother that Earl Barnes was becoming “known in the state as he is a favorite envoy of Dr. Jordan’s.”⁴⁵ Jordan became his mentor. She was pleased he taught history the right way in a college setting using scientific history and Pestalozzian concepts. Earl Barnes’ reputation and the relaxed atmosphere in a rural setting had a positive effect on their life style. She enjoyed the students and she had a favorable impression of the faculty wives. Many of the women were working on post-graduate degrees at the university. She felt the ambition of the women solidified her impressions that the “future of women were [sic] now secure.”⁴⁶

By the end of 1890, the Barneses were looking forward to returning to Ithaca. Earl Barnes’ commitment to David Starr Jordan for fifteen months was nearing an end; both the Barneses wanted to move back. Cornell University gave him an him an opportunity for additional studies and she could complete her work on a second textbook. Sheldon Barnes had completed several sections but needed more time in Ithaca for research and writing. Prior to their return to Ithaca, the Barneses attended the American Historical Association meeting in Washington, D.C. She had an opportunity to meet many of the leading historians of the day, including Herbert B. Adams who was the current president of the organization. Sheldon Barnes used the opportunity to explain her historical scientific method to him. Herbert Adams expressed “much interest” in the discussion and

⁴⁵ Sheldon Barnes to mother, 22 April 1890, Sophia Smith Collection.

⁴⁶ Sheldon Barnes to Sybil, November 1890. Sophia Smith Collection.

she hoped to pursue the matter later with him.⁴⁷ The meeting in 1891 was over the New Year's holidays.

1891 was an exceptional year for the Barneses. Earl Barnes completed work his Masters of Science degree, with distinction, and graduated from Cornell University on June 18, 1891. He scheduled his return to Indiana University for the fall semester of 1891. However, the Barnes' academic connections intervened with a different opportunity. While Earl Barnes was completing his work at Cornell University, Leland Stanford, the founder of Stanford University, was looking for a president of his new school. The university scheduled to open originally in 1887, but there were delays.⁴⁸ It did not open until the fall of 1891.⁴⁹ One of the main reasons for the delay was the school did not have a university president. Leland Stanford had offered the presidency to a few people with no success. One of the first offers went to Andrew Dickson White at Cornell University but he declined because of concerns about funding and location of the school on the west coast. White suggested David Starr Jordan who accepted the offer. Part of Jordan's agreement allowed him to recruit the faculty from a wide range of his friends, acquaintances, and former students. Earl Barnes was one of those faculty members and he accepted a position as Professor of Education.

Sheldon Barnes was very happy with the new position for her husband although they had to move across the continent. The salary was more than they expected at \$3,000 annually. Earl Barnes needed to extricate himself from his contract with Indiana

⁴⁷ Sheldon Barnes to family, 15 January 1891. Sophia Smith Collection. Interestingly enough, later in the day after her discussion with Adams, there was a reception at the White House and President Benjamin Harrison be present. However, the Barneses declined the invitation but not for any health issues. She chose to avoid the reception even though she was sure her father would disapprove of her decision. It appeared to be more of a political statement.

⁴⁸ Mirrielees, *Stanford: The Story of a University*.

⁴⁹ Herbert Hoover, 31st President of the United States, was in the first group of students to attend the University.

University but that was resolved with the help of Jordan. With the completion of Earl Barnes' degree requirements at Cornell University in the spring, the last item completed in the summer prior to their move to California was their book. When the couple returned to Ithaca in the spring of 1891 Sheldon Barnes was working on a second textbook, *Studies in American History*. In a letter to her mother, she stated "on Tuesday night [August 21, 1891] *we* [italics added] finished the book."⁵⁰ They caught a train at five o'clock in the morning and began their journey west.

Summary

Sheldon Barnes life had changed considerably from her undergraduate days at the University of Michigan. She had developed an intimate relationship with Mary V. Lee who altered her perspective about expectations for women in the nineteenth century. Initially, Sheldon Barnes wanted to focus on teaching without the distractions of marriage. However, Earl Barnes and her emerging healthy self-confidence provided her with an opportunity to develop a textbook that had the possibility to change instructional pedagogy in history. The Barneses were able to take advantage of friendships, scholarly alliances, and her publications to progress in academe that benefitted both individuals. Her writing skills created for her a well-deserved reputation as an accomplished history textbook author.

She wrote two textbooks in the span of five years. In the introductions to these books she explained her pedagogy. She wrote a more complete explanation on how to use scientific history and source material in her final book, *Studies in Historical Method*. Her two textbooks offered an alternative method for teaching history on a child-centered

⁵⁰ Sheldon Barnes to mother, 30 August 1891, Sophia Smith Collection. In earlier correspondence already noted, she referred to "my" book. Eventually, D.C. Heath published the book with both names.

basis. Her last book that published in 1896 provided an explanation for a teacher about the usage of her books in a classroom. The next chapter offers a summary and analysis of the books in order to show her accomplishments.

CHAPTER 7

MARY SHELDON BARNES' PUBLICATIONS

Introduction

Sheldon Barnes wrote two history textbooks and two teacher's manuals as companions for the books from 1885 to 1898. She also wrote one teaching methods book to explain her original source material pedagogy. These five volumes are the entirety of her book publications (with the exception of editing her father's autobiography published posthumously). At the time of her death, she was gathering material she hoped to turn into a revised version of her general studies textbooks. She firmly believed in the use of source material that provided students with an opportunity to "form their own opinions at the fountain-head of reality before they hear or know opinions of another."¹ In other words, Sheldon Barnes wanted her students to be able to develop their own opinions about history without someone telling them *how* to interpret history. Although she did have a direction and expected outcome for classroom discussions, she wanted students to use the original material and draw conclusions based upon their prior knowledge and analysis of the details. She based her teaching style upon scientific inquiry of historical subjects and used the German seminary format.

Scientific History and Seminary Method

Prior to analyzing Sheldon Barnes' writings, a brief introduction about scientific history and the German seminary process provides an important background. Sheldon Barnes was a pioneer in creating general history textbooks that used primary sources as the main focus. Her publications were distinctive but the idea of original source material

¹ Sheldon Barnes, *Studies in Historical Method*, 138.

had been in place almost fifty years earlier. She developed her pedagogy from distinguished academicians within the field of history, such as Charles Kendall Adams and Andrew Dickson White. The eminent German scholar Leopold von Ranke influenced these educators and historians with his innovative scientific history. Von Ranke used the German seminary as his classroom style. Ranke's methodology used research principles that were in use in the natural sciences in the early nineteenth century, such as seeking and recording original material in his research. He applied these principles for historical subjects. One of her professors, Charles Kendall Adams, travelled to Europe to study Rankean methods. He subsequently used Rankean methodology as he interpreted it into his history classes and Sheldon Barnes was familiar with it as an undergraduate.

Von Ranke's early years of study and teaching provided no suggestion that he would be an innovator of historical research and practices. Born on December 21, 1795, in his early years he taught at Frankfort on the Oder. He became convinced that many early nineteenth century historians wrote their narrative historical books and articles without any direct use of source material.² Although the material was available, scholars chose to use secondary information for their sources. He was concerned that there was little "critical study of genuine sources" such as ancient texts, journals, or manuscripts that were accessible.³ Von Ranke chose to alter his research methodology and investigated original source material in old churches or storage facilities. His intent was to create a more accurate picture for historical questions. Von Ranke's devotion to his methodology opened up a new approach to historical research. He applied contemporary scientific methods developed in the natural sciences, such as documenting original

² Bourne, "Leopold Von Ranke."

³ Ibid.

evidence, for analyzing narrative histories. Von Ranke's methodology advanced beyond research into a pedagogy known as the German seminary method.

Original source material was a requirement for Ranke as he developed a class seminary structure. History students expected to discuss, criticize, and analyze material prior to writing about historical subjects. The resulting "scientific history" process captured the imagination of scholars in Europe and the United States. For von Ranke, only students who would become historians had access to his seminars.⁴ The seminars were places where open and challenging discussions took place between the participants. He believed that scholars needed to see both the big and small picture when doing research and smaller more intimate settings were better suited for serious historical students. The intimacy of his seminars allowed Ranke and his students' opportunities to criticize each other's research and provided guidance and direction for additional discovery. These seminary sessions were serious places that tested the participant's ability to pursue scholarship.⁵ Ranke's seminars were only open to male students since most universities only allowed men to enroll in classes during the early nineteenth century. Eventually, the male dominant seminar changed as universities admitted women.⁶

Ranke used his historical research to develop a holistic model for research. The location and discovery of original source material provided him with a more realistic

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Smith, "Gender and the Practices of Scientific History: The Seminar and Archival Research in the Nineteenth Century," 1168. Smith described the "quest for original sources could require some sacrifices" in which students would spend days and weeks in privation and sickness to ascertain obscure manuscripts and facts.

⁶ Ibid.; Bohan, *Go to the Sources: Lucy Maynard Salmon and the Teaching of History*. In addition to Sheldon Barnes' use of the seminar method, Bohan described how Lucy Maynard Salmon (a friend and classmate of Sheldon Barnes) integrated the seminary method into her pedagogy.

picture of history.⁷ His seminars convened in his personal study located in his home. From these seminars, Ranke created a new generation of introspective, determined historians who impacted historical research for generations.

Charles Kendall Adams was a Rankean disciple who later influenced Sheldon Barnes during her years at the University of Michigan. He became a major influence on Sheldon Barnes as she enrolled in his courses. According to one biographer, Adams was only average as a teacher but was popular with his students.⁸ He spent a year and a half in Europe following his appointment as a full professor. His travels in Europe allowed him to observe and study the seminar method along with the scientific history approach used by Rankean scholars. He introduced the seminary method for teaching history at Michigan in 1871.⁹ Coincidentally, 1871 was Sheldon Barnes' first year at the school although she did not take history classes during her early university years.

Adams developed a broad plan for introducing the seminar approach and he expected his students to use a similar method in their classrooms upon graduation. Sheldon Barnes became an emissary of the seminar classroom once she began to teach at Wellesley College and Stanford University. His methods required teachers to establish the relevant facts of historical subjects and concepts. By presenting original source material, Adams guided his students in their classwork. He showed his students how original source materials impacted narrative accounts of historical events and might have been inaccurate. Students determined any "individual elements" of the source material

⁷ Bourne, "Leopold Von Ranke."

⁸ Curti, *The University of Wisconsin: 1848-1925*.

⁹ Ibid.

historical figures used as “sources of their influence and power” for an historical event.¹⁰ By having students develop a new understanding between a known event and original source material, Adams hoped his students gained an advanced perspective and interpretation as teachers of history.

Adams generally eschewed the classroom methods of lecturing and recitation used in schools. He believed the memorization process used in classrooms was more “injurious than beneficial.”¹¹ Individual research was more successful for both student and teacher. He did not promote the use of textbooks as a tool for teaching but understood their necessity with teachers without adequate training in history. He preferred the “judicious combination of the text-book, the lecture, and the method of personal research.”¹² Adams’ methodological process became a basic tenet for Sheldon Barnes’ pedagogy. She further developed his concepts in each of her books, especially her method book. Adams followed her career as she wrote history textbooks that reflected his pedagogy.

Studies in Historical Method

In Sheldon Barnes’ textbooks, she drew upon her knowledge of theory from Pestalozzi and Ranke; and the practical experience of Adams as he used it. In developing her first textbooks, she did not provide teachers and students with a complete explanation of her methodology. Only when she published her methods book did she explain to teachers and students her process. She expected teachers to use these books in conjunction with their prior knowledge about historical subjects.

¹⁰ Ibid., 204.

¹¹ Ibid., 209.

¹² Ibid., 211.

In Sheldon Barnes' *Studies in Historical Methods*, she provided instructional information for teachers regarding the use of original source material. The book written late in her life provided students and teachers with an instructional resource to use her methods. Sheldon Barnes published the book in 1896 after her two history textbooks.

Sheldon Barnes used her methods book to provide inexperienced or untrained teachers with guidelines for a critical study of history. In the late nineteenth century, teachers often purchased their own books. The book provided many teachers with both theory and application for teaching history which many teachers needed because of their lack of teacher education.

In the forward of her book, she established the general purpose to guide teachers in their reading. There were two general principles she used, first for any teacher "who wishes to specialize his work, and to see the world from this particular point of view."¹³ Many teachers in the late nineteenth century, especially in rural areas, were responsible for teaching multiple content areas. These teachers may have lacked formal training in history. Sheldon Barnes' book provided a bridge between educational curriculum concepts for teachers and the teaching of history in a classroom.

The second objective of the book was for a teacher "who can protect himself from the insanity of overwork and the frivolity of scattered work, may hope to make his way out from the deadly treadmill of routine."¹⁴ In other words, Sheldon Barnes offered teachers an alternative teaching method from the teacher-centered rote/recitation classrooms. She introduced students to original source material. Teachers could use resources, such as, maps, pictures, documents, or oral histories into active student-

¹³ Sheldon Barnes, *Studies in Historical Method*, 1.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 2.

centered lessons. The use of objects allowed students to learn to conceptualize history in a more hands-on and meaningful experience. Teachers guided the lessons but students went beyond a teacher's expectation (see Appendix A). Additional sources enumerated in the textbooks allow further study. In her methods book, she discussed age appropriate historical content. Charles Kendall Adams had discussed similar ideas in a chapter he contributed in the G. Stanley Hall's *Methods of Teaching History* in 1885.¹⁵ Sheldon Barnes was probably familiar with Hall's book because of her friendship with Hall and Adams. Adams' chapter did not use any published quantitative data but included his own concepts of a student's receptivity for historical material. Sheldon Barnes was able to synthesize Adams work into her pedagogy and writing.

Sheldon Barnes published in *Studies in Historical Methods* using original research. Hattie Mason, Anna Kohler, and Alma Patterson were students of hers who contributed chapters to the book in support of her research of age appropriate material.¹⁶ The research studies included in the book were simple but credible. Additionally, Sheldon Barnes' book included articles she previously published or would publish later as journal articles. The book has four sections: developing a general concept of history; providing an explanation of "historic sense" for primitive and civilized groups (including children); developing a method for teaching history; and applying a practical example in a high school setting. She developed these concepts to provide teachers with a practical process as they developed their educational processes.

¹⁵ Hall, *Methods of Teaching History*.

¹⁶ Sheldon Barnes, *Studies in Historical Method*. Anna Kohler's section of the book was entitled *Special Study on the Historic Memory of Children*, Alma Patterson's section of the book was entitled *Special Study on Children's Sense of Historical Time*, and Hattie Mason Willard's section of the book was entitled *Special Study on Ballads as Historical Material*.

General Historical Concept

Sheldon Barnes began *Studies in Historical Method* by asking the reader to create a definition of history. The discussion in her book provided teachers with ideas about the parameters of history. Sheldon Barnes first discussed the areas of “paleography [ancient writings], diplomatics [deciphering old official documents], epistography [early studies], and chronology [sequential studies].”¹⁷ In general, these subjects were general parameters of history as “that large inclusive unit is the *authentic and related story of action progressive through time* [italics in original].”¹⁸ As a historian, Sheldon Barnes was aware that people, the environment, and actions made history. As she explained, the artifacts of history were in museums or any place outside of public collections that framed people’s daily lives. It was the interaction of physical articles (letters, pictures, notes, and other writings) and their relationship to known events that historians used to interpret. She used the term “sources” to refer to physical objects used by historians.¹⁹ These sources were the basis for her pedagogy in her books and articles.

According to Sheldon Barnes’ her textbooks about American and general history were the only textbooks available that offered source textbooks.²⁰ These books and pamphlets provided original material but were only available on a limited basis. She wanted her source material provided in her textbooks as an enhancement for contemporary narrative history books. Most of the existing historical textbooks students used were narrative and chronological but did not include supporting source material.

¹⁷ Ibid., 3.

¹⁸ Ibid., 4; Sheldon Barnes, “History: A Definition and a Forecast,” 129.

¹⁹ Sheldon Barnes, *Studies in Historical Method*, 7.

²⁰ Ibid., 10.

According to Alice Spieseke, John M’Culloch in Pennsylvania wrote the first history textbook in 1787, *Introduction to the History of America*.²¹ M’Culloch’s book was a collection of speeches and documents that were incomplete and compiled without any intention of providing readers chronological direction. There were several authors who succeeded M’Culloch to develop either world or American history textbooks prior to Sheldon Barnes’ book in 1885.²² Some of these were similar in format. However, as Nietz explained, Sheldon Barnes’ book was “in [a] narrative form, but rather in parts or exercises.... [and] likely under the guidance of a good teacher, this was a good book.”²³ According to Sheldon Barnes, the combination of sources and methodology had two critical parts, first “the material used consists of sources; and, second, that the work of the student is the independent and, wherever possible, the original investigation of these materials.”²⁴ In essence providing original source material was the point of her books. She provided original sources and teachers needed to use their pedagogy to enhance learning opportunities.

European and American historical records were too vast for secondary and college survey classes. For serious historical students, she preferred a seminary style classroom. She noted that the seminary style was an ideal format for initial student interaction with local history.²⁵ She promoted a narrow local history boundary as a foundation for students to connect with regional historical sources. It was easier for students to focus on local history with its availability of material than trying to develop a

²¹ Spieseke, *First Textbooks in American History*.

²² Nietz, *The Evolution of American Secondary School Textbooks*.

²³ *Ibid.*, 245-246.

²⁴ Sheldon Barnes, *Studies in Historical Method*, 11.

²⁵ Higham, “Herbert Baxter Adams and the Study of Local History,” 1225. Sheldon Barnes referred to Johns Hopkins University where Adams used local history to establish his seminary teaching style.

world perspective without the proper base of inquiry. She wanted students to have an adequate training in original source material in order for them to properly interpret information. Her conception of the research process was similar to a pebble thrown into a pond and the subsequent ripples or waves that spread out. Students would begin developing an appreciation of history in their local communities.

