

Gendered Spaces at the University of Michigan at the Dawn of Coeducation

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Abstract:

Although the first decade of coeducation at the University of Michigan may appear to have been a golden age for women students, their admission was shaped by narrow and specific constraints rooted in an ideology that separated women and men into separate spheres of activity, which in turn installed women's subordination to men. Women students could only occupy domestic spaces, academic departments, and campus organizations in specific ways that did not threaten patriarchal hegemony. I believe focusing on space as a category of historical analysis reveals that both physical and non-physical spaces were a source of social power production and organization. Analyzing gendered spaces provides a new way to understand the social configurations and institutional hierarchies of the University of Michigan in the 1870s. Archival records from the University of Michigan Bentley Historical Library and Vassar College Special Collections narrate the gendered experiences of Michigan students during this first decade of coeducation. I suggest a new approach by shifting the focus onto the physical and conceptual spaces created and altered as a result of women's admission, allowing women's voices to narrate a different interpretation and revealing that coeducation at the University of Michigan was not as progressive as it has often been represented.

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Introduction

An American Girl

“It was against the canon of the Holy Scriptures that women should follow the pursuits of men, and that she should wield the saw and scalpel was to the last degree unfitting... but still the ladies of the University of Ortonville went daily to the dissecting-room, to the law-lectures and recitations, and still the world moved on.”

—
*An American Girl and Her Four Years in a Boys’ College, 1878*¹

Among the University of Michigan’s vast student portrait collection, there is one student who has two portraits on file at the Bentley Historical Library. Olive San Louie Anderson was a member of the class of 1875, and one of the first women students to attend the University of Michigan after coeducation was adopted in 1870.² One of her portraits features Anderson dressed in a dark gown with a ruffled neckline and her long hair pulled back in an intricate coil. She is staring into the distance and only her profile is shown. The more notable find is the other portrait, which features Anderson facing the

¹ SOLA [Olive San Louie Anderson], *An American Girl and Her Four Years in a Boys' College* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1878), 102-103.

² I have chosen to use the term “women students” versus “female students” in order to clarify that I am speaking about students who identified as women. I understand gender and sex as two different categories that are often conflated, but in reality, have distinct meanings and associations that are not necessarily related. The term female is strongly associated with biological classifications and my primary research purpose is to explore the social construction of gender rather than sex. When I use the term sex, it is in the context that the historical actors would have understood it as a term that encompassed both sex and gender.

photographer head on and dressed in men's clothing. Her hair is parted down the middle and appears much shorter in a masculine style. She is wearing a suit, vest, and patterned necktie. Both portraits are among the official student portrait collection and are taken by the same photographer, C.C. Randall of Detroit, who is credited as the photographer of most of her classmates' student portraits. It is not clear why this portrait is at the Bentley Historical Library. What motivated Anderson to dress this way? Did her classmates or the photographer know it was her when she posed for the photograph? What is shocking is that in many nineteenth century urban spaces, cross-dressing was illegal or at the very least, socially unconscionable.³ Portraits aside, Olive San Louie Anderson is an intriguing historical subject for many reasons. She especially interests me because of her refusal to let others categorize her. She played with not only gender, but also identity more generally. I have found that it is difficult to place modern categories of gender on Olive San Louie Anderson as they did not exist in 1871 and fail to capture the full political and social context of her choices.⁴ There is also a good chance she would have rejected these labels anyway.

³ Susan Stryker, *Transgender History: The Roots of Today's Revolution*, 2nd ed. (New York: Seal Press, 2017), 46-49.

⁴ Modern terminology, such as genderqueer, transgender or non-binary, are not appropriate labels to use retroactively as the full social and political context of these words cannot be put onto a body in the past without erasing the context in which Anderson formed her own identity. I use she/hers as pronouns for Anderson because those are the terms she used when referring to herself.



Figure 1: Olive San Louie Anderson, Class of 1875⁵

⁵ "Olive San Louie Anderson, Class of 1875," Box 1, Folder: Anderson, Olive San Louie, Michigan Historical Collections, University of Michigan student portraits circa 1870-1920, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan.



Figure 2: Olive San Louie Anderson in men's clothing⁶

In the 1870s, social organization was dominated by the Victorian belief that men and women belonged to separate spheres. These separate spheres were linked to ideas about inherent differences between men and women that were rooted in both religious and scientific knowledge. These separate spheres also emphasized the boundaries between the distinct activities and personality traits that men and women could appropriately embody. Men held the most power in the public spheres of politics, law, and the economy. Women were confined to domesticity and the home, but this granted

⁶ "Olive San Louie Anderson in men's clothing," Box 1, Folder: Anderson, Olive San Louie, Michigan Historical Collections, University of Michigan student portraits circa 1870-1920.

them some moral and spiritual authority stemming from these spaces.⁷ The separate spheres are useful for analysis because they were constructed conceptual spaces that dictated the physical and non-physical spaces women and men could appropriately occupy. Women at Michigan, like Olive San Louie Anderson, helped navigate the boundaries of these spheres via the challenges and provocations stemming from their enrollment. Feminist scholars of space have noted, “Boundaries have themselves been shown to be ambiguous, liminal spaces and remarkably permeable.”⁸ The legacy of the first women students at Michigan are a testament to that.

An American Girl and Her Four Years at A Boys’ College

In 1878, under the pseudonym SOLA, Olive San Louie Anderson published *An American Girl and Her Four Years at A Boys’ College*, which detailed the experiences of Wilhelmine (Will) Elliot, a young woman who enrolls at the fictional University of Ortonville at the beginning of the school’s experiment with coeducation. *An American Girl* is considered a roman à clef, based on Olive San Louie Anderson’s own experiences as a University of Michigan student. Her contemporaries hotly debated the accuracy of her novel in the student newspaper *Chronicle*. More recently, University of Michigan historians have disagreed over the degree of truth of certain events in her novel. Despite the fact that *An American Girl* is fiction, there are still many useful observations that can be derived from its pages. Anderson’s knowledge and experience are filtered through a fictional lens, but her recollections were undoubtedly grounded in her real experience.

⁷ Lynn Gordon, *Gender and Higher Education in the Progressive Era* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1990), 13.

⁸ Kathryn Beebe, Angela Davis, and Kathryn Gleadle, “Introduction: Space, Place and Gendered Identities: Feminist History and the Spatial Turn,” *Women’s History Review* 21, no. 4 (2012): 525.

Additionally, the contemporary debate around the novel may provide commentary on why alumni and students did not want the university to be represented in the way Anderson portrays her experience at Michigan.

In the University of Michigan's special collections, there is a copy of *An American Girl* that was annotated by Anderson's peer, Cora Agnes Benneson, and attests to the general accuracy of the novel. The major point of rejection from Benneson is the last three chapters, which detail the main character's struggle with a love interest and her senior year. Benneson writes, "From this point I call the book a second-rate novel. It does not represent truly our life here and it was not fair to the other girls for Jo Andersen to write it."⁹ Although this annotation provides evidence for disapproval of the novel, it can also be interpreted to demonstrate that much of the novel is accurate before the ninth chapter. The placement of Benneson's annotation at the front of the final three chapters and her other comments relating to the novel's accuracy demonstrate that she believed that much of the novel was indeed true. As a member of the class of 1878, she was a contemporary of Anderson and undoubtedly swapped stories about the first days of coeducation with the small community of women who made up about ten percent of the student body.¹⁰ Furthermore, Benneson does corroborate instances in the novel after the ninth chapter, which may demonstrate that her disapproval was based on the story of Will and her love interest, Randolph Guilford. It is fair to say that some contemporaries may

⁹ SOLA [Olive San Louie Anderson], *An American Girl*, 190. Annotated by Cora Agnes Benneson and found in Special Collections Research Center at the Harlan Hatcher Graduate Library at the University of Michigan.

¹⁰ "University of Michigan Enrollment Regular Session Enrollment by Schools and Colleges," Box 25, Folder: Reports & Statistics: Enrollment Statistics- long-term 1840-1960, University of Michigan Office of the Registrar records 1840-2003, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan. When Anderson graduated, there were 101 women and 1,026 men enrolled during 1875-1876.

have viewed the legacy of coeducation as threatened by Anderson's romantic tale, in which the two characters spent unsupervised time together in the ninth chapter. The chapter additionally had the suggestive title: "A Possible Result of Co-education."

There are many similarities between the author's own experiences and that of her heroine. For example, Anderson's friends at the University of Michigan called her "Jo" after the character in *Little Women*. In the January 19, 1878 issue, the *Chronicle* reveals that, "the author [of *An American Girl*] is undoubtedly the famous Miss "Jo" Anderson, of '75."¹¹ Anderson's family called her "Louie," and her character Wilhelmine also goes by the masculine nickname "Will." Both Anderson and Will use their share of their father's inheritance to attend a university that has recently opened its doors to women. Will attended the University of Ortonville and Anderson attended the University of Michigan.

The novel also utilizes familiar names and landmarks at the University of Michigan. When Will arrives by train, the steward suggests she may find housing around town: "There is Mrs. Hodges, in William street, No. 94— first-rate place; Mrs. Meyers, in Thompson Street; and Mrs. Smith, Jefferson Avenue, No. 59."¹² All three of these streets are nearby Michigan's campus. Familiar faces also appear in the novel. Prexy was the nickname of the university president in the novel and of James Burrill Angell, president of the University of Michigan during Anderson's school years.¹³ There is also mention of the Students' Christian Association in *An American Girl*, which was a popular University

¹¹ "Various Topics," *Chronicle* (University of Michigan), January 19, 1878.

¹² SOLA [Olive San Louie Anderson], *An American Girl*, 35.

¹³ E.C. Morris, "Dear Old 'Prexy,'" 1912, Rena Marguerite Lundell scrapbook, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan.

of Michigan organization that evolved to include women when they arrived.¹⁴ Even Will's discussion of her classmates' various churches around town aligns with what existed in Ann Arbor during the 1870s. The geographic diversity of Will's class also closely resembles enrollment statistics of the University of Michigan during the time Anderson matriculated. She describes her excitement at having both a "Sandwich-Islander" and a Japanese man among her classmates. The University of Michigan also enrolled one student from Hawaii in the 1871-1872 school year and one Japanese student in 1872-1873.¹⁵ Finally, the accolades of Will and Jo Anderson were identical. Will had the honor of being the only woman in her class who was granted an appointment to speak at commencement.¹⁶ Jo Anderson also had this honor among the University of Michigan class of 1875.

One fiery scene in the novel involves Will dramatically burning her corset while committing herself to dress reform. Although Will's friends do not necessarily agree with her ideology, they are amused by her hatred of corsets.¹⁷ This anecdote may help explain the second student portrait of Anderson in the archive, where she appears in men's clothing. Based on the large number of established similarities between Will in *An American Girl* and Olive San Louie Anderson's own experience, it is possible that Anderson tested out her ideas of dress reform in posing for this portrait while cross-dressed. Ann Heilmann argues female cross-dressing in fin-de-siècle feminist literature

¹⁴ SOLA [Olive San Louie Anderson], *An American Girl*, 142.

¹⁵ "University of Michigan Enrollment Outside Continental United States Since 1847-48," Box 25, Folder: Reports & Statistics: Enrollment Statistics- long-term 1840-1960, University of Michigan Office of the Registrar records 1840-2003, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan. Cora Agnes Benneson noted that the "Sandwich-Islander" was Lucy Andrus [Andrews] of '76 and the Japanese student was Toyama Saito.

¹⁶ SOLA [Olive San Louie Anderson], *An American Girl*, 257.

¹⁷ SOLA [Olive San Louie Anderson], *An American Girl*, 100.

conceptualizes the central concerns of the first women's movement through a metaphor of masquerade.¹⁸ Perhaps, Anderson's portrait was a political statement of this nature as she was a noted advocate of women's rights, particularly suffrage and dress reform. Anderson and Will's actions also demonstrate their disillusionment with the constraints and narrow boundaries of their sphere.

The portrait of Anderson in men's clothing also features her with short hair, which may be explained by a plot point in the novel. In *An American Girl*, Will goes to a barber who cuts her hair very short without her consent. She cries to her roommates, "O girls! he has ruined my head for life—ruined!"¹⁹ In the annotated copy of the novel, Cora Agnes Benneson identifies the story as, "A true incident from Jo Anderson's experience."²⁰ Although the photograph is undated, the portrait of Anderson in men's clothing was likely taken after this dramatic haircut.

Gendered Spaces and Golden Ages

As indebted as I am to Ruth Bordin's historical study of women at the University of Michigan, I intend to challenge her argument that the first decade of coeducation was a golden age for women students. In *Women at Michigan*, Bordin wrote, "In many ways the 1870s was a golden decade for women studying at Michigan. Exotic, competent, attractive, bright, and not yet too numerous enough to be a threat to male hegemony, women found a degree of acceptance that in later years proved almost impossible to

¹⁸ Ann Heilmann, "(Un)Masking Desire: Cross-dressing and the Crisis of Gender in New Woman Fiction," *Journal of Victorian Culture* 5, no.1 (2000): 84-85.

¹⁹ SOLA [Olive San Louie Anderson], *An American Girl*, 169.

²⁰ SOLA [Olive San Louie Anderson], *An American Girl*, 168. Annotated by Cora Agnes Benneson.

duplicate.”²¹ While I understand why Bordin interpreted the 1870s this way in comparison to later decades, I believe that my examination of this history from a new perspective complicates her narrative. Alternatively, I argue that coeducation transformed old and created new spaces at the University of Michigan, which reinforced hegemonic ideas of gender and exclusion. Although the classroom and many student organizations made room for women, these spaces remained masculine and patriarchal.

I further disagree with Bordin’s argument that women had more opportunities in this decade because even though women in the first generation of coeducation were allowed to occupy specific spaces, it did not entail their true inclusion or take away from the fact that these spaces were structured around oppression and hierarchy. The spaces that had existed before coeducation had been intensely hierarchical despite the fact that many men students believed their social structures were democratic.²² Because of the student body’s heterogeneity, men students had conceptualized their spaces as egalitarian when in reality their rejection of broader social configurations only allowed them to develop their own system of hierarchy among elite, white, Protestant young men with new criteria. At Michigan, women-only spaces had to be created right away, which tells us that men controlled many if not all of the spaces on campus. The addition of women to campus meant that the only spaces remaining in their “egalitarian” hierarchy were at the bottom underneath all other men.

²¹ Ruth Bordin, *Women at Michigan: The "Dangerous Experiment," 1870s to the Present* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1999), 12.

²² Helen Lefkowitz Horowitz, *Campus Life: Undergraduate Cultures from the End of the Eighteenth Century to the Present* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 13.

I rely on space as a conceptual tool of analysis to reinterpret the status of women students during the first decade of coeducation at the University of Michigan. I believe focusing on spaces as a source of social power production is important to understanding the social configurations and structural organization of the University of Michigan in the 1870s. I broadly define “space” as both conceptual and physical structures based on relational significance and the potential to reproduce social hierarchies. For example, a book club may not occupy a specific room or building, but I would categorize it as a space because of the general understanding that those who occupy it find relational meaning and significance and it also has the ability to reproduce hierarchy.²³

My hope is that by focusing on space as a category for analysis, I am able to ameliorate some of the issues that stem from using gender and other categories of identity as tools of historical analysis. Joan Wallach Scott famously theorized that gender is a useful tool in which we can evolve our understanding of power formations.²⁴ In some instances, however, historians’ reliance on gender as a category of analysis has rendered gender as universal and ahistorical. Historian Jeanne Boydston argues that categories of analysis are not analytically neutral because they replicate our understandings of the

²³ Leif Jerram argues that “space” has increasingly been employed as a category for analysis despite there being no consensus on its meaning. He argues that “space” is material and “place” is meaningful. I have chosen to use the term “space” instead of “place” because the spaces I have chosen to discuss in this thesis cannot be reduced to either being material or meaningful; they are both. Therefore, I will use the broader term “space” because within this framework I understand “place” to be defined as a specific point within space. My definitions are part of my evolving understanding of the term and its use as a category of analysis for historians. I acknowledge that my definitions are both incomplete and informed by my own understandings. Leif Jerram, “Space: A Useless Category for Historical Analysis?” *History and Theory* 52, no. 3 (October 2013): 400-419.

²⁴ Joan Wallach Scott, “Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis,” *The American Historical Review* 91, no. 5 (December 1986): 1053-1075.

world.²⁵ Gender is a historical process that is never fixed in time or a location. While it is true that “space” is also historically conceptualized like any potential category of analysis, space is distinct from identities such as gender or race and how they function as historical processes. I make no claim that our conceptualization of space is universal, but utilizing a broad understanding of space and structure provides an opportunity to return to viewing categories of identity such as gender as historical processes.

