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Femininity and Higher Education: Women at Ontario Universities, 1890 to 1920

Marilla McCargar, *The University of Western Ontario*

Supervisor: Katherine McKenna, *The University of Western Ontario*

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy degree
in History

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Abstract and Keywords

This dissertation examines the experiences of women studying at six institutions of higher education from 1890 to 1920. The universities include Queen's University in Kingston, The University of Western Ontario in London, the University of Toronto and its affiliates Victoria University, University College, and Trinity College in Toronto. While pioneering women who attended universities in the 1880s were opposed by people who believed that women's intellects were inferior to men's, women in this study faced the belief that by engaging in the "masculine" pursuit of higher education they risked their future as wives and mothers and thus jeopardized their femininity.

This dissertation challenges the historiographical assertion that female students who attended university after the pioneer women were less engaged academically and faced fewer barriers on campus than their predecessors. In fact, it argues that female students from 1890 to 1920 faced more supervision on campus than their foremothers and universities adapted to increased numbers of female students by hiring Deans of Women, physicians, and nurses to oversee students' physical and moral health. As the medical literature still maintained that an education could render women infertile, parents, administrators and students carefully guarded women's health on campus. In order to combat a dangerous education, some schools required students to perform physical activities and to be supervised by doctors and nurses. Women's inferior status was mapped onto campus and female students faced complex rules about where they were permitted to walk and stand on campus, and how they could interact with male students. In fact, they had greater freedom on city streets than they did on university campus, unless they acted in the traditionally feminine role as the dates of male students.

As a result of the complex rules that dictated how they could socialize with male students on campus, women lived in homosocial worlds. They relied upon their female friends and spent the vast majority of time in female boarding houses and residences. Many women engaged in romantic female friendships typical of the nineteenth century and in “lesbian-like” ways including fake marriages between friends, sleeping in each other’s beds, and dancing together. Romantic friendships were encouraged by university administrators who closely supervised interactions between men and women. Heterosexual relationships were difficult for female students to navigate, as women required a male escort to participate in most campus social events. While men were eager to form romantic relationships with their female peers, men and women struggled to create companionate relationships as women engaged in traditionally masculine higher education and careers.

Despite the opposition and supervision women faced on campus, the majority of students relished their time at university. They were able to step out of the feminine roles of performing domestic labour and were permitted to put their own desires and ambition before the needs of family. In order to justify their presence at university before a presumed retreat into the private sphere as wives and mothers, proponents of women’s higher education argued that it was beneficial for Canadian society at large to create “well-rounded girls” who would be wonderful mothers. Yet, given greater employment options than uneducated women, more than half of the graduates did not marry and return to the private sphere. Many graduates volunteered with alumnae associations for the rest of their lives to retain their connection to universities and ensure young women continued to have the opportunities they relished.

Keywords: higher education, women, gendered space, medical history, Ontario, social conditions of women, homosociality, dating, First World War

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Acknowledgements

I first became interested in the topic of women and higher education when I stumbled across a packet of letters that Jessie Reid Rowat sent her family in 1905 as she studied for her master's degree at the University of Chicago. I read them as I studied for my master's degree and was struck by the similarities in our experiences. Sensing my interest, my supervisor, Dr. Katherine McKenna, encouraged me to pursue this topic. Katherine has provided me with countless examples of feminist support and kindness at The University of Western Ontario. I am grateful for her guidance in how to be a feminist role model and advocate.

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Like many of the women I studied for this dissertation, I relied upon the support of my friends to complete my dissertation. Vanessa Ho stuck with me through flared jeans, braces, and countless awkward experiences. Laura Michael offered me the comfort of family and indulged me with yoga naps and sunscreen applications. David Valentin championed my work and took me to Taylor Swift concerts. Oliver Charbonneau provided endless sympathy and irreverent jokes. In 2007, Tim Compeau and I vowed to acknowledge each other in our dissertations. I had no idea how grateful I would be for his support, which included dog-sitting, inelegant arguments over wine, and excellent critiques of my writing.

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pushes me to do more. His ambition for me was tremendously meaningful whenever I found this project overwhelming. I am grateful for his support and look forward to continuing to celebrate his many successes.

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Like many of the women I studied, I benefitted from the support of my parents. They provided me with financial aid, lattes, trips to the market, and care for my demanding dog. For an early age, they instilled me with confidence in my abilities. My father, Tim McCargar, developed my love of learning by reading me books like *Ellie and the Ivy* and *The Snowman*. He purposefully raised a feminist daughter, and it is no surprise that I have benefitted from his love of learning.

My mother, Karen McCargar, raised me as a feminist who would value her own intelligence and abilities. As a child, a friend told me that since she liked expensive objects, her mother suggested she should marry a doctor. My mother was horrified when I recounted this story. She informed me, in no uncertain terms, there was no need to rely on my husband's income to earn a living and that I was capable of becoming a doctor myself. This confidence in my abilities endured, and despite the lack of a lavish lifestyle, I became a doctor after all.

1. “College Women”: An Introduction

In the late 1890s, Bessie Scott, who had attended the University of Toronto, gave a speech on “College Women” to an unknown audience: “As we stand now and look back over the years of the century so near its close, the century which we have been accustomed to think of as one of wonderful progress in nothing do we see this so strongly marked as in the condition of women.” In recent history, “a woman who desired an education higher than that meted out by the finishing schools was looked upon as unnatural, phenomenal and was likely to be misunderstood by her own sex and avoided by the opposite one as that obnoxious, spectacted monstrosity, a ‘bluestocking’.” Women like Scott were fortunate for the fortitude and strength of their foremothers, because the women “who humbly follow in their footsteps are able to do so with a very slight share of adverse criticism, though we are not entirely free from this yet.”¹

Yet, far from being an optimistic and satisfied reflection on a new societal view of women in higher education, Scott’s address was a prolonged defense of women’s right to study. Rather than a celebration of women’s accomplishments and right to education, she refuted the argument that strenuous study ill-prepared women to be wives and mothers, that higher education was too physically taxing for the delicate constitutions of women, and the coeducation was injurious to both women and men. Scott mocked the notion that women’s health would suffer while admitting, “all girls are certainly not fitted for college life,” but “neither are all boys.” As for the notion that women were intellectually inferior to men, she remarked, “that cry is growing more feeble each year. How can it be

¹ Bessie Mabel Scott Lewis, “College Women,” n.d. B1980-0033/001 File 06. Bessie Mabel Scott Lewis fonds, University of Toronto Archives, Toronto Ontario.

otherwise when we see the annual lists from colleges where men and women have equal opportunity.”²

Scott used her experience at University College at the University of Toronto from 1889 to 1891 to paint a picture of an ideal university environment for women: “We enter with something of awe, the grand portal[,] pass up the broad staircase and guided perhaps by merry girlish laughter, find ourselves in the rooms set apart for the girls’ special use.” In this women’s space a young woman formed lifelong friendships and experienced character growth as she was “no longer simply a gushing school girl, but a woman preparing to enter upon the battle of life.” The combination of an academic education, exposure to new people and ideas, and religious and extracurricular events improved her character. Upon graduation, Scott maintained that she “has learned to meet difficulties bravely and firmly and resolutely to conquer.” The university graduate was comfortable with her male peers, as she had “become accustomed to meet men as comrades, as friends and as rivals—has met them everywhere in library, in laboratory, in reading room, in examination hall and has not discovered that they are so much her intellectual superiors that (as some one [sic] has said) ‘it is unnatural and exciting stimulus to compete with them.’”³

While Scott acknowledged that most women desired marriage, she argued that a university education gave unmarried women independence. To “every girl the opportunity of having her own house does not come and how much happier is she with her power of being independent—life is not a failure even if the true knight does not

² Bessie Scott Lewis, “College Women,” n.d. UTA.

³ Ibid.

come to his fair lady. What more pitiable than a poor girl whose one hope of earthly salvation is this knight—whose own longing, growing each year more hopeless—is for his coming.” While a university education provided an income source for women unable or unwilling to marry, Scott argued that it was not a “mannish” activity that made women into unmarriageable shrews. Instead it helped women reach the pinnacle of femininity.

Female graduates were:

journalists, some doctors, many teachers and very many after passing through one or more of these stages are now becoming home-makers, fully satisfied that in so doing they are reaching to the highest ideal of woman, a true wife and a true mother and that their college training has helped them to see with clearer eyes what this idea may be.

Scott’s speech demonstrated the many conflicting ideals and critiques of university-educated women at the turn of the century. She maintained that female students were accepted and that the arguments used against education were feeble. Yet if women were welcome on campus and women’s fitness for higher education was no longer in question, why did Scott feel the need to defend it?

Access to higher education was one of the many transformations that affected women’s lives in the last decades of the nineteenth century. Middle-class women fought against their exclusion from public life through voluntary organizations and early political organizing in the temperance and suffrage movements. Single working women escaped the supervision they faced as domestic servants and poured into Canadian cities to work in factories and attain a degree of autonomy in their lives. Legal changes, such as the extension of the municipal franchise to unmarried women with property in 1884 and the Married Women’s Property Act, which gave married women in Ontario the right to control their own property, were followed by the federal and provincial franchise for

some women in 1918. The social, political, and economic status of women underwent significant transformations during this period.

Like these other changes in women's lives, the expansion of university education to women was a result of complex social and economic phenomena. Joan Burstyn has argued that intersecting ideologies and forces brought about this change in England:

The movement for higher education for women was an attempt to break through the prescriptions of the ideal [of True Womanhood] to provide women of the upper and middle classes with the opportunity for individual betterment. The movement cannot be considered alone; it was part of a broad upheaval caused by the development of industrialism, which affected women's economic well-being, and their aspirations for participation in the political and social life of the country.⁴

Burstyn argued that women gained access to higher education based on the ideal of educated mothers and the need for educated women in the workforce, especially in the teaching profession. Throughout the 1850s, 1860s and 1870s, a "surplus" of women in England relative to men forced fathers to rethink the ideal occupation as a leisured wife for their daughters. Rather, middle class women began entering universities in order to gain training as teachers, which was one of the few occupations considered respectable for them.⁵ The movement for women's education, according to Burstyn was also part of a desire for educated mothers to produce well-educated children and was the economic result of surplus women in England. As women proved their intellectual mettle by passing entrance examinations and arguing for the need for better-educated teachers, some institutions opened separate women's colleges, such as Bedford College in 1849 at the University of London, and Girton College and Newnham Hall which were separate

⁴ Joan N. Burstyn, *Victorian Education and the Ideal of Womanhood* (Totowa: New Jersey, Barnes and Noble Books, 1980), 11.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 34.

annexed colleges at Cambridge in 1869 and 1871. Separate colleges, where men and women did not mix as unsupervised academic peers, were preferred in Victorian society. Oxford established similarly annexed colleges, the Lady Margaret Hall and Somerville College, in 1879. The University of London granted women degrees in 1878 with many of the civic universities following soon after. By 1900, almost all of England's universities, with the exception of Oxford and Cambridge, accepted women students.⁶

American historians attribute the rise of women's education to similar forces, as well as to the Civil War. Barbara Miller Solomon argued that three factors influenced the rise of women in institutions of higher education between the Civil War and the First World War: the expansion of primary schools, the Civil War and Reconstruction, and the expansion of universities under federal funding that made it politically difficult to exclude women from public institutions.⁷ Oberlin College in Ohio was the first to accept women in 1837, although the purpose was to train women to be worthy wives to the male students and to complete domestic tasks, including sewing, for male students.⁸ Oberlin was an outlier, however, and women's acceptance to university did not become widespread until the 1860s when women demonstrated their intellectual abilities by passing entrance examinations and agitating for university enrolment. Like in England, American supporters of women's higher education endorsed separate women's colleges, such as Vassar College, which accepted its first students in 1865. This was followed by

⁶ Carol Dyhouse, *No distinction of sex? Women in British Universities, 1870 – 1939* (London: University College London Press, 1995), 12.

⁷ Barbara Miller Solomon, *In the Company of Educated Women: A History of Women and Higher Education in America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), 43.

⁸ Jill Kerr Conway, "Perspectives on the History of Women's Education in the United States," *History of Education Quarterly*, Vol. 14, No. 1 (Spring 1974), 6.

Wellesley College and Smith College in 1875, and Bryn Mawr in 1884. While some institutions like Cornell University supported the coeducational ideal, and accepted female students in 1872, economic necessity forced newer institutions such as the University of Michigan and the University of Chicago to accept women. Only the wealthiest universities like Harvard or Yale could afford to exclude female students and create separate women's colleges.⁹

Canadian centres of higher learning were deeply influenced by these developments in the wider Anglo-American world. Women's success in British university entrance examinations was reported in Canadian newspapers, and Canadian academics toured the British women's colleges while overseas. American women's colleges supplied an example of women's education closer to home, and provided educational opportunities for Canadian women.¹⁰ The first Canadian institution to officially accept female students was Mount Allison University, in New Brunswick, in 1872. The majority of Canadian university presidents desired separate women's colleges to avoid coeducation, but only McGill University was able to afford to do so, thanks to a donation from the railroad tycoon Donald Smith that created the Royal Victoria College in 1899.¹¹ The limited financial resources of Canadian universities required them to accept female students, including Acadia University in 1880 and Dalhousie University in

⁹ Sara Z. Burke, "Being Unlike Man": Challenges to Co-Education at the University of Toronto, 1884-1909," *Ontario History* Vol. 93, No. 1 (Spring 2001);16.

¹⁰ Paula LaPierre, "The First Generation: The Experience of Women University Students in Central Canada," PhD dissertation, University of Toronto (1993), 32.

¹¹ Robin S. Harris, *A History of Higher Education in Canada 1663 – 1960* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1976), 116.

1881.¹² By 1900, Canada's largest centres of higher learning, with the exception of McGill, were coeducational institutions.

This study focuses on six coeducational Ontario universities: Queen's University in Kingston, The University of Western Ontario in London, and the University of Toronto's affiliated colleges Trinity, University, and Victoria. Trinity College, associated with the Church of England, was initially established west of the University of Toronto, and did not become federated with the University of Toronto until 1903. In 1888, Trinity established a separate women's college, St. Hilda's College, but after its affiliation with Trinity College it became simply a women's residence. University College was a foundational non-denominational college at the University of Toronto. The Methodist Victoria College, established initially in Cobourg, Ontario, agreed to federate with the University of Toronto in 1890 and celebrated its formal opening in Toronto in 1892. Victoria first admitted female students in 1878.¹³

Like institutions in the United States and England, the path to accepting female students at these universities was uneven. The Toronto Women's Literary Club, which supported women's suffrage and other feminist causes, lobbied the Senate of the University of Toronto to allow women to write entrance examinations. In the late 1870s and 1880s individual professors permitted a few lucky women to sit in rooms adjacent to lecture halls so they could listen to lectures while remaining unseen by the male students.¹⁴ University of Toronto president Daniel Wilson supported the education of

¹² Burke, "“Being Unlike Man,”” 17.

¹³ Martin L. Freidland, *The University of Toronto: A History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002), 30, 88, 94, 110-111.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 88.

women, but wanted a system of separate women's colleges until he was forced to accept coeducation when Ontario Premier Oliver Mowat passed an Order-in-Council in 1884 mandating coeducation at the University of Toronto. The first women's residence at the University of Toronto was Victoria's Annesley Hall, which opened in 1903, followed by Queen's Hall in 1905.¹⁵

Women's education progressed similarly at Queen's University. Individual professors permitted some lucky women to listen to lectures hidden in adjacent cloakrooms, and even established "ladies' classes" organized by Professor John Clark Murray in the early 1870s. While the Queen's Senate permitted women to enroll in Chemistry and Logic in 1876, there was no large influx of female students in response to this policy. Paula LaPierre noted that while early institutional histories maintain that women were formally accepted in 1878, she was unable to find any records of female students until three students enrolled for an Arts degree in 1880.¹⁶ That same year, however, four female medical students started a summer lecture course for women and two years later began classes with male students. During the 1883-1884 school year, male faculty members and male students who opposed coeducation threatened to withdraw *en masse* from the Queen's medical school. This forced Queen's to abandon medical coeducation. Dr. A.P. Knight, professor of animal biology and physiology, led the initiative to open the Queen's-affiliated Women's Medical College in Kingston by selling

¹⁵ Freidland, *The University of Toronto: A History*, 89-91.

¹⁶ LaPierre, "The First Generation," 39 and 53-55.

public subscriptions, but the lack of funds and staff resources resulted in its closure in 1894.¹⁷

The University of Western Ontario in London allowed women to officially enroll in 1895, yet there were only a handful of female graduates during Western's first years of coeducation.¹⁸ The dire financial position of the university required the acceptance of women, although they had to fight for facilities on campus and did not have any official residences until the Second World War. In 1919, however, Brescia University College was established as an affiliated Catholic women's college, and Brescia built its current campus beside The University of Western Ontario in 1925. It remains the Canada's only women's university.¹⁹

Despite inauspicious beginnings, female enrollment increased between 1890 and 1920. In 1891, women made up 11.6% of the undergraduate population in Canada. By 1920, they comprised 16.3% of full time Canadian undergraduate students.²⁰ The dramatic increase in female students has led many historians to believe that the second generation of female students did not face significant barriers to education. Unlike their pioneering foremothers, they did not fight for the right to attend university. The greater number of female students on campus, and special women's spaces like residences and women's associations, has led many historians in the Anglo-American world to maintain

¹⁷ Hilda Neatby, *Queen's University, Volume 1, 1841-1917: And Not to Yield* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1978), 215-6.

¹⁸ John R.W. Gwynne-Timothy, *Western's First Century* (London: The University of Western Ontario, 1978), 135.

¹⁹ Alyson King, "The Experience of the Second Generation of Women Students at Ontario Universities, 1900-1930," PhD Dissertation, University of Toronto (1999), 124 and 146.

²⁰ F.H. Lacey, ed. *Historical Statistics of Canada*, 2nd edition. (Ottawa: Statistic Canada, 1983), Table W439-455.

the “second generation” of female students were largely accepted on campus. This dissertation challenges the argument that second generation students faced few barriers to a university education. Much of the historiography written in the 1980s and 1990s was preoccupied with comparing generations and missed the backlash to women on campus and the more obvious misogynistic environment the female students experienced. It also ignored the continuation of widely held beliefs that university education and middle class femininity were inherently incompatible. The opponents to women’s higher education conceded that women could theoretically compete with men intellectually, and while they may have grudgingly accepted women’s minds on campus, their opposition shifted to women’s bodies. Women were forbidden from many areas on campus, and their bodies became potential sites of disease due to overzealous studying, and were thus in need of control and supervision on campus. Women’s bodies, rather than their minds, became the chief barrier to women’s higher education from 1890 to 1920.

Despite the difficulties women faced on campus, their time at school remained a special period in their lives when their desires and ambitions were more important than familial roles and domestic labour as daughters or wives. In order to understand their experiences, and reevaluate the prevailing historiographical narrative, it is imperative to look beyond the quantitative data of increased female enrolment and slightly increased marriage rates of university graduates. To understand the female students from 1890 to 1920 and the resilience of patriarchal opposition to them, this dissertation examines the diaries and letters they wrote. Despite attending different universities, they shared common experiences on university campuses, as they attempted to reconcile their femininity and higher education.

Personal records of female students provide the backbone of this dissertation since they are the best means to understand how women represented their experiences at university. However, finding personal papers written by female students in Ontario from 1890 to 1920 was not an easy task. In fact, the first such records I found were still tied in ribbons and organized in their original envelopes in the archives at The University of Western Ontario. Other letters were stored in university archives in unsorted folders. The vast majority of female students did not donate their papers to archives, and so I was lucky to find collections that spanned years and in some cases included a combination of personal diaries and letters to family members.

While the personal papers are excellent sources, they are not unbiased. Students did not unburden all their worries upon their parents out of a fear that their parents could intervene and insist that they return home. In fact, as will be explored in Chapter 3 and Chapter 5, female students carefully crafted missives home that reassured their parents that their education did not jeopardize their femininity. Additionally, while modern diaries are considered private, many female students shared their diaries with their friends and sisters. They did not necessarily record their most intimate thoughts or experiences, but instead presented a generally lighthearted daily record of activities. Lorraine Shortt, for example, wrote at length about crushes or men she disliked, but rarely about a man with whom she pursued a romantic relationship. While students censored their letters and diaries, it is also important to remember that these papers were donated by the individuals or their families, and so were deemed fit for public consumption. The diaries and letters provide a window into women's lives and experiences at the time, but not a completely unvarnished portrait of university life.

The personal papers provide the backbone of this dissertation, but other sources were used to provide additional perspectives. Textbooks used at The University of Western Ontario medical school from 1890 to 1920 demonstrate the enduring scientific views of women's minds and bodies, and the information male medical students received about their female peers. Student newspapers from Western (*Cap and Gown*), University College (*The Varsity*), Queen's (*The Queen's Journal*) and St. Hilda's (*S. Hilda's Chronicle*) demonstrate how the campus press discussed gendered expectations of students, and characterized conflicts over male and female spaces. The *S. Hilda's Chronicle* is especially significant as it was an all-women student newspaper written by and for current and former St. Hilda's students. While the other newspapers had "Ladies' Columns," this newspaper was written without a male perspective or the expectation of a male audience. The use of these sources, examined from 1890 to 1920 (depending on publication dates), provides an excellent analysis of how women and men grappled with women's roles on university campus, and how the public representation of women on campus differed from private interactions between male and female students. The *S. Hilda's Chronicle* is a unique source and has not received the academic attention it deserves as a newspaper written exclusively for women. As Chapter 7 demonstrates, its female audience ensured that the issues it discussed were very different than how the *Queen's Journal's* "Ladies' Column" represented issues relevant to women on campus.

The records of six Ontario students were examined in depth to understand the experience of female students. Bessie Mabel Scott was born in 1871 in Ottawa to Methodist parents Charles S. Scott, an English immigrant, and Margaret Macagy Scott. She attended University College at the University of Toronto as an Arts student from

1889 to 1891, and her diaries of her first and second year were examined for this study. Scott worked as a teacher until her marriage in 1914 at the age of 43 to Franklin M. Lewis. Upon his death in 1924 she worked as a librarian at Lisgar Collegiate in Ottawa. She died in 1951.

Kathleen Cowan was born to Methodists George H Cowan, a doctor, and Ada Percy in 1890 in Napanee, Ontario. She attended Victoria College at the University of Toronto from 1907 to 1911, graduating with a Bachelor of Arts. She continued her education with teacher training and taught classics and art at the Barrie High School. In 1919 she married Lloyd Morrison, a Methodist minister she first met at Victoria College. They lived in Aylmer, Arnprior, and Ottawa, where she had four children. She died in 1930 due to complications after the birth of her fourth child.

Mary Lorraine Shortt's personal papers are the most extensive of any student examined in this study, largely due to her family's interest in chronicling its own history. Her mother, Elizabeth Smith, was one of the few women permitted to attend the Queen's University medical school and she graduated in 1884. She practiced medicine in Hamilton, Ontario, until her marriage to Adam Shortt, whom she met at Queen's. Adam Shortt worked as a professor of Philosophy and Politics and Economics at Queen's, while Elizabeth Smith Shortt lectured in the Women's Medical College in Kingston. Elizabeth Smith Shortt was an active member of the National Council of Women, while Adam Shortt was the first chair of the Canadian Civil Service Commission and served on the board of the Board of Publications at the Public Archives of Canada. He was also a Queen's University trustee until his death. Lorraine, their youngest child, was born in 1897. Her older siblings, Muriel and George, both attended Queen's. Lorraine graduated

from Queen's University in 1920 with a B.A., and took a Social Service course at the University of Toronto in 1922. Lorraine never married but instead supported herself with social work.

Miriam Marshall was also born to a mother involved in feminist work. Alice Smith Marshall, who graduated from the University of Toronto in 1894, was active in the Women's Christian Temperance Union and the Young Women's Christian Association. Alice Marshall married a Methodist minister, Sandford E. Marshall, and gave birth to Miriam in 1897. Miriam attended Victoria University from 1916 to 1920, and kept detailed diaries for most of her four years. After her graduation she worked in the advertisement industry and as a teacher in Toronto until her marriage to C.W. Sheridan in 1925. They met while students at Victoria. After their marriage they lived in Ottawa, where he worked as a dentist and she was involved in women's organizations including the University Women's Club of Ottawa and the Canadian Federation of University Women.

Like Lorraine Shortt, Florence Neelands did not marry. Her parents, Dr. Jacob and Catherine Neelands, lived in Lindsay, Ontario where Jacob practiced dentistry. Florence was born in 1873, attended the Bishop Strachan School and graduated from University College in 1896 with a BA in Modern Languages. She did post-graduate work in Berlin and Paris and then worked as a teacher for thirty years in Toronto, at Harbour Collegiate Institute and as a teacher and principal of St. Margaret's College, and was a member of the Women's University Club before she died in 1929. Neelands' records include miscellaneous letters to her family circa 1894 to 1896.

The changing norms of women's roles were reflected in works of fiction at the time as artists grappled with new expectations of masculinity and femininity. Two Canadian novels provide fictional representations of female students. *Anne of the Island* (1915) by Lucy Maud Montgomery and *Miriam of Queen's* (1921) by Lillian Vaux MacKinnon illustrate the popular construction of "coeds" and how they balanced an idealized life for women on campus while also reflecting real struggles women faced. Montgomery used her experience at Dalhousie University from 1895-1896 as an inspiration for *Anne of the Island*, the third novel in the popular *Anne of Green Gables* series, which follows Anne from Prince Edward Island to the fictional Redmond College, a proxy for Dalhousie University.²¹ Like Montgomery, Lillian Vaux MacKinnon, who attended Queen's from 1898 to 1902, and was the editor of the "Ladies' Department" column of the *Queen's Journal*, used her own memories as an inspiration to write *Miriam of Queen's*, a romantic melodrama about Miriam Campbell's life at Queen's University. These sources are helpful as they demonstrate how former students translated their experiences to a wide audience. Montgomery became a bestselling author in 1908 with the publication of *Anne of Green Gables*, and was hailed as one of Canada's 12 best-known women by *The Star* in 1923. She was supported by Mark Twain, British Prime Minister Stanley Baldwin, and Canadians of all ages.²² Montgomery's fame made her work a significant factor in the cultural view of women's higher education during this time. While Mackinnon was not well known and did not have a long literary career, her book's similarity to *Anne of the Island* ensured it was popular enough to require two

²¹ Mary Henley Rubio, *Lucy Maud Montgomery: The Gift of Wings* (Toronto: Anchor Canada, 2008), 185.

²² Irene Gammel and Elizabeth Epperly, eds., *L.M. Montgomery and Canadian Culture*. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), 3.

editions. The novels provide a unique examination of how women's higher education was made palatable for a wide audience, which elements of campus life were celebrated and recreated, and what the authors chose to leave out of their fiction.

Official university records demonstrate how administrators coped with the growing number of female students. Unfortunately the quality of institutional sources varies considerably. The papers of the Lady Superintendents or Deans of Women and their annual reports were consulted, but the records of Victoria University are by far the most extensive and thus are prominent throughout. Annual reports from the Dean of Women at Queen's University were useful. Only a small number of records relating to women remain from Trinity College, University College, and The University of Western Ontario, and are incorporated into the discussion whenever possible.

These sources make it is clear that women attending universities in Ontario from 1890 to 1920 faced deeply patriarchal institutions that were hostile to their presence. Chapter 2 examines the existing historiography that maintains that the second generation of female students were relatively unaffected by misogyny while at university. Largely written in the 1980s and 1990s, it provides key details about the institutions and a dissertation such as this would be impossible without these foundational studies. However, the field needs to be updated to reflect the forms of misogyny that persisted after the female pioneers. By focusing on the records of the students, rather than the administrative records or reports of Deans who had been pioneers themselves, this study demonstrates the limitations of the impact of feminist reforms on patriarchal institutions. It also demonstrates the importance that students, administrators and parents placed on women retaining their femininity despite their education. Administrators and parents only

approved of women's education under strict physical and moral regulations and to ensure they did not distract or compete with the true *male* student.

Chapter 3 examines the medical discourse on women and higher education from 1890 to 1920. While many historians argue that the medical opposition to higher education reached its zenith in 1873 with the publication of Edward H. Clarke's *Sex in Education; or a Fair Chance for Girls*, medical discourse maintained that it was possible and even likely for women to become ill from studying until 1920. The threat of illness shaped women's experience on campus, as it justified supervision from administrators and provisions for mandatory exercise classes to prevent women from becoming ill or infertile. Parents and administrators alike worried that an education threatened women's future as wives and mothers. Opponents to the education of pioneering women focused on women's alleged mental inferiority; opponents to the education of the second generation focused on women's supposed physical inferiority. This limited female students' ability to participate fully in university life.

These limitations are further examined in Chapter 4. Women faced complex and often contradictory rules about where they were permitted to go on campus, which reaffirmed the impression that they were interlopers in masculine territory who did not have the same right to occupy university space. Women's secondary status was literally mapped onto the university campus, where they were forced to adhere to rules that were stricter than the ones they observed on city streets. As academic peers to male students they occupied a secondary status on campus, yet when they attended social functions as the dates of male students, the space they could occupy on campus expanded. Women occupying traditionally feminine roles as romantic partners to male students were much

more welcome on campus than unladylike academic competitors to male students. The physical bodies of female students were sites of moral and medical concern.

Due to the isolation and hostile environment women faced on campus, they relied heavily on their female peers. Chapter 5 examines the importance of female friendships on university campus, the alternate institutions female students created, and the efforts they maintained to avoid conflict. Most significantly, this chapter demonstrates that female students did not fear being labeled as deviant or lesbian, and, in fact, many had close friendships that resemble those Carroll Smith-Rosenberg termed “romantic friendships” of the Victorian Era. While the American historiography maintains that these romantic friendships ended around the turn of the twentieth century due to the sexologists’ classification of female same-sex desire as deviant, this study argues that female university students in Canada had romantic friendships. Close friends shared beds, diaries, dressed as men to accompany each other at women-only dances and even held elaborate marriage ceremonies with each other. A fear of “deviant” sexuality did not appear in the records of these campuses; rather their interpretation of femininity included very close and “lesbian-like” friendships.²³ This stands in sharp contrast to the historiography that maintains these friendships ended prior to 1900.

The relationships between men and women on campus were complicated. Chapter 6 examines how female students navigated male friendships and romantic partnerships.

The patriarchal social norms on campus dictated that women could not attend social

²³ In her effort to uncover history of lesbians other than those who were persecuted or left explicit records during the Middle Ages Judith Bennett proposed the useful category of “‘lesbian-like’: women whose lives might have particularly offered opportunities for same-sex love; women who resisted norms of feminine behavior based on heterosexual marriage; women who lived in circumstances that allowed them to nurture and support other women (to paraphrase Blanche Wiesen Cooke’s famous formulation).” Judith M. Bennett, “Lesbian-Like’ and the Social History of Lesbianisms,” *Journal of the History of Sexuality* Vol. 9, No. 1/2 (Jan. – Apr. 2000), 9-10.

events without an invitation from a man, and this power imbalance made women vulnerable to sexual coercion. Many women faced unpleasant choices between attending events with undesirable dates or being excluded from university social events. University administrators sought to isolate women public events where they could meet “city men” yet did not perceive a threat to women’s sexual safety from their academic peers. Women in romantic relationships with fellow students struggled over gender identities. While many male students loved their girlfriends, fiancées and wives, they struggled with maintaining their own masculinity if they were not breadwinners or were challenged academically by their wives. Even when married, a university education could compromise a woman’s femininity and upset the expectations gender roles in marriage.

As a result of the challenges a university education presented to female students’ femininity, defenders used a narrative of self-improvement to justify higher education for women. According to this narrative, explored in Chapter 7, a university education made better wives and mothers, and for women unable to obtain that status, it enabled them to support their communities as settlement workers, teachers, or missionaries. Proponents countered criticism by arguing that a university education improved women’s abilities to fulfill feminine roles. While away at university, many found themselves in a unique period of their lives that was devoted purely to their intellectual pursuits, their desires, and their personal growth. They were freed from domestic chores and family expectations, even for a short period, and given the opportunity to live with other young women. Women attending university during the First World War had even greater opportunities on campus because they filled roles traditionally occupied by men who were away at the Front. Despite the opposition they faced, university remained a special

time period for female students between being dutiful daughters and wives in the private sphere, and was why many remained committed to their female friends, residences or colleges for the remainder of their lives.

From 1890 to 1920, women's minds were reluctantly permitted on university campuses, but their bodies remained a significant concern for administrators, male students, and professors. A university education was still viewed as a threat to an ideal middle class femininity. Women were confronted by the widespread belief that an education could make them infertile. They could become coarse or mannish by competing academically with male students, and could distract male students from their academic accomplishments. While twenty-first century female students are at great risk of sexual assault on campus, administrators in the nineteenth and early twentieth century were deeply concerned that female students would become sexless and sexually unattractive to men as a result of their studies. As a result, women faced complex rules about where they were permitted on campus. Women were given more lenience when they acted in a feminine manner, such as being the romantic partners of male students, but male graduates still struggled with maintaining their masculinity when they had educated wives. The hostility women faced on campus encouraged them to retreat to female spaces, where some engaged in romantic friendships. Despite the opposition from male peers, parents, and university administrators, the time spent at university remained an exceptional period in many female students' lives.

Admitting women into institutions that had been patriarchal bastions in living memory was no simple transformation. In fact, despite a significant rise in women's enrolment, their numerical superiority during the First World War, and the institutions

they built on campus, universities remained deeply patriarchal institutions. This study demonstrates the importance of investigating lived experiences along with quantitative evidence to thoroughly understand the significance of changes such as the increase in women's enrolment. Most significantly, this study demonstrates the resilience of patriarchal institutions to feminist challenges, and the impossibility of achieving gender equality within a patriarchal society.

2. Historiography

In their pioneering work *Canadian Women: A History* (1988), Alison Prentice and her coauthors argued that Canadian women's history does not have the same turning points as traditional Canadian political history. The narrative of Canada's evolution from monarchy to democracy, which views the Fall of Quebec, the Rebellions of Upper and Lower Canada, Confederation, and the two World Wars as benchmarks, does not apply if the primary lens of analysis is women rather than the state. Prentice et al. argued that the key turning points of Canadian women's history were the transition to an industrial economy in the mid-nineteenth century, the achievement of female suffrage and prohibition during the First World War, and the entrance of middle class married women into the workforce in the Second World War.¹ Second Wave feminist historians writing in the 1970s and 1980s, who were themselves challenging masculine institutions, were particularly interested in examining how First Wave feminist achieved their own reforms. In fact, Karen Dubinsky argued that the "years 1880 through the 1920s are perhaps the fifty most-studied years in Canadian history, particularly among women's, labor and other social historians."² The growth of industrial capitalism, the shift from a rural to urban nation, and immigration changed the social, political, and economic life of Canadians. It also proved to be transformative for women, especially middle class white women, who expanded their role in the public sphere.

¹ Alison Prentice et al, *Canadian Women: A History* (Toronto: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich Canada Inc., 1988), 13.

² Karen Dubinsky, *Improper Advances: Rape and Heterosexual Conflict in Ontario, 1880-1929* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1993), 4.

The majority of the historiography of women's experiences on university campuses was written in the 1970s, 1980s, and early 1990s by historians who were also experiencing tremendous social change as a result of the Second and Third Waves of the feminist movements. As the field of women's history matured in the 1990s and early 2000s it broadened to integrate gender history and to examine women who had been excluded from earlier narratives, including working class women and women of colour. As a result, much of the historiography of the First Wave has not been updated to reflect new approaches in the field, including gender and discourse analysis, as seen in works examining marriage in the Canadian west, the rise of the welfare state, and post World War II immigration.³

The foundational histories of early female university students were written by path-breaking American women's historians such as Joan Burstyn, Rosalind Rosenberg, Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, and Martha Vicinus, who examined women's struggle to gain admittance to universities in the 1870s and the unequal treatment they received once they were within the walls of the ivy towers.⁴ The majority of these early studies focused on exploring why women were barred from universities and the commonalities in women's struggles in Europe and North America. The historiography of women's educational experiences provided rich analyses of the processes by which diverse institutions opened

³ Sarah Carter, *The Importance of Being Monogamous: Marriage and Nation Building in Western Canada to 1915* (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 2008); Nancy Christie, *Engendering the State: Family, Work, and Welfare in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000); Franca Iacovetta, *Gatekeepers: Reshaping Immigrant Lives in Cold War Canada*. Toronto: Between the Lines, 2006.

⁴ Joan Burstyn, *Victorian Education and the Ideal of Womanhood* (Totowa, New Jersey: Barnes and Noble Books, 1980); Rosalind Rosenberg, *Beyond Separate Spheres: the Intellectual Roots of Modern Feminism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982); Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, *Disorderly Conduct: Visions of Gender in Victorian America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986); Martha Vicinus, *Independent Women: Work and Community for Single Women, 1850–1920* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985).

their doors to women, how they managed female students on campus, and the experience of some early students. However, there remain gaps in our understanding of women's experiences on Canadian campuses at the turn of the century. Historians have too readily accepted the idea that the second generation of female students was inherently less serious than the first generation. As a result, scholars have not fully explored the complexity of the patriarchal resistance to female students after the turn of the twentieth century. Canadian historians have largely accepted the generational divide argued by American historians despite significant national differences in when women were permitted to enroll in universities. The result is an historiography that maintains that universities, administrators, male faculty, and students largely accepted female students after the turn of the twentieth century, and generally ignores the exclusion faced by women other than the pioneering generation. Yet as this dissertation will demonstrate, women who attended university after the first generation faced barriers to their education, albeit less obvious ones than those faced by the pioneers. Additionally, historians have not reflected on how feminist challenges to institutions were diluted by their accepting limited change while universities continued to exclude women from full and equal participation on campus. As feminists continue to challenge patriarchal institutions of government and industry, this study demonstrates the danger in accepting simplistic studies of feminist success based on the integration of a small number of women.

The narrative of women's success and integration on university campuses was established early in the historiography. In order to understand the changing contexts for female students and their slightly different behaviour between the 1860s and 1920s, historians divided them into distinct generational groups. This division itself was

problematic because historians did not agree on the eras that characterize the generations. Some historians, such as Martha Vicinus and Joan Burstyn, divided the students into two generations: the first who attended university from the 1860s to the 1880s, and the second from the 1890s onwards. Others, such as Barbara Miller Solomon, Roberta Frankfort, and Helen Lefkowitz Horowitz, divided the students into three groups. Solomon described the first generation, those who attended university from the 1860s to the 1880s, as the pioneers, serious women who were often from the lower middle class. The second generation, wealthy women who attended from the 1890s to the 1910s, “let themselves appear to be at college for the ‘pursuit of happiness.’” They attended university for their own goals and amusement. The third generation in the 1910s solidified the image of the ‘new woman,’ and embraced changing notions of femininity that allowed women to attend university and return to the private sphere to embrace marriage and motherhood.⁵

Frankfort, Solomon and Horowitz concluded that these second generation women were less revolutionary than the women who had preceded them based on their marriage rates, socio-economic class, and behaviour on campus. Frankfort and Horowitz argued that the increased marriage rates demonstrated that they were more interested in domesticity than in careers.⁶ Solomon maintained that a university education became more acceptable in the United States, as “[i]n the economic prosperity of the decades preceding World War I, upper-middle-class parents found college a convenient parking place for adolescent daughters.” A university education simply became a rite of passage

⁵ Barbara Miller Solomon, *In the Company of Educated Women: A History of Women and Higher Education in America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), 121.

⁶ Helen Lefkowitz Horowitz, *Campus Life: Undergraduate Cultures from the End of the Eighteenth Century to the Present* (New York: Alfred A Knoff, 1987), 198.

for an economically privileged segment of the white population.⁷ In her study of women's colleges, Roberta Frankfort agreed, and argued that the first generation's "determination to prove feminine scholarly prowess... [was] replaced with talk about reconciling domesticity and a college education" by the late 1890s and early 1900s.⁸ Rosalind Rosenberg also pointed to the belief among administrators "that women students coming to college [after the 1890s] were distinctly less serious than earlier women students had been," and concurred that many women were less serious about their educations because they viewed university as a preparation for marriage, rather than preparation for a career.⁹

While this characterization of the female graduates provides a neat organizational structure to examine women's university experiences, the arguments used to support this interpretation are not convincing. Proponents of the generational theory argue that the most defining characteristic of each generation was their marriage rate. Frankfort was among the first to discuss the rising marriage rates between the generations—she found that in 1889, 47% of Bryn Mawr Graduates and 57% of Wellesley students married.¹⁰ Yet by 1909, 67% of Bryn Mawr and 72% of Wellesley graduates married.¹¹ While the difference in the marriage rates of each generation is significant, it is less significant than the difference in the marriage rates of university and non-university educated women.

Solomon admitted that according to the census in 1890 and 1910, 90% of American

⁷ Solomon, *In the Company of Educated Women*, 70 and 121.

⁸ Frankfort, *Collegiate Women: Domesticity and Career in Turn-of-the-Century America* (New York: New York University Press, 1977), xvii.

⁹ Rosenberg, "The Limits of Access: The History of Coeducation in America," In *Women and Higher Education in American History* ed. J.M. Faragher and F. Howe (New York: Norton, 1988), 116.

¹⁰ Frankfort, *Collegiate Women*, 73.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 73.

women married.¹² In the Canadian context, Marks and Gaffield found that between 1895 and 1900, 55% of Queen's students married. Yet during the same period, over 88% of women in the same age group married.¹³ These generational differences are interesting, but do not indicate whether second generation students were in fact more domestic, or whether the culture and students changed to make their education appear less masculine. Additionally, the marriage gap between second generation students and the wider female population remained very large compared to a small increase in the marriage rates from the first to the second generations.

A popular explanation for the increased marriage rates of the second generation was that they were supposedly wealthier than their forerunners, and they and their parents viewed university as a sort of finishing school before marriage. Solomon and Horowitz supported this interpretation, and Horowitz contended that the increased wealth of female students caused the rise of sororities and complex social events at women's colleges.¹⁴ She maintained that wealthier women created an elaborate social structure at women's colleges: "Greater wealth changed the college atmosphere, introducing more expensive pleasures—teas, suppers, flower giving—and lightening the tone." This interest in elaborate social events, according to Horowitz, was evidence of a wealthier student body with lower academic or professional aspirations. Horowitz maintained that coeducational institutions faced a similar onslaught of frivolous women:

¹² Solomon, *In the Company of Educated Women*, 119.

¹³ Lynne Marks and Chad Gaffield, "Women at Queen's University, 1895-1905: A 'Little Sphere' All Their Own?" *Ontario History* Vol. 78, No. 4 (1986), 343.

¹⁴ Helen Lefkowitz Horowitz, *Alma Mater: Design and Experience in the Women's Colleges From Their Nineteenth-Century Beginnings to the 1930s* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1984).

Unlike their pioneering predecessors, these daughters of the middle class brought more conventional notions of womanhood into the college world and the belief that they, like college men, had come for fun. They did not see college as a steppingstone to a career, but as a way station to a proper marriage.¹⁵

Even scholars who are not primarily women's historians used this framework to describe different groups of students. For example, in his study of Mount Allison University, John G. Reid marked the changing social status of the female undergraduates by new regulations regarding dresses: "the catalogue for 1895-6 contained a new admonition to parents that muslin or cashmere dresses should be worn by students at festive occasions, and that silk was both unnecessary and unsuitable."¹⁶ The slight increase in marriage rates, additional social activities, and more formal dresses, along with disparaging comments by pioneers about the second generation's alleged lack of seriousness have been used as proof that demonstrated the frivolity of the second generation.

While there is a dearth of data on the background of early female students, some case studies have challenged the assertion that the first generation was a group of serious lower-middle class women. In her analysis of the registrar records from the first ten classes of Smith College students, from 1879 to 1888, Sarah Gordon found that the majority of students came from small New England towns, and described their fathers as professionals. They were neither the richest nor the poorest individuals from their communities, but a middling group. Gordon argued that the school "appeared primarily as a means of escape and personal redefinition. Only secondarily was it seen as a means

¹⁵ Horowitz, *Campus Life*, 197-8, 201.

¹⁶ John G. Reid, *Mount Allison University: A History to 1963*, Volume I: 1843 – 1914 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1984), 213.

of preparing for a career; and it only served that function for a few.”¹⁷ Based on data available in the *Bulletin of Smith College* she found an average marriage rate of 48%, with a low of 32.5% (or 13 out of 40 students) in 1882 to a high of 61.2% (30 of 49 students) in 1886. An average of 37.9% worked as teachers, and 11.5% as professionals (doctors, professors, university administrators), but the data do not state how long the women remained employed. Gordon concluded that students at Smith College throughout the 1880s were not poor women who broke through social boundaries to further their educational aims, but often middle class women who attended classes for a few years before returning to the domestic sphere, whether in their own homes as wives or in relatives’ homes as unwed adults. Gordon’s case study of the first generation of Smith students demonstrates that it is difficult to classify them all as career-driven rebels.

Patricia Palmieri’s case study of the first generation of professors at Wellesley College from 1885 to 1910 supported Gordon’s argument. Palmieri examined the lives of female professors and found that they attended university with the support and blessing of their families. These students “were the conspicuous signs of the family’s desire to contribute to society and reform, and to advance its own social status. As such, these daughters were exempted from the norms of domesticity and were designated for achievement.”¹⁸ While they were pioneers, they retained both economic and emotional support from their families. In addition, they benefitted from the economic status of their middle class families, as nearly “all of these women were children of professional,

¹⁷ Sarah Gordon, “Smith College Students: The First Ten Classes, 1879 – 1888,” *History of Education Quarterly* Vol. 15, No. 2 (Summer 1975), 147, 156-157.

¹⁸ Patricia A. Palmieri, “Patterns of Achievement of Single Academic Women at Wellesley College, 1880 – 1920,” *Frontiers: A Journal of Women’s Studies* Vol. 5, No. 1 (Spring 1980), 64.

middle-class families. Their fathers were cultivated men—ministers, lawyers, doctors, college presidents and teachers.”¹⁹ Palmieri found that the women who taught at Wellesley until 1920 had deep family roots in reform causes, and so while their actions as the first women to attend university seemed radical to the broader community, they were largely supported within their own family and social circles.

The problem of the generational divide often is due to a “golden age” view of the first generation. Women’s historians were very interested in a group of women who fought for their right to attend university and created a space for female academics at unwelcoming institutions. For example, in her portrait of the female professoriate at Wellesley, Palmieri presented an almost uniformly positive account of their lives and their lasting influences on their students.²⁰ She described the lives of these women, who remained single throughout their careers, and the female world they created at Wellesley in glowing terms. Palmieri maintained that the “Wellesley faculty were not merely professional associates but astoundingly good friends.”²¹ The female faculty supported each other professionally and personally, so that “In this milieu, no one was isolated, no one forgotten.”²² This environment, concluded Palmieri, was uniquely nurturing:

Here indeed was fellowship! Women born and reared in a similar tradition, who wove their lives around a similar set of educational and socio-cultural ideals and who remained at the same institution for a lifetime found the meaning of life not simply in professional experiences or achievements but as well in the inexhaustible human

¹⁹ Patricia A. Palmieri, “Here Was Fellowship: A Social Portrait of Academic Women at Wellesley College, 1895-1920,” *History of Education Quarterly* Vol. 23, No. 1 (Summer 1983), 198.

²⁰ Patricia A. Palmieri, “Patterns of Achievement of Single Academic Women at Wellesley College,” 63-67, and Patricia A. Palmieri, “Here was fellowship: a social portrait of academic women at Wellesley College, 1895 – 1920,” *History of Education Quarterly* Vo. 23, No. 2 (Summer 1983), 195-214.

²¹ Palmieri, “Here was fellowship: a social portrait of academic women at Wellesley College,” 203.

²² Palmieri, “Patterns of Achievement of Single Academic Women at Wellesley College,” 66.

treasury of which they were a part. These academic women did not shift their life-courses away from the communal mentality as did many male professionals; nor did they single-mindedly adhere to scientific rationalism, specialization, social science objectivity, or hierarchical associations in which vertical mobility took precedence over sisterhood.²³

While the environment at schools such as Wellesley presented fortunate alternatives for women who were not interested in marriage, a ‘golden-age’ view of this period is not an accurate portrait of university experiences for all women prior to 1890. Palmieri’s interpretation must be viewed with some skepticism, as it is highly unlikely that every professor at Wellesley felt happy and included.

In fact, Martha Vicinus described the often devastating emotional conflicts between educated women. Using case studies, Vicinus argued that single academic women were unable to fulfill all their emotional needs with their colleagues. The “continual struggle to build a new family, to develop a new kind of homoerotic friendship that met the different needs of a professional woman, often left the first generation of college-educated women brittle, cold, or overemotional.”²⁴ Not all academic women were able to embrace new models of single womanhood or create loving romantic friendships. In her study of Cornell University, Charlotte Williams Conable found that after 1884 women were made to feel unequal on campus both socially and academically, and many had negative feelings about their inferior educational experience at a university that publicly triumphed its devotion to coeducation.²⁵

²³ Palmieri, “Here was fellowship: a social portrait of academic women at Wellesley College,” 209-10.

²⁴ Martha Vicinus, “‘One Life To Stand Beside Me’: Emotional Conflicts in First-Generation College Women in England,” *Feminist Studies* Vol. 8, No. 3 (Autumn 1982), 622.

²⁵ Charlotte Williams Conable, *Women at Cornell: The Myth of an Equal Education* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1977).

The early historiography provided key details to understand and examine women's experiences at university. Historians used the most readily available sources, the records of prominent professors or pioneers, to shape the generational paradigm. While it provided key foundational details, the false emphasis on the "radical" first generation compared to the "less feminist" subsequent generations minimizes the continued and complex misogyny students faced into the twentieth century. By relying on the interpretations of exceptional first generation students who were disappointed with the women who attended university after them, rather than examining the second generation's records, including the overt backlashes to women's presence on campus.