While in California, she taught extensively about the “Pacific Slope” settlers and Native Americans who lived west of the Rocky Mountains. Sheldon Barnes requested residents in local communities for assistance in gathering artifacts for her classes at Stanford University. As she stated, “I am inclined to think that some study of this sort should be made in every school where history is taught.”²⁶ She was referring to a former student of hers, Adrian Yarrington, who created an environment in his high school classroom filled with local source material. The material included a variety of material from maps, speeches, biographies, and newspaper articles that were available about events or people. Using her source material and methods, she expected her books to provide teachers with additional resources such as bibliographies and primary sources outside of the immediate community.

The source material Yarrington and other teachers used created an environment of interest for students. Sheldon Barnes believed that history was important for fostering citizenship qualities. The availability of local documents and artifacts included oral histories of residents and made the local option more practical.²⁷

²⁶ Sheldon Barnes, *Studies in Historical Method*, 13. Sheldon Barnes used Yarrington who taught at the Pratt Institute of Brooklyn, NY as a role model for high school teachers.

²⁷ Ibid.

Since American historical scholarship was still in its early stage, teachers and local museums provided a multitude of opportunities to gather and view materials. These collections included resources such as notebooks, journals, newspaper articles, pottery, and other items that were available. The museum was a logical place to combine and store valuable artifacts, including histories of established local ethnic groups as well as newer immigrant populations. Sheldon Barnes thought that immigrants were a rich source of material for historians. New arrivals into a community provided cultural opportunities for all citizens learn about different traditions and customs around the world.²⁸ Immigrants changed the mosaic of local life. A significant source of local material, such as ballads or legends provided communities with stories about their past. According to Sheldon Barnes' ballads were great opportunities for teachers who traveled to gain a broader sense of history.

Sheldon Barnes hoped teachers would travel to relate to geography and history. The benefit for students was a teacher who had a broader understanding of historical events and geography who could provide visual images. Students and teachers were able to use sources provided in her books to enhance the student's sense of history beyond a series of disparate facts. Since teachers were teaching these subjects, first-hand knowledge of places provided teachers with more insight into physical and geographic locations and the role these settings played in historic events. History classes became more interesting for students if teachers were able "to bring him [students] into contact with the sources of his subject."²⁹ Obviously, Sheldon Barnes traveled widely and her experience afforded her a broader sense of geography and history than most public school

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid., 30.

teachers. She wanted students and teachers to experience the positive effects travel brought to the classroom. Additionally, travel allowed historian and teachers with opportunities to view the “authorities...based on the *sources* [italics in original].”³⁰

Historic Sense

One of Sheldon Barnes’ more controversial publications was her article on various cultures and their sense of history.³¹ Her pedagogy included a perception of how other cultures perceive history. The perception is provocative even today because contemporary critics interject racial interpretation into her writing with somewhat limited support for their conclusions. She based her description of a group’s cultural history on the way they perceived their gods, heroes, and events within their cultural mores and understanding of past events. She included in *Studies in Historical Methods* a previously published article on primitive cultures and children.³² In her article, Sheldon Barnes established a hierarchy of cultures based on a cultural group’s ability to connect historic time with their ability to count in numeric categories. If they were able to count beyond basic numbers, people were able to maintain a sense of chronological and historical order. Based upon her classification system, the Aborigines of Australia, or as she referred to them “Bushmen,” were at the “lowest known stage of human culture.”³³ The lowly placement was primarily due to their inability to count above three. According to Sheldon Barnes, some Australian tribes counted up to seven but only used their counting skills occasionally. The ideas she discussed about primitive cultures in her article were

³⁰ Ibid., 32.

³¹ Welsh and Brooks, “The Con/Text of Sheldon Barnes (1850-1898).”

³² Barnes, *Studies in Historical Method*. There are two articles in her book, *The Historic Sense among Primitive Peoples* and *The Historic Sense among Children* that addresses children and primitive cultures that references multiple cultures throughout the world and her quantitative study regarding age appropriate historical instruction.

³³ Ibid., 47.

not original concepts. Much of her opinion derived originally from an essay by Herbert Spencer.³⁴ Spencer's works reviewed primitive cultures and biological differences as the natural development of organisms from simple to complex. She extended the comparison from biology of organisms to cultural growth based on her educational experience at the University of Michigan. For her, the progression of government and history, like culture, were a natural part of her interpretation of Darwinian theory. Similarly, Sheldon Barnes described the natural growth of cultures from less primitive to more sophisticated societies.³⁵

She summed up the historical sense of people and cultures based on four stages of group development beginning with the use of myth in the early stage. Many groups began written and oral traditions to establish a sense of time for their past. In the second stage, there was a relationship to the past with heroes. The personal connection placed heroes within a broader sense of the world and the culture wherein the group resided. Groups then integrated myth and chronological periods into their societal context. During this early period, cultural heroes instructed adults and children to facilitate good behavior and group cohesion. Established cultural relationships and rules made the stories more believable. In the final stage, stories provided a type of legend that was believable and had a memorable moral perspective for the social group. Eventually, these four pieces of tradition were part cultural history and group customs.

³⁴ Spencer, *The Principles of Sociology*, vol. I. Sheldon Barnes referred to Spencer's work entitled *Descriptive Sociology; or, Groups of Sociological Facts Classified and Arranged*, 1873. Spencer used the basic information from other books or chapters of books referring to the "bushmen" as the lowest form of cultural groupings.

³⁵ Sheldon Barnes, "Can History Be Taught as a Natural Science?"

From the discussion of general historical concepts for groups of people Sheldon Barnes transitioned specifically to children. She provided the results of a study she conducted using 1,250 children in northern California entitled *The Historic Sense among Children*.³⁶ Her research with children is similar to the work she had done with cultures. Primitive societies personalized heroes as part of their culture and children placed importance on the use of names of characters in stories.³⁷ According to Sheldon Barnes additional investigation should determine the relationship between age and children in understanding history. Children related to more complex stories and historical subjects as they matured and were able to connect to broader historical concepts.

In summary, in her research about children's historic sense, Sheldon Barnes developed three general concepts; first, children were mainly interested in stories with characters, action, and cause and effect outcomes. Second, children were able to draw relevance using historic narrative and their real life experiences. This new relevance altered their cultural perspective and understanding with the actual world. Finally, students showed a strong interest in original source material around thirteen years old. Older students should be more involved with history beyond reading a narrative account of historical events. Original sources provided students with a powerful opportunity to relate cognitive and cultural interaction within advanced curriculum levels.

³⁶ Sheldon Barnes, *Studies in Historical Method*.

³⁷ Ibid. Sheldon Barnes referred in her first footnote to the similarity between primitive cultures and children placing importance in names. Students or colleagues of the Barneses completed the research in question while they were at Stanford University. In the chapter entitled *Helen: The Life History of Certain Imaginary Companions*, Clara Vostrovsky provided the details of a woman who created a story with a heroine named Helen. In the article *Fear in Childhood*, Agnes Sinclair Holbrook described personalized stories for children and used aliases in order for the story to be more memorable for children. The author expected readers to compare the material.

From these interpretations, Sheldon Barnes inferred several generalizations. First, *savages* or primitive cultures and children showed a similarity for using myths and stories. For primitive cultures, stories were part of their culture as a method for preserving order. Similarly, children began to assimilate historical stories as early as seven in order to satisfy their curiosity about origins. Sheldon Barnes' research showed that primitive cultures used counting as way to develop their historical knowledge chronologically. Each culture, according to Sheldon Barnes, primitive or sophisticated, used a form of dating to keep stories or *facts* in some sort of chronological order. Children used stories and heroes in epic tales until the age of twelve or thirteen. At that age, chronological dates became easier to understand and categorize facts.

According to her interpretation, teachers needed to use timelines with children for learning history prior to their early teen years. Her research deemed timelines as an important memory device for children and primitive cultures because they allowed both to remember important events. Primitive people with no writing skills used *knotted cords* or other devices to assist them with their collective memory. More advanced groups used genealogies as shown in the Bible for the same purpose. A timeline or knotted cord provided both with a sense of time in relation to contemporary periods.

Using research, Sheldon Barnes concluded children struggle with deductive reasoning until the age of twelve or thirteen. Teachers should begin teaching history using an inferential process at that age. To expect children to use logical reasoning prior to twelve was unproductive. Teachers would be more successful using stories that provided students with direction. Biographies and stories with action insured relevance and maintained focus for students. Sheldon Barnes concluded that action and names were

significant for both young children and primitive cultures. As a result, teachers of younger children who could not understand deductive reasoning needed to guide students to appropriate conclusions.

Based on her research, Sheldon Barnes suggested children and primitive cultures were uncritical in their acceptance of stories and myths. Both groups tended to relate historical records to their myths in order to preserve the essence of a story for illustrative purposes. Children became more critical of stories as they matured or at approximately twelve or thirteen years old. However, primitive cultures perpetuated stories through generations without regard for age. Introduction of new information or artifacts broadened curiosity for both; as a result, both children and primitive cultures sought new sources for information. Sheldon Barnes stated that the broadening of information within a historic perspective moved at an individual pace. The individuality of learning and pacing of new concepts by children referred to Pestalozzian principles.

Finally, Sheldon Barnes reasoned from her research that separation of boys and girls should take place within learning environments. She based this conclusion upon her research that gender differences were significant to the classroom. Males and females had different interests and required teachers to spend time differentiating instruction based upon ages and interests.³⁸ In many primitive cultures, sexes separated for cultural and moral purposes. Each trained to develop specific skill sets. Sheldon Barnes concluded that teachers and their curriculum should establish an age and gender separation.

However, as Sheldon Barnes had previously written, students had some latitude with developing their own interpretation of source materials. Teachers guided the

³⁸ Sheldon Barnes' recommendation for the separation of boys and girls differed than earlier observations she made during her first visit to Germany with Mary Lee.

analysis but did not necessarily provide predetermined answers for students (see Appendix A). At high school or college, students used original source material and completed a more thorough analysis of the sources. Individual conclusions about historical material based on their investigations were more beneficial than student's recitations. Sheldon Barnes provided teachers with a general explanation of her methods. The methods section of her book was not as long as her discussion about historic sense, but pedagogy was the heart of her book.

Methods

Sheldon Barnes began the methods section of her book by explaining one additional limitation of her methodology. Teachers needed to be flexible in their use of her pedagogy due to the geographical location of a teacher. She was aware through her domestic and international travels that each community had different limitations and requirements. Each supervising board of education developed their own standards and expectations for credentialing or academic subjects based upon traditional values within the area. Teachers needed to be aware of and conform to local school board issues; although her expectations for all history teachers were the same. She wanted teachers to develop new *truths* for their students.

She summarized her objective for teaching history as,

add[ing] to the sum of human knowledge; to add to the diffusion of human knowledge; to form intelligent and patriotic citizens. In other words, we study history in order to discover new truth, to popularize truth, or to shape character and action; with the last aim the teacher actively deals.³⁹

³⁹ Ibid., 106.

History was more than a list of dates and events; it was a way to preserve culture and prepare children to be active, productive citizens. Teachers were the agent of change for society with a goal to prepare and encourage children for the future. A teacher should establish the best age appropriate material to present an event, such as Betsy Ross and the making of the first American flag. Conflict encouraged students to interpret the source material based upon their prior knowledge, current information available, and contemporary cultural setting.

The advantages of age appropriate curriculum to Sheldon Barnes were two-fold; first, the process eliminated any emotional responses to learning about history. Students had to analyze the information in a logical manner to arrive at a conclusion. Second, students used their skills to interpret information from a variety of sources. The synthesis of material provided benefits for students later in their lives. Teachers now became central figures for society and children took responsibility for their knowledge.

Students would view historic information more critically than narratives. They now had to determine for themselves whether the information provided to them was accurate or required an alternative interpretation. History teachers viewed narrative textbooks and original source material differently. The material provided in a narrative gave it expectations of acceptance without question. Source material required analysis and interpretation based on all known aspects of an event. An analysis of historical events could change over time as more information became available. Also, in some cases, teachers and historians may have consciously included partial information about events or people. A teacher or historian's lack of substantiation of material or acceptance of previous analysis without checking the details was a flaw in narrations. Sheldon Barnes

expected history teachers to develop new sets of standards for writing and teaching. Students could explore local sources of information with a more critical perspective.⁴⁰ Sheldon Barnes' method provided an alternative for learning.

Sheldon Barnes wanted to use common schools as the laboratory for her pedagogy.⁴¹ In fact, she thought common schools were a perfect opportunity to create a system of learning because of the commonality of speech and literature. She envisioned a system with European influences that became available to multiple classes and levels of students within all American cultural groups. To Sheldon Barnes, student use of sources and of critical thinking skills made the United States stronger.

The metaphor of a growing organism fit her scientific history principles. Her methods book provided an opportunity to repeat this analogy first revealed in her speech entitled "*Can History Be Taught as a Natural Science?*"⁴² In her presentation to the Massachusetts Teachers Association, she explained that history teachers needed to use information based upon the format used in the scientific method of natural sciences. Students needed to develop a hypothesis and search for information to support it.

Sheldon Barnes wanted the United States to be continually growing and changing. She advised the kaleidoscope of ethnic groups and cultures with the main purpose of preserving "its [United States] independence, its character, its individuality among

⁴⁰ Sheldon Barnes, *Studies in Historical Method*.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 119.

⁴² Sheldon Barnes, "Can History Be Taught as a Natural Science?" In her presentation to the Massachusetts Teachers' Association, she was teaching at Wellesley College but the exact date is unknown. She provided reasons for using original source material and that allowed her students to work through any questions by guiding their interpretation of the material. She used life's stages from birth to death to provide a simplistic explanation for teachers to use history in conjunction with natural sciences.

nations.”⁴³ Her methods for teaching children ultimately produced good citizens. As citizenship expanded for all ethnic groups and cultures, the United States became a mix of one collage of people with common goals. As she stated “do not tell us, to love, but show us what is great and fair.”⁴⁴ Teachers provided guidance to students of all ethnicities for the benefit of the American culture. A blending of a multicultural society created a different viewpoint for interpreting history.

Application

Sheldon Barnes wanted her methods book to address the ordinary high school teacher’s curriculum needs. She traveled throughout the world enough to see that teachers held a wide range of experience in high school history classrooms. She addressed the last section of her methods book to teachers in the hopes that it would assist them in a constructive manner. She gave several examples of how to use the material. First and foremost, she wanted teachers to be familiar with and use primary sources. As described previously, source material allowed teachers latitude “*in teaching the general truth through the special fact, and in making each individual pupil judge the special fact for himself in its general aspects* [italics in original].”⁴⁵ As Sheldon Barnes had demonstrated in her textbooks on general and American history, she wanted teachers to use her books and other original sources available in order to benefit student learning.

⁴³ Sheldon Barnes, *Studies in Historical Method*, 120. A concern stated by Sheldon Barnes was the masses of immigrants entering America and there would be a “cosmopolitan museum of races and opinions and manners jostling one another in unrelated proximity!” Different cultures living together but not necessarily expressing a united cultural perspective.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 121.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 133.

An advantage for her pedagogy, as Sheldon Barnes saw it, was simple; students could relate history to their everyday lives. If students saw the benefits of history, the ultimate goals of a multicultural American society expanded and students would become better educated and productive citizens. The use of original source material improved the “quality of character” for all students. An objective of schools was to create a better educated work force that prepared people for citizenship and change within society. The source material provided students with a process to understand political and cultural dynamics.

Summary

Sheldon Barnes’ research supported methods for the use of scientific history and seminary classrooms. Sheldon Barnes provided support for teachers who taught students how to use history critically. Original source materials used in the classroom needed to be age appropriate materials. She did compare children to *savages*. However, her use of some terms, such as primitive, was acceptable in the historical period. Sheldon Barnes’ wrote *Studies in Historical Method* eleven years after her first book *Studies in General History*. The purpose of the methods book was to clarify for teachers how to use source material, and specifically her textbooks, in their classrooms. Sheldon Barnes’ methods book about classroom practices, provided teachers with a clearer understanding of her objectives in her two earlier textbooks.

Studies in General History

Sheldon Barnes wrote *Studies in General History* during an interesting period in her life. She expected students to use her textbook generally in their history classes although teachers needed a reasonable background in history to make the information

understandable. Sheldon Barnes intended her book as a primary textbook for teachers. Teachers who had general background knowledge in world history used it as their main textbook. Sheldon Barnes published *Studies in General History* in 1885 under her maiden name, Mary D. Sheldon. Its success was evident as lifetime sales of it reached 39,900 copies.⁴⁶ There were 110,000 secondary students in 1880 and this number increased to 519,000 by 1900.⁴⁷ Teachers probably used the book for both primary source material and narrative purposes. The book originally cost \$1.60. Educators used it in classrooms from 1885 through 1929. In some circumstances, teachers were required to furnish their own classroom materials. The purchase of textbooks was a significant undertaking.⁴⁸

Sheldon Barnes wrote the book chronologically as common to other narrative history textbooks. She began with a brief comment about the period prior to 776 B.C. In the book's preface she explained to the readers that "we Americans are all making history – an American history, of a sort that no man has ever made before us, and which lies entirely in our own hands ... Now this book is not a history, but a collection of historical materials."⁴⁹ The first page in the book has a map showing the "known" world prior through 776 B.C. It showed the land area surrounding the Mediterranean Sea and limited labels on the map to Egyptian and Greek geographic boundaries. The next page provided notes for students use as they reviewed the map. Additionally, she created questions for

⁴⁶ Keohane, "Mary Sheldon Barnes and the Origin of the Source Method of Teaching History in the American Secondary School, 1885-1896 - (Part II), 110. According to D.C.Heath & Co, 31,886 copies of this book sold between the years of 1885-1899. The rest sold after 1900 through 1929.

⁴⁷ U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Historical Statistics of the United States*, 368.

⁴⁸ "U.S. Department of Education, "Historical Summary of Public Elementary and Secondary School Statistics: Selected Years, 1869–70 through 2007–08." Table 35. Teacher's salaries during this period averaged \$252 annually.

⁴⁹ Sheldon Barnes, *Studies in General History*, vii.

both teachers and students to explore in conjunction with the map and its ancient civilizations.