Iris Marion Young argues that theorizing categories of identity around structures provides an account of the constitution and causes of social inequality.²⁶ For example, assessing the separate spheres as structures helps us understand how the Gilded Age sexual hierarchy placed women below men despite the assertion by many that the spheres were complimentary. By reframing my archival research around spaces as a category of study, I am able to explore these experiences of social inequality that other historians have overlooked when interpreting the first decade of coeducation as a golden age for women. Young also postulates that by focusing on structure as a historian, individual perpetrators are relieved from direct blame for oppression and domination, and interprets them instead as simply actors complicit in its production.²⁷ Thinking through history in this way allows me to discuss how institutions as spaces were systemically complicit without having to address individuals who contributed to an oppressive structure. Furthermore, recognizing social inequality and sexism as systemic issues help advance

²⁵ Jeanne Boydston, “Gender as a Question of Historical Analysis,” *Gender & History* 20, no. 3 (November 2008): 559–560.

²⁶ Iris Marion Young, *On Female Body Experience: “Throwing Like a Girl” and Other Essays* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 21.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

the notion that the term golden age is not an appropriate categorization of women students' experiences at the University of Michigan in the 1870s.

In *Women at Michigan*, Ruth Bordin argues that alumnae resented Olive San Louie Anderson's fictionalized account of the early days of coeducation and that there were no contemporary accounts to corroborate the novel.²⁸ This categorization is proven false by corroboration from reviewers in the *Chronicle*, *The Michigan Alumnus*, and other student recollections.

In the February 2, 1878 edition of the *Chronicle*, Anderson's *An American Girl* was positively reviewed and described as accurate: "In fine, we can say in conclusion that the book is interesting, accurate, well written, and in every way worthy of the reception which we doubt not it will receive. The story and the manner in which it is told are alike creditable to our alma mater."²⁹ This excerpt from the *Chronicle* does not align with Bordin's golden age interpretation and is in fact challenged by the contemporary reviewer who believed that Anderson's novel was accurate. Although these students did not attend classes with Anderson in 1871, they are reviewing the accuracy of her work only three years after her graduation. It is likely that the editors would have been her peers while she attended from 1871 until 1875.³⁰

In 1924, *The Michigan Alumnus* published excerpts of *An American Girl*. In a later issue, one alum wrote in to the editor, "The excerpts from San Louie Anderson's

²⁸ Ruth Bordin, *Women at Michigan: The "Dangerous Experiment," 1870s to the Present* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1999), 12-13.

²⁹ "An American Girl, and Her Four Years in a Boys' College," *Chronicle* (University of Michigan), February 2, 1878.

³⁰ For example, Cora Agnes Benneson was an editor for the *Chronicle* in the second semester of 1877-1878. She would have been a freshman when Anderson was a senior in the 1874-1875 school year.

‘Four Years in a Boys’ College,’ give a very vivid portrayal of affairs as they were at the opening of the college year in the fall of ’71. It makes one seem like living over again those hallowed days of the long ago, for I was one of the 102 who graduated with her from the Literary Department in ’75.’³¹ As additional evidence, the editor of the novel, Caroline Hubbard Kleinstuck, was a member of Anderson’s graduating class, too.³² It is important to note that these reviewers and alumni would have had a more contemporary recollection of the early days of coeducation than Bordin acknowledges.

Although some alumni who studied at Michigan in the 1870s attested that women’s experiences were entirely positive, including one alum who wrote into the *Chronicle* challenging the editors’ review of *An American Girl*, that does not mean all women felt this way.³³ I believe it is unwise to dismiss Anderson’s novel as a totally fictionalized account without working to extract elements of actual experience from its pages and without examining alternative motivations of some alumnae who spoke out against its accuracy. Contemporary debate around the novel may provide a window into why alumnae did not want the university to be represented in the way Anderson portrays her experience at Michigan. I argue that Bordin misinterprets alumnae’s reasoning for rejecting the novel. Discontent was not due to the novel being an inaccurate representation of early women student’s experience, but about the romantic plotline between the heroine and another student. Alumnae did not want their experience reduced to inappropriate flirtations with men and that is why one alumna wrote that *An American Girl* was “a little volume that the university girls who have read it look upon as a

³¹ Frank P. Wood, letter to the editor, *The Michigan Alumnus*, May 8, 1926, 575.

³² “Four Years in a Boys’ College,” *The Michigan Alumnus*, January 16, 1926, 285.

³³ Correspondence,” *Chronicle* (University of Michigan), March 16, 1878.

dishonor to the university, and one through which they have been deeply wronged.”³⁴

Rejection of the novel was based on these terms, not over any other inaccuracy in describing early women’s experiences at Michigan.

Other scholars, including Dorothy McGuigan and Lynn Gordon posit that women did experience segregation and discrimination at Michigan during the 1870s.³⁵ In contrast to Bordin, McGuigan and Gordon have a more positive interpretation of Anderson’s *An American Girl*. What we also potentially learn from Anderson’s work is how she wanted to be perceived, as Will Elliot, and how women generally negotiated the masculine spaces they were confronted with as a result of coeducation. Bordin’s misinterpretation of the critical response to the novel and the great deal of corroboration by other students render it unfounded to dismiss Anderson’s work. I view *An American Girl* as a site of knowledge production that challenges the golden age narrative and offers social truths that are not otherwise documented elsewhere. For all of these above reasons, this thesis utilizes Anderson’s novel as a window into the first decade of coeducation at Michigan.

In this thesis, I will explore the construction of gendered spaces at the University of Michigan during the first decade of coeducation (1870-1880) and their role in shaping women students’ experiences. In the first chapter, I will discuss domestic spaces– student housing and chapels– in this period and how they reinforced prevailing gender ideology at Michigan. In the second chapter, I will discuss how women challenged boundaries of the women’s sphere in the professional schools. I will endeavor to answer what types of

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Dorothy McGuigan, *A Dangerous Experiment: 100 Years of Women at the University of Michigan* (Ann Arbor, MI: Center for Continuing Education of Women, 1970), 1-2.
Lynn Gordon, *Gender and Higher Education in the Progressive Era* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1990), 25-26.

knowledge women could possess in the late nineteenth century and how these women students may have defied gendered expectations of the types of professions available to them during this time period. In the third chapter, I will explore student organizations on campus and their inclusion and exclusion of women students, which was based on predominant constructions of gender.

Women's admission was shaped by narrow and specific constraints rooted in an ideology that separated women and men into separate spheres of activity, which in turn installed women's subordination to men. My focus on space as a category of historical analysis reveals that both physical and non-physical spaces were a source for social hierarchy production. Analyzing gendered spaces provides a new way to understand the social configurations and institutional organization of the University of Michigan in the 1870s. Archival records from the University of Michigan Bentley Historical Library and Vassar College Special Collections narrate the gendered experiences of Michigan students during this first decade of education. I suggest a new approach by shifting the focus onto the physical and conceptual spaces created and altered as a result of women's admission, allowing women's voices to narrate a different interpretation and revealing that coeducation at the University of Michigan was not as progressive as it has often been represented.

Chapter I

Domestic Spaces

“They say ‘Boys will be boys,’ which seems to mean ‘Boys will be horrid.’ At any rate they never say it, when boys are agreeable.”

Mary O. Marston A.B. 1877¹

In January 1870, Madelon Stockwell carried her books and belongings onto the University of Michigan’s campus as the first woman to enroll. A short time later, the new president, James Burrill Angell, graciously accepted the admission of women and regarded the new students as equals to their male counterparts, unlike most of his predecessors and contemporaries. In 1858, when the “woman question” was brought up at a Board of Regents meeting, the record reflects that the Regents believed admitting women students to Michigan was a “dangerous experiment” that would ruin the institution and any women involved.² Despite their trepidation, the fight for women students’ enrollment at Michigan prevailed after the Civil War. Stockwell’s enrollment was the result of citizen-led insistence that the state of Michigan’s largest public university accept women students, although many in Ann Arbor did not welcome her.

¹ Mary O. Marston to her father, December 20, 1874, Mary O. Marston Papers, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan.

² University of Michigan Board of Regents, “Report on the Admission of Females,” September 29, 1858, Proceedings of the University of Michigan Board of Regents, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan.

Upon her arrival, she was met with pointed stares and tougher entrance examinations than her peers faced. In the writings of one student, Stockwell was referred to as the “She-sophomore.”³ Thirty-three other women joined her later that fall in the Literary, Law, and Medical Departments. Stockwell would go on to graduate from the Literary Department with the class of 1872 alongside Frances Amelia Gage.⁴

During the 1870s, the number of women students at the University of Michigan grew from a single individual to a collective comprising a little over one-fifth of the Literary Department and about 13% of the overall student body.⁵ Despite the fact that women students were challenging gender norms by attending the coeducational university, expectations stemming from the women’s sphere still shaped and constrained their experience. Dorothy McGuigan argues that the enrollment of two of the first African American students— Literary Department student John Summerfield Davidson and law student Gabriel Franklin Hargo— in 1868 did not stir up nearly as much controversy as Stockwell’s enrollment two years later because there was no mention of their enrollment in the press or student correspondence.⁶ This is surprising due to the fact that Gabriel Franklin Hargo would become only the second African American to earn a law degree in

³ Dorothy McGuigan, *A Dangerous Experiment: 100 Years of Women at the University of Michigan* (Ann Arbor, MI: Center for Continuing Education of Women, 1970), 1-2.

⁴ In *Women at Michigan*, Ruth Bordin refers to Ms. Gage as “Amanda,” though I can find no record of her being referred to by this name.

⁵ “University of Michigan Enrollment Regular Session Enrollment by Schools and Colleges,” Box 25, Folder: Reports & Statistics: Enrollment Statistics- long-term 1840-1960, University of Michigan Office of the Registrar records 1840-2003, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan.

⁶ Dorothy McGuigan, *A Dangerous Experiment: 100 Years of Women at the University of Michigan* (Ann Arbor, MI: Center for Continuing Education of Women, 1970), 2. The Bentley Historical Library recognizes Samuel Codes Watson, a medical student who enrolled in 1853 for two years, as the first African American student.

the United States.⁷ If McGuigan's findings were true, then a woman taking up space on campus was deemed more threatening an invasion to the white male hegemony at Michigan than African American men enrolling on all-white campus.

Women pursuing higher education was not unknown when coeducation was adopted at Michigan. Although only 0.7% of women between the ages of eighteen and twenty-one attended an institution of higher education in 1870, other institutions such as Oberlin and Antioch had been coeducational since the antebellum period.⁸ Still, many continued to view women leaving home to attend college as a breach of normal behavior. Therefore, the women who did pursue higher education had to do so on terms that made sense for prevailing gender ideology. The intention behind allowing women to attend institutions of higher education was to make them better nurturers (i.e. teachers). Many women at Michigan did go on to pursue careers in education, but many women also transcended these expectations.

Across the country, student life in the late nineteenth century was marked by masculine violence and class competitions. At Michigan, freshman Lucy Salmon wrote home about her first experience with the violent rushes between sophomores and freshmen:

I attended chapel this morning and witnessed the first 'rush.' I happened to be the first one of the girls going down stairs and so saw the whole performance without being in any danger. Two of the professors came down to stop it, but they might have known it would do no good, for they were perfectly powerless and in fact were 'rushed' about as much as any of our poor freshmen. The sophs were all out in full force and waiting at the foot of the stairs for the classical freshs. I wish I might describe the scene that ensued. I had heard of college rushes every day

⁷ Margaret A. Leary and Barbara J. Snow, "Gabriel Franklin Hargo: Michigan Law 1870," June 9, 2009, University of Michigan Law School.

⁸ Mabel Newcomer, *A Century of Higher Education for American Women* (New York: Harper & Row, 1959), 46.

since I had been here and thought I knew what they were, but such a systemic going at it, I had never dreamed of.⁹

Rushes were characteristic of Michigan student life prior to coeducation and were also a form of organized violence that pitted underclassmen against other classes in order to demonstrate their class spirit and individual vigor. Despite the fact that many characterize women's admission as a pacifying force, the rushes continued for at least a few years after women arrived. As evidence, Lucy Salmon was a freshman in 1872, so the rushes went on for at least two years after coeducation began. In her letter, she does state that one source told her that the rushes "were not nearly as bad as they used to be before the girls came."¹⁰ In the late 1870s, Cora Agnes Benneson also noted that the rushes no longer occurred "when the girls are present."¹¹ Still, the violence did not end when coeducation began as many have argued. Women would have to carve out their own space amidst a student body that was redefining masculinity in response to women's inclusion.

Overall, women's admission to the University of Michigan was conditioned under the constraints of the women's sphere. Although the boundaries of this sphere were shifting to allow women to pursue higher education alongside men, both their presence and the spaces they could occupy were extremely gendered. Spaces of domestic

⁹ Louise Fargo Brown, *Apostle of Democracy: The Life of Lucy Maynard Salmon* (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishing, 1943), 48-49.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 49. In *Women at Michigan*, Ruth Bordin interprets Lucy Salmon's quote as being about men in general. By re-reading the letters in Louise Fargo Brown's *Apostle of Democracy*, I was able to gather that Salmon was actually referring to rushes not being "as bad as they used to be."

¹¹ SOLA [Olive San Louie Anderson], *An American Girl*, 52. Annotated by Cora Agnes Benneson and found in Special Collections Research Center at the Harlan Hatcher Graduate Library at the University of Michigan.

authority, such as student housing and religious spaces constitute an important set of such spaces that women negotiated on terms different from their peers.

Roomers and Boarders

Although men and women students sometimes lived in mixed boarding houses before *in loco parentis* was adopted in 1902, the living spaces of students were still very segregated and revealed the severe social constrictions placed on women in this period.¹² Once on campus, there were two housing options for women attending the University of Michigan before the era of dormitories and formal housing arrangements. Women who lived in Ann Arbor typically stayed at home. The remaining option was the private residences willing to accept women students as roomers and boarders. The term boarding house refers to both the private residence spaces where women lived and rented rooms as “roomers” and the places they took board or ate their meals as “boarders.” These boarding houses became important spaces for early women students as they faced discrimination from townspeople and members of the university community. These typically homosocial spaces were sites of empathy and shared experience.

At the dawn of coeducation, boarding houses immediately became vital spaces for women students. In their analysis of Olive San Louie Anderson’s *An American Girl and Her Four Years in a Boys’ College*, Elisabeth Israels Perry and Jennifer Ann Price point out that although the novel takes place at the University of Ortonville, most of the

¹² *In loco parentis* refers to the university acting in a parental capacity toward its students. Although paternalism existed at Michigan before 1902, during the first few decades of coeducation there were no formal rules regulating interactions between men and women outside of the classroom. The university also did not sponsor any formal housing arrangements for students, which would change once Myra Jordan became the second Dean of Women.

important character interactions take place within private and domestic spaces, such as the home of the heroine, Will Elliot, and her boarding house rooms on campus. Will may leave these spaces to go on adventures, but she always returns to where she can find refuge in feminine support.¹³ Undoubtedly, Anderson's experience in the boarding houses was central to her overall experience as a Michigan student as she portrays a great deal of Will's narrative in these spaces.

A member of the class of 1877, Mary Marston's letters to her parents demonstrate how Elisabeth Israels Perry and Jennifer Ann Price's analysis of Anderson's reliance on feminine space as a setting in *An American Girl* is equally relevant to the unfiltered recollections of women students at the University of Michigan in the 1870s. On an almost daily basis, Mary ritually calls on other women by visiting their residences. In her letters home, she recollects her frequent calls on two prominent local women, Mrs. Ford and Mrs. Angell, wife of the president of the university. Her calls also included visiting other women students. On November 7, 1874, she and her friend Hattie called on twenty freshman girls, of which thirteen were home.¹⁴ The institution of visiting other women—"that endless trooping of women to each other's homes for social purposes" was an important ritual for nineteenth century women because it extended the geographical range of their sphere.¹⁵ Visiting other women allowed women students to expand the range of spaces they could occupy at Michigan.

¹³ SOLA [Olive San Louie Anderson], *An American Girl and Her Four Years in a Boys' College*, eds. Elisabeth Israels Perry and Jennifer Ann Price (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2006), 29.

¹⁴ Mary O. Marston to her mother, November 8, 1874, Mary O. Marston Papers.

¹⁵ Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, "The Female World of Love and Ritual: Relations Between Women in Nineteenth-Century America," *Signs* 1, no. 1 (Autumn, 1975): 10.

At the beginning of her sophomore year, Mary Marston wrote to her parents about her struggles in trying to find a boarding house where she could rent a room.