Some more recent contributions to the historiography present more nuanced examinations of women on campus. Chief among them is Margaret A. Lowe's excellent work *Looking Good: College Women and Body Image, 1875 – 1930*, which examined the social and cultural ideas invested in women's bodies during this period. By exploring black and white students at Spelman College, Smith College, and Cornell University, she identified the prevailing belief on university campuses that problematic female bodies had to be governed according to very specific racial and class-based guidelines.²⁶ Lowe argued that women "began their education during an era when popular and scientific discourse viewed the 'student body' as a problem," and demonstrated that the solutions to these "problems," ranging from adding calories, dieting, or bathing more frequently, depended upon the class and race of the student bodies. She also noted the historical continuities of "key components many consider detrimental to young women today—a sylphlike body ideal, racial coding, demanding collegiate peer cultures, normalized

²⁶ Margaret A. Lowe, *Looking Good: College Women and Body Image, 1875 – 1930* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003).

dieting, exacting fitness standards, and a moral code that equates goodness with health and beauty—first emerged on college campuses in the postwar decade.”²⁷ Lowe argued that after the First World War, a unified student culture emerged rather than unique cultures that varied from campus to campus. Many of the negative elements of this culture, including expectations about the female body, continue to endure on and off campus today.

Lowe’s work demonstrated the emphasis students and administrators placed on the bodies of the female students, the enduring belief that female students’ bodies were problematic, and the fact that the “discourse offers one of the clearest expressions of the social and cultural meanings given to women’s bodies in the early decades of the twentieth century.”²⁸ As this dissertation confirms, Lowe found that the major preoccupation of university administrators and barrier to women’s participation on campus were the bodies of female students. By normalizing the male student, universities retained their patriarchal character and cast the female body as a troublesome interloper who could never quite acquire the same status as the male student.

Catherine Gidney’s *Teaching the Student Body: Youth, Health, and the Modern University* explored how universities adopted medical expertise and applied it to the student bodies on Canadian campuses. She charted the changes in approaches to students’ health from 1900 to 1960, and the development of physical education, disease control, and psychiatry. Gidney addressed the gendered nature of the physical education for men and women at the turn of the century, which encouraged strength and virility among men

²⁷ Lowe, *Looking Good*, 10-11.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 4.

and form and posture among women. This dissertation builds on her work to examine how the medical supervision of female students reduced their personal agency and reinforced the idea that women's higher education jeopardized women's health and femininity.²⁹

Another more recent contribution to the historiography is Andrea G. Radke-Moss's book *Bright Epoch: Women and Coeducation in the American West*. She maintained that when examining the experience of women on campus the locations of the institutions matter. In her examination of Morrill Act land-grant colleges in the American west, she argued for variegated experiences:

While land-grant women encountered a culture of ideological and physical separation, especially through the reinforcement of the traditional feminine expectations, these women also found ways to challenge the separation by rejecting traditional roles or simply adopting them to their own purposes. Out of this interplay between separation and inclusion, women students succeeded in negotiating new spaces of gendered inclusion and equality at land-grant colleges.³⁰

Since the institutions were newer than those on the Eastern seaboard, the culture in the west "represented an environment of acceptance and promotion of the widespread practice of state-supported coeducation."³¹ Radke-Moss noted that students faced physical separation on campus, in campus clubs and organizations, an argument this dissertation supports. She maintained that there was a different western culture where patriarchal institutions were not as ingrained as they were in the east. Rather than women attempting to break down barriers like they did at institutions along the eastern seaboard, western

²⁹ Catherine Gidney, *Tending the Student Body: Youth, Health, and the Modern University* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2015).

³⁰ Andrea G. Radke-Moss, *Bright Epoch: Women & Coeducation in the American West* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 2008), 2.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 5.

land-grant institutions opened as coeducational colleges, thus establishing a place for women from the beginning. Radke-Moss maintained that this provided women greater opportunities.

Radke-Moss approached her study with a rather condescending viewpoint. She stated, “Unlike other historical studies of women and coeducation—most of which have typically focused on separation and segregation—this study is not looking for gender discrimination around every campus corner.”³² In an effort to afford agency to female students, she maintained that female students negotiated both physical and intellectual space on campus, and “demand[ed] their own inclusion.”³³ She argued that coeducation was inherently progressive, and:

The acceptance of coeducation implicitly recognized that because men and women were more intellectually and socially compatible—even if not fully equal—that they should be educated together. Coeducation also rejected general ideas about women’s inherent physical weakness that rendered them incapable of competing with men.³⁴

Her attempt to remedy a historiography that emphasized “female exclusion and discrimination” gives women both credit and blame for their inclusion and exclusion on campus. She argued that the period of 1870 to 1900 was in fact a “bright epoch” for women, as they were more likely than men to graduate. By establishing their own literary societies and negotiating space on campus, Radke-Moss argued that women fostered a nearly equal environment on campus. However, this ended in 1918,

as land-grant education—indeed, as higher education in general—became more widely available to women, and as the newness and significance of coeducational

³² Radke-Moss, *Bright Epoch: Women & Coeducation in the American West*, 12.

³³ *Ibid.*, 12.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 12.

opportunity wore off in American society, more women pursued higher education as a route toward greater sociality and possibility of marriage.³⁵

Radke-Moss accepted the traditional narrative to argue that women, beginning in 1905 and culminating in 1918, were less invested in education. Although she acknowledged this was due in part to a backlash against coeducation, fears of low birth rates among the white middle-class, and quotas on female students, women's spaces on campus including literary societies, declined with the end of this special period. Ultimately, she maintains that while women sometimes faced secondary roles, such as being deputy newspaper editors, or were subjected to emphasis on their appearance, "in spite of the culture of separation that kept women students sometimes subordinated to men in the land-grant atmosphere, women students still achieved great gains and found themselves on equal playing fields with men, in many important ways."³⁶

Radke-Moss's analysis highlights the tension between providing historical subjects agency and examining patriarchal societies and structures that have influenced much of the historiography on women and higher education. In an effort to accord female students agency, historians have at times overlooked hidden or systemic misogyny that influenced the decisions women made. This dissertation and Radke-Moss's work observe many similar phenomena. Both explore the separate physical space women occupied on campus, and the feminine environments women created due to sexual segregation. However, in an attempt to devote extraordinary degrees of agency to female students, Radke-Moss dismissed the deeply misogynistic society and institutions at universities. As this dissertation will demonstrate, coeducation did not negate the belief that women were

³⁵ Radke-Moss, *Bright Epoch: Women & Coeducation in the American West*, 293.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 301.

physically threatened by education, nor did it create equality. Women had agency and did attempt to negotiate their presence on campus, but I believe they had far less room to do so due to patriarchal cultures and institutions that Radke-Moss seemed to largely ignore.

My view of women's experiences at university is more closely related to Christine D. Myer's analysis of coeducation in the United States and the United Kingdom published in 2010. She argued that coeducation was not intended to make men and women equal, and in fact the "differences in opportunities for men and women, no matter how slight, continually reinforced their respective roles in society and gently pointed them toward appropriate fields of study and extracurricular activities."³⁷ She highlighted the different expectations from their male peers that female students faced, such as being encouraged to take domestic science rather than chemistry or physics, or different rules for male and female students on campus. She maintains that the:

[C]onscious and unconscious efforts of university officials and students to ensure that women married and entered into society in a suitably traditional role are key to this study. Despite significant changes in the opportunities open to women, they were still bombarded with images of femininity and matrimony that were intended to help them chart the proper course for their lives.³⁸

Since Myers provided a macro study of multiple institutions across the United Kingdom and the United States, she was able to identify larger trends in how the universities acted to push women into traditionally feminine roles. While women's opportunities expanded with a university education, Myers argued that they simply expanded the feminine sphere. Women were permitted to be dieticians who advised other women about how to care for their families, but were discouraged from being chemists. The opportunities for

³⁷ Christine D. Myers, *University Coeducation in the Victorian Era: Inclusion in the United States and the United Kingdom* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 25.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 2.

individual women's agency within these institutions to fight against gender segregation were limited. Myer's balance of individual agency in patriarchal institutions is similar to the one presented in this dissertation, whereby she understands that some remarkable women pushed boundaries but that all students existed in a patriarchal institution that made large scale change impossible.

In order to examine the patriarchal nature of the university and women's responses to it, historians have used diverse lenses of analysis to understand the female student experience. Jane Hamlett used photographs of students' rooms in Royal Holloway, and the Oxford and Cambridge colleges between 1896 and 1898. She demonstrated that women's colleges used interior décor to "promote an image of themselves as conventionally domestic and feminine," but that students used the décor of their own rooms to assert their individuality and institutional loyalty.³⁹ Lynn Gordon examined popular literary descriptions of the Gibson girl and 'college girls' between 1890 and 1920 in the United States. She argued that by emphasizing the leisure and traditionally feminine pursuits of college women, especially the importance of marriage and childbearing, the popular literature, "represented... not so much acceptance of women's higher education, as fear of its results and an attempt to deflect social change by warning educated women about their future."⁴⁰ Gordon's work demonstrated how social

³⁹ Jane Hamlett, "'Nicely Feminine, Yet Learned': Student Rooms at Royal Holloway and the Oxford and Cambridge Colleges in Late Nineteenth-Century Britain," *Women's History Review* Vol. 15, No. 1 (2006), pp. 137-161,

⁴⁰ Lynn D. Gordon, "The Gibson Girl Goes to College: Popular Culture and Women's Higher Education in the Progressive Era, 1890 – 1920," *American Quarterly*, Vol. 39, No. 2 (Summer 1987), 213, For another example of the use of fiction to examine representations of female students see Sherrie A. Inness, "'It Is Pluck But Is It Sense?': Athletic Student Culture in Progressive Era Girls' College Fiction," *Journal of Popular Culture* Vol. 27, No. 1 (Summer 1993), 99-124. For an analysis of news reporting of female students see Deirdre Clemente, "'Prettier Than They Used to Be': Femininity, Fashion, and the Recasting

norms, for example, a belief that women were destined to become wives and mothers, an aspiration that higher education could jeopardize, could be conveyed in fiction, and the importance of considering fictional literature in historical analysis. These diverse approaches have strengthened the field, and provide alternative models to understand women's experiences on university campuses. Gordon's work also influenced my decision to use popular fiction to examine how Canadian authors represented women's experiences at university, and acknowledge the importance of fiction in reflecting and reinforcing social norms.⁴¹

Two dissertations provide the backbone of our understanding of Canadian women's experiences at university. Paula LaPierre's "The First Generation: The Experience of Women University Students in Central Canada" (1993), and Alyson King's "The Experience of the Second Generation of Women Students at Ontario Universities, 1900-1930" (1999), provide invaluable information for any further studies of women on Canadian campuses. Both are carefully researched and provide details about women's admission to the universities, the expansion of women's spaces on campus, and female students' academic and extracurricular activities.

LaPierre's dissertation examined McGill, Queen's, and three University of Toronto affiliated colleges. She explored the decision of those institutions to accept female students in the 1880s and the experiences of female students prior to 1900. Using official university records, documents such as yearbooks and personal papers, LaPierre

of Radcliffe's Reputation, 1900 – 1950," *The New England Quarterly* Vol. 82, No. 4 (December 2009), 637-666.

⁴¹ Bonnell, Victoria, Lynn Avery Hunt, Richard Biernacki, eds. *Beyond the Cultural Turn: New Directions in the Study of Society and Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999).

provided an in-depth history of the admission of women to these institutions and the early years of women on campus. Her dissertation provides the building blocks for further studies by examining the complexities of the debates over coeducation and early residences, and compiling research on the academic life of female students. LaPierre argued that the limited financial resources of Canadian schools, along with the ideological views of some of the university presidents, produced a unique culture of coeducation that did not exist in England or the United States. She maintained that the first generation of female students in Canada sought to distance themselves from a radical or feminist identity due to their exclusion from nearly all aspects of university life. She argued that “Women students were quickly confined to a marginal role within the university, and this, in turn, reinforced their secondary role in other spheres of society.”⁴² While sympathetic to the female students and the misogyny they faced, LaPierre concluded that their “passive acceptance of these conditions established a legacy which would shape the experience of the generations of women university students who would follow.”⁴³

LaPierre’s discussion of women’s enrollment from the 1870s to 1900 is complemented by Alyson King’s dissertation “The Experience of the Second Generation of Women Students at Ontario Universities, 1900-1930.” Like LaPierre, King’s dissertation provides important research about the expanding presence of women on Ontario campuses during this period. She examined the struggle to build women’s residences and other women’s spaces on campus, the students’ backgrounds and plans of

⁴² Paula J. LaPierre, “The First Generation: The Experience of Women University Students in Central Canada,” (PhD dissertation, University of Toronto 1993), 12-13, 20.

⁴³ LaPierre, “The First Generation,” 294.

study, their extracurricular and religious involvement, and women's residential life. King used university records, student documents including yearbooks and student newspapers along with diaries, to examine the experiences of women at the University of Toronto's affiliated colleges, McMaster University, The University of Western Ontario, and Queen's University from 1900 – 1930. King concluded that women's experiences were often contradictory. Female students "often welcomed a degree of separatism because of the exclusion, occasional ridicule, and increasing regulation they faced. At the same time, they made positive use of their opportunities, and even formed separate clubs and institutions, to push at the boundaries and establish their presence as permanent, if not equal, participants in Ontario university life."⁴⁴

Both dissertations provide invaluable research for any further study of women and higher education in Ontario. This dissertation builds on their work to explore exactly how the secondary status of female students that LaPierre described was enforced by university administrators, male students, and even by female students, while other female students rebelled against it in small ways. This study will also examine why female students embraced the separatism on campus that King described, and what occurred when they challenged it. This dissertation centres the student experience, and examines questions raised by King and LaPierre. Most significantly, by emphasizing students' experiences this dissertation describes the extensive opposition women faced on campus. It also is able to demonstrate that women after the pioneers still faced tremendous barriers to equal participation on campus, which is not addressed by King. It shows the resilience

⁴⁴ Alyson E. King, "The Experience of the Second Generation of Women Students at Ontario Universities, 1900 – 1930," (PhD dissertation, University of Toronto 1999), 24.

of the patriarchal universities to female students forty years after they first arrived on campus, and that this opposition continued well into the twentieth century.

Outside of the two dissertations, the majority of the Canadian historiography of women's experience at universities is devoted to case studies of individual institutions. Several books examine the barriers women had to overcome on each campus. For example, Lee Stewart chronicled the admission of women to the University of British Columbia, the growth of courses aimed at women such as the home economics and nursing departments, and the efforts by female reformers to provide such opportunities to female students.⁴⁵ Similarly, Anne Rochon Ford chronicled the first 100 years of women's education at the University of Toronto, and described the reformers that helped push for women's acceptance at university and on campus.⁴⁶ These books contribute to the field in the detailed research they provided about women's activities on campus and serve as important building blocks. However this dissertation examines multiple institutions to demonstrate that female students faced similar barriers at various Ontario institutions. The opposition was not limited to one institution.

Along with the important historical details, several Canadian works provide analytical frameworks that will be used in this dissertation. Sara Z. Burke's two articles about early female students at the University of Toronto argue that coeducation was very reluctantly accepted and the growing numbers of female students resulted in backlashes.⁴⁷

⁴⁵ Lee Stewart, *It's Up to you: Women at UBC in the Early Years* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1990).

⁴⁶ Anne Rochon Ford, *A Path Not Strewn With Roses: One Hundred Years of Women at the University of Toronto 1884-1984* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988).

⁴⁷ Sara Z. Burke, "Being unlike Man': Challenges to Co-education at the University of Toronto, 1884-1909," *Ontario History* Vol. 93 No. 1 (Spring 2001), pp. 11-31 and Sara Z. Burke, "New women and old

For example, Burke described the outrage by the Toronto community in response to female students participating in an 1895 student strike at University College. The scandal of women marching alongside their male peers resulted in increased public scrutiny about women's conduct on campus, and, in order to protect their reputation, University College administrators increased supervision over the female students. Mixed-sex boarding houses were outlawed for female students, and a Lady Superintendent was hired to oversee the behaviour of the female students.⁴⁸ Burke also discussed a proposal by Professor George Wrong, introduced in 1907, to establish a separate women's college at the University of Toronto. She maintained that this was similarly part of a backlash to female enrolment at the university. Wrong argued that coeducation did not provide the proper education for women's domestic role and had a negative effect on men. Wrong wrote to a Senate committee on coeducation that the "main argument against co-education is that women and men need somewhat different types of training, and that when they are educated together the men tend to become effeminate and the women masculine."⁴⁹ This attempt to rid the University of Toronto of coeducation occurred more than 30 years after women had first enrolled. Burke's work thoroughly demonstrates that women were not rapidly accepted on campus, nor did their acceptance increase in a linear fashion over time. She argued that instead the "advancement of female students at Toronto was accompanied by repeated checks and cautions."⁵⁰ This perspective, with an

Romans: Co-education at the University of Toronto, 1884 – 95," *The Canadian Historical Review* Vol. 80, No. 2 (June 1999), pp. 219-244.

⁴⁸ Burke, "New women and old Romans: Co-education at the University of Toronto, 1884 – 95," 240.

⁴⁹ Burke, "Being unlike Man': Challenges to Co-education at the University of Toronto, 1884-1909," 20.

⁵⁰ Burke, "Being unlike Man': Challenges to Co-education at the University of Toronto, 1884-1909," 26.

emphasis on backlashes to women's presence on campus, will be used throughout this dissertation on a larger scale than simply one school and a broader time period.

Due to the paucity of records, the few quantitative studies of students are important. The quantitative analysis of women who graduated from Queen's between 1895-1900 by Lynne Marks, Chad Gaffield and Susan Laskin made several important contributions to our understanding of women's experiences at Canadian universities. Gaffield et al. found that parents were more likely to send their daughters to Queen's if they lived in Kingston, indicating "that parents were more willing to send daughters to university when transportation and boarding costs were not a financial burden."⁵¹ They also found that while female students came from wealthier backgrounds on average than the male students, they were most likely to be farmers' daughters and were not from the wealthiest strata of society.⁵² In another quantitative study, they demonstrated the low level of Queen's graduates who married men upon graduation: only 58% compared to the national average of 88% of Canadian women.⁵³ Significantly, Gaffield and Marks found that over 66% of women whose fathers were white-collar workers married, compared to only 50% of the daughters of manual workers or farmers.⁵⁴ All of this information is

⁵¹ Chad Gaffield, Lynne Marks, and Susan Laskin, "Student Populations and Graduate Careers: Queen's University, 1895 – 1900," in *Youth, University and Canadian Society: Essays in the Social History of Higher Education* eds. Paul Axelrod and John G. Reid (Montreal-Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1989), 8.

⁵² Gaffield, Marks, and Laskin, "Student Populations and Graduate Careers: Queen's University, 1895 – 1900," 12.

⁵³ Marks and Gaffield, "Women at Queen's University, 1895 – 1905," 336.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 336.

useful for the further study of women at university, and the results match those of other institutions.⁵⁵ Gaffield and Marks concluded that:

For some women, university attendance extended rather than altered the larger social patterns. With the days of pioneering, ‘unnatural’ bluestockings over, certain parents and their daughters simply came to see university as an acceptable interlude before marriage.⁵⁶

The conclusion is a little perplexing based on the evidence presented in the article, and must be influenced by the American historiography that asserts that university attendance became normalized and even fashionable by 1900. The study’s statistics show that university-educated women married at a rate of 30% lower than the average Canadian woman, yet the authors conclude that university was a widely acceptable lark for women before marriage. The gap of 30% surely suggests that a university degree either provided more economic opportunities for women or made them less desirable on the marriage market, not that a university degree suddenly became popular for young women. As this study will demonstrate, the women who attended Queen’s at the turn of the twentieth century did so with equal parts enthusiasm and trepidation. They fought for space on campus and had to consistently reassure their parents that their studies were not putting their femininity and health in jeopardy.

Women working at Canadian universities have provided another perspective to understand the role of women on campuses. Catherine Gidney examined the role of

⁵⁵ See for example, John G. Reid, “The Education of Women at Mount Allison, 1854 – 1914,” *Acadiensis* Vol. 12, No. 2 (Spring 1983), pp. 3-33, or Judith Fingard “College, Career, and Community: Dalhousie Coeds, 1881 – 1921,” in *Youth, University and Canadian Society: Essays in the Social History of Higher Education*, ed. Paul Axelrod and John G. Reid (Montreal-Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1990), pp. 26-50, WPJ Millar and RD Gidney, “ ‘Medettes’: Thriving or Just Surviving? Women Students in the Faculty of Medicine, University of Toronto, 1910-1951,” in *Challenging Professions: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives on Women’s Professional Work* ed. By Elizabeth Smyth, Sandra Acker, Paula Bourne and Alison Prentice (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999).

⁵⁶ Marks and Gaffield, “Women at Queen’s University, 1895 – 1905,” 338-339.

nonacademic professional staff at Victoria College, such as Deans of Women and dietitians, and determined that these women worked to produce positive female spaces on campus both to encourage students and each other. Gidney noted that despite their efforts to achieve professional recognition, they were often denied official status or equal status to male professors.⁵⁷ For example, Margaret Addison continually struggled to have her academic credentials recognized, and to expand her title from Dean of Annesley Hall to Dean of Women at Victoria University, in recognition of the work she completed.

Professional women on other campuses in Canada also found their qualifications questioned and their positions unequal to their male colleagues, but used the opportunities available to them to further their careers whenever possible. In her study of the University of Toronto's Faculty of Household Science from 1900 to 1950, Ruby Heap argued that the women who taught in this faculty did not simply view it as a venue to train good mothers. Instead they applied scientific rigor to their research and teaching to legitimize their faculty and their career. Despite the fact that the female-centric nature of the department meant it had a lower status, Heap maintained that it "constituted a positive space for single women interested in science as well as a professional career."⁵⁸ Similarly, Alison Prentice found that female physicists at the University of Toronto and McGill

⁵⁷ Catherine Gidney, "Feminist Ideals and Everyday Life: Professional Women's Feminism at Victoria College, University of Toronto, 1900-40" in *Feminist History in Canada: New Essays on Women, Gender, Work, and Nation* eds. Catherine Carstairs and Nancy Janovicek (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2013), 96-117.

⁵⁸ Ruby Heap, "From the Science of Housekeeping to the Science of Nutrition: Pioneers in Canadian Nutrition and Dietetics at the University of Toronto's Faculty of Household Science, 1900-1950," in *Challenging Professions: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives on Women's Professional Work* ed. By Elizabeth Smyth, Sandra Acker, Paula Bourne and Alison Prentice (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), 162.

University had better opportunities than women in the arts or social sciences, because there was more funding for assistantships in the sciences.⁵⁹

While historians like Heap and Prentice noted degrees of agency and opportunities for professional women on university campuses, they of course worked in a patriarchal environment that undervalued women's contributions. In her examination of the academics who expanded the University of Toronto's Social Service Department, Sara Z. Burke found that while women argued that they were uniquely suited to social service work, the male professoriate favoured young men as the leaders of society. Women in the Social Services Department were not viewed as academic equals, and while "female social workers would increasingly base their claim to professional status on the possession of technical skills suited to welfare administration, the Toronto ideal would continue to regard social service as an expression of moral fulfillment, a realization of the 'highest good' that was exemplified by the disinterested male volunteer."⁶⁰ These works, along with similar case studies, demonstrate the tension between according women agency while recognizing the patriarchal environment in which they lived.⁶¹

⁵⁹ Alison Prentice, "Three Women in Physics," in *Challenging Professions: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives on Women's Professional Work* ed. By Elizabeth Smyth, Sandra Acker, Paula Bourne and Alison Prentice (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), 134.

⁶⁰ Sara Z. Burke *Seeking the Highest Good: Social Service and Gender at the University of Toronto, 1888-1937* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), 7.

⁶¹ Judith Fingard, "Gender and Inequality at Dalhousie: Faculty Women Before 1950" *Dalhousie Review* 64, No. 4 (Winter 1984-5), pp. 687-703, Kerrie J. Kennedy "Womanly Work: The Introduction of Household Science at the University of Toronto," (M.A. Thesis, University of Toronto 1995), Alison Prentice, "Bluestockings, Feminists, or Women Workers? A Preliminary Look at Women's Early Employment at the University of Toronto," *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association* 2 (1991), pp. 231-61, Alison Prentice, "The Early History of Women in University Physics: A Toronto Case Study," *Physics in Canada* 52 Vol. 2 (March/April 1996).

The limitations women faced on campus are also discussed in oral histories of early female students or case studies of exceptional women.⁶² While these studies include personal details to fill in historical gaps, many are centred on one institution and therefore do not connect the experience of university educated women across multiple schools. Additionally, the histories were often commissioned by the university to celebrate anniversaries of the admission of women, and were rarely written by professional historians. They were also generally liberal-progressive in nature and show the struggles of early female students and how they overcame them to achieve the present state of equality or near equality on campus, such as Margaret Gillett's *We Walked Very Warily: A History of Women at McGill* or Lee Stewart's *'It's Up to You': Women at UBC in the Early Years*.⁶³ Lee's history remains the only history of women at Canadian universities west of Ontario, and the Prairie Provinces are missing entirely. This study builds on the case studies presented in these histories to demonstrate that the opposition women faced at individual institutions was universal.

Historians who used unique approaches to understand women's status on campus also influenced this dissertation. Alyson King's article "Centre of 'Home-like Influence': Residences for Women at the University of Toronto" uses photos and floor plans of women's residences to examine how the planners attempted to balance women's

⁶² See for example Marleen Rayner-Canham and Geoff Rayner-Canham, *Creating Complicated Lives: Women and Science at English-Canadian Universities, 1880-1980*, ed. Marianne Ainley (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2012), Margaret Gillett and Kay E. Sibbald, eds., *A Fair Shake: Autobiographical Essays of Women at McGill* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1984), Joy Parr, ed, *Still Running... Personal Stories by Queen's Women Celebrating the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Mary Scholarship* (Kingston: Queen's Alumane Association, 1987), Alison Prentice, "Scholarly Passion: Two Persons Who Caught It," *Historical Studies in Education* 1 (Spring 1989), 9.

⁶³ Anne Ford, *A Path Not Strewn with Roses: One Hundred Years of Women at the University of Toronto, 1884 – 1984* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985),

femininity with their academic needs.⁶⁴ My study expands on this question of the balance of femininity and higher education into all areas of campus life. Catherine Gidney's study of the rulebooks of women's residences argued that administrators at the University of Toronto were overwhelmingly concerned with women's behaviour and placed many more regulations on women, in order to protect their chastity, than they did male students. She also demonstrated that female students helped police other students and reinforce these norms.⁶⁵ This dissertation also examines the complexity of the rules for women across many campuses and female students' roles in upholding the rules for the sake of their reputation. It also explores women's relationships with each other, as does Charles Levi's article on the Queen's Hall residence at University College, which demonstrates that the homosocial lives of women on Canadian campuses were not always smooth.⁶⁶

Another area of female students' lives that has been examined is their religious life. Johanna M. Selles' excellent book *Methodists & Women's Education in Ontario, 1836-1925* (1996) charts the growth of private Methodist women's seminaries and colleges leading to the establishment of Victoria University's Annesley Hall. She noted the important shift in Methodist theology in the late 1800s from a belief in miraculous interventions of God, to God working through human actions, which provided space for social movements and moral reform. The social gospel movement provided opportunities

⁶⁴ Alyson King, 'Centres of Home-Like Influence': Residences for Women at the University of Toronto," *Material History Review* 49 (Spring 1999).

⁶⁵ Catherine Gidney, "Dating and Gating: The Moral Regulation of Men and Women at Victoria and University Colleges, University of Toronto, 1920 – 60," *Journal of Canadian Studies* Vol. 41, No. 2 (Spring 2007) pp.138-160.

⁶⁶ Charles Levi, "Phyllis Grierson, Margaret Ross, and the Queen's Hall Girls: Intergroup Conflict Among University College Women 1910 – 21," *Historical Studies in Education* 12 No. 1/2 (2000), pp. 73-92.

for educated Methodist women who were “called” for social service. She maintained that women were first accepted at Victoria “less [as] a distinct policy change than an extension of privileges to a hardy minority who were very careful not to intrude on male territory.”

Selles opposed a triumphalist narrative however. She maintained that,

Women’s accomplishments in and by means of education were gained in spite of resistance and resentment by some who opposed change in the prevailing gender ideology. Structural limits were rarely altered or challenged by women themselves, who were culturally bound by norms of propriety. The patriarchy that graciously allowed them to partake at the well of learning also ensured that they would not attain ultimate control over the source.⁶⁷

In fact, Selles argued that women were vulnerable to theological shifts that first welcomed women into educational institutions and then expelled them. The backlash to women’s education is central to Selles’ work. She concluded that,

The success of the educational experiment at Victoria revived the debate about the propriety of women’s education, which was rooted in the early-nineteenth-century seminaries and academies. The threat that an educated women posed to society, the church, and the family resulted in a reassessment of Methodist educational policy. The resulting ambivalence about the goals of women’s education undermined some of the achievements of this education. Despite this ambivalence, women graduates embraced the possibilities that their education opened to them and pursued a variety of professional and familial goals.⁶⁸

Elizabeth M. Smyth found similar experiences at the Catholic women’s colleges at the University of Toronto.⁶⁹ Alyson King’s dissertation also highlighted the daily connection most female students had with religious organizations, such as bible study groups, Young Women’s Christian Association meetings and boarding homes, and church attendance. In

⁶⁷ Johanna Selles, *Methodists and Women’s Education in Ontario 1836-1925* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press), 7 and 5.

⁶⁸ Selles, *Methodists and Women’s Education in Ontario 1836-1925*, 12.

⁶⁹ Elizabeth M. Smyth, “The Culture of Catholic Women’s Colleges at the University of Toronto 1911-1925,” *Historical Studies* 70 (2004): 111-130.

these cases, religious conceptions of ideal motherhood and the need for educated wives of missionaries served as a justification for higher education for women, but also created limiting views of femininity and acceptable spheres of activities for women.⁷⁰

The First World War dramatically influenced the acceptable spheres of behaviour for women. The enlistment of many male students provided women with unique experiences on Canadian campuses and there are several studies examining the war years on campus.⁷¹ However, like the other studies, they run the risk of abandoning the student perspective and privileging the public narrative of student newspapers or administrators' speeches. Without the records of individual students, it is difficult to determine their lived experience. For example, Terry Wilde's study "Freshettes, Farmerettes, and Feminine Fortitude at the University of Toronto during the First World War" argues that women actively and diligently participated in Red Cross and other wartime organizations out of a sense of patriotism.⁷² While many women certainly did, the official newspaper reports of their activities that Wilde relies on do not explore the joy that women experienced at the proximity of eligible young men training before going overseas, the increased opportunities for leadership on campus, and the frustration that some women felt at being

⁷⁰ See also Elizabeth L. Profit, "Education for Women in the Baptist Tradition: An Examination of the Work of the Canadian Literary Institute, Moulton Ladies' College and McMaster University," (PhD dissertation, McMaster University, 1987), Johanna M. Selles, *Methodists and Women's Education in Ontario 1836 – 1925* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1996) and Elizabeth M. Smyth, "The Culture of Catholic Women's Colleges at the University of Toronto 1911 – 1925," *CCHA Historical Studies* 70 (2004), pp. 111-130.

⁷¹ See for example Lee Stewart, "Women on Campus in British Columbia: Strategies for Survival, Years of War and Peace, 1906-1920," in *Not Just Pin Money*, eds Barbara K. Latham and Roberta J. Pazdro (Victoria: Camosun College, 1984), Paul Stortz and E. Lisa Panayotidis, eds, *Culture, Communities, and Conflict: Histories of Canadian Universities and War* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1979).

⁷² Terry Wilde, "study "Freshettes, Farmerettes, and Feminine Fortitude at the University of Toronto during the First World War," in *A Sisterhood of Suffering and Service: Women and Girls of Canada and Newfoundland During the First World War* ed. Sarah Glassford and Amy Shaw (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2012).

expected to volunteer at the Red Cross. Private papers and diaries, written at the time, expand the historiography for a more nuanced understanding of women's experiences on campus.

This dissertation illustrates the conflicting feelings of excitement many female students felt during the war when soldiers were stationed on university grounds, and the eagerness with which they stepped into leadership positions on campus that were vacated by men. Most significantly, it will explore the backlash upon the return of soldiers and the new norms the jaded soldiers brought to campus after the war. In this way I will balance the achievements and individual experiences of students with an understanding of the patriarchal environment they faced.

In a review essay published in 2013, Sara Z. Burke argued that the field of women's higher education has seen a shift from incorporating extraordinary women into existing historical narratives to examining how class, race, and gender influenced women's experiences on campus. She maintained that in this way the field mirrors the evolution of women's and gender history and the growing sophistication of the analysis as the field matured. I agree with Burke's categories, as one type of analysis seeks to celebrate how early pioneers overcame barriers to achieve an education, while another examines the complex relationships women had to education, and how they negotiated the competing options of coeducation, to improve white middle class motherhood or to allow them to step into the public sphere, albeit still in feminine roles as teachers and social workers. Burke concludes that, "In Canada, the history of female education is still a largely underdeveloped field."⁷³ This dissertation will adopt the second approach:

⁷³ Sara Z Burke, "Review Essay Equal Citizenship of the Mind: Recent Studies in the History of Women's Education," *Historical Studies in Education* Vol. 23 no. 1 (Spring 2011): 86.

examining how women experienced a university education while negotiating expectations of gender and class from 1890 to 1920, to understand how they reconciled femininity and higher education.

This dissertation updates the historiography, which has been mired in a generational debate that did not reflect the complexities of women's experiences on campus. While female students faced different environments on Ontario campuses in 1880 than they did in 1910, they nevertheless faced institutions that were hostile to their presence. A slight increase in the marriage rate of university graduates, especially compared to the thirty per cent difference between university-educated and non-university-educated women, does not signify a decrease in feminist ambition or a widespread acceptance of female students. In fact, the increased numbers of female students resulted in increased supervision, in the form of Deans of Women, nurses and physicians who were hired by the university to prevent women from becoming "coarse" due to their masculine education. By exploring popular fiction, this dissertation provides greater depth to our understanding of popular conceptions of women's educational experiences compared to the lived experiences by students. By centering the student experience, this dissertation explores the intensity of the opposition to women on campus well into the twentieth century, which has not been fully examined in the Canadian context. It demonstrates that even supportive parents and administrators tried to reinforce students' femininity through supervision over their health and interaction with male students. This dissertation uses a spatial analysis to show that women's inferior status at university was reinforced with physical barriers on campus. As a result of the limited interactions between men and women on campus, female students engaged in romantic

friendships and lesbian-like behaviour that scholars have previously thought had been widely censured by the turn of the twentieth century. An emphasis on the lived experience of the female students and by relying upon student records, this dissertation demonstrates the resilience of the patriarchal university in Ontario in the face of feminist reforms, and the difficulty in reconciling middle-class femininity and higher education from 1890 to 1920.

3. “To give them health and vigor of mind and body to fit them for their work in life”: Women’s Health on Campus

Prior to leaving her small farming community for university, L.M. Montgomery’s fictional Anne Shirley endured visits from well-meaning but pessimistic farm wives in *Anne of the Island* (1915). They warned her about the expense of university, the intellectual and social distance an education would put between her and her family in Avonlea, and the snobbery of the city-born women attending Redmond College. Anne’s health was also a significant concern, as she told her friend Gilbert Blythe: “Mrs. Peter Sloane sighed and said she hoped my strength would hold out till I got through; and at once I saw myself a hopeless victim of nervous prostration at the end of my third year.” While Gilbert suggested that these warnings were based in jealousy and a fear of the unknown, Anne replied: “If they had been spiteful cats I wouldn’t have minded them. But they are all nice, kind, motherly souls, who like me and whom I like, and that is why what they said, or hinted, had such undue weight with me.”¹ The well-intentioned women were worried about Anne’s physical health while she attended university, and Anne acknowledged that it was a legitimate concern.

The threat of losing one’s health is not present in *Miriam of Queen’s* (1921), which presented a more unrealistic account of the university experience than *Anne of the Island*. Miriam’s family members criticized her desire to attend Queen’s University, but their concern was largely that her education would expand her worldview beyond the domestic sphere. Unfortunately, many historians have also accepted the idea that female

¹ L.M. Montgomery, *Anne of the Island* (1915; reprint, Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1985), 12.

students' health was a concern only for the pioneering students and was not a pressing issue for female students by the turn of the twentieth century.² In fact, medical textbooks in the 1920s continued to warn that zealous studying posed risks for women's reproductive organs and their special vulnerability to illnesses that could result in infertility. The threat of illness preoccupied female students, their parents, and university administrators from the 1890s to the 1920s. It shaped women's experiences on campus and how they recounted their daily life at school to anxious parents at home. Administrators required female students to undergo medical examinations and participate in exercise classes to prevent illness; students who did not meet narrow guidelines of good health received directives to gain weight, rest, or otherwise guard their health. While many women accepted the expertise of university administrators and the medical advice of their parents, others rebelled against strict regulations by skipping meals, studying for long hours, or refusing to attend gymnasium classes. From 1890 to 1920, few female students were confronted with the belief that they were intellectually unfit to attend university. Yet, the belief that an education could damage their health and therefore their future as mothers was prevalent and acted as an effective barrier to their full and equal participation in academic life.

² This issue of women's health after the pioneering generation is not examined by the majority of the pioneering works on female university students such as: Helen Lefkowitz Horowitz, *Alma Mater: Design and Experience in the Women's Colleges From Their Nineteenth-Century Beginnings to the 1930s* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1984); Helen Lefkowitz Horowitz, *Campus Life: Undergraduate Cultures from the End of the Eighteenth Century to the Present* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1987); Alyson. "The Experience of the Second Generation of Women Students at Ontario Universities, 1900-1930." Ph.D. Dissertation, (University of Toronto, 1999); Barbara Miller Solomon, *In the Company of Educated Women: A History of Women and Higher Education in America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985). Some new works have examined the medical and social preoccupations with female students' bodies including Margaret Lowe's *Looking Good: College Women and Body Image, 1875-1930* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003) Heather Munro Prescott, *Student Bodies: The Influence of Student Health Services in American Society and Medicine* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2007), and Catherine Gidney, *Tending the Student Body: Youth, Health, and the Modern University* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2015).

Female students attended university during a period of increasing medical authority and surveillance of the female body. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, physicians successfully medicalized the process of childbirth and argued that their supervision was required for healthy deliveries.³ Intersecting forces, including the professionalization of physicians, a fear of how industrialization affected the health of Canadians, xenophobic concerns about the falling birth rate of British Canadians during a period of extensive immigration, and anxiety about the changing role of women reinforced the need for medical supervision of women and emphasis on their “natural” role as mothers. Denyse Baillargeon argued that as a result, by the early twentieth century, “it was no longer merely a matter of convincing women of the importance of their role as mothers in order to better subordinate maternity to the service of society or the nation, but of dictating their behaviour down to the smallest detail.”⁴

Wendy Mitchinson’s work is critical to understanding the relationship between Canadian doctors and their female patients. In *The Nature of Their Bodies: Women and Their Doctors in Victorian Canada* and *Body Failure: Medical Views of Women, 1900-1950*, Mitchinson argues that doctors’ views of patients was not disinterested and removed from social context, but instead reflected society’s values. Mitchinson explained that in general, medicine is “a bedrock of societal norms, sometimes in their creation and

³ For information on the physician and state supervision of pregnancy, childbirth and motherhood, see for example Neil Sutherland, *Children in English-Canadian Society: Framing the Twentieth-Century Consensus* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1976), Veronica Strong-Boag, “Intruders in the Nursery,” in *Childhood and Family in Canadian History* ed. Joy Parr (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1982), Katherine Arnup, *Education for Motherhood: Advice for Mothers in Twentieth-Century Canada*. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994).

⁴ Denyse Baillargeon, *Babies for the Nation: The Medicalization of Motherhood in Quebec, 1910-1970* translated by W. Donald Wilson (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2009), 3.

more often in their maintenance.”⁵ For example, the cultural idealization of motherhood in this period led some physicians to believe that the uterus was the cause of most illnesses in women, including diseases that also affected men. Mitchinson identified several important themes in the medical view of women that required intervention from male doctors. These included the importance of biological differences between men and women, the belief that women were weaker than men and bound to their bodily and reproductive priorities in a way that men were not, the medicalization of women’s bodies, and the role of doctors in addressing social concerns. Most significantly, she argued that throughout the period from 1850 to 1950, the medical discourse revealed concern of women engaging in masculine pursuits such as education, employment, and interests outside the realm of childrearing, and the fear that these pursuits could jeopardize women’s ability to bear children and therefore challenge the foundation of Canadian society. Due to the declining birth rate of middle-class white women, along with the immigration boom at the turn of the century, the fears of a changing society also included a xenophobic fear of a “race suicide.”⁶

The reproductive organs were central to the Victorian conception of women and women’s health. Mitchinson noted that this idea had precursors in Greek medical theory, but was repeatedly emphasized in Victorian medical textbooks and in doctors’ practices. She argued that “in their discussion on the nature of women, physicians went further than

⁵ Wendy Mitchinson, *Body Failure: Medical Views of Women, 1900-1950* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2013), 8.

⁶ Angus McLaren, *The Bedroom and the State: the Changing Practices and Politics of Contraception and Abortion in Canada, 1880-1980* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1986), 17. For an examination of the positive eugenics movement and its focus on the responsibility of mothers see Wendy Kline, *Building a Better Race: Gender, Sexuality, and Eugenics from the Turn of the Turn of the Twentieth Century to the Baby Boom* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002).

simply suggesting that a woman's body, especially her reproductive system, dominated or controlled her; it determined her function or purpose in life."⁷ Victorian doctors believed that diseases unrelated to the reproductive organs, when diagnosed in men, such as gastritis or tuberculosis, could be caused by reproductive organ problems in women.⁸ The erroneous belief that women's illnesses could be largely reduced to causes within their reproductive organs resulted in unnecessary and ineffective medical interventions, but on an ideological level reaffirmed the belief that while men could rise above their evolutionary roles and bodies, women were forever beholden to theirs.

According to Victorian doctors, the centrality of the reproductive system in women's health created significant biological differences between women and men.⁹ Mitchinson noted that the medical belief in sexual differences reflected and supported the Victorian notion of separate roles for men and women: "Throughout the latter half of the nineteenth century, Canadians were inundated with powerful and at times maudlin descriptions of the concept of sexual separation at every level—intellectual, physical, moral, and emotional."¹⁰ While the status of women changed during this period with increased employment opportunities, the right to vote, and other profound social changes,

⁷ Mitchinson, *The Nature of Their Bodies: Women and Their Doctors in Victorian Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991), 32.

⁸ Ibid., 47.

⁹ Other sources that explore the construction of sex difference between men and women and the social implications include Cynthia Eagle Russett, *Sexual Science: The Victorian Construction of Womanhood* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989); Rob Boddice, "The Manly Mind? Revising the Victorian 'Sex in Brain' Debate," *Gender & History* Vol. 23, No. 2 (August 2011), 321-340; Emily Martin, *The Woman in the Body: A Cultural Analysis of Reproduction* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1987); Carroll Smith-Rosenberg and Charles Rosenberg, "The Female Animal: Medical and Biological View of Woman and Her Role in Nineteenth-Century America," *The Journal of American History* Vol. 60, No. 2 (September 1973), 332-356.

¹⁰ Mitchinson, *The Nature of their Bodies*, 15.

the medical community continued to emphasize the biological differences between men and women that denigrated women as the weaker sex. Despite considerable advances in understanding the menstrual cycle during the interwar period, “the underlying fragility of women because of their reproductive destiny was not something doctors were willing to rethink.”¹¹ From 1850 to 1950, physicians in Canada reaffirmed the sexual separation between men and women due to women’s ability to give birth. This “reason for women’s differences was belief in motherhood as woman’s central role, her *raison d’etre*. Her body dictated that destiny and as experts on the body physicians’ views of woman shored up those beliefs.”¹²

Doctors maintained that women were dependent on their reproductive organs and were therefore more vulnerable to illness than men. As a result, physicians maintained their responsibility to make medical pronouncements on most, if not all, of women’s activities in their daily life from clothing to bicycle riding.¹³ Mitchinson argued that the medical community viewed modern life, with its distractions and opportunities for women, as dangerous for their health. Many doctors had a nostalgic view of the past when women’s concerns were centred exclusively on their families, and believed that lifestyle had resulted in a healthier life for women. In order to cope with the dangers of modern life, “doctors proffered advice to women on how to live, advice which corresponded to their view of woman’s proper role. Women were to get married and have

¹¹ Mitchinson, *Body Failure: Medical Views of Women, 1900-1950*, 21.

¹² *Ibid.*, 24.

¹³ Martha H. Verbrugge, *Able-Bodied Womanhood: Personal Health and Social Change in Nineteenth-Century Boston* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 16-19. Doctors also believed that middle class women were more sensitive to pain for example, see Whitney Wood, “The Luxurious Daughters of Artificial Life”: Female ‘Delicacy’ and Pain in Late-Victorian Advice Literature,” *Canadian Bulletin of Medical History* Vol. 31, No. 2 (2014): 71-92;

children, they were to spend time raising those children and taking care of the family.”¹⁴

Women’s pursuit of an education or employment outside the home endangered their health and due to their vulnerability, doctors were required to caution them against the excesses of modern life that removed them from their traditional responsibilities to their husbands and children. While Mitchinson’s books identified social and medical changes from 1850 to 1950, she maintained that the themes of sexual difference between men and women, the importance of women’s biology in dictating her life, and the need for doctors to determine healthy choices for women endured throughout the period.

These themes are evident in the early historiography of the medical opposition to higher education. Joan Burstyn argued that before the 1870s, opponents of higher education for women doubted female students could succeed because of their smaller brains, which, some authorities maintained, was an indication of intellectual inferiority. British women who passed university entrance examinations in London and Cambridge in the 1870s refuted this argument and demonstrated that women were capable of intellectual success. They proved that women were not in fact mentally inferior to men.¹⁵ Consequently, opponents to higher education for women had to devise different arguments. Physicians like Edward H. Clarke began to direct their argument away from academic achievement to the perils of study on reproductive health. In his *Sex in Education; or A Fair Chance for Girls*, Clarke argued that while it was possible for women to excel in their studies, “it is not true that she can do all this, and retain uninjured

¹⁴ Mitchinson, *The Nature of their Bodies*, 75.

¹⁵ Joan N. Burstyn, “Education and Sex: The Medical Case Against Higher Education for Women in England, 1870 – 1900,” *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* Vol. 117, No. 2 (April 10 1973), 79.

health and a future secure from neuralgia, uterine disease, hysteria, and other derangements of the nervous system.”¹⁶ Burstyn maintained it was no coincidence that “specialists in gynecology and obstetrics, who were the first to feel competition” from university-educated women, “were prominent in the attack.”¹⁷ Male gynecologists faced a serious threat of competition from female doctors who could discuss bodily discomforts with other women without fear of offending Victorian sensibilities.

The historiographical narrative supported by Solomon, Horowitz, and Frankfort emphasizes the medical opposition to higher education prior to 1900.¹⁸ However, the increased enrolment of women at universities and a slight increase in marriage rates among university-educated women after the turn of the century was deemed proof that the opposition from the medical community to the education of women declined. In fact, this chapter demonstrates that the medical literature after 1900 continued to argue that strenuous study could damage women’s reproductive organs, and as a result, administrators adopted measures to protect the health of female students. Additionally, more female students resulted in Deans of Women who were charged with guarding the health of the female students. Since no institutions had Deans of Women prior to 1900, the second generation actually faced more surveillance than the first. Consequently, women’s lives on campus were circumscribed by the belief that their education could

¹⁶ Edward H. Clarke, *Sex in Education; or a Fair Chance for Girls* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1884, originally published 1873), 18.

¹⁷ Burstyn, “Education and Sex: The Medical Case Against Higher Education for Women,” 79-81.

¹⁸ See for example Barbara Miller Solomon, *In the Company of Educated Women* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), Helen Lefkowitz Horowitz, *Alma Mater: Design and Experience in the Women’s Colleges* (New York: Knopf, 1984), Roberta Frankfort *Collegiate Women: Domesticity and Career in Turn-of-The-Century America* (New York: New York University Press, 1977).

jeopardize their health, and they were prevented from partaking in full and equal participation on campus.

Margaret A. Lowe's book *Looking Good: College Women and Body Image, 1875-1930* provided an alternate to this dominant narrative. Lowe explored three campuses, Smith College, Spelman College and Cornell University, to determine how "perceptions of the female body—its purpose, appearance, and health—continued to set the terms of the debate, delineating the meanings and objectives of higher education for women."¹⁹ Lowe noted that students at all three institutions included daily reports of their health to their parents, and students and administrators sought to calm critics and show that women could attend school without damaging their health. She maintained that: "In their almost daily correspondence, students used such messages to reassure parents and friends that college life had not damaged their health but in fact had improved it."²⁰ Students chronicled by Lowe, like the students examined in this dissertation, were eager to demonstrate that their education had not jeopardized their health. Lowe showed that women's bodies, viewed as sickly, athletic or sexual, have continuously concerned students and administrators. The concern with female students' well-being and preoccupation with women's bodies on campus did not end by 1900.

Like Lowe's work, this study demonstrates that the medical community continued to believe that studying could risk women's health past 1890, and the potential for female students to "ruin" their health was an issue that preoccupied students and their families in the twentieth century. This is evident in the textbooks assigned to medical students at The

¹⁹ Margaret A. Lowe, *Looking Good: College Women and Body Image, 1875-1930* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003), 4-5.

²⁰ Lowe, *Looking Good*, 13.

University of Western Ontario after 1890, which are examined below. They illustrate that in 1850 as well as in 1920, doctors believed that higher education could jeopardize women's futures as wives and mothers. Medical textbooks continued to emphasize women's sexual difference from men, the belief that women's health was determined by their reproductive organs, and that women were especially vulnerable to illness.