The chronology Sheldon Barnes employed followed the traditional format used by multiple historians. Based on her book, *Studies in Historical Method*, the format used in *Studies in General History* provided information in a timeline in order for students to build on previous information. The progression from ancient history to contemporary issues allowed students to develop their conceptual constructs of historical events. She continued to develop each section of the book based on her organic development of cultures.

Each section in a chapter provided a basic outline of material and concepts students needed to be familiar with concerning any specific time period. Sheldon Barnes encouraged teachers and students to use narrative history textbooks and provided names to assist them, if necessary. Her explanation of each historical topic was limited, thus, requiring students to use other “source” materials for a more holistic understanding about the time period. At the end of each section, she provided a set of guiding or summary questions to direct additional investigation. Many of these questions were knowledge or basic level questions, such as “Who held the central political and military power in ancient Egypt?”⁵⁰ However, immediately following the basic questions, she asked students to defend their answer (See Appendix A). The answers to these questions were provided within the context of the readings. New information from her book or others was available to answer follow-up questions (and less knowledgeable teachers) which then required other original or narrative sources. As an example of a follow-up question

⁵⁰ Ibid., 7.

for the above, she asked her students to infer their understanding of the “chief desires of the Memphite kings.”⁵¹ Sheldon Barnes wanted students to support their answers using source material in her textbook or another original source.

Usually, the material Sheldon Barnes wanted students to select centered on the availability of the material in the school area. She introduced written material from a variety of sources, such as the Egyptian *Book of the Dead* to show students the importance of archival sources. Additionally, she used sketches and pictures within her textbooks to provide visual images for students. She was a pioneer in the use of photography in her history textbooks. By using pictures, she showed relevant information and brought to life sources such as the *Colossus of Ramseses II*.⁵² The photographs, sketches, maps, and written material provided students with examples of a wide variety available for them for primary sources in their research.

The remainder of the book followed a similar chronological pattern. She authored brief historical summaries with significant concepts enumerated with original source material and visual components for students. The *Teacher's Manual* for the book differed in that it provided more extensive explanations about the specific historical section with some teacher guidance for classes. Sheldon Barnes provided, in her *Teachers Manual*, a basic description of her teaching method she used in conjunction with her textbook.

Sheldon Barnes knew that many public school teachers in the late nineteenth century were self-taught or had minimal education to qualify for their teaching

⁵¹ Ibid., 7.

⁵² Sheldon Barnes, *Studies in General History*, 11. The photograph on this page shows a man standing next to the stone carving that provided students with a proportional visual perspective for the source material.

positions.⁵³ She preferred teachers of history to be more history-oriented than other subjects. She stated that “no study is more difficult; none calls more completely on all the mental powers, none affords the mind more generous play [than history].⁵⁴ A scholar entered into the study of history as an ordinary person and became a “genuine student” after he or she discovered “some results for himself, by exercising his own powers upon the necessary ‘raw material’ of history.”⁵⁵ Despite her original disinterest in the subject, she became a passionate proponent of history after leaving the University of Michigan.

She wanted to foster scholarly independence and an atmosphere where students were more open to criticism and discussion within a classroom. Criticism allowed students to challenge narratives about historical subjects. Students needed to develop their own explanations if new original documentation offered alternative justifications for past events. A critical interpretation for a known historical event using Sheldon Barnes’ methods was similar to Pestalozzian concepts of building knowledge and Rankean concepts of scientific history and seminary methods.

Sheldon Barnes used the companion text, *Studies in General History: Teacher’s Manual*, to provide teachers with answers to the general questions posed in the student’s edition. As she stated, “the *Teacher’s Manual* contains the answers to these problems [developed in the *Student’s Edition*] embodied in tabulations, and a running commentary of text, which may serve as suggestive for discussions and the summaries demanded by the class-room [sic].”⁵⁶

⁵³ Altenbaugh, *The American People and Their Education: A Social History*.

⁵⁴ Sheldon Barnes, *Studies in General History: Teacher’s Manual*, v.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, v.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, vi.

The organization of the *Teacher's Manual* provided teachers with answers to the questions she raised in the student edition. These answers provided novice history teachers with knowledge for them to use without researching historical material. Her answers were not elaborate but provided teachers with a summary that they could expand within the context of the classroom discussion.⁵⁷ Her methods provided opportunities for teachers to use more student-centered discussions (“debate”) that in turn “allow[ed] the utmost freedom of opinion, simply requiring that any position taken should be sustained by facts.”⁵⁸ Her natural science background became apparent as she expected students to defend their classroom discussions with facts and not unsubstantiated opinions. She thought opinions had a place in discourse but the opinions required evidence and not ambiguities. Teachers needed to take the necessary time to introduce newer ideas to foster the student’s cognitive development.⁵⁹

Sheldon Barnes was conscious of the cost of her books she stated “I am sorry that the necessary limit set at the present to the expense of a text-book has made it impossible to illustrate more fully...”⁶⁰ In the later versions of *Studies in General History*, Sheldon Barnes included a separate section entitled *Aids for Teaching General History; including a list of books recommended for a working school library*.⁶¹ The books that Sheldon Barnes listed in 1888 included a variety authors that were original sources such as Arrian (Greek-Roman historian), Samuel Pepys, and Plutarch. Additionally, in her *Aids for*

⁵⁷ Ibid., 128; Sheldon Barnes, *Studies in General History: Student's Edition*, 446. A typical entry in the Student's Edition asked “What three groups of countries do you distinguish in these relations?” The answer was “Absolute governments...Military despotism...Constitutional monarchy.”

⁵⁸ Sheldon Barnes, *Studies in General History: Teacher's Manual*, 7.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 11.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 32. The price of the student’s edition was \$1.60

⁶¹ Sheldon, *Studies in General History: Teacher's Manual*. This insert appeared in the 1894 edition of the book.

Teaching General History list, she cited several encyclopedic books, such as, Charles K. Adams's *Manual of Historical Literature*, J. Haydn's *Dictionary of Dates*, or Robert Labberton's *New Historical Atlas and General History*; or Robert Labberton's *New Historical Atlas and General History* with a brief summary of each book.⁶² These books provided an inexperienced or undereducated teacher with possible source material for lessons. Sheldon Barnes' *Aids for Teaching General History* included fifty-three books she considered a respectable beginning for history classrooms.

In the *Aids for Teaching General History*, Sheldon Barnes used a *sketch* that she created to illustrate her teaching methodology (see Appendix A). In this fictitious dialogue and summary, Sheldon Barnes provided teachers with a brief version of her teaching method. She wanted students to bring an inquisitive mind to historical subjects. She wanted students to understand any original vocabulary as the basis for new concepts. Therefore, she listed several words that students may or may not have any knowledge of at the beginning of each section. Without a common vocabulary for new subjects, students might not understand the lessons. She wanted history students to use her sources she provided as a "specimen would [is to] be used in botany."⁶³ Teachers conveyed their understanding of events based on scientific history with her original sources for a more elaborate conclusion.

⁶² Adams, *A Manual of Historical Literature*. Adams provided a comprehensive list of source books by author and a summary of the books; Vincent, *Dictionary of Dates and Universal Information, Eighteenth*. Vincent created a list of significant historical dates and a brief alphabetic encyclopedia of concepts and events; Labberton, *New Historical Atlas and General History*. Labberton provided 198 maps using color and gave a limited version of general or world history.

⁶³ Sheldon Barnes, *Studies in General History: Teacher's Manual*, 8.

Summary

Sheldon Barnes developed her first textbook on the basis of her pedagogy. She chose the specific original source material along with photographs, maps, sketches, or other artifacts available for teacher's inclusion in their classrooms. She knew many teachers did not have the benefit of a library, either in the school or local community. Her book's source material provided students with an opportunity to view primary documents in their classroom. Her *Studies in General History* encouraged teachers to integrate original material with narrative secondary source textbooks. The combination created more knowledgeable history students and citizens. Sheldon Barnes used the similar format for her next student textbook about American history.

Studies in American History

Sheldon Barnes was married to Earl Barnes when D.C. Heath published her next history textbook in 1891 entitled *Studies in American History*. This second book used the same chronological format she used in her first book *Studies in General History*. One distinction in this second textbook was Earl Barnes' name appeared as co-author. The publisher, D.C. Heath, priced the Student's Edition at \$1.25 in 1896. The cost was less than her first book but it was one hundred fewer pages in length with a, presumably, lesser publishing cost. And, obviously, the subject matter was different.

The authors clarified that the American history book was suited for younger children than Sheldon Barnes' first book. Since the focus of the material was limited to the United States, the authors expected children to be more familiar with the subject matter. Sheldon Barnes emphasized expanding out from local history to broader subject

matter. Children learned to build the relationship between book knowledge and citizenship as they expanded their historical insight.

The purpose of *Studies in American History* was more significant than just learning facts about American history. The authors provided a universal statement as to the objective for learning history

What is more to our [authors] purpose, it is only by dealing with the sources of past history, that our pupils can be rightly trained to deal with the historic sources of his own time, and to form independent and unprejudiced judgments concerning the mass of opinions, actions, institutions and social products of all sorts in which he finds himself involved. In other words, whatever else young people will become, citizens they must be; and the citizen must constantly form judgments of the historical sort, which can only be based upon contemporary sources. To enable him to do this should perhaps be the primary aim of the study of history.⁶⁴

The authors stressed once again that original source material was integral in studying history and developing good citizenship qualities. They hoped United States citizens could discern large amounts of factual information from opinions. When assimilating new information citizens made conclusions about their country. The source material provided by teachers was critical and provided students and teachers significant advantages beyond narrative historical accounts of events. The Barneses later explained their methods in the *Studies in American History: Teacher's Manual* created as a companion book to the *Student's Edition* in the same manner Sheldon Barnes had done in her first book.

The student's version of the book developed a brief description of historical events discussed in the classrooms. After the general explanation of an event, the authors introduced pictures, maps, or other source materials. A series of questions followed the source material and students used them to guide their inquiries. In some cases, a range of

⁶⁴ Barnes and Barnes, *Studies in American History, Teacher's Manual*, iii.

questions from basic informational questions, such as answering dates or locations through analytical questions such as, inference about leadership based on facts (See Appendix A). Finally, the authors included a section entitled *Supplementary Reading* that listed more books and readings on historical topics. The books in this section were original sources or narrative books about a particular subject. All the bibliographical books were historical in scope. In some cases historical novels, such as James Fenimore Cooper's *Wept-of the Wish Ton-wish* published in 1829 were included.⁶⁵ The authors' choice of books provided students and teachers with a broader content area beyond narrow fact based history. To further assist teachers in daily history lessons, Sheldon Barnes created a companion book for teachers.

The *Studies in American History: Teacher's Manual*, written by Sheldon Barnes, was different than her *Studies in General History: Teacher's Manual*. Earl Barnes did not receive co-authorship credit for this book. In the *Teacher's Manual*, Sheldon Barnes used the first twenty-nine pages to explain the purpose and format used the original *Studies in American History: Student Edition*. She later used the prologue from *Teacher's Manual* in her book, *Studies in Historical Method*. In the essay, she provided teachers with an abbreviated version of her teaching methods. The price of the *Teacher's Manual* was sixty cents in 1896; a modest amount for teachers and less than half the price of the *Student's Edition*.

Sheldon Barnes explained in the prologue for teachers, in broad terms, how to use the material in the *Student's Edition*. Students used primary source material in the same

⁶⁵ Cooper, *The Wept of the Wish-Ton-Wish*. This is a book about life in the 17th century frontier near Hartford, CT. It provided explicit accounts of early American life from a settler's perspective. The Barneses included this reference in the *Studies in American History* following the source material about King Philip's War in the 17th century.

manner that “geologist deals with fossils.”⁶⁶ The expectation was for students to use the primary source material as part of their scientific approach to analyzing history. Students should use source material to research historical subjects in a similar method as normal historians do in life.

Sheldon Barnes clarified for teachers the importance for having some knowledge of historical subjects. Teachers could introduce new material into lessons about historical subjects with material, such as poetry, and then move into historical content. As Sheldon Barnes later explained in her methods book, children moved through historical subjects based upon age readiness. She based different teaching methods and activities upon a student’s age and level of prior knowledge. Younger students recited historical poems or sections of documents such as the Declaration of Independence for general knowledge. Older students searched for more meaningful material to enhance their content knowledge using original sources.

Sheldon Barnes included a section entitled *The Sources of History* and provided a list of possible primary sources materials teachers could use with students; including actual physical buildings and artifacts, Indian mounds, diaries, sermons, maps, pictures and letters. At the end of this section, Sheldon Barnes referred teachers to a bibliography she created known as *General Publications Containing Sources of American History* for additional sources. The benefit for a section like this is that teacher’s materials that may or may be available in their classrooms or local libraries. The source material used by

⁶⁶ Sheldon Barnes, *Studies in American History, Teacher's Manual*, 2.

Sheldon Barnes provided teachers opportunities to analyze source material with any published narrative biographies of people or historical events.

Geography, the changing political process, and economic development within the United States were a focal point of the primary source material used in her books.

Sheldon Barnes described the material provided in the book as a “drama unfolds itself before us in never-ending play of action, whose meaning and relations we must interpret for ourselves as the drama plays along from act to act.”⁶⁷ Each student used the same source material and moved along at a separate pace using a prior knowledge as parameters based upon Pestalozzian principles.

The role of teachers as historians was not to become *moralists* but to lead the students in a scientific pursuit of facts. Sheldon Barnes used the example of slavery to illustrate her point. A historian’s

business is not to prove that slavery was right or wrong. His [historian] business is to find out what were its causes, under what conditions it continued to exist, what were the causes of its downfall, what were its effect upon the slaves and the slaveholder.⁶⁸

She expected others, such as ministers, to engage in a public dialogue about the moral and economic issues of slavery. It was the role as a scientific historian to present the information about social and cultural aspects of slavery. A student’s knowledge of the past events provided relevance for contemporary teachers and students. By providing the *facts*, teachers engaged their students in parables instead of moral lectures about historical subjects. These discussions and original source materials created discerning

⁶⁷ Ibid., 5.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 6.

citizens and exhibited more patriotic qualities than lectures or reading stories about events.

Teachers were encouraged to use local history to engage students in the classroom. In some communities, artifacts existed in places such as Indian mounds or weapons used by the Native American tribes who originally lived in the area. Teachers could take their students to these locations as field trips. In these types of exercises, students would find the material more beneficial than a reading a book on the subject of Indian mounds. Sheldon Barnes expected teachers to prepare for a field trip by becoming knowledgeable in local customs and history. The benefits for the students would be learning about history through using their senses, such as touch and sight, as Pestalozzi proposed. Primary evidence was available for students during field trips that helped to synthesize any prior information they had on the subject. This process would be especially effective when there were diverse regional immigrant groups or indigenous Native American tribes.

The mixture of immigrant populations into local cultures provided teachers with other sources about customs or different languages. Gathering the local information allowed teachers a foundation for wider areas of study about the United States or the world. According to the Sheldon Barnes “local history has its place in study and teaching, a place which nothing else can fill.”⁶⁹ She appreciated the impact that local history had within the larger historical perspective of nation or world.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 12.

At the beginning of each lesson, she used a quotation by a historical figure as a general guide for the class discussion.⁷⁰ Teachers focused their discussion and analysis of the source material around the quote. The use of a general warm up exercise has relevance to many contemporary classrooms when teachers use an essential question to begin a class. The uses of these written statements or questions were to be hooks for students and help maintain focus for them throughout the lesson.

Sheldon Barnes used descriptive chronological lists meant for students in a way contemporary teachers use timelines. These lists provided students a reference for the event within the framework within chronological historical references. “The lists are in no case to be employed as memory-tasks; they are simply for reference or study.”⁷¹ Teachers needed to provide lists to younger students as a tool to assist them in remembering historical dates or events that were relevant.

Oral recitation of some classroom material that showed a grasp of essential facts by students supported her discussion questions about history. She expected recitation on a limited basis in conjunction with periodic assessments to show progress for students.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 57 At the beginning of the section about John Smith and Jamestown, the Barneses quoted “a poet of Elizabeth’s time” with the following:

Britons, you stay too long:
 Quickly aboard bestow you;
 And with a merry gale
 Swell your stretch’d sail
 With vows as strong
 As the winds that blow you.
 And cheerfully at sea,
 Success you still entice,
 To get the pearl and gold;
 And ours to hold;
 Virginia,
 Earth’s only Paradise.

⁷¹ Ibid., 14.

These student opportunities showed their subject knowledge as scaffolding for newer concepts. Additionally, assessments, oral or written, allowed teachers assurance that previously learned concepts were true representations of the material.

A final part of classroom work for teachers was map work required for students. Sheldon Barnes wanted teachers to use maps so that there was a sense of location and geographic understanding. Students received a visual sense about geography and its impact on cultures when they imagined physical locations of nations within regions of the world. Maps created or copied from other publications formed a learning aid with student understanding to interpret history. Students' cooperative learning activities used along with role playing were dynamic alternatives for child-centered activities.

She expected teachers to be given considerable latitude in their classrooms for teaching history. Classroom activities and student readings were necessary but the amount of material available to teachers within the respective communities or libraries impacted their teaching abilities. Sheldon Barnes provided a bibliography showing teachers a wide variety of source material available to them.

Bibliographies

Sheldon Barnes placed a special emphasis on the inclusion of additional reading sources for teachers. Her textbooks "were made to help such teachers, so that even the poorest little country school, without pretense to a library, could get some 'crumbs from the Master's table,' some fragments from the life-giving source."⁷² Teachers decided which original sources were most useful in their classrooms. Sheldon Barnes created chapter endnotes for reference sources that directed teachers to either the complete

⁷² Ibid., 15–16.

citation or other illustrations that supported the material in the lesson. Many of these sources were books that required considerable time to use properly. The varieties of sources available were considerably different than we find in our contemporary classrooms, such as dictionaries, encyclopedias, or computer searches through the internet. Sheldon Barnes' bibliography and endnotes reflected a broader sense of source material and historical literature. The bibliography generated within Sheldon Barnes' textbooks provided students "the touch of the life of men, and seeks for it again where he believed it first. But give him to understand that he has all the wisdom of all time."⁷³

Even with the bibliographies for teachers on original sources, Sheldon Barnes expected teachers to read leading historians who had written narrative history books, such as, William Hickling Prescott (1796-1859) or Francis Parkman (1823-1893). These authors "should always *follow* the class-room work on the sources [*italics in original*]."⁷⁴ Her emphasis was on original sources followed by a narrative study as reinforcement of the original material. The students then differentiated facts from errors.