Right after breakfast yesterday morning Jessie and I started out to look at rooms. We went to a good many places, but it was a repetition of my experience last year. Looking up a boarding place is about as dismal work as I ever did. Jessie was a good deal discouraged, and did not want to room alone anyway. So before night we made an arrangement with Mrs. Hammond, by which she lets us have this room and the whole of the large closet for four dollars and a half a week.¹⁶

Finances were important considerations when seeking out boarding houses. Mary decided to share a room with her friend Jessie in order to please her parents and her friend, although she made it clear that she preferred her own room.¹⁷ Most of the students attending Michigan during this period were upper middle class or wealthier. Next, she had to consider where she was going to eat her meals.

During her sophomore year, Mary Marston boarded with Mrs. Adams, the wife of professor Charles Kendall Adams. She and other women friends gathered to dine at the Adams' residence for every meal, including afternoon tea. The boarders were expected to arrive on time and received penalties for lateness. In one instance Mary was punished with a hard week's work for her tardiness, although she told her mother that it had been worth the trouble because she had enjoyed spending time with other women students before arriving late.¹⁸ These boarding houses also appear to have been generally segregated by gender. Mary only discusses dining with other women in her letters that mention boarding at the Adams. Irving Pond, a member of the class of 1879, also boarded only among the company of other men as evidenced by a photograph on file at the

¹⁶ Mary O. Marston to her mother, September 22, 1874, Mary O. Marston Papers.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Mary O. Marston to her mother, November 8, 1874, Mary O. Marston Papers.

Bentley Historical Library. It pictures Pond and thirty-five other men at their boarding house. In some instances, students chose not to take board in the traditional way, and instead formed unique arrangements called eating clubs.



Figure 3: Boarding House of Irving Pond, class of 1879¹⁹

All of the students boarding at Leonora Kelly's home were part of such clubs. She wrote to a friend in 1877 that her house was absolutely full of students, but she did not board any of them because the students had formed clubs, purchasing their own food and hiring someone to prepare it for them, which was less expensive than outright boarding.²⁰

Lucy Salmon was also part of an eating club that included "nine girls and a few innocent

¹⁹ "Where Irving Boarded, U of M," Folder: Off-campus: Student Rooming Houses (Exteriors), University of Michigan Photographs Vertical File, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan.

²⁰ Leonora Kelly to Mary Hellen Light, September 2, 1877, Leonora Kelly Letters, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan.

freshmen.”²¹ She wrote home that she was only paying \$2.50 each week for her board as part of the eating club when it would normally be \$4.00 to board with a private family.²²

In *An American Girl*, Will also writes to her friend at Vassar that her and her friends are “going to club it” the next year and have already found a woman to cook their meals. She tells her friend that they plan to invite a select company of only the best boys from their class, a few freshmen girls, and themselves.²³ This mixed group became important socially as all meals were shared together. In the Bentley’s archives there is also a photograph dated 1876 of The Chaucer Hash Club, which features a group of six men and three women who dined together. These clubs were out of the direct supervision of landladies or other authority figures. The only non-students in their company were the women they hired to cook their meals, who as hired help, cannot be considered chaperones.

²¹ Brown, *Apostle of Democracy*, 54.

²² *Ibid.*, 55.

²³ SOLA [Olive San Louie Anderson], *An American Girl*, 130.

Because Anderson and Salmon lived in the same boarding house with the Finleys, it is likely that they were part of the same eating club, although Salmon reports there were only women in it.



Figure 4: *The Chaucer Hash Club, 1876*²⁴

In *An American Girl*, Will makes an effort to dissuade her friend at Vassar from passing judgment on the eating clubs, which demonstrates that they were to some degree out of the ordinary.²⁵ It is a fair assessment that students were exercising a considerable amount of autonomy by forming these arrangements outside of traditional boarding. The mixing of men and women in this informal arena probably made many adults uncomfortable due to the unsupervised social interaction that was uncharacteristic in an era where the separate spheres dictated that homosocial spaces be the dominant sites of friendship and socialization. Instances of men and women students mixing did not mean they were no longer constrained by dominant gender ideology. In fact, tensions between mixed eating clubs, boarding houses, and the separate spheres reveal that domestic spaces around campus were intended to be homosocial; transgressing these configurations could

²⁴ “The Chaucer Hash Club, Folder: Eating Clubs, University of Michigan Photographs Vertical File, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan.

²⁵ SOLA [Olive San Louie Anderson], *An American Girl*, 130-131.

be considered radical and dangerous. As a result, many women students chose to remain in women-only spaces in order to protect coeducation as a fledgling institution and for their own comfort.

Ann Arbor Landladies & Dr. Clarke

Ann Arbor landladies served an immensely important economic function for the college town, but they often reinforced the community's exclusion of women. In general, townswomen initially treated women students with a great deal of contempt. Madelon Stockwell recounted that she once attended a party of over 200 people and the only other women that spoke to her the whole evening were the hostess and her daughter.²⁶ The "college widows" or local women who relied on the college students for social engagement were also probably agitated by the new competition women students posed.²⁷ Years after her graduation, Caroline Kleinstuck Hubbard, discussed the discrimination she experienced as one of the first women on campus. "Whether they thought we were deaf or that it didn't matter how rude they were to such freaks, the words, 'There's a university girl' were heard by us on every hand— at lectures, in the streets, and even at church... The antagonism of the townspeople was in some ways harder to bear than that of the few students who did protest."²⁸ This discrimination loomed over the first women students' attempts to find housing.

²⁶ O.W. Stephenson, *Ann Arbor, The First Hundred Years* (Ann Arbor, MI: Ann Arbor Chamber of Commerce, 1927), 267.

²⁷ SOLA [Olive San Louie Anderson], *An American Girl and Her Four Years in a Boys' College*, eds. Elisabeth Israels Perry and Jennifer Ann Price (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2006), 59.

²⁸ Dorothy McGuigan, *A Dangerous Experiment: 100 Years of Women at the University of Michigan* (Ann Arbor, MI: Center for Continuing Education of Women, 1970), 32.

An American Girl and Her Four Years in a Boys' College chronicles the difficulties women students faced in their quest to find housing soon after coeducation was adopted. Will relies on the university's steward to help her find a landlord who will accept women roomers. After the steward lists off a number of landladies she may approach to find housing, Will is surprised to learn that the women of the university town are not all widowed, but in fact have a great deal of power when it comes to boarding and rooming students.

““Why, they all seem to be widows here?” said Will, struck with the fact that the heads of households were women.

‘Oh, no; but their husbands always allow them this enterprise of keeping boarders, by which they make their own pin-money and pay the church-dues,’ said Mr. Benson, with a twinkle in his eye.”²⁹

The steward's reply evidences that there was a great deal of authority granted to these women, but that this work was still gendered and had less importance by his use of the phrases “pin-money,” and “church-dues.” Pin-money would have referred to a woman's allowance from her husband for inessential items. The church-dues were also an expense related to the women's sphere: religion and morality. Because these landladies were operating within their defined sphere, many men probably did not understand the landladies as holding any sort of power. Will's question also evidences that even the author, Anderson, was probably surprised when she first arrived in Ann Arbor that married women could operate such an enterprise.

Townswomen exercised considerable authority as landladies, but this power was qualified by their gender. Students' correspondence provides evidence of which activities

²⁹ SOLA [Olive San Louie Anderson], *An American Girl*, 36.

were not acceptable functions of the women's sphere. In November 1874, Mary Marston described a mealtime conversation with the Adamses on the topic of women's suffrage, which was on the ballot as a special referendum that year. "Professor Adams said he would do as his wife said, but she declined to advise him. He voted against it, as did all the members of the Faculty, I believe, except Professors Merriman and Cocker, and Mr. Bennan and Mr. Blackburn. The majority in this ward was only six against it, but it's a pretty bad defeat throughout the state."³⁰ The role Mrs. Adams plays in this anecdote again evidences the conditional nature of townswomen's power in Ann Arbor. She decided against advising her husband about women's suffrage because politics was not an area of her authority despite the fact that she operated a boarding enterprise.

Some students appear to have recognized how essential women were to Ann Arbor's economy. In the *Chronicle's* review of Anderson's *An American Girl*, the editors praise the mention of their "dear foster-mothers," the Ann Arbor landladies, whom they argue often support their families as breadwinners beyond just paying church dues and collecting pin money.³¹ Anderson's words combined with those of the *Chronicle* editors evidence how important the landladies' economic role was in the community and how powerful they were. Leonora Kelly wrote in 1877, "I have nothing to complain of, I have five students rooming in the house which gives good company and mostly a living."³² As a widow, her statement illustrates that operating a boarding house could both provide enough income to run her household and afford hired help. Leonora Kelly also wrote how

³⁰ Mary O. Marston to her mother, November 8, 1874, Mary O. Marston Papers.

³¹ "An American Girl and Her Four Years in a Boys' College," *Chronicle* (University of Michigan), February 2, 1878.

³² Leonora Kelly to Mary Hellen Light, September 2, 1877, Leonora Kelly Letters.

much work went into operating a boarding house. She hired a girl to help her take in nine roomers, which provided company and funds, but also “a want of time” because of the large amount of work required to prepare her home and maintain her roomers.³³ It is unclear if Leonora Kelly took in women roomers, however, many Ann Arbor townspeople like her were initially resistant to coeducation.

After Will’s conversation with the steward in *An American Girl*, two different landladies turn her away because she is a woman. The fact that many women in Ann Arbor had the economic power to run boarding houses and were still willing to deny women students demonstrates a deep-rooted discomfort in women pursuing activities outside of their sphere, such as attending the university. Because of the prominence of protestant Christianity in these landladies’ lives, it is likely that the Ann Arbor clergy, who were vehemently against coeducation, reinforced this prejudice against women students. Reverend Samuel Duffield was a prominent preacher at the First Presbyterian Church in Ann Arbor and his beliefs were widely known throughout town. In fact, women students were well aware that he did not approve of coeducation at Michigan.³⁴ Other authorities spoke out against coeducation at the University of Michigan, including a New England physician, Dr. Edward Clarke.

Clarke’s 1873 book *Sex in Education; Or, a Fair Chance for the Girls* argued that coeducation was dangerous and ill-advised based on the danger to women’s reproductive

³³ Leonora Kelly to Mary Hellen Light, November 3, 1877, Leonora Kelly Letters.

³⁴ Mary O. Marston to her mother, November 1, 1874, Mary O. Marston Papers.

In *A Dangerous Experiment*, Dorothy McGuigan presents an anecdote of one early woman student who rented a pew at an Ann Arbor church and was not spoken to by anyone for an entire year, except by the man who collected pew fees. See Dorothy McGuigan, *A Dangerous Experiment: 100 Years of Women at the University of Michigan* (Ann Arbor, MI: Center for Continuing Education of Women, 1970), 32.

health and their weaker physique. The book and the ideology surrounding it was so popular that President Angell, an advocate of coeducation, provided an obligatory line in his annual report to the Board of Regents that women students seemed to be enjoying university life and completing their coursework without detriment to their health.³⁵ In *Sex in Education*, Clarke employed an argument that was rooted in a sort of pseudo-feminist equality, but relied on scientific knowledge and physiology for an explanation as to why women could not safely access education in the same matter that men could. Clarke argued that there is an inherent difference between men and women, which did not make one group superior, but may make one group better suited for specific work, i.e. higher education. The logic of parallel, complementary spheres was used to reinforce separation, but explanations often ignored that the value system for gendered work was indeed hierarchical based on its existence in a patriarchal society. To Clarke, widening the women's sphere and adopting coeducation would treat these two inherently separate and distinct groups as shockingly identical.³⁶ This argument was adopted by many clergy members in Ann Arbor, including Reverend Duffield who repeated Clarke's message in his sermons. The *Chronicle* confirmed the local popularity of Dr. Edward Clarke's book, and his work is also mentioned in *An American Girl* as well-read by the townspeople.³⁷

Fundamentally, women students were considered "other" by the university community. Many of the first women students recounted being pointed and stared at

³⁵ James Burrill Angell, *The President's Report to the Board of Regents for the Year Ending June 30, 1874*, (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan), 11, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan.

³⁶ Edward Clarke, *Sex in Education; Or, a Fair Chance for the Girls*, 2nd ed. (Boston: James R. Osgood and Company, 1874), 14.

³⁷ "An American Girl and Her Four Years in a Boys' College," *Chronicle* (University of Michigan), February 2, 1878.

when they went around town. Will Elliot recounts one of these experiences in *An American Girl*, and Cora Agnes Benneson wrote alongside it, “The first girls really had to encounter social ostracism from the people in town.”³⁸ The language used by community members to discuss women and men students also illustrates how women were seen as “other” to men. When anyone, including women, referred to “students” they always meant men. Women were called “college girls,” which further reinforced the hierarchy that placed women students below men. The University of Michigan was a space for men and the women who enrolled could not join in the collective identity of “students.” Women students themselves even took part in reinforcing this difference. In one letter home discussing religion and the bad habits of men students, Lucy Salmon wrote, “we girls have temptations but it is not one fiftieth part of what the students have.”³⁹ By not referring to her and her classmates as students, she knowingly or unknowingly acknowledged her own exclusion and limited membership status within the university community.

Boys Will Be Boys

Religious belief and practice played an important role in student life on campus, particularly for women. Even though the university was secular, compulsory chapel was a daily activity until President James Burrill Angell ended the practice in 1872.⁴⁰ Among townspeople, religious practice was also central, as Leonora Kelly wrote, “I have good

³⁸ SOLA [Olive San Louie Anderson], *An American Girl*, 52. Annotated by Cora Agnes Benneson.

³⁹ Brown, *Apostle of Democracy*, 56.

⁴⁰ Howard H. Peckham, *The Making of the University of Michigan, 1817-1992*, 1967, eds. Margaret L. Steneck and Nicholas H. Steneck, (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1994), 84.

Church & Society privileges here [in Ann Arbor] much better than I could enjoy elsewhere.”⁴¹ Attending daily chapel and participating in prayer groups served an important role for women socially and presented them with an opportunity to exercise a form of domestic authority through encouraging religious observance and practice. When coeducation appeared that it would not end in the result implied by the phrase “dangerous experiment,” men like Reverend Duffield began to speak about women’s admission in terms of how their feminine qualities complemented the overripe masculinity of the student body. In one sermon he observed that women had helped bring religion back into the classrooms of the secular university.⁴² With women students no longer posing a threat of social upheaval, the separate spheres could coexist at Michigan as long as their boundaries did not overlap too much.

Despite the removal of compulsory daily chapel, throughout the 1870s, religion still notably featured in many students’ daily life as evidenced through their correspondence. Mary Marston would attend prayer meetings with other students or head to chapel before and after her classes. Every letter she sent to her parents had some mention of her and her friends attending class prayer meetings or attending a different Protestant service in town. These outings were an almost daily occurrence for Mary and her friends and were a performance of her religious devotion and a feminine social responsibility. With the notable exception of Olive San Louie Anderson, women students’ correspondence and campus activities reveal that women students participated

⁴¹ Leonora Kelly to Mary Hellen Light, November 3, 1877, Leonora Kelly Letters.

⁴² Samuel Willoughby Duffield, *A Farewell Sermon Delivered in the First Presbyterian Church, Ann Arbor, Michigan, November 29, 1874*, (Ann Arbor, MI: Courier Steam Printing House, 1874).

in campus religious life in greater proportions than men students. This may have been because religion offered the opportunity for women students to exercise authority within the boundaries of their sphere. Demonstrated religious devotion also could have been used by women students to embed the narrative that coeducation was civilizing and complementary for the student body.

In *An American Girl*, Anderson portrays Clara Hopkins, a deeply devout and evangelical Christian, as Will's roommate probably to illustrate Anderson's own experience with religious women students.⁴³ At the beginning of the novel, Clara repeatedly attempts to convert Will and also pressures Will to borrow her copy of the Bible. In one instance, Clara shames Will into attending a class prayer meeting with her where Will is again accosted for her perceived nihilism. Freshman Will also remarks that she is not used to seeing women speaking and leading prayers as she had only ever seen men lead worship.⁴⁴ Although it is unknown whether Clara and Will's relationship was exaggerated to emphasize Will's irreligion, Anderson's own narration demonstrates how Ann Arbor townswomen and women students were leaders in religious practice and evangelism.

⁴³ It should be noted that Cora Agnes Benneson identified Clara Hopkins as Susie Hall of '74. No one of this name attended the University of Michigan, but another woman, Emma Maria Hall, did graduate with an A.B. in 1874. Hall was one of the first women to join the Students' Christian Association in the fall of 1870. She also belonged to the same friend group as Anderson. Hall later moved to Rome after graduation to become a missionary. For these reasons, I believe Benneson mistakenly identified the wrong woman, and that Emma Maria Hall is the inspiration for Clara Hopkins.

⁴⁴ SOLA [Olive San Louie Anderson], *An American Girl*, 40. Ibid., 58.

On campus, professors often preached sermons in the University Hall, where all students were in attendance on certain occasions. Before her classes ended for the Christmas holiday, Mary wrote to her father about a particular incident in the chapel.