Accordingly, the medical profession sternly warned women of the pitfalls that they could face if they indulged in academic pursuits during the fledgling years of women's higher education. This was based on the perceived differences between women and men. Despite her own success as a doctor and speaker, in 1887 Dr. A.M. Longshore-Potts advised that

The difference in the texture and formation of the organization of the two sexes indicates a difference in their pastimes and in their labours. This difference exists in every part of their construction, from the fibre of the bone to the configuration of the skeleton; and in this lies a secret which, when discovered, points to the natural position of man and of woman in the domestic and practical pursuits of life.²¹

Women's physical differences from men were extreme, she argued, and attempting to overcome these fundamental disparities would lead to illness. Additionally, the physiological differences between men and women created different social roles for each, and to ensure health and happiness, women needed to embrace their natural roles as wives and mothers. Gynecologist Edward Clarke concurred, and warned his readers that as long as "Eve [took] a wise care of the temple God made for her, and Adam of the one made for him... both will enter upon a career whose glory and beauty no seer has foretold or poet sung."²² Women's biological ability to bear children dictated their social role, and

²¹ A.M. Longshore-Potts, *Discourses to Women on Medical Subjects* (London: 1887), 19.

²² Clarke, *Sex in Education*, 34.

ignoring this biological destiny to compete with men could lead to disaster. In order to prevent this calamity, Clarke argued, women should embrace their calling as wives and mothers.

This maternal calling for Victorian women began at puberty, which separated them from boys and ushered in a new period of vulnerability to ill health. Wendy Mitchinson argued that it marked a change in status: a young woman “as an individual, ceased to be important; rather, her destiny as a child bearer became paramount.”²³ Successful puberty ensured that a young woman’s reproductive organs developed properly, which would permit her to fulfill her destiny as a mother. It was a pivotal period in life. In 1847, Dr. A.M. Mauriceau warned that

[O]n the appearance of the menses, or monthly turns, nature seems to perfect her work, both as regards development and proportion: it is the period of the most perfect beauty of which the female is susceptible; it is the one at which the moral changes are not less remarkable than the physical; it is a moment, of all others, the most replete with consequences.²⁴

These consequences were both moral and physical. Exposure to cold water, sudden heat, exercise or labour could result in fevers, menstrual disorders, or even sterility. During the years of puberty, considered to be generally between the ages of fourteen and twenty, girls were advised against consuming fatty meat, caffeine, or alcohol. Novels, dancing and excessive socialization encouraged “an unnaturally early sexual life,” and were to be avoided at all cost. Puberty was an influential time in a girl’s life that would “seal for ever the happiness or the hopeless misery of her whole life.”²⁵

²³ Mitchinson, *The Nature of their Bodies*, 81.

²⁴ A.M. Mauriceau, *The Married Woman’s Private Medical Companion* (New York, 1847), 4.

²⁵ George H Napheys, *The Physical Life of Woman* (Williard M Wood & Co., 1880), 29 and 26.

Clarke expanded upon the medical reasons for the peril of puberty. He maintained that the “system never does two things well at the same time. The muscles and the brain cannot *functionate* [sic] in their best way at the same moment.”²⁶ While temperature changes could encourage disease and fever, and fatty food could encourage immorality, diverting blood from the reproductive organs would retard their development, potentially making women infertile. Blood was a finite resource, and during puberty it was needed to develop women’s reproductive organs. If it was diverted by extensive activity in the brain, sterility could follow. Not only were girls vulnerable during puberty, but they were also especially at risk of developmental problems during menstruation. George Napheys advised that the “first monthly loss of blood exhausts the system. Therefore, plenty of food, plenty of rest, plenty of sleep, are required.”²⁷ The discharge of blood required that all other bodily exertions be restrained.

Doctors’ fears about the dangers of menstruation were evident in the many disorders of menstruation. In 1892, F.H. Davenport described amenorrhea, the absence of menstruation, either before the first menstruation or after a woman had begun menstruating, and menorrhagia, or “profuse menstruation.” While these diseases were very different in their symptoms, the causes and treatments were the same. Amenorrhea occurred in “young women whose general health has suffered from overwork, insufficient food, lack of exercise, and overtaxing of the brain.” The treatment focused on gaining the “muscular and nervous systems, by food, exercise, out-of-door life, and

²⁶ Clarke, *Sex in Education*, 40.

²⁷ Napheys, *The Physical Life of Woman*, 42.

mental rest.”²⁸ Women were encouraged to avoid study, which often delayed or stopped altogether the integral function of menstruation. Without menstruation, women risked sterility, and thus abandoning study and focusing on developing the reproductive functions was imperative for a young woman to reach sexual maturity.

While menorrhagia, excessive blood loss, exhibited the opposite symptoms to amenorrhea, the causes were similar:

[Y]oung girls, who, at the age of puberty and for a few years subsequently, have grown rapidly, pursued a too laborious course of study, and taken too little exercise. Frequent examples of this are to be found in our schools, where the competition is so great that proper attention is not paid to rest at the time of menstruation, and the strain upon the nervous system is kept up continuously.²⁹

The disorders of menstruation were difficult to classify, as there was no objective standard. While doctors disagreed over the exact causes, the treatment options were remarkably similar over time: to avoid mental strain and retreat into the domestic sphere for rest.

The medical preoccupation with sexual difference and the importance of the biological function of women as mothers to their physical health and future happiness did not end with the turn of the century. The medical literature accepted the possibility of higher education for women after 1890. However, it maintained that women risked the development of their reproductive organs and jeopardized their natural roles as wives and mothers by studying. While medical textbooks supported education for women, they asserted that it needed to be conducted appropriately in order to support girls’ physical development and vulnerabilities. In 1908 the authors of *A System of Gynaecology*,

²⁸ F.H. Davenport, *Diseases of Women: A Manual of Non-Surgical Gynecology* (Philadelphia: Lea Brothers & Co., 1892), 112, 93 and 78.

²⁹ Davenport, *Diseases of Women*, 112.

required reading for medical students at The University of Western Ontario, identified a need for educational institutions “where the menstrual function is systematically cared for and attended to.”³⁰ Education could continue, but girls and women required rest, both physically and mentally, during menstruation.

A greater emphasis on physical fitness and development was identified for women. The authors of *A System of Gynaecology* compared physical activity in boys’ schools to that in girls’ schools, and argued that “While it is questionable whether in boys’ schools the attention given to exercise and athletics may not be excessive, in girls’ schools it is, on the other hand, not nearly sufficient.”³¹ They argued that if educators paid more attention to girls’ bodies, rather than their minds, girls would have fewer problems stemming from their education. George Herman, whose textbook was required for University of Western Ontario medical students beginning in 1904, agreed with this assessment, and maintained that when the “development of the muscles by open-air games forms part of the daily routine of every girls’ school there will be fewer women with aching backs.”³²

While textbooks published after the turn of the century maintained that they supported higher education for women, much of the medical discourse reiterated the

³⁰ Sir Clifford Allbutt, W.S. Playfair and Thomas Watts Eden, eds, *A System of Gynaecology by Many Writers* (London: Macmillan and Co., Limited, 1909), 118..

³¹ Allbutt, Clifford, Playfair and Eden, *A System of Gynaecology by Many Writers*, 120. For a discussion of the growth of athleticism and its relationship with masculinity see Roberta J. Park, “Muscles, Symmetry and Action: ‘Do You Measure Up?’ Defining Masculinity in Britain and America from the 1860s to the early 1900s,” *The International Journal of the History of Sport* Vol. 22, No. 3 (May 2005), 365-395; Bruce Kidd, “Muscular Christianity and Value-centred Sport: The Legacy of Tom Brown in Canada,” *The International Journal of the History of Sport* Vol. 23, No. 5 (August 2006), 701-713; or David P. Setran, “Following the Broad-Shouldered Jesus: The College YMCA and the Culture of Muscular Christianity in American Campus Life, 1890-1914,” *American Educational History Journal* Vol. 32, No. 1 (2005), 59-66.

³² George Ernest Herman, *The Student’s Handbook of Gynaecology* (New York: William Wood and Company, 1914), 19.

potential dangers of studying and identified the need for women to be exceptionally healthy in order to pursue it. Due to the continued belief in women's greater susceptibility to illness, the importance of the reproductive organs in determining good health, and women's chief biological purpose as mothers, only a few women could possibly earn a university degree without compromising their health. In his introduction to *The Student's Handbook of Gynaecology*, published in 1914, George Herman emphasized women's biological differences from men:

The diseases particular to women differ in some points from disease in the other sex, and in other parts of the body. First, women are more sensitive than men. Secondly, the reproductive organs play a larger part in the life of women than they do in the life of men. The greatest happiness for a healthy woman is to be a wife and mother. With these functions are bound up her highest emotions.³³

Gynecology textbooks continued to maintain that women were unique from men because of their reproductive organs. Herman insisted that these biological differences encouraged emotional differences and a woman's fate as a mother was central to her life and emotional well-being. Thus puberty and menstruation were a period of emotional as well as physical vulnerability and, according to R.C. Dudley in 1904, "they are critical turning-points in her life."³⁴ So while the medical dialogue after 1900 supported women's higher education, it remained a potentially dangerous activity for young women and had to be pursued with the utmost caution.

Prior to the twentieth century, many medical texts cautioned women about the dangers of exercise. In 1887, Dr. Longshore-Potts warned against "riding on horseback,

³³ Herman, *The Student's Handbook of Gynaecology*, 1.

³⁴ E.C. Dudley, *The Principles and Practice of Gynecology: for Students and Practitioners* (Philadelphia: Lea Brothers and Company, 1904), 17.

skating, either on the ice or indoors, lawn-tennis, cricket, long walks, or any fatiguing labor, such as gardening, house-cleaning or washing.”³⁵ However, after 1900, exercise became a way to ensure women were spending energy on developing their bodies, rather than just their minds. As examined above, gynecology textbooks expressed concerns about an education that emphasized the mental without a corresponding emphasis on the physical. Accordingly, girls were advised to spend plenty of time outside. In his textbook, *Diseases of Women*, required reading for University of Western Ontario medical students beginning in 1917, Harry Crossen prescribed a healthy lifestyle for a girl during her teenage years. He argued that during this period,

[S]he should live in a free and healthful way—plenty of fresh air and outdoor exercise, with proper rest at menstrual periods, an abundance of plain nourishing food, regular hours of sleep, only a moderate amount of school work and other mental training—in short, a regimen that favors free physical development, unhampered by exhausting mental work or by indolent habits.

Girls should “be at some healthful physical work (house-work, outdoor exercise, etc.)” rather than slaving over their studies.³⁶ While many authors acknowledged the reality of women’s education, it was considered to be secondary to their physical development. Unwritten too was the notion that the women in Crossen’s study were Anglo-Saxon women of his class who had the benefits of tutors, private education, and benefits of piano and horseback lessons.

The view of the importance of physical activity is evident when examining the medical discourse on menstrual diseases after 1900. Unlike their Victorian predecessors,

³⁵ Longshore-Potts, *Discourses to Women on Medical Subjects*, 85.

³⁶ Harry Sturgeon Crossen, *Diseases of Women* Fourth Edition, Revised. (St. Louis: Cosby Company, 1917), 974.

early twentieth century textbooks provided broad descriptions of menstrual disorders, and they were viewed as less harmful to overall health than previously believed. The prescribed treatments for the diseases overwhelmingly involved removing girls from educational institutions in favour of leisure and exercise. This is particularly striking since the early twentieth century textbooks did not identify education as the cause of a menstrual disorder, yet they recommended ceasing all studies as part of the treatment. While women could attempt to gain an education, at the first sign of broadly defined “trouble” they were ordered to quit school and focus their energy on physical development.

In *Diseases of Women* (1917) Harry Sturgeon Crossen identified various causes for interrupted menstruation, including “Nervous Impressions... exciting work, study (as in preparing for examinations), taking up a new occupation,” and all cases where a young woman missed menstruation for as little as one month, her parents were advised to remove her from school. Similarly, in cases where a girl had never menstruated, Crossen advised that parents, “Curtail Exhausting School Duties, immoderate piano practice and other acquisitions of modern life,” even though education was not explicitly identified as a cause of the disorder.³⁷ In fact, during this period, the cited causes of amenorrhea were many, and changed from author to author. Sir John Bland-Sutton and Arthur E. Giles argued in 1916 that it was caused by “Catching cold, as from getting the feet wet during menstruation.”³⁸ Their contemporary, Charles Green, blamed amenorrhea on “various nervous and mental disorders, emotion, fright, to diversion of energy by over-study or

³⁷ Crossen, *Diseases of Women*, 986 and 979.

³⁸ Sir John Bland-Sutton and Arthur E. Giles, *The Diseases of Women: A Handbook for Students and Practitioners* Revised Edition (London: William Heinemann, 1916), 384.

undue social activities, and to change of climate and sea-voyage.”³⁹ Despite the disagreement over the causes of amenorrhea, the treatment was uniform: cease education.

As Crossen argued in 1917:

The course of study in the public schools should be under such medical supervision that the pupils be not unduly taxed, and when it is seen that a girl is not doing well physically, her parents should be advised to take her out for a time and let her live the outdoor life that she needs. Such a step in time would turn many a girl from the path of imperfect development and lifelong invalidism, and cause her to become a healthy, robust and useful woman—an ornament to society and a blessing to all around her.⁴⁰

At the first sign of illness, Crossen and the other experts agreed that, regardless of the disease or the cause, parents should remove their girls from school. They were to bring them home without hesitation.

The medical discourse regarding women and higher education changed slightly between 1850 and 1920. In 1850, doctors first maintained that women’s brains were too small to compete with men’s. When women passed entrance exams to university, the medical profession changed tactics to warn that girls had finite energy, and if they devoted too much energy on mental activities rather than physical development they would render themselves barren. Girls were vulnerable during menstruation, and if they did not live a quiet life at home they would be “ruined.” Education made women infertile because it diverted blood from the reproductive organs to the brain. Women could be educated, but doing so risked their fertility, their future happiness, and in some cases, their sanity. After 1900, most textbooks professed some support for women’s education. They argued that, under the proper conditions, women could successfully achieve an

³⁹ Charles M Green, *Histories in Disease of Women* (Boston: W.M. Leonard, 1915), 19-20.

⁴⁰ Crossen, *Diseases of Women*, 980.

education. However, these conditions were unrealistic and included a similar view of their predecessors regarding menstruation. Women were vulnerable during menstruation, and any diversions from “normal” menstruation required removing girls and women from school. While studying was not always included in the causes of menstrual distress, if menstruation was interrupted, mental rest was overwhelmingly the prescription. Male students at medical schools learned from textbooks arguing that their female classmates were at risk. While education may have been more socially acceptable for women in the second generation, the medical risks of studying remained consistent.

Given the continued medical warnings about the perils of overtaxing women with the strains of education, it is no wonder that universities felt responsible for ensuring their female students entered university healthy and left in an even better condition. The surviving records demonstrate that administrators were concerned about the physical health of their female students, and especially the reputation of the universities in maintaining good health. Many annual reports from the Deans of Women include detailed accounts of the illnesses female students faced while at university.

While all schools encouraged physical education, Queen’s University was the only school to require a physical education credit from its male and female students. The medical examiner at Queen’s described the purpose of the examinations for all students at the beginning of the school year:

1. To determine the fitness of the individual to undergo the course of physical instruction now compulsory for first year students of all faculties.
2. To advise on the presence of physical disability and to instruct, where feasible, in a suitable course of exercise.
3. To detect, if possible, the presence of any disease likely to render the individual unfit to pursue his course, or to provide inimical to the student community.⁴¹

⁴¹ Queen’s University, *Principal’s Report 1912-1913* (Kingston: Queen’s University, 1913), 19.

These goals illuminate the belief that students could improve their physical fitness dramatically with proper instruction, and that some students were unfit and unable to study at university but perhaps did not know it themselves. The examiner at Queen's University, Dr. Frederick Etherington, noted that of 300 students (men and women) he examined, the two students deemed unfit for physical activity were female students.

Queen's was proud of its requirement that first year students undertake 2 hours of supervised gymnasium classes per week, and noted that, "Queen's is the first Canadian University to carry on successfully a system of compulsory education embracing all Faculties."⁴² However, by the mid-1910s, it was clear that female students were not as interested in the physical education component of their education as their male peers. The 1916-1917 Annual Report stated that "unfortunately" there "seems to be a desire on the part of the lady students to avoid" the physical training class. The author complained that female students who played on athletic teams sought exemptions from the gymnasium classes and students brought letters from their physicians stating they should be exempted. The Committee on Physical Training did not appreciate their classes being questioned or avoided by the students since it was believed that the classes were "so eminently suited" to the "lady students."⁴³ The Committee believed that the medical notes excusing students from participation in the athletic course were too easy to obtain. Starting in 1920, any student requesting exemption was required to obtain certification from the Queen's medical examiner.⁴⁴

⁴² Queen's University, *Principal's Report 1913-1914* (Kingston: Queen's University, 1914), 29.

⁴³ Queen's University, *Principal's Report 1916-1917* (Kingston: Queen's University, 1917), 52.

⁴⁴ Queen's University, *Principal's Report 1919-1920* (Kingston: Queen's University, 1920), 55.

While Queen's required medical examinations and gym classes, their lack of residences meant that the school had less control over the health of its students than universities with residences. In the 1914-1915 Annual Report, the medical examiner determined that only two students examined could have been prohibited from taking classes, including a man who was epileptic and a "frail, neurotic young woman."⁴⁵ The examiner stated, "considerable latitude should be allowed" with regards to the two cases, yet he was also unsure about his ability to make these decisions himself.

Unlike Queen's, Victoria University was able to supervise their female students more closely because students lived in residence. Due to the excellent records from Annesley Hall residence and the Dean of Women's reports, it is possible to determine the policies that Victoria University instituted to ensure the good health of its female students – policies that were sometimes implemented over the objections of students and their parents. Unlike Queen's, Victoria did not institute compulsory physical education, but this was not for lack of effort. The Dean of Annesley Hall, Margaret Addison, and the Director of Physical Training Emma Scott-Raff, believed it was their duty to ensure the health of the students under their supervision, including what the students ate, their posture while walking and studying, and whether they left their windows open at night. In order to circumvent opposition to women's education and the assertion that studying led to poor health, Addison carefully monitored her students' physical health. The rules and regulations at Victoria demonstrate that the medical views of women's special vulnerability to ill health and the dangers of studying were taken seriously by Addison and the other administrators. While Victoria's administrators approved regulations to

⁴⁵ Queen's University, *Principal's Report 1914-1915* (Kingston: Queen's University, 1915), 23.

protect their students and, more importantly, protect women's education from public scrutiny, the result was that the female students at Victoria were constantly supervised and were restricted in order to uphold a strict definition of health.

Upon entering their first year, Victoria students were subjected to a medical examination. Like the medical examination at Queen's, this focused on the smallest physical failing. The 1905 Report of the Examining Physician, Dr. Letitia Davis, argued that the purpose of the examinations was to "ascertain in each case the general condition of health and physical capacity, as a guide to the best use of the gymnasium during the year and any medication [sic] of the hall life which may seem advisable." When arriving at Victoria, students faced the possibility of additional rules and regulations in residence in addition to classes they were pressured to take at the gymnasium. The purpose of the examination, in conjunction with the physical exercises, was to promote a regime that would "strengthen the body generally and develop the muscular system, and to correct the wrong habits which are largely the result of carelessness and physical weakness, by means of suitable exercises and the development of a proper mental conception of normal form of position."⁴⁶ Even proper posture was considered a significant problem that required mental and physical correction.

Posture was not the only problem discovered by the medical examiners at Victoria University. In 1921, Dr. Edna Guest examined 155 female students. She discovered that while 94 students were in "good condition," 63 were in only "fair condition". The issues she discovered included: 7 suffering from "defect of nose," 2 with "disease of eye lids," 20 with enlarged tonsils, 22 heart defects, 16 students with flat feet, 11 students with

⁴⁶ Letia A. Davis, Report of Examining Physician, 1905. File 20, Box 3. Records Relating to Women at Victoria University: Series 2, Victoria University Archives, Toronto.

weak ankles, 13 cases of bad posture, 26 students with dysmenorrhea, 15 students with “nerves requiring very special care,” 36 students requiring extra nourishment and 31 students requiring extra rest. Guest concluded that the abundance of students who required eye testing was evidence that “so very many nervous breakdowns in the spring are the direct result of over strained eyes, and eyes whose glasses are not quite right.” Guest determined that the students required extra rest, and “each girl was talked to individually and told the need for real rest lying down for half hour after lunch, and half hour before dinner and bed at 10.30pm.” Dictating the sleeping schedule of her charges was not always sufficient; some women were prescribed sleep in the infirmary. In 1921, she noted, “one particularly nervous girl who might otherwise have been sent directly home, and has been brought to the Infirmary for a month’s special supervision.”⁴⁷

In order to correct these many physical failings, specialized gymnastic routines were prescribed at Victoria University. Scott-Raff reported that in 1905, exercise was undertaken for “Low Shoulders, Drooping Head, Constipation, Indigestion, Biliousness, [sic] Pain in Back, [and] Narrow Shoulders.”⁴⁸ Both Scott-Raff’s reports of 1910 and 1911 show that she was also concerned with the students’ height. The 1910 report states that: “We have five little girls very eager to grow and by the rule of anthropometry four of them should have grown taller. They have been regularly stretched and the process has been life-giving we believe. We cannot force human muscles in a day, or a month, so will report on these cases later on.”⁴⁹ Apparently growth was successful as it was later reported

⁴⁷ Edna M. Guest, Physician’s Report November 1, 1921, Box 3, File 20, Records Relating to Women at Victoria University: Series 2, Victoria University Archives, Toronto.

⁴⁸ Emma Scott- Raff, Reports of Gymnasium 1905, Box 3, File 19. Records Relating to Women at Victoria University: Series 2, Victoria University Archives, Toronto.

⁴⁹ Scott-Raff, Report of Physical Training, April 14, 1910, VUA.

“five of our students who were working for height have gained from one-half inch to one and one-half inches.”⁵⁰

While individual students suffered from a variety of maladies, Scott-Raff reported in 1908 that most women shared some common bad habits that would lead to further medical issues. The “girls do not stand well, sit well or walk properly,” she wrote, “and from my own gymnasium test- they are not breathing properly and are absolutely ignorant of the value of relaxation.” Scott-Raff maintained that posture, strength, and relaxation were important for the women’s future happiness, and she summarized her beliefs in the presentations she gave at the beginning of the school year:

I have arranged a series of five minute talks to give our girls in these early morning classes on breathing, diet, sleep, fresh air, exercise, bathing and the real purpose of the gymnasium for our women, which is to give them health and vigor of mind and body to fit them for their work in life.⁵¹

Victoria students faced supervision in their residence as well as in the gymnasium. An undated list of the duties for the nurse in Annesley Hall stated she was required to “observe each student as she enters the dining-room at breakfast, and to look up those who are absent,” to “look up the absentees from dinner,” and to “visit each student’s room each day.” The nurse was also required to

Guard the health of the students, to watch their weight, and if need be to take their measurements; to see that the students take sufficient exercise [and to] advise them in matters of health; to have oversight of their personal hygiene; to teach them the laws of health.⁵²

⁵⁰ Scott-Raff, Report of Physical Training 1910, VUA.

⁵¹ Report on Physical Training, 14 October 1908, VUA.

⁵² Duties of the Trained Nurse in Annesley Hall, undated (circa 1913), Box 3, File 23. Records Relating to Women at Victoria University: Series 2, VUA.

The well-being of Annesley students was not left to chance. Instead, they were carefully monitored in order to ensure that they abided by strict standards of health.

While many students seemingly accepted the prevailing views about the fragility of their health, some women were frustrated by the restrictions on their freedom. Miriam Marshall quickly learned the importance of attending all residence meals after sleeping through breakfast on 17 October 1917. When Marshall was not present at breakfast, the nurse, Miss Gregory appeared at her bedroom door to determine why she skipped the meal. Marshall recounted, “My voice was still pretty husky, so she gave me a dose of castor oil!! Made me feel wretched all morning & aft—in fact all day.”⁵³ As a result, Marshall vowed “hereafter I get up for breakfast, whether I’m late or no!!” By Marshall’s third year at Annesley she was more comfortable circumventing the rules. When she woke up feeling ill on 3 April 1919, she asked her friend Edith to bring her up breakfast but not to confess that Miriam was ill. Edith downplayed Miriam’s symptoms to the nurse, who required Miriam to get a glass of milk from the infirmary. Miriam had her own ideas of how to feel better and recorded in her diary “I went, oh yes!!—but to the Regent & had lovely hot chocolate only ate about 5 mouthfuls of salad for lunch & that worked.”⁵⁴ After three years at Annesley, Marshall was eager to maintain autonomy over her body, and determined that the treatment she required was to sleep in and eat lunch out at a restaurant. It was a small gesture, but nonetheless a defiant assertion of control over her freedom.

⁵³ Miriam Marshall Diary, 17 October 1917. Box 2, File 12, Miriam Sheridan and Family fonds, MG 31-K27, Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa.

⁵⁴ Miriam Marshall Diary, 3 April 1919. LAC.

Similarly, while Addison and Scott-Raff maintained that gymnastic work was required to achieve good health, the students did not all agree. Scott-Raff argued that delinquent students must recognize the importance of physical education. Physical training was “not simply for their own culture, wage earning capacity, or share in social life, but for the benefit of the race to which they belong.” Strengthening their delicate bodies was an important element of success at university, as Scott-Raff wrote:

We must not shut our eyes to the fact that there are in Annesley Hall girls who do not own hockey sticks or tennis racquets who spend the gymnasium period making fudge, study until twelve o’clock every night and go to four hours of severe mental application with no breakfast the next morning. If she got honors in all her subjects I should never call such a girl educated.⁵⁵

Scott-Raff supported the medical and social views of a women’s ultimate function as wife, mother, and educated propagator of the Anglo-Saxon race. If a student ignored her biological destiny for the short-term goals of studying or having fun at university, she was not the ideal young woman Victoria tried to foster. Moreover, she worried about the morality of a woman who disregarded her reproductive health. Scott-Raff warned, “girls who disregard the rules of hygiene are not slow to disregard other regulations.”⁵⁶ Women who neglected their biological functions could easily slip into immorality in other areas. Yet, administrators were not overly concerned that students could become pregnant outside of wedlock. So long as women obeyed the residence rules and consorted with approved dates (men of the same class who could not possibly jeopardize their virtue), and cared for their health, they would be safe. Administrators were much more concerned

⁵⁵ Scott-Raff, Report on Physical Education, 1911, VUA.

⁵⁶ Scott-Raff, Report of Physical Education 1907, VUA.

that female students would become “mannish” bluestockings who were sexually unappealing to men of their class.

Denyse Baillargeon has explored how female reformers and doctors led the movement for medical supervision of women and mothers to benefit the Anglo-Saxon race in response to increased immigration to Canada. Dr. Helen MacMurchy, one of Canada’s foremost proponents of eugenics, examined incoming Annesley students in 1911 and corresponded with Addison about their care.⁵⁷ Baillargeon maintained that the turn of the twentieth century was a pivotal time period when the project of overseeing maternity changed from “no longer merely a matter of convincing women of the importance of their role as mothers in order to better subordinate maternity to the service of society or the nation, but of dictating their behaviour down to the smallest detail.”⁵⁸ In fact, in the 1870s reform groups argued that women’s education was necessary for the growth of Canadian society, and that white Anglo-Saxon women were connected to racial progress.⁵⁹ Administrators and parents were preoccupied with keeping the female students healthy and able to bear the next generation of intelligent, middle class Canadians.

⁵⁷ MacMurchy worked for the Toronto Board of Education and worked as the chief of the Division of Child Welfare for the Canadian Department of Pensions and National Health in 1919 until her retirement in 1934. For more information on MacMurchy see Angus McLaren, *Our Own Master Race: Eugenics in Canada 1885-1945* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1990), 30-45; or Dianne Dodd, “Helen MacMurchy, MD: Gender and Professional Conflict in the Medical Inspection of Toronto Schools, 1910-1911,” *Ontario History* Vol. 93, No. 2 (Nov. 2001), 127-149.

⁵⁸ Denyse Baillargeon, *Babies for the Nation: The Medicalization of Motherhood in Quebec, 1910-1970* translated by W. Donald Wilson (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2009), 3. See also Michael Anne Sullivan, *Healing Bodies and Saving the Race: Women, Public Health, Eugenics, and Sexuality, 1890-1950* (PhD diss., 1995); Wendy Kline, *Building a Better Race: Gender, Sexuality, and Eugenics from the Turn of the Century to the Baby Boom* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001).

⁵⁹ Sara Burke, “Women of Newfangle: Co-Education, Racial Discourse and Women’s Rights in Victorian Ontario,” *Historical Studies in Education* Vol. 19, No. 1 (Spring 2007), 111-134.

Yet this was not their only preoccupation. Just as compromises were made in sharing academic facilities with men, so too were compromises necessary in the care of young women. Scott-Raff constantly bemoaned the fact that the students did not take gymnastic work seriously. University officials were unwilling to require a gymnastic credit to earn a degree, and so many students skipped the classes. In 1911 Scott-Raff stated that, “Another year has passed and still the department of work of which I have charge is far from satisfactory.”⁶⁰ While gymnasium attendance was required for Annesley Hall residents, Scott-Raff and Addison were unable to compel students to attend because there were no academic penalties for non-compliance. Scott-Raff tried to shame delinquent students by posting a list of the students’ names on her office door and instructing them to record the type of exercise they did each day, but this still failed to motivate students.

The surviving records from Queen’s University and Victoria University from 1890 to 1920 demonstrate that administrators believed it was their responsibility to maintain the health of the students under their supervision. Significantly, that supervision increased during the influx of female students in the second generation as the institutions adapted themselves to a larger female student body. They used medical examinations to prescribe treatments and outline regimes to adopt at the gymnasium. While they were not always successful in achieving daily gymnasium attendance, students experienced pressure to exercise regularly. Daily habits were also scrutinized in order to ensure that the institutions would not be blamed for the ill health of students. While the restrictions originated from a desire to ensure students remained healthy, it controlled the behaviour

⁶⁰ Scott- Raff, Report of Physical Training, 1911, VUA.

of female students quite dramatically. As Miriam Marshall learned, if she slept in, she was required to take medicine. Students faced lectures about their sleeping habits, their diets, and even their posture.

Despite the argument put forward in the historiography that life in the twentieth century was easier for woman than it was in the nineteenth, most women who attended university faced academic pressures and the belief that if they studied too hard to achieve good grades their health could be jeopardized and “ruined.” While some students like Marshall disregarded some of the medical advice they received from university administrators, all students examined in this dissertation were influenced by the medical beliefs that long hours of studying could damage their health. While men suffered nervous strain from “cramming” for final exams, the belief that studying could ruin a student’s future life was largely a concern for women. Women who attended university did so knowing that there were essays to write and exams to study for, and sought out these academic challenges. Most also wanted to do well in their studies and were proud of their accomplishments. Yet they were constantly made aware of the dangers of studying and competing with men academically.

The educational system in Canada, which relied heavily on final exams for a significant portion of the grade, was often blamed for the prevalence of nervous disorders in female students. The student newspaper *The Queen’s Journal* printed a speech in 1890 given by the author and reformer Agnes Maule Machar to the Woman’s Christian Temperance Union in support of women’s education. While Machar acknowledged that some women could suffer ill health from studying, she maintained that the negative health effects were less severe for university students than for manual labourers or those

sitting at machines all day. She suggested that women could thrive in the “un-ideal” conditions of universities, but identified problems with heavily weighted exams at the end of the semester that required students to cram information learned from the entire semester in the short period at the end of classes.⁶¹

While advocates of women’s higher education like Machar argued that the university system was damaging for both men and women, women were believed to suffer unduly. Women who were eager to succeed academically also often had to contend with the worries of their families. Kathleen Cowan, who did very well in school and relished her successes, recorded in her diary that she “Got a letter from father telling me not to work too hard.” The view that studying was dangerous was promoted between women. Cowan mentioned a conversation she had with a friend: “Was talking to Winona about not working too hard and we agreed it [working too hard] was foolish.”⁶² None of the women examined noted that they received encouragement from their parents to study and strive to do well in their classes. Instead, in their letters home, students qualified their dedication to their schoolwork with statements reassuring their parents about their good health. Florence Neelands’ parents appear to have been particularly worried about the amount of time she studied, and she reassured them that she was still taking care of herself. When she informed her parents that she studied from 7:00 pm until midnight, she maintained “if I study so much I also have exercise once a week.”⁶³

⁶¹ Agnes Maule Machar excerpt published in “Ladies’ Corner,” *Queen’s Journal* February 14, 1890, 115.

⁶² Kathleen Cowan, *It’s Late and All the Girls Have Gone: An Annesley Diary, 1907-1910* ed. Aida Farrag Graff and David Knight (Toronto: Childe Thursday, 1984), 324. and 176.

⁶³ Florence Neelands to family, undated. File 1, Box 1 B1987-0012. Florence Neelands fonds, University of Toronto, Toronto.

Neelands illustrated the paradox many students faced when reporting their activities to their parents. On May 13, 1894 she wrote

Don't worry about my health. I feel splendidly & I don't get rattled. One is all right if they keep cool. It is very lucky having half a day to study & sometimes a day & a half between each exam for I can't study more than 2 hours at night. My eyes get tired & I have to save them up till the end... I got such a nice book from the library to read today but I can't now I must save my eyes for work only.⁶⁴

Neelands described only her daily routine and her annoyance at her vision problems.

However, it appears that her mother was very anxious to learn whether Neelands' eyes were bothering her at night. The following week Neelands wrote

I should not have frightened you all about my eyes. I was provoked at them acting so at night when I wanted to work but they have not done so since. And I have been able to work till twelve every night last week and got up at six in the morning & studied 1½ hours before breakfast. Then from 9-1 & from 2-6 in the library. That is pretty hard knuckling down, is it not!

Neelands' response makes it clear that she felt guilty about confessing her vision problems, and she rushed to reassure her family of her good health. In an effort to prove that her eyes were not bothering her, she reported her studying schedule, although the assurance that she prepared for exams 13 hours per day seems ill-advised. Clearly her mother was still concerned, as in another letter Neelands wrote:

Please do not feel anxious about me. It is of no use to do that. I am doing the very best I can & never waste a minute. I never felt better in my life & it does not make me nervous at all... Work agrees with me & I am so busy that I have not time to worry.⁶⁵

She was careful not to report any health problems again, although she did continue to record her difficult studying schedule. Unfortunately, her parents concern for her health made it impossible for women like Neelands to report any suggestion of ill-health,

⁶⁴ Florence Neelands to family, 13 May 1894, VUA.

⁶⁵ Florence Neelands to family, undated, UTA.

because according to the medical literature of the time, the only cure would be a removal from the studies they clearly loved. While it was risky to tell her mother how much she was studying, Neelands appeared to be proud of her academic dedication.

In order to guard against illness, university students carefully examined their weight and diet. Comments in letters home about diet and weight gain or loss were as frequent as records of studying. Professors used the classroom podium to instruct their students about “good” and “bad” food. Dr. Knight informed his students at Queen’s that they should consume cream rather than cod liver oil, advice that Lorraine Shortt dutifully followed.⁶⁶ Miriam Marshall also kept a handwritten list in her diary of recommended food and bad “starchy” fats, according to the dietary wisdom of the day.⁶⁷ Most students upheld the belief that they needed to gain weight to ensure that they remained strong enough to complete their exams, but also so that they retained feminine curves while at university. They did not want to appear to be worn down and thin as a result of their labours, and most significantly they did not want to appear coarse.⁶⁸

While most of the students examined in this study recorded their eating habits in diaries and letters home, some were ambivalent about the idea of gaining weight while at school. Lorraine Shortt sent letters to her mother (who was a physician) inquiring about different methods of gaining weight. On February 19, 1916, Shortt discovered that she weighed 106.5lbs. However, by April 5, when she discovered that she weighed 115lbs,

⁶⁶ Lorraine Shortt Diary, 14 January 1916, File 1875, Elizabeth Shortt fonds, University of Waterloo Archives, Waterloo Ontario.

⁶⁷ Miriam Sheridan Diary, 18 April 1919. LAC.

⁶⁸ Martha H. Patterson. *Beyond the Gibson Girl: Reimagining the American New Woman, 1895-1915* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2005); Martha Banta, *Imagining American Women: Ideals and Ideas in Cultural History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987).

(which was the most she had ever weighed), she recorded in her diary: “Horrors,” but “I suppose mother will be glad though.”⁶⁹ Nevertheless, throughout the five years of correspondence between Shortt and her mother, Elizabeth, there are both numerous inquiries about proper weight gain and reports on the results. On January 22, 1916, Shortt wrote that she weighed 108.5lbs, and asked her mother about consuming cream as a way to gain weight. Yet, this clearly was not a success because on January 30, she reported that she weighed 108lbs, and maintained, “I have to do better than that.”⁷⁰ While she privately was not happy about her mother’s instruction to gain weight, she listened to her mother’s suggestion in the spring of 1916 not to snack between meals, in an effort to eat more at each meal. After first receiving this instruction, she lamented that

The instruction I find hardest to keep, among the many instructions from last letter, is the ‘non-nibbling’ stunt. I must have unconsciously drifted into a dreadful habit for I am constantly wanting to eat a biscuit or an orange or something, as long as I’m in the house.⁷¹

Despite the fact that Shortt did not share her mother’s belief that she needed to gain weight, she followed instructions that actually made her very hungry during the day. In order to gain her mother’s approval for her new diet, Shortt reported on March 8 “The non nibbling sure has given me the most enormous appetite you ever saw.” Privately she believed “Its [sic] really disgraceful.”⁷² In order to follow her mother’s instructions to increase her weight, Shortt went against her own preferences and suffered through hunger

⁶⁹ Lorraine Shortt Diary, 5 April 1916. UWA.

⁷⁰ Lorraine Shortt Diary, 30 January 1916. UWA.

⁷¹ Lorraine Shortt to Elizabeth Shortt, 20 February 1916. UWA.

⁷² Lorraine Shortt to Elizabeth Shortt, 8 March 1916. UWA.

to achieve the ideal. By the standards of her time, the extra pounds were aesthetically pleasing, demonstrated her good health, and would ideally protect her against illness.

Physical education was another way for women to mitigate the dangers of education and retain their femininity. As noted above, Queen's implemented mandatory physical education in order to ensure that the men and women were maintaining their bodies along with their minds. However, as Margaret Lowe notes in her book *Looking Good*, participating in organized sports was a favourite activity for many women and a source of camaraderie between classmates, while getting the exercise they believed would make them healthy and well-rounded citizens.⁷³

Some women and teachers worried that organized sport could be considered unladylike, but an editorial in a 1902 edition of *S. Hilda's Chronicle* from Trinity College's women's residence defended exercise and organized sports among university students. The editorial maintained that women could retain their femininity while playing such games as ice hockey as "there is no reason why a woman should not keep and cultivate a soft voice, grace and graciousness, and at the same time develop her physique." Far from making women unfeminine, sports allowed women to cultivate feminine qualities of grace and ease of movement. Most importantly, "to students some form of athletics is a necessity if they are to retain health and energy."⁷⁴ In the opinion of the *S. Hilda's* students, participating in athletic activities was a way to ensure that women kept their bodies safe as they improved their minds at university.

⁷³ Margaret Lowe, *Looking Good: College Women and Body Image, 1875-1930* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003).

⁷⁴ "Athletics," *S. Hilda's Chronicle* Vol. 2 No 1 (Lent 1902), 3.

Sport also served an important function in the social lives of female students. As the *S. Hilda's* editorial explained, "Athletics do more than anything else to develop an *esprit de corps* in a college."⁷⁵ The *S. Hilda's Chronicle* reiterated in almost every edition the importance of women becoming involved in St. Hilda's activities and in creating a unified community. Their behaviour needed to be exemplary, because one St. Hilda's student's misdeeds, it was said, could reflect on the university as a whole. The editorial affirmed that while exercise was beneficial to the individual, "The girl who tries the hardest to be a good athlete for the sake of her college, and plays hardest that her college may be foremost in the field, will be the greatest strength to the community in which she lives in after life."⁷⁶ Participation in organized sports fostered teamwork among university women, but most importantly helped keep them healthy. By demonstrating an ability to yield individual desires for the betterment of the team and college, and keeping themselves healthy and able to reproduce, university women helped build characteristics that would be important in their lives after university as contributing members to their families or communities.

While some students reluctantly attended official gymnastic classes at the urging of administrators, many female students relished their extracurricular athletic experiences because of the love of the game and camaraderie. Miriam Marshall reported attending a women's basketball game that included male spectators among the many "rooters."⁷⁷ The *St. Hilda's Chronicle* reported on games against the other University of Toronto College

⁷⁵ "Athletics," *S. Hilda's Chronicle* Vol. 2 No 1 (Lent 1902), 3.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 3.

⁷⁷ Miriam Marshall Diary, 27 November 1917. UTA.

teams, including constructive criticism of the St. Hilda's team performance. A 1904 account of a hockey game between St. Hilda's and the Annesley Hall team reported that "S. Hilda's forwards were very fast, and showed some signs of combination, but this might still be improved... Both wings neglected to feed the centre forwards when attacking their opponents' goal."⁷⁸ Students were engaged in the successes and failures of their teams, and analyzed their losses. They were not simply idle spectators. While basketball was also played at St. Hilda's, hockey was particularly popular. In 1906 the *Chronicle* noted that "Hockey enthusiasm in S. Hilda's this year rages more furiously than ever."⁷⁹ As a result, "every girl in College, who can make a pretence [sic] at maintaining her equilibrium on skates, came back to S. Hilda's after Christmas eager to take an active part in the hockey practices."⁸⁰ Women from different colleges were able to meet on the hockey rink and often held receptions after the games to further acquaintances made on the rink. Interestingly, the St. Hilda women occasionally played against the Trinity men's hockey team, who played with their left hands. The games were often fierce, including one game in 1903 when a St. Hilda's player was forced to sit out a penalty for knocking down a Trinity man.⁸¹ Although administrators and textbook authors argued that women needed physical exercise to ensure the proper development and maintenance of their reproductive organs, women who participated on athletic teams did so out of the thrill of competition and for fun.

⁷⁸ "Athletics," *S. Hilda's Chronicle* Vol. 4 No. 1 (Lent 1904), 11.

⁷⁹ "S. Hilda's Notes," *S. Hilda's Chronicle* Vol. 5, No. 4 (Lent 1906), 11.

⁸⁰ "Athletic Notes, *S. Hilda's Chronicle* Vol. 5, No. 10 (Lent 1908), 30.

⁸¹ "Athletics," *S. Hilda's Chronicle* Vol. 4, No. 1 (Lent 1904), 9.

While women embraced sports and cheered for their classmates at the hockey rink and the basketball court, their male colleagues believed the women's teams were inferior to the men's teams. In 1916, women at Queen's asked that female athletes, who played against other universities, be awarded the letter "Q" like male athletes. The request was denied by the Alma Mater Society in 1917, since the women's teams were "subordinate athletics" and not worthy to wear the coveted distinction.⁸² The Alma Mater Society was eager to guard against the "promiscuous" use of the Q letter award, and further argued that allowing women to wear it was improper as it served as "a sacred tribute to those of our athletes who so proudly wore their letter while at Queen's and who have since sacrificed their lives in the defence of the Empire."⁸³ Just as men alone were able to fight to defend Canada, only male athletes truly represented Queen's.⁸⁴

Skating was a very popular form of recreational exercise for less athletic students. Miriam Marshall recorded skating nearly every night when the skating rink was operational, including playing hockey from 7:00pm to 8:00pm, and then skating from 8:00pm until 10:00pm. Occasional "frozen" ears and sprained ankles did not stop her from skating for very long. While university administrators generally encouraged women to skate in the evening on university rinks, the enthusiasm of the administrators at Victoria University, particularly Dean of Women Margaret Addison, waned in the 1910s

⁸² Queen's University, *Principal's Report 1919-1920* (Kingston: Queen's University 1917), 48.

⁸³ Queen's University, *Principal's Report 1919-1920* (Kingston: Queen's University 1917), 48.

⁸⁴ For a discussion of the growth of male and female athletics at the University of Toronto see Catherine Gidney, "The Athletics-Physical Education Dichotomy Revisited: The Case of the University of Toronto, 1900-1940," *Sport History Review* Vol. 37 (2006), 130-149. For a discussion of how women created parallel (but unequal) intercollegiate sports leagues in the 1920s see Anne Warner, "'The Coming of the Skirts': Women's Intercollegiate Basketball at Queen's University in the 1920s," *Sport History Review* Vol. 41 (2010), 33-49.

as they feared that skating was a forum for flirting and was much closer to dancing than to the Swedish gymnastics favoured by Annesley. In the 1911 annual report, the Athletic Director at Queen's maintained that the rink was having positive results: "The outdoor rink has supplied a long-felt want, and has been a success as far as the results are concerned."⁸⁵ Initially, Addison agreed with this view that skating was beneficial. In February 1908, she reported that "Skating does not wane in its popularity and we are always glad when it lasts late into the season, as it ensures a greater measure of health in May."⁸⁶ In 1908, students were permitted to skip their daily visits to the gymnasium if they reported that they had skated. Nevertheless, by 1913, Addison requested that the university prohibit bands from playing at the rink other than on Friday. She reported that the band playing at the rink was "an obvious hindrance to the academic work of the residents, and as the cause of late hours is injurious to their health."⁸⁷ It is obvious from the journals of the Annesley women that skating was embraced because it was primarily a social rather than physical activity. Women were introduced to new classmates in this social environment and took requests for "bands" (i.e. songs) much as they would solicit numbers for their dance cards. The bands played popular music and the rink also appears to have been free from administrator supervision, although women certainly policed each other's behaviour by gossiping about partners and the number of "bands" skated with one partner. Clearly, Addison realized the women's enthusiasm for skating was due to more than their enjoyment of physical exercise, and she questioned why they skated

⁸⁵ Queen's University, *Principal's Report 1910-1911* (Kingston: Queen's University 1911), 23.

⁸⁶ Margaret Addison, Dean's Report 12 February 1908, VUA.

⁸⁷ Margaret Addison, Dean's Reports 13 March 1913, VUA.

each night but had many excuses for not participating in the boring official gym classes. Skating was far too similar to dancing for Addison, whose college did not permit dances between men and women in university buildings.

Participation in mandatory exercise classes and organized sports demonstrates the limits of control of university administrators. Women participated in rigorous athletic teams not simply because they wanted to uphold the ideals of health espoused by medical textbooks. They participated on hockey and basketball teams for the love of the game and competition, and because they had fun. While skating with their male classmates was good exercise, it was also an opportunity for socializing and flirting. Some students were able to use the expectations of exercise for their own enjoyment. Administrators such as Addison, however, questioned the value of exercise when it involved men or was too popular. They expected women to devote themselves to exercise aimed at maintaining health and fertility, in accordance with their future roles in society.

Female university students from 1890 to 1920 did not face the same challenges that the pioneering female students did in the 1870s and 1880s. The medical literature acknowledged that women's smaller brains no longer made it impossible for them to compete academically with men. Yet they still faced significant medical barriers to earning a university education. Women were believed to be more vulnerable than men to illnesses, and their well being resided in their reproductive organs. Prior to the twentieth century, it was believed that thinking too hard or concentrating during menstruation could divert blood from the uterus and render a woman infertile. After the turn of the twentieth century, physicians argued that it was possible for women to earn a degree. However, should the woman experience any illness or interruption to her period, the solution was

inevitably to remove her from school. The scientific literature continued to argue that women could jeopardize their health and fertility by attending university.

Universities responded by enacting regulations to protect female students' health. Women at Queen's and Victoria were forced to undergo medical examinations prior to entering residence and were required to attend gymnastics classes. Women in residence at Victoria were forced to accept the medical advice of the nurse and doctor if they wished to enjoy the privileges of leaving residence for classes or social events. While administrators such as Addison wished to protect both female students and the future of women's education by maintaining the health of the students, in practice these beliefs shaped women's experiences on campus. Students were preoccupied with their health, with gaining weight and reassuring their anxious parents that they remained healthy. While some women responded to these pressures by small acts of rebellion, such as refusing to attend exercise classes they disliked or refusing medicine offered when they slept past breakfast, they were keenly aware of the dangers they faced by attending university. Fear that academic pursuits could ruin their health and cause infertility limited women's ability to participate fully in university life, and reinforced the belief that their ultimate purpose was as wives and mothers, regardless of their academic successes.

4. “Mercy I never felt so conspicuous in my life”: Women on Campus

Anne Shirley and Priscilla Grant felt uncomfortable and out of place when they arrived at Redmond College’s campus in L.M. Montgomery’s novel *Anne of the Island* (1915). As they registered for classes they noted that the male freshmen “had banded themselves together on the big staircase of the entrance hall, where they were shouting out glees with all the vigor of youthful lungs.” While Anne blamed her discomfort on the new, large school and her feeling of insignificance, Priscilla indicated that the male students made her uneasy. Priscilla explained that while she wanted to introduce herself to another lonely first year student, Philippa Gordon, “I couldn’t lumber across that big hall with all those boys howling on the stairs.” When they finally met Philippa in a city graveyard, she commiserated about their first experience on campus: “Say, wasn’t it *awful* there? For the first time I wished I had stayed home and got married.”¹ While the freshmen did not yell directly at the freshettes, their behaviour made women like Philippa believe it would be easier to retreat to traditional gender roles than try to defend their right to attend university.

In Lillian Vaux MacKinnon’s novel *Miriam of Queen’s* (1921), the male students were also hostile to female students. A Latin professor instructed the freshmen, “Now, gentlemen, don’t jostle! There is plenty of time to walk in politely. Let the ladies pass in first, gentlemen, and don’t stare at them! You’ve seen them often enough, and you may hope to see them every day. In my time ladies weren’t such a common sight in colleges

¹ Lucy Maude Montgomery, *Anne of the Island* (1915; reprint, Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1985), 28.

as they are now. Oh, no, they were rar-re.”² He also chastised the male students for laughing at a female student’s small error. Individual male students, such as Miriam’s cousin Sedly and romantic interest Hugh, encouraged her in her studies and respected her as a student. Yet as a group, male students were threatening to female students. Despite the attempts of the Latin professor, female students felt unwelcome on the Queen’s campus in *Miriam of Queen’s*.