Sample Lesson

Sheldon Barnes concluded her opening remarks by providing teachers with an illustration of her method. In the *Studies of American History: Teacher's Manual* she used an example of "the Oregon Question and the Oregon Trail." The format is the same as her previous sample lesson used in *Studies in General History: Teacher's Manual*. She altered the general subject matter to conform to the interests of the book. She directed the teacher to the *Student's Edition* dealing with the Oregon question. Sheldon Barnes then

⁷³ Ibid., 16.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 17.

provided teachers with a basic explanation of the classroom process. She used another example of a hypothetical classroom discussion lead by a teacher who guided students' discussions. The fictional teacher used interrogatory questions requiring factual dates or names. Then the teacher asked evaluative or analytical questions to move the discussion into inferential reasoning. Both sets of questions required students to recall specific dates along timelines for historical accuracy. Students used their timeline tools they had created or were in the process of completing.

At the end of the discussion, the teacher created a summary of the lesson for the class. Sheldon Barnes referenced the questions used in the *Student's Edition* but emphasized that the questions in the textbook did not have to be used by teachers. She wanted teachers to be free to guide the discussion in whatever direction students wanted and the lesson followed; although there were parameters based upon the source material. Teachers needed to keep in mind the salient facts but allow discussions to develop naturally.

Summary

Sheldon Barnes' *Studies in American History: Teacher's Manual* is a companion piece for the Barneses *Studies in American History: Student's Edition*. Teachers did not have to follow the *Student's Edition* exactly if other narrative histories or source materials were available. If teachers had copies of the *Teacher's Manual* available, as a companion book for the textbook she provided additional resources for teachers with limited sources in their communities. Many of the additional sources listed in the bibliography were not expensive, for example, pamphlets listed as source documents sold for a nickel. There were other sources such as magazine subscriptions that cost three

dollars annually. Sheldon Barnes listed several books as “Important Authorities for the General Study of United States History” such as, George Bancroft’s *History of the United States* or Justin Winsor’s *Narrative and Critical History of America, 1492-1850*.⁷⁵

One of the values of the *Studies in American History: Teacher’s Manual* was the lists of original source materials along with brief explanation of these sources.

Additionally, Sheldon Barnes provided a brief example for a teacher’s lesson that she used with the textbook. Lessons were transferable into other content areas for those teachers who were required to teach multiple subjects. Finally, the original source material provided students a glimpse *into* history that was not available through narrative books *about* history. Students were encouraged to seek other sources for a more complete education in history.

Other Publications

Sheldon Barnes was a writer generally known for history textbooks. Throughout her life, beginning at an early age, she created poems and articles for magazines. Some of the articles were for her enjoyment. Many of the articles and poems appeared in publications that did not pay her or paid only nominal sums, such as Stanford University’s *The Sequoia* or the University of Michigan’s *The Chronicle*. Several articles were in professional journals, such as, *A Journal of Secondary Education*. There was an eclectic substance to many of these writings. However, there were several that had specific themes that she wanted to express, such as, her early radical perspective.

⁷⁵ These books were valued according to Sheldon Barnes at \$15.00 for Bancroft’s six volume set or \$40.00 for Winsor’s book. The Winsor book Sheldon Barnes referenced included original maps and other sources including bibliographies to enhance teacher libraries. However, as previously noted, the respective cost of these books in contemporary dollars was about \$330.00 and \$880.00. These were not insignificant amounts even by today’s standards.

The focus of this manuscript has been on the life and professional textbook writings of Sheldon Barnes. She originally wanted to be a poet and artist. Throughout her life she created poems and sketched pictures on a variety of subjects. The poems reflected her changing personality from a naïve college girl who proudly saw God as man's strength, direction, and inspiration to a mature radical woman. One of her first published poems was *The Rescue* published in *The Chronicle*.

The Rescue!

Up! For the strength of the human is fleeting!
 Night is behind thee, the day is before!
 God is your helper,
 Shield and defender,
 And with His strength be strong evermore.⁷⁶

Sheldon Barnes wrote the poem when she was a sophomore and professed her strong religious beliefs she brought to Ann Arbor. Her belief in God and His inspiration in life remained in her letters throughout her life but changes began to take place as she matured. There were fewer references to God in her journals and letters as her perspective about life and interests became reoriented academically.

In a poem published the following year in the *The Chronicle*, she showed her early radical thoughts with a more scientific perspective in her poem "INSPIRATION". She reached out to "heavens and earth" that universal knowledge is possible though "Each must all to us reveal."⁷⁷ Sheldon Barnes changed the pronouns used in the poem to emphasize female gender as "She it is who fills our bosom/with resolve to know the

⁷⁶ Sheldon Barnes, *The Chronicle*, 1873.

⁷⁷ Sheldon Barnes, *The Chronicle*, 1874.

real.”⁷⁸ The gender distinction coincides with her meeting a number of ardent radicals, such as Mary V. Lee who provided her with a new gender equality direction.

In 1878 while Sheldon Barnes was teaching at Wellesley College, the University of Michigan asked her to write and read a poem for the graduating class. She wrote about the legendary Amazonian race of women warriors and entitled the poem “A Legend of the Amazon.”⁷⁹ The poem is eight pages long and filled with illusions of women’s rightful place in society. Additionally, she brought into the poem her interpretation of Darwinian principles she developed as a student. The poem provided a sense of her thought about women and their place in the academic world absurdity of patriarchal bias towards women.

A Legend of the Amazon

“‘Is size of brain, then, measure of the mind?’
That woman’s brain, though not of manly girth,
May still have compensation in its kind.

Because men feared my bold, platonic thought
Can this prove nothing for a woman’s mind?”⁸⁰

Sheldon Barnes described men as physically stronger than women however women could use their minds to attain equality, if they tried. She asked if the purpose of men was “to prove that a woman won’t or can’t/ Invent or investigate an engine/And therefore, forsooth, a woman shan’t.”⁸¹ She ended the poem with a statement that “my

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Sheldon Barnes, Commencement Program, 1878. Sophia Smith Collection. Prior to graduating in 1874, she had accepted a position as the alternative poet of the graduating class if the original person was unable to fulfill that role. The organizing committee, in 1878, requested that she fulfill that role. In that position as class poet, she created this poem.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Ibid.

resolve is this/ That woman have and hold an equal place/Within my portion of this fair old land.”⁸² These words expressed her evolving radical thoughts in a new and bolder arrangement. She was active as a teacher at Wellesley College and expressed her radical thoughts to her students in classes, as well as in writing. She asserted that women were as strong scholastically, given the appropriate academic surroundings, as men.

Sheldon Barnes advocated for women’s rights and position within academe through poems; although she primarily wrote within her chosen professional field of history and teaching. As noted earlier, Sheldon Barnes explained her teaching method early in her career in “Can History be [sic] Taught as a Natural Science?”⁸³ She used a speech to a group of Massachusetts teachers to explain her method for teaching history. Her practice evolved further during her time at Stanford. Although the basic scientific structure that focused on government and its changing patterns remained a pillar to her pedagogy.

Writing an essay for the *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* in 1895 entitled “History: A Definition and a Forecast” she expanded on her interpretation of history and culture. The article encouraged historians to look at the totality of culture and events in order to have a more thorough “*story of progressive action* [emphasis in original].”⁸⁴ This essay incorporated studies in language, art, literature, or a more holistic approach to the subject of history. From her perspective, history “*studies the progressive personality of a people, as it develops through*

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Sheldon Barnes, “Can History be [sic] Taught as a Natural Science?”

⁸⁴ Sheldon Barnes, “History: A Definition and a Forecast.”

environment and action into social success or failure [italics in original].”⁸⁵ She expected historians to think in a larger context rather than in narrowly defined possibilities, such as government, art, and other social sciences individually.

By 1896 Sheldon Barnes had progressed in her thinking. She thought knowledge was available for all seekers without respect to gender identification. Knowledge was originally available to mankind in a manner similar to the Greek god, Prometheus delivering it to all who sought the truth. In “Promethean Fire” she stated the knowledge is a “boundless plain/... [this required] a stern and lonely soul/ to bring to earth the god’s Promethean fires.”⁸⁶ The search for knowledge was all mankind’s duty but each person sought knowledge individually. Information was available and people could find it as the Greek god’s mythology foretold.

Writing for Money

In addition to professional publications, Sheldon Barnes wrote articles for popular magazines of the period such as *Appletons’ Journal*, *Cornhill Magazine*, *The Ladies’ Repository*, or *Popular Science Monthly*. One of her first articles published in *The Ladies’ Repository* in 1874 while she was a student entitled “The Northern Iliad.”⁸⁷ In her article, she compared Greek mythology and Homer’s epic poem, *The Iliad*, with the Norse stories using myths of Valhalla and Odin. She concluded that “The Northern Iliad” was a better presentation and reached similar conclusions about morality, truth, and trust.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 130.

⁸⁶ Sheldon Barnes, “Promethean Fire.”

⁸⁷ Sheldon Barnes, There are two earlier publications “The Dog That Had No Teeth” and a poem, “The Orchestra of Nature” that are in her papers at Penfield Library.

In 1882, an article entitled “Poor White Trash” appeared in *Cornhill Magazine* while she was in the final months of her first trip to Europe.⁸⁸ The fees she received for this article paid for her university fees and living expenses.⁸⁹ The story provided a first person description of her visit to the rural south during her college days. She traveled with a University of Michigan classmate who was wealthy and her family owned approximately three thousand acres of land. The two women visited a small country church for a “foot washing” program; she described the ceremony in detail because she had never seen anything such as it previously. Additionally, she provided a perspective on social class and seemed perplexed by rural people and their rustic lifestyle. She concluded that once the railroad entered the rural south these communities would disappear.

Another article published in 1897 in *Popular Science Monthly* discussed “Some Primitive Californians.”⁹⁰ This article provided an educational perspective; it appeared in a magazine that had a widespread audience. Sheldon Barnes discussed how a group of Stanford University students had located and excavated an Indian Mound approximately five miles south of Palo Alto. She used her knowledge of history and scientific methods to construct an explanation about the Indian tribe that once lived in the vicinity. The article provided historical reconstruction details for her students and amateur archeologists.

⁸⁸ Mary Sheldon, “Poor White Trash.”

⁸⁹ Messrs. Smith, Elder & Co. to Mary Sheldon, 29 April, 1882; Sheldon Barnes to parents, 30 April, 1882, Sophia Smith Collection.

⁹⁰ Sheldon Barnes, “Some Primitive Californians.”

Educational Publications

There are two types of Sheldon Barnes' historical research articles; those published with her name alone or co-authored ones with her husband, Earl Barnes. For the most part, she wrote about her teaching pedagogy.⁹¹ For her articles, Sheldon Barnes provided applications for her original source pedagogy. In some cases she provided lists of questions she used to initiate research into historical subjects, such as, "Were the first settlers married or unmarried?" or "What events have tended to increase or decrease the number of Chinese among you?"⁹² Using these types of prompts, she provided assistance for teachers, students or historians a place to begin their research.

Articles she co-authored with her husband were usually about historical events or cultures. With these types of articles she wished to reach a wider audience and teach about original source methods and scientific history. These articles also appeared as chapters in Earl Barnes' edited book on children published in 1896.⁹³ Furthermore, she intended to show how diverse ethnic groups, such as Aztecs or Chinese, used a family setting to teach children. Family education was always an influential part of Sheldon Barnes' Pestalozzian interpretation of learning. These articles reinforced her methods for using original sources to develop higher learning skills in children.

Sheldon Barnes' primary writing was her textbooks. She dabbled in non-educational writing for publication or her own pleasure. As she entered into the academe, her writing focused more within her professional field. Although, she instructed Earl

⁹¹ Sheldon Barnes, "History: A Definition and a Forecast"; Sheldon Barnes, "Proposal for the Study of Local History,"⁴; Sheldon Barnes, "Can History Be Taught as a Natural Science?": Sheldon Barnes, "The Audubon of the Pacific."

⁹² Sheldon Barnes, "Proposal for the Study of Local History," 3.

⁹³ Barnes, *Studies in Education... Devoted to Child Study*. The book provided readers with multiple topics using many authors but there are several original articles authored by Earl Barnes.

Barnes to burn her papers after her death, it is unknown whether he included any poems or other professional articles in this process. Many of her sketches and paintings were preserved and included in her papers.

Summary

Sheldon Barnes used her textbooks as the primary method for conveying her pedagogy to educators. These books helped history teachers with engaging students on historical subjects beyond the narrative history usually available in classrooms. Her goal was to develop a student who could think critically about current events and antecedent events. The books did not address all historical subjects available to authors. It was her intent to provide teachers and students with a pedagogical method for learning about historical events whether they were included in her books or not. She showed how the integration of Pestalozzian concepts provided a basic structure for teachers without using theoretical terms and explanations for both normal school, college educated, or undereducated teachers.

Although her primary focus was history textbook writing, she showed her diversity and practicality by writing articles for a variety of journals or magazines. In a few of these articles she was paid and these monies provided her with a limited income outside of teaching. Her paintings and sketches were for her or her family's enjoyment. In her textbooks, there are many sketches that may have been created by her. Additionally, in her *Studies in General History* book, there were several pictures that probably came from her travels to Europe. However, there is no artistic attribution in her textbooks to determine the artist.

Her books were creative and unique for the period. Her articles were unexceptionable but well written. She tried to convey to readers a sense of looking at history as an alternative process than the narrative, dry explanation of events or people who influenced them.

CHAPTER 8

MARY SHELDON BARNES' FINAL YEARS

Stanford and the Barneses First Year

For Sheldon Barnes, the train ride was arduous but enjoyable. The journey was her first trip west. She spent many hours observing the terrain of the western part of the United States. She was only familiar with the landscape from books and magazine articles. Like her previous trips to Europe, she wrote letters home surveying the landscape and providing an historical perspective. The train eventually delivered them to California. Her first impression of Palo Alto was a city that was physically well-positioned because “the Diablo Range is as beautiful as the snow-peaks of the Bernese Oberland [Switzerland], as clear and ethereal, but with the most subtle tints of rose and gold, with purple in the shadows; and brilliant sky in the west! And to think that the Pacific Ocean lies beyond!”¹ Her first impression remained an enduring one that she occasionally wrote about even after they later left Palo Alto.

At Stanford University, Sheldon Barnes settled in as she had at Indiana University as the wife of a faculty member. The Barneses entertained and held regular scholarly discussions in their house with students and faculty. Many of these sessions were casual gatherings with people just stopping by to visit or discuss academic issues. Earl Barnes was impressed with Leland Stanford who he described as “simple-hearted, straightforward and earnest in his character.”² However, Earl Barnes was not as complimentary of Jane Lathrop Stanford, his wife. Sheldon Barnes wrote that he did not have as “favorable impression” of her and Earl Barnes “thinks she has the faults of her

¹ Sheldon Barnes Journal, 6 September 1891, Sophia Smith Collection.

² Ibid.

sex, though he did not definitely state what those are.”³ Fortunately for Earl Barnes, his opinion about Jane Stanford changed over the next few years as Stanford University both prospered and struggled.

Earl Barnes’ teaching responsibilities required him to spend time teaching and working with teachers throughout California. Teachers met periodically throughout California at teacher institutes, oftentimes, held over a three or four day period. These were professional development opportunities especially for inexperienced teachers. The Barneses lectured regularly with him as a featured speaker. The Barneses and David Starr Jordan, also a lecturer, used these meetings to generate support for Stanford University. Although Sheldon Barnes had known Jordan socially for several years, he did not know her as a lecturer and historian. Occasionally, Jordan used the time at the meetings to observe her speaking ability and command of factual information in front of large groups of people. Sheldon Barnes used the institutes as an opportunity to further develop her skills as a lecturer before both men and women’s groups.

Stanford Teaching Experience

On February 23, 1892, David Starr Jordan asked Sheldon Barnes to lecture to the Stanford University student body as part of a lecture series. She “spoke [for] an hour ...without notes, and had a lot of illustrative photographs and engravings, and had a great success, they all say.”⁴ She used the scientific history format to showcase her abilities as a teacher at the college level. The faculty and administration were impressed with her command of the subject matter. Unexpectedly during the following week, Jordan offered

³ Ibid.

⁴ Sheldon Barnes to Mother, 1892, February 25. Sophia Smith Collection.

Sheldon Barnes a position of assistant professor in the history department and she accepted. She became the first full-time woman faculty member at Stanford University.

Like many other colleges and universities of the period, there were no female faculty members at Stanford University when the school opened its doors in 1891.

Sheldon Barnes was surprised because “this appointment has been absolutely unsolicited on my part...and it has historical value, as being the first appointment of a woman to do work of such high grade in one of our first-rate universities.”⁵ She overstated the value of Stanford University because it was a new school but the faculty was prominent.