Recitations closed Friday morning. We were all glad. The boys made a pretty big disturbance in chapel, I suppose because they were glad. I felt as though I wanted something to happen to make them sorry. Of course, I didn't want to shake them myself, because it would tire me, and wouldn't be lady-like, but I would willingly have held a lamp or something of that sort while somebody else did it. They say- 'Boys will be boys,' which seems to mean 'Boys will be horrid.' At any rate they never say it, when boys are agreeable. Still, our boys are pretty good on the whole. I like them much better collectively than I do individually though.⁴⁵

Women students made it clear that there were great differences between men and women students in respect to their behavior, especially in the chapel. Many violent or disorderly episodes occurred in these spaces. In reaction, women students spent time collecting evidence of disturbances in sacred spaces and then provided commentary on men's rowdy behavior. Marston's admission that she would have liked to have been involved in physically punishing the troublemaking students had social constraints permitted her is striking because it illustrates the outrage many women students felt when men disturbed the spaces where women could hold a splinter of authority. The domestic spaces that were disturbed were not only chapels, but also the boarding houses where women stayed.

In 1871, Mary Alice Williams wrote to her family about a law student being hazed in the boarding house where she roomed:

And Tuesday at midnight was the whole house wakened by three other law students, who thundered up the stairs and yelling after the most unearthly fashion, stormed into the room of this [law student] and pulled him and his roommate out of the bed yelling all the time and tried to tie 'the roommate to a railroad car' as they said, and shook the house with their stamping feet... Was I afraid? No, indeed, but lay listening in my shaking bed just under them and thought of the Greek Bacchantes... But our... Scotch landlady was of a different opinion and

⁴⁵ Mary O. Marston to her father, December 20, 1874, Mary O. Marston Papers.

shortly sent them away and she says the Bacchantes– only she calls the ‘three drunken fellows’– will not come again.⁴⁶

These incidences of men disrupting the peace were carefully recollected by women students and directly contrasted the reports of women’s behavior on campus. Reverend Duffield who had publicly abhorred coeducation, stated in his farewell sermon before moving west that, “with Woman came into the University of Michigan heart, taste and a religious and social element of inexpressible importance.”⁴⁷ Although women students first appeared as a threat, the university and surrounding community came to realize the potential of women classmates to combat men students’ impropriety and violent behavior.

At the dawn of coeducation, men students had the opportunity to renegotiate campus to make room for women. Instead, they disturbed the domestic spaces that women students held dear and where women held some sense of authority– in boarding houses and in the chapels. These spaces were not necessarily controlled by women, but they were spaces where women felt most secure. The violent behavior of men students jeopardized this sense of security and authority. In order to combat the dominant masculine presence of campus, women students sought out homosocial spaces they could preserve. Articulations of both the centrality of and threat toward these feminine spaces demonstrate how domestic spaces at the University of Michigan reinforced strict adherence to gendered expectations stemming from the women’s sphere.

⁴⁶ Mary Alice Williams to Williams, October 14, 1871, Mary Alice Williams Papers, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan.

⁴⁷ Samuel Willoughby Duffield, *A Farewell Sermon Delivered in the First Presbyterian Church, Ann Arbor, Michigan, November 29, 1874.*

Chapter II

Women in the Professional Schools

“...Medical co-education of the sexes is at best an experiment of doubtful utility, and one not calculated to increase the dignity of man, nor the modesty of woman.”

—

Faculty members of the Department of Medicine and Surgery, 1870¹

The mid-nineteenth century was marked by a transformation in American moral and religious formations, which reshaped the purpose of higher education for both men and women. Across the country, higher education was evolving to better prepare young adults for professions in law, medicine, teaching, and business. The university was no longer only a place for preparation for the ministry. As the purpose of higher education was changing, the doors of institutions were being opened to women simultaneously. As a result, many women, including famed Michigan alumna, Alice Freeman Palmer, sought out higher education in order to gain independence and as a “life insurance policy.”² While many would assume that coeducation contributed to a new egalitarian social order, Andrea Turpin argues that after the Civil War, collegiate leaders actually reinforced gendered hierarchies at their institutions. These leaders “articulated the moral purposes of

¹ A.B. Crosby, S.H. Douglas, and A.B. Palmer, “Memorial on Female Medical Education,” March 25, 1870, Folder: Misc. and general, University of Michigan Department of Medicine and Surgery Vertical File Collection, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan.

² Ruth Bordin, *Alice Freeman Palmer: The Evolution of a New Woman* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1993), 30.

collegiate education in more gendered terms than had past evangelical leaders of antebellum men's colleges or that era's few top institutions for women. The new leaders thus more actively encouraged educated women and men to advance the public good in sex-specific ways."³ This meant that although the purpose of higher education was evolving, there were still very distinct visions for the pathways college-educated women and men were expected to take upon graduation. As a public institution, Michigan made all of its courses and departments available to women in 1870, but that did not mean all were welcoming to coeducation or that all careers were suddenly accessible

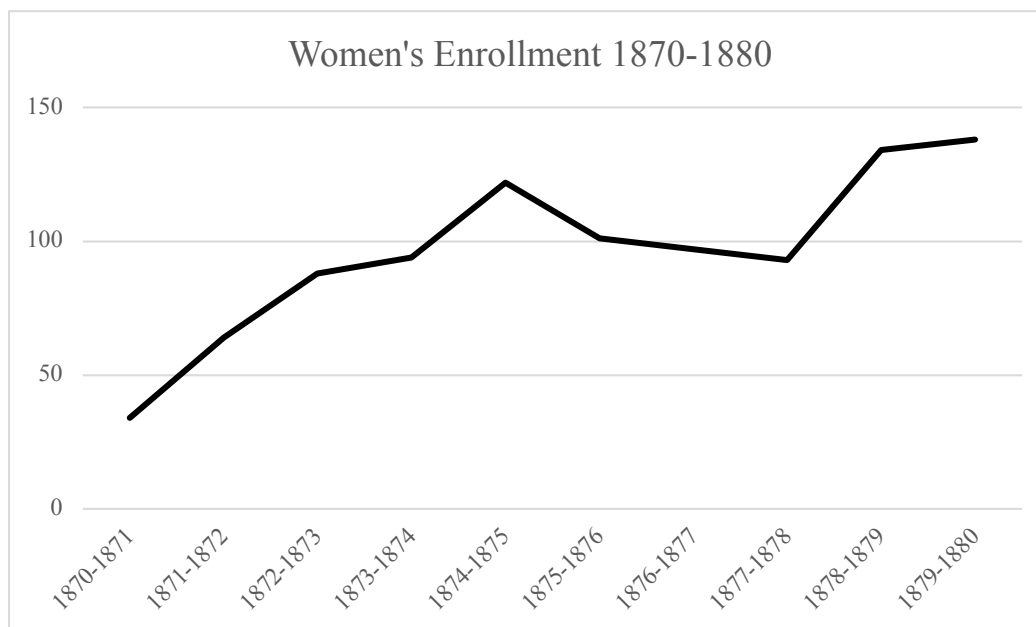


Figure 5: Women's Enrollment at the University of Michigan 1870-1880⁴

³ Andrea L. Turpin, *A New Moral Vision: Gender, Religion, and the Changing Purposes of American Higher Education, 1837-1917* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2016), 4.

⁴ "Regular Session Enrollment: Women," Box 25, Folder: Reports & Statistics: Enrollment Statistics- long-term 1840-1960, University of Michigan Office of the Registrar records 1840-2003, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan.

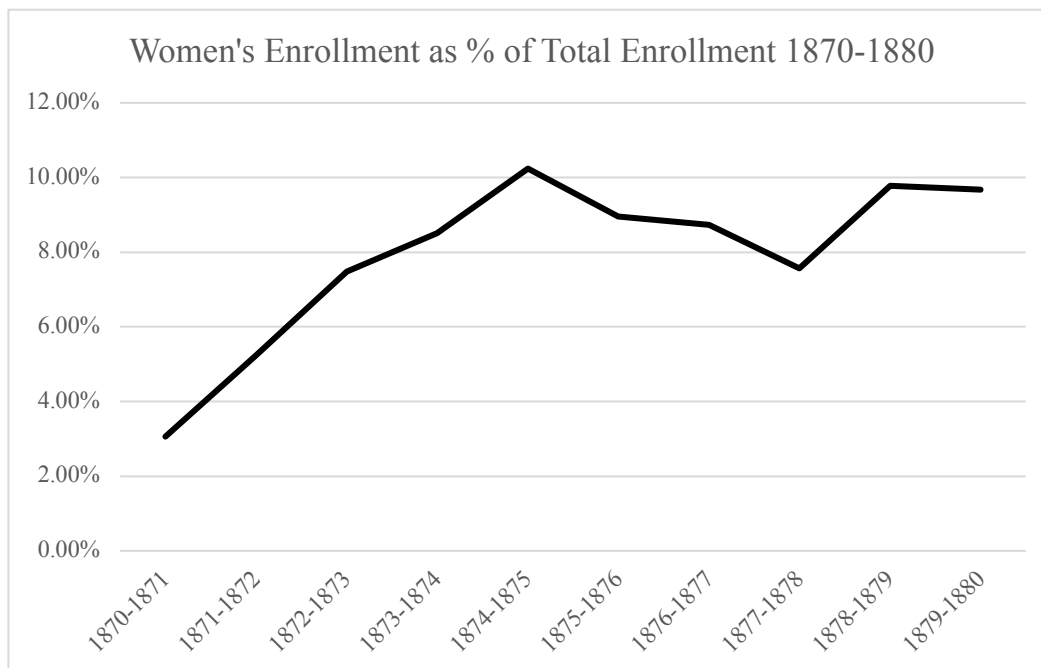


Figure 6: Women's Enrollment at the University of Michigan 1870-1880 as a percentage of the total student body⁵

The professional schools at Michigan are particularly rich spaces for consideration because their inclusion of women was on unique terms compared to the social and political status of women in the United States during the 1870s. Unlike many other institutions of similar rank, Michigan allowed women to enroll across the entire university when they adopted coeducation. Professional schools were relatively new and quickly evolving in this period. Still, the professional schools as both conceptual and physical spaces were extremely gendered, which heavily influenced the experiences of students in both positive and negative ways.

⁵ "University of Michigan Total Enrollment," Box 25, Folder: Reports & Statistics: Enrollment Statistics- long-term 1840-1960, University of Michigan Office of the Registrar records 1840-2003.

In 1870, a student enrolling at the University of Michigan had the option of entering one of three programs: Department of Law, Department of Medicine and Surgery, or Department of Literature, Science, and the Arts. These programs were distinct and had their own admissions processes but were not considered to be separate entities to the extent that the Law and Medical Schools are considered today. The majority of Michigan's students entered the "Lit" Department and took a four-year course to earn a bachelor's degree. Students who had previously taken college courses or excelled at entrance exams could enter with advanced standing and graduate in less than four years. Sizeable groups of students also entered the Law Department or the Medical Department. Later in the decade, course offerings would expand to include courses in Pharmacy, Dentistry, and Homeopathic Medicine.

The degrees offered to Michigan students in the nineteenth century are significantly different from what is available to students today. Within the Literary Department, students earned bachelor's and master's degrees. Many of these degrees are recognizable today, such as the Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Sciences. Other common degrees that were granted in the 1870s have gone out of use. For example, the first African American woman to graduate from the university, Mary Henrietta Graham, graduated with a Bachelor of Philosophy, or Ph.B., in 1880. She later became a teacher at a school for African American students called the Lincoln Institute, then known as the Colored Missouri State Normal School.⁶

⁶ University of Michigan Alumni Records, "Graham, Mary Henrietta [d. Jan. 2, 1890: Ph.B. 1880]" Necrology files, Box 255, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan.

Several programs that would later establish their own schools and departments were housed in the Lit Department in the period. There was no Engineering school at Michigan yet, but students could still earn their C.E. for civil engineering from the Lit Department or even focus their studies in agriculture.⁷ The Michigan elective system was modeled after German universities and had been one of the first American adaptations of this style earlier in the century.⁸ Professional degrees vary in terms of their historical relevance. Degrees for medical students have not changed; students have always been granted their M.D. or Doctorate in Medicine. In the 1870s, law students received their Bachelor of Laws, or LL.B, which is still in use in many countries. This degree was replaced at Michigan by the J.D. or Juris Doctor in later decades as part of the standardization of legal education in the United States.

The concept of graduate education as it functions today did not exist in the 1870s; one could enter the professional schools without having earned a bachelor's degree. The Medical and Law courses were not considered to be graduate programs and thus could be taken as a course of study without prior academic training above high school. Work experience and interest in the field were more important factors. Today, bachelor's degrees are prerequisite to graduate and professional education. The only aspect of graduate education that has remained constant is that master's degrees are awarded after bachelor's degrees.

Women students' experiences at Michigan were predominantly shaped by their course of study. Very few women entered the Law Department throughout the first

⁷ "Statistics of the Class of 1872," *Chronicle* (University of Michigan), 1872.

⁸ Ruth Bordin, *Women at Michigan: The "Dangerous Experiment," 1870s to the Present* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1999), 7.

decade of coeducation. In 1871, there were only two women in the program and by 1880, still only three women total were enrolled in Law. In contrast, the number of women in the Literary Department grew from one student, Madelon Stockwell, in 1870 to comprising over one-fifth of the Department by 1880. Coeducation was less consistent in medicine. The Medical Department began with 5% women students and ended the decade having doubled its women student population, but also having decreased from the mid-decade high of almost 12% women.⁹

By the time Michigan adopted coeducation, it was becoming more common for American women to pursue higher education. At the same time, the disciplines and careers women could pursue were still up for debate. While a liberal arts education was gaining greater acceptance as a course of study for women, the Law and Medical Departments at Michigan were two of the first professional schools available to women in the United States when coeducation was adopted. In 1870, the U.S. Census counted 525 women physicians and just five women lawyers. By the end of the decade there were 2,432 women physicians and seventy-five women lawyers.¹⁰ Both groups constituted an extremely small percentage of each profession, but many of them were Michigan alumnae whose enrollment had been groundbreaking not just the university, but for the entire country.

⁹ "University of Michigan Total Enrollment," Box 25, Folder: Reports & Statistics: Enrollment Statistics- long-term 1840-1960, University of Michigan Office of the Registrar records 1840-2003.

¹⁰ *Compendium of the Ninth Census (June 1, 1870)* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1872), 606.
Compendium of the Tenth Census (June 1, 1880) (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1885), 1368.

Law Department

Similar to other cultural shifts in this period, American ideas of equality were evolving when coeducation was adopted at Michigan. Specifically, scholars of jurisprudence and lawmakers were transforming their understanding of civil liberties and identity. In the midst of Reconstruction, African Americans gained constitutional rights as new citizens of the United States. In some Western territories, suffrage was also extended to include women.¹¹ Progress in some arenas did not guarantee full equality or inclusion in all spaces. Although many men across the state of Michigan had approved of coeducation at the state's largest university, voters in Michigan swiftly rejected women's suffrage in 1874.¹² Women exercising authority in public or political spaces remained out of reach.

As more women became conscious of their lack of rights, some sought out legal education despite the fact that many places did not welcome women attorneys. Women law students were situated in a space that simultaneously permitted their inclusion but also upheld their second-class status under the law. As a profession, lawyers heavily relied on public speaking, which was not considered appropriate for women as it would have meant they were exercising authority outside of their sphere. In most states, lawyers had to be admitted to the bar in order to practice, and many states refused to admit women based on this principle. Sarah Kilgore, the first woman to enroll in the university's Law Department in 1870, later became the first woman admitted to the bar in

¹¹ In 1869, the territory of Wyoming became the first to extend universal suffrage to women.

¹² American Academy of Political and Social Science, *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* (Philadelphia: American Academy of Political and Social Science, 1890), 156. The proposal was defeated 135,957 to 40,077.

Michigan.¹³ Women law students at Michigan were true pioneers as the university was one of the very first institutions to allow woman to receive a legal education.

Only three years after Kilgore's admission, the United States Supreme Court denied Myra Bradwell's petition to compel the Illinois state bar to admit her in *Bradwell v. Illinois*. The state of Illinois had refused to admit her based on her identity as a woman. Bradwell, who legally had to be represented by her husband, argued that the Fourteenth Amendment's Immunity and Protection clause protected her right to practice as a citizen. The 8-1 majority opinion disagreed. Justice Bradley's concurring opinion in particular nailed down why it was unconscionable for women to become attorneys.