Women’s ability to attend university was contested well into the twentieth century. While their intellectual capacity was no longer considered a sufficient reason to exclude them from universities, their bodies and their physical stamina for higher education were issues that concerned university administrators, students, and parents from 1890 to 1920. This chapter argues that a woman’s intellect was permitted in university classrooms, but her physical body remained a site of concern and occasional conflict. Deans of Women, faculty, and male and female students scrutinized the physical deportment of female students. Women faced a myriad of rules concerning how they dressed, where they walked, and how they interacted with their male peers on campus. Etiquette rules required minimal contact between men and women on campus when they coexisted in academic spaces. Individuals who challenged these rules were shamed by their peers or disciplined by administrators. The experience of female students reinforced the importance of women-only areas of residences, coatrooms, and reading rooms, as these were the only spaces on campus that women had an unchallenged right to occupy. As a result, female students were made to feel that they were trespassing onto masculine territory at the university. Their behaviour and physical presence on campus was subject

² Lillian Vaux MacKinnon, *Miriam of Queen’s* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1921), 58.

to varying levels of control in order to maintain a division between men and women. While individual men certainly encouraged their female classmates to participate in university life and were supportive of their academic aspirations, male students as a group reinforced gender divisions and prevented women from feeling as though they had an equal right to what was traditionally masculine space. They were unwelcome, and had to behave according to very strict rules to minimize their impact on this male arena. They knew that a slight breach of the rules could result in a contentious debate on women's right to be on campus at all. While female students were subject to rules and supervision on campus, they faced different rules when attending social functions as the dates of male students. The university environment was more accommodating of women in traditionally feminine roles than it was of female students whose presence challenged the university's historic role as an exclusively male space.

The separation between men and women on university campuses reflected a wider acceptance of different spheres in nineteenth century life. Barbara Welter's important 1966 description of the Victorian "Cult of True Womanhood" provided a description of the feminine domestic sphere, and its attributes according to prescriptive literature. Welter maintained that there was a sharp division between the lives of men and women. The "nineteenth-century American man... was a busy builder of bridges and railroads, at work long hours in a materialistic society," whereas his wife was "the hostage in the home."³ The nineteenth century woman, unlike her eighteenth century foremother, embodied morality and goodness as she was isolated from the moral and physical filth of the commercial world and ensconced in the pure world of the home.

³ Barbara Welter, "The Cult of True Womanhood, 1820- 1860," *American Quarterly* Vol. 18, No. 2 (Summer 1966), 151-2.

Gerda Lerner added a class-based analysis to the separate spheres in her 1969 article, "The Lady and the Mill Girl: Changes in the Status of Women in the Age of Jackson." Lerner argued that the separate spheres ideal arose in the first decades of the nineteenth century as a result of the professionalization and industrialization of the American economy. She maintained that the emphasis on women's place in the home occurred during a time when more poor women than ever left their homes to work in factories, and therefore had a distinct class basis where the only "true woman" was a woman whose husband was wealthy enough to shield her from employment outside the home. The "image of 'the lady,'" wrote Lerner, "was elevated to the accepted ideal of femininity toward which all women would strive."⁴ However, Lerner reminded the reader that women have always worked and only middle and upper class white women were able to attain the status of "true women" by virtue of their husbands' wealth.

In the 1970s, historians identified positive aspects of the domestic sphere to explain why women wrote prescriptive literature that encouraged the conservative separate spheres ideal. Carroll Smith-Rosenberg identified the complex and lifelong emotional ties between women that flourished in the domestic sphere.⁵ Blanche Wiesen Cook and Margaret Conrad, among others, demonstrated that homosocial relationships were sometimes more significant to women than their relationships with their husbands, and provided emotional support for women through life milestones.⁶ For many nineteenth

⁴ Gerda Lerner, "The Lady and the Mill Girl: Changes in the Status of Women in the Age of Jackson," *American Studies Journal* Vol. 10, No. 1 (Spring 1969), 13.

⁵ Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, "The Female World of Love and Ritual: Relations between Women in Nineteenth Century America," *Signs* Vol. 1, No. 1 (Autumn 1975), 1-29.

⁶ See for example Blanche Wiesen Cook, "Female Support Networks and Political Activism: Lillian Wald, Chrystal Eastman, Emma Goldman," *Chrysalis* No. 3 (1977), pp. 43-61; and Margaret Conrad, "'Sundays Always Make Me Think of Home': Time and Place in Canadian Women's History," in *Rethinking Canada:*

century women, the female sphere was one of comfort, support, and cooperation. It is no wonder that the camaraderie of a women-only environment appealed to feminist historians of the 1960s and 1970s, who were fighting for women's recognition among their often hostile male colleagues.

Linda K. Kerber objected to the overly positive description of the separate spheres paradigm. She argued that there were several problems with the use of the construct.

First, she argued that the term was not fixed:

When they used the metaphor of separate spheres, historians referred, often interchangeably, to an ideology *imposed on* women, a culture *created by* women, a set of boundaries *expected to be observed* by women. Moreover, the metaphor helped historians avoid thinking about race; virtually all discussion of the subject until very recently has focused on the experience of white women, mostly of the middle class.⁷

She, along with other historians, argued that it was important to separate notions of a proudly feminine culture from the forced isolation of women into the domestic sphere.

Kerber reminded historians that while some women found emotional fulfillment in the domestic sphere and that some longed to belong to the class of women that could afford such luxury, it was an oppressive construct that early feminists fought to escape.⁸

In the 1980s and 1990s, historians explored the complexities of the separate spheres ideology and how it determined women's daily experiences. For example, M. Jeanne Peterson's study of a group of middle class women in England explored the

The Promise of Women's History 1st Edition, ed. Veronica Strong-Boag and Anita Clair Fellman (Toronto: Copp Clark Pittman, 1986), pp. 67-81.

⁷ Linda K. Kerber, "Separate Spheres, Female Worlds, Woman's Place: The Rhetoric of Women's History," *The Journal of American History* Vol. 75, No. 1 (June 1988), 17.

⁸ See for example Ellen Dubois, Mari Jo Buhle, Temma Kaplan, Gerda Lerner and Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, "Politics and Culture in Women's History: A Symposium," *Feminist Studies*, Vol. 6, No 2 (Spring 1980), 26-64.

different experience of Victorian gentlewomen even within the same family. Her study demonstrated that individual women contributed to their husbands' careers and that some men were invested in the private sphere and had deep emotional connections to their families.⁹ Conversely, while Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall described the porous boundaries of the public and private, and masculine and feminine spheres, and argued it was an ideological rather than spatial construct in their path-breaking book *Family Fortunes*, they maintained that the ideology acted to limit women's power in England throughout the nineteenth century.¹⁰ In the Canadian context, Cynthia R. Commacchio argued in *The Infinite Bonds of Family* that although Anglo-Canadians supported the separate spheres ideology, the realities of everyday life made it difficult to strictly enforce.¹¹

While the separate spheres ideology argued that women's role remained in the home, religious women, reformers, and feminists used the ideology of women's supposed moral superiority to justify leaving the domestic spheres to purify the corrupt public world. If women were truly more inherently moral and untainted by the corrupting influence of capitalism, surely their involvement in religious and philanthropic pursuits was beneficial.¹² Religious women such as Harriet Dobbs Carwright used philanthropic

⁹ M. Jeanne Peterson, *Family, Love, and Work in the Lives of Victorian Gentlewomen* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989).

¹⁰ Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class, 1780-1850* (London: Routledge, 1987).

¹¹ Cynthia R. Comacchio, *The Infinite Bonds of Family: Domesticity in Canada, 1850-1940* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999.)

¹² Eileen Janes Yeo, *Radical Femininity: Women's Self-Representation in the Public Spheres* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998); Sandra Stanley Holton, Alison Mackinnon and Margaret Allan, eds., "Between Rationality and Revelation: Women: Faith and Public Roles in the Nineteenth Centuries" issue of *Women's History Review* Vol. 7, No. 2 (1998); F.K. Prochaska, *Women and Philanthropy in Nineteenth-Century England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980).

efforts to justify their involvement in the public sphere.¹³ As the moral guardians, some women argued that they were required to rid the wider world of social ills. Feminists like Nellie McClung used the domestic role of women as the justification for female suffrage, believing only women could “clean up” the dirty world of politics.¹⁴ This manipulation justified female involvement in a myriad of nineteenth century social movements, including the antislavery and temperance movements.

Industrial capitalism also helped middle-class women move from the private sphere into the public one. As keepers of the household, women were required to make their homes pleasant and attractive, and since middle-class Victorian women did not produce household items, they were required to purchase them ready-made. Several studies of the growth of department stores and their creation as a female space demonstrate that the woman’s role as consumer necessitated the creation of a woman’s space in the commercial heart of cities.¹⁵ Examinations of how women experienced the Victorian city are particularly useful in determining how the world of consumerism

¹³ Katherine McKenna, “The Union Between Faith and Good Works: The Life of Harriet Dobbs Cartwright, 1808-1887,” in *Changing Roles of Women Within the Christian Church in Canada*, 284-294. Eds Marilyn Fardig Whiteley and Elizabeth Gillian Muir (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995).

¹⁴ Veronica Strong-Boag, “ ‘Ever a Crusader’: Nellie McClung, First Wave Feminist,” in *Rethinking Canada: the Promise of Women’s History* 3rd Edition, ed. Veronica Strong-Boag and Anita Clair Feldman (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1997), 274. See also Carmen J. Nielson, *Private Women and the Public Good: Charity and State Formation in Hamilton, Ontario, 1846-93* (Vancouver, University of British Columbia Press, 2014).

¹⁵ Alan Kidd and David Nicholls, ed. *Gender, Civic Culture and Consumerism: Middle-Class Identity in Britain 1800-1940* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999); Elizabeth Kowalesi-Wallace, *Consuming Subjects: Women, Shopping, and Business in the Eighteenth Century* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997); William Lancaster, *The Department Store: A Social History* (London: Leicester University Press, 1995); William R. Leach, “Transformations in a Culture of Consumption: Women and Department Stores, 1890-1925,” *Journal of American History* Vol. 71, No. 2 (September 1984), 319-42; Susan Porter Benson, *Counter Cultures: Saleswomen, Managers, and Customers in American Department Stores, 1890-1940* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988); Victoria de Grazia with Ellen Furlough, eds., *The Sex of Things: Gender and Consumption in Historical Perspective* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996); Donica Belisle, *Retail Nation: Department Stores and the Making of Modern Canada* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2011).

expanded the female sphere.¹⁶ For example, Erika Rappaport argued that while the sight of women venturing into the seemingly dirty, corrupt city to purchase goods for their home was repellant to many Victorians, it was also a necessary function of the mother to create a happy home filled with pleasant objects. She argued that the rise of consumerism and the development of discourse about the city as a site of pleasure “altered the way many Victorians viewed their city, produced new notions of desire, and rewrote gender ideals, producing a bourgeois femininity that was born within the public realm.”¹⁷ Consumerism opened a public space to middle class women within the late Victorian city, including important leisure areas such as Pleasure Gardens and urban parks.¹⁸ Architectural historians have also identified how cities and buildings reinforced the separate spheres and created women’s spaces within industrial cities.¹⁹ Large department stores provided feminine havens within the male industrial city, complete with resting rooms, toilets, and restaurants to tend to the female shopper.

¹⁶ See for example Deborah Epstein Nord, *Walking the Victorian Streets: Women, Representation, and the City* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995); Elizabeth Wilson, *The Sphinx in the City: Urban Life, the Control of Disorder, and Women* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991); Christine Stansell, *City of Women: Sex and Class in New York, 1789-1860* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1987); Kathy Peiss, *Cheap Amusements: Working Women and Leisure in Turn-of-the-Century New York* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1986); Mary P. Ryan, *Women in Public: Between Banners and Ballots, 1825-1880* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990).

¹⁷ Erika Rappaport, *Shopping for Pleasure: Women in the Making of London’s West End* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 5.

¹⁸ Galen Cranz, “Women in Urban Parks,” *Sign* Vol. 5, No. 3 Supplement: Women and the American City (Spring 1980), 579-595.

¹⁹ For early explanations of feminist geography and architecture see Women and Geography Study Group, *Geography and Gender: An Introduction to Feminist Geography* (London: Hutchinson & Co., 1984) and Jane Rendell, Barbara Penner, and Ian Borden, eds., *Gender Space Architecture: An Interdisciplinary Introduction* (London: Routledge, 2000); Daphne Spain, *Gendered Spaces* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1992); Beatriz Colomina, ed., *Sexuality and Space* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1992).

Of course, working class women labored outside their homes for wages throughout the nineteenth century. Working women were forced to exist in masculine spheres and often struggled to carve out female space within the public sphere.²⁰ As Carolyn Strange discussed in her book *Toronto's Girl Problem* (1995), one of the greatest social panics of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries concerned unmarried women's employment in the public sphere. While women had long worked for wages, prior to the industrial revolution, they had been employed in wealthy employers' homes. Strange documented the moral panic concerning everything from the toilet facilities they used to their leisure activities in public amusement parks, rinks, and dance halls.²¹ In the mid nineteenth century, however, the growing necessity and acceptability of white-collar work outside the home provided more opportunities for working women to enter the public sphere.²²

Due to the separate spheres ideology and the fact that the university had long been a male-only space, the question of how to integrate men and women on campus was a difficult one for proponents of higher education for women. This was especially true for

²⁰ Gareth Stedman Jones, *Outcast London: A Study of the Relationship between the Classes in Victorian Society*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971); Nigel Thrift and Peter Williams, eds. *Class and Space: the Making of Urban Society* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1987)

²¹ Carolyn Strange, *Toronto's Girl Problem: The Perils and Pleasures of the City, 1880-1930* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995). Mariana Valverde's book *The Age of Light, Soap, and Water: Moral Reform in English Canada, 1885-1925* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart Inc., 1991) demonstrates how various reform organizations sought to combat the immorality of the city and the opportunities for middle class women within these movements.

²² Jane Lewis, *Women in England, 1870-1950: Sexual Divisions and Social Change* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984); Martha Vicinus, ed., *A Widening Sphere: Changing Roles of Women* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1977); Martha Vicinus, *Independent Women: Work and Community for Single Women, 1850-1920* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985); Elizabeth Graham, "Schoolmarm and Early Teaching in Ontario," in *Women at Work Ontario 1850-1930*, 165-210, eds. Janice Acton, Penny Goldsmith and Bonnie Shepard (Toronto: Canadian Women's Educational Press, 1974).

women who attended university, as they were understood to be the middle class white women who were most suited to uphold the separate spheres ideal. Middle class women had been permitted into the masculine city centres for leisure or to shop for their families because these activities were done to fulfill their feminine role of women in creating a happy home. While opponents of higher education for women initially focused on women's supposed intellectual inferiority, the issue of how men and women could possibly coexist on a university campus supplanted the question of intellectual fitness. Throughout the second half of the nineteenth century, women's colleges were considered the ideal way to educate young women. Separate colleges allowed universities to adapt curriculum to the needs of their female students and provided appropriate separation between men and women on campus. Women did not become "mannish" through overexposure to academic competition with male peers and men were able to retain their masculinity and not become distracted by female students.²³

Yet only the wealthiest institutions were able to maintain this separation between men and women on campus. Public sentiment and financial pressures forced non-elite schools to open their doors to female students.²⁴ In Canada, McGill was the only institution that was able to adopt a separate women's college into the twentieth century. A \$50,000 donation from the railroad tycoon Donald Smith created the Royal Victoria

²³ For a discussion of the design and purpose of women's colleges in the United States, see Helen Lefkowitz Horowitz, *Alma Mater: Design and Experience in the Women's Colleges from their Nineteenth Century Beginnings to the 1930s* (New York: Knopf, 1984). For a discussion of the challenges of coeducation see Rosalind Rosenberg, *Beyond Separate Spheres: The Intellectual Origins of Modern Feminism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982).

²⁴ Paula LaPierre discusses the debates over coeducation and the early reasons for coeducation in Chapters 1 and 2 of her dissertation, "The First Generation: The Experience of Women University Students in Central Canada," PhD diss, The University of Toronto, 1993.

College, which held women's classes beginning in 1884.²⁵ While Canada's other institutions were forced to accept female students and to open small spaces to accommodate them, universities remained male territory where women were only reluctantly permitted.

While many historians have found the separate spheres framework useful to discuss the position of nineteenth century women, the utility of the separate spheres as a framework has not remained unchallenged.²⁶ Lawrence Klein argued that the separate spheres should be interpreted as an analytical term first and foremost, and not the only way individuals experienced and organized daily life.²⁷ Doreen Massey maintained that there were more complex categories in the Victorian ideology than man and woman, for example, the difference between the categories of "woman," "girl," and "lady," and those divisions should be interrogated.²⁸ While these critiques are important rejoinders to focus on the lived experiences of individuals, the different expectations and spaces for men and women are critical to understanding women's lives on campus.

The most useful interpretation of the separate spheres ideology is one that recognizes it was in constant flux and required renegotiation on ideological and physical grounds. In her discussion of The Chautauqua Lake Assembly in New York during the

²⁵ LaPierre, "The First Generation: The Experience of Women University Students in Central Canada," 92-93.

²⁶ Amanda Vickery, "From Golden Age to Separate Spheres: A Review of the Categories and Chronology of the English Women's History," *Historical Journal* Vol. 36 No. 2 (1993), 383-414; Eleanor Gordon and Gwyneth Nair, *Public Lives: Women, Family and Society in Victorian Britain* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003).

²⁷ Lawrence E. Klein, "Gender and the Public/Private Distinction in the Eighteenth Century: Some Questions about the Evidence and Analytic Procedure," *Eighteenth Century Studies* 29 No. 1 (1995), 97-109.

²⁸ Doreen Massey, "Masculinity, Dualisms and High Technology," in Nancy Duncan ed. *Body Space: Destabilizing Geographies of Gender and Sexuality* (London and New York: Routledge, 1996).

Victorian era, Jeanne Kilde argued that while the ideology of separate spheres provide a useful theoretical view of women's public interactions, the physical separate spheres should not be viewed as "fixed constructs."²⁹ Instead, Kilde proposed

a shift in perspective away from "gendered space" toward "the gendering of space," which would foreground the *processes* that determine how spaces become identified with multiple (not simply binary) gender categories and also, more important, toward "gendering in space," which would focus on how spaces help define, maintain, and sometimes even subvert gender categories.³⁰

Kilde's approach is particularly useful in this discussion of women on university campuses. As scholars, they were made to feel that they were trespassing on masculine territory. While they were permitted a degree of freedom within the walls of the feminine areas on campus, outside of these spaces their behaviour was policed more strictly on campus than on city streets. When female students attended dances, skated with their male classmates, or behaved in other traditionally feminine ways, the expectations for their behaviour changed. The gendered environment of the university campus was more accommodating for women fulfilling traditionally feminine roles. Conversely, as students, women were made acutely aware that they were interlopers on male space. Well into the twentieth century, women were welcomed on campus as partners to male students. Their full participation as academic peers or competitors to men was strongly resisted well into the twentieth century.

Female students were expected to follow confusing and often conflicting roles while attending academic functions on campus. Lorraine Shortt's experience during her first month at Queen's demonstrates just how arbitrary the rules were. On 23 October

²⁹ Jeanne Kilde, "The 'Predominance of the Feminine' at Chautauqua: Rethinking the Gender-Space Relationship in Victorian America," *Signs* Vol. 24, no. 2 (1999), 454.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 454.

1915, Shortt attended a student government meeting with her cousin, Gwen Carter, and a male acquaintance, Mr. Peterson. They were the first to arrive at the auditorium and were unsure of where to sit, so they chose seats on the ground floor. While Shortt became nervous when a group of women arrived and sat up in the gallery, several women followed Shortt and Carter's example and sat with them on one side of the auditorium. Shortt watched with horror as more people entered:

[A]t this point a lot of boys came in & sat on the other side and we began to get nervous again but Mr. Peterson sat tight through the meeting, the only man on that side of the hall. My it was dreadful. We thought surely we would get hauled up before the Levana Court for it but we didn't. Mr. P. came home with us afterwards and apologized deeply.³¹

Shortt, Carter and Peterson did not know that men and women were not permitted to sit together during university functions. In fact, it seems their decision to sit on the floor rather than in the gallery was an error that other female first-year students compounded, since unwritten rules dictated that at meetings of the Alma Mater Society (A.M.S.), women occupied the gallery and men the floor. While Shortt was terribly embarrassed, she was also concerned about the response from her female peers. Levana represented all Queen's women at the university and was responsible for policing the behaviour of female students on and off campus. Shortt worried her breach of etiquette was so serious that she could face sanctions from her female classmates.

Shortt's problems continued as she went to her first classes the following week. When she encountered an acquaintance between classes she was unsure of how to act. Luckily she guessed correctly and "shut off a smile in the making" and pretended not to know her male friend while within the Queen's building, which she later discovered was

³¹ Diary of Lorraine Shortt, 25 October 1915. WA10: File 1873, Elizabeth Smith Shortt fonds WA10, University of Waterloo Archives, Waterloo, Ontario.

the correct etiquette.³² However, her biggest blunder occurred on Sunday, 31 October. She and Carter decided to go to the church service offered at Convocation Hall. Shortt recounted the event in her journal:

I suggested as we felt kind of shy about going that we go in the gallery. Gwen readily assented so into the gallery we went. We modestly took a back seat & then began to look around us. So far there were only a few boys in the front seats of the gallery but down stairs it was pretty well filled. In a few minutes about sixty boys came into the gallery and seated themselves & not another girl – then worse & worse the choir walked in sat down [sic] on the platform facing us & then the whole bunch of professors did likewise. Then two boys came in and sat down beside us, next to me. Oh but I never wanted to be out of a place so much in my life the agony was too much for Gwen & she pulled off her chrysanthemum & stepped on it.³³

The mistake of sitting in the male-only gallery was so humiliating that Carter crushed the flower she was wearing in despair. Shortt and Gwen later learned that while women sat in the gallery for extra-curricular events like A.M.S. and debating society meetings, they were expected to sit on the main floor during religious services. The opposite rule was enforced at Victoria University, as Kathleen Cowan learned when she tried to sit on the main floor during a university church service and was informed “Not here—up stairs.”³⁴

The blunders Shortt made during her first week at Queen’s are revealing because Queen’s was very familiar to her. Her mother, Elizabeth Smith, graduated from Queen’s in the pioneering class of female medical students in 1884.³⁵ Elizabeth met Lorraine’s father Adam Shortt at Queen’s, and Adam and Elizabeth remained active members of the

³² Diary of Lorraine Shortt, 25 October 1915. UWA.

³³ Diary of Lorraine Shortt, 31 October 1915. UWA.

³⁴ Kathleen Cowan, *It’s Late, and All the Girls Have Gone: An Annesley Diary, 1907-1910* ed. Aida Farrag Graff and David Knight (Toronto: Childe Thursday, 1984), 34.

³⁵ Elizabeth Smith Shortt, *A Woman with a Purpose: The Diaries of Elizabeth Smith 1872-1884* ed. Veronica Strong-Boag, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980) xxv.

Queen's community. Adam Shortt was a former professor and a trustee who was considered as a candidate for the Principal of Queen's, and Elizabeth was a former professor and an influential member of the Queen's Alumnae Association. Lorraine's older siblings Muriel and George both attended Queen's, as did Lorraine's cousin (and Gwen's older brother), Alfred. Shortt's intimate connection with Queen's demonstrates how confusing these rules were to women at the turn of the century. If Shortt had such difficulty navigating the unwritten rules on campus, an outsider had little chance of acting appropriately.

Female students were unprepared for the arbitrary conventions on campus because they were different than the social conventions they observed in their home communities. The social rules of the wider culture, and in fact rules that applied on the city streets of university communities, were different than those observed on campus. There were strict rules about where women were permitted to sit and stand, and when and to whom they could talk. While men were mocked for attempting to speak to their female classmates, they faced no prohibitions on their physical movements on campus. Overall, this created the impression that women were trespassing on an exclusively masculine area and wrong behaviour would earn them public humiliation and could negatively affect the entire female student population. While these were not official rules in the university handbook, they were important unwritten rules that male and female students enforced.

Women were expected to file *en mass* to the front of the classroom at the beginning of class. Some professors did not like co-education and made female students feel uncomfortable and unwelcome in the classroom, reinforcing the idea that women were trespassing on masculine space. Discussing "delicate" topics related to reproduction

or sexuality that made female students feel uncomfortable and morally compromised was a common tactic. Male professors subjected female students to humiliating remarks on “unladylike” topics such as divorce, as Kathleen Cowan experienced in 1909. She recorded her embarrassment and frustration in her diary: “Dr. Bell said the most horrid thing... to Edith this morning about divorce. We were both hot.”³⁶ This comment was apparently so awful that Cowan was reluctant to write it down in her diary. Professors also used the classroom to opine on co-education. Bessie Scott initially was ambivalent about Professor Chapman at University College who denied “that he objects to ladies.”³⁷ However, she soon learned that Professor Chapman was not eager to teach female students, and when none of them appeared in class in October 1889, he informed the male students that he was happy there were no women in attendance.³⁸ Lorraine Shortt recorded a couple of interactions with a German professor she called ‘Mephisto,’ perhaps after Goethe’s Faustian devil. When ‘Mephisto’ interrogated a female student as to why she skipped class with the rest of the students, she said that she did not want to stay alone. He replied, “I suppose not with me without a chaperone.”³⁹ On a particularly cold day, Lorraine dared not to sit at the front of the class as was the usual rule for women, but instead sat at the back beside the radiator, “much against Mephisto’s wishes.”⁴⁰

³⁶ Kathleen Cowan, *It’s Late and All the Girls Have Gone*, 281.

³⁷ Diary of Bessie Mabel Scott Lewis, 30 October 1889. File 03, Box 1001. Bessie Mabel Scott Lewis fonds B1980-0033. University of Toronto Archives, Toronto, Ontario.

³⁸ Diary of Bessie Mabel Scott Lewis, 29 October 1889. UTA.

³⁹ Diary of Lorraine Shortt, 11 January 1918. UWA.

⁴⁰ Lorraine Shortt to Elizabeth Smith Shortt, 10 February 1918. UWA.

Many female students felt uncomfortable attending classes or exams without other women. All diaries and letters examined in this study recorded occasions when there were few women in class or at university events. Lorraine Shortt noted with horror an exam that left her so shaky she could “hardly walk home afterwards I was so all in.” While the exam was difficult, it was the lack of other women in the auditorium that so unnerved Shortt. She recorded that “Grant Hall was packed to overflowing with men, chiefly science and I, with one exception was the only girl. Mercy, I never felt so conspicuous in my life.”⁴¹ Most women ensured they had the comfort of other women with them when they went to campus and tried to be inconspicuous. They felt insecure and uncomfortable being alone in the male sphere.

The classroom was not the only space on campus that women had trouble navigating. As Paula LaPierre demonstrated in her study of the first generation of women to attend university, accommodations for women on campus were haphazard and often inadequate.⁴² When universities opened their doors to female students, they provided the bare necessities, usually in the form of a classroom that served the function of a coatroom, a waiting room, a study space, a lunchroom, and a meeting room. While the number of female students increased at the turn of the century, the universities were slow to provide additional infrastructure. Library space was a serious concern for female students. At Queen’s, women did not have access to the main reading room, and instead had to sign out small numbers of books at a time to take to the Levana-organized “Red Room” which women could use as a coat and reading room. Like Queen’s, The

⁴¹ Lorraine Shortt Diary, 13 September 1920. UWA.

⁴² LaPierre, “The First Generation: The Experience of Women University Students in Central Canada.”

University of Western Ontario had a ladies room that was the focus of the women's campus life, room Number 6, but it appears to have been used more socially than academically. At Trinity College, a barren room was used as a library at St. Hilda's but it had few volumes that could be used for reference. The *S. Hilda's Chronicle* repeatedly begged for book donations and was overjoyed to obtain a set of Francis Parkman's works.⁴³

When male and female students shared library space or auditoriums, male students used public shaming to enforce gender segregation. At University College, men and women used adjoining reading rooms. Male students were prohibited from speaking to female students, and if they did, men stamped their feet loudly in public disapproval. While Florence Neelands was happy to perform with her male colleagues in the university production of *Antigone*, she was very nervous about interacting with them on campus. She expressed the discomfort she felt sitting in the library numerous times, such as in April 1894 when due to the number of students in the library, she had to sit "embarrassingly near the men."⁴⁴ She was aghast when she learned that a male friend had intended to speak to her in the library, and wrote, "It would have been dreadful if he had. The men would have stamped." She was equally uncomfortable when a friend who did not attend the university joined her in the library and read while Neelands studied. She recalled that her friend "looked so pretty & stylish and all the men stared at her." Neelands was keenly aware of her physical presence on campus and how to behave properly. She saw no problem with dressing up and wearing makeup to participate in the

⁴³ "Editor's Drawer," *S. Hilda's Chronicle* Vol. 3, No. 3 (Michelmas 1903), 55.

⁴⁴ Letter from Florence Neelands to family, c. 9 April 1894. File 01, Box 01 B1987-0012. Florence Neelands fonds, University of Toronto, Toronto Ontario.

Antigone production because it was clearly a non-academic pursuit. However, studying in the library was quite different. She was uncomfortable sitting close to men and did not want to speak to any of her male friends. When her pretty friend joined her in the library, the gaze of her male peers also made her uncomfortable. Her discomfort on campus was such that she refused to play tennis on the school grounds, arguing, “I don’t think it is lady-like to play on the campus where about one hundred men are playing cricket at the same time.”⁴⁵ Neelands believed that the presence of male students made the women’s tennis courts at Annesley Hall inaccessible.

Miriam Marshall faced similar issues on the Victoria University campus 30 years later. Marshall recorded that two male friends joined her and her friend in the front row at the university’s Stunt Night in November 1917. The group was heckled for daring to sit together:

When it was announced that the Soph quartette wasn’t going to sing after all, some brilliant person at the back of the room asked where the quartette was, & some still more brilliant person answered, ‘In the front seat!’ They kept up remarks like this until I tho’t I would simply have to get up & go out!⁴⁶

When she sold tickets to the Choral Club spring concert in 1917, she wrote that she had “lots of fun getting after everybody,” even though the “boys stamp feet when I speak to Mr. Denton!”⁴⁷ This happened again on 22 February: “Mr. Albright brings Mr. Le Gros up to me in library study to see plan of seat –other boys stamp feet—I blush & look terribly embarrassed! Miss Barker has to stop them.”⁴⁸ While the two men approaching

⁴⁵ Letter from Florence Neelands to family, no date. UTA.

⁴⁶ Miriam Marshall Diary, 15 November 1917, Box 2, File 12. Miriam Sheridan and Family fonds, MG 31-K27, Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa, Ontario.

⁴⁷ Miriam Marshall Diary 31 January 1917. LAC.

⁴⁸ Miriam Marshall Diary 22 February 1917. LAC.

her in the library caused the other male students to stamp their feet in disapproval, Marshall wrote about her embarrassment rather than that of Albright or Le Gros. The male students publicly denounced any mixing in an academic environment by making noise and reinforced the idea that sexual segregation was necessary in academic settings. It also made women feel like interlopers rather than as academic peers with equal rights to the university grounds.

While female students carefully monitored their behaviour on the male-dominated space on campus, they moved more freely on city streets. Miriam Marshall was concerned when she met Miss Curlotte, a manager of Annesley Hall, while being escorted home by her male cousin. She recorded her discussion with Miss Curlotte the next morning when she identified her escort, and her relief that she decided to do so as Miss Curlotte “didn’t think it was my cousin.”⁴⁹ Marshall was worried about her reputation on campus and wanted to ensure she behaved properly with an acceptable escort. However, two weeks later she recorded an unescorted evening out with male friends, riding around Toronto until 12:30 a.m. with one of her female friends driving the car.⁵⁰ Marshall believed there was more room for social relationships with men on city streets than on the university grounds.

Lorraine Shortt also behaved differently on campus than she did on city streets. She recorded the fun she had at a party for Levana in 1917. On the way home, the female students “came home on a car which of course we filled & went around the city giving

⁴⁹ Miriam Marshall Diary, 5 October 1917. LAC.

⁵⁰ Miriam Marshall Diary, 15 October 1917. LAC.

our yells & songs, especially upon spying Professors & notorious students etc.”⁵¹ While the Levana members were perhaps emboldened by the number of women together, they would not have yelled at professors and students on campus. The streets of Kingston offered a space where it was acceptable for them to show their college spirit, whereas the range of permissible behaviour on the Queen’s campus was narrower. While often self-conscious on campus, Shortt thought nothing of canoeing and swimming along popular routes on the Rideau river and cross-dressing on her residential street in Ottawa. In 1916 she and a friend dressed in men’s clothing on a dare, walked up and down Shortt’s street, and tricked her father and maid into believing they were men.⁵² St. Hilda students were subject to strict rules of behaviour on campus, but enthusiastically ran around High Park in their annual paper chase game in which students, the ‘foxes,’ tried to catch the ‘hare’ who left paper clues behind her. Female students modified their behaviour on campus in comparison to other public spaces.

While male students often used social pressure to enforce the proper division between the sexes, some men also used it for political ends. In February 1900, male student representatives of the Queen’s student government, the Alma Mater Society (A.M.S.), used the rules for women on campus to reduce their political power. The issue, on the surface, was the rental cost of a piano housed in the Levana room. Male students argued that female students should pay more than half the rental payment as the piano’s placement in the women’s room meant that male students used it only for dances and other student events, whereas female students had daily use of it. When the A.M.S.

⁵¹ Lorraine Shortt Diary, 1 October 1917. UWA.

⁵² Lorraine Shortt Diary, 17 August 1916. UWA.

brought the issue to debate, they required female students wishing to vote on the matter to sit on the floor of the auditorium, which was contrary to the usual protocol, which had women, sit in the gallery. While the male student politicians argued that they wanted the opinion of female students, they refused to open the gallery to observe the proper sexual segregation on campus. The majority of women who embraced the gendered divisions felt that under such circumstances they could not participate in the political debate and vote on the issue.

Female students resented this tactic. An anonymous Levana member wrote a letter to the *Queen's Journal* editor lamenting that the "girls have been dragged so noticeably into the discussion" about the place of women within the A.M.S. She did not approve of female students voting in an A.M.S. student government matter on the floor of the auditorium alongside male students. The letter writer argued that, "As a matter of fact we know that the girls do not want to take their seats on the floor of the house and vote at ordinary meetings and on ordinary questions."⁵³ She maintained that the female students wished to express their political perspectives through Levana rather than risk propriety by sitting with the male students on the floor of the auditorium. In this way they could participate politically without risking decorum.

The author of the Ladies Column in the *Queen's Journal*, however, saw right through the male students' tactic. She argued that:

It is almost regrettable that the ladies are so much the slaves of custom that they will not assume their assigned place on the floor of the hall at the meeting of the Alma Mater Society on Saturday nights, but must needs occupy their old place in the gallery. Of course, the writer of the above understands that it is entirely due to the modesty of the ladies and their immense deference to the rest of the Alma Mater Society, but when this great representative body of the students of Queen's

⁵³ "Letter to the Editor," *Queen's Journal*, 17 February 1900, 151.

has so far risen above custom and has offered the girls such a kindly welcome, it seems a pity that we should still hold back and hesitate to comply with the request which the courtesy of the Alma Mater has made.⁵⁴

The Ladies Column author sarcastically needled the male students by referencing their “kindly” behaviour, when the readers of the *Queen’s Journal* knew it was anything but. As Lorraine Shortt’s experiences show, breaking the seating rules was humiliating and could result in sanctions from Levana. It was not something female students could easily do, and the male students used social pressure to reduce the turnout of female voters.

The refusal of female students to participate in the debate on the terms dictated by the A.M.S. angered male students. “JD” wrote to the *Queen’s Journal* and explained his frustrations with his female classmates. JD argued that the A.M.S. made a new effort to include their female classmates, and that if women students did not attend the meeting, “they can scarcely say that they are blameless.” In fact, JD argued, “the action of many of the women students is scarcely beyond criticism.” Despite the request of the A.M.S., female students attended the meeting in the gallery, which according to JD, was the “the first regular meeting, so far as I know, that they ever attended they deliberately broke one of the laws of the Society, the law that at regular meetings the gallery should be unoccupied.”

At the next meeting of the A.M.S., the doors were locked in order to prevent the women from sitting in the gallery. Some enterprising women found the janitor and asked him to unlock the door so they could again attend the meeting in the gallery. JD condescendingly remarked that perhaps the women did not mean to cause offense, but if they “were a little more accustomed to public procedure they *would* realize it and so

⁵⁴ “Ladies’ Column,” *Queen’s Journal*, 17 February 1900, 155.

would know how to avoid such mistakes.” JD concluded, “I do not wish, however, to urge that the women students attend all meetings of the A.M.S. I merely wish to urge that the Society has done right in making it easy for them to attend if they wish.” Ultimately he left the attendance of women “to their intuitive sense of the fitness of things.”⁵⁵

This seemingly benign debate over the piano payments turned into a discussion about the political participation of women at Queen’s and demonstrates the significance of their physical presence on campus. The A.M.S. encouraged the women to sit on the floor, allegedly in order to create a collegial atmosphere. However, they knew that doing so challenged the social rules on campus. The demand for women to sit on the floor of the building was an attempt to suppress the voting power of Queen’s women and reduce their political power within the student government. The political power of women at Queen’s was a contentious issue during this period. Some male students believed that since Levana represented female students, Queen’s women did not deserve a vote within the A.M.S. This issue was exacerbated by the fact that the female students often voted for the same slate of candidates, and so determined the outcome of the A.M.S. elections. The political power of female students at Queen’s was a problem for some male students and so they attempted to disenfranchise women by taking advantage of the rules that limited women’s mobility on campus. Male students used this technique more than once. In 1901, the Ladies Column of the *Journal* reported that

The girls, as members of the A.M.S., are as much interested in the business part of the meetings as their fellow-students, but this seems to be entirely overlooked by those downstairs. Almost all the speakers took their stand *under* the gallery, and speaking from that vantage ground, what they said was utterly unintelligible to the

⁵⁵ “Letter to the Editor,” *Queen’s Journal* 3 March 1900, 172.

majority of the lady students. The whole meeting, we might say, took place right under our feet.⁵⁶

While the writers did not accuse the speakers of deliberately ensuring that female students could not follow the debate, it was a clever way to use the physical limitations placed on university women in order to marginalize them politically, ensuring that they could not participate in the student government or even follow the debate.

Male students also targeted other men who overstepped the bounds of gender segregation on campus. The *Queen's Journal* satirized men who frequented the women's areas on campus. For example, an 1890 article remarked that, "The Freshmen have been taking walks in the direction of the Ladies' Reading Room. If they wish it the ladies will vacate the room for an hour every morning, when they may make undisturbed inspection."⁵⁷ The *Journal* implied that only freshmen were foolish enough to spend their time looking at the female students, and that upper year students had more serious matters to consider.

The Arts column in the *Queen's Journal* also mocked the sensitivity of Divinity students (the Arts students' traditional rivals) to the presence of female students. In 1900 the column noted

A visitor might notice, at certain times between classes, a very *fair* portion of the students standing in a large group in the hall opposite the ladies' cloak room. He would be inclined to ask why this *fair* portion stand there. We do not answer this—it is not our business. But we have often noticed the embarrassment of the divinities who have of necessity to pass that way. When we ourselves pass that way, we rather enjoy it, as we are used to it; but it is not so with the divinities. They blush and hesitate when they find themselves under the necessity of

⁵⁶ "Ladies Column," *Queen's Journal*, 9 March 1901, 214.

⁵⁷ "College Notes," *Queen's Journal*, 8 November 1890, 12.

elbowing their way amid beauty. We hope the *fair* portion will be merciful to them.⁵⁸

While the Arts students mocked the delicate sensibilities of the divinity students and their blushing behaviour around female students, the writer objected to female students occupying the hall. He implied that female students should remain in the women's cloakroom between classes rather than occupy the hall. While their presence in the hallway was mysterious to the writer, he at least found pleasure in their appearance. Female students were not welcome on campus as academic peers, but were acceptable as romantic pursuits.

Some female students objected to this treatment. The Ladies' Column responded to the Arts in the next edition of the *Queen's Journal* by asserting "That plaintive little yarn in the Arts column of the last issue about 'a *fair* portion of the students' frightening the divinities is very unfair, and the flattery does not smooth it over at all, at all." In addition, the columnists argued "We have a right to be there if we want to, and if occasionally we do block up the thoroughfare, students not blest with enviable elbow-power may go round by the stairs." The columnists added that it was "much more distressing for the girls to squeeze through the close packed ranks... in front of the library." They sarcastically noted that after pushing their way through the men, women were "mostly physical wrecks, and utterly incapable of exercising our faculties."⁵⁹

Queen's students also confronted the harassment they received on campus. In an 1891 column entitled "What the Ladies Would Like to Know," female students aired grievances that would continue to irritate Queen's students well past 1920. They asked

⁵⁸ "Arts" *Queen's Journal*, 7 December 1900, 92.

⁵⁹ "Ladies," *Queen's Journal*, 21 December 1900, 118-119.

first “Why they [women] are never asked to air their Latin in class,” referring to preferential treatment professors gave their male classmates. Secondly they demanded “Why it should be necessary to enter the English class-room [sic] ten minutes early,” as the custom was that women should file into class before their male classmates. They then demanded to know why “when unattended they choose to enter Convocation Hall they should be yelled at,--and even more yelled at if attended.” Lastly, they simply asked “Why, oh why! That abominable whistling! Surely the line might be drawn at that.”⁶⁰ Despite the protest, male students continued to reinforce the notion that the campus belonged to them and women were unwelcome interlopers. Female students learned that criticizing the treatment they received from male professors and students yielded few results. Even when they behaved properly, the rules could change without notice to suit male purposes.

The rules that female students followed on campus made it difficult for them to befriend male students. Lorraine Shortt found herself without an escort to a dance in her first months at Queen’s in 1915 despite the fact that her family had deep social roots in Kingston. When an acquaintance apologized for asking someone else, he told her he thought since she “knew so many girls in K [Kingston], I must also know boys.”⁶¹ This acquaintance either did not know very much about the university or used an excuse because it was rare for women in their first years at university to know their male classmates. Edith Chown recorded meeting a freshman who complained about the rumour that, “girls would not speak to you when you met them on the street unless you

⁶⁰ “What the Ladies Would Like to Know,” *Queen’s Journal*, 28 November 1891, 31

⁶¹ Lorraine Shortt to Elizabeth Smith Shortt, 28 November 1915.

were introduced to them four or five times.”⁶² Proper etiquette dictated that men and women must be introduced in a social setting before they could interact, even if they shared classrooms for years.

When male and female students met in a social environment that upheld traditional gender roles, there was greater lenience than when they interacted as academic peers. While Lorraine Shortt agonized over accidentally sitting next to a male student on the floor in Convocation Hall during a class meeting, she attended numerous dances in Convocation hall where she happily danced with male students on the same floor and even sat with them to eat food during the supper portion of the dances. Miriam Marshall was careful not to speak to her male friends in the corridors between classes, but she made their acquaintance on the skating rink at Victoria University, held their arms, and allowed them the liberty of rubbing her frozen ears on especially cold nights.⁶³ The Arts column in the *Queen's Journal* made it clear to female students that they were welcome on campus as social partners for male students. The space for women on campus expanded ever so slightly when they were social, rather than academic actors, and consequently not intruding on masculine space.

Due to the sexual segregation and discomfort they faced on campus, women's spaces were very important to female students. After a fire destroyed the women's room at University College in 1889, Bessie Scott recorded glumly in her diary “it does seem if we had lost a dear friend.” She went to view the damage, only to find that “the place was crowded, many of the girls taking a mournful look at the ruins.” They missed the “dear

⁶² Edith Chown to Lorne Pierce, 15 November 1912. Box 1, File 5, Edith Chown Pierce fonds, 2001.2. Queen's University Archives, Kingston, Ontario.

⁶³ Miriam Marshall Diary 10 February 1917. LAC.

little room where we have spent so many happy hours” of female solidarity.⁶⁴ At Queen’s, the Levana room, originally tucked away in the attic of the Old Arts building, was important since there were no residences for women until 1926. Women’s rooms were the only non-residential spaces on campus that were truly feminine and they served as the social centre for women on campuses without residences. Female students spent a significant amount of time studying, relaxing, and chatting with friends in the women’s rooms. It was one of the few spaces on campus where they were truly comfortable, and their memories of these rooms indicate how important they were.

At Victoria University, women students were given a “ladies parlour” in the university building when they first moved to Toronto from Cobourg in 1892. Annesley Hall, the women’s residence at Victoria, became the physical and emotional centre for women students once it opened in 1903.⁶⁵ The founding of St. Hilda’s in 1888 included a women’s residence in rented homes that were repurposed until St. Hilda’s first permanent residence was built in 1899. Beginning in 1885, University College provided a ladies’ cloakroom, and then opened the women’s residence Queen’s Hall after 1905. Due to the number of students living off-campus in Toronto, the University of Toronto opened a Women’s Union in 1916. The importance of the women’s residences in Toronto is easily demonstrated by fact that university women referred to themselves as St. Hildians, not as Trinity College students. Margaret Addison began her tenure as the Dean of Annesley Hall, but was soon named the Dean of Women at Victoria, a natural outgrowth of her

⁶⁴ Bessie Mabel Scott Lewis Diary, 15 February 1890. UTA.

⁶⁵ LaPierre, “The First Generation: The Experience of Women University Students in Central Canada,” 132-3, 220.

position since Annesley was the physical and emotional centre of women's lives at Victoria.⁶⁶

At Western and Queen's, campuses without official women's residences, women's rooms became especially prominent in the experiences of female students. Students fondly recalled Western's room "No. 6," a cloakroom, a meeting area, and a place to prepare and eat lunch. Western's female students were given a new room in 1909 that remained a key feature of university life since residences for women were not opened until after the Second World War. At Queen's, the Levana room was given to female students in 1890, where they first formed the organization that represented Queen's women. The Levana room went through several different locations, often out of the way on a top floor, and was eventually sacrificed to the Queen's hospital during the First World War.⁶⁷

While there were no official residences at Queen's until 1923, the alumnae realized their importance and furnished and operated three with the help of faculty wives and daughters. The first, a rented house on William Street, provided rooms for 10 students for the 1901-02 year.⁶⁸ This was followed by the rental of a house on Earl Street, nicknamed "The Hencoop" in 1902 and the Avonmore in 1917.⁶⁹ While the residences

⁶⁶ King, "The Experience of the Second Generation of Women Students at Ontario Universities, 1900-1930," 124-5, 163-4.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 124-5, 163-4.

⁶⁸ Annie Campbell MacGillivray, "Old Residences," Mary MacPhail Chown, ed. *Queen's University Alumnae Association 1900-1961 and Women's Residences at Queen's*, 6. Miscellaneous Printed Material Box 8, File 4. Printed Material. Queen's University Alumnae Association fonds 3627. Queen's University Archives, Kingston, Ontario.

⁶⁹ Mary MacPhail Chown and Maud Brownlee Harkness, "Old Residences," 12 and Wilhelmina Gordon, "The Avonmore," 17, in Mary MacPhail Chown ed., *Queen's University Alumnae Association 1900-1961*.

housed only a small fraction of Queen's students, many came to eat meals and were known as "grubbers." These houses were so much the heart of women's experiences at Queen's that in the 1910s, the women's initiations were often held there. Wilhelmina Gordon, Queen's first female faculty member, recalled the preparations to make the Avonmore, the third unofficial residence, ready for its tenants:

Now, over forty years later, graduates and undergraduates of Queen's, accustomed to large and costly buildings, luxuriously furnished and decorated by professionals, may consider trivial or pathetic the necessary economic practiced in making the "Avonmore" habitable. Some members of the committee and other Alumnae cleaned the building, possibly with the help of a charwoman. Others searched the second-hand shops for beds and chairs, and – most important – for tables; the University Library, with its books crowded into the curved end of the "Old Arts Building", had scanty room for readers; students borrowed books there, but they studied them in their own rooms. Some Alumnae painted the furniture, floors, and stairs; one member of the committee is said to have bicycled to the house almost at the last moment, with a can of paint slung on her bicycle handle-bars.⁷⁰

While Lorraine Shortt wrote later in life that the Avonmore conditions "would be considered by present-day students as pre-historic," the residence played a pivotal role in her experience at Queen's.⁷¹ Upon hearing news of the Armistice in 1918, she descended upon the Avonmore with the other non-residents and they paraded downtown. She was devastated when she was informed that she lost a lottery for rooms in the Avonmore and would not live there during the 1916-1917 year. She held a personal grudge against Mrs. McNeill, Queen's Dean of Women, based in part because she blamed McNeill for losing her room at the Avonmore.

⁷⁰ Wilhelmina Gordon, "The Avonmore," in Mary MacPhail Chown, ed. *Queen's University Alumnae Association 1900-1961*, 16. QUA.

⁷¹ Lorraine Shortt, "The Avonmore," Mary MacPhail Chown, ed. *Queen's University Alumnae Association 1900-1961*, 19. QUA.