Eventually, the school earned first-rate distinction. Jordan told Sheldon Barnes she could have more responsibilities if she wanted them. However, her family and local friends were concerned about her health so she opted for a lesser position as a test. She hoped her heart issues would improve in the new climate and, subsequently, she would acquire additional work. Her starting salary was \$500 annually or about fifteen percent of her husband’s salary. The lower salary reflected both the lower work load and the structural economic discrepancies in the late nineteenth century. She accepted her new status with some caution but an awareness of the historical meaning of the appointment,

I don’t know but I am the [wo]man who woke one morning and found himself [herself] famous. Over in the library this morning, Miss Peters almost hugged me outright, and with a face perfectly beaming with joy told me how glad all the girls were at my appointment; and this afternoon Miss Thompson came over from Roble Hall and told me that the girls had had a regular jubilation over it; and Miss Boring Hovers was delight[ed] about the first woman professor, as she calls me; and Mr. Woods told me on Sunday that I was now a great historical character, and marked an epoch! But I am not sure that the men approve of the deed, Mr. Woodruff [librarian] laughed and told me that if anyone could reconcile to such a thing, I could. And not one of my colleagues has even referred to it, except Prof. Griffin [associate professor of German], who welcomed me very cordially. I am

⁵ Sheldon Barnes to family, 5 March 1892, Sophia Smith Collection.

worth the honor, I can make my way, and if I'm not, the sooner brought up face to face with the fact, the better. But I can see the girls feel that I stand for them.⁶

Sheldon Barnes received several letters applauding the appointment despite the lack of acknowledgement from her colleagues on the faculty. She wrote to family and friends about the appointment and expressed pleasure although she did not dwell on the topic. One of her former professors from Michigan, Moses Coit, wrote from Cornell University "I rejoice in it [appointment] without reserve, as good for you and for the University and for the students and for the cause of civilization all around."⁷ For her part, Sheldon Barnes continued teaching and attending teacher institutes throughout California. However, she now appeared on the meeting programs as an instructor similar in status as her husband and Jordan.

Sheldon Barnes was not the first female who became an assistant professor at a coeducational institution in the United States. However, she was the first for Stanford University and probably Jane Stanford's influence and Jordan's vision impacted the decision. When Stanford University opened its doors for the 1891-92 school years, it included women in both undergraduate and graduate programs.⁸ The nineteenth century woman had a very difficult time entering into the professional ranks especially faculty positions at coeducational campuses.⁹ Sheldon Barnes had teaching experience at post-secondary school level at Wellesley College. By comparison, the students who attended Stanford University appeared to be better prepared as an academic group.

⁶ Sheldon Barnes Diary, 8 March 1892, Sophia Smith Collection.

⁷ Moses Coit to Sheldon Barnes, 31 March 1892, Sophia Smith Collection. Coit praised Dr. Jordan for his "courage... [and] moral and intellectual genius" with the appointment.

⁸ Rossiter, "Doctorates for American Women, 1868-1907."

⁹ Brumberg and Tomes, "Women in the Professions: A Research Agenda for American Historians."

In Stanford's early years, women were part of the student body based on the "same terms as men."¹⁰ The expectations for academic preparation and success were the same for both groups. Many of the women lived in homes in the surrounding community of Palo Alto, similarly to arrangements at OSNTS. However, there was an official dormitory for women, Roble Hall, as compared to a pseudo-official hall in Oswego. The rules for governance for the dormitories at Stanford were the same for both sexes.¹¹ Students participated on a fairly equal basis in classes and social settings. However, Jordan, under the watchful eye of Jane Stanford, made tentative strides at Stanford University to address any social or academic imbalances. The hiring of Sheldon Barnes was an initial step to integrate women into the faculty.

Stanford University's male dominated faculty was not unique to colleges in the United States. A definite lack of women in faculty positions existed at coeducational universities. In 1891, the *Woman's Journal* published two articles that addressed the issue about the dearth of women in teaching at the collegiate level.¹² In one of the articles, presumably written by Lucinda Stone, the author stated, "I [Stone] now see and feel that an institution is not really co-educational until it is co-educating – until men and women, both and together, form the teaching force and influence of that institution."¹³ Faculties of colleges and universities, despite the discipline, were overwhelmingly male.

¹⁰ Elliott, "Women at Stanford University," 777.

¹¹ Elliott, "Women at Stanford University." There was one woman designated as the "Mistress of Roble Hall" but she only provided advice and cared for any students who became ill. The women, like the men, established their own general behavior rules in the dormitory and contracted with local vendors for services. Additionally, there were routine monthly meetings in which one woman presided. The other "inmates," a term used by the writer to describe the women students, elected the mistress to that position. Additionally, women set aside the last Saturday of the month for "girl's night" and invited all the women at the school including faculty wives and students who did not live on campus to a general social gathering.

¹² "Women Needed as Professors," 2; Oakley, "Women as College Professors," 218.

¹³ Ibid.

As Sheldon Barnes' career moved forward, she experienced a personal tragedy. Mary V. Lee was fifty-five in the spring of 1892 when she became ill in Oswego. Although there were ups-and-downs in her health during the ensuing months, she died on July 24, 1892 while the Barneses were living in California.¹⁴ There is no mention of the cause of death but Earl Barnes, who was in Massachusetts at the time of Lee's death, tried to console Sheldon Barnes in a letter while he attended an educator's meeting. He expressed his thoughts about Lee's premature death at an early age as fitting for the fiercely independent woman. He remarked to Sheldon Barnes "how the old deep feelings in us are aroused by such events."¹⁵ Sheldon Barnes was not able to attend the funeral. She knew she would be unable to arrive in time because of the limitations of train travel. However, she did travel east at the end of summer to visit family and pay her respects to her dear friend before the beginning of Stanford University's fall term.

When Sheldon Barnes returned to Palo Alto, the couple's home again became the center of activity for many of the Stanford students and their faculty associates. Earl Barnes taught child psychology and Sheldon Barnes taught a class on the *Spanish Discovery on the Western Slope*. The class was originally fifty-three students but expanded to ninety-three.¹⁶ Her family in Oswego expressed concern about the size of the class along with her speaking schedule away from Stanford University. She dismissed these concerns because "I enjoy it all so much, and this is so much easier than

¹⁴ Edward Austin Sheldon, "Obituary: Dr. Mary V. Lee."

¹⁵ Earl Barnes to Sheldon Barnes, 1892, 26 July 1892, Sophia Smith Collection. He lamented about her death at an early age but felt it was appropriate instead of malingering into old age. He would have preferred to see her in "a happy and growing old age," however, he accepted her death as inevitable and "civil" given how quickly it occurred after her illness was diagnosed.

¹⁶ Ibid. 1992, September 11. In the entry, she noted that the registration process was tiring because of the long hours but that was part of her job. Additionally she noted, that one student was from Oregon and specifically wanted to attend Stanford "because she wanted to go to a school to [sic] a woman, something she has never done in all her life!" Her appointment as assistant professor had sparked interest outside of California which bemused her.

housework.”¹⁷ She was not as critical of finding help in Palo Alto as she had been in Bloomington; she may have become used to doing some housework herself.

Sheldon Barnes used her scientific history methods integrating primary sources with other published secondary histories about the Pacific Slope. The syllabus included a complete overview of the Spanish discovery of the Americas through 1775.¹⁸ In the outline, Sheldon Barnes raised an intriguing question about who discovered North America. Could it have been the Chinese, the Phoenicians, or any other groups? The syllabus did not discuss an option beyond the mention of the possibility but there was some interest in developing an alternative theory of history for discovering North America. As the class developed, she asked students and community members for artifacts, including maps, pottery, or first-hand accounts of early settlers that she used in her class.

She used treaties and discussions about the Pacific Slope to segue into world and local customs that provided relevance for students. In later years, she expanded her class offerings to a variety of history related subjects, such as international laws and treaties. One of her most popular classes, *The History of the Pacific Slope*, was an extension of her first class. Sheldon Barnes summarized the results of one of *The History of the Pacific Slope* classes for her administration. According to her records, the class began with ninety-four students but she only examined eighty-six at the end. She was particularly pleased with the amount of “original sources” the class accumulated, such as maps, original manuscripts, “pueblo pottery...presented by various students and friends: more than fifty photographs of Indians, pioneers, historical scenes, structures and objects,

¹⁷ Sheldon Barnes to parents, 8 October 1892, Sophia Smith Collection.

¹⁸ Sheldon Barnes, “Syllabus for Spanish Discovery on Western Slope”, University of California, Berkeley, The Bancroft Library (hereinafter referred to as The Bancroft Library).

illustrative of the history of the slope.”¹⁹ These items were in the main library for display and research and later used in her classes.

Stanford's Difficulties

While she was having success on campus, problems arose that were outside of either the Barnes's control. First, in June 1893 Leland Stanford died. Although he had made arrangements for succession in the control of his personal and professional finances to his wife, Jane Lathrop Stanford, there were difficulties. After his death, many of Leland Stanford's advisors wanted the university closed. Be that as it may, Jane Stanford wanted the university to remain open as a legacy to her husband and son. She wanted to follow the wishes of her husband as closely as possible and keep the university open. Finding the financial resources to keep it running would prove very difficult despite his estate value and her inheritance. The Panic of 1893 occurred at the time of Stanford's death and created an enormous challenge for Jane Stanford and the school. Many factors caused the Panic. Trade, collapse of banks, bankruptcy of two railroads, and the downfall of many leading stocks in the stock market were just a few of the reasons for the Panic.²⁰

Because of the Panic, Jane Stanford's financial resources diminished. There were few if any buyers of assets of any kind for her to maintain the cash flow needed to fund teacher's salaries and student's daily living requirements, such as food. The federal government complicated her efforts by filing a lawsuit against Leland Stanford's estate that limited the selloff of some assets even if Jane Stanford could find buyers. As a result of the lawsuit and interruption in cash flow, many of the teachers were unpaid for several months during the summer of 1893. Jordan and Stanford were confident that the lawsuit

¹⁹ Sheldon Barnes, "The History of the Pacific Slope", The Bancroft Library.

²⁰ Mirrielees, *Stanford: The Story of a University*; Stevens, "Analysis of the Phenomena of the Panic in the United States in 1893."

and the cash flow would be resolved ultimately in favor of the university and the estate, but there were many dark days on campus. Fortunately for the Barneses, there was money available for them from royalties of the two textbooks that were in print. Many other younger, less experienced professors did not have these types of resources and they struggled for a period. In a letter to her father on August 20, 1893, Sheldon Barnes told him of the challenges the Barneses faced just to pay their bills. Nevertheless, she expressed her faith in Jordan. As an alternative, she expected D.C. Heath to send \$500 “in case we need it.”²¹ She mentioned in her journal that people were starving all around the country due to the Panic so she felt they were in a better position compared to many. In August, the university finally paid their salaries and the Barneses’ accumulated debts were paid. The crisis was temporarily over but it would take a couple more years to be resolved completely.

Finally, in October, 1895, the Supreme Court handed down its’ unanimous opinion in favor of the Stanford estate and Stanford University. The United States government had no claim against either. The Stanford estate assets were available for university use without limitation. When the university community heard David Starr Jordan announce the decision, there was considerable rejoicing. The fiscal cloud lifted and the campus returned to a less restrictive financial position.²²

Final Textbook Publication

After the financial difficulties ended at the end of 1895, the Barneses refocused their attention toward the students. Both professors were busy with their classes, Earl

²¹ Sheldon Barnes to father, 20 August 1893. Sophia Smith Collection.

²² Mirrielees, *Stanford: The Story of a University*; Sheldon Barnes journal, 13 October 1895. Sheldon Barnes described the scene that unfolded in front of her as the girls formed a parade in the quadrangle using their “dustpans and curling-irons” and the boys joined the procession of “jubilants” waiting for Jordan to arrive and give the official version of the court opinion.

Barnes with education classes and Sheldon Barnes with development of the *History of the Pacific Slope* class. Both professors continued traveling for various teacher institute meetings and they entertained students and faculty members routinely in their home. For the past two years, Sheldon Barnes had been working on her third book, *Studies in Historical Method* that she finally completed. She sent the book to D.C. Heath for publication in October, 1895. This book was the last one that she authored.²³ At the time of her death, she was working on a either a revised version of her *Studies in General History* or a different version of her original subject matter, general history.

Sheldon Barnes published *Studies in Historical Methods* in 1896. In the book, she provided considerable information about her research and version of scientific historical methods. Sheldon Barnes was pleased with her latest book and received praise from D.C. Heath, her publisher, and others members of the academe. The people who wrote to her believed that the book followed the guidelines established by The Committee of Ten report from 1892. The National Education Association (NEA) created the committee to review curriculum in American schools. The report suggested that the American social studies curriculum should be broadened to be more child-centered, a significant ingredient for progressive education.²⁴

Post-Financial Challenges and Campus Life

With the completion of her book and the financial situation of the university more stable, Sheldon Barnes focused on her classes and teaching responsibilities. The school was still relatively new but was gaining a solid reputation. David Starr Jordan asked the

²³ Sheldon, *Autobiography of Edward Austin Sheldon*. Sheldon Barnes worked on the book near the end of her life.

²⁴ Bohan, "Early Vanguards of Progressive Education: The Committee of Ten, The Committee of Seven, and Social Education."

faculty what was needed to make the school a “great school?” George Howard, Sheldon Barnes’ supervisor told him the history department needed a “great Seminary like a laboratory, where each student has his own table and drawer with writing materials always at hand.”²⁵ These types of classes provided the history department with a unique opportunity for improved scholarship.

After hearing about George Howard’s thoughts on university improvements, Dr. Kriehn asked Sheldon Barnes, a non-history faculty member, about Howard’s suggestion. Kriehn wanted to know “how can you teach by that laboratory method, with such complex facts?” [She responded saying] ‘Nevertheless, I can do it, and if I can get a room for the books and the students!’²⁶ She was confident in her abilities and methods. She knew given the right circumstances her classes would shine at Stanford University.

One activity in particular fascinated Sheldon Barnes during her time at Stanford University. She became a fan of college football. The school had been playing the game since its first academic year in 1891. Sheldon Barnes did not attend any games until 1895. She enjoyed the game as played in its early form without pads and with limited rules. She went to the annual game between Stanford University and the University of California with a friend.

The two spectators

watched our boys beat the San Francisco [University of California] fellows from end to end of the gridiron. I think I must go again, although this football business reveals very clearly to me the state of mind that reigned in the Roman amphitheater when they had their gladiatorial contests.²⁷

²⁵ Sheldon Barnes Journal, 1 November 1895, Sophia Smith Collection.

²⁶ Sheldon Barnes Journal, 9 November 1895, Sophia Smith Collection.

²⁷ Sheldon Barnes Journal, 15 November 1895. It was interesting that she brought a sense of history to the football field.

Overall, she seemed to enjoy the physical matches and attended other university games. She was impressed with the way the students, men and women, reacted to this new men's sport.

In addition to university sports, Sheldon Barnes supported activities for women. She was active with the Association of Collegiate Alumnae (ACA) and attended meetings of the local western chapter held in Palo Alto. She expected the Stanford University women, upon graduation, to become active members of the organization. She was a member of the Committee on the Development of Childhood and the Committee on Fellowships when the organization was in its early stages of development.²⁸ Both committees were active within the structure of the ACA and helped direct resources for women in their post-graduate years.

Another organization she enjoyed was the University Women's Debating Club. Sheldon Barnes attended one of their debates and "formed the opinion that they [women] needed it. Strange, what an interest woman has for herself [sic] these days; these girls have had three meetings, and they have all been about women!"²⁹ Sheldon Barnes continued to express a radical perspective. Women students accepted the message positively as progress.

One of these challenges involved the Stanford student body was as a self-governing group. In 1895, a major issue was cheating on exams. There was no official written honor code in place for the university at the time. Students were unaccountable if they chose academic dishonesty; in some cases, many students knew the cheaters. The specific cheating issue in December involved an end of course examination reported in

²⁸ Talbot and Rosenberry, *The History of the American Association of University Women 1881-1931*.

²⁹ Sheldon Barnes Journal, 20 November 1895, Sophia Smith Collection.

the *San Francisco Call*, a leading independent newspaper.³⁰ The class in question was an economics class. In administering the examination, the professor split the class into two sections. When the first section completed the exam, a student passed a copy of the exam out an open window to another student. The second student along with two or three others used the test to study. One student reported the incident and David Starr Jordan eventually expelled two students, a man and a woman, for cheating.

Sheldon Barnes recorded the episode in her journal along the different viewpoints of both students and faculty.³¹ Some expressed concern over the expulsion and initial reporting of the incident by a fellow student. Since Jordan removed two students from campus, he believed the situation had been resolved. He thought no one else needed to account for neither their actions nor any new rules established for the entire student body. Students and faculty knew the student's names already. He did not want the relationship between students and faculty disrupted with any further action.

Many in the student body had a differing perspective, for two primary reasons. First, they were angry because they believed the student body should have dealt with the expelled students initially before the administration became involved. And second, the student body wanted to know the name or names of those individuals who supplied the names of the cheaters to the faculty. The student body did not think college students should aid the faculty in catching cheaters. The faculty was split in its position; most sensed disappointment but maintained "faith and love" of the student body. There were a few faculty members who were angry because students did not uphold an unwritten code of academic honesty.

³⁰ "To Stop Cheating at Stanford."

³¹ Sheldon Barnes Journal, 10 December 1895, Sophia Smith Collection.

The eventual resolution of the situation encouraged students to continue to provide names of cheaters to faculty members. Any student who provided names of other cheating students would have their names kept confidential. Then only a student committee established to investigate academic dishonesty would know the source and specific accusation. When an informant “prove[d] that he was actuated solely by honorable motives, [he] shall be treated with special distinction as a reward for his courage and fidelity.”³² Stanford lacked a formal written honor system for students at the time. Students and faculty believed safeguards were now in place to insure academic integrity at Stanford University. Both groups believed students needed to take responsibility for their actions. This compromise became an unwritten honor code system established by and for all to insure future scholastic integrity.

Changes in 1896

Sheldon Barnes never explained her opinion of the cheating incident because she was busy in 1896 preparing for the next version of the “History of the Pacific Slope” class. She explained earlier to Dr. Kriehn, she intended to use her class as the laboratory as a seminary class. She wanted to limit the class to about twelve students in order to provide an intense focus for local history, including the Indians. The class visited several local places including the Bancroft Library where many original Native American and early settler artifacts were stored. She emphasized Spanish and English exploration and their interaction with the “native races.”³³ At the beginning of her class syllabus, she discussed “sources and authorities” and provided examples of typical kinds of original source material. The format for the class was similar to her style in her illustrated

³² “A Sense of Honor,” *San Francisco Call*.