It certainly cannot be affirmed, as an historical fact, that this has ever been established as one of the fundamental privileges and immunities of the sex. On the contrary, the civil law, as well as nature herself, has always recognized a wide difference in the respective spheres and destinies of man and woman. Man is, or should be, woman's protector and defender. The natural and proper timidity and delicacy which belongs to the female sex evidently unfits it for many of the occupations of civil life.¹⁴

Justice Bradley argued that although there were new privileges and immunities granted to citizens by the Fourteenth Amendment, guarantees that women be allowed to practice law or pursue any career were not among them. In this instance, civil life referred to the public sphere or spaces outside of where women were supposed to carry any authority. Women who practiced law were exercising a form of knowledge and power outside of their prescribed roles as mothers and wives. This went against the established gender

¹³ Margaret A. Leary, "Michigan's First Woman Lawyer," *Law Quadrangle Notes* 48, no. 3 (Winter/Spring 2006): 8-10. Sarah Kilgore was admitted to the state of Michigan bar in 1871 after graduating with her LL.B. from the University of Michigan. In later decades, she was a prominent member of the Equity Club, which promoted equity among women attorneys who attended the University of Michigan.

¹⁴ *Bradwell v. Illinois*, 83 U.S. 130 (1873) (8-1 decision) (Bradley, J., concurring). Two other justices joined this concurring opinion, demonstrating it as a prominent viewpoint.

hierarchy that he argued law was meant to reinforce. The way Justice Bradley described the separate spheres reveals that they were not laterally associated, but were hierarchical with men above women. Although religious and moral formations were evolving in this era, authorities such as Justice Bradley utilized perceived biological differences between men and women and reasoning grounded in divine creation to justify why the law could not be interpreted to grant gender equality.¹⁵ In fact, these authorities cited law as a reproduction of moral codes that recognized gendered division of labor and a sexual hierarchy.

The Constitution of the family organization, which is founded in the divine ordinance as well as in the nature of things, indicates the domestic sphere as that which properly belongs to the domain and functions of womanhood. The harmony, not to say identity, of interest and views which belong, or should belong, to the family institution is repugnant to the idea of a woman adopting a distinct and independent career from that of her husband. So firmly fixed was this sentiment in the founders of the common law that it became a maxim of that system of jurisprudence that a woman had no legal existence separate from her husband, who was regarded as her head and representative in the social state, and, notwithstanding some recent modifications of this civil status, many of the special rules of law flowing from and dependent upon this cardinal principle still exist in full force in most states.¹⁶

In this instance, Justice Bradley utilized socially constructed legal barriers for women in order to justify why women could not exercise the personhood necessary to practice law. He believed that a woman forming an identity or exercising authority outside of motherhood would degrade the moral fabric of society, which was rooted in women's labor being confined to domestic spaces and not in the market. His concern mirrored a societal fear that women operating outside of the home would damage the wellbeing of

¹⁵ Turpin, *A New Moral Vision*, 94. These arguments were also used to back opposition to coeducation.

¹⁶ *Bradwell v. Illinois*, 83 U.S. 130 (1873) (8-1 decision) (Bradley, J., concurring).

their children. He posited that even if some states adopted new laws that uplifted the status of women, the principle that women should remain in their own divinely ordained sphere was at the root of American law.

The paramount destiny and mission of woman are to fulfill the noble and benign offices of wife and mother. This is the law of the Creator. And the rules of civil society must be adapted to the general constitution of things, and cannot be based upon exceptional cases... It is the prerogative of the legislator to prescribe regulations founded on nature, reason, and experience for the due admission of qualified persons to professions and callings demanding special skill and confidence. This fairly belongs to the police power of the state, and, in my opinion, in view of the peculiar characteristics, destiny, and mission of woman, it is within the province of the legislature to ordain what offices, positions, and callings shall be filled and discharged by men, and shall receive the benefit of those energies and responsibilities, and that decision and firmness which are presumed to predominate in the sterner sex.¹⁷

Finally, Justice Bradley argued that allowing women to be admitted to the bar was a states' right issue. Still, he made clear that it was also the "law of the Creator" that women should remain within their own sphere of domesticity and motherhood. Moving outside of this boundary therefore was akin to heresy. His remarks and the two concurring justices attached to his opinion demonstrate the proximity of law and religion to each other in this period. The public and many jurists held the belief that scripture defined morality and that morality was meant to be enforced by law. Finally, by referring to men as the "sterner sex," Justice Bradley made another biological assumption that the inherent qualities of womanhood excluded her from the rigor and attitude necessary to be an attorney. The result of the *Bradwell* decision was that women attorneys swore to uphold a legal system that did not guarantee their full equality or inclusion.

¹⁷ *Bradwell v. Illinois*, 83 U.S. 130 (1873) (8-1 decision) (Bradley, J., concurring).

Until an initial stage of professionalization in the mid-nineteenth century, the American legal profession had relied on apprenticeship as a means of acquiring the skills necessary to practice law. Formal schooling was not common until the end of the century and there were no national standards. In fact, the American Bar Association, the national organization for the standardization of law was not founded until 1878. Furthermore, one could be admitted to the bar without formal schooling as Elizabeth Eaglesfield was in Indiana before she attended the university.¹⁸ Michigan's Law Department was founded in 1859 and was a preeminent law program by the time coeducation was adopted. There were thirty-one Law departments or schools in the United States in 1870 and only a handful admitted women.¹⁹ At the University of Michigan the program was two years in length. First year students were referred to as juniors and second year students were called seniors.

The small group of women law students during the first decade of coeducation were an eclectic group with many different backgrounds and post-graduate plans. Only thirteen women enrolled during the first decade of coeducation, so each woman's story heavily influences an impression of the entire group. Alumni records reveal that teaching and practicing law were the employment opportunities available to these women wishing to use their legal education. Although the vast majority of all law graduates went on to

¹⁸ University of Michigan Alumni Records, "Eaglesfield, Elizabeth [d. June 24, 1940: A.B. 1876, LL.B. 1878]," Necrology files, Box 188.

¹⁹ Alfred Zantzinger Reed, "Training for the Public Profession of the Law: Historical Development and Principal Contemporary Problems of Legal Education in the United States with Some Account of Conditions in England and Canada," *Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching Bulletin*, no. 15 (1921): 445. Currently, there are 206 ABA-approved law schools in the United States. In the early 1870s the few schools known for admitting women were Michigan, Union College of Law in Chicago, Washington University (also referred to as St. Louis Law School), Boston University, and Howard University.

practice, teaching remained a very common profession for women law graduates because women were refused admission to the bar in many states and because of a societal consensus that law was not a feminine profession.

Among women law students, some embarked on a legal education for intellectual gain rather than as a profession. Emma Lucretia Hubbard received her LL.B. in 1873 after previously studying at Vassar to get her bachelor's and master's degrees. Hubbard went on to work as a teacher, despite her impressive collection of degrees.²⁰ In Mary Stockbridge's alumni file, she was listed as a lawyer, but she wrote in one survey that she had never practiced.²¹ Jane Maria Slocum, class of 1874, also became a teacher after graduating.²² Maud Howard was the thirteenth woman to graduate from Law in 1880. Although she never practiced law, she taught elocution in Toronto until her death in 1890.²³ Several women also took the Literary course at Michigan before they pursued legal studies. Lorraine Ashman took courses in the Literary Department sporadically throughout the 1870s, before earning her LL.B. in 1878. Her profession was listed as a fruit-grower.²⁴

The women law students of the 1870s were not only pioneers at the University of Michigan, they were also leaders in the exclusively masculine legal field. These alumnae

²⁰ University of Michigan Alumni Records, "Hubbard, Emma Lucretia [d. Nov. 28, 1926: LL.B. 1873]," Necrology files, Box 325. At this time, a bachelor's degree was not always a requirement to become an educator. Many teachers did not have an education beyond completing high school.

²¹ University of Michigan Alumni Records, "Stockbridge, Mary Phoebe [d. Jan. 18, 1929: LL.B. 1874]," Necrology files, Box 641.

²² University of Michigan Alumni Records, "Slocum, Jane Maria [d. Aug. 10, 1924: LL.B. 1874]," Necrology files, Box 613.

²³ University of Michigan Alumni Records, "Howard, Mrs. Maud [d. May 6, 1890: LL.B. 1880] [maiden name: Kelsey, Maud Annie]," Necrology files, Box 323.

²⁴ University of Michigan Alumni Records, "Ashman, Lorraine [d. Dec. 10, 1920: LL.B. 1878, a 1872-73, 1874-76]," Necrology files, Box 20.

were truly some of the very first women lawyers in the United States. Elizabeth Eaglesfield graduated from Law in 1878 after receiving her bachelor's degree from Michigan in 1876. She was the first woman admitted to the bar in Indiana.²⁵ Cora Agnes Benneson received her A.B. in 1878 from Michigan and then applied to Harvard Law School. When she was rejected because she was a woman, she went on to get both her master's degree and LL.B. from Michigan. She was one of two women admitted to the Massachusetts Bar, writing in one alumni survey, "I am engaged in the active practice of the law."²⁶ Hattie Mason also practiced law in Muskegon, Michigan.²⁷ Upon their graduation in 1875, classmates Ellen Annette Martin and Mary Fredericka Perry established their own practice, "Perry & Martin, attorneys and counsellors at law" in Chicago. After Perry died in 1883 Martin continued practicing.²⁸

Women law graduates in this decade also varied in age. Mary Elizabeth Foster graduated in 1876 at fifty-one years of age. She had been widowed three times, and upon the death of her third husband she entered the Law Department to make a living as the first woman practicing law in Ann Arbor.²⁹ Susannah Raper went on to pursue business, and also appears older than her classmates according to a letter written for her thirty-five year reunion in 1908. "I regret very much I cannot meet with you all next Wednesday, but will try and attend the next reunion in 1913. You may think I am too old to make such a calculation. I am old in years but not in health. I can walk ten or twelve miles a day and

²⁵ University of Michigan Alumni Records, "Eaglesfield, Elizabeth [d. June 24, 1940: A.B. 1876, LL.B. 1878]," Necrology files, Box 188.

²⁶ University of Michigan Alumni Records, "Benneson, Cora Agnes [d. June 8, 1919: A.B. 1878, A.M. 1883, LL.B. 1880]," Necrology files, Box 48, Suppl.

²⁷ "Personals," *Chronicle* (University of Michigan), October 13, 1877.

²⁸ University of Michigan Alumni Records, "Martin, Ellen Annette [d. Apr. 27, 1916: LL.B. 1875]," Necrology files, Box 447.

²⁹ Lelia J. Robinson "Women Lawyers in the United States," *The Green Bag*, 2 (1890): 18.

attend to business. I have not been to a doctor's office in 25 years. I do not know what it is to as much as have headaches."³⁰

One commonality among these women was that they married less frequently than other women alumnae from Michigan. Of the thirteen women law graduates from 1871-1880, only four were ever married. Between 1870-1920 when only 10% of American women did not marry, between 40-60% of college educated women did not marry.³¹ Lynn Gordon also argues that the first generation of college women were less interested in marriage than their successors.³² While women with college degrees did marry less frequently than the national average, women law students at Michigan seemed to marry even less often, which was probably due to their unique careers.

Department of Medicine and Surgery

Michigan's Department of Medicine and Surgery was founded in 1850, attracting hundreds of students from across the world. Throughout the decade, attendance grew from about 300 students up to nearly 400. In 1874, Literary Department sophomore Mary Marston wrote to her father about the geographical diversity of the class: "The Medical department opened last week with a considerably larger number of students than last year. Among them are a lady from St. Petersburg, a lady from Denmark, and two

³⁰ Ibid.

"Memorial of the Third Reunion U. of M. Law '73, Held June 17, 1908" *Class Year Publications*, University of Michigan Law School Scholarship Repository.

³¹ Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, "The New Woman as Androgyne," in *Disorderly Conduct: Visions of Gender in Victorian America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 253.

³² Lynn Gordon, *Gender and Higher Education in the Progressive Era* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1990), 5.

gentlemen from Liberia.”³³ After coeducation was adopted, eighteen women immediately enrolled for the 1870-1871 school year.

Women Medical students at Michigan may not have been the very first group of American women physicians, but their enrollment was significant based on the fact that it was at a coeducational institution. Before 1871, one study reported that only eleven graduates out of 544 women physicians had attended a coeducational medical school. Most had attended women’s medical schools instead, which were considered inferior.³⁴

Although the University of Michigan was one of the first coeducational universities in the United States to offer medical education to women, the prospect of coeducation did not please everyone in the Department of Medicine and Surgery. The Medical faculty initially refused to teach men and women together in the same lecture halls and dissection rooms. After Madelon Stockwell enrolled at Michigan in January 1870, it was unclear to many whether or not coeducation would be adopted by the entire university. Three faculty members wrote to the Board of Regents a “Memorial on Female Medical Education,” which outlined their position in comparison to the two prominent and opposing views on medical coeducation.³⁵ The first position they outlined fully supported women’s capabilities as successful medical students and physicians. The faculty also included in their letter the opposing position, which argued “that from the age of puberty throughout her most active period of life, woman is during a large fraction

³³ Mary O. Marston to her father, October 4, 1874, Mary O. Marston Papers.

³⁴ Thomas Neville Bonner, *To the Ends of the Earth: Women’s Search for Education in Medicine* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992), 28.

³⁵ A.B. Crosby, S.H. Douglas, and A.B. Palmer, “Memorial on Female Medical Education,” March 25, 1870, Folder: Misc. and general, University of Michigan Department of Medicine and Surgery Vertical File Collection.

of each month a quasi invalid.”³⁶ From this viewpoint, menstruation disqualified women from such a rigorous course of study and profession. The faculty’s inclusion of this viewpoint also demonstrates that it held some standing or validity among educators. The faculty position was strategically placed among these opposing viewpoints in order to fully contextualize their plea to the Regents to spare the Medical Department from coeducation.

The authoring faculty argued that coeducation in medicine was, “at best an experiment of doubtful utility, and one not calculated to increase the dignity of man, nor the modesty of woman.” They went on to state that, “it must be obvious, to even the casual observer, that a large portion of medical instruction cannot be given in the presence of mixed classes without offending the sense of delicacy, and refinement, which should be scrupulously maintained between the sexes.”³⁷ These statements from the faculty demonstrate how strictly separate men and women’s spheres were meant to be maintained. The Medical faculty believed that their institution should uphold these distinct roles for men and women because they were based in both biological fact and divine providence. Even if they believed that some women could become successful physicians, the faculty argued that medical coeducation was an unacceptable breach of social norms. Their fear was founded in women and men learning about anatomy or “diseases of the sexual organs” together, which to them was unconscionable. Their proposed solution was to establish a separate course for women or to establish a Female Medical College in Ann Arbor or nearby Detroit.³⁸ When a separate college became

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid.

impossible, the faculty agreed to educating women separately for a salary increase. In a special meeting held on July 26, 1870, the Board of Regents approved a \$500 pay increase for the faculty per course taught to women. Only one regent of five voted against segregation.³⁹

Over time, the Medical Department continued to be the most segregated space at the university. The following school year after faculty members realized how tiring it was to repeat their lectures for women students, many decided to allow women to be in the same lecture halls as men students. This did not mean that segregation was gone completely, though. In fact, the faculty utilized a “broad red-painted band extending from the pit to the top row of seats” as a boundary between men and women.⁴⁰ Photographs also demonstrate that the dissection rooms where anatomy was taught remained segregated for decades after coeducation began. The segregation women medical students experienced was unlike any other program at the university and speaks to how uncomfortable the institution was with women acquiring specialized medical knowledge in the presence of men.

³⁹ University of Michigan Board of Regents, “Special Meeting,” July 26, 1870, Proceedings of the University of Michigan Board of Regents, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan.

⁴⁰ Wilfred B. Shaw, ed. *The University of Michigan: An Encyclopedic Survey*, vol. 2 (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1942): 795. According to Shaw, it was not until 1903 when the West Medical Building was built that the red line was gone, allowing women to choose their seat.



Figure 7: Women Medical students in the dissection room, 1893⁴¹

Women medical students continued to face discrimination throughout the first decade of coeducation and were referred to by the derogatory term “hen medics.” When the first woman graduate, Amanda Sanford, received her diploma in 1871 she was hit with spitballs from spectators at commencement.⁴² As a sizeable group, women medical students were a threat to the masculine institution of medicine in a way that the small number of women law students were not. In *An American Girl and Her Four Years in a Boys’ College*, Olive San Louie Anderson wrote that the first women medical students “had harder battles to fight than those of either of the other departments,” which Cora

⁴¹ Gibson, J. Jefferson, “Female Medical Students in the Dissection Room,” 1893, Box 136, Folder: Surgery and anatomy classes – Dissections, Medical School (University of Michigan) records, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan.

⁴² Florence Woolsey Hazzard, “Dr. Amanda Sanford Hickey of Auburn,” Florence W. Hazzard Papers, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan.