The Queen's University Alumnae Association (QUAA) recognized the importance of a residence for female students and began a fundraising campaign that was long and frustrating. They received little support from the Queen's Senate which preferred to build a new library and, after the First World War, a male Student Union building. The QUAA was forced to suspend the fundraising campaign with the outbreak of war and they were further derailed in the 1920s when inflation and increased costs resulted in their original goal being insufficient to fund a new residence. In 1923, the new Ban Righ hall was constructed, and the naming decision recognized the group effort required to build it:

We did not want to call it after one person, though there were several who merited such an honour, because almost every Alumnae had had a finger in the pie. Inevitably a Gaelic name was suggested and Dr. Malcolm MacGillivray was asked to help. He thought that "Queen's" translated into Gaelic would be most appropriate so Ban Righ Hall it was, and is.⁷²

While many individuals supported the QUAA's fundraising campaign to ensure the propriety and supervision of Queen's female students, the involvement of the alumnae over a decade shows the importance they placed on female spaces on the university campus. The QUAA wanted an emotional centre for women on campus that truly belonged to and welcomed women.

Despite their attachment to the residences, women who moved out of their parents' homes into university housing were often surprised by the severity of the rules and regulations they had to uphold. An editorial "To the Freshies" in the *S. Hilda's Chronicle* proclaimed that

⁷² Annie Campbell MacGillivray, "Old Residences," Mary MacPhail Chown, ed. *Queen's University Alumnae Association 1900-1961*, 9. QUA.

To the girl... who has come from a small town where she has lived at home and enjoyed all the liberties of home life, the College rules and training will, in all probability, seem unnecessarily strict and confining. She, too, will have difficulty in adapting herself to her surroundings. She must realize that although she is now a College woman there are certain traditions connected with that College life which she must, through very loyalty, obey.⁷³

Women who were accustomed to freedom at home or in private boarding homes were informed that college life would be different. They faced strict regulations in the residences and on campus. While each residence had different rules, they all depended on the female heads of the house or Deans to grant permission for students to attend social events and to approve a chaperone. St. Hilda's was the most strict residence, requiring students to seek permission from the Dean of Women to leave after dinner or for any other evening event. They were required to seek the Dean's approval for chaperones for all dances, visits to restaurants, hotels and tearooms, and any social visits to Trinity College. Students were subject to special regulations on Sunday, requiring them to attend Sunday church service and being forbidden to dine at restaurants, tearooms, or at Trinity College, where the male students lived. First year students were permitted to leave St. Hilda's only two nights per week while upper year students were permitted three evening leaves.⁷⁴

Queen's University students faced a series of unwritten rules because of the lack of a residence for women before 1923. The Queen's Dean of Women was involved in policing female student behaviour on and off campus. The first Dean of Women, Caroline McNeill, took it upon herself to inspect all lodging houses that women occupied

⁷³ "To the Freshies," *S. Hilda's Chronicle*, Vol. 6 No. 1 (Christmas 1908), 5.

⁷⁴ "House Regulations," n.d., Box 1 File 1, St. Hilda's College Early Documents, Office of the Dean of St. Hilda's College, 1985-0271. Trinity College Archives, Toronto Ontario.

in Kingston to ensure that they had “proper sanitary conditions and suitable accommodation.” She argued this was necessary to place the boarding house on a list of accommodations recommended to Queen’s students, but in fact she began her inspections before any such list was published. During the process of her inspections in 1911, McNeill found the majority of the boarding homes were “comfortable rooms in pleasant houses.” However, there were rooms and behaviour that she deemed unacceptable, including “rooms in humble homes, in which conditions were bad.” McNeill did not have sympathy for the financial pressures that may have motivated women to choose cheap boarding homes, but instead determined that these rooms were chosen “from the desire to economize [rather] than from necessity.” Women were not to be trusted to make their own decisions about what they could afford and how to spend their money, as McNeill complained that, “I have been unable in some instances to persuade girls to seek the best places open to them, because the prices were higher than they wished to pay.”⁷⁵ It is significant to note that McNeill believed she had a right and responsibility to report on women’s off-campus housing to the Senate and Principal, and that these private housing arrangements, possibly endorsed by the students’ parents, were a matter of public debate for university administrators.

Men’s private living arrangements were not considered an issue except when McNeill brought up the problem of boarding homes that allowed both male and female boarders. She encouraged the Levana council to pass a motion in 1912 forbidding Queen’s women from a mixed boarding home. The motion was not put forward at the Alma Mater Society, which represented all students, but only in Levana, making it clear

⁷⁵ Caroline McNeill, “Report of the Adviser of Women,” *Queen’s University Annual Report 1911-1912* (Kingston: Queen’s University 1912), 31.

that the issue of mixed boarding homes reflected poorly on Queen's female students but not Queen's male students, and that the women were responsible for maintaining gender propriety. It is also significant that this was a new rule. In 1882 when Elizabeth Smith met Adam Shortt in a mixed boarding home which was acceptable even to Elizabeth Smith's very strict mother. However by 1915 when Elizabeth and Adam's daughter attended Queen's, mixed boarding homes were prohibited. Female Queen's students did not require supervision from a Dean of Women due to their small number during the first generation, but the larger number of female students during the second generation required institutional changes and additional supervision.

Deans of Women were installed to oversee and guide the behaviour of female students on campus. McNeill argued that women did not require a firm disciplinarian. In her initial report to the Principal and Senate in 1911, she explained that a Dean of Women's position would not require "oversight of the conduct of the students or for any purpose of discipline, as there is no suggestion of any existing need in these respects." Instead, the position was to "be one of influence rather than of authority, in which, by sympathy and counsel, not by command, she might aid the women students in the direction of their studies and the development of their character, thus enabling them the more fully to avail themselves of all the opportunities offered by the University."⁷⁶ While McNeill argued that her role was to guide proper behaviour, she and other Deans of Women certainly punished transgressors and acted as gatekeepers to control female students' behaviour, whether by forbidding women from attending unsuitable social

⁷⁶ Caroline McNeill, "Report of the Advisor of Women," *Queen's University Annual Report 1910-1911* (Kingston: Queen's University, 1911), 28-9.

events, or enacting additional rules to discourage inappropriate behaviour such as mixed boarding houses.

Women also monitored their peers on university campuses. The institutions discussed in this study all adopted some sort of self-government over female students under the auspices of the Deans of Women. For most schools this took place within the residences. At St. Hilda's, self-government was initiated in 1903. An editorial in the *S. Hilda's Chronicle* described the organizational structure of an Executive Council composed of six members elected by the female students, which was "held responsible by the Lady Principal for the general tone of the College."⁷⁷ The committee met once per week to determine whether any rules were broken and to fine the guilty parties for noise violations in residence. However, the realm of their responsibilities was largely keeping order during quiet hours for study and to ensure that bed times were enforced

At Annesley Hall, Dean Addison believed that self-government was a tool to inculcate responsibility and self-regulation in her students, and help them create a strong and well-mannered community. In her monthly report to the Committee of Management of Annesley Hall in January 1907, Addison argued that the students approved of the new self-government rules and had met her with fewer objections than she anticipated. She reported, "The friction now is only such as is inevitable in so large a company of people living together, and although there are many improvements to be desired in both manners and morals," overall she was happy with the response to self-government.⁷⁸ However, she

⁷⁷ "Self Government," *S. Hilda's Chronicle*, Vol. 3, No. 2 (1903), 26. TUA.

⁷⁸ Margaret Addison, "Dean of Annesley Hall's Report to Committee of Management January 1907." Box 2 File 4. Records Relating to Women at Victoria University Collection, Series 2: Records of University Councils and Committees. 1990.064. Victoria University Archives, Victoria University, Toronto, Ontario.

cautioned in the February 1907 report that the “discipline has been good but it is kept so only by eternal vigilance.”⁷⁹ Like McNeill of Queen’s, Addison believed in the importance of persuasion and moral guidance rather than overt discipline. She argued that “the confidence existing between the Dean and the students has made it possible for the former to guide the students in their own self-discipline, though they may not have been aware of it.”⁸⁰ Addison held weekly Sunday chats with the students to discuss their moral and religious self-improvement and how those standards could be applied to life in Annesley Hall. In her monthly reports to the Committee of Management, Addison commented on the discipline, morals and general behaviour of the students. This followed the assertion that residences were to be a “home-like” influence, and she was the head of the family. Thus petty grievances were a concern to Addison because they interrupted the pleasant atmosphere. Addison happily reported on the manners of the students in January 1908: “It is with much pleasure that I can still record a steady progress in self-control, thoughtfulness, and good order among our young women.”⁸¹ Addison supported her students’ intellectual pursuits in the public sphere but she also believed it was important to create a pleasant, harmonious, and feminine private sphere.

While self-government by the Annesley Hall Student Government appeared to give the residents a degree of control, the rules they were able to alter were small issues such as the length of quiet hours and telephone privileges. According to the agreement

⁷⁹ Margaret Addison, “Dean of Annesley Hall’s Report to Committee of Management 13 February 1907.” VUA.

⁸⁰ Margaret Addison, “Report of Annesley Hall 1906-1907 To the Committee of Management.” VUA.

⁸¹ Margaret Addison, “, “Dean of Annesley Hall’s Report to Committee of Management January 1908.” VUA.

signed between the students and the Victoria administrators in 1906, the Dean of Women regulated:

All formal entertainments in the Residence whether public or private and invitations to such entertainments.

All matters pertaining to the use of Residence property and equipment, the grounds, gymnasium, library and apparatus of every kind.

All matters pertaining to the management of the household.⁸²

This agreement allowed Addison a significant degree of control, which she sought to employ using her powers of example and suggestion. Perhaps it was through her guidance that the Annesley Hall Student Government (AHSB) posted “General Hints” for the incoming students. The suggestions included comportment tips such as “Don’t play with the table service” and “Don’t lounge at the table,” but also included notices to “Wear hats and gloves on frequented streets,” and a prohibition against walking or talking “boisterously in the halls or elsewhere.”⁸³ Self-government gave students a small degree of control over the Annesley Hall rules, but also recruited female students to police their peers’ behaviour on and off campus in yet another layer of control over the female students.

The private records of Victoria University students make it clear that many students disobeyed rules they believed were unfair. Two Annesley Hall residents, Kathleen Cowan and Miriam Marshall, recorded their efforts to subvert the rules imposed upon them by the Annesley Hall student government and the Dean of Women. Cowan frequently challenged Addison’s decisions not to allow her late leaves or permission to

⁸² “Agreement Between the Dean of Annesley Hall and the Students of Annesley Hall and its Annex Concerning Student Government,” 1906. Box 3, File 1. Dean of Women fonds Series 2: Subject/Correspondence files 90.141V. Victoria University Archives, Toronto, Ontario.

⁸³ Annesley Hall Student Government Association, “Read! Heed!” 1914, Box 3, File 3. Dean of Women fonds Series 2: Subject/Correspondence files 90.141V. VUA.

attend social events. During her first year, Cowan came home late from a party after the Dean denied her permission to stay late. Cowan wrote that she missed the late car (whether purposefully or not is impossible to know) and upon coming home she recorded that “when the big door closed... the dean lit in.” That night she “bawled like everything,” but the next morning she enjoyed the notoriety of being a rule-breaking first year student. She wrote she felt “like quite a heroine today,” as “more of the freshies were in trouble last night and I am one of the warrior few. It is quite exciting recounting my adventures.”⁸⁴

Miriam Marshall and her friends disobeyed the Annesley Hall rules, usually by recording incorrect times of arriving home in the sign-in book. Marshall recounted a night when her friends Jan and Helen missed the last car coming home from a dance and did not arrive until 1:10 am, well past their curfew. Rather than ringing the doorbell, they climbed through a friend’s window, and signed in as arriving at 12:29, just before their curfew.⁸⁵ Marshall frequently misrepresented the time she arrived back to Annesley Hall in the record book. Marshall also attended restaurants with men twice when she did not have permission to do so, which was a more significant rule violation. Cowan and Marshall’s actions demonstrate that some students rebelled against the rules for women’s behaviour on campus.

Despite the actions of some rule-breakers like Cowan and Marshall, most students recognized the precarious position of female students and policed their own behaviour on campus. In its annual message to the Freshies, the *S. Hilda’s Chronicle* repeatedly

⁸⁴ Kathleen Cowan, *It’s Late and All the Girls Have Gone*, 63-4.

⁸⁵ Miriam Marshall Diary, 26 January 1917. LAC.

exhorted that the new students behave carefully because individual transgressions could jeopardize the reputation of the female students as a group. In 1902, the *Chronicle* argued,

We can never realize too clearly that the reputation of a college in the outside world depends almost wholly upon the members individually. Fairly or not, outsiders will inevitably judge a college by those members of it who are known to them.⁸⁶

This message was repeated nearly every year in the Christmas edition of the *Chronicle*. St. Hildians were not the only students to worry about their legacy. In a 1917 *Queen's Journal* article on the history of the Levana Council, the author described the reason for the formation of Levana in 1890, "The women students felt that they were still, as it were, on trial, and they were very jealous not only for their own reputation and standing, but for that of the generations of Queen's women to follow them."⁸⁷

Female students who attended university between 1890 and 1920 were aware that their presence on campus remained controversial. While they did not face the same barriers as the pioneers, the institutions did not welcome them. This chapter demonstrates that only limited spaces were carved out for women on the masculine space of university campuses, and when women stepped out of their cloakrooms they faced strict and conflicting rules of how to behave. Professors and male students begrudgingly accepted women's intellectual presence in classrooms but women's bodies remained a significant concern. Female students faced confusing rules dictating where they were permitted to stand and sit on campus—rules that female and male students, along with professors and administrators, upheld. By shaming women who interacted with male students as

⁸⁶ "College Ideals," *S. Hilda's Chronicle* Vol. 2, No. 2, (1902), 19.

⁸⁷ "Levana History," *Queen's Journal* 12 January 1917, 1.

academic peers, male students reminded female students that they were intruding on a male space. As a result, students had strong emotional connections to the female-only spaces of women's cloakrooms and residences.

Most significantly, this chapter demonstrates that the women's functions on campus determined the rules they were required to follow. When women attended classes and the library as students they faced rules that were often more restrictive than those they observed on city streets. Yet when women attended dances as romantic partners of male students, the rules changed and it was acceptable for women to interact with men. The gendered space of the university campus was more accommodating for women fulfilling traditionally feminine roles as sexual partners to men. As fellow students and academic competitors to men, women were continually reminded that they were trespassing on male space and their presence was strongly resisted. As a result, women were denied full and equal participation in university life and faced opposition on campus well into the twentieth century.

5. “Full of Girls All Day Long”: The Homosocial World

“I owe you a grudge, Queen Anne. I really ought to hate you and instead I love you madly, and I’m miserable if I don’t see you every day. You’re different from any girl I ever knew before. When you look at me in a certain way I feel what an insignificant, frivolous little beast I am, and I long to be better and wiser and stronger.” These words were uttered to the titular character of *Anne of the Island*, not by one of her beaux but instead by her female friend Philippa Gordon. Anne and Philippa met at Redmond College and quickly formed a close friendship. Philippa openly adored her “Queen Anne” and showered her with compliments such as, “I love the way your hair grows on your forehead, Anne. And that one wee curl, always looking as if it were going to drop, but never dropping, is delicious.” Philippa frequently sought reassurance that her affection for Anne was returned, asking, “Anne, please tell me over again that you like me a little bit. I yearn to hear it.” When Anne and two other friends agree to rent a house, Philippa begged them to let her join them, stating that she would even sleep in the doghouse. While Anne’s courtship with Gilbert Blythe played a prominent role in the plot arc of *Anne of the Island* and in the *Anne* series as a whole, Anne’s relationships with her female friends were far more important to her while she attended university. She lived with, studied with, socialized with them, and relied on their emotional support. While moving into their rental home, the narrator remarked: “How those girls enjoyed putting their nest in order! As Phil said, it was almost as good as getting married. You had the fun of homemaking without the bother of a husband.”¹ By the end of *Anne of the Island*, two of the four roommates were engaged, but their future husbands barely featured in the

¹ L.M. Montgomery, *Anne of the Island* (1915 reprint; Toronto: McClelland and Stewart 1985), 38, 119, 137.

book. Instead, *Anne of the Island* clearly demonstrated that the close friendships between the female students were their most important relationships during this stage of life.

Miriam of Queen's presented a much different interpretation of women's lives at university. Most of the women in Miriam's life were rivals for male attention or barriers to her dream of attending Queen's University. Miriam's sister and mother opposed her enrollment, as her sister maintained, "College will spoil Miriam for anything sensible." The second most prominent female character in the novel, Cora, was a romantic rival and opposite to Miriam in the eyes of Sedley Danvers, Miriam's cousin and crush. When Sedley first met Cora Hotchkiss, it was after he saw Miriam in virginal white and "her eyes starlike, her cheeks warm with excitement." However, the sexually aggressive Cora was described much differently:

Dreaming of Miriam, he had wandered right into Cora's mesh. Deep rose gown, black hair, creamy throat—Cora made a fascinating picture. Many of the older and more serious college girls had looked askance at her costume in the dressing-room, as she slipped out of her evening cloak. It had seemed out of place at a reception given by the Y.M. and Y.W.C.A.

Miriam was an innocent young woman devoted to her education and to creating a meaningful life. Cora, conversely, was a society woman devoted to pleasure and social success. Cora mocked Miriam and her intellectual aspirations even after her marriage to Sedley.

Miriam's encouragement to attend university and work hard were largely from her male cousin Sedley. She received some small support from her aunt, Sedley's mother, and had a minor friendship with a Jewish student named Rachel. While Miriam told a dying Rachel "we all love you so," their relationship did not seem deeper than walking to

and from class.² In fact, Miriam interacted with female students in only a handful of scenes in *Miriam of Queen's*.

The historiography of the second generation of female students largely supports the vision of *Miriam of Queen's*, which argues that women were less concerned with deep female friendships than dating and meeting future husbands. Historians such as Martha Vicinus and Carroll Smith-Rosenberg argued that close female friendships were a marker of an earlier generation of female students. They contended that the social acceptability of university education and corresponding increase in marriage rates of graduates, along with the sexologist view of lesbians as deviants who weakened marital ties, resulted in less intense female friendships.³ According to this argument, as university became more socially acceptable, women did not need to rely on each other and instead could join the general population in the pursuit of dating and male attention. As a result, the intense friendships between students and the strong women's communities in universities declined by the early twentieth century.

However, the records of female students at Ontario universities between 1890 and 1920 demonstrate that their female friendships were by far the most important aspect of their lives while at university. Due to the gender segregation on campus, female students largely occupied a homosocial world. They relied on each other for intellectual stimulation and support, and were physically and emotionally intimate. Many rituals of university life revolved around the relationships among female classmates so they bonded

² Lillian Vaux MacKinnon, *Miriam of Queen's* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1921), 16, 69, 70, 148.

³ See for example Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, "The New Woman as Androgyne: Social Disorder and Gender Crisis, 1870-1936," in *Disorderly Conduct: Visions of Gender in Victorian America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985) and Martha Vicinus, *Independent Women: Work and Community for Single Women, 1850-1920* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1985).

as a group and believed that poor behaviour by an individual could threaten the reputation and emotional well-being of the female student body as a whole. While their relationships were often loving and supportive, there were still significant conflicts between women. Aggressive hazing established the boundaries of acceptable behaviour in university residences and different social rituals were used to reinforce positive behaviour and minimize actions that led to conflict. Overall, women's primary relationships on campus were with each other. The types of relationships varied depending on the students, and included romantic friendships that were lesbian-like.⁴ These close relationships resulted in lifelong friendships and deep attachments to the universities that fostered them.

The historiography of women's friendships during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was shaped by Carroll Smith-Rosenberg's pivotal work, "The Female World of Love and Ritual: Relations Between Women in Nineteenth-Century America." Smith-Rosenberg's description of friendships between women explored the phenomenon of close friendships that were romantic and possibly sexual in nature. The relationships were usually formed while the women were young adolescents and continued throughout the women's lives. Smith-Rosenberg argued that the friendships arose because of the barriers between men and women in Victorian society. She wrote:

These supportive networks were institutionalized in social conventions or rituals that accompanied virtually every important event in a woman's life, from birth to death. Such female relationships were frequently supported and paralleled by severe social restrictions on intimacy between young men and women. Within

⁴ In her effort to uncover history of lesbians other than those who were persecuted or left explicit records during the Middle Ages, Judith Bennett proposed the useful category of "'lesbian-like': women whose lives might have particularly offered opportunities for same-sex love; women who resisted norms of feminine behavior based on heterosexual marriage; women who lived in circumstances that allowed them to nurture and support other women (to paraphrase Blanche Wiesen Cooke's famous formulation)." Judith M. Bennett, "Lesbian-Like' and the Social History of Lesbianisms," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* Vol. 9, No. 1/2 (Jan. – Apr. 2000), 9-10.

such a world of emotional richness and complexity, devotion to and love of other women became a plausible and socially acceptable form of human interaction.⁵

Smith-Rosenberg identified boarding schools for teenaged girls as a key place where these friendships were formed.

Martha Vicinus also produced pioneering work on the relationships between unmarried women at universities and other female institutions. In her discussion of single professional women in England, *Independent Women: Work and Community for Single Women 1850-1920*, she argued

[F]or many single women, friendship was seen as completing a life's work, as validating the decision not to marry, to have a career, to help a wider sphere than one's immediate family. As such, a special relationship was the single most important emotional tie to an institution or organization; virtually every community discussed here nourished and was nourished by the homoerotic friendships of women.⁶

While Smith-Rosenberg argued that romantic friendships provided a socially acceptable emotional outlet prior to marriage, Vicinus posited that strong female friendships provided an alternative to marriage for single professional women who were unable or unwilling to marry. However, Vicinus argued that between 1900 and 1914, the popularity of close female friendships declined and these relationships were mocked and labeled as unhealthy. Most significantly, she argued that as the second generation of students sought to create their own generational identity and rebel against the strict rules they faced at schools, "the revolt of the younger generation of college students against out-of-date regulations took the form of seeing men."⁷ These students eschewed the close female

⁵ Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, *Disorderly Conduct: Visions of Gender in Victorian America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 63.

⁶ Martha Vicinus, *Independent Women: Work and Community for Single Women*, 158.

⁷ Martha Vicinus, "'One Life to Stand Beside Me': Emotional Conflicts in First-Generation College Women in England," *Feminist Studies* Vol. 8, No. 3, (Autumn 1982), 623.

friendships of their professors in favour of heterosexual relationships. Smith-Rosenberg maintained that intense female friendships declined at the beginning of the twentieth century and “it is possible to speculate that in the twentieth century a number of cultural taboos evolved to cut short the homosocial ties of girlhood and to impel the emerging woman of thirteen or fourteen toward heterosexual relationships.”⁸ According to these early historiographical works, the 1860s to 1880s were a golden period of romantic female friendships that could supplement or supplant sexual bonds between men and women.

While Smith-Rosenberg and Vicinus’ pioneering work on female friendships provided a new lens for analysis of women’s relationships in the nineteenth century, recent scholarship on women’s friendships and same-sex relationships has provided a more complex analysis. In her study of female relationships in Victorian England, Sharon Marcus argued that female friendships underwent significant transmutations throughout the past three centuries. She argued:

In the eighteenth century, aristocratic women viewed friendship as an alternative to marriage and justified it as the cultivation of reason, equality, and taste; in the wake of Romanticism and Evangelicalism, nineteenth-century women defined friendship as the expression of emotion, affinity, personal inclination, and religious faith. In the 1880s, friendship merged with altruistic activism and became a model for bridging class differences to forge a better world. By the twentieth century, the increasing importance of school, the emergence of adolescence as a life stage, anxiety about lesbian deviance, and the popularity of developmental models that equated maturity with heterosexuality made it almost inevitable that same-sex friendship would come to be defined as antithetical to the family and the married couple.⁹

⁸ Smith-Rosenberg, *Disorderly Conduct*, 74.

⁹ Sharon Marcus, *Between Women: Friendship, Desire, and Marriage in Victorian England* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007), 28-9.

Like many recent historians, Marcus was careful to note that an anti-lesbian panic in England did not occur until the 1930s, rather than the first decade of the twentieth century as Vicinus and Smith-Rosenberg claimed. In her study of lesbianism in twentieth century England, Laura Doan explained that, in “the absence of a *common* cultural understanding of lesbianism, or a coherent and stable image of *any* formulation of ‘lesbian,’ ... the widespread belief concerning moral panic about the lesbian menace is more likely a myth produced after the fact that a product of careful historical analysis.”¹⁰ Doan argued that historians have exaggerated the influence of the sexologists who pathologized female same-sex relationships in the first decades of the twentieth century. According to Doan, there was not a widespread knowledge of or panic about lesbians in Britain until the 1928 obscenity trial of “the lesbian book” *The Well of Loneliness*. Doan acknowledged that ideas about female deviance and homosexuality certainly existed at the beginning of the twentieth century, especially in academic and medical descriptions of “inversion”, and in the 1920 and 1921 debate in the British parliament to criminalize homosexuality among women. However, Doan maintained that these were not known by the general public and that historians have overemphasized the importance of the sexologists.

Recent research on female friendships in the United States also argues that close female friendships continued into the twentieth century. Linda W. Rosenzweig’s study of twentieth century American friendships argued, “For the most part, the friendships of both young and mature women before 1920 resembled those of their predecessors. Intense, affectionate, lasting relationships continued to play central roles in many

¹⁰ Laura Doan, *Fashioning Sapphism: The Origins of a Modern English Lesbian Culture* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), xxi.

women's lives."¹¹ While friendships during this period did begin to lose the intensity of the Victorian Era as women were permitted to socialize more with men and social norms placed a greater emphasis on heterosexual relationships, homosocial bonds were still fundamental relationships for young women, especially in schools, universities and female-dominated workplaces. In his study of the response by the Toronto tabloid *Hush's* to *The Well of Loneliness* trial in 1928, Steven Maynard argued that the tabloid's characterization of lesbianism was of an elite, urbane phenomenon that existed largely in New York and London. Perhaps some couples practiced lesbianism in Toronto, but *Hush* knew of only a handful of women living together as man and wife. Maynard argued that like in England, the trial demonstrated "an early moment in the [Canadian] public apprehension of lesbianism."¹² Maynard concluded that the Canadian public had little understanding of lesbianism until the 1928 trial of *The Well of Loneliness*, and more research is needed to understand the public view of lesbianism in the early twentieth century. Cameron Duder's work *Awfully Devoted Women: Lesbian Lives in Canada, 1900-65* shares this interpretation. In post World War I Canada, the family was viewed as a stabilizing force and any deviance from the heterosexual norm was questioned. However, the "deviant" was generally assumed to be a man who preyed upon children, and so "many Canadians had little to no knowledge of lesbianism" in the early twentieth century.¹³

¹¹ Linda W. Rosenzweig, *Another Self: Middle-Class American Women and Their Friends in the Twentieth Century* (New York: New York University Press, 1999), 8.

¹² Steven Maynard, "Hell Witches in Toronto: Notes on Lesbian Visibility in Early Twentieth-Century Canada," *Left History* Vol. 9 No. 2 (Spring/Summer 2004), 195.

¹³ Cameron Duder, *Awfully Devoted Women: Lesbian Lives in Canada, 1900-65* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2010), 9.

This dissertation supports Sharon Marcus and Linda W. Rosenzweig's assertion that female friendships from 1890 to 1920 were similar to intense Victorian friendships. The women examined in this study had little fear of showering their friends with affection and did not display anxiety about the acceptability of these intense friendships. The relationships between the female students were their most important relationships while attending university and were characterized by great physical and emotional intimacy.

In a 1904 editorial instructing the first year students about how to make the most of their first year at university, a St. Hilda's student wrote

[W]hen all is told, the best part of college life is the opportunity it affords of making friends, and friendships formed then are of their nature more lasting than any others. Of course, I fell in love with our Head of college, and thought all the seniors wonderful people, but the close friendships formed with those of my own year are the most enjoyable of my life.¹⁴

The author was clear that female friendships were critical to enjoying university. In her memories of life at one of Queen's University's unofficial women's residences, Gwen Cauley Sellar noted that there "was little loneliness for the girls were literally in each other's laps."¹⁵ They provided emotional support for each other and helped puzzle out ideas of life, religion, and even sex. While living with her cousin Gwen, Lorraine Shortt recorded the many nights they stayed up late talking. Shortt almost always described her friends positively in her journal, writing an especially flattering account of her friend Marge: "My but Marge is the best friend ever. She's so sympathetic about things that only touch her through me, that really don't matter a pin head to her. I am the most

¹⁴ *S. Hilda's Chronicle* Vol. 4, No. 1 (Lent Term 1904), 20.

¹⁵ Gwen Cauley Sellar, "The Residence 1916-1920," in *Queen's University Alumnae Association 1900-1961 and Women's Residences at Queen's* ed. Mary MacPhail, (1962), 14.

fortunate girl.”¹⁶ Kathleen Cowan, who began university at 16 years old, used discussions with her friends to decide how to behave correctly and to determine her goals in life. In 1907 she recounted an evening spent in her friend’s bedroom writing that, “we had a lively discussion with regard to Methodism, card-playing and dancing, which was really very interesting although it made one feel like a dreadful sinner.” When she was unsure whether she should accept an invitation to a social event, she recorded that “It sounds so dreadful but Helen Dafoe did not seem to think it so bad.” Cowan did not hesitate to discuss important issues with her friends, and reported

Afterward we were in Muriel’s room talking re love marriage &c. We all apparently are desirous of tying the nuptial knot sometime or other. Mary wants a man, tall and dark, fiery temper, determined will, courteous, quiet marriage at parsonage, no newspaper account, Edith big wedding, good temper, Helen gentleman, good living, business man, home lover. O yes and Edith wants hers to be away a lot.¹⁷

While men and marriage were important issues for discussion, Cowan also discussed the morality of drinking alcohol, dancing, religion, and politics with her friends. In fact, her diary frequently includes entries such as, “Helen and I talked till all hours that night and go so excited over elections, men, marriage &c that I could hardly go to sleep.”¹⁸

Physical intimacy accompanied emotional intimacy. University students ate meals, attended school and social events, slept, and bathed together. Sleeping together was prevalent and presented an opportunity to engage in emotional intimacy. Many women at Annesley Hall spent nights in their friends’ beds rather than their own, even

¹⁶ Diary of Lorraine Shortt, 26 October 1916. WA10: File 1874. Elizabeth Smith Shortt fonds WA10, University of Waterloo Archives, Waterloo, Ontario.

¹⁷ Kathleen Cowan, *It’s Late, and All the Girls Have Gone: An Annesley Diary, 1907-1910* ed. Aida Farrag Graff and David Knight (Toronto: Childe Thursday, 1984), 121.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 76, 81, and 300.

when their own were right down the hall. Miriam Marshall recounted an evening when she was “in bed by 11 when Alice comes up & gets in with me, & we talk until one!”¹⁹ Cowan similarly slipped down the hall one evening and “slept with Ada and she told me all her love affairs.” When Cowan’s close friend Edith opted to sleep in the infirmary in 1908, Cowan slept in the room with her to keep her company.²⁰ Lorraine Shortt recounted an evening when after seeing a film she “went over to sleep with Ruth.”²¹ Both Cowan and Shortt took naps in their friends’ rooms while living in residence, rather than sleeping alone in their own beds mere metres away.

Since the course options were fairly limited and most women took a Bachelor of Arts degree, many women spent nearly all their time with their friends. Lorraine Shortt spent her first two years at Queen’s in constant company with her cousin Gwen, and they rarely socialized without each other. She described a typical weekend afternoon:

After tea Gwen & I went to see Mary Pickford in Little Pall with Marge & Doris Browne. I didn’t like it especially. We had a nice walk home afterwards. Gwen & I are getting to be absolute vagrants. At eight o’clock to night we were to be seen surreptitiously sitting on somebody-or-other’s front door step on Union St. Sounds suspicious, n’est-ce pas?²²

Florence Neelands spent so much time with her friend Agnes that she was questioned when she appeared alone in the library. She wrote that it “rather causes Univ. people, Professors not excepted, to wonder & question when either Agnes or I appear alone.

¹⁹ Miriam Marshall Diary, 26 January 1919. Box 2, File 12. Miriam Sheridan and Family fonds, MG 31-K27, Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa.

²⁰ Cowan, *It’s Late and All the Girls Have Gone*, 101 and 223.

²¹ Lorraine Shortt Diary 7 March 1919. UWA.

²² Lorraine Shortt Diary, 29 October 1915. UWA.

Everyone asks where is the other one?”²³ Since women felt uncomfortable without female classmates on campus, they attended lectures and campus events together. If they did not live at home, it was conceivable that they spent all their time in the physical presence of their friends. This was doubly true for especially close friends like Lorraine Shortt and Gwen Carter and Florence Neelands and Agnes.

Women living away from home relied on their friends to help care for them when they were ill. When Miriam Marshall fainted in 1918, her friends carried her back to her residence and called a doctor. She wrote “the girls all so good to me.”²⁴ When she sprained her ankle in 1919, her friends entertained her and brought her gifts. She reported that the girls were “awfully good to me & come in to see me lots—bring me all sorts of nice things—so many remarks on how cute I look!—have little pink sweater on & hair combed right back... Alice is the best little nurse that ever happened.”²⁵

When Lorraine Shortt felt symptoms of the flu in October 1918, her decision to go to the hospital to be quarantined was motivated by the fact that she could share a room with another Queen’s student. This helped lift her spirits significantly:

Doris being here I haven’t minded it much but even so I’m not exactly enthusiastic. The day nurses are very nice and I’m getting used to the night nurse. Doris and I try to keep each other going by such witty remarks as ‘Flee away little fly, we have the flu’ etc. We aren’t allowed visitors and can’t send any letters out which is certainly a nuisance.²⁶

²³ Letter from Florence Neelands to family, c. 9 April 1894. File 01, Box 01 B1987-0012. Florence Neelands fonds, University of Toronto, Toronto Ontario..

²⁴ Miriam Marshall Diary, 23 March 1918. LAC.

²⁵ Miriam Marshall Diary, 30 January 1919. LAC.

²⁶ Lorraine Shortt Diary, 9 October 1918. UWA.

In difficult emotional and physical moments, the students comforted each other. When a woman named Marie thought she may need her leg amputated, Miriam Marshall wrote that Marie's "room is full of girls all day long." When Marie left for her operation, Marshall recorded that "the atmosphere around Annesley is very depressing... Alice & I had our little cry out just after Marie left & I'm sure no one will ever know how badly we felt." When the Annesley women discovered that Marie's leg was not amputated, Marshall and the other students "all ran around like mad!"²⁷ So engaged were they in caring for each other, physically and emotionally, that Marie's friends were elated at her good news and celebrated it as their own.

The female students took pride in their friends' successes and in their positive attributes, both physical and emotional. Most diaries and letters contained many compliments about friends. Bessie Mabel Scott wrote about her admiration of her friend, nicknamed Lou, writing that she is, "a perfect queen among us, graceful, objective, sweet & beautiful."²⁸ Kathleen Cowan admitted her admiration for her friend Ruby who "made the most cute illogical replies."²⁹

Students also took pleasure in the academic successes of their friends. When Lou finally passed her first year exams, Bessie Scott wrote "Oh! How jubilant I feel, as glad as if I had done something myself- dear old girl how pleased she will be."³⁰ Kathleen Cowan wrote she was "rather tickled" when her friend Helen won an English prize

²⁷ Miriam Marshall Diary 25-27 November 1917. LAC.

²⁸ Diary of Bessie Mabel Scott Lewis, 30 October 1889. File 03, Box 1001. Bessie Mabel Scott Lewis fonds B1980-0033. University of Toronto Archives, Toronto, Ontario.

²⁹ Cowan, *It's Late and All the Girls Have Gone*, 128.

³⁰ Bessie Scott Lewis Diary, 12 January 1890. UTA.

despite the fact that Cowan and the rest “were mad and tore our hair and swore” over the exam that Helen aced.³¹ Lorraine Shortt celebrated minor achievements of her friends, including Gwen’s adeptness at the first time she played billiards: “Gwen was simply a marvel at it.”³² Shortt’s loyalty to her female classmates was most apparent when two women decided to run, for the first time, for positions in the Queen’s student government, the Alma Mater Society (A.M.S.). She showed her support for her gender in her letters home, recounting listening to the candidates’ speeches: “Both of the girls made dandy speeches, especially one. They are two of the best girls in the college and I’m sure they’ll get it.”³³ Shortt was happy to smear the men running against the women, calling them “boys, who to put it mildly, could go to the war if they tried hard enough. I never realized before that there are more than one or two slackers around this place. That is disgusting all right.”³⁴ She did not hesitate to inform her parents, including her father who was on the Queen’s Board of Trustees, that at least one of the women was “running against a slacker.”³⁵ Shortt celebrated the successes of her female classmates and was happy to denigrate the reputation of men who dared compete with them for student government positions. In their minority and embattled position on campus, women relied heavily upon each other for emotional support and homosociability.

University students also often relied on older female mentors as well as their peers. In their reminiscences of living in the unofficial Queen’s residences, nearly all the

³¹ Cowan, *It’s Late and All the Girls Have Gone*, 242.

³² Lorraine Shortt Diary 28 December 1915. UWA.

³³ Lorraine Shortt to Elizabeth Shortt, 3 December 1916. UWA.

³⁴ Lorraine Shortt Diary 24 November 1916. UWA.

³⁵ Lorraine Shortt to Elizabeth Shortt, 26 November 1916. UWA.

authors emphasized the kindness of the women in charge of the residences. Maud Brownless Harkness, who graduated in 1913, wrote

Each of us who lived at the Residence during her [Miss Mowat's] regime will have something to contribute to the legend, and each, I know, looks back with affectionate memory at some special kindness, some amusing incident, some expression of that quite unusual person.³⁶

Like many others, Harkness remembered Mowat's rules fondly. The rules dictated that women could not show their décolletage before 6:00 p.m., had to return calls when invited to a tea or dance, and wear white gloves when attending a social event. Harkness described Mowat's attitude as "a Victorian appreciation of what they used to call 'the fitness of things,'" and she concluded that while the students Mowat supervised may have been frustrated by her rules, they benefitted from her guidance.³⁷

Lorraine Shortt was especially profuse in her affection for Mrs. MacPhail, who was responsible for the Avonmore residence at Queen's. In her description of the residence, Shortt wrote

One of the reasons for the popularity of The Avonmore was the personality of the first House Mother- Mrs. D. G. MacPhail, or Mother MacPhail as every girl came to know her. She was the most wonderful persona imaginable. She had the warmest personality, the most outgoing type, with a keen sense of humour and every other good quality I can think of, including true unselfishness. "To know her was to love her". None of those who came under her sway could ever let her go again and kept in touch with her until her death. How much influence for good she was responsible for in our lives will never be known.³⁸

Shortt's sentiments were not simply due to fond memories decades after her graduation from Queen's. While she lived at Queen's, she included many tributes to "Mother

³⁶ Maud Brownless Harkness, "Old Residences," in Mary MacPhail ed. *Queen's University Alumane Association 1900-1961 and Women's Residences at Queen's* (1962), 11.

³⁷ Harkness, "Old Residences," 11. QUA.

³⁸ Lorraine Shortt, "The Avonmore," in *Queen's University Alumane Association 1900-1961 and Women's Residences at Queen's* ed. Mary MacPhail (1962), 19-20. QUA.

MacPhail” in her diaries and letters home. After spending time with Mrs. MacPhail, Shortt recorded that she “is the best all around sport & most unselfish person I’ve met in ages. She does so many unusually nice thing [sic] for the girls. Oh I couldn’t begin to praise her enough.”³⁹ Shortt sent MacPhail flowers on her birthday, and was devastated when her husband was killed during the First World War.

Kathleen Cowan found an older female mentor outside the university residence, although she did record her admiration of Mrs. Raff, Annesley Hall’s Director of Physical Education and Movement. Her cousin, also named Kathleen Cowan, was a source of emotional support, guidance, and encouragement. The elder Kathleen also helped her negotiate her relationship with her brother Harold, who was very critical of Cowan’s behaviour and appearance. For example, when Harold criticized Cowan’s hair, the elder Kathleen fixed it and soothed her hurt feelings:

[My hair] was up on top of my head with a couple of cunning little curls behind. She said Harold ought to be glad to have such a good-looking sister, when I remarked he was ashamed of me. Harold came in to see the completed effect and *approved*.⁴⁰

The elder Kathleen helped build up Cowan’s confidence, introduced her to new young men, and tried to show Harold that his sister was a social success. Kathleen went out of her way to tell Harold about Cowan’s male callers. Kathleen also invited men that she liked to teas at her house, and generally tried to smooth her social life in Toronto. For example, Cowan recorded that Kathleen “‘joked’ me about popularity and gave me some chocolates which I came home and dispersed to my friends on the [skating] rink.”⁴¹ This

³⁹ Lorraine Shortt Diary, 9 December 1917. UWA.

⁴⁰ Cowan, *It’s Late and All the Girls Have Gone*, 57-8.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 85.

relationship was very important to the insecure Cowan and gave her precious opportunities to meet men and win her brother's approval.

Older women fulfilled important emotional and social roles for university students away from home. They acted in mother-like roles of setting rules and guidelines for behaviour, especially in residence, by seeking out acceptable young men and encouraging them like Kathleen Cowan's cousin did, or by limiting their contact with the young women, as the Deans of the Queen's residences did when refusing to invite particular young men to dances at the residence. While Chapter 3 provided examples of women who resented this intrusion in their private lives, this was generally because they were not close to the older women. When their relationship was close, the young women such as Kathleen Cowan and Lorraine Shortt accepted the advice of their mentors and were grateful to have maternal guidance at university. While female peers were critical sources of companionship and emotional support for university students, older female mentors were important to women as they navigated the new rules of university life.

Upper-year students and mentors were instrumental in passing down university rituals and traditions that encouraged close relationships among the female students. They also established hierarchies and explained social norms to new students through hazing. Senior students devised elaborate plays and costumes to explain expectations for behaviour at university, and demonstrate the power of senior students over junior ones. Most universities and residences began the school year with initiations. These involved costumes and skits that mocked and instructed the freshettes, and sometimes pranks and hazing. The initiation for female students at Queen's University was organized by Levana and held in the school gymnasium or in the unofficial residences. As a sophomore in

1916, Lorraine Shortt participated in the initiation by dressing up as a devil and finding “lost souls” (the freshettes) and then punishing them for their “sins”: “one girl had to kiss the floor, another crawl like a worm, another eat a piece of bacon... they all had to push coal along the floor with their noses.” Shortt believed the skits were “the best they’ve had in years” and it was one of her most enjoyable evenings of the fall.⁴² In 1917, she presided over the initiation at the Avonmore, where she acted as a restaurant owner who served disgusting food including “strips of banana dipped in tea with a few drops of castor oil added. This was served on a cabbage leaf to make it appetizing.”⁴³ Since she did not eat the food herself, Shortt enjoyed her time immensely.

Students at Victoria University held similar initiations. The official initiation included stunts and elaborate costumes. As Miriam Marshall recorded in 1917, “We, the 20th Highland Bn, court martialled [sic] the 21st platoon of raw recruits. Many fearful charges [were] brought against them, so consequently many fearful punishments resulted.”⁴⁴ In her sophomore year, Kathleen Cowan watched as the “prisoners were brought in by the policemen in due style and tried.” Cowan’s initiation was a “baby party” where freshmen were expected to dress as young children. It seems as though most students enjoyed the initiations. Cowan recorded her experience positively: “We had a dandy time, me as a boy in tights. Gave us bread & milk, grapes, cake & candy to eat. I had lots of fun with Miss McTavish. Afterwards we had gymnasium exercises. However, when she helped organize the ceremony as a sophomore, she did report that “Mary

⁴² Lorraine Shortt Diary, 14 October 1916. UWA.

⁴³ Lorraine Shortt Diary, 11 October 1917. UWA.

⁴⁴ Miriam Marshall Diary, 28 September 1917. LAC.

Buckley acted sinful like a kid and I was afraid it would all be batty but the rest were game.”⁴⁵ Mary Buckley, at least, did not enjoy the initiation.

Hazing also occurred in the Victoria University women’s residence Annesley Hall. Miriam Marshall participated by disrupting the freshettes’ bedrooms. They made “‘apple pies’ in their beds, turn[ed] pictures to wall, put dresser drawers under bed, pile[d] books in heap, disconnect[ed] the lights & shove them up to the tops, & at the Annex only left three matches in the whole place!”⁴⁶ Kathleen Cowan awoke one morning to find her bedroom door locked, and when she attempted to escape through the window, the older women caught her and dunked her under water. She took her revenge as a sophomore, when she spent three days attacking the freshettes. When she heard a freshette boasting about eluding sophomores the night before, Kathleen wrote that this comment “riled me so that at noon we had early lunch and I crawled in through the transom and tossed her room at which she was fuming.”⁴⁷ Cowan and her co-conspirators put salt in the water jugs used by the freshettes for their class meeting, and the next day put carbon bisulphide on their pillows and quinine on their toothbrushes. At this point Addison asked Cowan and her friends to “cease hostilities.”⁴⁸ While the pranks were used to build group cohesion among the incoming class, the aggression displayed by students like Cowan was not simply “in good fun” and needed to be controlled by Addison.

In her recollection of her time at Queen’s University, Maud Brownlee Harkness argued that the initiations were “designed to show the freshettes quite clearly that their

⁴⁵ Cowan, *It’s Late and All the Girls Have Gone*, 148 and 25.

⁴⁶ Miriam Marshall Diary, 26 September 1917. LAC.

⁴⁷ Cowan, *It’s Late and All the Girls Have Gone*, 21 and 147.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 148.

place in the scheme of things was a very humble one indeed.” She argued that once the initiations were over, the freshettes were “in” and accepted to the group, she minimized the impact of hazing on the first year students. Looking back, she wrote:

I cannot see that it was undignified or cruel or any of the other epithets that have been applied to it, and it had the virtue of being over quickly—no two weeks of going about with odd hair-do’s or mis-matching stockings or placards with one’s name and rude comments. Our behaviour throughout the year was closely watched by the house council in Residence, and by the Levana Council at college; that did us no harm either.⁴⁹

Participants in the hazing argued that the purpose was to establish acceptable social norms for new students. The trial format of the initiations was used to isolate unsavory behaviour. For example, in 1921, Gladys Bennett, a Victoria University student, described the “crimes” she was tried for during her initiation:

Well, I was accused of utmost presumption [sic] in stopping an honourable Junior from playing the piano & further by ordering when & when not the students could use the ‘phone! Furthermore I committed the crime of being familiar with the Faculty, & boasting of extended travelling, all being summed up as distinctly ‘bumptious’! Wherefore I promptly underwent the ordeal of having my head chopped off (a la “Alice in Wonderland”) which meant put your head on a block & having a big streak of black paint staff, back & front,—what with the green dye from the lizard popes & this black grease, - I did look a sight!⁵⁰

The elaborate initiations served several functions at university. First, they instructed the individual women that their behaviour would be reflected back on the class (and all the female students) as a whole. The trials, which occurred independently at both Victoria University and Queen’s University, demonstrated acceptable behaviour. They discouraged women like Bennett from bragging about her family’s lifestyle, and reinforced the deference first year students were supposed to show the senior students. It

⁴⁹ Harkness, “Old Residences,” 12.

⁵⁰ Gladys Bennett to Family, 7 October 1921. Box 1, File 1. Gladys Bennett Fonds 2001.051V /TR Victoria University Archives, Victoria University, Toronto, Ontario.

was an early lesson for women who were used to being responsible only to themselves and their families for their behaviour and established a hierarchy between the freshmen and senior students.

The relationship between the freshettes and the senior students was complicated. Some newspaper reports and published recollections of university life characterized the relationship as unequal and often demeaning. Maud Brownlee Harkness recalled at the Queen's women's residence the students entered the dining room in the "proper order by seniors, juniors, sophomores and freshies."⁵¹ Gwen Cauley Sellar, a Queen's graduate, remembered the "'gracious' (there was another unkind name for it) mingling with the tolerated sophomores and less-than-the-dust freshettes" at Sunday teas in the residences by seniors and juniors.⁵²

In 1910, the *St. Hilda's Chronicle* ran a poem, the "Lament of a Freshie," that argued that the freshettes occupied a very low position on the St. Hilda's campus:

Oh, who would be a freshie,
(In other words a "worm").
And be at someone's beck and call
Which ever way she turn?

Oh, who would be a freshie,
And at each bell's loud peal
Be bound to tear up stair and hall
With message or with meal?

Oh, who would be a freshie,
And mark the tennis lawn,
And muddle up the measurements
And find the lines are wrong?

Oh, who would be a freshie,

⁵¹ Harkness, "Old Residences," 10. QUA.

⁵² Saulters, "The Residence 1916-1920," 13. QUA.

And on the seniors wait,
And slips and pencils take around
At meeting or debate.

But still a freshie may her mind,
At intervals relieve.
By thinking of the *awful* time,
She'll next year's freshies give!⁵³

According to these sources, life in university residence depended on hierarchies, and the freshettes were responsible for tedious jobs such as answering the telephone and being served last at meals. However, there was a sense of reciprocity from the older students as they adjusted to life at university. At Queen's, freshettes were appointed to sophomore students so that the sophomore could find them dance partners for the first school dance. In 1916, Lorraine Shortt attended an escort's meeting where sophomore women took their freshette's dance cards to meet with sophomore men who signed up their freshmen as partners. Shortt arrived only to discover she did not know anyone there, and consequently "wanted to crawl away somewhere & burn up." However, she persevered, and despite the fact that she had never met the freshette, she "got her quite a few numbers just the same."⁵⁴ As Gwen Cauley Sellar wrote in her recollection of life at Queen's

There was a family responsibility which was possible in a small group. With few exceptions, the girls wanted everyone to do well in their work, coaching, if necessary, and generously suggesting lines of study for examinations. Dates were important and the 'Senior-Freshette' arrangement made it practically obligatory, from a prestige point of view, to see that one's freshette had a pleasant introduction to College.⁵⁵

⁵³ "Lament of a freshie," *S. Hilda's Chronicle* Vol. 6, No. 7 (Michaelmas 1910), 11.

⁵⁴ Lorraine Shortt to Elizabeth Shortt, 26 October 1916. UWA.

⁵⁵ Sellar, "The Residence 1916-1920," 14. QUA.