³³ “Contents of Course in History of Pacific Slope,” The Bancroft Library.

textbooks. According to Edward Griggs, a faculty colleague and friend of both Barneses, her class was one of the two “most attractive offered in the University.”³⁴ The other class was also one she also taught entitled the “Nineteenth Century.” Her classes were popular with both men and women. Sheldon Barnes observed gender barriers becoming more relaxed both in the classroom and at sporting events.

In 1896 intramural basketball games between members of the two women’s dormitories were routine. These games had been part of the Stanford University women’s collegiate experience almost from the opening of the school. An important difference for the game in 1896 was the spectators. Men and women attended the game as spectators together. The mixed audience was substantially different than in previous years. The women played a game that Sheldon Barnes described as a “radical thing.”³⁵ She called the whole experience in front of a mixed audience probably “the first time since the days of ancient Sparta.”³⁶ She described the enthusiasm of the women, both players and spectators, as being unusual in a university setting. She hoped basketball would become a regular sporting event beginning with a game against the University of California in Berkeley. They played the first inter-university game on April 5, 1896. Sheldon Barnes wrote that she was “proud and glad, for I am sure that our women will not amount to much until they have strength and independence.”³⁷ She was pleased with the independence that Stanford University women showed.

³⁴ Griggs, “Mary Sheldon Barnes,” 382.

³⁵ Sheldon Barnes Journal, 21 February 1896, Sophia Smith Collection. There was a fee for the game. The games were free in the past. The women were dressed in the “gymnasium suits.” They were embarrassed at first but overcame the uncomfortable feelings of playing in front of men and women and proceeded to play for the crowd.

³⁶ Sheldon Barnes to father, 21 February 1896, Sophia Smith Collection.

³⁷ Sheldon Barnes to father, 5 April 1896, Sophia Smith Collection.

With the success of woman's campus activities and her classes, Sheldon Barnes was comfortable with her personal and professional situation. However, on March 8, 1896, Sheldon Barnes' mother died. Frances A.B. Stiles Sheldon had been the centerpiece in the Sheldon family. She provided strength and direction for Edward Sheldon during his career at OSNTS from the very beginning. She was the scribe for the family and kept all informed about each other's activities. Her death was difficult for Sheldon Barnes especially since she was physically so far away from her father. She wrote to her father on March 16 that she was "thinking of you is so impotent a thing; I long to be with you, in this first and most terrible grief that has come to our dear family."³⁸ In a letter to her sister, Anna, during the summer of 1896, Sheldon Barnes wanted her sister to have children and bring them to the family home, Shady Shore, to lessen her father's loss.³⁹ The absence from her family was difficult time for Sheldon Barnes. She experienced professional success but an enormous amount of personal grief.

As she put her mother's death behind her, she looked to women's issues to energize her. In early May, Sheldon Barnes attended the West Coast Women's Congress Association meeting held in San Francisco.⁴⁰ The Barneses declined to speak presumably because of their academic duties. Susan B. Anthony and Anna Shaw were the conference co-chairs. Many of the Stanford University faculty was active in the conference as speakers and participants. The title of the conference was "Woman and Government" but had a subtext that was "The Hand that Rocks the Cradle Rears the Patriot." The major purpose of the meeting was to draw attention to women's rights and suffrage. The only

³⁸ Sheldon Barnes to father, 16 March 1896, Penfield Library.

³⁹ Sheldon Barnes to sister, summer 1896. Sophia Smith Collection. In the letter, Sheldon Barnes lamented the loss and "heartache for my own dear baby lost years ago." There is no other reference to a child in any collections of Sheldon Barnes' papers.

⁴⁰ Silver, "West Coast Women's Congress Association: Unfinished History."

controversy Sheldon Barnes observed at the conference was when a fellow Stanford University faculty member, Professor Powers, compared women to slaves. She hoped he was “misunderstood” and hoped the attendees appreciated both supportive and derogative remarks by the university faculty.⁴¹ She supported her fellow faculty member but thought the remarks were misguided. Her radical positions for women’s rights would not allow her to accept his opinion even though he probably was trying to make an allegorical point.

After the conference, Earl Barnes spent the summer lecturing at the University of Chicago. Sheldon Barnes used the opportunity to visit her family in Oswego. The loss of her mother in March and the end of the spring term provided a respite from her teaching duties in California. Earl Barnes did not enjoy his summer in Chicago. He was busy teaching and he enjoyed his students but struggled with the administration.⁴² The Barneses missed each other but used the opportunity to prepare for the forthcoming fall classes.

The End of an Educator’s Life

In March 1897, Stanford University renewed Earl Barnes’ annual contract. However, he requested a sabbatical year that David Starr Jordan approved. The Barneses were taking a year to travel in Europe lecturing and researching for her next book. Her health was a concern. They both thought rest and recuperation was prudent. They believed a year away at the British Museum researching material was necessary to complete her book.

⁴¹ Sheldon Barnes to father, 10 May 1896, Sophia Smith Collection.

⁴² Earl Barnes to Sheldon Barnes, 27 July 1896, Sophia Smith Collection.

However, abruptly in the summer of 1897, both Barneses resigned from Stanford University. According to *The Sequoia*, the student newspaper, “work and health” required them to resign. The paper, whose editor was Dane Coolidge, gave a brief testimonial to them about using original source material in their classrooms.⁴³ He also described the many times he and other students had spent in the Barnes’ home and have it serve as a “meeting” place for people of divergent backgrounds. The Coolidge tribute was heartfelt. However, there was another reason for their resignations.

Another version for their resignations was much more scandalous than the official version Coolidge wrote. The Stanford University website states that Earl Barnes “was asked by Jordan to resign. Jordan had discovered that [Earl] Barnes had been involved in an extramarital love affair, conduct which the President of Stanford University could not tolerate in one of his faculty members.”⁴⁴ The affair occurred in 1895 according to a telegram Jordan sent Earl Barnes on June 4, 1897.⁴⁵ Jordan asked him to remember a “conversation two years ago [and] profoundly regret[ed] that neither you nor I have any alternative but to act. Please wire decision immediately assigning your own reasons for withdrawal.”⁴⁶ Earl Barnes resigned shortly after receiving the telegram from Jordan. Apparently, both men brushed the affair aside for almost two years. Earl Barnes was able to weave his sabbatical year and resignations into a public reason for their departure. The affair was later confirmed in a note David Starr Jordan wrote to Nicholas Murray Butler of Columbia University.⁴⁷ In any event, the Barneses resigned and traveled to England as

⁴³ Coolidge. Coolidge later wrote several Western novels that used some of the information he developed while a student in Sheldon Barnes' classes regarding Indians in California.

⁴⁴ “Earl Barnes Papers, 1882-1912,” Stanford University.

⁴⁵ David Starr Jordan Papers, Stanford University.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid. Earl Barnes' affair later created additional challenges for him when he applied for faculty positions. After Sheldon Barnes' death, a circular of unknown authorship appeared at several universities

they originally planned. Sheldon Barnes' continued her research and Earl Barnes began gathering notes for his forthcoming lecture series.

After their resignations, more challenges appeared in Sheldon Barnes's life. Her father, Edward Austin Sheldon, passed away on August 26, 1897. His death caused more distress for her during summer. The Barneses had left for Europe just prior to Edward Austin Sheldon's death. Sheldon Barnes did not record her thoughts about his death, but it must have been difficult. She had lost both parents within eighteen months, her husband had forced their resignations, and she knew her health was not as robust as it had been earlier in her life. Similarly, as in the death of her mother, Sheldon Barnes was unable to return to Oswego to be with her family.

In Europe, their work continued with trips to museums and historical sites for information Sheldon Barnes intended to use. Their life at Stanford University had always been busy with students, classwork, social activities, and various outside engagements, such as teacher's institutes. Once they arrived in England, their activities slowed. There were a few opportunities to see friends from the United States, like Edward Griggs, their fellow professor from Stanford University, or Lucy Salmon from Vassar College. They did develop local friendships but their lives were not as robust as in California. There was a positive aspect to their seclusion in that it allowed them to focus on their research activities.

They limited their external activities for another reason, Sheldon Barnes' health. In May 1898, Earl Barnes described Sheldon Barnes as "very well, but she is far from

providing details of the affair. Jordan replied to an inquiry from Butler "The plain fact is that he [Barnes] was dismissed on account of the seduction of a school teacher of his acquaintance."

strong.”⁴⁸ He thought the time away from their hectic California schedules would have a positive impact on her health. But Earl Barnes was concerned about the coming winter in England for the frail Sheldon Barnes. He began to make plans to travel to Germany or some other place outside of England that was milder in the cold months. As a result of her declining health, the “rewriting [Sheldon Barnes’] general history...is taking a good deal of time.”⁴⁹ Earl Barnes made several day trips without her in order to allow her to concentrate on writing and preserve her strength.

In July 1898 Sheldon Barnes wrote a letter to her sister confirming their future plans for the winter. The letter is interesting because this may have been one of the last letters she wrote to her family. The letter is decidedly different than much of her other correspondence. Usually, her letters to family members were two or three pages long.



Figure 6
Mary Sheldon Barnes
Spring, 1898
Courtesy of Penfield Library

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Earl Barnes to Will Munroe, 30 June 1898, Sophia Smith Collection.

This letter was only four paragraphs in length and had only brief comments about either of the Barneses. Letter writing may have been an effort that required more energy than she was able to gather. She described Earl Barnes' lecture series as "a great success... [and] the most important being a series of four or five demonstrations to be given at the College of Preceptors."⁵⁰ She did not mention her health.

In the summer of 1898, the Barneses knew her health was deteriorating but held out hope for recovery. According to her death certificate, Sheldon Barnes suffered from "Mitrol & Aortic diseases (15 years) and Malignant disease of the Uterus (6 months)."⁵¹ Earl Barnes called the period before her death as "the long struggle."⁵² According to Edward Griggs their family friend who was visiting with the Barneses during this critical time, Sheldon Barnes had made "a consultation with the best surgeon in London...& he strongly advised an operation. It was her only possible chance of life & he [the doctor]



Figure 7
Mary Sheldon Barnes Gravesite
Photo Courtesy of Sophia Smith
Collection, Smith College

⁵⁰ Sheldon Barnes to Anna Sheldon Howe. 10 July 1898, Sophia Smith Collection.

⁵¹ General Register Office, *An Entry of Death*.

⁵² Earl Barnes to Laura Sheldon, September 1898. Sophia Smith Collection.

insisted there was a reasonable chance.”⁵³ According to Griggs, she never awoke from the anesthetic administered during the operation and this may have ultimately caused her death.

Mary Downing Sheldon Barnes died on August 27, 1898 at 10:15 AM.

Earl Barnes was distraught because his wife had passed so quickly despite all the medical assurances to the contrary. Because of her illness, Sheldon Barnes remained in their bedroom and experienced in some pain for several weeks before the operation. It is unclear if the surgical procedure was for her heart or to treat her cancer. She expected her death and met it with grace and some anticipation.

In the weeks prior to her death, Earl Barnes recorded that she had thought about and discussed her parents. He wrote in his diary “I cannot believe she is gone...during this last illness we have realized its [death] possible and have often spoken of its possibility.”⁵⁴ Sheldon Barnes was a scientist. She used her experiences in life as preparation for her own death. Earl Barnes wrote of one of their last conversations prior to her death “‘When I think of my probable death,’ she said, one day this week, ‘my prevailing sentiment is one of profound curiosity. There is something. I shall know what it is.’”⁵⁵ In retrospect, her statement appeared accepting and inquisitive about her future. She missed her parents and knew she would miss Earl Barnes. However, she knew her death was probably eminent. According to Earl Barnes, on the day of her operation she said, “‘Today we begin new lives. I a new one and you a new one. Let us live them well.’” She hoped for life but expected death. She loved Earl Barnes but wanted to ease his conscious about his forthcoming life without her. She told him “‘Let me be to you in

⁵³ Edward Griggs to friend, 30 August 1898, Sophia Smith Collection.

⁵⁴ Earl Barnes Diary, 27 August 1898, Sophia Smith Collection.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

your future life,' she said before yesterday, 'what my blessed father and mother have been in mine since they died – strong living realities. Your life is full of mine – let it live in you.'”⁵⁶

With her death, the relationship shared between the Barneses ended but there was no doubt that they loved each other. The letters between them through the years showed a strong connection when they were apart. Sheldon Barnes’ death left a hole in Earl Barnes’ life and heart. Immediately after her death, he still expected her to rise from her death bed and greet him with her normal “Hello! Dearest Earl!”⁵⁷

Sheldon Barnes had several final requests; first, she wanted her body cremated. The cremation took place on August 30, 1898. She also wanted burial in Rome. Acceding to her requests, Earl Barnes had her ashes interred at the Protestant Cemetery between the graves of Percy Bysshe Shelley and John Keats.⁵⁸ Finally, she wanted Earl Barnes to “burn up all my manuscript which is not vitally connected with your work.”⁵⁹ He burned her research and writing as she requested.

Interestingly enough, Earl Barnes did not notify her family until after her cremation. For whatever reason, he had not kept them informed about her health issues in 1898. So the family expressed surprise by her death.⁶⁰ The confusion may have been the length of time between her death and notification of the family via letters. Transatlantic cable service was available but he chose to use the mail. Edward Griggs, who was a family friend of the Barneses, did not describe any unusual circumstances. He was with them prior to the operation. So, the reason for the delayed notification is unclear. The

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Crocco and Davis, *Building a Legacy: Women in Social Education, 1784-1984*.

⁵⁹ Earl Barnes Diary, 27 August 1898, Sophia Smith Collection.

⁶⁰ *Oswego Daily Times*, “Mrs. M.S. Barnes Dies in London.”

family was satisfied with Earl Barnes' delayed explanation for her death. However, they would have probably preferred faster notification.

The faculty at Stanford University was surprised and saddened by her death. At a meeting of a history seminar on September 15, 1898, many of the staff expressed their appreciation for the work she did while she was a member of the faculty. George Elliott Howard (the chairman of the history department) stated that "no woman in the field of history of the United States has left a deeper impression in the field chosen than has Mary Sheldon Barnes. As a teacher, writer, woman, friend, she is one... [they] will remember with reverence and love."⁶¹ Many people spoke about her helpfulness and compassion as both a teacher and mentor for students. Ewald Flügel, professor of English philology described her cheerfulness despite years of illness and pain.⁶² He thought she had wisdom beyond her years or experience. Magazines and newspapers published her obituary.⁶³

Summary

Sheldon Barnes' life became more complicated with her introduction to Earl Barnes. She reprioritized two significant parts of her life and created alternative choices. First, she ended the intimate relationship with Mary V. Lee. Sheldon Barnes truly enjoyed their relationship as friends. However, Sheldon Barnes realized a long-term relationship with Earl Barnes was more critical, both emotionally and physically. I believe she saw Earl Barnes as a person who she could work with as a partner, friend, and mentee.

⁶¹ Unpublished document, 1898, Sophia Smith Collection. Someone wrote notes about the comments made by many professors in attendance at the meeting and passed along to Earl Barnes after her death.

⁶² Ewald Flügel to Earl Barnes, 20 September 1898, Sophia Smith Collection. Flügel thought she was a huge asset to Stanford University by stating "*There is a noble woman! How fine that she is here!*"

⁶³ Monroe, "Death of Professor Sheldon Barnes," September 1898; Bates, "In Memoriam," 1898; Griggs, "Mary Sheldon Barnes."

The second change in her life provided more freedom as a married woman. The marriage enhanced her position as a textbook author and teacher at an institution of higher learning. It opened doors for her that may not have been available as a single woman. Additionally, her marriage narrowed her choices about teaching in elementary or secondary schools. Most women who taught at those levels were required to be unmarried. Earlier, she had mused in college about teachers who required focus and that sort of intensity was only available to single women. Her marriage enabled her to combine teaching and writing that reached a larger audience.

Closing Thoughts about Earl Barnes' Publications

Sheldon Barnes was an accomplished author by the time she married Earl Barnes in 1885. As noted, she had written one textbook and a few other professional or wide-ranging articles. Immediately after their marriage, the Barneses appeared to collaborate on historically related publications, such as their book, *Studies in American History*, and articles about diverse learning cultures. Earl Barnes taught history early in his career at the German Academy and Indiana University. However, he acknowledged the assistance of Sheldon Barnes and her methods in his first professorial assignment at Indiana University.

When he accepted his appointment to the faculty at Stanford University his attention changed to general education about children with an emphasis on early childhood learning. An experimental school loosely attached to the university was available for research and his development of theories about children and their early learning. In 1896-1897, Earl Barnes completed his first edited book, *Studies in*

*Education, A Series of Ten Numbers Devoted to Child-Study and the History of Education.*⁶⁴

The book included articles written by many authors, such as Sheldon Barnes or Anna Kohler. Earl Barnes wrote eighteen of the articles for the book about how children learn. The book republished two previously co-authored articles about the Aztecs and Chinese.

This edited book was the only one completed by Earl Barnes during Sheldon Barnes' lifetime. After her death, Earl Barnes developed a brief autobiography for its inclusion in the 1907 *Who's Who in Education*.⁶⁵ His published and hand-written entry stated that he was the author of *Studies in American History*. The entry only states he was the author and not co-author of the textbook. There is some question as to the amount of writing Earl Barnes actually contributed to the writing and editing of the manuscript. In the actual notes that remain in Sheldon Barnes' papers, only her handwriting is noted.⁶⁶

Finally, at a memorial service after Earl Barnes' death on July 15, 1935, Edward Griggs, a long-time friend of both Barneses, reviewed his life's accomplishments. The memorial became Earl Barnes' only biography.⁶⁷ In the book, Griggs provided a "List of Publications by Earl Barnes." The list omits both the *Studies in American History* and the history articles published by Earl and Mary Sheldon Barnes. The omission is difficult to understand. Edward Griggs was close to both people, professionally and personally, from their days at Stanford University. He was in England when Sheldon Barnes died in 1898. He supported Earl Barnes during and after his dismissal at Stanford University. Yet he

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Leonard, *Who's Who in America: A Biographical Dictionary of Notable Living Men and Women of the United States, 1906-1907*.