Agnes Benneson agreed to in one of her annotations.⁴³ Women showed up in Ann Arbor for the Medical course right away in large numbers. They arrived from all across the country because of a universal desire to become accredited physicians and the limited opportunities elsewhere. Their immediate arrival and demand for space embodied the fears laid out by the faculty in their letter to the Board of Regents, which in turn resulted in segregation and discrimination.

The gendered segregation institutionalized by the Department of Medicine and Surgery is evidenced in their everyday recordkeeping. Unlike other programs at Michigan, the Medical Department did not rely on categorizing students by class year because the diversity in medical experience that students brought with them meant that there was not always a typical length of study for students to receive their degree. Instead, gender became the determinant force in which students were categorized. Commencement programs from 1873 and 1874 listed women graduates after all of the men. Furthermore, the school's records from 1877-1881 listed all of the enrolled men students before listing any women. The pages listing women students were designated by the word "Ladies" at the top. It was not until 1878 that pages with men's names were designated with "Gentlemen." Recordkeeping thereby reinforced women in the Medical Department as both other and secondary to men.

Professionalization of medicine in the United States led to many administrative changes in the department during the late nineteenth century. The medical curriculum

⁴³ SOLA [Olive San Louie Anderson], *An American Girl and Her Four Years in a Boys' College*, (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1878), 191. Annotated by Cora Agnes Benneson and found in Special Collections Research Center at the Harlan Hatcher Graduate Library at the University of Michigan.

increased from two courses of six months each to two courses of nine months each in the mid 1870s. Applicants were expected to have some experience in medical training or to take an additional year's course to supplement their learning. Dr. Palmer, a faculty member, explained the increased time in a lecture on the opening day of classes in 1877. In addressing the audience as "Gentlemen," he stated that there would continue to be four didactic lectures a day in addition to laboratory work in order for students to become familiar with using a microscope to study tissues. He also stated that the Medical faculty strongly advised that students take the three year course.⁴⁴ Even though Dr. Palmer addresses the audience as "Gentlemen," there were undoubtedly women students in attendance because thirty seven women were listed among the Medical student records for 1877-1878. His exclusion of women as members of the lecture audience demonstrates the disregard for women students by faculty members even after they had been enrolled in courses for several years.

Although there was no requirement to have a bachelor's degree before entering the Medical Department, the faculty expected applicants to have some sort of secondary education and to have some medical training before enrolling. This is demonstrated in an 1875 applicant entrance examination, which assessed general knowledge with questions such as "what are the principal rivers of North America?" and "What is a biped? Give an example."⁴⁵ The medical faculty generally accepted students without full credentials and only required their completion when they were up for their degree. Near the completion

⁴⁴ A.B. Palmer, M.D. "The New Departure in Medical Teaching," 1877, University of Michigan Medical School publications 1849-2014, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan.

⁴⁵ University of Michigan Department of Medicine and Surgery, "Examination of Candidate for Admission, 6th October, 1875," October 6, 1875, Folder: Misc. and general, University of Michigan Department of Medicine and Surgery Vertical File Collection.

of their degree, students were expected to write a thesis.⁴⁶ Many women students wrote theirs about the emerging specialization of obstetrics. Amanda Sanford wrote hers on eclampsia, which she saw take the lives of many women in childbirth while practicing in New England.

Similar to Law, some women also pursued study in the Literary Department before applying to the Medical course. This is explored in Olive San Louie Anderson's *An American Girl and Her Years in a Boys' College*. For much of the novel, the heroine, Will, intends to take the Medical course after graduation before deciding she will instead go into teaching for a few years first. Discrimination is also a theme discussed in the novel as Will faces a crisis when the man she is in love with tells her that he would not marry a woman doctor. In real life, Anderson also wanted to become a physician after obtaining her bachelor's degree. She attended medical lectures and spent Saturdays and "all her spare time with one of the medical ladies" studying. Before her untimely death, she had planned to return to Michigan to obtain her medical degree. Her friend, Lucy Salmon was sure of it, writing home, "You know of course she is going to be a doctor."⁴⁷

Like other early women students at Michigan, women medical students were often already quite advanced in their field despite not having a degree and were credited with advanced standing. Amanda Sanford had been "practically faculty" at the New England Hospital in Boston when she applied to the University of Michigan in 1870.⁴⁸

⁴⁶ Catherine J. Whitaker, "The Early Years of the University of Michigan Medical School: The Upjohn Family Experience," *Michigan Historical Collections Bulletin*, no. 31 (1982): 3.

⁴⁷ Louise Fargo Brown, *Apostle of Democracy: The Life of Lucy Maynard Salmon* (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishing, 1943), 72-73.

⁴⁸ Florence Woolsey Hazzard, "Dr. Eliza Mosher and Organized Medical Women," Florence W. Hazzard Papers.

Unlike Law, most women medical students did go on to practice in their field and found success by catering to women's health. One of Sanford's counterparts in Boston, Dr. Eliza Mosher, had her own practice in Brooklyn, New York before later becoming the first Dean of Women at the University of Michigan. Harriet Virtue Bills, M.D. 1877, began her practice of medicine at the age of twenty and continued practicing for forty-six more years in Saginaw, Michigan. Adelaide Lewitt, class of 1878, also practiced as the resident physician at a hospital in San Francisco.⁴⁹ Many women medical graduates did find success as physicians, especially by carving out space in the field of obstetrics and gynecology.

A unique circumstance of several women medical students was to practice medicine with their husbands. In late 1873, Lit Department sophomore, Vine Colby, married medical student, Sidney H. Foster. Mrs. Foster then graduated from the Latin Scientific course in 1876 with a Ph. B. That following year, she attended lectures in the Medical Department before moving to Keokuk, Iowa with her husband. She soon graduated from the Keokuk Medical College in June 1877. In her obituary file, a friend wrote that she was practicing medicine alongside her husband when she died suddenly at twenty-five. "She was very successful in her profession and died of over work as is the case with a good many of our graduates. The policy of our University [of Michigan] has been to seriously overwork its students and inculcate habits of excessive labor so that many of them are unfitted for severe labor after graduation and many live but a short time. I think a reform is seriously needed in this regard and is now being somewhat

⁴⁹ University of Michigan Alumni Records, "Lewitt, Adelaide [d. Jan. 1918: M.D. 1878]," Necrology files, Box 402.

attended to by the Faculties.”⁵⁰ The exhaustion Vine Colby Foster experienced may serve as a metaphor for the work women students put into their education and careers. In this era, women had to demonstrate their intellectual capacity in a way that men did not.

Other types of medical education were introduced at Michigan during this decade with various enrollments of women. The College of Dental Surgery was established in 1875 with no women in the inaugural class. By 1880, five of the eighty-six students in the Dental program were women.⁵¹ The Homeopathic Medical College was also founded in 1875. Women made up two of the first twenty-four students. Women students later constituted over 17% of Homeopathic enrollment by 1880, which was significantly higher than the 10% women enrolled in the Medical Department. The School of Pharmacy was established in 1876 after having been previously housed in the Literary Department. Amelia and Mary Upjohn were the first women to graduate from the program with a Ph. C. or degree of pharmaceutical chemist while it was still under the umbrella of the Literary Department.⁵²

Undoubtedly, coeducation was an important institutional milestone for the University of Michigan, but it was not without difficulty or discrimination. The experiences of the first women students were shaped by their course in Literary, Law, or Medicine, but their individual prospects were often independent of the course they chose based on societal beliefs about women’s duty. Upon graduation, the degrees women

⁵⁰ University of Michigan Alumni Records, “Foster, Mrs. Vine [d. Mar. 5, 1878: Ph.B. 1876, m 1876-77] [maiden name: Colby, Vine],” Necrology files, Box 221.

⁵¹ “University of Michigan Enrollment Regular Session Enrollment by Schools and Colleges,” Box 25, Folder: Reports & Statistics: Enrollment Statistics- long-term 1840-1960, University of Michigan Office of the Registrar records 1840-2003.

⁵² University of Michigan Alumni Records, “Upjohn, Amelia [d. Jan. 29, 1876: Ph.C. 1871],” Necrology files, Box 681. Amelia and Mary Upjohn graduated in 1871 a few months after Amanda Sanford and Sarah Kilgore as the first four women graduates of the University.

received did allow some women to pursue professions, while others maintained domestic roles. Despite having advanced degrees, Michigan alumnae often faced discrimination from professional fields and their career choices still remained very limited. As progressive as coeducation appeared, it was not a complete barrier-breaking moment for the entire institution or the country.

The idea of coeducation was not popular among Medical faculty for instance, despite the fact that women attending to the sick was not a new or radical idea. To some, the unnaturalness stemmed from women acting outside of their prescribed sphere and obtaining specialized knowledge that had once been reserved for men. To others it was the indecency of men and women sharing a medical space. Despite this, there was a greater openness for women entering the medical field compared to law probably due to the possibility of women adapting a practice within their sphere devoted to women. Furthermore, the concept of women in medicine was not entirely shocking as the first woman physician in the United States, Elizabeth Blackwell, had received her degree in 1849. In contrast, Lemma Barkeloo and Phoebe Wilson Couzins are believed to have been the first women law students and they did not enroll at Washington University until 1869.⁵³ Compared to the lack of women attorneys in this period, women in medicine were perhaps less distressing, although it was still keenly important to maintain separate spheres and thus separate medical lectures and dissections. Furthermore, women law students were so few in number that they may not have felt intense discrimination at Michigan because they were an anomaly that did not threaten the sexual hierarchy within

⁵³ Karen L. Tokarz, "A Tribute to the Nation's First Women Law Students," *Washington University Law Review* 68, no. 1 (January 1990): 89.

the Law Department. They were simply a curiosity that came along with university-wide coeducation. Still, it was no golden age for women in the Law Department by any account because their career prospects were severely limited. When women did practice as attorneys they upheld a legal system that subordinated them as second-class. The most intense discrimination came when they left the academic spaces of Michigan and met the outside world.

Chapter III

Student Organizations and Clubs

“When you Q.C. girls meet again in Society rooms, please remember one who will never meet with you again, but who in heart and soul wishes you ‘God-speed.’”

Inez “Blanchie” Slocum A.M. 1874¹

In October of 1872, President Angell announced one morning in chapel that, “The ladies of the university will meet in the old chapel this afternoon at five o’clock.”² They assembled later that day, and their reaction to the unexpected meeting was recorded by one woman in attendance.

Most of us were ignorant of the subject of the call, yet we could not help a little feeling of pardonable pride and exultation that we had women there numerous enough and important enough to have notices read in chapel for our special benefit. The subject of the meeting [was] to consider the invitation of the ladies of Syracuse University to establish a chapter here of one of their secret societies. After a warm discussion, we came to the unanimous decision that it would be unwise to take such a step— and the question [arose] whether we could not form some society among ourselves which should be private but not secret. But the plans proposed were as numerous as the persons present, and the matter was dropped.³

¹ Inez Blanche (Blanchie) Slocum to Q.C. girls, July 28, 1874, Lucy Maynard Salmon Papers, 1818-1976, Box 25, Folder 13, Archives and Special Collections Library, Vassar College.

² “Address to the Q. Ceekers,” June 24, 1876, Lucy Maynard Salmon Papers, 1818-1976, Box 35, Folder 11. It is probable that Lucy Maynard Salmon was the author of this address because it was written right after her graduation from the university and at the end of her presidency.

³ Ibid. Two fraternities for women were founded at Syracuse with Alpha Phi in 1872 and Gamma Phi Beta in 1874, which may have been the societies that reached out to the women at Michigan. Today, these organizations are commonly referred to as sororities, but that term was not in

The notion of a secret society was rejected by the women students probably due to the decades long controversy surrounding men students' secret societies. These fraternal organizations dated back to the mid-1840s at the University of Michigan and were not well received by the faculty because students and faculty were often in direct opposition to each other over the evolving role of higher education. While the faculty held firm that higher education was meant to prepare students for the ministry, their students often wished to pursue careers in law, medicine, and business. Nationwide, students rebelled against faculties that were slow to accept this change, with the result that fraternities spread across the country.

At the beginning of coeducation at Michigan, there were three main types of student organizations on campus. These included religious organizations, literary societies, and Greek letter organizations. The established extracurricular student organizations that were available to Michigan women at the beginning of coeducation were deeply rooted in class year hierarchies and departmental distinction. The organizations that became coeducational kept these distinctions and additionally added gender as a category to define their membership. Coeducational organizations that allowed women to take on leadership roles tended to set aside roles for women that were within their sphere of influence. When women created their own organizations, they replicated the spaces they were excluded from: secret fraternal organizations. Although there was inclusion of women in some campus organizations, all student organizations fundamentally reinforced gendered distinctions between students.

existence at the founding of Alpha Phi, Gamma Phi Beta, or Kappa Alpha Theta. See "History," Syracuse University Office of Fraternity and Sorority Affairs, <http://fasa.syr.edu/about/history.html>.

Fraternities

In *An American Girl and Her Four Years in a Boys' College*, Olive San Louie Anderson provided commentary on the extracurricular opportunities for the first women students. "The girls in the literary department had steadily maintained their reputation for scholarship. They had joined the literary societies, but the secret fraternities were something to which they could never hope to attain... But, notwithstanding this inherent disability, they manage to have pleasant times, and are even quite happy over their work and prospects for the future."⁴ Anderson's choice of the word "disability" is striking in that it refers to a lack of certain qualifications or an incapacity. It reveals that women's inherent qualities determined their inability to belong to these secret fraternal organizations. Despite the fact that women could not join these fraternities, women did go on to develop organizations that were private and also promoted social bonding. The secrecy of the fraternal organizations was the trait that firmly determined women's exclusion.

The distinction between secret and private organizations is important to a discussion of gendered organizations because the nature of the group dictated whether or not women could become members. This is because privacy is conceptually different from secrecy. A secret organization operated in a political sense because members deliberately hid their organization and membership from the public in order to subvert some authority. For example, early fraternities were secret organizations that were founded in order to foster camaraderie among students who were in rebellion against the

⁴ SOLA [Olive San Louie Anderson], *An American Girl and Her Four Years in a Boys' College*, (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1878), 192.

faculty and looking to assert their independence and manliness.⁵ Private organizations did not have this same inherent political nature because membership could be known to the public, meaning that members were publically tied to an organization's actions or principles. Women were able to join private organizations based on this distinction. They could not belong to secret societies because membership in these organizations was a subversion of authority due to its covert nature. This was not acceptable for women based on dominant constructions of gender that understood all women as subservient to patriarchal authority.

Fraternities originated at the University of Michigan in 1845, soon after the Ann Arbor campus opened.⁶ The first fraternities were Greek-letter secret societies that often battled with the faculty over their existence. In December 1849, the members of two of these organizations were expelled from the university, which caused Ann Arbor townspeople to circulate a notice of indignation against the faculty.⁷ Although some of the students were reinstated shortly after, the larger conflict between fraternities and the administration would continue for several decades while fraternities continued to recruit more men to join their ranks.

Fraternities came into existence during a time when the purpose of higher education was in question. University faculty held firm that higher education was meant

⁵ Nicholas Syrett, *The Company He Keeps: A History of White College Fraternities* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2009), 34.

⁶ Shelby B. Schurtz, "Greek Letter Fraternities at the University of Michigan, 1845-1937," (1937), 39, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan.

The University of Michigan was founded in 1817 in Detroit, but later moved to Ann Arbor in 1837, opening its doors to students in 1841.

⁷ "Attention! Indignation Meeting," December 20, 1849, Vertical File Collection: Off-campus. Folder: Off-campus, Student Rooming Houses, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan.

to prepare students for the ministry while their students wished to pursue careers in law, medicine, and business. Born out of this conflict, fraternities established themselves as secret societies for men students to rebel against the faculty who they saw as the enemy.⁸

During the 1870s, fraternities were in a liminal phase at Michigan. They had found some acceptance but they did not yet dominate the social functions on campus like they would in the following decade and into the twentieth century. At the beginning of the 1870s, ten fraternities were already in existence and four more established themselves during the decade.⁹ These organizations continued to function as secret societies with the oldest eight being known as the “Palladium Fraternities,” named after their annual publication called the “Palladium.”¹⁰ Other fraternities existed on campus outside of this elite group, but they were not in control of the social and political functions of campus as the Palladium Fraternities would be starting in the 1880s. In 1876, Delta Upsilon was founded at Michigan and established itself as an anti-secret society in contrast to the nature of all other fraternities on campus.¹¹

Nicholas Syrett theorizes that fraternities established their masculinity through exclusion of other students, including women.¹² As fraternities became more powerful on campus, women longed to have societies of their own and to share similar bonds. The development of women’s sororal organizations in the United States was founded in reaction to the exclusion of women from masculine spaces.¹³ Kappa Alpha Theta, the

⁸ Syrett, *The Company He Keeps*, 23.

⁹ Shelby B. Schurtz, “Greek Letter Fraternities at the University of Michigan, 1845-1937,” 5.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 34-37.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 37.