The relationship at once mirrored the dynamic within men's boarding houses and the male-female relationship itself. The older students acted as chivalrous superiors to the naïve youngsters while teaching them the way of the university world. Older students acted as escorts to the younger students for women's only dances and even taught the younger women to dance. Sellar recalled that:

The Reception Room was the Common Room and there a great number of students learned to dance. There were always three or four who played the piano and, after dinner, there was at least half an hour of dancing. Once a protégé was deemed sufficiently trained, the Juniors and Seniors managed introductions at the Social Evenings at the College.⁵⁶

Dances with the senior students acting and dressing up as male students were common, such as the masquerade party in Annesley Hall that Miriam Marshall reported in 1917, where the "Srs. were all men & also a few of the Jrs & the rest were little girls."⁵⁷

Lorraine Shortt attended a dance where "half the girls went as men. Edith made the most wonderful highlander in kilts and all."⁵⁸ The senior students displayed their superior position in the university hierarchy by dressing up as men, and by showing chivalry to the unequal junior students, who attended dances as women.

Another important ritual in female friendships was hosting teas or "feeds" in residence rooms. A 1914 edition of the *S. Hilda's Chronicle* provided a somewhat satirical instruction on "College Etiquette," the majority of which discussed college teas. The article appeared in the spring, indicating that perhaps upper year students were

⁵⁶ Sellar, "The Residence 1916-1920," 14. QUA.

⁵⁷ Miriam Marshall Diary, 3 November 1917. LAC.

⁵⁸ Lorraine Shortt Diary, 25 February 1920. UWA.

displeased with the manners of the freshettes during the fall term. The article described the manners required for a college tea:

At a representative College tea no one expects her hostess to wait on her. Each guest wanders about the room and wisely chooses what she likes best to eat. No one drinks less than three cups of tea, on pain of drawing upon herself loud derision from the other guests. Every person eats until she is a little more than satisfied, and emotions from time to time exactly how she is enjoying her food. On departing, she washes her own cup and saucer, unless there be Freshies present, when such menial tasks are left to them.

The article emphasizes the informal nature of teas and feeds, and their reciprocal nature as the author suggests that hosts can tell their guests the items they lack, for “it enables one to enjoy the warm pleasure of being hospitable, when one’s exchequer is quite cold and bare, or when one is too overpowered with essays or lectures to visit a grocery store.”⁵⁹ Despite the assertion that the teas were simple to host, some were quite large affairs. The “S. Hilda’s Notes” section of the *S. Hilda’s Chronicle* reported on particularly successful or novel teas, and these occasional events included a large number of students and sometimes required additional hosts. For example, the “S. Hilda’s Notes” reported on a 1909 tea in the St. Hilda common room: “Miss Eva MacGregor made a very charming hostess on Thursday, January 21st, when she entertained about fifty guests at afternoon tea. Miss MacGregor and her mother received the guests, who, on taking their leave all declared they had had a most delightful afternoon.”⁶⁰ Hosting fifty students for a tea was no minor undertaking, and the presence of the student’s mother indicates that this was hardly an informal event. The social activities organized for students at St.

⁵⁹ “College Etiquette,” *S. Hilda’s Chronicle* Vol. 7, No. 16 (Lent 1916), 7.

⁶⁰ “S. Hilda’s Notes,” *S. Hilda’s Chronicle* Vol. 6, No. 2 (Spring 1909), 21.

Hilda's also included a skating party hosted by three women in 1904. However, these were exceptions rather than the norm.

Smaller "feeds" were also crucial elements of female bonding at university. *S.*

Hilda's Chronicle informed its readers that

Another rule with regard to food is summed up in the words, "Be generous." A girl at College will share her last much-loved delectable pickle or the biscuit which stands between her and that horrible bogy, "Hungry-to-Bed" if she happens to meet anyone who shows signs of an inward craving. At College no one piles up dainties for her own private consumption, as happens too frequently in the outside world.⁶¹

Late night parties in residence rooms were popular methods of socialization among students. However they were similarly not small affairs. Miriam Marshall described a spread she provided for her friends: "Had lovely feed- whole roasted chicken with dressing, bread & butter, pickles, chocolatts [sic], nut bread & jelly & toffee. Make awful racquet afterwards, even after gong sounds, so Lena proctors [penalizes] the whole bunch of us!"⁶² As a junior Marshall hosted a tea in her room for all the Annesley freshettes, with "loads & varieties of eats."⁶³ A popular amusement at teas and feeds was for a student to act as a fortuneteller or to use a Ouija board, undoubtedly using knowledge of the participants' lives to hint at love affairs.

Another ritual experience to encourage bonding and social cohesion was the "Trade-Last" or "T.L.," which was extremely popular, especially at the University of Toronto. It required one woman to trade the last compliment she overheard about another student or simply to pass along a compliment to a friend. This was a key manner of

⁶¹ "College Etiquette," *S. Hilda's Chronicle* Vol. 7, No. 16 (Lent 1916), 8.

⁶² Miriam Marshall Diary, 22 February 1919. LAC.

⁶³ Miriam Marshall Diary, 7 January 1919. LAC.

socializing, and while the compliments were generally overheard from men, the affection for the compliment often rested on the woman who shared it, rather than the man who originally uttered it. They were frequently shared in women's social events or teas. In a discussion of T.L.s, the *S. Hilda's Chronicle* asserted: "The Trade-Last is neither autocrat, democrat, or republican. It has the power of being 'all things to all men,' and meets with enthusiastic reception in the best society, among the learned, and even among the unlettered!" The T.L. "serves to brighten the monotony of a social function," and that at university the "air is thick with geometrical angles" as women sought to find compliments to discover what was said about them.⁶⁴ Kathleen Cowan recorded all her T.L.'s in her diary, including a 1907 T.L. that she was "one of the prettiest girls in our year," or when Bell Whitlam gave her T.L. that Elizabeth Clark said Cowan was "the best all round girl in our year."⁶⁵ T.L.s were a popular way to boost the self-esteem of students and create friendships.

Group cohesion among university students was important to both the students and the administrators. There were two chief reasons for this. First, the students and administrators knew that the poor behaviour of only one student could be viewed as representative of all students. Female students were not secure enough at university and were afraid that the misstep of one student could have negative repercussions for all students. Second, the administrators of university residences hoped to cultivate a "family-like" atmosphere and viewed their charges as belonging to a domestic circle. As dutiful daughters, they should demonstrate their love and compassion for the family unit. The

⁶⁴ "An Apology for T.L.'s," *S. Hilda's Chronicle* Vol. 5, No. 5 (Trinity Term 1906), 17-18.

⁶⁵ Cowan, *It's Late and all the Girls Have Gone*, 49 and 92.

emphasis on the residence community as a family was adopted to assuage the fears of parents and the public that their daughters would be unprotected at university and without a strong maternal influence, could become rebellious or unladylike. This emphasis on a family-like environment meant that administrators were apprehensive about conflicts between students, and rebellion against the maternal figures that held authority.

Margaret Addison was particularly concerned with ensuring that Annesley Hall remained free of any sort of conflict among the young women. A copy of an address she gave in 1903 after the opening of Annesley Hall celebrated a lack of “untruthfulness—there has been loyalty—there has been a kindly feeling—an absence of pettiness and jealousy and smallness.” However, she told the students that she expected more from them. While admitting that the students had followed the Annesley rules, their behaviour did not reach “the highest ideals, one of which is, the giving up of one’s own rights and pleasures for the sake of a nobler whole.”⁶⁶ Addison believed that in order to provide a proper home life for her charges, they had to embrace her belief in the value of sacrifice and self-denial. She also worked to establish emotional bonds with the students who were not behaving as she believed they should. For example, she described some problem students in 1910, when she noted that: “[A] few restless souls of the third year were not contributing the right kind of spirit to the Hall. While they did nothing contrary to the law, it was evident that they were not in sympathy with the powers that be.”⁶⁷ In order to create a harmonious residence, Addison believed that her students must have the proper emotional attitude to Annesley Hall, each other, and to her. In 1915, she admitted that

⁶⁶ Margaret Addison, Untitled speech circa 1903, Dean of Women fonds. Series 2: Subject/Correspondence files. Box 3 File 1: 90.141V. Victoria University Archives, Toronto Ontario.

⁶⁷ Margaret Addison, Report to the Committee of Management, 8 December 1910. UVA.

half of her time was spent “in trying to keep harmony and to prevent discord.”⁶⁸ A successful residence and admirable female students would not accept divisions among their ranks. Addison believed it was important to run the residence with the same loving hand as a mother or aunt, and expect good behaviour out of duty rather than a fear of reprisal.

Addison was not alone in her focus on fostering group cohesion. In its annual editorial welcoming the freshettes, the *St. Hilda's Chronicle* described college spirit in the following manner:

It is an enthusiasm tempered with common sense and far-sightedness; it is the merging of self, pure and simple, into one's College; it is the incentive to all college enterprise. Without it, college would be a mere cramming institution, relieved by no variety whatsoever. It is therefore plain that college spirit is a valuable acquisition, and if we have it not, it behooves us to acquire it with all possible speed.”⁶⁹

The editorial encouraged the new St. Hilda's students to join the literary society or learn how to play hockey, not for their own self-improvement, but for the good of the school. University life required participation from all students to improve the community. They were also discouraged from criticizing each other in private or in public. In order to create a beneficial environment for female students, St. Hilda's students “should support each other by all possible means, making our society as perfect as the frailty of our natures will allow, and at least to the outside world, present an aspect of complete union and harmony.”⁷⁰

⁶⁸ Margaret Addison, Report to the Committee of Management, 9 December 1915. UVA.

⁶⁹ “College Spirit,” *St. Hilda's Chronicle* Vol. 3 No. 1 (Lenten Term 1903), 2.

⁷⁰ “College Spirit,” *St. Hilda's Chronicle* Vol. 4, No. 3 (Michelmas Term 1904), 56.

While Addison used moral suasion to enforce class unity and strong relationships among students, St. Hilda's and Queen's students adopted their own methods to temper unwanted behaviour. While most initiations mocked undesirable behaviour at the beginning of each school year to instruct the incoming students about the proper ways to behave, Queen's and St. Hilda's also instituted entertaining skits in the spring to highlight inappropriate behaviour. A senior student took on the costume of the prophetess at Queen's and "Father Episcopon" at St. Hilda's. Both occurred in the form of a jest, although the importance placed on these institutions shows that they influenced behaviour. Lorraine Shortt recalled the last house meeting of the year when the "poetess and prophetess read their literary appraisals of the others, underlining their foibles and indiscretions."⁷¹ Under the cover of a joke, the students criticized the actions of the residents over the school year, highlighting unwanted behaviour.

St. Hilda's "Father Episcopon" provided a more formalized and ritualized approach. Each year before Lent, the students gathered to hear "Father Episcopon" (one of the senior students in costume) list their faults. The tradition was established very early in the history of St. Hilda's, first appearing in the *S. Hilda's Chronicle* in 1905. The purpose was explained to new students:

Now the Father does not come to stir up strife and dissension amongst his dear children, nor to hurt their tender hearts by sharp words or sarcasm. He has not been watching you all this year without gaining some insight into your character. But now the time approaches when he would come amongst you, and point out to each her own pet failing. He knows how kind are the hearts of his children; he knows how good are their intentions; but he is also very human and knows that the flesh is weak. Looking back then on his own life, on the lessons which he had to learn by strenuous experience, he would not have you ignorant of the faults which may mar an otherwise beautiful character? He knows that the years at College are the character-forming years of your lives, the early summer time

⁷¹ Shortt, "The Avonmore," 20. QUA.

when the grain is growing above ground, and has begun to show a sprinkling of chaff. He would have a fine ripe harvest of first-rate grain, to grain which he must root out the chaff at once. Perhaps the uprooting may disturb the ground a little at first, leaving blank spaces here and there, but in the end the grain will spread out all the stronger and sweeter for the enlarged area.⁷²

While the evening concluded with treats and a dance, it was a ritualized examination of the student's flaws. A 1908 account of his visit described "sad faces and heavy hearts" after listening to his advice.⁷³ It is impossible to determine how severely Father Episcopon criticized the students. However, it is clear that the St. Hilda's students found an acceptable way to mold ideal behaviour in residence. The cultural ideals for unmarried women at the time did not permit outright aggression and forthright confrontation to change the actions of their peers. Instead, the women found an indirect and humourous way to discourage unwanted behaviour. In the close homosocial world that depended upon strong relationships between women, especially when they lived, socialized, and attended classes together, students created institutions to encourage cooperation and discourage conflict. These rituals demonstrate the importance of the female friendships within the homosocial world of the university.

Despite the strong efforts made to create cohesive groups that were free from conflict and the gender ideals that forbade women from showing outright aggression, female university students still experienced conflict with their peers. Finding traces of it, however, is difficult, as very few women wrote down their complaints about their female peers. Most women shared their diaries with their close friends. It would be a poor practice to complain about a friend only to exchange journals with her. Additionally,

⁷² "Episcopon," *S. Hilda's Chronicle* Vol. 5, No. 1 (Lent 1905), 6.

⁷³ "S. Hilda's Notes," *S. Hilda's Chronicle* Vol. 5 No. 10 (Lent 1908), 24.

students were reluctant to criticize their peers due to their loyalty to their university and the belief that criticism of individual students could reflect badly on all students.

However, there are some exceptions that demonstrate that despite their close emotional bonds, university students experienced conflict and frustrations with each other while living together in close quarters.

Bessie Mabel Scott described the conflict her group of friends faced over the time spent studying. While she was very close with four women in her freshman year, she admitted that her friend Cecie was poisoning the group by bragging about the amount of time she devoted to her schoolwork. Scott compared Cecie to another friend Lou:

Lou is really the finest girl in many ways, I ever met. I was afraid perhaps as I knew her more I would like her less but on the contrary I love & adore her more every day. I can hardly say the same of Cecie, she is too fond altogether of letting us know exactly how much work she is accomplishing but still she is a fine girl.⁷⁴

Cecie's bragging about her studying wore on her friends and made them nervous about their own academic performances. Scott wrote on 17 April 1890, "Cecie informed us yesterday she had studied 12 hours day before." Scott finished her diary entry by noting "Studied in all about 12 hours," and proceeded to list the number of hours she studied per day for the next week.⁷⁵ Lou was worried about passing her exams, and Scott wrote "after hearing Cecie she went home more despondent than ever."⁷⁶ While Scott was sympathetic and worried about Lou, she did admit her own worries about her academic standing: "I wonder how we will all come out—if only I didn't have to be below all 'our Quartette' in

⁷⁴ Bessie Mabel Scott Diary, 24 February 1890. UTA.

⁷⁵ Bessie Mabel Scott Diary, 17 April 1890. UTA.

⁷⁶ Bessie Mabel Scott Diary, 22 April 1890. UTA.

everything—wonder if Lou is studying hard. I put in almost 14 hours today.”⁷⁷ Scott’s hard work paid off by passing her exams, but Lou did not pass hers, which put her a year behind Scott. Despite the fact that Scott and Cecie both passed, the next year Scott reported that “Cecie & I hardly ever go together at all now.”⁷⁸ Perhaps they grew apart as Lou was the link between them, but it seems just as likely that Cecie’s competitiveness ruined the friendship.

Scott’s conflict over studying is interesting for several reasons. First, there are few records of conflicts among female students. Most diary entries celebrate the achievements of friends and even female classmates they did not know well. Scott’s diary is notable because she did describe the conflict with her friend. Additionally, Scott and Cecie experienced conflict in a decidedly unladylike arena: education. Both women devoted extraordinary amounts of time to studying so that they would not have the lowest grades in their friend group. Cecie bragged about her dedication to studying, which as Chapter 3 demonstrated, was still considered dangerous behaviour for women. Both were dedicated to their schoolwork and ambitious about success in their exams.

Kathleen Cowan also experienced conflict with a female friend. She moved from Napanee to Toronto to attend university with her close friend Edith Gibson. However, Edith and Kathleen had a very tempestuous relationship that Kathleen, in contrast to the rest of the diarists, recorded in her journal. The women frequently competed over male attention and sought to attract the same men throughout their four years at Victoria. In one of her first entries at Victoria, Cowan wrote, “Mr. Irwin was with Edith. I just love

⁷⁷ Bessie Mabel Scott Diary, 24 April 1890. UTA.

⁷⁸ Bessie Mabel Scott Diary, 29 October 1890. UTA.

that fellow's looks. *HE* also came home with me and so set my heart a wildly fluttering".⁷⁹ This entry typifies the relationship between the two women throughout their time at Victoria. Cowan reported many instances of jealousy and fighting over the same men. Cowan noted in her 27 March 1908 entry that

Edith said she was expecting a caller Sunday night. SO am I and I do not see why it makes me angry but it does. *To think of her having Mr. Moorhouse when he has been with me all along.* But that is a horrid jealous spirit.

Edith seems to have been similarly jealous of the attention Cowan received. When Cowan informed Edith of her first male caller, she wrote, "Edith did not seem at all overjoyed when I told her of my good luck. Perhaps I should not have expected it." They also competed for the attention of a Mr. Emory, and upon hearing that he intended to call on Edith she bemoaned, "It is always down and out with me is it not?" Edith appears to have goaded Cowan and told her about her attentive male escorts, such as James who wanted "to do something every week," or the clergyman who told Edith "she was the most kissable girl he ever met."⁸⁰

Cowan's conflicts with other women were not limited to competition over male attention. Her diary provides examples of her lack of patience and jealousy with female friends other than Edith. After an evening entertaining a friend named Mary Bolton, Cowan wrote crossly that she regretted inviting Mary as "she was just like a stick and I was sleepy and I thought she would never go home." Despite trying not to speak poorly of other people, Cowan reported an evening when she "raked everybody and everything over the coals," belatedly hoping "I was not mean." Cowan appears to have been quite

⁷⁹ Cowan, *It's Late and All the Girls Have Gone*, 27.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 30, 113, 194, 196, 292.

insecure about her male and female companions and was hurt when excluded from social occasions. For example, she reported one evening that she “was grieved because Muriel did not ask me to go to Massey Hall with her cousins and was horrid about it.”⁸¹ She was aware of her tendency to act out when upset, as she wrote in 1908 “I simply must learn to be nice to people or I shall have no friends.”⁸²

Cowan was very concerned that her emotional conflicts could damage her friendships which were important to her. It was quite a traumatic event therefore when Cowan’s roommate Helen suggested that they room individually for their fourth year. Addison approached Cowan about rooming apart from Helen, and while Cowan admitted, “I can not say it was unexpected,” Cowan wrote that she “had dreadful heart rendering.” The next morning Cowan was depressed: “Woke up with the awfulest sinking feeling as if the bottom had dropped out of the world. Added to that I was deathly sick.” She looked at potential rooms for the next year, but “could not stand it long.”⁸³ Interestingly, Cowan did not record any examples in her diary of why she believed that Helen would not want to live with her the following year. Perhaps this was out of a fear that Helen could snoop through her diary since they shared a residence room. However, her response to Helen’s decision that they live apart indicates how important it was to her to maintain strong female friendships, and how embarrassing it was for her that their dispute was made public by Addison suggesting that the women should live apart.

⁸¹ Cowan, *It’s Late and All the Girls Have Gone*, 107, 161, 193.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 50.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 318-319.

The conflict experienced by Bessie Scott and Kathleen Cowan demonstrates that while their relationships with other women were very important, they were not free of conflict. However, these women are also exceptions. The other women in this study rarely made negative comments about other women in their diaries, let alone their close friends. The university ideal, illustrated by Margaret Addison's comments and the institutions of the prophetess and St. Hilda's, was a harmonious whole that protected each other. While most students sought this ideal, not all were able to achieve it.

When examining the relationships between female students it is important to consider the role of sexuality and to question whether any of the relationships were sexual or "lesbian-like," as described by Judith M. Bennett.⁸⁴ Bennett described the purpose of the term to identify women who might have met some characteristics of lesbian behaviour but whom historians cannot with certainty identify as lesbian. It enables historians to incorporate a broader group of women into lesbian history who share characteristics of modern lesbians:

If women had genital sex with other women, regardless of their marital or religious status, let us consider that their behavior was lesbian-like. If women's primary emotions were directed toward other women, regardless of their own sexual practices, perhaps their affection was lesbian-like. If women lived in single-sex communities, their life circumstances might be usefully conceptualized as lesbian-like. If women resisted marriage or, indeed, just did not marry, whatever the reason, their singleness can be seen as lesbian-like. If women dressed as men, whether in response to saintly voices, in order to study, in pursuit of certain careers, or just to travel with male lovers, their cross-dressing was arguably lesbian-like. And if women worked as prostitutes or otherwise flouted norms of sexual propriety, we might see their deviance as lesbian-like.⁸⁵

⁸⁴ Judith Bennett, "'Lesbian-Like' and the Social History of Lesbianisms," *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, Vol. 9, No. 1/2 (Jan-Apr. 2000), pp. 1 – 24.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 15.

The category of “lesbian-like” is useful for this study. None of the women identified as lesbians or confirmed that they had genital contact with other women. However, two women, Kathleen Cowan and Lorraine Shortt, displayed lesbian-like behaviour while they studied at university.

While some historians like Martha Vicinus and Carroll Smith-Rosenberg argued that a fear of lesbianism reduced the role of romantic friendships on campus during the first decades of the twentieth century, the newer historiography on the rise of a lesbian culture convincingly argues that these developments did not occur until the late 1920s and 1930s.⁸⁶ Additionally, statistical research from the 1920s indicates that a significant percentage of women engaged in emotionally significant relationships with other women and half of those women engaged in sexual relationships with women. In 1929, Katherine Bement Davis published the study *Factors in the Sex Life of Twenty-Two Hundred Women*, which provides interesting data concerning the sexuality of turn-of-the-century university students. Based on a survey mailed to American women, Davis examined the responses of 1,200 unmarried college graduates and 1,200 married women. Of the unmarried women, 605 reported “intense emotional relations” with other women, and of those 605 women, 234 affirmed that the relationships were “accompanied by mutual masturbation, contact of genital organs, or other physical expressions recognized as sexual in character.” A further 78 reported kissing and hugging that was sexual in nature.⁸⁷ For those women who identified their relationships as being sexual in character,

⁸⁶ See for example Laura Doan, *Fashioning Sapphism: The Origins of a Modern English Lesbian Culture* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001).

⁸⁷ Katharine Bement Davis, *Factors in the Sex Life of Twenty-Two Hundred Women* (New York: Arno Press 1972 reprint 1929), 247.

37.2% began before college, 35.3% during college and 27.5% after college. The study concluded that,

Slightly over 50 per cent of a group of 1,200 women college graduates, at least five years out of college, state that they have experienced intense emotional relations with other women, and that in slightly more than half these cases, or 26 per cent of the entire group, the experience has been accompanied by overt physical practices.

Of 1,000 married women, including many who attended university, 306 reported experiencing “intense emotional relations with other women.” Of those, 157 reported some sexual contact, from kissing to mutual masturbation.⁸⁸ Davis’ study demonstrated that same-sex relationships among women, especially university-educated women, occurred in significant numbers in the early twentieth century.

None of the journals consulted for this study demonstrate any overt lesbian relationships. However, using Bennett’s “lesbian-like” lens, Kathleen Cowan’s relationship with her friend Edith fulfills the description of a woman whose “Primary emotions were directed toward other women.” Cowan’s assertion that after she told Edith about her first male caller she “did not seem at all over-joyed when I told her of my good luck. Perhaps I should not have expected it,” can be interpreted in multiple ways.⁸⁹ Perhaps Edith was not happy for her friend because of sexual jealousy rather than her rivalry for male attention. Cowan and Edith’s friendship remained competitive and close for their four years at university. They often sought invitations from the same men, and Cowan rejoiced in her diary when she received them. Yet a close reading of their relationship raises the possibility of a more complex dynamic than simply a competitive

⁸⁸ Davis, *Factors in the Sex Life of Twenty-Two Hundred Women*, 249, 277, 298,

⁸⁹ Cowan, *It’s Late and All the Girls Have Gone*, 30.

friendship. In fact, many of their social interactions with men ended with the two women talking over their evenings and their feelings. For example, on 22 November 1907, Cowan and Edith saw their male acquaintances at a social event, and Mr. Irwin invited Edith to the university's Conversat. However, Edith declined as "She does not care as much for Irwin since he took her arm coming home same as he did" with Cowan. Despite the awkwardness of this situation or even by uttering these sentiments, Cowan and Edith spent the evening talking over the issue. Cowan concluded her diary entry for that day by exclaiming, "How funny everything is." Another evening Cowan wrote, "Edith said she was expecting a caller Sunday night. So am I and I do not see why it makes me angry but it does."⁹⁰ It bothered her enough to keep meticulous accounts of Edith's callers in her diary.

Despite Cowan's competition with Edith over men, they remained devoted friends. When Cowan was worried she "tried to seek comfort from Edith." They frequently talked "till all hours" They slept together on occasion, such as on 18 March 1909, when Cowan wrote that she was "Going to sleep in infirmary tonight with Edith."⁹¹ When Edith was upset, Cowan "sat in the bathroom while Edith took a bath, to rescue her from the briny deep." There is one other intriguing hint of same-sex desire in Cowan's diary. Cowan and other women were acting out love scenes to mock each other about their beaux. Cowan recorded that she had a "love scene with Mr. Birnie who was so sweet I had to kiss her."⁹² Cowan eventually married a man, and her diaries of her time at

⁹⁰ Cowan, *It's Late and all the Girls Have Gone*, 54, and 113.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 129, 148, and 223.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 223 and 211.

Victoria University are the only remaining records of her life. It is impossible to tell with any certainty if she continued her relationship with Edith after graduation, and if there relationship was ever physical. Additionally, Cowan was quite open about heterosexual desire. Yet given the prevalence of sexual relationships among women during this time, Cowan's complex friendship with Edith raises the possibility that their relationship had sexual undertones at the very least.

While Cowan's relationship with Edith was fairly unique, Lorraine Shortt's friendship with a student named Jean resembled a romantic friendship of the Victorian era. Shortt noticed that some students "married" each other and played at being husbands and wives in the Avonmore residence at Queen's. On 21 October 1917, she wrote "Mildred is Edith's 'hubby' so on Sunday I proposed to Jean & we became 'begaged.' On Monday I bought her a solitaire diamond ring price 15 cents to seal the bond. Everything is progressing favourably & we should lead to a charming marriage in the near future."⁹³

Shortt and Jean had a long engagement and were not married until 15 February 1918. Shortt recorded the proceedings in her diary:

On Saturday Evening Feb. 15 at 9.15 Jean & I were married. It was quite an affair—performed in the sitting room. At 10.00 a wedding breakfast was served & then we danced till we left on the midnight. We got some very good flashes of those present. Only three things were omitted in the excitement- viz. the signing of the register, toast to the bride & telegrams of congratulations (which were hardly for us to see to.) Among those present were – Mrs MacPhail – matron of honor K MacPhail- parson – Mary – groomsman – Ruth Campbell bridesmaid; B – flower girl, Myrtle- ring bearer – Gladys Sexton- my sister & her husband (Margaret) Count de la Freniere, Edith – the bridesmaid's little sister – Clara- the brides little sister – Cecile – my cousin from California, Elizabeth – my "mater" and Edith Sampter- my "pater", Jean Fell – the brides father, and Jean Govan the

⁹³ Lorraine Shortt Diary 21 October 1917. UWA.

brides mother- Dora- player of the wedding march- Nelida- singer of “Because”- etc.

In celebration of their marriage, they “borrowed Dora’s bed & Jean was here all the nights. We had quite fun – specially after the dance.”⁹⁴ The nature of the fun they enjoyed after the dance during their “honeymoon” is unknown. This was a ritualized event, as other women in residence had married each other prior to Shortt and Jean’s marriage. Shortt’s friends decorated the sitting room, provided food and gifts, and participated in the wedding party and in the dance afterward. The social acceptability of this event is clear by the fact that Mrs. MacPhail, who supervised the moral behaviour of the women at the Avonmore, participated in the ceremony as the Matron of Honour. She also approved of the honeymoon sleepover in Lorraine’s room. The marriage party was one that other students enjoyed late into the night. Several women other than Lorraine participated in the wedding and dance while playing male roles as groomsmen or led their partners in the male role during the dance.

Before their marriage, Shortt and Jean were friends but not especially close. However, they became closer after their marriage. While away from Kingston in the summer of 1918, Shortt wrote about a memorable telephone conversation with Jean:

This afternoon I was called to the phone and who was it but Jean- my own little wifey! She had motored up for the day and was going back early. She thought at first she’d be able to get out for a few minutes but finally was able to manage it. She had two families of Aunts and Uncles in the city whom she hadn’t seen for two years. And so didn’t have an extra time – even to see her own hubby. We had a regular chat – or gossip—over the phone. It certainly was nice to hear her if not to see her. One gets lonesome for one’s wife occasionally.

While Shortt jestingly described her relationship with Jean, she enjoyed their relationship even outside of Queen’s. In July of 1918 she met up with Jean and another friend at

⁹⁴ Lorraine Shortt Diary, 11 March 1918. UWA.

Winona, where the women were picking fruit for the summer. They danced for hours that evening and Shortt described a particularly enjoyable dance with Jean: “I had a Missouri waltz with Jean that acted just like liquor on me and left me weak in the knees.”⁹⁵ Her description of this dance would not be out of place in a romantic novel describing a heterosexual pairing. Shortt described another evening dancing with Jean the following winter: “Flossie played ‘Till We Meet Again,’ a scrummy new waltz after tea and I had it with Jean—Bliss!”⁹⁶

Shortt’s marriage demonstrates that women at Queen’s University did have close, romantic friendships common in the Victorian era and were not worried about being labeled as lesbians. Shortt wrote home to inform her parents about the marriage, and there are no records of them objecting to her behaviour. Shortt never actually married, and recorded two instances of passing an afternoon dressing up as a man with her friends at her parents’ home in Ottawa. There are only a handful of surviving letters from Jean in the archival collection that houses Shortt’s papers, and none of them indicate that the relationship survived after they graduated from Queen’s. It is possible that this was a more serious relationship and that Shortt destroyed any evidence. Both Shortt and Kathleen Cowan’s behaviour can be classified as lesbian-like, and provides more scope of the complexity of female relationships and the homosocial world.

Despite the insistence by some historians that female students after the twentieth century were less reliant upon their female friends than their foremothers, this chapter demonstrates the centrality of the homosocial relationships in the lives of female

⁹⁵ Lorraine Shortt Diary 19 May 1918 and 22 July 1918. UWA.

⁹⁶ Lorraine Shortt Diary, 14 January 1919. UWA.

university students. Female friends provided emotional intimacy and cared for each other when they were ill. Women celebrated their friends' accomplishments and mourned their disappointments. Older women acted as important mother-like figures for women who were away from home and attempting to navigate a new and challenging social environment. Relationships among women were the foundation of female rituals on university campuses. The university administrators and students believed that a harmonious environment among female students was very important and created institutions, including hazing, T.L.'s, prophetesses and Father Episcopon to model proper behaviour and to critique undesirable actions. While historians of the 1980s and early 1990s maintained that a fear of lesbianism and being labeled as 'deviant' reduced the frequency of strong friendships between women and any same-sex relationships by the start of the twentieth century, the historical evidence disproves this notion and suggests that complex relationships existed on university campuses. The physical and social separation required between male and female students encouraged women to create parallel social institutions and deep emotional relationships. The homosocial relationships between women were much less fraught than the heterosexual relationships of male and female students who met as academic peers, friends, and romantic partners on university campuses.

6. Crushes, Comrades, and Companionate Partners: Male Peers

Upon first meeting Anne Shirley in *Anne of the Island*, Philippa Gregory declared:

If I stayed home I'd have to get married. Mother wanted that—wanted it decidedly. Mother has plenty of decision. But I really hated the thought of being married for a few years yet. I want to have heaps of fun before I settle down. And, ridiculous as the idea of my being a B.A. is, the idea of my being an old married woman is still more absurd, isn't it? I'm only eighteen. No, I concluded, I would rather come to Redmond than be married.

While Philippa enjoyed flirting with her male classmates, she was clear that she attended Redmond College as an alternative to marriage rather than as a way to find a husband. She had plenty of opportunities at home to marry but prioritized her education. Philippa's exposure to new people and personal growth at university enabled her to marry a man she loved and respected and with whom she built a companionate relationship. At the beginning of the novel Philippa asserted that she must marry a rich man as "I can't do a single useful thing, and I'm *very* extravagant." Affection or compatibility were not among her priorities in a husband, and she narrowed her list down to two men who met her requirements of wealth and a good social position. When Anne asked her whether she loved either man, Philippa responded, "Goodness no. *I* couldn't love anybody. It isn't in me. Besides I wouldn't want to. Being in love makes you a perfect slave, *I* think."¹ However, as she matured and expanded her social circle at Redmond College, Philippa fell in love with a poor, unattractive minister named Jonas Blake. Philippa's personal growth while at Redmond College made it possible for her to prioritize the qualities in

¹ L.M. Montgomery, *Anne of the Island* (1915; reprint. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1985), 31-2.

Jonas that made him a good partner for her, such as his kindness and generosity, rather than the wealth and good looks that she valued in her suitors prior to attending university.

Anne's romantic journey during *Anne of the Island* was a process of maturing beyond her childish ideal of a tall, dark, romantic hero to recognize that her old friend, Gilbert Blythe, was an excellent companionate partner for her. Anne declined multiple offers of marriage because she was not in love with the men who proposed but also because accepting a proposal would have forced her to abandon her beloved studies. She did not seek out male attention like Philippa, and disliked any notion of sexual tension between herself and Gilbert:

But Gilbert's visits were not what they once were. Anne almost dreaded them. It was very disconcerting to look up in the midst of a sudden silence and find Gilbert's hazel eyes fixed upon her with a quite unmistakable expression in their grave depths; and it was still more disconcerting to find herself blushing hotly and uncomfortably under his gaze, just as if—just as if—well it was embarrassing.

When Gilbert proposed to Anne she rejected him, believing that her feelings for him were friendly rather than romantic. She met the dashing and romantic Roy Gardiner and believed herself to be in love with him, but when he proposed to her she realized that her infatuation with him was not love and she could not build a life with him. After rejecting Roy, Anne attempted to explain her behaviour: "I want some one who *belongs* in my life. He doesn't. I was swept off my feet at first by his good looks and knack of paying romantic compliments; and later on I thought I *must* be in love because he was my dark-eyed ideal."² Anne realized that she needed a companionate partner with a matching sense of humour and similar goals in life. When Gilbert fell seriously ill, Anne realized that she was in love with him and they reconciled at the end of the book.

² Montgomery, *Anne of the Island*, 131-2 and 226.

Anne and Philippa attended Redmond College because of their desire for an education. They experienced personal growth while at university as they were exposed to new people and new ideas. As a result, they were able to cast off their childish romantic ideals. For Philippa this was a wealthy husband she did not love and for Anne, a dark, romantic hero. They declined proposals from men that are unsuitable partners and instead waited for the men with whom they could create an ideal companionate marriage.

Miriam also recognized the importance of a companionate marriage in *Miriam of Queen's*. At the beginning of the novel, Miriam had a crush on her cousin Sedley Danvers. However, her rival, Cora, a society woman unimpressed with higher education, was also interested in Sedley. "Having determined to attract his gaze, Cora Hotchkiss gave her black-lashed eyes full play." While Cora admired Sedley's intelligence, it was not because she shared his intellectual pursuits. "The brainier the victim, the better, so long as she could lead him captive. It shed something of a reflected glory upon her to be surrounded by clever men."³ Despite their incompatibility, Sedley and Cora married, and their marriage led to unhappiness for both. Cora engaged in an extramarital affair and Sedley drowned tragically when he learned of it. Their relationship served as a warning against hasty marriages based on sexual attraction.

Miriam was much luckier than her erstwhile crush. She met Hugh Stewart while visiting her aunt in Nova Scotia, and Hugh joined Miriam at Queen's. His simple Scottish morals and unpretentious attitude won him admiration at Queen's, as did his good looks and athletic prowess:

The tall figure crowned with a handsome head, and the whole-souled interest he showed in each event, his unbridled enthusiasm and native grace won for Hugh

³ Lillian Vaux MacKinnon, *Miriam of Queen's* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1921), 69-70.

Stewart a host of new friends... She [Miriam] was not alone in her admiration. All the girls around were watching him.

While Miriam admired Hugh's physical appearance, it was Hugh's manners and intelligence that made him an ideal partner for her. It was no surprise that after rescuing her from drowning, Hugh "gathered her tight in his arms and kissed her flaming cheeks and chin and lips."⁴ Miriam and Hugh's attraction to each other was complemented by their shared intellectual background and moral values. By attending Queen's and exposing themselves to new people and new ideas, they were able to recognize these values in each other.

Like Anne and Miriam, many women who attended university in Ontario from 1890 to 1920 struggled with the concept of marriage. They sought to find companionate partners and were very cautious about committing themselves to one man. Despite the stereotype portrayed in the historiography of women who were more eager to date than to study, female students were not desperate for romantic attention or engagements. In fact, both *Anne of the Island* and *Miriam of Queen's* simplified the complexities of interacting with men on university campuses. Many female students struggled with the expectations for feminine behaviour while their ability to meet men on campus was extremely limited and university officials supervised their behaviour. The line between romantic partner and male friend was porous, and women struggled to maintain male friendships that would permit them to attend dances and other mixed events that required women to be escorted by men, but not to limit themselves to one partner or commit themselves to a relationship. In fact, many women went to lengths to maintain superficial friendships with men and avoid sexual danger. Some female students sought companionate

⁴ MacKinnon, *Miriam of Queen's*, 91 and 308.

relationships and to reconcile popular expectations of femininity with their “masculine” education which proved difficult within and outside the university.

Historians have charted the shifting courtship rituals and expectations between the late 1800s and the turn of the century. Peter Ward argued that in the nineteenth century, courtship occurred in “settings defined and governed by clear and well-understood rules.” These spaces included church activities, dances, small parties, and outdoor activities such as skating and picnics, all carefully supervised by chaperones. Ward maintained that men dominated public activities such as balls, and thus controlled public social events, whereas women controlled private, smaller parties. However, at the end of the nineteenth century, as more young people moved or were born into large cities, courtship shifted from the private party into the public sphere. Ward observed that “These new courtship occasions usually centered upon paid public amusements which couples attended alone, invariably at the invitation and expense of the male suitor... Courtship had begun to assume its modern commercial, more private guise.”⁵ In her study of American marriage in the twentieth century, Kristin Celello argued that as women’s roles changed in the beginning of the twentieth century, the expectations for marriage changed as well. Since women could theoretically support themselves, marriage experts advocated that they should be based on “love, sexual gratification, and equality.” However, Celello noted that this notion of marriage still held to strict gender differentiation, and the “definition of equality within such marriages, for example, still held to a strict sex-role differentiation, whereby the husband was the primary breadwinner and the wife was the primary

⁵ Peter Ward, *Courtship, Love and Marriage in Nineteenth-Century English Canada* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1990), 65, 69 and 92.

housekeeper and caregiver.”⁶ Even if women had fewer children and worked prior to marriage or pregnancy, they were expected to fulfill traditional roles. Stephanie Coontz argued that the new companionate ideal was actually detrimental to some women because it made marriage, rather than familial relationships or friendships, most important in a woman’s life, and thus made women “*more* dependent upon their relationships with men.”⁷

Not all university students sought the companionate marriage ideal, but many understood that their social life would be curtailed without interacting with men in a social setting. Helen Leftkowitz Horowitz, the American historian of higher education, argued that the most dramatic change in undergraduate life in the twentieth century was the rise of dating between students and so changes in “attitudes about sex and in sexual practices reshaped the form and content of college life for both men and women.”⁸ Horowitz argued that prior to the twentieth century, male students satisfied their sexual desires quietly with non-students, usually working-class women. However, shifting sexual norms in the 1920s allowed a degree of sexual activity:

The coeducational campus became the scene of heterosexual play—at the soda fountain, the movies, and college dances... While dating had its own rules that kept most college women technically virgins until engagement, it allowed large doses of foreplay and enough ambiguity to keep college men trying.

⁶ Kristin Celello, *Making Marriage Work: A History of Marriage and Divorce in the Twentieth-Century United States* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2009), 22-23.

⁷ Stephanie Coontz, *Marriage, a History: From Obedience to Intimacy, or How Love Conquered Marriage*. New York: Viking Adult, 2005), 205.

⁸ Helen Leftkowitz Horowitz, *Campus Life: Undergraduate Cultures from the End of the Eighteenth Century to the Present* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 123.

Horowitz argued that this development created a new and prominent source of status for women: “College men vied for positions on the field or in the newsroom; college women gained their positions indirectly by being asked out by the right man.”⁹

In the Canadian context, Alyson King argued that university-educated women from 1900 to 1930 fought against restrictions on their social lives during a time of changing social norms. She maintained that university administrators sought to reaffirm Victorian ideals of chaperonage and promenades rather than dances, but that students were eager to subvert these attempts at regulation. Deans of Women were given more power on university campuses and official residences were built to house out of town students, ensuring that they were constantly supervised. Despite these efforts, King concludes that “students during all three decades under study here pushed at the social boundaries.”¹⁰

As many women sought to distance themselves from the supervision of university authorities, their relationships with men remained complicated. Some women sought companionship and even looked forward to sexual experiences, other women used their appeal to men to negate the supposed masculine effects of university and prove their femininity. While women embraced the new dating patterns, their experiences corresponded to those of their peers who did not attend university. Female students embraced the notion that their femininity was measured by their appeal to men, but also understood that their university attendance would delay marriage.

⁹ Horowitz, *Campus Life*, 127 and 208.

¹⁰ Alyson King, “The Experience of the Second Generation of Women Students at Ontario Universities, 1900-1930,” PhD dissertation, University of Toronto (1999), 262.

The marriage rates of university-educated women were a source of concern for doctors, parents and administrators in the nineteenth century and remain an important lens through which female students are studied. American and British historians note that around the turn of the twentieth century the marriage rates of university-educated women began to rise. Prior to the 1890s, most graduates did not marry. They postponed marriage for an education and career, and when they were ready to be married, they found few available men in their age cohort. However, by 1900, the marriage rates increased.¹¹ In her study of women's colleges, Roberta Frankfort noted that from 1889 to 1908, 53% of Bryn Mawr Graduates remained unmarried. However, from 1909 to 1918, only 33% remained single, and 67% wed.¹²

A popular explanation for the increased marriage rates at the turn of the century is that the students were wealthier than their forerunners, and they and their parents viewed university as a sort of finishing school before marriage. Solomon and Horowitz espoused this interpretation, and Horowitz attributed the rise of sororities and complex social events at women's colleges to wealthier women students.¹³ Even historians who are not primarily women's historians have used this framework to describe different groups of students. For example, in his study of Mount Allison University, John G. Reid marked the changing social status of the female students by new regulations regarding dresses when he noted that, "the catalogue for 1895-6 contained a new admonition to parents that

¹¹ Horowitz, *Campus Life*, 198.

¹² Roberta Frankfort, *Collegiate Women: Domesticity and Career in Turn-of-the-Century America* (New York: New York University Press, 1977), 73.

¹³ Helen Lefkowitz Horowitz, *Alma Mater: Design and Experience in the Women's Colleges From Their Nineteenth-Century Beginnings to the 1930s* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1984).

muslin or cashmere dresses should be worn by students at festive occasions, and that silk was both unnecessary and unsuitable.”¹⁴

These characterizations of the second generation of female students are not supported by historical evidence, and the women of the first generation were not the radical pioneers that many historians believed them to be. In her analysis of Smith College students from 1879 to 1888, Sarah Gordon found that the majority of students were the daughters of professionals in New England towns, and neither the richest nor the poorest in their communities. Gordon argued that the school “appeared primarily as a means of escape and personal redefinition. Only secondarily was it seen as a means of preparing for a career; and it only served that function for a few.”¹⁵ Other than a small group of scholarship students, the women at Smith College throughout the 1880s were not poor women who broke through social boundaries to further their educational aims, but often middle class women who attended classes for a few years before returning to the domestic sphere.

In addition, Patricia Palmieri examined the first generation of Wellesley students and professors, and discovered that they were not nearly as rebellious as Horowitz or Solomon believed. Palmieri argued that these women did not rebel against their families to pursue university studies and careers, but instead were aided and encouraged by their families. These university women “were the conspicuous signs of the family’s desire to contribute to society and reform, and to advance its own social status. As such, these

¹⁴ John G. Reid, *Mount Allison University: A History to 1963 Volume I: 1843 – 1914* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1984), 213.

¹⁵ Sarah Gordon, “Smith College Students: The First Ten Classes, 1879 – 1888,” *History of Education Quarterly* Vol. 15, No. 2 (Summer 1975), 147, 156-7.

daughters were exempted from the norms of domesticity and were designated for achievement.”¹⁶ While they were pioneers, they still relied on economic and emotional support from their families.

In order to argue the vast difference between the first and second generations, historians stressed the different marriage rates between generations. However, this misses the larger distinction between the marriage rates of university-educated and non-university educated women. Roberta Frankfort found that in 1889, 47% of Bryn Mawr graduates and 57% of Wellesley students married. Yet by 1909, 67% of Bryn Mawr and 72% of Wellesley graduates married.¹⁷ While the difference in the marriage rates of each generation is significant, it is less significant than the difference in the marriage rates of the women who attended university and those who did not. Solomon briefly mentioned that according to the census reports of 1890 and 1910, 90% of American women married.¹⁸ In the Canadian context, Marks, Laskin, and Gaffield found that between 1895 and 1900, 55% of Queen’s students married. Yet during the same time period, over 88% of Canadian women in the same age group married.¹⁹

This chapter demonstrates that the stigma of the “mannish” coed, although present from 1890 to 1920, did not prevent female students from being viewed as marriageable women by male students. Most male students were more comfortable with their female

¹⁶ Palmieri, “Patterns of Achievement of Single Academic Women at Wellesley College, 1880 – 1920,” 64.

¹⁷ Frankfort, *Collegiate Women*, 73.

¹⁸ Solomon, *In the Company of Educated Women*, 119.

¹⁹ Chad Gaffield, Lynne Marks and Susan Laskin, “Student Populations and Graduate Careers: Queen’s University, 1895-1900,” in *Youth, University and Canadian Society: Essays in the Social History of Higher Education* ed. Paul Axelrod and John G. Reid. (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1990), 43.

peers when they occupied traditionally feminine roles on the dance floor than when they were academic competitors in the classroom. Some men and women used their experiences at university to help forge companionate marriages. However, female students struggled to prove their femininity, and their low marriage rates compared to the national average demonstrates that despite their professed interest in men and male attention, many women chose to remain single or deemed a poor marriage as a less attractive choice than singlehood or employment.

While many female students were eager to engage in current dating fads, university administrators were not supportive of changes to the Victorian ideal of courtship, which required strict chaperonage and proper introductions. The reaction of university administrators depended upon the personality of the administrator, the religious denomination and character of the school, and most significantly, whether the institution housed its students in official residences. While the lack of surviving documents makes a comparison between different schools difficult, the contrast between official reports at Queen's University and Victoria University is telling. Queen's did not build a women's residence until 1925, and while there were unofficial residences since 1900, they were not operated under the purview of the Dean of Women but by the Queen's University Alumnae Association. While the Queen's Dean of Women, Caroline McNeill, was very concerned with women's housing arrangements, she did not address any issues of men and women socializing in her official reports from 1911 to 1920 other than encouraging Levana to prohibit women and men from sharing a boardinghouse. She focused on women maintaining their femininity, and so organized art history courses and French conversation afternoons, but women's heterosocial behaviour was not mentioned.

Whether this was because it was not a concern for McNeill or because she did not want to draw attention to poor behaviour of the female students in a public forum and therefore damage the reputation of Queen's, is impossible to know.

Conversely, women's behaviour with men was a significant concern at Victoria University. Again, the cause of this discrepancy is difficult to tell, but there are several contributing factors. Coeducation was frequently reevaluated at the University of Toronto, for example in 1907 when the university appointed Professor George Wrong to study the possibility of a separate woman's college. Wrong argued that both sexes would benefit from segregated classes, so that women did not dominate the modern languages and men political studies. However, he also believed that women were not properly prepared by the University for their roles of wives and mothers, and that a separate college would provide more appropriate courses for the future homemakers. The senate approved his proposal by 28 votes to 8, despite opposition from women of the university. However, the report was later withdrawn due to the overwhelming opposition from women and due to the lack of funds for such a project.²⁰ Many men at the University of Toronto believed women were an unwelcome distraction on campus and felt that they should not compete in the classroom. While Queen's shed its denominational affiliation by the turn of the century, Victoria remained a committed Methodist institution. Annesley Hall hosted promenades, in which couples walked around a room while music played, rather than dances because of a prohibition against dancing. Most significantly, women at Annesley Hall were under the direct protection of the university and the Dean of Women

²⁰ Martin L. Friedland, *The University of Toronto: A History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002), 229- 231.

Margaret Addison. As a result, concerns over women's sexuality were prominent throughout the surviving Victoria University records.

As early as 1906, Addison reported that women were unhappy with chaperonage rules at Annesley. The rules stated that since "many of the residents were very young," they would not be "allowed to go out unaccompanied to concerts or entertainments, or come in late at night." She noted that the "girls resented the idea of chaperonage and thought they should be allowed to go in groups to entertainments or with young men, and even to ice cream parlors after 10P.M."²¹ Some of the concern originated from the agreement to allow the Annesley Student Government Association (ASGA) to govern the students, with many individuals on the Committee of Management of Annesley Hall believing that the students were incapable of self-government.

In May 1908, the Annesley Hall Committee of Management appointed a sub-committee to examine the rules at Annesley Hall and report back "so that all the ladies may be informed concerning these regulations, and be in a position to speak with authority should any question be asked by the outside public, either regarding what has been done in the past, or what is being done in the present."²² This was in response to an unrecorded comment about female students "sitting up" [staying up late] at night and may have also involved comments about women's late leaves. When the Committee of Management met in June 1908, the committee stated that:

They regarded the rules just, that many of the remarks which led to the appointment of the committee were either unfounded or had their foundation in

²¹ Committee of Management of Annesley Hall, "Minute Book," June 7 1906, Box 1, File 1. Records Relating to Women at Victoria University Collection Fonds 1990.064V. Victoria University Archives, Toronto, Ontario.