⁶⁶ Sheldon Barnes noted that on the eve of their departure to California, they had completed and mailed the manuscript to D.C. Heath. However, she had previously referred earlier to "my" book.

⁶⁷ Griggs, *Earl Barnes: A Life Sketch and an Address*.

chose not to list their joint publications as part of Earl Barnes' accomplishments. Griggs did list thirty-two articles and three books for which Earl Barnes was the sole author.

There is no clear evidence as to the amount of input Earl Barnes had on any of the co-authored historical publications. However, after the death of Sheldon Barnes, he did not publish any new history related books or articles. In his subsequent lectures he gave in Europe and the United States, the central theme of his work was child psychology and learning skills. Perhaps Earl Barnes received co-authorship credit, but Sheldon Barnes did the majority of writing and research. A larger concern however is the entry in *Who's Who*. He claimed authorship, not co-authorship, for the book. The preponderance of the material in Sheldon Barnes' file supports the belief that Earl Barnes was not the extensive scholar that Edward Griggs portrayed. He appeared to have relied on Sheldon Barnes early in his career to help in his teaching assignment at Indiana University and with the historical publications while at Stanford University. Despite his reputation as a lecturer in California, his inappropriate behavior while on faculty at Stanford University forced their resignations. Earl Barnes did not tarnish Sheldon Barnes' reputation with his resignation. However, the anomalies between his life and writing diminished his reputation.

Additional exploration into his early scholarship, writing and publications probably would clear any confusion for historical social educators. Sheldon Barnes provided assistance from his academic years at OSTNS until the end of her life. The question is to what extent did Sheldon Barnes influence and supported him during their time together.

The Impact of Mary Sheldon Barnes in Education

The two textbooks and one method book were different and compelling for teachers who sought an alternative teaching pedagogy from memorization/recitation

classroom processes. Both textbooks in general and American history provided teachers with a chronological format using original sources. She provided teachers an alternative for teaching with more child-centered lessons in their classrooms. If teachers were interested in developing students who would analyze and synthesize alternative historical interpretation of past events and leaders, Sheldon Barnes offered teachers a minimal amount of original material to use in their classrooms. The bibliographies in the textbooks provide a more inquisitive teacher with additional sources either as background or prime material for discussion with students. These textbooks were distinctive.

Sheldon Barnes was an important educator at the end of the nineteenth century. She introduced original source textbooks for teachers and students during the Progressive Era. She provided a methodology for students to relate historical subjects using primary sources and developed a hands-on approach in her pedagogy. Sheldon Barnes believed her method of teaching using original source material and a seminar method encouraged students to analyze history beyond the facts. She was a pioneer in introducing pictures and original source material in history textbooks for a new generation of teachers and students. Many contemporary textbook writers still use an adapted model of her textbook format.

Sheldon Barnes' life story is remarkable. She went to college, traveled, married, and supported her husband as many women did. Her life style and expectations progressed within the emerging radical movement. Textbook writing became a valuable tool to influence the next generation of teachers. The process she advocated using original source material to develop critical thinking skills created opportunities for women. She asked her students to use the materials she offered. She wanted students to

participate in classroom discussions and develop new concepts based upon scientific data instead of opinions.

Women in the Progressive Era were trying to find their place within a male dominated society that did not value females as scholars. Sheldon Barnes used her platform in higher education to show that women could contribute to scholarship in a meaningful manner along with men. Her methodology benefitted all students. However, her scholarship probably helped girls more due to their increasing enrollment in higher education as students in the forty-eight years of Sheldon Barnes' life.⁶⁸ Not that all teachers used her methods, but original source material pedagogy was a viable alternative to memorization processes. Teachers who used her books and classrooms were more likely to have actively engaged students in lessons.

She used the seminar method in her first teaching assignments after graduating from the University of Michigan. Her teaching method helped foster interactive discussion between students and teachers. Sheldon Barnes did not create the seminar method but used it effectively in her classrooms. She preferred smaller groups of students in classes similar to her last classes at Stanford University. As the first woman on the school's faculty, her classes were popular because of her pedagogy.

When Sheldon Barnes began teaching at Stanford University, women faculty members were uncommon even at women's colleges. Although the numbers of women were increasing as students in coeducational institutions, there was a strong bias against them as faculty members. David Starr Jordan and Jane Lathrop Stanford had the foresight

⁶⁸ U.S. Bureau of Statistics. *Historical Statistics of the United States*, 370. In 1850 when Sheldon Barnes was born, 44.8% of all girls attended public schools. In 1900, just after Sheldon Barnes' death, the number of girls attending public schools rose to 50.9%. In the same period of time for boys, the comparable statistics were 49.6 % and 50.1%, respectively.

to hire her and break the barrier at Stanford University. Additionally, women had equal access to housing and campus activities while she taught at Stanford.

Her textbooks were in publication and use for many years after her death but her legacy has diminished over time. Sheldon Barnes' early death in 1898 has prevented contemporary historians from realizing her contribution to history textbooks. Had she lived, would she have adapted her textbooks based upon changes taking place in classrooms? Earl Barnes destroyed her last textbook she was working on at the time of her death, as she requested. The American Historical Association's (AHA) Committee of Seven report mentioned Sheldon Barnes's original source books and an article on teaching history.⁶⁹ In all likelihood, at the end of her life, she was revising her *Studies in General History*. However, it is unclear whether her primary source methods were changing or she was enhancing her original publications.

The Committee of Seven was critical of source materials for teaching history as a primary method of teaching. According to the report "the difficulty with this system [source method] is that while it suggests the basis of original record upon which all history rests, on the other hand it expects valuable generalizations from insufficient bases."⁷⁰ The Committee stated that students who totally relied on source material, without sufficient guidance from a teacher and previous knowledge base of the material, were unable to infer the proper concepts using artifacts alone. Sheldon Barnes disagreed with the committee and believed that source material alone could be a sound basis for

⁶⁹ "The Study of History in Schools: A Report to the American Historical Association by the Committee of Seven, *American Historical Association*; Sheldon Barnes, "The Teaching of Local History". In the AHA report, there are two references to Sheldon Barnes' work, her book *Studies in Historical Method* and a section of the book entitled "The Study of Local History." Sheldon Barnes published her method in the *Educational Review* on local history.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

instruction. However, she emphasized that there was additional bibliographic information in her books teachers should be familiar with as part of the history curriculum.

Sheldon Barnes addressed the issue as

It is true that books for supplementary reading are indicated at the end of nearly every chapter of the history [in her book], but it is well understood that only occasionally will these books be accessible to the pupil, and they are noted they are more largely for the purpose of showing the pupil that what he has in the book is really but a small part of the matter which a historian has to read and study, and, moreover, to give an adequate idea of the bibliography of the subject, and familiarize him the names of authors and original sources of information, to which his interest will lead him to recur, after the mere school study of history is ended.

Teachers will see that in this respect, as well as some others, the book differs almost entirely from the ordinary narrative history, which gives but the conclusions of one author, and nothing whatever of the method or extent of his research. Original research and training of the power to form candid judgments upon historical questions are the very soul of teaching history.⁷¹

Sheldon Barnes advocated that her book was completely different than many of the available history books. She provided the names of many popular books teachers could use to develop their background in historical subject matter. Her response demonstrates she anticipated the Committee of Seven's report. She expected her scientific process as a preparation for students for researching and understanding contemporary issues as they encountered them in classes or later in life.

Conclusions about Mary Sheldon Barnes and Teaching Today

Sheldon Barnes was born during a critical time period of American history. The Seneca Falls Convention, held just prior to her birth, elevated women's issues and became a subject of interest for many Americans. She became both a supporter and a beneficiary of women's movement. Progress was slow but steady. She developed her radical perspective after she discovered the positive impact she and other women could

⁷¹ Sheldon Barnes, "A Query and Its Answer," 4.

make given an equal educational opportunity. She had no expectations of college as a young girl. However, through her perseverance and with her parent's encouragement, she altered her expectations of a new generation of women. She did not march in demonstrations or send opinion letters to newspapers but her correspondence to friends and family members provides researchers insight into her burgeoning radical thoughts.

She was an advocate for teachers and students. As a former teacher in Oswego schools, she knew first-hand the challenges nineteenth century teachers faced in a classroom. Her experience may have been different than many because of her father's guidance and prominence as an educator. She was a scholar who earned the respect from many within the academe for scholarship and writing. Records are not available describing her experience teaching after her graduation from OSNTS. Sheldon Barnes' teaching at the college level did not include teacher training. She was a history professor. However, she realized many of the young women she taught would become teachers after college because that was one of the few professions opened to women college graduates. Her textbooks and methods book created a bridge between high school graduate qualified teachers and normal or college educated teachers. Her travel and educational experiences provided her with an expanded view of the world. She encouraged teachers through her books augment their knowledge of history with supplemental books to guide their students.

Many aspects of Sheldon Barnes' life provide relevancy for contemporary educators. She was not the first person to introduce sketches and drawings in books. These visual presentations had been available for some time before Sheldon Barnes became an educator. However, her contribution was in the combination of using original

source material and the scientific study of history. Will Monroe, a contemporary educator, writer, and student of Sheldon Barnes, described educational qualifications “in the domain of teaching history from sources, Professor Mary Sheldon Barnes was a pioneer...and it must not be forgotten that this method was only not in practice in America, but that it was entirely unknown before the days of Mary Sheldon’s ‘*Studies in General History*.’”⁷²

Would Sheldon Barnes pedagogy and source material prevailed into the twentieth century? The history textbook establishment supported only the use of here textbooks as a supplementary source for students according to the Committee of Seven. Even though her textbooks were used into the early 1900s. As was previously stated, she was developing a new general studies textbook when she died but we do not have any record of the style she used. Unfortunately, many have forgotten Sheldon Barnes’ educational contributions but her pedagogy still has relevance in the classroom in the twenty-first century. According to Larry Cuban, teachers still struggle with children-centered teaching pedagogy.⁷³ As children are promoted to higher level classes, the lesson delivery method for teachers change to more teacher-centered pedagogy; although, educators regularly use original source material in many disciplines. The material may be items such as rocks, ancient articles of clothing or literary passages; or it may be pictures of prized historical relics, such as the Declaration of Independence or pictures of Stonehenge or the Cosmos. Educators use PowerPoint presentations, videos, and other media representations to create relevancy for student classroom engagement and higher learning skills.

⁷² Monroe, *Journal of Education*, 175. Monroe wrote several books during his lifetime such as *Comenius and the Beginnings of Educational Reform* and *History of the Pestalozzian Movement in the United States with Nine Portraits and a Bibliography*.

⁷³ Cuban, “How Did Teachers Teach, 1890-1980,” 165.

Were other educators of the period using artifacts in the classroom? They probably did to some extent. The uniqueness of Sheldon Barnes was combining both original source material with a scientific study of history and guiding students into higher level learning processes. Her educational background at the University of Michigan and OSNTS gave her a vision for teaching history. The Progressive Era practice of placing the child at the center of the classroom coincided with her pedagogy. There were other educators, such as Lucy Maynard Salmon, a classmate and fellow college professor, who provided their students with alternative methods to use history. Jane Addams expanded her definition of education beyond the classroom to life skills. Sheldon Barnes hoped to provide analytical life skills for using information found in the community, such as newspapers, to synthesize new information within a logical, systematic view of history. Sheldon Barnes hoped by using original source material in a classroom, students would learn how to critically examine documents and develop a scientific approach to learning.

Are educators using Sheldon Barnes' concepts today in relation to learning? Unfortunately, high stakes testing requires teachers to rely more on test taking skills instead of critical thinking.⁷⁴ Sheldon Barnes would likely oppose high stakes testing because they require a considerable amount of rote memorization. Routine testing and mandated pacing guides do not allow teachers or students to explore historic material. A child's individual learning pace advocated by Pestalozzi and Sheldon Barnes allows children time to build on previously learned material. Pacing guides used in many school systems require all students to learn at a rapid, predetermined pace. Despite protestation by school system administrators to the contrary, Sheldon Barnes' critical learning skills

⁷⁴ Pace, *Theory and Research in Social Education*; Au, *Teacher Education Quarterly*; Upadhyay, *Cultural Studies of Science Education*. These are only a few of the many articles that address teaching practices in a high stake testing environment.

are outside the practical, mainstream teaching method used in the modern classroom. It is ironic that as one of the pioneers in creative educational pedagogy, Sheldon Barnes' legacy has become one of a neglected protagonist for history textbook writers in social education history.

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APPENDIX A

TEACHING LESSON IN GENERAL HISTORY

Teacher. Alice and Henry may go to the board and write their lists of the arts and sciences known to the Egyptians, I while the rest of us talk about the religion. How do we know that they had any religion, anyway, Philip?

Philip. Why, because they prayed.

Teacher. And how do you know that?

Philip. Because we have their prayers; there is the prayer to the sun, and the prayer of Rameses [sic], and the prayer to the Chief God.

Teacher. What other proof that they had a religion?

Anna. We know that they had temples, from the pictures of them, and from the lists of buildings made by the kings.

Laura. They had images of the gods, and sang hymns to them.

Teacher. What proof have you of that?

Laura. Because there is a picture of one of these images, and we have one of the hymns to the Nile.

Teacher. Well, I think we may fairly put down religion as a part of the old Egyptian life. (Writes it on the board in proper place in the summary already begun in a previous lesson. See page 4, Manual.) And now, what about the number of the gods, James?

James. They had, at least, several.

Teacher. For instance?

James. They worshipped the Nile, the sun, a god that they call the Lord of Truth, and another that they call Ammon.

Teacher. Do you know how we describe a religion where the people believe in more than one god? (No one answers. The teacher should never wait long for a technical or unknown word, but should give it himself if the class does not at once supply it.) We call it Polytheistic. (Writes the word on the board, under Religion.) And what sort of objects are the Nile and the sun, Carlton?

Carlton. Why, I suppose we might call them natural.

Teacher. (Writes on the board Nature-worship, after Polytheistic.) What did they see in the Nile to worship? Jenny, what do you say?

Jenny. The Nile gave them life.

Teacher. How so?

Jenny. Why, the Nile made the grass grow in the meadows, and the grass fed the oxen and made them live and grow, and then the oxen fed men and made them live and grow.

Teacher. And what about the Nile?

Jenny. Nobody fed that, so far as they could see. (Here is a place where it is quite appropriate for the teacher to add something himself to the general fund ; he may call attention to the fact that the Nile was the one river of Egypt, and a branchless river, coming eternally full of life-giving water from some unknown source. The reasons why the sun would seem divine should then be discussed in the same way; such a talk brings the pupil into historic sympathy with the old Egyptian's point of view, and he comes to

feel that, after all, the old fellow was kith and kin of his own, and that he, too, would have been an old Egyptian once upon a time.)

Teacher. Now we have just been saying that the religious belief was polytheistic; now, do you know, that doesn't seem quite true to me; does it to you, Will? Did you see anything to make you think that they had a tendency to believe in one god; that is, to be monotheists

Will. It says in one place, "prayer to the Chief God."

Teacher. Yes; but is there any proof in the prayer that he is chief? (No one knows.) I think you could easily have seen that; but now look again at this prayer. (All open their books to page 10. There is a moment's silence.) Ah! Some of you see already; what do you see, Mary?

Mary. He seems to have made the other gods; for it says, - at whose command the gods were made.

John. And he is greater than the Nile; for it says, - at whose pleasure the Nile overflows her banks.

Teacher. Good; that wasn't so hard to see, after all. (This is the way in which total failure on the part of the pupils must be met, when the teacher is sure such failure is not due to carelessness. In the latter case, the teacher will simply leave the matter for another trial on the following day; but, at the beginning of the work, before pupils understand very clearly what is expected of them, it is well for the teacher to help them by doing some actual study with them in the classroom. Such help should not be given afterward, except in cases where the teacher sees that the question is really too difficult for the average of the class, in which case it is always best to have recourse to the text on the

spot). So you see that though the Egyptians believed in many gods, - they believed, in fact, in many more than those named here, - yet they also had the thought of one god above all gods; so, we add *Tendencies to Monotheism* [italics in original] about the Polytheistic Nature-worship. Now, what did they think about the immortality to the soul? Kate, what do you say?

Kate. They believed in it; at least, in the Book of the Dead, the soul is represented as coming before Osiris for judgment, and then, if Osiris is contented with it, going on to Elysium.

Teacher. And what about the bodies?

Mary. They embalmed them; put them up to keep.

Teacher. Perhaps some of you know from your general reading why they wanted to keep the bodies; well, Mary again?

Mary. They thought some day [sic] that the soul would want the body again.

Will. Why, that is just what we Christians believe about the resurrection of the body; we think the soul and body will last forever, too.

Teacher. Yes, a great many people do think so. (The teacher must not allow himself to be drawn off into any statement of *his own belief* [italics in original] here, although to a certain extent he may allow his pupils to express themselves on these delicate religious matters. Teacher writes *Immortality of the Soul* [italics in original], on the board, under Religion.

Teacher. Now, when I asked you for proofs that Egyptians had a religion, you said right away "they prayed to the gods" now what made them pray to the gods, James?

James. Why, because they wanted things, and they thought that the gods could give them to them.

Teacher. What were some of the things they prayed for? (Various members of the class answer, "Success in war," "Help in trouble," "Justice," etc.)

Teacher. What do such prayers show that they thought of the gods?

Various members. That they were powerful, kind, just.

(Teacher writes on the board *Believed gods would and could help men* [italics in original]. The teacher may, if he thinks best, also call attention to the fact that this is really the belief in special providence).

Teacher. When you were naming the gods, there was one whom you did not name.

James. Well, I wanted to ask you about the king; it seemed as if they prayed to him, too, just as if he were a god.

Teacher. You are quite right. The king was like a god to them; just turn to page 14, and see how they address him; read a sentence, Jenny, in which they speak to him as if he were a god.