¹² Syrett, *The Company He Keeps*, 3.

¹³ The term sororal is the feminine equivalent of fraternal. There is not a genderless form of this word. Therefore, I chose to use sororal to punctuate the fact that the word is awkward and

first Greek-letter organization for women in the United States, was founded in the same year that Madelon Stockwell arrived at Michigan. At Indiana Asbury, Bettie Locke founded her own fraternity for women after she was not permitted to join Phi Gamma Delta.¹⁴ Kappa Alpha Theta would later expand to the University of Michigan on December 10, 1879 as the first Greek-letter organization for women on campus. Six women constituted the original initiates.¹⁵ In the meantime, the earliest women students at Michigan looked for other ways they could establish women-only organizations that replicated the bonds shared by fraternity brothers.

Quadratic Club

Since the early days of the Republic, literary societies had been a space for women to meet and exercise influence within the civil sphere. Literary societies developed as significant sites for feminine intellectual authority because women were not permitted to participate in politics.¹⁶ The educated women who joined these voluntary organizations participated in collective reading and writing to demonstrate their intellectual abilities as well. The importance of literary societies as a site of community cannot be understated. This was a significant motivation for the formation of the Quadratic Club by women students at the University of Michigan. Labeled as a

unfamiliar, which I hope highlights the disparity between the reader's comfort with fraternal spaces and the concept of sororal spaces.

¹⁴ Kappa Alpha Theta, "Bettie Locke Hamilton," *Kappa Alpha Theta Heritage*, 2018, <http://heritage.kappaalphatheta.org/page/bettielockehamilton>.

¹⁵ Fran Becque, "Collegiate Sorosis at the University of Michigan – Gone But Not Forgotten," *Fraternity History & More*, February 18, 2012, <http://www.franbecque.com/2012/02/18/collegiate-sorosis-at-the-university-of-michigan-gone-but-not-forgottenn/>.

¹⁶ Mary Kelley, *Learning to Stand and Speak: Women, Education, and Public Life in America's Republic* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2012), 113.

“dangerous experiment,” women students also had to demonstrate the seriousness of their intellectual capacity. As a result, the Quadratic Club was formed.

The Quadratic Club, or Q.C. held its first meeting on November 16, 1872 in Lucy Maynard Salmon’s room in order to form a private society among women in the Literary Department.¹⁷ The organization’s founding was extremely significant because it was the first of its kind to exist at the university. The literary society was established after a committee of three women drafted a constitution following Mary Sheldon’s motion for the idea at a second meeting of all the Literary women students in the fall of 1872.¹⁸ Emma Maria Hall became the first president. Later, Lucy Maynard Salmon would also become president of the organization, which met on Saturday nights.¹⁹ The members, or Q. Ceekers, referred to their meeting programs as exercises, which generally consisted of songs, prepared essays, and formal debates between women.

Reflecting on the organization, one member wrote: “We did not hesitate to discuss the most important questions of the day, political, educational, and social, and although the decisions we reached have as yet made no perceptible impression upon the government of the nation, they at least served to open our eyes to subjects which have been new to most of us.”²⁰ Members discussed a variety of subjects ranging from women’s suffrage to protective tariffs. Although the Q.C. provided opportunities for women to socialize, members stressed that the priority of the meetings lay in their

¹⁷ “Address to the Q. Ceekers,” Lucy Maynard Salmon Papers.
Ruth Bordin, *Women at Michigan: The "Dangerous Experiment," 1870s to the Present* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1999), 16.

¹⁸ “Address to the Q. Ceekers,” Lucy Maynard Salmon Papers.

¹⁹ Mary O. Marston to her father, October 4, 1874, Mary O. Marston Papers, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan.

²⁰ “Address to the Q. Ceekers,” Lucy Maynard Salmon Papers.

intellectual value. Socializing only occurred before and after meetings or during the recess.²¹

Mary Marston often wrote to her parents about Q.C. meetings and her friendships with the other members. “I went to Q.C. last night, and enjoyed it, as I always do. But the exercises were particularly good. Angie had a fine essay, and there were other nice things. A good many of the freshmen girls have joined already, and some of them promise to be valuable members.”²² Marston’s recollections illustrate how the space provided by the Q.C. helped maintain the functions and rituals of female friendship that up until its founding had not been fully realized on the university’s coeducational campus.

The prevalence of separate sphere ideology made homosocial spaces significant sites for men and women’s distinct emotional and social development. Carroll Smith-Rosenberg describes American society during this period as “characterized in large part by rigid gender-role differentiation within the family and within society as a whole.” She argues that “the emotional segregation of women and men” stemmed from this separation.²³ When men and women were suddenly sharing spaces as a result of coeducation, there remained issues over where women could express the necessary rituals of friendship with few other women on campus. Lucy Salmon wrote about being anxious from her separation from other women, “The whole class is divided into a great many small sections, seven in each, and as all the girls’ names come in the first part of the

²¹ Ibid.

²² Mary O. Marston to her mother, October 18, 1874, Mary O. Marston Papers.

²³ Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, “The Female World of Love and Ritual: Relations between Women in Nineteenth-Century America,” *Signs* 1, no. 1 (Autumn, 1975): 9.

alphabet, I am all alone with six boys. I try not to worry about it for when I do, it takes away all the pleasure of everything else.”²⁴ College was the first time most of these women had left the comfort and emotional security of home and shared kin.²⁵ The Q.C. filled this gap as a women-only space, unlike their classroom experience. Although the boarding houses provided a site for homosocial bonding, the Q.C. gatherings were larger in number than any of these domestic spaces. An organized place where women students could seek out these friendships was vital to their emotional wellbeing.

Intellectual spaces often served as spaces where educated women could develop these important friendships. For example, many nineteenth century boarding schools facilitated fictive kinship between women students.²⁶ It is reasonable to assess that the friendships between women at Michigan functioned in a similar manner. The Q.C. provided opportunities for members to interact with other women in the Literary Department from different graduating classes. First-year students were able to join a formalized community of women that was both academic and social. The more senior women students acted as mentors in this space and sought out the membership of first-year students to carry on their traditions. Because the number of women on campus was not especially large during the 1870s, women students were generally acquainted with one another and even looked out for the freshmen. After the first year, the society continued to grow from the original twelve members. During the 1874-1875 school year,

²⁴ Louise Fargo Brown, *Apostle of Democracy: The Life of Lucy Maynard Salmon* (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishing, 1943), 55.

²⁵ Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, “The New Woman as Androgyne,” in *Disorderly Conduct: Visions of Gender in Victorian America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 249.

²⁶ Smith-Rosenberg, “The Female World of Love and Ritual,” 19.

there were at least twenty-three members, which was over a third of the women enrolled in the Literary Department.²⁷



*Figure 8: Q.C.*²⁸

(from left to right) Top row: Annie Peck, Lucy Salmon, Martha Angle Dorsett, unidentified, unidentified. Second row from the top: unidentified, Marty Marston, Mary Sheldon. Third row from the top: unidentified, Sarah Dix Hamlin, Hattie Holman, unidentified, Alice Freeman Palmer, Angie Chapin, unidentified, unidentified. Bottom row: Laura Rogers White, Emma Maria Hall, Olive San Louie Anderson, Elizabeth (Bess) Eaglesfield, Emma Stockbridge, Louisa (Lou) Reed, Lelia Taber.

²⁷ "Q.C.," undated, Lucy Maynard Salmon Papers, 1818-1976, Box 39, Folder 11. There were twenty-three members as evidenced by the photograph labeled "Q.C." among Lucy Maynard Salmon's papers. The photograph is undated, but I have identified both Olive San Louie Anderson class of '75 and Annie Peck class of '78 making the 1874-1875 school year the only plausible year the two women could have been members of the club together.

There were sixty women enrolled at Michigan in 1875-1876 according to "University of Michigan Enrollment Regular Session Enrollment by Schools and Colleges," Box 25, Folder: Reports & Statistics: Enrollment Statistics- long-term 1840-1960, University of Michigan Office of the Registrar records 1840-2003, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan.

²⁸ "Q.C.," undated, Lucy Maynard Salmon Papers.

In her reflection on the history of the organization, one member wrote that the Q.C. had broken through the class year based social barriers that were prevalent at the University of Michigan during the first decade of coeducation.

We think we are justified in looking back with a considerable degree of pride and enthusiasm upon the results of our first year's work. One of these was the doing away to a great extent of a feeling of class spirit among the girls which was far more unavoidable and far more injurious formerly than now. One great secret of our success was the perfect sympathy among the members and a freedom from all those petty jealousies and strifes which destroy the vigor and usefulness of any society.²⁹

Violent competition between underclassmen was especially prevalent at Michigan and other universities during this period, as evidenced by rushes and disciplinary records. As a minority on campus, women students ignored these divisions and sought out each other's company in order to develop a stronger sense of inclusion and camaraderie that men students as the dominant group were able to develop as a collective through class identity and spirit.

On one occasion, the Q.C. held a gathering for all of the "college girls," which had never been done before. Not all of the women students were Q.C. members, but almost all of them gathered together that evening to participate in songs, recitations, and a general debate on the question of whether an educational qualification should be the basis of suffrage. A few townswomen even provided the group with refreshments and tableware for the evening.³⁰ The gathering provided an opportunity for all women students to share in the social bonding that Q.C. members participated in every Saturday evening.

²⁹ "Address to the Q. Ceekers," Lucy Maynard Salmon Papers.

³⁰ Brown, *Apostle of Democracy*, 62.

The most important bonding activity between Q.C. members took place at the end of every meeting when the group held “go arounds” where they walked members back to their boarding house rooms. The president was escorted home first and farewell songs were sung at her gate, and then it was ensured that each member also returned home safely.³¹ Although the organization was private, the “go arounds” were a public demonstration of membership to the Michigan community and campus.

The importance of the bonds shared by Q.Ceekers is evident by their round-robin letters exchanged in the summer of 1874. The letters were organized by a committee and included directions advising that once a member received her letter she was required to quickly send it to the next name on the list. The original letter and all following correspondence was sent along with the newest letter.³² In their correspondence, the women frequently poke fun at and criticize gendered stereotypes and customs that they found silly. Salmon wrote:

The lake was quick rough one day and two of the gentlemen in our party were boasting that they never were sea sick, but I being a girl, was expected to turn pale and rush for my room the first moment and stay there the remainder of the time; so I rather enjoyed laughing at them when they both began to look sober and acknowledged they would...prefer to be on land while I was not sea sick the whole time.³³

Olive San Louie “Jo” Anderson was also a Q. Ceeker, and in her letter she wrote about her travels out west in Nebraska. True to form, Anderson included an anecdote about dress reform. “Heaven bless your girls. How do you all do? I am ‘out west’ and having a jolly time. I have ridden everything, from a...ranger down to a braying donkey

³¹ “Address to the Q. Ceekers,” Lucy Maynard Salmon Papers.

³² Lucy Maynard Salmon to Q.C. members, July 1, 1874, Lucy Maynard Salmon Papers, Box 25, Folder 13.

³³ Ibid.

and if at any time my steed objected to “petticoats” I respected his scruples and changed my costume for it is not the dress that makes the person you know.”³⁴

The importance of the organization to the women’s college experiences is also evidenced by Blanchie Slocum’s letter in which she describes how much she will miss the other Q. Ceekers now that she has completed her master’s and graduated from the University of Michigan.

Now I understand as never before what graduation means– I am never to go to school anymore. But I hope I am not dependent. All this training is for a purpose that we may do a work in life. My darling girls, I shall wait patiently to hear the record of each life and I am confident it will be glorious. Circumstances often make us what we are, but with a strong will and earnest purpose, we can to a certain extent, make our circumstances.³⁵

Her letter is full of hope, but it also reflects the reality that the women may never see each other again and that the circumstances for women graduates in the 1870s were vastly different from what men graduates could expect upon their graduation from the University of Michigan. In this decade, men graduates generally began a career after earning their degree, but women graduates from the Literary Department did not have a clear path to follow upon graduation. Although many women found teaching positions with their degrees, including Salmon and Anderson, others married or took on domestic

³⁴ Olive San Louie Anderson to Q.C. members, August 11, 1874, Lucy Maynard Salmon Papers, Box 25, Folder 13. In their annotated edition of *An American Girl*, editors Elisabeth Israels Perry and Jennifer Ann Price noted, “From the evidence available, Anderson does not appear to have been a [Q.C.] member.” Evidence I found in Lucy Maynard Salmon’s papers proves that Anderson was indeed an active member of the Quadratic Club. In *Apostle of Democracy*, Louise Fargo Brown does note that San Louie Anderson was a member of the Q.C., but her interpretation of this letter is incorrect. She attributes this letter to Jo Archer instead of Jo Anderson and refers to her as “the irrepressible westerner who at home rode wild horses.” When Anderson wrote this letter she was just visiting Nebraska for the summer and probably did not ride wild horses at her real home in Mansfield, Ohio.

³⁵ Inez Blanche (Blanchie) Slocum to Q.C. girls, July 28, 1874, Lucy Maynard Salmon Papers.

responsibilities. Luckily, Blanchie Slocum did find the independence she desired as a lecturer.³⁶

The end to Slocum's letter is full of her longing to return to the university and her friends. "When you Q.C. girls meet again in Society rooms, please remember one who will never meet with you again, but who in heart and soul wishes you 'God-speed.'" She signed her round-robin letter with "Yours in the bonds of Q.C."³⁷ The Q.C. was important to many of these women's college experiences and their words reflect a strong, sisterly connection between members. The Q.C. was not only a necessary space for women students to gather together to engage in intellectual and social activity when there were few other social spaces that did not rely heavily on class year and gender distinctions; it was also an essential space for women to foster bonds of friendship and support in a community that did not readily welcome their full inclusion or exercise of authority.

Coeducational Literary Societies and Associations

The Literary Adelphi was founded on March 6, 1837 at the University of Michigan. Similar to other literary societies, the organization provided its student members with a space to perform essays, debates, discussions and criticisms. Like most student organizations at Michigan during this period, the Literary Adelphi heavily relied on class rank to organize its members. Women began joining the organization in 1873 as noted by the listing of Sarah Dix Hamlin among the class of '74.³⁸ She was not listed in

³⁶ University of Michigan Alumni Records, "Slocum, Inez Blanche [d. Unknown: A.M. 1874]" Necrology files, Box 613.

³⁷ Inez Blanche (Blanchie) Slocum to Q.C. girls, July 28, 1874, Lucy Maynard Salmon Papers.

³⁸ An annotated copy of the Literary Adelphi's constitution and bylaws states that Frances Anna (Frank) Prentiss (non-graduate, 1876-1879), Laura Donnan (class of 1879), and Mattie E. Arnold

the second semester's records, so it appears that she was only a member of the Literary Adelphi for the first semester of her senior year. That same year Emma Stockbridge, Alice Freeman, Elizabeth Eaglesfield, and Alice Devor were listed as members of the class of '76. The following year, Lucy Andrews would be added to their class. There were no women listed among the class of '75 in 1873, so it appears that Stockbridge, Freeman, Eaglesfield, and Devor may have joined as a coalition of sorts. Perhaps, this was a strategy to promote their inclusion. Women were also admitted to another literary society, Alpha Nu, beginning in 1877.³⁹

Once women began joining the Literary Adelphi, their names were designated with "Miss" in the membership lists in order to distinguish them from the men students who needed no such designation of their gender. Other organizations and academic departments at Michigan also adopted "Miss" to designate specific members in their lists as women. Later, some organizations, such as the Students' Christian Association, did adopt "Mister" or "Messrs." to introduce men, but the initial adoption of only one gendered title demonstrates that men students were seen as the norm and that women students were categorized as "other," which necessitated a special designation. The adoption of both gendered titles in their membership lists only continued to promote categorization of members based on gender.

The Lecture Association was another extracurricular space on campus that accepted women as members. While women were welcome to attend the lecture series and often did, they were not organizers because it would have required them to act

(class of 1880) were "the first lady members," despite the fact that women students first appear in 1873.

³⁹ Edwin H. Humphrey, *The Michigan Book* (Ann Arbor, MI: The Inland Press, 1898), 95.

outside of their sphere through correspondence with professionals and public speaking. For this reason, women were excluded from leadership roles in the Lecture Association and would find difficulty obtaining leadership positions in other coeducational clubs.