²² Minutes of Annesley Hall Committee of Management, May 13, 1908. UVA.

what occurred before the present system of [self] government came into action, also that the conduct of the students during the last two years did not warrant the comment that had been heard.²³

The swift response by the Annesley Hall Committee of Management indicates the precarious position of female students. The committee reaffirmed their confidence in Addison to oversee the late leave permissions and in the ASGA, and stated that “the opinion of many of the ladies was that this [regulation of late leaves] should be left to the discretion of the Dean and Head of the respective Halls.”²⁴ While Addison’s guidance of her charges was reaffirmed, the issue of women staying out late remained a common feature in the minutes of the Annesley Hall Committee of Management minutes for several years.

The matter erupted in 1911, when Chancellor Burwash of Victoria University and Mrs. Burwash questioned the behaviour of the Annesley students and the discipline regime. On January 30, 1911, Chancellor Burwash wrote to Addison with his decision to request the Senate to investigate discipline at Annesley Hall:

I am told that many students have the habit of sitting up and visiting in their rooms until 12 o’clock at night, that students are allowed the privilege of going out on visits every night in the week, and that students have gone to dances without a chaperone and to dances probably the character and conduct of which we know nothing, and have come in as late as 2 o’clock in the morning. These are matters which, if mooted abroad, would destroy the value of our residence for young women in the eyes of our Methodist people, and, apart altogether from public opinion, they are things which should not be allowed in a well regulated college.²⁵

²³ Minutes of Annesley Hall Committee of Management, June 15, 1908. UVA.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Chancellor Burwash to Margaret Addison, 30 January 1911. UVA.

While Burwash's first complaint was female students staying up late in residence, it is clear that his opposition to the discipline regime at Annesley Hall was based on their interactions with male students. He alleged that students were given a free reign and able to interact with men without the supervision of a proper chaperone. He believed this behaviour could jeopardize the education of women at Victoria University and put into doubt the university's religious foundation.

His wife, Margaret Burwash, was the president of the Annesley Hall Committee of Management. She had similar concerns. First, she alleged that the AGSA had broken its agreement with the Committee of Management because

residents had interfered with the household management, by carrying dishes from the dining room and by a letter sent in from the executive of the A.S.G.A making several complaints as to the household's management in Annesley hall, asking that the roasts of meat be larger and request for additional furnishing in South Hall.²⁶

She argued that this matter alone was enough to suspend the student government.

However, the real problem with the student government was the rule that permitted women to be unchaperoned with men and to attend dances. She theatrically denounced the problems with the AGSA:

Is it consistent that young women should be forbidden to go to church with young men and yet allowed to go to dances with them unchaperoned. According to the present rules it is possible for a young woman to go three times a week to the theatre. Student government as administered in Annesley Hall was a failure, Mrs. Burwash said. The university, said Mrs. Burwash, had recently considered the dances held there and had decided that they must be under the control of the Council.²⁷

²⁶ Minutes of Annesley Hall Committee of Management, 9 March 1911. UVA.

²⁷ Minutes of Annesley Hall Committee of Management, 9 March 1911. UVA.

The issue was referred to the Senate of Victoria University. Over the next year, the Committee of Management debated the Annesley Hall rules, but this resulted in only minor changes due to the split on the Committee between individuals who supported Addison and the student government experiment, and those like Burwash who believed that the opportunities for women to interact with male students and to attend dances delegitimized the AGSA and jeopardized the university as a whole. For example, the first rule stated that

After dinner no student may leave the Hall without the permission of the Dean, and those who ask leave of absence must give in writing the address of the place to which they wish to go, and must report themselves to the Dean and in her absence to the Director of the Household on their return not later than 10.30 o'clock.²⁸

The rule was changed in April 1911 to include the name of the person the student visited.²⁹ While minor changes were accepted, those critical of the rules asked the Senate to evaluate rule 3: “Students of the third and fourth years may be permitted to go out any evening, and, if in groups of three or more may have the use of a latch key.”³⁰ Carolyn Strange has examined the power of the latch key, or ability to control their entrance and exit of a home, for working class women, and the levels of supervision they faced in Toronto boarding homes and women’s residences. She found that many boarding homes, like the West Toronto Y, hotly debated women’s interactions with men and prohibitions against dancing.

²⁸ Rules and Regulations for Annesley and South Halls, no date, UVA.

²⁹ Minutes of Annesley Hall Committee of Management, 18 April 1911. UVA.

³⁰ Rules and Regulations for Annesley and South Halls, 6. UVA.

Carolyn Strange and Joan Sangster have examined the “problem” of women living alone in Canadian cities at the turn of the twentieth century. Like the working class women discussed by Strange and Sangster, university women were believed to require protection and supervision to maintain their innocence and virginity. The class differences between university students and working women allowed university women to be given less moral condemnation if they came home after curfew than the working class women who were frequently characterized as “delinquent” if they subverted strict rules. However, university students and working women were supervised by older women who firmly believed that it was a social good for them to supervise young women who were alone in Canadian cities.³¹

Addison presented her case to the Senate by extolling the virtues of the Annesley Hall residents. She compared the grades of the students within residence to those outside of residence, demonstrating that women in residence performed slightly better academically. For example in 1911, 57% of students in residence achieved a first or second class standing compared to 41% out of residence.³² Addison celebrated the behaviour of the students during a diphtheria quarantine, including the disciplining of young students who tried to leave the building:

They were promptly informed they were under discipline and would not be allowed to go. They have been loyal and straightforward, thoughtful and earnest, and have both in spirit and in action showed themselves worthy daughters of Victoria College, of whom the College may be justly proud.³³

³¹ Joan Sangster, *Girl Trouble: Female Delinquency in English Canada* (Toronto: Between the Lines, 2002) and Carolyn Strange, *Toronto's Girl Problem: The Perils and Pleasures of the City, 1880-1930* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995).

³² Margaret Addison Report to the Committee of Management, 14 March 1912, 2. UVA.

³³ Margaret Addison Report to the Committee of Management, 14 March 1912, 4. UVA.

Addison's reports proved convincing to the Senate, and on 15 May 1912 the following motion passed:

That this Senate, having heard the report of the Dean of Annesley Hall, we wish to express our hearty approval of her management and assure her of our confidence and hearty support and that we suggest to the Board of Management of Annesley Hall that all officers of the Hall should be under the Dean's direction; that a copy of this resolution be sent to Miss Addison, to the Committee of Management and the Board of Regents.³⁴

The Committee of Management also supported Addison. The Chancellor and Margaret Burwash took leave in October 1912 and Chancellor Burwash resigned shortly afterwards, possibly in response to this dispute.³⁵

The debate over the chaperonage and social entertainments illustrates that Victoria University authorities were very concerned about women's interactions with men. This is consistent with the anxieties over young women in urban contexts, away from the supervision of their families, during this time period.³⁶ Administrators believed that the students jeopardized the reputation of the university by socializing with men without a chaperone late at night. However, the fear was much more about "city" or lower class men than male students. In fact, the behaviour of the male students who were accompanying the female students was not discussed. The administrators believed that if they personally oversaw the relationships, women would be safe with male students. City men, unknown to university administrators, were a much greater risk in their minds than male students. The regulations focused on the women and the possibility that upper year

³⁴ Senate of Victoria College Minutes, 15 March 1912. UVA.

³⁵ Jean O'Grady, *Margaret Addison: A Biography* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2001), 135.

³⁶ See Strange, *Toronto's Girl Problem* or Mariana Valverde, *The Age of Light, Soap, and Water: Moral Reform in English Canada 1885-1925* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1991).

students could socialize with men multiple times per week and avoid chaperones. First and second year students faced curfews of 10:30 pm during the week and 12:30 pm on Friday evening, and chaperones were required for any public event. Third and fourth year students had the privilege of a 12:30 pm curfew every night, but they all faced the same chaperone rules. As Kathleen Cowan discovered, the Dean was also given authority to forbid a request to attend an event even when it complied with the rules. However, the possibility of female students not abiding by the rules and escaping the supervision of the university authorities resulted in an administrative battle at Victoria. The unsupervised and unguarded sexuality of Victoria students could, according to Chancellor Burwash, “destroy the value of our residence for young women.” Women’s chaperonage and curfews were matters that concerned the highest level of administration.

While Addison supported the rules established by the AGSA and argued that the students behaved appropriately, she did not support changes to Canadian social life in the 1910s. She initially supported skating as a good form of exercise but in 1913 she complained that it was a “serious distraction to faithful students.” She was also concerned that students were too focused on social activities and that the expense and number of social activities was distracting them from a simple life of education and faith. As a result, she argued that the “social, moral and religious life of the students has been disappointing” in the early twentieth century. These changes were due to “the youth of the students, to the predominance of their opinion over adult opinion, to the large number of students gather[ed] to-gether; partly to the increase of student activities, and probably most of all to the prosperity and love of pleasure belonging to the times.”³⁷ Addison’s

³⁷ Margaret Addison, “Dean’s Report 1913,” 24 March 1913. UVA.

critique was not specifically that women engaged in inappropriate relationships with men, but that they engaged in frivolous activities and did not behave as modest Methodist women should. Addison and other Victoria administrators viewed the female students' sexuality as something to be guarded carefully for the sake of the university's reputation. Romantic or companionate relationships were also not discussed by the administrators, largely because they viewed the female students as innocent and immature "girls."

The female students were viewed in different and in contradictory ways by their male peers. As Chapter 4 demonstrated, male students were quick to ensure that female students were made uncomfortable on campus, and made it clear that they were treading on masculine territory. Female students' presence on campus made university education no longer an intrinsically masculine endeavor. This was part of the cultural concern over a decline of masculinity among the middle classes at the end of the nineteenth century, and many university men were eager to prove their manhood and virility on campus.³⁸ In his study of Ontario students, A.B. McKillop found that,

With the presence of women on university campuses, usually in the faculties of arts, male undergraduates met the challenge of their presence by turning to aggressive, 'manly' activities in the form of organized sports that helped to preserve their sense of a domain of male exclusiveness.³⁹

Most men on campus did not openly welcome the arrival of female students, and instead viewed their presence as a direct challenge to their dominance. Masculinity could be upheld through feats of physical strength and violent sports or rough initiations and

³⁸ David P. Setran, "Following the Broad-Shouldered Jesus: The College YMCA and the Culture of Muscular Christianity in American Campus Life, 1890-1914," *American Educational History Journal* Vol. 31, Issue 1 (Spring 2005), 61.

³⁹ A.B. McKillop, "Marching as to War: Elements of Ontario Undergraduate Culture, 1880-1914," in *Youth, University and Canadian Society* ed. Axelrod and Reid, 75.

drunken escapades. Sara Burke argues that the debauchery and violence of University of Toronto initiations increased with the arrival of female students.⁴⁰

Masculinity on campus was not equated with romantic success at the turn of the twentieth century. Upon their arrival on campus, male students were quickly informed that flirting with women and paying too much attention to female students was not acceptable behavior. During the University of Toronto initiations, freshmen that “escorted ladies” were especially targeted for hazing.⁴¹ Women and men who entered class meetings or sporting events together were greeted by stamping feet and derision. An 1890 *Queen’s Journal* article argued that women were a distraction on campus and interfered with men’s real purpose for attending university. The author wrote a parable about a male student whose study habits and ambition were curtailed when the man fell in love, and that this was a danger facing all male students. The author informed the readers that, “we want to impress upon you, don’t you see, is that you are here to gain knowledge by careful application and study, not to look for a housekeeper.” There were plenty of women in the world and “an early engagement or anything approaching to such a state will stunt your social nature and spoil your chances of success in life.”⁴² A strong romantic attachment would not only ruin a man’s university experience, but also perhaps ruin his life. The purpose of university for male students was academic enrichment and connections with his male classmates, and ultimately, as a front page article reminded students at Queen’s in 1890, “The end at which the college should aim is, as we have said

⁴⁰ Burke, Sara Z. “Being unlike Man’: Challenges to Co-Education at the University of Toronto, 1884-1909,” *Ontario History* Vol. 93, No. 1 (Spring 2001), 11-31.

⁴¹ Keith Walden, “Hazes, Hustles, Scraps, and Stunts: Initiations at the University of Toronto, 1880-1925,” in *Youth, University and Canadian Society* ed. Axelrod and Reid, 98.

⁴² “Confidential Chats,” *Queen’s Journal* 22 March 22, 1890, 146.

to make *men* of its students; and the end at which a student should aim is to be a *man*.⁴³

The ideal student, according to the newspaper read by the entire student body, was a man who was not distracted by women who would serve as little else than a housekeeper.

Despite the fact that male students competed with women in the classroom, they were distractions rather than possible romantic or companionate partners.

The University of Western Ontario's student newspaper, *Cap and Gown*, was not nearly as dismissive of female students or relationships with them. However, articles written by men sexualized the female students and cast them as beautiful distractions used to make classes more palatable. For example, a December 1909 poem established the class of 1912's desire for beautiful students:

It happened that the class of twelve
Was sadly short of girls,
And so we prayed the gentle gods
For ruffles, lace and curls.

Kind Heaven sent, to make amends,
A bunch of fair freshettes,
And we were happy when we found
That none were suffragettes.

Rose up the doughty class of twelve,
And every man spoke out,
There waits for me a little girl
In class thirteen, no doubt.

And on Reception night they stood
Before our raptured eyes,
And they were, let me breathe it low,
The sweetest, dear surprise.

There's Ina from the Quaker State,
Her deep, dark eyes enthral;
Miss Torrey, of the thoughtful pose,
Is lithesome-like and tall.

⁴³ *Queen's Journal*, 20 November 1890, 1.

And Connie, fair with Celtic grace,
Quite thrills my sleepy pen;
But, heart alas, for me! I'm told
She dotes on Irishmen.

Fame for her golden words, forsooth,
Is lovely Rachel Jones;
And Kathleen of the liquid voice
Charms with her gentle tones.

Miss Douglas is quite winsome, but
Miss Johnston is my choice;
And don't you know I rather like
The music of her voice.

I won't sit down on pumpkins now,
Or, on myself write jokes;
I tell you, I am quite in love
With all the Freshman folks.⁴⁴

This poem demonstrates a very narrow role for women if they were to be accepted on campus. First and foremost, they were to be beautiful objects of distraction, not academic peers. This is evident in the author's relief that "none were suffragettes." These women, while completing the previously masculine task of earning degrees, should not attempt to upset gender norms on campus. They were angels, sent as an answer to the male students' prayers, and embodied traditional feminine virtues. They were all "ruffles, lace and curls," graceful, "lithesome-like," and "winsome." While the poem superficially seems to celebrate the female students, one in particular received harsh words as Connie was teased for liking "Irishmen." Most freshettes were terrified of attracting male attention or wandering onto male areas on campus, so it is clear that the majority would not have been flattered by being named in such a poem. While the male students could have

⁴⁴ "In Lighter Vein," *Cap and Gown* (December 1909), 98.

maintained it was complimentary, it is unlikely any of the students named within the poem would have viewed it as such.

This poem was not exceptional. The University of Western Ontario class of 1919's "Freshmen's song" acknowledged the attractiveness of the second, third and fourth year students:

Here's to the Freshettes.
The jolly bright-eyed Freshettes
They are just the cutest maidens that can be
And when with them I'm dancing,
The whole world seems entrancing.
Oh the Freshettes are the girls for me.

The Sophettes and the Seniors
With grave and staid demeanours
Are charming in their own peculiar way,
But the Freshettes cute and witty,
The theme of this short ditty,
Are the darlings of the Varsity.

The Co-eds too are charming
Their glances are disarming
And in their eyes their [sic] lurks sweet deviltry.
But the Freshettes sweet and pretty.
The best that's in the city,
Oh the Freshettes are the girls for me.

So here's to Alma Mater
With knowledge growing greater,
The Arts and Meds and Theologs agree,
The white and purple ever,
And the Freshettes cute and clever
Are the darlings of the Varsity.⁴⁵

This song goes further than the first, as it argues that senior students are more sexually aggressive than the innocent freshettes: "Their glances are disarming/And in their eyes their [sic] lurks sweet deviltry." The students of 1919 measured the physical attributes

⁴⁵ "Freshmen's song," *Gap and Gown* (November 1915), 17- 18.

and sexual innocence of their female classmates against more senior women to argue for the freshmen class's supremacy on campus. The freshettes were hardly academic equals, but remained, in the imagery of the male students, as distractions who embodied traditional feminine virtues and whose presence on campus was a reward for male students ("and so we prayed the gentle gods").

The reaction from male students in the Queen's *Journal* and the Western *Cap and Gown* demonstrate a public belief that women were not academic peers. At Queen's they were viewed as barriers to male students' academic and personal successes. At Western, they were beautiful ornaments accepted only when they fulfilled traditional definitions of female beauty and did not upset the power dynamic. As Alyson King demonstrated with her analysis of *The Varsity*, University College's student newspaper, male students often publicly disparaged their female classmates.⁴⁶ Yet their personal interactions with female students were quite different in small groups or one-on-one.

Women's interactions with their male peers largely depended on how long they had been on campus and had absorbed the complicated social rules dictating interactions between men and women. Most women arrived at university knowing few men, and while they quickly became acquainted with the women with whom they lived and attended classes with, men were harder to befriend due to the gender segregation on campus. During their first year, many women had crushes on men they saw on campus or knew superficially. This was due to the reality of the sexual segregation, which made it difficult for women to form meaningful relationships with men during their first few months on campus, but also reflective of the expectations of female behaviour in the

⁴⁶ King, "The Experience of the Second Generation of Women Students at Ontario Universities, 1900-1930,"

wider society. Harmless crushes were an easy way to affirm femininity in a safe environment.

Like many women, Lorraine Shortt had a few prominent crushes throughout her first year at university, but none was so pronounced as her crush on her English professor whom she called “Freddie B.” Her first impression of him was that he was “a youngish man, dark & sissy looking,” but she later amended her diary entry by writing “How did I ever think that!”⁴⁷ Throughout 1915, Shortt recorded all her interactions with Freddie. She reported proudly that she had made him laugh during a private conference about her work, and that “after the conference I fully realized for the first time that [I] had my first teacher crush... It’s awful but then its mighty interesting.”⁴⁸ Shortt, who was so nervous about sitting in the wrong seats on campus, happily followed Freddie when she saw him in downtown Kingston, and in the spring of 1916, upon spying him in the street, tried to take a photo of him without his knowledge. After Christmas, Shortt recalled that she was so excited to see him again in class that she “got red & forgot the answer when he asked me a question.”⁴⁹ Shortt purchased a photo of the English department so that she would have a photo of Freddie, and recorded the women with whom he danced with at various balls, even ones she did not attend herself. In her short list of “Important Events” of 1915, Freddie was listed after her arrival at Queen’s.

Shortt’s crush on Freddie was innocent, formulaic, and safe. While she recorded the women that danced with Freddie, she was also keenly interested in another professor,

⁴⁷ Lorraine Shortt Diary, 14 October 1915. UWA.

⁴⁸ Lorraine Shortt Diary, 8 December 1915. UWA.

⁴⁹ Lorraine Shortt Diary 11 January 1916. UWA.

Wilhelmina Gordon, who appeared to have a strong relationship with him. Shortt was not jealous of Gordon, as Shortt knew he was unattainable. Upon seeing Freddie and Gordon dance, she reported, “they danced beautifully together.”⁵⁰ The ritualistic nature of her crush is evident when she was excited to realize he was her “teacher” crush, and was socially acceptable as she showed her friends at home pictures of him and recounted stories about him. Shortt went so far as to pretend to have deep romantic feelings about him: “I love to tease Gwen by raving foolishly about him. She tries to get back at me by doing similarly about Mr. Cadhead.”⁵¹ Freddie was one of two men who figured in her diaries of her university years, yet she did not have a real relationship with him outside the classroom. In fact, the man in whom she was most interested throughout her years at Queen’s was mentioned only in passing. However her every thought and interaction with Freddie was recorded. Shortt’s social life was quite limited during her first year and she had few opportunities to interact with her male peers. Freddie left Queen’s before she graduated but once her social circle widened in her second and third years. There were men she admired from afar, but the relationship was much different when she interacted with them on a social basis and her crushes were not long lasting.

Kathleen Cowan, however, had crushes on many men during her first years at the University of Toronto. Unlike Shortt, Cowan had access to social circles in Toronto through her brother and a popular female friend. Her crushes were more fleeting since she interacted with more men socially. During Cowan’s first year she commented on the men she liked and recorded how they made her feel. For example, she wrote, “I just love

⁵⁰ Lorraine Shortt Diary 3 February 1916. UWA.

⁵¹ Lorraine Shortt Diary 9 December 1915. UWA.

that fellow's looks. *He* also came home with me and so set my heart a wildly fluttering and sent one to bed to dream of him by night and *of* Cutler [another crush].”⁵² Like Shortt, Cowan's descriptions of men she did not know well were much more flowery than those she knew and liked, similar to romantic fiction. She was “thrilled” by men touching her arm and dropped her eyes in “confusion” when she locked eyes with one of her crushes on campus. Like Shortt, when Cowan became more comfortable with the men her feelings were not so giddy. When she negotiated actual relationships and the potential of (minor) physical relationships, Cowan behaved and wrote differently.

Cowan's relationship with Mr. Lovering was indicative of the difficult situation women faced on university campuses. As noted in Chapter 4, most social outings required women to be escorted by men. Women could not attend dances without being invited by a man, and rarely went to the theatre with other women. This inability to navigate social events by themselves often forced women to choose between spending an evening out with a man they did not like or to stay home. Additionally, the only way to meet men was largely through dances, so that in order to expand their circle of potential male escorts, they needed to attend dances and social events. The social isolation could be quite painful, as Bessie Scott recorded during her first year: “I feel as if I were some old maid who had long ago gotten over all such things [as dances] & no body ever wants me to go anywhere.”⁵³ Scott unfortunately was not able to make many male acquaintances, and her social life was very limited as a result.

⁵² Kathleen Cowan, *It's Late and All the Girls Have Gone*, 27.

⁵³ Bessie Mabel Scott Diary, 21 January 1890. UTA.

Women who wanted to attend social events quickly learned that in order to do so, they often had to endure an evening with a man they disliked, some of whom had expectations for emotional or physical relationships. Cowan was popular among Victoria's male students, but felt unable to decline invitations to events she wished to attend. For example, when she was not asked by her first choice to a dance, she "decided discretion was the better part of valor and went especially as only three or four others of the [first year] girls were asked." She built a social relationship with a Mr. Lovering, attending concerts and skating with him in the fall of 1907. However, by the winter of 1908, she was not interested in socializing with him any more yet felt unable to reject him outright. She tried lying to him about her availability, but her Christian conscience made her feel badly about it: "It bothered me so I could not work all evening and tried to seek comfort from Edith *but it serves me right and I am so sorry. Better a thousand unacceptable calls than one lie.*" Asking Lovering not to call was not an option for Cowan, and so she was forced to endure his company, including a visit that she thought "would never end." Cowan did not write why she wanted to avoid him in the spring of 1908, but by the fall, perhaps due to her lack of other options, she wrote that "I wish Mr. Lovering would be nice again but I suppose it is my own fault." Lovering began calling on her again and she recorded her confused emotions: "I really do not know whether I am glad or sorry."⁵⁴ However, by January 1909, her problem with Lovering was finally clear. After he called on her at Annesley Hall, she wrote

He spoke something about theatre night but I do not believe I want to go with him. He likes me too well. I rather like him too, everything but his age his face

⁵⁴ Cowan, *It's Late and All the Girls Have Gone*, 63, 129, 137, 163.

and his attention and I like the sensible way he speaks about religion but I simply must not get too intimate.⁵⁵

As a fourth year student, Lovering presented special dangers to Cowan. He was eager to start his life, and since he seemed to like her so much, she was likely worried that he was forming a serious attachment to her, rather than the mildly flirtatious but friendly relationship she wanted. Cowan liked the comradeship, attention, and social opportunities she received from Lovering, but did not view their relationship as romantic since she did not find him attractive. However, she felt unable to lie in order to decline all of his invitations, so she began avoiding him at social gatherings so he would not continue his affection for her.

Lorraine Shortt also faced problems when she accepted invitations in order to attend events, rather than because she truly liked the man who accompanied her. In 1918, Professor Goodwin, the relative of one of her friends and a Queen's professor, invited her for a walk. She recorded her reaction: "I was too dumb founded [sic] to refuse. Fancy me doing such a thing with a professor –what next?"⁵⁶ Like Cowan, Shortt enjoyed the social status of a professor inviting her out, especially since, unlike Cowan, she did not have many other men competing for her attention. Relationships between professors and students were not viewed negatively; in fact, Shortt introduced Goodwin to her father, Adam Shortt, a former Queen's professor and Queen's Trustee. Shortly after their first walk, Goodwin invited her to a dance, and while she initially refused because she did not want to attend the dance with an older professor, she regretted her decision when no one else invited her and she was unable to go.

⁵⁵ Cowan, *It's Late and All The Girls Have Gone*, 192.

⁵⁶ Lorraine Shortt Diary 28 February 1918. UWA.

When Shortt returned to Queen's in the fall of 1918 she saw more of Goodwin. She recorded that he was "rather good" to her that fall because he invited her to several events. She admitted that "I rather like the man, in some ways; he's got more to him than I thought."⁵⁷ However, this was a small consolation, as she did not have any romantic feelings for him. She recounted being pleased that a student asked her for a last dance number before Goodwin so that she could avoid walking home with him. When he invited her to the Arts Dance in January 1919, she wrote in her diary: "I waveringly accepted. After getting an invite I was satisfied & didn't care about anything else. At least I can say I was asked! And that's the whole thing."⁵⁸ However, soon after she began criticizing him far more in her journal. Referring to him by his military rank, she described her embarrassment during an outing to a tearoom in February 1919:

Major G. & Dr. McKee took Marge & I out for a walk – Portsmouth way and thence, by car to the tea rooms. It would have been so much more enjoyable if Major G hadn't worn those abominable vile English knickers. As it was I didn't enjoy it much, people stared so. When he's in Rome, why on earth doesn't he do as the Romans do! I steered him off onto other topics every time he started to talk about the returned men's dance every time he brought up the subject. No thank you, even if you are returned. I'd rather not go at all—and I didn't.⁵⁹

She made a resolution not to accept more invitations, but broke it often because of her desire to attend the events.

In 1920, Goodwin began making physical overtures to Shortt, perhaps as a precursor to a proposal at the end of her final year at Queen's. She skillfully avoided places that he could make advances, such as refusing to invite him in at the end of an

⁵⁷ Lorraine Shortt Diary, no date 1918. UWA.

⁵⁸ Lorraine Shortt Diary 14 January 1919. UWA.

⁵⁹ Lorraine Shortt Diary 13 February 1919. UWA.

evening. However, the automobile provided Goodwin ample opportunities. After going to see a movie, Goodwin “had to spoil it all on the way home by being silly and trying to gaze at the stars [act romantically] etc etc.”⁶⁰ In September of 1920, his behaviour became more aggressive. After attending a play together, Shortt reported that “going home in the car G. was altogether too persistent about holding my hands etc and I decided I had about enough.” However, she walked up to her apartment only to discover she had lost her key. Her landlady was not home so she had to wait in the stairway:

Finally I heard footsteps and hoped it was Mrs. Carson coming home, but it was G. with my key which he said he had found in the car. It was very nice of him to bring it to me—but—a little scene was then enacted on the top steps, that I won’t soon forget, more’s the pity. Suffice it to say that once inside the door I couldn’t help saying a naughty word. I wish I’d said it louder so he’d have heard it. I didn’t get to sleep for a long time that night.⁶¹

Shortt also wrote that she suspected Goodwin had purposefully taken her key out of her pocket to catch her alone.

One of the central findings of Karen Dubinsky’s classic work on sexual violence *Improper Advances: Rape and Heterosexual Desire in Ontario, 1880 to 1920* was that the institutions that were supposed to protect women from violence often subjected them to it. Dubinsky maintained:

I found that when I examined the actual situations of reported sexual violence, those institutions most revered as centres of safety and moral authority—the family, the rural household, church picnics and ‘respectable’ employments such as domestic service—were in fact the sites of the most pervasive instances of sexual abuse. I contrast this discovery with the ‘discourses of danger’ about other bogeymen of the period: the wandering tramp, the dangerous foreigner, the scheming taxi driver, and the nefarious “Jack-the-Hugger.” All of these cultural stereotypes contain tiny grains of reality, but they functioned, I argue, to displace

⁶⁰ Lorraine Shortt Diary, 25 June 1919. UWA.

⁶¹ Lorraine Shortt Diary, 13 September 1920. UWA.

culpability for sexual exploitation away from those who did far more serious harm: boyfriends, neighbors and fathers.⁶²

Women were more likely to face sexual violence from men they knew than from “city boys.” Lorraine Shortt experienced this first hand. She believed herself to be relatively safe with an important member of the Queen’s community like Professor Goodwin. In fact, the matron of the unofficial residence for women at Queen’s had deemed him an acceptable date. However, he repeatedly coerced or assaulted her. Shortt’s records of these events are especially telling as Shortt was frequently circumspect about sensitive issues in her diary, as it was shared with her friends and sister. The fact that she recorded her dismay demonstrates her disturbed emotions. While Shortt did not give the specifics of the incident, her ellipses and silences indicate that something occurred that she was not comfortable even writing down, yet were bad enough that they kept her awake long into the evening. As Dubinsky demonstrated, women were not free from sexual danger within revered institutions or by prominent community members. Goodwin’s respectability as a university professor allowed him to avoid scrutiny as a potential source of sexual threat.

Women’s ability to interact with men on campus was fraught because most mixed events required men to invite women to attend. Women like Cowan and Shortt were forced to choose between attending the event with a man they did not like, and thereby expanding their social group, or staying at home. Both wanted to be well liked by their male peers. They were vulnerable to coercion from their dates due to the rape myths that maintained that the true threat they faced was from outside men, not those who had been approved as acceptable companions for respectable middle-class activities. Due to the

⁶² Karen Dubinsky, *Improper Advances: Rape and Heterosexual Conflict in Ontario 1890-1929* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 8.

few surviving records and self-censoring nature of the existing records, it is likely that these incidents were only a few of many of examples of sexual coercion of female students on Canadian campuses.

Some women did meet their husbands at university. Their courtships were long processes as they carefully determined whether they had complimentary characters and similar worldviews in an effort to create ideal companionate marriages. One such example is Miriam Marshall, who married Wesley Sheridan in 1925. They met while both students at Victoria University in 1916 to 1920. Sheridan was a fixture in her diary while they attended university, but he was never overtly favoured during her time at Victoria. They corresponded while Sheridan was overseas during the First World War, and he was appreciative of her correspondence:

I'll tell you straight Miriam you're a mighty good pal to correspond with. I wonder if you took the hint from the story in the St. Eve. Post about writing to the boys away from home to cheer them up!! Never mind I don't think you did, but I hope you understand how much they are all appreciated.⁶³

His appreciation for her letters went beyond her being a "pal," as he complimented her frequently on photos that she sent him (upon his request). He wrote that he was "quite struck on this picture of yours" in 1918, and in 1919 when she sent him a new picture he responded, "I'll just have to talk about that photograph again. The more I look at it the more I---. I'll simply have to put it away."⁶⁴

His letters during the war hint at the possibility of romance, but since hers do not survive, it is impossible to determine whether they were equally flirtatious. Based on

⁶³ CW Sheridan to Miriam Marshall, 14 August 14 1918. Miriam Sheridan fonds, Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa, Ontario.

⁶⁴ CW Sheridan to Miriam Marshall, 20 December 1919. LAC.

their correspondence from after the war, it appears not. In fact, she may not have seriously considered him as a romantic suitor until he proposed. They were engaged on 26 April 1921, and in a letter on 5 May 1921, she wrote “You seem to be meaning more to me every day, Wesley dear, and no person else has any interest for me at all. A little while ago I would never have thought I could have “settled down” so soon – and so easily!” She also wrote in the letter that, “Really, the more I think of it the happier I think we’re going to be.”⁶⁵ Their correspondence reveals the effort that they undertook to create a strong relationship and to determine their roles within the relationship.

The correspondence between Marshall and Sheridan indicates that while they strove for a companionate relationship, their equal education did not necessarily create equality in their relationship or inspire them to rebel against gender norms. Before they were engaged, Sheridan did not hesitate to offer advice about Marshall’s life. While her diary (and presumably her letters to him) indicates that she loved working in a munitions factory and fruit picking, he informed her that he did not approve of women working in farms. Based on his visit to a farm in Grimsby, he concluded, “Those girls had to work like niggers and let the farmers make all the money out of it.”⁶⁶ He did not approve of the physical labour he considered beneath Marshall’s racial and class status. He also warned her “Don’t work your head off in that munitions factory, thinking the war depends on the no. of shells you handle.”⁶⁷

⁶⁵ Miriam Marshall to CW Sheridan, no date (circa 1919-1921). LAC.

⁶⁶ CW Sheridan to Miriam Marshall, 20 March 1917. LAC.

⁶⁷ CW Sheridan to Miriam Marshall, 30 June 30 1917. LAC.

Sheridan also belittled Marshall's academic successes. In a June 1917 response to her letter, he wrote, "I don't wonder at Pelham Edgar giving you high marks in letter writing. I marked yours of May 27 pretty high and gave you an extra bonus when I found the snaps. They are certainly dandies, merci beaucoup."⁶⁸ When Marshall won an English prize in 1918, he also tied her academic success to her appearance and the professor's supposed interest in her:

No wonder you received that English prize—Congrats—I never heard of anybody that could write such English as you can. I think Pelham Edgar must like you pretty well. I remember when we were studying *Romeo & Juliet* and the Prof. made you some very nice compliment, you blushed so nicely. I felt like getting up and ____.⁶⁹

While Sheridan complimented Marshall on her academic successes, he also insinuated that they were based on the professor's attraction to her rather than grades that were earned. They were classmates but her femininity made it difficult for Sheridan to view her as a peer. After the war Sheridan continued his education in order to graduate with a degree in Dentistry from McGill University. Marshall was hired to do different types of work, including teaching and work in a laboratory, until they were ready to marry. Sheridan had a difficult time accepting the fact that Marshall was self-supporting and working when he was still in school. They also argued frequently in their letters, and Marshall seems to have constantly apologized for outbursts, such as complaining about the stresses she encountered at work. In a 1921 letter she wrote that

I'm awfully sorry dearie if I have been bothering you with telling so much of my "busyness" and "tiredness" but those two things have really seemed to form the

⁶⁸ CW Sheridan to Miriam Marshall, 12 June 1917. LAC.

⁶⁹ CW Sheridan to Miriam Marshall, 26 November 1918. LAC.

major part of my career lately, and of course one is the natural outcome of the other. But I promise “honest injun” never to mention them to you again.⁷⁰

While sympathizing with him for his busy exam schedule, he apparently was not pleased that she complained about the difficulties of her job, perhaps because it emphasized the fact that she did not require him to cover her expenses.

Marshall also embraced traditional gender norms. While Sheridan was stationed overseas, she wrote that she hoped he was behaving himself, as many nineteenth and twentieth century women attempted to use their influence over men to encourage them to behave morally. Once they were engaged she wrote rapturous letters detailing her love for him, and when she was upset about the distance between the two of them and the few opportunities they had to live in the same city during his time at McGill. One example was an apology letter she wrote in 1921 when she wrote, “I just live for the word I get from you. I suppose if you were here you’d call me a silly little girl, wouldn’t you?”⁷¹ She embraced her role as the weaker, emotional partner. After writing a letter that questioned his investment in their relationship, she again apologized for her behaviour: “But dearie you’ll never need to ‘lose your patience and haul me over the coals when I do it again’ – for I’m never going to do it again! I think I’ve at last learned my lesson.”⁷² Despite their unconventional equal education and her ability to support herself economically during their engagement, Sheridan and Marshall largely adopted traditional gender roles once they became engaged.

⁷⁰ Miriam Marshall to CW Sheridan, 21 November 1921. LAC.

⁷¹ Miriam Marshall to CW Sheridan 17 June 1921. LAC.

⁷² Miriam Marshall to CW Sheridan, 8 October 1921. LAC.

Due to the fact that many women allowed their sisters and friends to read their diaries, it is difficult to determine women's sexual interest in men or women based on their journals. Women were much more likely to express interest in men on whom they had crushes from a distance than to record their intimate feelings about men in whom they were truly interested. For example, Lorraine Shortt was more open about her admiration for Freddie B and her frustrations with Goodwin than she was with her actual relationship with a man named Hal. Despite exchanging regular letters and telephone calls with Hal, and even staying with his family for a visit at one point, Shortt rarely mentioned him in her diary. Miriam Marshall's diary entries mention many men and whether she enjoyed social events, but also rarely display any sense of sexual interest (or disinterest) in any of her male partners.

Kathleen Cowan's diary is a marked contrast to this. Cowan was younger than many of her classmates since she entered university at 16, so perhaps her immaturity was one reason that she was so candid in her journal. Her diaries show a teenaged girl who longed for some physical contact while understanding that it was not acceptable outside of marriage. When she visited her newly married cousin Cowan, she wrote "When I see Abbie and Ernest it makes me lonesome that I have nobody to hug and love me like that." She acknowledged that she did not want a physical relationship at the moment, but when Earnest put his arm around her during a cold drive home, she wrote that "the pressure of his fingers sent such thrills through me, I know not but they did and would again." Abbie seems to have noticed Cowan's interest in her husband, and the following day Cowan recorded that she had a discussion with Abbie "about boys taking liberties." Abbie's influence (temporarily) worked, as Cowan recorded that "I have decided here and now

that Ray Allison or any other boy will never do the like again, not if I never go for a drive. I have no dignity but upon my word I will try to find some.”⁷³ It is impossible to tell whether Abbie was jealous of her husband’s attention to Cowan, or if she thought Cowan’s sexual interest was too readily apparent. Cowan retained mixed emotions throughout her four years of university about driving with a man, perhaps due to this conversation. She enjoyed driving very much, but would often vow not to go out again, perhaps in an effort to keep her intention not to put their arms around her waist. However, she did retain an open sexual interest in men. When a classmate helped lift her over a fence, she wrote, “it is crazy but I loved the very touch of his arms.”⁷⁴ She was also quoted in jest in the Victoria University newspaper, *Acta Victoriana*, in responding to a query of whether “tennis make a man’s arm strong”: “Oh, yes. I should say it does. Why, it makes a man’s arms so strong that-that-that one can scarcely breathe.”⁷⁵

While Cowan was more frank with her sexual desires, she recognized the dangers of heterosexual contact, and the expectation that it was permissible only within the bounds of an engagement and marriage. Most women understood the dangers of premarital sex- after rumours were printed in a local paper about the hasty marriage of a cousin, Shortt maintained that “if I were that girl I think I’d slay the editors of the paper & then drown myself”⁷⁶ She also understood why her parents lied about her brother’s marriage, stating that it took place in England rather than the truth that he met (and

⁷³ Cowan, *It’s Late and All The Girls Have Gone*, 42-43.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 233.

⁷⁵ Cowan, *It’s Late and All The Girls Have Gone*, 303.

⁷⁶ Lorraine Shortt Diary, 5 February 1916. UWA.

presumably had sex with) his wife on a boat between England and Canada in 1917. The rumours about soldiers' activities overseas brought a new awareness of sex and sexuality to young women during the First World War, and dangers of sex were made explicit after the war as women were warned about venereal diseases.

Regardless of their relationships with men on campus, most women were eager to prove that their education did not negate their femininity. Florence Neelands, who graduated from University College in 1896, was one such example. When she wrote letters home she often included lists of the men with whom she danced and compliments about her looks. After a list of her partners she wrote, "So I did not fare badly did I? All those 'Varsity' men said they knew me quite well by sight- Horrid!"⁷⁷ While she objected to being known by her beauty, she still recorded the comment. When her father repeated a remark by another student, she responded that she was "not conceited mother, because it is only by contrast. For the most part the girls are ordinary, ordinary."⁷⁸ Neelands' most revealing letters are those she wrote in the aftermath of appearing in a silent role in the 1894 production of *Antigone*.

Before the production, Neelands wrote home to inform her mother that her costume was "so becoming," however the day of the production her costume was enhanced with makeup and hairstyling: "Mr Shaw makes up beautiful. He did us & we looked lovely. And our eyelids & under. The eyes were darkened to make them look big

⁷⁷ Florence Neelands to family, no date (circa 1893). UTA.

⁷⁸ Florence Neelands to family, circa 9 April 1894. UTA.

& their eyebrows marked & the hairdresser did our hair “a la” Greek at the expense of the classical society.”⁷⁹

Neelands recorded all the compliments she received that evening and in the following days. She admitted, “I never looked so fine really in my life.”⁸⁰ She repeated the accolades paid in newspaper reports of the play, which stated that she “looked sweet” and that the maids were “graceful.” She also pointed out in her letter that “Much nicer things were said to me in private—ahem.”⁸¹ One of those compliments included a man who was working as a stagehand who sang to her “Maid of Honor ‘ere we part/Give oh give me back my heart” as she was about to go on stage. Neelands’ younger sister Ethel, who watched the play, also reported back to her mother and father that Neelands was widely admired. Neelands memorialized her part in the *Antigone* production by being photographed in her costume a few days later, and exchanging her photo with men from the cast. As she debated which photo to choose, she informed her mother how well received they were:

But everyone likes the one kneeling down which I sent you. Isn’t it demure? All the men who saw it (there were several at Simpson’s when we went for the props) thought it was lovely & Mr. Reeve said my that one is beautiful. The photographer thinks the kneeling one is a prettier picture than any of those he took of Miss Steen or Miss Howlie or Irene.⁸²

Neelands’ confidence in her feminine appearance stands in marked contrast to her fear of interacting with men on campus, as outlined in Chapter 3. She thought that it was improper to play tennis on campus because of nearby male students. Yet she relished the

⁷⁹ Florence Neelands to family, no date. UTA.

⁸⁰ Florence Neelands to family, no date. UTA.

⁸¹ Florence Neelands to family, no date. UTA.

⁸² Florence Neelands to family, 25 February 1894. UTA.

compliments she received from male students and spectators while on stage wearing makeup. Neelands' experience demonstrates the pressure that many female students faced to reassure their parents that their education did not rob them of their femininity, which was a significant concern. Lady Aberdeen attended the play with her husband, and spoke to the female performers after the curtain closed. She told them "Dear girls let me ask you not to forget in cultivating your intellect to cultivate the more important growth of your hearts."⁸³ Like most female students, Neelands was constantly aware that her education was rendering her less feminine than the women who did not attend post-secondary institutions. Her participation in *Antigone* allowed her to reaffirm her femininity and to prove to her parents that she could uphold traditional gender norms. Despite this, Neelands never married and instead worked as a teacher and eventually became the principal of a girls' high school. Perhaps she was unable to find a partner that was convinced that she would still be a good wife despite her education or with whom she could build a companionate marriage. Alternatively, perhaps she already knew that she was not interested in a traditional life as a wife and mother, and was only attempting to placate her parents as they paid for her education.

Female students like Neelands found it difficult to navigate relationships with their male peers. They required a male escort to become involved in the social life of the university and often had to suffer through partners who were less than ideal. While few women attended university with the purpose of getting married, as has been suggested in the historiography, some developed strong relationships with their male peers that resulted in long marriages. However, the conflict between being academic peers with

⁸³ Florence Neelands to family, no date. UTA.

men and romantic gender norms made it difficult for women to create equal and companionate marriages. Female students found it very difficult to reconcile femininity and the broadened horizons their education gave them.

7. ‘The object of a ‘liberal’ education of either sex is the improvement of the individual”: The Purpose of Higher Education

Anne Shirley relished her time at university; she “enjoyed it thoroughly in all its phases—the stimulating class rivalry, the making and deepening of new and helpful friendships, the gay little social stunts, the doings of the various societies of which she was a member, the widening of horizons and interests.” She expanded her social circle and encountered people who were different than her neighbours in the small farming community of Avonlea. Social activities with other university students provided the academic stimulation she did not find at home, and her male callers came to “talk over ‘ologies and ‘isms,” along with more trivial matters.” While Anne and her friends won academic honours and celebrated their achievements, she believed that her character growth over the four years was just as significant as her academic growth. When asked what she learned at university, Anne replied, “I really have learned to look upon each little hindrance as a jest and each great one as the foreshadowing of victory.”¹ For most of her childhood, Anne was devastated by small mistakes and misfortunes and easily could fall into “the depths of despair.” Learning to overlook small misfortunes was significant character growth for Anne.

Miriam’s maturation was even more evident throughout *Miriam of Queen’s*. In fact, *Miriam of Queen’s* is both a pulpy romance and a bildungsroman that shows the maturation of Miriam’s personality and her happiness at finding a place for herself as an instructor at the Halifax Ladies College. The plot focused on her romantic life, and

¹ L.M. Montgomery, *Anne of the Island* (1915; reprint, Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1985), 83-84, 290.

chronicles the downfall of two potential partners, Sedley and Fife Boulding, but the novel also explored the transformative experience of university and the independence she gained as a result of her education.

From the beginning of the novel, it was clear that a university education encompassed more than attending classes. When Miriam first told her cousin Sedley that she intended to go to Queen's University, he offered to help her: "Miriam, you must profit by all my mistakes. You'll let me help you make your course better than mine was? I know you'll take higher rank; oh, yes you will. But there are other things than the curriculum." Miriam's cousin Elizabeth was also excited about Miriam's choice to attend university. While Elizabeth was newly married, thinking about her life at Queen's made her "hungry for the old stimulus and stir, the days of crowded lectures, the nights of study, and running through them all the fine threads of friendship. To feel justified in spending hours with Carlyle, Browning and such stalwarts, to know that one ought to read poetry, to be obliged to listen to inspiring lectures from master minds, surely this was making of duty a delight!"² Despite Elizabeth's happy marriage, she felt melancholy when comparing her life at home to Miriam's life at school.

Miriam experienced significant conflict between her old life and her new life at Queen's. When she returned home at Christmas after her first semester, she noticed changes in herself and her lack of interest in the female sphere of shopping and social calls that her mother and sister happily occupied. It was

the same old life, and yet with a difference. There was a feeling of expectancy, a sense of marking time, eagerness, through all her enjoyment, for the end of holidays and the return to college. She felt that the roots of her life were set in a new soil, that she shared her sister's interests in but a superficial manner, and the

² Lillian Vaux MacKinnon, *Miriam of Queen's* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1921), 19 and 56.

fact that she knew she must conceal this only proved how radical the separation was.

Miriam's sister Pauline was especially resentful of Miriam's preoccupation with university and her disinterest in the female domestic sphere. When Miriam told Sedley that Pauline believed she was dissatisfied with home life, Sedley disagreed. "Of course not," he told her, "But you've found something larger. You're out after big game." Mrs. Dan, Miriam's employer after her father lost his fortune, noted Miriam's evolution: "physically, as well as mentally, she was developing, and little Mrs. Dan, whose round eyes missed no detail near them, beheld with mingled feelings her unfolding grace and dignity. She was proud of the girl's growing loveliness, but she was afraid that she would lose her governess."³

When Miriam graduated and returned home to Ottawa from Kingston, she had a difficult time adjusting to a life of housekeeping. She awoke the first morning home with a "sense of depression and loss brooded over her. What could it mean? Then she remembered. There was *no more college*. The realization came like a dull blow. For a moment life seemed an utter blank."⁴ Miriam noted that Pauline was perfectly cheerful to be a housekeeper since she was unaware of how much richer her life could be, and believed "How infinitely happier the girl who has never tasted the joys of college life!" Pauline was hurt and resentful of Miriam's attitude. A college graduate neighbour commiserated with Miriam and told her that life was different after attending university. She told Miriam to:

³ Mackinnon, *Miriam of Queen's*, 112, 128, 188.

⁴ Ibid., 224.

put your University course into use. You'll wither on the stalk if you don't. It's all nonsense to talk about college girls being no good at home, afterwards, or perhaps it's all sense. They aren't any good for some of the trivialities. They are quite disqualified. You'll find you can't slip into your old niche at home. It would be a wasted four years if you could. Remember I don't say you can't find *a* place at home. But you can't find your old place. There must be readjustments. And to spend your spare time as Pauline does in fixing up her clothes for parties and going to them seems to me the emptiest sort of existence.⁵

Miriam recognized the truth in this argument and applied to teach at the Halifax Ladies Collegiate. She finally gained independence from her family and established herself as an individual. Her students admired her because of her teaching abilities:

It was in the classroom that Miriam really scored. For, once confronted with her old friends the poets, she entirely forgot her reserve and poured into the ears of the girls before her such a flood of appreciation, criticism and explanation as made them gasp. To hear her quote whole pages of poetry, to listen to her anecdote of literary geniuses, to catch and remember the descriptive terms she gave off, was at once the despair and admiration of the classroom. She was like a pony let loose in a field of clover.⁶

As a teacher in Halifax, Miriam was respected, admired, and was the guest of honour at parties. Her students and peers embraced and celebrated her intelligence. Her mother disliked Miriam's independence and so encouraged her to apply to a vacant position at an Ottawa collegiate, but Miriam was not interested in moving back home as she "had lost her heart to the grey old city by the sea, she loved her life of independence there, and looked forward to returning the Fall."⁷ Teaching allowed her to create her own life distinct from her family, to be known as an intelligent woman, and to determine her own priorities.

⁵ Mackinnon, *Miriam of Queen's*, 224 and 227.

⁶ Ibid., 259-60.

⁷ Ibid., 270.