(Jenny reads, "Hail to thee, Horus, sacred majesty"; others read other sentences showing the same thing. The teacher then asks, "Mary, do you remember from our lesson of yesterday another fact that shows that the religion had a good deal to do with the government?")

Mary. Yes; the king was a priest, and the chief high priest was next to the king.

Other members give other facts, as that the king was always building temples,

that the priests held many offices, etc. Teacher writes on the board, *Close union of religion with the state, as shown in importance of temples and priests, and sacredness of king.* [Italics in original]

Meanwhile the lists have been placed on the board, and the teacher will proceed in a similar way to collect the points for the intellectual, industrial, political, social, and moral life of the ancient Egyptians, as per summary. In this sort of work, the teacher will notice, *first* [italics in original], - that the questions follow a summary in his own mind, rather than the order of questions in the book; as has been already said, this gives freshness and order to the work. *Second* [italics in original], - new terms are given at once, as soon as, but *after* [italics in original], the thing they name is understood; examples, Polytheism, Nature-worship, Monotheism. *Third*, - *and greatest of all, constant reference must be made to the text. It must be appealed to as proof of the pupils' statements, and be their referee in all cases of dispute. In short, it must be used just as the specimen would be used in botany* [italics in original]; and if the teacher has been able to collect still other material from the sources, it should be used similarly, to prove, test, modify, or broaden opinion[italics in original].

The above has been written on the supposition that the teacher is as yet in the "little go" of his teaching, and is still confined to his text-books in hand; if, however, he has had time to do further reading, or if, best of all, he has had time to hunt up new pictures and extracts, he will be able to enrich every moment of the hour. In the latter case, however, there is real danger of his getting in the way of the pupil, and he must always remember that he is in the class-room, first of all, to give full play to the pupils.

Let *their own work* [italics in original] stand out [sic] simple, clear, and strong, rectified by your own greater knowledge and judgment.

What the teacher brings from his own stores should be connected with what the pupils have themselves done [italics in original]. It should be illustrative and cumulative in its effect, and be in plain sight from their elementary point of view. But, keeping this primal principle in view let him go as far afield with them as he possibly can. ¹

¹ Sheldon Barnes, *Studies in General History: Teacher's Manual*.

APPENDIX B

JOHN SMITH AND JAMESTOWN

The Councell contrive the Fort, the rest cut downe trees ... some make gardens, some nets, &c. The Salvages often visited us kindly. . . .

What toyle we had to guard our workemen adayes, watch all night, resist our enemies ... cut downe trees, and prepare the ground to plant our Corne. ... [When the ships that brought them out returned to England] there remained neither taverne ... nor place of reliefe, but the common Kettell; [which furnished] halfe a pint of wheat, and as much barley boyled with water for a man a day, and this having fryed some 26. weekes in the ship's hold contained as many wormes as graines; ... our drinke was water, our lodgings Castles in the ayre.... From May to September... fiftie ... we buried....

How John Smith gets Corn for the Colony.–

[Soon after, Captain John Smith with six or seven others went down the river to buy corn. At first, the savages] scorned him, as a famished man; and would in derision offer him a handfull of Corne ... for ... swords ... muskets, and ... apparell. But seeing by trade ... there was nothing to be had, he ... let fly his muskets, whereat they all fled into the woods. So, marching toward their houses, they might see great heapes of corne: much adoe he had to restraine his hungry souldiers from ... taking of it, expecting ... that the Salvages would assault them, as not long after they did with a most hydeous noyse.... Being well armed with Clubs, ... Bowes, and Arrowes they charged the English, that so ... received them with their muskets ... that they ... fled again to the woods, and ere long sent

... to offer peace. ... Smith told them, if onely six of them would come unarmed and loade his boat [with corn], he would not only be their friend, but ... give them Beads, Copper, and Hatchets ...: and then they brought him Venison, Turkies ... bread, and what they had; singing and dauncing in signe of friendship

How Captain John Smith trained the Colonists.–

[In 1608, Captain John Smith became president of the colony.] Now . . . the- Church was repaired; . . . buildings prepared for the supplyes we expected; [ships came twice from England with men and provisions]; the fort reduced to a live-square forme; ... the whole company every Saturday exercised ...: the boats trimmed for trade. [Meanwhile, Captain John Smith took] 30 of us ... downe the river some 5 myles from James towne, to learne to ... cut downe trees, and lye in woods. ... Strange were these pleasures to their conditions [of gentlemen]; yet lodging, eating and drinking, working or playing, they but doing as the President did himselfe, . . . within a weeke ... became Masters, making it their delight to heare the trees thunder as they fell; but the axes so oft blistered their tender fingers, that many times every third blow had a loud othe to drown the eccho ... twentie good workmen had beene better then them all.

The Starving Time.–

[In 1609, Captain John Smith went back to England, leaving the colonists with] seaven boats ... the harvest newly gathered ... 300 Muskets ... Shot Powder and Match sufficient; ... Nets for fishing; Toolles of all sorts ...; live or sixe hundred Swine; as many Hennes and Chickens, some Goats and some Sheepe.

[But after he was gone,] as for corne ... from the Salvages, we had nothing but mortall wounds, with clubs and arrowes; as for our Hogs, Hens, Goats, [and] Sheepe ... our commanders, officers and Salvages daily consumed them, till all was devoured; then swords, armes, ... or anything, wee traded with the Salvages.... Within six moneths after Captaine Smith's departure, there remained not past sixtie men, women and children, most miserable and poore creatures; and those were preserved for the most part, by roots, herbes, acornes, walnuts, berries, now and then a little fish: ... yea, even the very skinnes of our horses. ... But God that would not that this Countrie should be unplanted [sent ships and men] to preserve us [1610].¹

STUDY ON 2.

1. Judging from the charter, what did the companies want of Virginia? 2. What right had the English king to grant this charter? 3. Who might have disputed this right? 4. What false idea had the London Company about the geography of Virginia? 5. What do you think *gentleman* meant at this time? 6. Prove it. 7. Which men named in the list would make the best colonists? 8. Why? 9. Give three ways in which John Smith was a good leader for the colonists. 10. What troubles did the colonists have? 11. What do you understand by the *common Kettell*? 12. By the phrase, *our lodgings Castles in the ayre*? 13. How did the Indians in this part of our country make their living? 14. How did they defend themselves against enemies? 15. Describe a palisaded village of Virginia Indians. 16. What could the colonists have done so as not to have had a *starving time*? 17. What was Virginia good for?

¹ Smith, *The Generall Historie of Virginia, New-England, and the Summer Isles*. Sheldon Barnes used an edited version of Smith's history by Edward Arber's in 1884, pp. 387-393, 439, 480, 498, and 499. She used several parts of Smith's story for illustration purposes as examples of original source material. She added her own comments for clarification when necessary.

Supplementary Reading. – *The Settlement Of Virginia*, by Captain John Smith, in *Historical Classical Readings*, by Effingham Maynard & Co., N.Y. *An Adventure on the Chickahominy and The Romance of Pocahontas*, by Captain John Smith, *Library American Literature*, I. 3, 10. Charles Dudley Warner's *Captain John Smith. The Adventures of Captain John Smith*, in John Esten Cooke's *Stories of the Old Dominion*. Edward Eggleston's *Pocahontas and Powhatan*.²

² Sheldon Barnes, *Studies in American History*, 61.

APPENDIX C

OSWEGO BOARD OF EDUCATION NOTES

In 1862, the *Proceedings of the Educational Convention* published the lessons detailed below. Members of the Oswego Board of Education observed these lessons demonstrated over a three day period in different classrooms. According to the notes, the Board was “admirably” impressed with the lessons and “recommend[ed] the adoption of the system.”¹ Realizing the examples used below may be simple compared to today’s lessons, these lessons were far different than the rote memorization methods used by most school systems in the mid-nineteenth century.

Exercises were held in the school-room.

LESSON ON PLACE.

A review of a C class, primary. Ages of children 6 to 7 years.

The Object of the lesson was to distinguish and define place, as neater, farther, between, to the right, to the left.

2d. To represent objects in these relations.

3d. To distinguish the cardinal and semi-cardinal points.

First, objects were placed on a table, and the children requested to observe the position of each, after which the teacher would remove them, and call upon individuals to put them in the same position again. Then the position of these objects on the table were represented by drawing on a slate held in a horizontal position. Then the same positions were represented by drawings on the blackboard. Children were called upon to point with their fingers; also to walk in different directions; also to tell in what direction they must

walk to go from their seat to some given part of the room. The teacher would name a point of compass, and request the children to point toward it, while she would point in some other direction. This made each pupil think and act for himself.

LESSON ON PLACE.

Given to the A Class, primary. A review. Children, average age 9 years.

An outline map of the city of Oswego was placed before the class, and the children were required to point out the various localities, tell the distance of one from another, the direction in which a person must go in proceeding from one place to the other. The outline map was drawn on a scale of one foot to the mile; the pupils ascertained distances, after estimating by the eye, by taking a tape measure and ascertaining the number of feet from one point to the other. A drawing of the school-room made to a scale, previously placed upon the blackboard, was exhibited. Rivers, lakes, canals, dams, locks in canals, etc., were described by the pupils in answer to questions by members of the Committee.

LESSON ON NUMBER.

A review of the C class, primary. Ages of children 6 to 7 years.

The object of this exercise was to show how addition, subtraction, and multiplication are worked out with objects.

The children were arranged in front of a shelf containing pebbles in boxes or compartments. The teacher said to the first pupil, "I will give you 1 pebble; how many must you add to it to make ten!"

To the next she said, "I will give you 8 pebbles; how many must you add to these to make ten?"

To the next, "I will give you 2 pebbles; how many, must you add to make ten?"

The children would proceed to take other pebbles from the boxes, and counting, add enough to make ten. As each finished the number, the hand would be raised. When all had completed the number assigned, the teacher commenced by asking the first pupil, "How many did I give you?"

Child. "One."

T. "How many did you add to make ten?"

C. "Nine."

T. (To the next pupil.) "How many did I give you?"

C. "Three."

T. "How many did you add to make ten?"

C. "Seven."

In this manner the teacher kept all the pupils at work and each at work on a separate problem. Subsequently the pupils were requested to see in how many ways they could arrange given numbers. One was to arrange the number five in as many ways as possible, as 4 and 1, 2 and 3, 2 and 2 and 1, 2 and 1 and 1 and 1, 1 and 3 and 1, etc. Another was told to arrange six, another *seven*, another *eight*, in as many ways as they could with the pebbles.

The teacher gave them numbers, and then told them to take away less numbers, as, "I give you 8 pebbles; take away 5, and tell me how many remain," etc.

The teacher having placed six marks on the board thus, 111111, rubbed out *two*, and asked, "What have I done?"

C. "*Rubbed* out two marks."

T. "*How* many marks remain?"

C. "Four marks."

T. "*What* may you say, then?"

C. "Two from *six* leaves four."

Then seven and eight marks were treated in the same way.

Again, the teacher gave them 2 and 2 and 2, to state how many 3 twos are. Then she asked how many are 4 twos, 2 threes, and 5 twos. In each instance the pupils represented the numbers by arranging pebbles in groups corresponding with these numbers.

This exercise was followed by a lesson to show how children were first taught multiplication. The teacher placed two pebbles on the table, then two more, and asked, "How many pebbles were on the table?"

C. "*Four* pebbles."

The teacher then made two marks on the board, then two more, thus:

11 11, and asked, "How many are two marks and two marks?"

C. "*Four* marks."

Then the teacher placed three pebbles on the table, then three more, and asked, "How many pebbles are on the, table?"

C. "Six pebbles."

She then made three marks thus, 111 111, and asked, "Three marks and *three* marks are how many marks?"

C. "Six marks."

Subsequently the teacher would change the question by saying, "How many are two times two pebbles?" "How many are two times two marks?" etc.¹

¹ "Proceedings of the Educational Convention held at Oswego, NY., February 11, 12, and 13, to examine into a system of Primary Instruction by Object Lessons." As an interesting resolution added to the report stated that teachers "*who do not clearly comprehend its [object teaching] principles, and who have not been trained in its [object teaching] methods, can result only in failure* [italics in original]. Thereby, encouraging teachers and administrators attend Oswego State Normal and Training School because the school was unique in teacher training for the United States.

APPENDIX D

EDWARD SHAW NEWSPAPER ARTICLE

In looking over the schedule of recitations our decision was first to visit Miss Mary D. Sheldon's room, and listen to a lesson in Roman History; for what subject is more difficult to teach objectively....Wholly unconscious of visitors, Miss Sheldon begins the lesson. First, the written reproductions of yesterday's lesson are read, criticized, and any misstatements [sic] corrected. Then, the advance work is taken up. It is a character sketch -part of a study on the character of Julius Caesar. The class has already seen the best picture of Julius Caesar procurable. It was hung in the class-room a day or two ago, and they were asked to look at it closely.

Miss Sheldon says: "I am going, to read you some stories about Julius Caesar, and I want you to tell me what sort of a man you think him to be:

“Once he was taken prisoner by pirates, and they demanded of him twenty talents for his ransom; he laughed at them for not understanding the value of their prisoner, and promised to give them fifty.

“At Apollonia, the master of the boat could not make good his passage, but ordered his sailors to tack about and return. Caesar, upon this, taking the man by the hand, said: "Go on, my friend, and fear nothing; you carry Caesar and his fortune."

“What sort of a man does he seem to be in these stories?"

Answers, such as "Self-confident "; "Believes in Caesar," are made and written upon the board.

"Again, in Africa, he was in such want of forage for his horses, that he was forced to feed with sea-weed, which he washed thoroughly to take off the saltness [sic], and then mixed with a little grass to make it taste better.'

"What sort of a man, Miss W-, was Caesar to think of using sea-weed in this way?"

"I think he was ingenious in finding resources."

"In the war against Pompey, he marched so fast that he left all his army behind him, except six hundred chosen men and five legions with which to put to sea in the very middle of winter, and, having passed the Ionian sea, sent back the ships to Brundisium to bring over the soldiers who were left behind in the march.'

"What quality does he show?"

Caesar called...mathematicians of his, time, and out of the systems he had before him, formed a new and more exact method of correcting the calendar [sic].

"In order to have made this new calendar, what must Caesar have been?"

Ans.-He must have been ingenious- must have had a scientific mind.

"Cicero said of Caesar: "When I see his hair so carefully arranged, and observe him adjusting it with one finger, I cannot imagine it should enter such a man's thoughts to subvert the Roman state." ‘

"What did Cicero see in Caesar?"

"Vanity," was answered, and then there was a thorough sounding of the class as to what they meant by vanity.

“As he was passing by a small village of the barbarians, with but few inhabitants, his companions asked the question among themselves, by way of mockery, if there were any canvassing for officers there. To which Caesar made answer, seriously: "For my part, I had rather be the first man among these fellows, than the second man in Rome.""

"Why does Caesar make this remark, Miss R.?"

Miss R.—Because he is ambitious.

Miss Sheldon – For whom, Mr. C.?

Mr. C. – For himself.

The idea of "personal ambition" is now before the class, and an interesting, though brief discussion, ensues upon the other kinds of ambition men may have, bringing up patriotism and philanthropy- ambition for the state and for humanity.

“He was able to dictate letters from on horseback, and to give directions to two who took notes at the same time.'

"What quality of mind would enable Caesar to do these things, Miss K.?"

There being hesitation, "Miss Sheldon asks further: "What sort of a mind is it that can keep two things at the same time before it, without any confusion?"

Miss K.—A clear mind.

“After the battle of Pharsalia, when Caesar saw some of his opponents dead upon the ground, and others dying, he said, with a groan: "This they would have; they brought me to this necessity!" and after the conflict was over he not only pardoned many of those who fought against him, but, further, to some gave honors and offices, as particularly to Brutus and Cassius; and Pompey's images that were thrown down, he set up again.'

“What sort of a spirit does Caesar show here?"

Some of the class think, a kind and forgiving spirit; others, that he was politic.

“In Gaul, when the army threatened cowardly desertion, Caesar said: 'If you abandon me, I shall still go on; the tenth legion will be enough for me.'

"What quality of character does Caesar show here, class?"

Upon recognition of raised hands, the answers come-determination, perseverance, courage.

Directing the class's attention to the list of characteristics which had been written upon the board as given, Miss Sheldon asks which made Caesar great, and why, of each. To one reply, that lawlessness made him so, follows the question: "Among what sort of people would a lawless man become great?" and the class is thus led to see that the people must have been lawless, too, to have Caesar go unpunished-to say nothing of the honor they paid him.

This study on the character of Caesar would deal further with his means of gaining and retaining power, and would be extended so as to amount almost to a study of the last days of the Republic.

In visiting the class afterward, I found that Miss Sheldon had reached the period of the Empire, and was dealing with the Church of the State, and the Christian Church, showing how these two great factors were working, bringing out the distinctive differences and the influence each was wielding in the Roman Empire-the most difficult place in all history, in our opinion, to make objective.

We must not neglect mentioning the picture-work, which Miss Sheldon makes a strong ally. Photographs of ruins and excavations, pictures of restorations, plans, plaster

casts, specimens, etc., are placed in the class-room for observation, giving the whole study, besides direct aid, an artistic setting.

With a marvelous mastery of her subject, with the ability to draw her materials from original sources, Miss Sheldon presents to her class, with rare force, typical examples in sufficient number for them to reach therefrom a correct judgment. She does not foist opinions upon her class. They make their own inferences, but they must sustain the inferences they make.

“Searching for truth” has become a hackneyed phrase to many. I, myself, must confess a little distrust of much that is so called. But such absolute fairness and impartiality as this young lady showed in all her work, irrespective of how it would come out, or what it might establish or disestablish, was real truth-seeking.

The whole spirit of what I am saying is beautifully illustrated by this circumstance:

A number of us were standing in the corridors after listening to several recitations, when Mr. — remarked: “What a profound argument you are making for Christianity, Miss Sheldon, in your treatment of the decline of the Roman Empire.”

“I am not making it, Mr. —; it is making itself. I did not know how it would come out. I did not think it would come out this way. I am glad, though, now it has,” she answered with that simplicity of statement characteristic of the great mind.