Students' Christian Association

The Students' Christian Association, or SCA, was a religious organization on campus open to anyone connected to the university who professed a belief in the religion of Christ and was willing to abide by a lengthy membership pledge.⁴⁰ The association was very popular and was featured prominently in the writings of many women students. Mary Marston wrote to her parents about the SCA and how she “hoped not to miss a single Christian Association meeting this year.”⁴¹ The organization's standing religious meetings were Sunday mornings and Wednesday and Friday evenings. A weekly business meeting was held every Wednesday evening, too. Every year, the SCA facilitated weeks of prayer meetings for the two national prayer weeks for colleges and schools and for Christian college organizations. Many of the organization's records describe the popularity of SCA meetings and the support they had from the community and the university. In his summary of the year, SCA President, Don A. Matthews, wrote:

The meetings grew so large immediately after the day of prayer for colleges (Feb. 26th) that we are obliged to move out of our old assoc. Room, hallowed by so many precious associations, and to hold services in Dr. Cocker's recitation room; this also proving too small, we were obliged to move in the chapel where we

⁴⁰ “Students' Christian Association of the University of Michigan Constitution and By-Laws”, 1875, Lucy Maynard Salmon Papers, Box 31, Folder 2.

⁴¹ Mary O. Marston to her mother, October 18, 1874, Mary O. Marston Papers.

remained nearly three weeks, holding daily meeting, as had been done since Jan. 4th, 1874.⁴²

The SCA held its members accountable to Christian principles through its membership pledge. One section of the pledge, which was updated in 1874, outlined the role of members in promoting Christianity on campus: “You will also, both through this society and individually, labor for the general religious welfare of the University of Michigan; and to this end you will give your personal influence against vice in all its forms, especially intemperance, profanity and Sabbath-breaking, and in favor of order, morality, and piety.”⁴³ In order to uphold this pledge, SCA members encouraged church membership among their peers and brought in influential religious leaders to speak at their meetings.

The SCA’s extensive organizational structure highlights the way many student clubs made distinctions between not only class rank, but also the department with which its members were affiliated. The officers of the association were all students of the Literary Department, but the organization also elected two vice presidents for the Law and Medical Departments. These vice presidents were elected in the fall after the term had begun, while the other officers from the Literary Department assumed office at the end of the previous school year in May.⁴⁴ Throughout the 1870s, a major goal of the organization was to expand its membership beyond its base in the Literary Department.⁴⁵

⁴² Don A. Matthews, Secretary's record book 1860-1879, vol. 1, May 1874, Office of Ethics and Religion (University of Michigan) records: 1860-1991, Box 1, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan.

⁴³ “Students’ Christian Association of the University of Michigan Constitution and By-Laws”, 1875, Lucy Maynard Salmon Papers.

⁴⁴ Students’ Christian Association, “Secretary's record book 1860-1879,” vol. 1, October 7, 1874, Office of Ethics and Religion (University of Michigan) records: 1860-1991, Box 1.

⁴⁵ Don A. Matthews, “Secretary's record book 1860-1879,” May 1874.

Recognizing a need to expand their reach to new departments, in 1878, the number of Vice Presidents expanded to include a representative from the other professional departments: Homeopathic Medicine, Pharmacy, and Dentistry.⁴⁶

In 1870, the organization decided to organize a committee to conduct a survey of the professing Christians and their denominations. The committee was led by a chairman from each department who selected additional assistants from their respective departments. A similar survey conducted in 1874 also organized responses by class and department. The total enrollment for students in 1874 was 1,112, which demonstrates that the SCA was able to get in contact with at least one-third of the entire student body.⁴⁷ That fall, SCA members distributed cards of invitation to the freshmen Literary students, juniors in the Law Department, and all medical students.⁴⁸

⁴⁶ Students' Christian Association, "Secretary's record book," November 6, 1878.

⁴⁷ James Burrill Angell, *The President's Report to the Board of Regents for the Year Ending June 30, 1874* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan), 4, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan.

⁴⁸ Students' Christian Association, "Secretary's record book 1860-1879," October 7, 1874.

Figure 9: Professing Christians at the University of Michigan, 1874⁴⁹

Literary	149
Seniors	27
Juniors	32
Sophomores	34
Freshmen	41
Pharmacy	15
Law	114
Seniors	46
Juniors	68
Medical	105
Total	368

In 1875, the organization recorded 156 SCA members and 352 church members on campus out of a total of 1,191 students. There were nine students preparing for the ministry and six conversions recorded that year.⁵⁰

Women began joining the Students' Christian Association within their first semester at Michigan. Ruth Delia Hemingway, Julia Knight, Mary Frances Hapgood, and Emma Maria Hall were elected into the association on October 28, 1870.⁵¹ C. Grey Austin argues that the SCA eagerly awaited women's membership and even changed its name from the Michigan Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) to the Students'

⁴⁹ Students' Christian Association, "Secretary's record book 1860-1879," February 25, 1874. Later surveys follow this same pattern but instead seek out the number of church members at the University of Michigan. For this reason, I infer that professing Christian specifically meant those who were confirmed members of Christian churches.

⁵⁰ Students' Christian Association, "Secretary's record book 1860-1879," January 1876.

⁵¹ Students' Christian Association, "Secretary's record book 1860-1879," October 28, 1876.

Christian Association in the 1850s to demonstrate its willingness to include women once the university adopted coeducation.⁵² Other women joined the organization each year and women increasingly made up a larger proportion of the membership by 1874.

Although no women are listed as presidents of the association, the SCA elected Alice Freeman as its secretary for the 1874-1875 school year.⁵³ When Freeman resigned in February of 1875, the officers presented a motion to thank her for faithful and efficient service to the organization.⁵⁴ Freeman was the first woman officer of the SCA, but for the rest of the decade women were elected to the secretary position at every officer election in the spring, with only 1877 as an exception. Hattie Holman was next elected as secretary on May 19, 1875. Then Kate Coman became secretary on May 17, 1876 until her resignation and Emma Pugsley's election to fill the position on October 6, 1876. After no women were elected for the 1876-1877 school year, Marion Sarah Gerls was elected as secretary for the following school year in May 1877. After the resignation of Gerls, Annie Peck was elected as secretary on Jan 16, 1878, but she declined the position. After the SCA reorganized their officers to include both a recording and a corresponding secretary, women filled the recording role. On May 15, 1878, Ella Cornelia Williams was elected as the recording secretary for 1878-1879 school year. Upon her return to the school, Kate Coman ran again and was elected on May 21, 1879 as recording secretary. Additionally, Amanda Conkling became Medical Vice President of the SCA on

⁵² C. Grey Austin, *A Century of Religion at the University of Michigan: A Case Study in Religion and the State University, Commemorating the Centennial of Student Religious Activity at the University of Michigan* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan, 1957), 5, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan.

⁵³ Students' Christian Association, "Secretary's record book 1860-1879," May 13, 1874.

⁵⁴ Students' Christian Association, "Secretary's record book 1860-1879," February 3, 1875.

November 3, 1875 after beating out three men. Harriet Bills held the same position the following school year.

Although these elections may appear as evidence of inclusion, the fact that there were few socially acceptable officer positions that women could hold demonstrates how the SCA reinforced dominant gender ideology. The association's adoption of both a recording and corresponding secretary demonstrates that the only authoritative role women could hold was in the invisible collection of information— labor that was similar to family record keeping. Women could not hold the active role of recording secretary because that officer conversed with other Christian associations and esteemed clergy members. Women were not chosen to attend any of the conferences as representatives of the SCA, either. Fundamentally, women who joined the SCA were joining an organization founded by and serving men. Although the organization's name was changed and women served in specific leadership positions, the role of women in the organization was to serve college students, who at that time were understood to be young men only.

Student organizations and clubs at the University of Michigan in the 1870s were spaces that both excluded and included women, but above all reinforced gendered expectations and difference. Most organizations, except for the notable exception of the Quadratic Club, also categorized students by class year and department affiliation. The spaces that women were most excluded from were secret fraternal organizations, which were inaccessible to women as secret groups because of prevailing gender ideology. The creation of the Quadratic Club also demonstrates that a women-only organization was vital to women's emotional wellbeing and the preservation of feminine rituals of

friendship on a campus where they were in the minority. By founding the Q.C., women students also rejected class year hierarchies in order to preserve friendship and unity among all women, regardless of the social importance of class spirit and identity among men students. While coeducational organizations may have appeared to have been progressive in terms of admitting women or electing them as officers, their organizational records and practices reveal that women's inclusion was on qualified terms and could not deviate from their predetermined sphere, much like the overall circumstance of women students at the University of Michigan in this first decade of coeducation.

Conclusion

Without A Golden Age

“In the University, her bright original manner, her clear reasoning powers, her witty and concise way of expressing herself, rendered her a favorite both within and without the classroom... she constituted herself the champion of woman.”

—

Sarah Dix Hamlin reflecting on the life of Olive San Louie Anderson, June 1886¹

Just as Will Elliot boarded a train west at the end of *An American Girl and Her Four Years in a Boys' College*, Olive San Louie Anderson headed to California after her graduation. Instead of pursuing medicine right away, she decided to pay forward her education and teach a younger generation of women. She first took a professorship of Greek and Latin at Santa Barbara College and then became the principal of a private school in San Rafael, teaching until the time of her death. Heartbreakingly, on June 5, 1886, Olive San Louie Anderson drowned in the Sacramento River at only thirty-three years old.² As her friends mourned the loss of Anderson, her classmate Sarah Dix Hamlin wrote an extensive obituary to honor her, which is now on file at the Bentley Historical Library. Over a century later, I too mourn her loss as her ambitions were never fully

¹ Sarah Dix Hamlin, “Santa Louise Anderson,” University of Michigan Alumni Records, “Anderson, San Louie [d. June 5, 1886: A.B. 1875]” Necrology files, Box 13 Suppl., Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan.

² Ibid.

realized and because I strongly believe she would have left an even bigger mark on this world had she not died at such a young age. She was a fighter who wholeheartedly challenged the role society had set for her as a woman. Her memory serves as an opportunity to look back on the history of coeducation at the University of Michigan in a light that provides the modern reader with an opportunity to deal with issues of inclusion and exclusion in a more honest way.

Throughout the first decade of coeducation, women students were referred to by belittling terms such as hen medics or college girls, but they were never able to take part in the collective identity of student. This is because women students were perceived as fundamentally different from men students. Men struggled to share the campus with women, so how could they share a collective identity with them? Instead, women at the University of Michigan were categorically “other” to men, which reinforced their subordination and how their inclusion was understood. Focusing on space as a new way to rethink this history allows us to see how the prevailing gender ideology of the 1870s informed coeducation at Michigan and women’s exclusion and inclusion. Defining space as both physical and conceptual also allows us to look at a variety of spaces and their role in reinforcing gender hierarchies and subordination. This thesis specifically focused on domestic spaces, the professional schools, and student organizations as gendered spaces that redefined themselves as a result of coeducation.

The way that men and women students negotiated spaces of domestic authority, such as student housing and chapels revealed that men students did not want to make room for women on campus. Instead, men students disturbed the domestic spaces that women students relied on for support and where women held some sense of authority.

These spaces were often sites of homosocial bonding and where women drew strength against the threat of masculine violence and domination on campus. Women students' recollections illustrate the importance of and threat toward these spaces by men students, which provides evidence that domestic spaces at Michigan reinforced adherence to the dominant gender ideology of separate spheres.

The mid-nineteenth century was marked by a transformation in American moral and religious formations, which reshaped the purpose of higher education. Conceptualizing the professional schools as spaces for historical analysis allows us to comprehend how this evolving understanding of equality and gender ideology functioned at Michigan during the first decade of coeducation. Gendered hierarchies were reinforced at Michigan through two distinct models. The Medical school employed segregation in order to maintain gendered distinctions between students. Women law students did not experience this segregation, but their participation in the legal field reinforced their subordinate status to men. The professional schools demonstrate how any inclusion resulting from coeducation was limited and constrained by dominant constructions of gender.

Student organizations at the University of Michigan in the 1870s were spaces that both excluded and included women and fundamentally reinforced gender ideologies of difference. The established extracurricular student organizations that opened themselves to women at the beginning of coeducation relied on class year hierarchies and departmental affiliation to distinguish their members. When they became coeducational, these organizations kept these distinctions and additionally added gender as a category to define membership. If they elected women to leadership roles, these roles fit into

expectations of their sphere. Many organizations also flat out refused to accept women as members, such as fraternities. Women who developed their own organizations in response to this exclusion replicated the secret and fraternal spaces they could not join. As women could not belong to secret organizations because of their gender, they created private women-only organizations that fostered homosocial bonding and community. Student organizations represented another response of men students to women's admission and demonstrates that any form of their inclusion or exclusion at Michigan was dictated by understandings of gender.

As women broke through barriers as Michigan students and alumnae, the boundaries of the women's sphere began to shift simultaneously. Still, the battle to enroll at Michigan would seem small in retrospect for some looking to engage in careers where few women were present. Nearly two decades after women graduated with law degrees from Michigan, an early woman lawyer wrote, "The newspapers publish and republish little floating items about women lawyers along with those of the latest sea-serpent, the popular idea seeming to be that the one is about as real as the other."³ Elsewhere, women continued to be excluded from top tier programs even though Michigan had proven coeducation had fruitful results. Columbia University did not admit women law students until 1929, and Harvard not until 1950.⁴ Coeducation may appear to have been a progressive move for Michigan, but women's inclusion was not black and white. Reviewing this history in terms of gendered spaces reveals that at times when there was inclusion it was conditional and always under the constraints of women's sphere.

³ Lelia J. Robinson "Women Lawyers in the United States," *The Green Bag*, 2 (1890): 10.

⁴ Karen Berger Morello, *The Invisible Bar: The Woman Lawyer in America, 1638 to the Present* (New York: Random House, 1986), 101-103.

Exclusion and discrimination remained prevalent. The lack of respect shown by the university to its own women physicians may be surprising to the modern reader, but it reflects the university community's attitude toward women holding positions of authority from the dawn of coeducation until decades later. In 1896, President Angell asked Eliza Mosher, M.D. 1875 to become the first Dean of Women at Michigan. Although she held a medical degree from the university, the Medical Department refused to make her a member of their faculty. Instead she became a professor of hygiene in the Literary Department and was given the embarrassing courtesy to address medical students.⁵ For decades, administrators slighted women as potential faculty. After her death, Alice Freeman Palmer's husband donated \$35,000 to the university in 1924 to endow a faculty chair in the History Department for a woman "appointed on the same grounds as a man would be."⁶ The Board of Regents refused to appoint a woman to fill the position until 1957.⁷

In Anderson's obituary, Sarah Dix Hamlin wrote that Anderson came to regret her only novel. If this is true, I believe this it is not due to questions over the truthfulness of the novel, but rather the reaction it generated. The contemporary debate around *An American Girl* was about protecting the hard-fought results of the "dangerous experiment." The alumnae who spoke out in opposition to the novel did not want their experience to be interpreted as an endeavor in match-making because they believed it

⁵ Ruth Bordin, *Women at Michigan: The "Dangerous Experiment," 1870s to the Present* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1999), 33.

⁶ University of Michigan Board of Regents, "Session of September 26," September 26, 1924, Proceedings of the University of Michigan Board of Regents, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan.

⁷ Bordin, *Women at Michigan*, 49.

would jeopardize the legacy of coeducation and women's future at Michigan. Throughout the first decade of coeducation, women's presence was still under a microscope; no alumnae were willing to let their labor go to waste on account of a novel that painted their experience as frivolous or romantic. Carroll Smith-Rosenberg captures their perspective for wanting to preserve their experience as purely intellectual in order to protect the place of future women students at Michigan. "Conscious of being scrutinized by a dubious world, they reached out to one another, forming the intense bonds of a shared identity... ardently cultivating the future."⁸ I believe those in opposition to *An American Girl* were looking out for the women of the next generation. This is why there is a disconnect between contemporaries who argued that the novel was accurate and how at the same time alumnae, specifically, took issue.

Although women students at Michigan may not have transgressed gender in the same fashion as Olive San Louie Anderson, their presence at the university alone challenged the constraints placed on women in the nineteenth century. Carroll Smith-Rosenberg argues that placing "a woman outside of a domestic setting, to train a woman to think and feel 'as a man,' and to encourage her to succeed at a career, indeed, to place a career before marriage, violated virtually every late-Victorian norm."⁹ In taking herself "outside of conventional structures and social arrangements... She thus made herself the intellectual peer of young men, and rendered herself socially questionable by that very act."¹⁰ The voices included in this thesis attest to how radical the notion of women

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, "The New Woman as Androgyne," in *Disorderly Conduct: Visions of Gender in Victorian America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 252.

¹⁰ Ibid.

entering the University of Michigan and its gendered spaces was at the dawn of coeducation. These spaces were created for and upheld by men, which necessitated that women carve out their own spaces amidst a student body that was redefining masculinity and their own sphere in response to women's admission. Women students could only occupy domestic spaces, academic departments, and campus organizations in specific ways that did not threaten patriarchal hegemony, which demonstrates that women's admission did not bring about profound institutional change at the University of Michigan. Without a golden age, one can see the history as it should be: continuity and change; and in Michigan's case as complicated and destined to be reinterpreted.

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