Anne of the Island and *Miriam of Queen's* ended with the engagement of their protagonists. Both novels demonstrated why Gilbert Blythe and Hugh Stewart were ideal husbands for Anne and Miriam. However, a close reading of the books demonstrates that the engagements cannot purely be read as happy events for the protagonists, especially for Miriam. Anne's life was in upheaval because her roommates had already embarked on their own separate plans, so the life that she enjoyed at university could not be recreated once she agreed to marry Gilbert. However, she had just begun to gain literary success, as her first piece of writing was published in *Anne of the Island*, and unlike Lucy Maud Montgomery, the subsequent books in the *Anne* series demonstrate that Anne abandoned her literary dreams after marriage. Miriam's life was truly upended with her marriage to Hugh. His legal practice and life were in Western Canada, so upon her marriage Miriam had to quit her teaching position at the Halifax Ladies' Collegiate and move far away from the city she loved and the independence she cherished. Superficially, both novels celebrate the engagements of the protagonists and their resumption of traditionally feminine roles as wives and mothers. Both women loved their freedom and their marriages marked the end of their dearly held personal ambitions.

The novels show the complexities of university life and its purpose for early female students. Students and administrators wrestled with the purpose and value of an undergraduate degree for women during this period. While some supported women's access to white collar work, justifying the economic value of a degree was difficult as women who married were usually expected to leave paid employment, which nullified the money spent on a degree. As a result, students and administrators, like Montgomery and Mackinnon, characterized the value of women's degrees as a matter of personal

growth. Degrees created a “well-rounded girl” who was a credit to her family and community, whether she worked outside the home or within it.

Students took this advice to heart and participated in the many extracurricular activities the university campus offered to them. They enjoyed their freedom from domestic duties while at university, and embraced opportunities for further independence including temporary paid employment. The importance of this period in female students’ lives is demonstrated by their lifelong commitment to women’s university organizations and support for coeducation for younger women. Despite the problems they faced on campus, for many women their attendance at university was an exceptional period in their lives. Unlike modern women, female students had little hope of balancing a fulfilling career with family life. They knew that if they chose marriage, they were pushed back into the domestic sphere. If they chose to remain unmarried, as many university women did, they were viewed as unfortunate spinsters by society at large. For a short time at university, they were freed from the domestic sphere and unpaid domestic labour, and allowed to engage in activities in the traditionally male sphere, albeit in a limited fashion. During the First World War, women on campus seized opportunities for leadership that ordinarily would be barred to them and experienced truly life-changing opportunities. However, with the end of the war, the chief concern on campus became the returned soldiers and women felt a patriotic duty to step aside from their positions. University administrators and male and female students reaffirmed the primacy of the male student. Women remained fixtures at university by 1920, but were firmly established as the other, lesser student. In many ways, this is a metaphor for the women whose lives expanded while at university, only to contract upon graduation. Despite the limitations and

misogyny female students experienced on campus, it was a special time period in their lives.

At the turn of the twentieth century, supporters of women's higher education faced a contradiction in their support of women's university education. Increasing female enrolment made it clear that a desire for higher education was not limited to a small group of unique women and supporters argued that it was possible for women to study and retain their femininity. However, if this were true, why would parents send their daughter to university for a costly degree if she were destined to retreat back into the private sphere either after the completion of her degree or after her marriage? This contradiction encouraged advocates to endorse women's education as a matter of personal improvement—academically, socially, and morally. This argument negated the assertion that university education was wasted on women who married and remained at home caring for their children, and maintained instead that university education benefitted the woman's future children, and thus, all of society.

Student newspapers often explored the purpose of higher education for both men and women. One such example was a column in the *Queen's Journal*, which protested against male students' preoccupation with shallow entertainments and frivolous concerns (namely preoccupations with sports and women). The author reminded the readers of the true reason for a university education: "All the great men whom the world has ever seen, unite in declaring that the true aim of all education is to develop the man, and not simply to increase the amount of what he knows." While increasing knowledge was important, it was a means to the end, and the "end at which the college should aim is, as we have said to make *men* of its students; and the end at which a student should aim is to be a *man*."

Devoting himself to his studies, expanding his mental horizons and showing fortitude through long hours of study were the means of creating a strong character. Academics were the means, not the end goal: “Hence it becomes necessary for him to remember continually, that the ultimate aim of all this work is, not the passing of such and such exams, but the development of the highest that is in him. And to make some progress in this direction should be the first object throughout the whole of our college course, and indeed throughout life.”⁸ According to this editorial, the specific features of a university life of hard work, new knowledge, and experiences were key to creating an ideal man. Struggling through difficult courses improved fortitude and self-sacrifice, and so developed the “highest that is in him.”

Proponents of women’s education argued that it served a similar function for female students. In 1890, the Ladies’ Column of the *Queen’s Journal* reproduced a speech given to the Dominion WCTU by Agnes Maule Machar that argued in favour of women’s education. Machar dismissed concerns about female students’ health with the assertion that male students’ health was also at risk under the system with highly weighted final exams. She also maintained that menial labour was much more taxing than mental labour. She argued that women who were unable to find a husband had a right to an education that would lead to gainful employment. However, she concluded her speech by arguing that “the object of a ‘liberal’ education of either sex is the improvement of the individual; not that of fitting the individual for any particular career.” Machar also employed the arguments of the opponents of higher education for women to support women’s education. Women were “governed far more by instinct, by impulse, by

⁸ *Queen’s Journal*, 20 November 1890, 1.

affections, than by logic, by purpose, by physiology,” according to opponents, so Machar argued that women would benefit from higher education. If women were too flighty or prone to make decisions based on their emotions rather than based on logic, they required an education to improve their character. Canadian society was in need of

Thoroughly cultivated women who shall use the power and influence which, as women, they possess, not for selfish or frivolous ends, but to promote the higher ideals of life; who shall realize the nobler qualities of Wordsworth’s ‘perfect woman,’ while, at the same time, ‘not too bright or good’ for any sweet loving office of womanly care!⁹

Women could also achieve “the highest that is in them.” Through struggling with exams and meeting new people, women developed their own fortitude and emotional depths.

The personal growth experienced by women would make them ideal women, just as it did for men.

The “Ladies’ Column” of the *Queen’s Journal* consistently emphasized the personal growth women experienced while attending university. For example, in a column aimed at the incoming students, the authors asserted that

To belong to Queen’s, to be a Queen’s girl means so much more to every one of us. It should mean broader education of course... It means new friends, new ideas, new responsibilities. In our year meetings and societies, shine forth those artists, poets, orators, actresses and even house-keepers, who in the future will silence forever those oft-recurring articles with their odious question marks: ‘Does college life fit woman for her life work?’¹⁰

Students asserted that through social interactions, volunteering with student societies, and academic work, they improved themselves and created ideal women who could fulfill diverse roles in the public or private sphere. Through these activities, female students were “fitting ourselves for the future, of striving, by developing all our powers—social,

⁹ “Ladies’ Corner,” *Queen’s Journal*, February 14 1890, 116.

¹⁰ “Ladies’ Column,” *Queen’s Journal*, 27 October 1910, 31.

intellectual and moral—to learn that which will enable us to get the best out of life.”¹¹

While women could use university to improve themselves, the Ladies Column reminded their readers that it was also possible to harm themselves with too much devotion to socializing or by missing church attendance. When students returned to school in January 1911, the Ladies Column directed its readers to, “look closely into that piece of tapestry each one is so busily embroidering to make sure that no dull colours or tangled threads creep in to mar its beauty or its usefulness in the years to come.”¹² The Ladies’ Column argued that women’s characters were malleable while at university, and they had to shape their behaviour with care to shape themselves into ideal women.

The *S. Hilda’s Chronicle* was more direct in its assertion that the true purpose of a university education was character growth, rather than academic accomplishment, social success, or improved employment opportunities. In an article encouraging women to play for the St. Hilda’s hockey team, the author discussed the national importance of women’s moral, physical, and intellectual development. The column argued that Canada required women with serious and well-formed characters rather than simpering women who recused themselves from the serious matters of life. This argument maintained that

The notion has long been eradicated that a woman’s duty in life is to be able to say ‘sweet nothings’ and, still less, to delve into those serious matters of life which are the cares and the privileges of the sterner sex. A country’s strength, physical as well as mental, of her women, and we assume that it is the purpose of the College student to fit herself, to the utmost of her opportunities, to occupy this position of a rampart to her country.¹³

¹¹ “Ladies’ Column,” *Queen’s Journal*, 17 January, 1902, 25.

¹² “Ladies’ Column,” *Queen’s Journal*, 12 January 1911, 276.

¹³ “Hockey,” *S. Hilda’s Chronicle* Vol. 4, No. 1 (Lent Term 1904), 4.

Weak women who were ignorant of hard work, of the wider world, and of contributing to a social life were disadvantageous to Canadian society. Instead, St. Hilda's created women who would be strong mothers and community members. Rather than making women unsuitable to be mothers or to return to the private sphere, an education improved women's ability to do both by strengthening her character. A later editorial explained further the purpose of an education:

The only use of any education is to form character, and fit one for her place in life. If S. Hilda's turns out women of fine character,--noble, strong and true, with a clear insight into the meaning of life and a calm and courageous manner of receiving its carried incidents of joy and sorrow—how will its influence be regarded?—as a bad one, or as a good one? Surely it will be the latter.¹⁴

At St. Hilda's, students were expected to improve their character for the good of country and the university. Character growth was the primary purpose of education; school work was “a secondary consideration.”¹⁵

The *S. Hilda's Chronicle* argued that intelligence and character development created an ideal woman who was still very feminine. In fact, it argued that a university education increased a woman's femininity, as “College life, primarily, is a splendid means of developing *womanliness*.”¹⁶ By enduring the challenges of adapting to a life with specific rules and hierarchies in residence and engaging in hard mental work, a university-educated woman could become an ideal woman. According to the “Ladies Column” in the *Queen's Journal* and the *St. Hilda's Chronicle*, personal growth was not

¹⁴ “College Spirit,” *S. Hilda's Chronicle* Vol. 4, No. 3 (Micheltmas Term 1904), 56.

¹⁵ “English and Canadian College Women,” *S. Hilda's Chronicle* Vol. 5, No. 4 (Lent Term 1906), 5.

¹⁶ “To The Freshies,” *S. Hilda's Chronicle* Vol. 6, No. 4 (Christmas 1909), 7.

limited to male students. Both men and women could achieve “the highest that is in” them.

University administrators held a similar view that personal development was the ultimate purpose of attending university. However, depending on the university, they also emphasized women’s femininity, or their moral and religious development. At Queen’s University, the Dean of Women, Caroline McNeill, worked to ensure that the Queen’s girls had requisite training in their physical and moral lives. While the members of the Queen’s Alumnae Association were preoccupied with building a women’s residence, electing a female member on to the Queen’s Board of Trustees, and providing employment opportunities to the Queen’s students, McNeill provided lectures on art and music to accompany the women’s intellectual training, and tried to provide an alternate residence scheme so that the Queen’s women could benefit from exposure to a graceful French conversationalist. McNeill presided over a series of lectures on the “history of painting” and a general course on art, which began during the 1914-1915 academic year.¹⁷ She continued her effort to include non-academic studies of artwork in 1919 by placing reproductions of famous paintings around the Levana room “in order that the girls might become familiar with the form and outline at least of some of the best things.”¹⁸ McNeill was eager that her charges attained traditional middle-class feminine “accomplishments” of art appreciation and conversational skills.

¹⁷ “Statement of Adviser of Women,” *Principal’s Report 1914-1915* (Kingston: Queen’s University, 1915), 19.

¹⁸ “Report of the Dean of Women,” *Principal’s Report 1918-1919* (Kingston: Queen’s University, 1919), 50.

McNeill increased her efforts to incorporate traditional markers of middle-class femininity, a knowledge of art, music, and conversational skills, into the Queen's experience during the First World War, when women broke barriers such as sitting on the elected student government body and acting as the editor of the *Queen's Journal*. It appears that McNeill believed that the "Queen's girls" were missing out on feminine attributes as they tried to become ideal college women. In order to rectify this situation, McNeill also encouraged the hiring of a French-speaking woman, Anne Haynaud, to provide "French conversation at table" while students ate their meals in the residences. Haynaud, a "brilliant conversationalist," was part of McNeill's plan to open up home-like residences with a "lady" at the head who could provide instructions on manners and conversation as well as on the French language. This plan was bitterly opposed by the Queen's University Alumnae Association, who had already collected money towards creating a large and official residence on the Queen's campus. The Q.U.A.A., more attuned to the practical needs of the students, supported an official residence that encouraged academic achievement rather than emphasized traditional middle-class femininity.

Margaret Addison at Victoria University was more concerned about the moral and religious life of her students than was McNeill. In fact, Addison's view of the purpose of Annesley Hall was to "quicken the lives of the young women, spiritually and mentally."¹⁹ Addison, as a committed Methodist, believed her task was to improve the moral and religious character of the students under her care. In 1906, she began giving talks to the

¹⁹ Margaret Addison, Dean's Report June 1913-1914, Box 2 File 10. Records Relating to Women at Victoria University Collection, Series 2: Records of University Councils and Committees. 1990.064. Victoria University Archives, Victoria University, Toronto, Ontario.

students after tea on Sunday, about themes such as “unkind criticism, the need of self-denial, humility, &c.”²⁰ Addison used her influence over the students to encourage them to be self-sacrificing, deny themselves pleasure, and engage more in religious study. Addison believed a university education could be used to improve women’s moral and religious beliefs, and she did not hesitate to involve herself in the personal lives of her charges to encourage this behaviour.

Addison held missionaries in high esteem and encouraged her students to revere them. She also supported women who sought to become missionaries themselves. In 1912, she reported that a student had decided to become a foreign missionary “if permission can be obtained from her home people.” She noted that only one student out of 136 women in residence had agreed to volunteer with the foreign missions, and bemoaned the fact that “several students would offer themselves to the missionary field now if they did not encounter opposition from home.” Addison’s frustration with the lack of support from her students’ families is evident in her report, as is her belief that the students did not receive proper religious instruction from their families and were indulged at home. She concluded her yearly report by asking the Committee of Management of Annesley Hall to join her in “Earnestly beseeching God, that the young women, given into our care may be led this year and soon into a strong and aggressive Christian life, with such a vision of their duty to their God & to their country that they will in every way contribute to the Furtherance of the Kingdom of Heaven.”²¹

²⁰ Margaret Addison, Dean’s Report to the Committee of Management 1907, VUA.

²¹ Margaret Addison, Dean’s Report to the Committee of Management, 14 November 1912. VUA.

Addison believed that the moral and religious instruction her students lacked at home could be gained during their education at Victoria University. In fact, she believed this was one benefit of the First World War. In her report to the Committee of Management in June 1914, Addison hoped that the students would be less beset by temptations in the form of entertainments, and instead embrace self-denial and self-sacrifice. She asked the Committee of Management for “earnest prayer during the summer months, that there may be a spiritual awakening among our young women such as we have not known before.”²² In her 12 November 1914 report, she rejoiced in the change of behaviour among her students:

Never have we been so thoroughly happy, even though the national tragedy hangs a heavy cloud above us all. The household machinery goes smoothly, and the student government has never been better administered. We have at least the conditions which we have long desired, and with these as a background, and the spirit [illegible] engendered by the war, there is a seriousness of purpose such as we have longed for during many years.²³

Addison believed the war was beneficial because it encouraged religious growth and emphasized self-sacrifice and introspection, which she had long found lacking among her charges. In the troubled war years, she was able to help properly mold her students into ideal women. Addison believed that the moral and religious growth of her students was far more important than their studies. McNeill, in contrast, attempted to ensure that female students retained markers of middle-class femininity while studying at Queen’s. Despite the opposition of students and the Queen’s University Alumnae Association, she wanted women to learn elegant manners and the “finer things” in life, along with history and literature.

²² Margaret Addison, Annual Report to the Committee of Management 1914. VUA.

²³ Margaret Addison, Report to the Committee of Management, 12 November 1914. VUA.

While students and administrators publicly focused on the personal growth of female students while at university, many female students enrolled in university because of its practical benefits. Some administrators like Addison rarely focused on women's careers, whereas McNeill found herself embroiled in the matter of women's employment. In her first annual report as the Adviser of Women, McNeill outlined her responsibilities for female students. While not her first priority, she did acknowledge that "[t]here should be some one in the University to gather information regarding various lines of employment that may be open for women students, to whom application might be made alike by those desiring employment and by those who might wish to secure the services of trained students."²⁴

While McNeill was much more concerned about the state of women's boardinghouses in Kingston, she did examine how the Queen's students spent their summer. When she discovered that many worked as teachers in the western provinces throughout the summer months, she "spent considerable time in collecting information regarding the conditions under which they must work." Using the information she collected, McNeill gave a presentation describing the conditions women faced when teaching in the west and provided files on 100 schools. McNeill hoped this information would "eliminate some of the unpleasant features from Western teaching experiences," and eliminate the need for women to pay fees to employment bureaus helping connect teachers to rural western schools if she could establish one at Queen's for free.²⁵ While

²⁴ "Report of the Dean of Women," *Queen's University Annual Report 1910-1911* (Kingston: Queen's University 1911), 27.

²⁵ "Report of the Dean of Women," *Queen's University Annual Report 1911-1912*, (Kingston: Queen's University, 1912), 33-34.

she continued to provide information to prospective teachers, McNeill was also very concerned about the propriety of their travel arrangements. In 1913, she stated that she had spent nearly two months booking train tickets for students, and was frustrated with the students' insistence on traveling in "tourist" cars to save money, and the university's refusal to schedule examinations that could facilitate women travelling en masse out west.

Overseeing women's employment arrangements and their train travel out west was not part of the job MaNeill envisioned when she first accepted the position of Dean of Women. She was more interested in issues of propriety than any professional advancement of her charges. Yet she learned that female students were frequently required to work as teachers during the summer, and so she was drawn into the issue of women's employment.

While student newspapers discussed women's employment options and opportunities, the degree to which they supported that goal depended on the audience. The *Queen's Journal* allotted only one column to women, "the Ladies Department." The *Journal* was often hostile to women; it included letters to the editors challenging coeducation and female students' right to be voting members of the student government. The Ladies' Department examined different career options for women, along with many columns discussing women's natural housekeeping abilities—it generally presented a conservative viewpoint of women's purpose both within and outside the university. For example, the Ladies' Department's discussion about Queen's students as housekeepers maintained that they were naturally interested in and skilled at housekeeping duties, so

that “she is a queer girl who does not enjoy housekeeping in at least a general way.”²⁶ The Ladies’ Department described the educated women’s relationship to housekeeping:

Clever she may be, and in her element when surrounded by piles of books and pads and pens. She may revel in lectures and essays. But there is surely something radically wrong if she does not experience a distinct feeling of satisfaction, deep-dwelling, inherent, when she finds herself on even the sunniest of mornings, clad in a big check apron, polishing the breakfast cups. The real true college girl ought to enjoy such things more than ordinary mortals, for she knows a little bit of the fields of knowledge stretching all around and she can cherish that little glimpse most carefully while she rubs away at the cups and is happy that her education is not ‘like an ill-roasted egg, all on one side.’²⁷

This assertion reads more as a male fantasy than as the reality for hard-working female students. According to the Ladies’ Column, a university education created well-rounded women who had a variety of employment options. However the “inherent” biological interest in housekeeping and the traditionally feminine sphere of unpaid domestic labour ensured that female students were not made masculine by their education. While developing their intellect, they supposedly relished domestic tasks even more than the average woman because housekeeping duties brought them firmly back into a female domestic sphere. Regardless of their employment prospects, the *Queen’s Journal* argued that female students could be relied upon to embrace traditionally feminine roles.

Conversely, the *S. Hilda’s Chronicle* regularly reported on the benefits and disadvantages of different careers for its graduates and in so doing normalized the idea that St. Hilda’s women could have interesting and diverse employment options. The *Chronicle* was first published in 1901 in a monthly format, but was reorganized in 1902 into four yearly editions. The very first edition of the newly organized *Chronicle* featured

²⁶ “Ladies Department,” *Queen’s Journal* 25 April 1902, 28.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 28-29.

an article describing the life of a teacher in Japan and her efforts to evangelize her students. It also included a discussion of the benefits of the future Toronto Women's College Hospital and the option for women to be examined by female doctors, again demonstrating careers available to St. Hilda women. A 1903 article by Mabel Cartwright, later the St. Hilda's Dean of Women, described settlement and social service work and outlined why it was ideal for university educated women. This was because settlement homes allowed university-educated women to act as role models for lower-class women. Cartwright also acknowledged that many middle and upper-class women found meaning outside of the home:

Many thoughtful minds feel that the present system of education is not the ideal training for women, and is a very poor preparation for their home or domestic life, yet they recognize that as there are 'diversities of gifts,' so the home can no longer absorb all the energies of all women; and while other spheres are needed for their energies, so there exist outside the home many needs demanding their service and ministrations. It is just here that the 'higher education' movement must look for its true justification, because it can supply part of the need for trained service which every sphere of activity is now demanding.²⁸

Cartwright maintained that some women, clearly middle and upper-class women who would be freed from many domestic chores with the help of servants, were not happy to remain in the domestic sphere. Housework would not interest all women, and the influence of educated middle and upper-class women could be used to benefit Canadian society through efforts such as settlement homes. Unlike the *Queen's Journal's* Ladies' Department, Cartwright argued that some women were not satisfied by domestic housework and had gifts that could be used in the public sphere. While this notion was certainly shaped by ideas of race and class and of how white Anglo-Saxon women could

²⁸ Mabel Cartwright, "College Settlements," *S. Hilda's Chronicle* Vol. 3, No. 2 (Trinity Term 1903), 43.

influence the poor, Cartwright acknowledged that some women wanted to escape the domestic sphere.

The *S. Hilda's Chronicle* examined varied career options for women and provided analysis on the benefits and disadvantages of each. It was clear to any reader of the *Chronicle* that many women sought employment after graduation and benefitted from discussions about their options. For example, a 1908 article examined the career of a private secretary. In comparison to teaching, it was “much more interesting to the average mind... and is not so physical[ly] exhausting.” However, the author cautioned, “No one should become a private secretary, however, unless she has a methodical mind. She will have to keep accounts most likely, as well as answer letters, so that ability to spell and to add should be amongst her acquirements.” In contrast, graduates could pursue work in a reference library, but it “requires a wider knowledge than that of a private secretary.” While work in a regular library would be a “much easier position,” it “does not seem to require much knowledge of the books beyond their titles, and is not often undertaken by college graduates.”²⁹

The *S. Hilda's Chronicle* helped students find the ideal employment for their individual personalities and aptitudes. The number of articles on this topic demonstrates that this was a priority for female students, despite the assertion that they attended university for personal growth. Additional *S. Hilda's Chronicle* articles described the work required for missionaries, teachers, women attempting to enter into the business world, teachers, nurses, and doctors. The articles on professions requiring additional education, such as doctors and lawyers, included information on prominent women in the

²⁹ “Afterwards,” *S. Hilda's Chronicle* Vol. 5, No. 10 (Mid-Summer 1908,) 5.

profession, presumably in case students wished to write to these women for advice, and identified schools that accepted female students. During the First World War, the *S. Hilda's Chronicle* also described the different types of war work women could do during the summer months and provided snapshots of what life was like while completing the work.

The information supplied about St. Hilda's graduates in the *S. Hilda's Chronicle* was even more significant. The *S. Hilda's Chronicle* informed readers if a graduate went abroad or married and included information about their employment and professional lives. For example, a graduate working as a nurse at Michael Rees Hospital in Chicago in 1902 described her life:

At present I am on night duty, and have no time to myself. We report at 7:15 in the evening, and it is eight in the morning before we are free. We are obliged to sleep from nine in the morning till five at night, so you can see what little time I have. And, strange to say, I like it all. It is a matter of long hours and hard work, but the hours fly by, and the work is so intensely interesting that one does not feel how hard it is until it is all over—then comes that tired feeling. At present, I have charge of the male surgical ward, and a few private rooms. It is a particularly interesting ward—so much continual excitement. Emergency cases pour in at the most unpropitious moments, but they only add to the general interest.”³⁰

These reports of women's working lives demonstrated to current St. Hilda's students that it was possible for them to attain a career and to enjoy their work. Rather than platitudes about women's inherent love of housekeeping, the *S. Hilda's Chronicle* provided role models of former students that may have comforted current students who were unsure about their path after graduation, or who were reluctant to marry and retreat into the domestic sphere. While the nurse was very busy, she reported tremendous pleasure and satisfaction in her work. This is no small thing for women whose education alone

³⁰ “S. Hilda's Notes,” *St. Hilda's Chronicle* Vol. 2, No. 1 (Lent Term 1902), 13-14.

separated them from the majority of Canadian women, but who also perhaps held ambitions beyond university life.

A teacher working in New York City also described her experiences in the *S. Hilda's Chronicle* "Graduates' Column":

I wish I could say I were doing something original and interesting to tell about. Teaching grammar and rhetoric sounds sadly unprogressive and commonplace—perhaps especially so when I tell you that I find it interesting. The atmosphere of the school is full of life and inspiration, and the system of education unusually fine.³¹

St. Hilda's also hosted teas and speeches, including lantern slides, of visiting graduates who spoke about their experiences as missionaries, settlement workers, and other professions, thus providing information about possible careers for St. Hilda's students. The students were able to gather information about what to expect in a given career, whether it was right for them, and what type of work they would undertake. Most significantly, these reports demonstrated the satisfaction and happiness of women engaged in employment.

The "Graduates' Column" also celebrated the academic achievements of its former students. A 1902 entry informed the readers that "Miss Laing, '92, Miss Ianthe Constantinides, '98, Miss Katharine Talbot, '99, and Miss Beatrice Bovell, '00, intend to take their M.A. this year at the June Convocation."³² The *Chronicle* also told its readers that "Bryn Mawr has given scholarships to S. Hildians, Miss Newton '11 and Miss Ewart '12," or that "Miss Middleton is studying in Paris, France."³³ The information about the

³¹ "Graduates' Column," *S. Hilda's Chronicle* Vol 4, No. 1 (Lent Term 1904), 74.

³² Ibid.

³³ "Graduates' Notes," *S. Hilda's Chronicle* Vol. 7, No. 12 (Christmas 1912), 2219-20.

graduates' careers and further education provided evidence to young St. Hilda's students that academic and employment success was possible for them. More than that, it demonstrated that graduates of St. Hilda's were capable of creating meaningful and exciting lives outside of the traditional domestic realm. There was no guarantee that the nurse or teacher would remain unmarried and maintain their jobs, but the *Chronicle* provided examples of St. Hilda's students who rejected the domestic norm in favour of employment.

Despite celebrating women's employment opportunities the *Chronicle* was also clear that many of the St. Hilda's graduates would remain within the domestic sphere. More than any other university publication or private papers, it expressed the idea that returning home after university would require a significant adjustment and potentially make a graduate unhappy. It maintained that the "scene of her home may be a dull little town with commonplace surroundings." However, the "home-life after College may be the complement of the university career if the will and faith of the girl be strong enough." While missing the companionship of her peers and intellectual stimulus of university, it was possible for a woman who returned to the domestic sphere to enjoy her life. First and foremost, she would be "a help and companion to her mother... [and] surely she can answer this better after receiving fresh impulses and ideas at college." Women who were freed from domestic duties for four years at university understood the burden of domestic tasks. A university-educated woman was also primed to be an intellectual leader in her social circle. She could "share her books with others, be a real companion, talk and laugh,

and make others do the same.”³⁴ A woman’s education could brighten her social circle and local community even if she returned to the domestic sphere.

While presenting ways for university-educated women to enrich their home lives, the *Chronicle* was ambivalent about them returning to the domestic sphere after graduation. It acknowledged that there would be difficulties in adjusting to smaller communities and limiting their lives to housekeeping tasks. While the *S. Hilda’s Chronicle* included first-hand accounts of the excitement of graduates who worked as nurses and teachers, they did not include such articles for “home girls.” The *Chronicle* did not reject traditional femininity, as many graduates were wives and mothers. However, the students who wrote columns describing career options for women were more enthusiastic about paid work than unpaid domestic work as unmarried daughters. Even women who were wealthy enough that they would not need to help with domestic labour or find paid employment were encouraged to use the skills they attained at university to volunteer, as “there are various kinds of work which can only be done by girls of leisure, and for which a university training is a specially suitable preparation.”³⁵

These sentiments illustrate the conflicting position of female university students. They fought to retain their femininity while pursuing their studies, whether by asserting that the true purpose of their studies was to improve their character, or as previous chapters have demonstrated, by accepting their limitations on campus or by fulfilling feminine roles in romantic relationships with men. Yet many embraced the opportunities for independence and improved employment prospects.

³⁴ “A Question Concerning Graduates,” *S. Hilda’s Chronicle* Vol. 7 No. 10 (Lent 1912), 3.

³⁵ “Afterwards,” *S. Hilda’s Chronicle* Vol. 5, No. 2 (Easter Term 1905), 37.

Regardless of their plans after graduation, female students absolutely relished the independence they experienced on campus. While they were able to find freedom from supervision by sneaking in food and having small parties late at night, or like Kathleen Cowan and her friends, stealing back into residence through the fire escape, many students had little financial control over their lives. Women who received financial support from their parents often faced the common practice of receiving only small amounts of money at a time and had to notify their parents about each purchase. After Lorraine Shortt acquired a new hat (consulting with her mother as to whether it was acceptable), she wrote to inquire whether her mother thought it should be trimmed, which would cost an additional \$1.25 for the \$4.00 hat. She wrote she was “anxiously awaiting your judgment about the trimming,” as she did not have the money to make the decision herself.³⁶ In the fall of 1916 she wrote to her family that she needed money “tout de suite” since she did not have the funds to purchase a chemistry textbook.³⁷ While women like Shortt were certainly fortunate to have monetary support to attend university, they were not given discretion to make financial decisions. Instead, money was given out piecemeal so that the family still had a degree of control over the women’s lives and activities, even if they were hundreds of kilometers away.

Most women examined for this study, including women whose education was paid for by their parents, were consequently thrilled when they were able to have waged employment. They were middle class and the majority was supported by their parents for their tuition and living expenses. Since their parents tightly controlled the financial

³⁶ Lorraine Shortt to Elizabeth Shortt, 2 October 1916. Elizabeth Smith Shortt fonds WA10, University of Waterloo Archives, Waterloo, Ontario.

³⁷ Lorraine Shortt to Elizabeth Shortt, 6 October 1916. UWA.

support the women received, the ability to earn spending money was thrilling. However, their enthusiasm came from their middle class privilege, whereby they did not depend upon their earnings for survival but instead for pocket money. The financial resources and support of their parents made it possible to quit jobs they did not enjoy, the employment lasted only a couple of months during the summer, and they believed that once they completed their degrees they would have the ability to earn a higher wage. However, they viewed the ability to earn money themselves and have full control over how it was spent as something positive and exciting. In 1919, Miriam Marshall had the opportunity to work at the Simpson's department store for the day, apparently because of a large sale, and found the experience to be "heaps of fun, although of course it was hard work too." Marshall demonstrated her class privilege and view of the working class when she described presiding over the bargain table. She could not understand why shoppers chose utilitarian and cheap items over more expensive decorative items:

And such a collection!! – all kinds of the weirdest looking articles that seemed made for neither beauty nor usefulness. But they sold like hot-cakes, all the same, – to a certain class! They all had a foreign accident of some kind or other, and seem bent on getting the most quantity for their money. In vain did I praise the few pretty little cut-glass salad bowl or silver cake trays, for they all wanted something that 'looked more'!³⁸

Marshall enjoyed her day as a shop girl. She wrote that, "the best of the whole day was when we got our pay envelopes, with the big sum of \$1.75 in them, and went down to the basement to ring ourselves out... tired, but oh so happy!"³⁹ In *Toronto's Girl Problem: The Pleasures and the Perils of the City*, Caroline Strange described the harsh conditions

³⁸ Miriam Marshall Diary 19 April 1919. Box 2, File 12. Miriam Sheridan and Family fonds, MG 31-K27, Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa.

³⁹ Miriam Marshall Diary, 19 April 1919. VUA.

working-class women faced as shop girls. Stores prohibited the women from sitting down, from using the toilets at work, and they were viewed as morally questionable because popular myths suggested that their low wages and poverty could encourage them to succumb to “occasional prostitution” for additional funds.⁴⁰ Due to her middle-class upbringing and attendance at university, Marshall did not face moral scrutiny for her day working as a shop girl. She judged the poor immigrant women who looked for bargains, while she returned home to comfortable residence and used her wages as she wished.

Like many other students attending university during the First World War, Marshall also relished paid wartime work. When Marshall heard about a position available in a munitions factory near her hometown, she wrote in her diary about the details: “just a few blocks from home & can home [sic] for hot dinner at noon—1 hour. I can make about \$10 a wk with prospects of a raise & it’s a 9 hrs day 7a.m-6p.m. Isn’t that wonderful?”⁴¹ Marshall was thrilled to have a job, despite the fact that a nine-hour day was hardly light work, but monotonous labour in a hot factory. In any other circumstance, Marshall would have been horrified to work in such a setting and her parents likely would not have permitted it. However, the need for labour and patriotism of wartime made her labour in a munitions factory acceptable.

Despite the difficult conditions facing women who participated in wartime work, many were eager to do their part for the war effort, enjoyed the company of their peers, and made money that they alone controlled. Lorraine Shortt, Florence Neelands, and Kathleen Cowan received monthly or biweekly allowances and reported their spending

⁴⁰ Carolyn Strange, *Toronto’s Girl Problem: The Perils and Pleasures of the City, 1880-1930* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995), 22-23.

⁴¹ Miriam Marshall Diary 11 April 1917. VUA.

back to their parents. Lorraine Shortt had to secure her mother's permission to purchase new clothing, generally after sending back a description of each item for approval. The freedom from familial oversight on all purchases, including books and entertainment, was liberating and added to the appeal of war work.

Lorraine Shortt was desperate to join her classmates who picked fruit in Winona, Ontario in 1917. Shortt wrote her family for permission in 1917, assuring her parents that a "whole bunch of the dandiest Queen's girls" were going.⁴² She wrote in her journal glumly "I certainly don't expect a reply in the affirmative. However, nothing venture, nothing win."⁴³ As expected, Shortt's parents did not support her desire to work that summer, partially because they believed it was unseemly because the farm belonged to her uncle. The Shortts, who counted among their friends the Governor-General and his wife, believed such lower-class labour was below their family. They certainly did not want to give the impression that Shortt needed to work for the summer. Additionally, Shortt's domestic labour was also required at home. Upon receiving the letter prohibiting her from working, she responded "I suppose you know best. I'll try to think so anyway."⁴⁴ Shortt wanted to spend the summer with her friends. However, she explicitly wanted the independence it would offer her and the ability to escape the domestic chores she faced in her parents' home. She also wanted to escape her family's control over her spending.

The independence, social environment, and sense of contributing to the war effort made the summer at Winona worthwhile for many young women. One Queen's

⁴² Lorraine Shortt to Elizabeth Shortt, 30 March 1917. UWA.

⁴³ Lorraine Shortt Diary 1917, 29 March 1917. UWA.

⁴⁴ Lorraine Shortt to Elizabeth Shortt, 5 April 1917. UWA.

University student, Lois Allen, made a scrapbook of photos and songs to commemorate her summer in 1918. In her introduction to the scrapbook, Allen described life at Winona where she picked strawberries and then in Burlington picking raspberries. She said most women who were there became interested after hearing about the experiences from women who worked there in 1917. She wrote that the “girls all came from good homes and all were anxious to do their ‘bit’” for the war. Allen explained that the women lived “in a camp under Y.W. supervision, having the choice of either a room in the barracks where we ate, or a tent.”⁴⁵ The fruit pickers, then, were explicitly middle class women engaging in labour they ordinarily would have eschewed for the benefit of the war effort. The supervision from the Y.W.C.A. ensured that sleeping in tents or barracks did not jeopardize their reputation or chastity. They worked long hours, ten to twelve hours per day, hulling strawberries for jam in a factory, but they entertained themselves by “‘making up’ parodies & popular songs and telling stories to one another.”⁴⁶ Allen wrote that she “made friends for life” during the summer of 1918, and she recorded the songs and photos to commemorate her summer of friendship, relative independence and hard work.

Allen’s scrapbook shows that she and her friends believed their labour was a significant contribution to the war effort. They replaced the lyrics to the song “Good Luck to the Boys” with an ode to the female farmers:

Good luck to the girls in the khaki,
Just watch them do their bit;
For their country they are working
And the boys who fight for it.

⁴⁵ Lois Allen Album, Lois Allen fonds R1792-0-E. Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa.

⁴⁶ Lois Allen Album, LAC.

Till all of the crops are gathered in
We'll work right well you bet.
So give three cheers for our soldier boys,
And a cheer for the farmerette.

A verse in another song also shows their belief that their labour was important to the war effort:

We never put the old hoe down,
For it's better than loafing in town,
We don't want to shirk, so we must work
And when we work, we work, work, work
From morn till night with all our might
We pick, and climb and hoe and weed
To save all our crops and our soldiers too
We are working, why aren't you?

Allen and other women viewed their work as an essential war service, which justified them engaging in working-class labour in an environment most middle-class families would not have permitted outside of the context of the war. They enjoyed the camaraderie of other young women, but their primary goal was to earn money picking fruit. Allen glued mementos of her summer into her album, including her first pay envelope with the line "Do you recall that delicious feeling you had when you received your first pay envelope?"⁴⁷ While their attitude toward the fruit they picked was somewhat resentful after the long, monotonous days spent picking it, the song "Farewell" demonstrates this motivation:

Farwell to thee, my strawberry,
We hate to leave thee more than we can say;
We'll miss the goo, and the backache, too,
But more than all we'll hate to miss our pay.

Allen's scrapbook demonstrates the importance of this summer in her life. She was able to try something new as a "farmerette," and the long hours working closely with other

⁴⁷ Lois Allen Album, LAC.

women resulted in lifelong friendships. It also gave Allen a sense of purpose, freedom from supervision, and a degree of independence by having control over her wages.

Lorraine Shortt also knew that waged labour would provide some freedom from parental control. In 1918, Shortt again wanted to pursue waged labour during the summer months. However, her mother wrote to dissuade her, informing her “your father does not want you to take any ‘job’ this summer... He has more & more hugged the idea of going down to spend a holiday on the Magdalen Islands in the Gulf or near there off P.E.I.”⁴⁸ Shortt responded and conceded “I can see the force and sense of papa’s arguments all right and I have thought since that I’d be doing more good if I did more housework & let mama go freer from it than if I went into an office & couldn’t help her.”⁴⁹ Despite Shortt’s letter, she worried in her diary about her lack of money. She complained that “I can’t earn money any how and my allowance is gone up to the first of July already. I’m in a corner all right.”⁵⁰ Shortt spent the summers of 1917 and 1918 unable to take advantage of the employment opportunities available to women due to the war. She lived at home and helped her mother with domestic duties instead, as the family was unable to find a domestic servant. Shortt’s duties included preparing tea and cleaning dishes after eating. Shortt’s parents supported her while she attended university, and as the youngest and only unmarried daughter, Shortt had social pressure to stay at home. However, she would have embraced the opportunity to earn her own money and have a degree of independence. Her mother occasionally gave her gifts of money in appreciation for her

⁴⁸ Elizabeth Shortt to Lorraine Shortt, 13 March 1918. UWA.

⁴⁹ Lorraine Shortt to Elizabeth Shortt, 17 March 1918. UWA.

⁵⁰ Lorraine Shortt Diary, 23 April 1918. UWA.

domestic work, but for Shortt, it was not equivalent to waged labour with a predictable pay rate and having control over the proceeds.

Florence Neelands expressed feelings of guilt and the need to return home to help her mother with domestic duties. She frequently wrote to express concern about the work required of her mother to run the Neelands household. Throughout the spring of 1894, Neelands worried about her mother's health. On 13 May, she wrote "I am so sorry you are having such a miserable time this spring. No girl & housecleaning & sickness... If I were at home to help you!"⁵¹ While in Toronto, Neelands did her best to help with ordering clothing for her younger sister, Ethel. However, by June, she decided that she needed to return home to help with the household labour. She wrote to her mother,

It was so good of you to say it did not matter if I wanted to stay longer & that I might. But, dear heart, that was just like you always sacrificing yourself for me. I know what a perfectly miserable spring you had tho' you did not tell me about it. But, dear Mother, I had made up my mind that I ought not to stay for Commencement etc and now I think I had better come home really. I want to get back to you.⁵²

Neelands was more positive about returning home to help with domestic duties than was Shortt. As unmarried daughters, they both (Shortt albeit begrudgingly) recognized their familial duties to perform unpaid domestic labour. Interestingly, both women ultimately spent their lives working in the public sphere for wages rather than in the domestic sphere: Shortt as a social worker and Neelands as a teacher and later a principal. While this was largely due to their status as single women, perhaps both women decided that the independence they found at university (and that was denied to them over the summer)

⁵¹ Florence Neelands to family, 13 March 1894. File 01, Box 01 B1987-0012. Florence Neelands fonds, University of Toronto, Toronto Ontario.

⁵² Florence Neelands to family, 2 June 1894. UTA.

was better than domestic labour. Shortt seems to have had at least one marriage proposal, but decided that working was preferable to domestic duties.

For women like Neelands and Shortt, their university education and subsequent employment allowed them greater freedom to remain single. They were not alone. In their study of Queen's University students, Marks and Gaffield found that between 1895 and 1900, only 55% of women who graduated from Queen's married, compared to 88% of Canadian women.⁵³ It is impossible to determine whether or not those women remained single because they were unable to demonstrate appropriate femininity and appeal to male students or because they chose to remain unmarried. Yet the experiences of Lorraine Shortt and Florence Neelands demonstrate that for some women, their university education gave them more flexibility with their romantic relationships. If they did not find ideal partners, they were able to seek employment and did not risk the financial vulnerability of being an unmarried and unemployed woman. While administrators did not envision this as a purpose of higher education (and in fact went to great pains to characterize female students as ideal domestic women in public reports), many students were able to use their education to obtain some independence and self-sufficiency in their lives.

Similarly, many official histories of the First World War presented idealized self-sacrificing female students who were eager to do what they could to support the war effort. As male students enrolled in the war, "Women students found an activity deemed

⁵³ Marks and Gaffield, Lynne Marks and Chad Gaffield, "Women at Queen's University, 1895-1905: A 'Little Sphere' All Their Own?" *Ontario History* Vol. 78, No. 4 (1986), 343.

suitable to their sex in working for the Red Cross.”⁵⁴ Yet the First World War offered female students unprecedented opportunities for independence, self-sufficiency, and leadership roles on campus. As male students left school to fight at the front, women took up traditionally male positions on university campuses. At Queen’s University, women ran for the executive of the Alma Mater Society (the A.M.S.) for the first time during the war. Lorraine Shortt recorded her excitement: “There was wild excitement in the air. For the first time in the history of Queen’s, two girls had been chosen to run on the A.M.S. executive.”⁵⁵ As noted earlier, she was contemptuous of the women’s opponents, believing that they, “to put it mildly, could go to the war if they tried hard enough. I never realized before that there are more than one or two slackers around this place. That is disgusting all right.”⁵⁶ Charlotte Whitton and Eva Coon were elected. It was also during the war that Charlotte Whitton became the first female editor of the *Queen’s Journal* in 1917-1918, and Miss May Macdonnell and Miss Wilhelmina Gordon, daughter of the principal, were hired as general academic staff in 1917.⁵⁷ Women embraced leadership positions, new roles in fundraising, and also a more lax social and dating environment on campus.

Some female students were excited by the presence of soldiers on campus. In 1915, Lorraine Shortt complained about a small party with “a lot of fossils” that was luckily livened up by some officers. At the end of the entry, she noted that the officers

⁵⁴ Hilda Neatby, *Queen’s University Vol. 1 1841-1917* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1978) 297.

⁵⁵ Lorraine Shortt Diary, 24 November 1916. UWA.

⁵⁶ Lorraine Shortt Diary, 24 November 1916. UWA.

⁵⁷ Neatby, *Queen’s University Vol. 1 1841-1917*, 303.

were “leaving for good on Sat.”⁵⁸ While many of the social events she attended were fundraisers for war-related causes, her notes in her diary were more concerned with the quality of her dance partners. After complaining about a tea her mother held to fundraise, Shortt noted, “Never mind though we made \$170 for the poor Serbs & Poles.”⁵⁹ She attended church services with departing soldiers that were “very impressive” and a “social afternoon to give a farewell to the boys of the year going with the hospital unit. I had a dandy time at it.”⁶⁰ Shortt understood the brutality of the war, but it did not stop her from enjoying flirting with soldiers and social events.

Shortt also wrote letters to men at the front, which she described as “Peggy Mary” letters, because that was the name she signed to them. She was thrilled to hear back from her unknown correspondent, writing that, “it was given to an adorable boy and he answered it. The letter was the most original, funniest, cheeriest thing imaginable. My but I was, and am, tickled. The adorable’s name is Harvie R. Erb. I shall write him another “Peggy Mary” letter “vivement.”⁶¹ The next line of her diary complained about the quality of men in her year at Queen’s. It was clear that she enjoyed the flirtation with her “Peggy Mary” man. After receiving another letter from him she recorded in her diary that she was “so glad to hear he was live after all—and well—and as witty as ever.” In her response to him, she “put snaps of a group of all the Avonmore girls in fancy dress & told

⁵⁸ Lorraine Shortt Diary, 17 December 1915. UWA.

⁵⁹ Lorraine Shortt Diary, 29 December 1915. UWA.

⁶⁰ Lorraine Shortt Diary, 23 January 1916. UWA.

⁶¹ Lorraine Shortt Diary, 15 January 1917. UWA.

him I was in it!”⁶² Apart from her flirtation, she was frequently anxious about his safety after gaps in their correspondence.

Miriam Marshall enjoyed the relaxed rules of conduct between men and women on campus and elsewhere. While working in the munitions factory she reported that she was working with only one other female friend, and they had “lots of fun entertaining all the men in the factory!”⁶³ Marshall was much more adventurous than Shortt (or had more opportunities than Shortt did, as Marshall seems to have been more popular among the male students). In a September 1917 journal entry, she wrote: “Went for motor ride with Sheridan--& drove part of the way!—all round Toronto!”⁶⁴ Driving along with a man all around Toronto was certainly not supported by Margaret Addison. Again in October, Marshall described an evening when a mixed group “went for ride around city until 12.30! & Jean driving most of the way too! Joyce let us in without having to ring the bell.”⁶⁵ Marshall enjoyed the romanticism of the soldiers, and reported a dinner where she “had the grandest time & met the most wonderful man!!—a returned officer... He was a terrible flirt, but it has been so long since I’ve met a really exciting man that I simply raved about him for an hour after I got home.”⁶⁶

Female students were expected to provide volunteer war work while at university. *A S. Hilda’s Chronicle* editorial on “Women and War Work” described the sentiments of many students: “We are heart and soul with the allies and would consider no sacrifice

⁶² Lorraine Shortt Diary, 1 March 1918. UWA.

⁶³ Miriam Marshall Diary, 14 August 1917. LAC.

⁶⁴ Miriam Marshall Diary, 29 September 1917. LAC.

⁶⁵ Miriam Marshall Diary, 15 October 1917. LAC.

⁶⁶ Miriam Marshall Diary, 22 November 1917. LAC.

too great to make for their cause.” Despite their ardor, “While we would esteem no sacrifice too great, while we are burning to do great deeds for the Empire... Our task lies in the smaller things, that are hard to do because we lack the inspiration that accompanies a great sacrifice. What we are chiefly called upon to do is give what we can to the Red cross and Patriotic Fund, or do a few hours Red Cross work a week. And this is the easiest duty to shirk.”⁶⁷ Shortt and Neelands both participated in “rolling bandages” throughout the school year. While home during the summer in Ottawa, Shortt volunteered with the Red Cross, was made “Captain of the Gauzes”, and noted “two captains in our family now! It’s fun saluting.”⁶⁸ Despite her sly sense of humour, being home in Ottawa made her much more aware of the war news, especially during the Battle of the Somme.

The volunteering on campus increased in the fall of 1917. Shortt reported:

Quite a few of the girls did war work on the grounds raking leaves. Some did one hour, some two & some three. I did two and got 40 cents! Which I put in the Red Cross box at the Y.W. sale. I think all the girls did or at any rate intended to. Every thurs. we either make gauze shirts or dip them to make them Vermin proof and send them off to the front. The stuff is awfully hard on your hands- but then it only lasts a little while... Every Monday at eleven I go over to the Red Cross Rooms and pack or whatever is to be done for an hour.⁶⁹

Conscription seems to have required more women’s work on campus, or resulted in more peer pressure to undertake war work. Either way, it was clear that the War gave women a more prominent position on Canadian campuses, and they stepped into positions of leadership.

⁶⁷ “Women and War,” *S. Hilda’s Chronicle* Vol. 7, No. 21 (Lent 1916), 9.

⁶⁸ Lorraine Shortt Diary, 7 June 1916. UWA.

⁶⁹ Lorraine Shortt Diary, 9 December 1917. UWA.

Like most Canadians, Lorraine Shortt was joyful when she heard the news of the Armistice. She ran over to the Avonmore residence, from where she and other Queen's students ran downtown to the newspaper office to confirm the news. They ended up on a milkman's truck, which "took us all in and motored us up and down Princess St. & all around for over an hour... We had flags etc & Queen's banners for decoration."⁷⁰ However, little did she or other women realize that with the end of the war came the expectation that women would retreat from positions of leadership and authority and cede them to returned soldiers. Even before the end of the war, Shortt corresponded with her mother about Charlotte Whitton, one of the first female members of the A.M.S., the first female editor of the *Queen's Journal*, and later longtime mayor of Ottawa. They discussed Whitton's decision in 1918 to decline a job with the federal government. Shortt explained to her mother that, "I was so surprised to hear Lottie had withdrawn her [job] application but I saw her yesterday she said it was because of C.H. Girdler—a returned soldier with very good qualifications—who had his application in etc. She is sure of getting some good position somewhere I suppose but even so I think it is dandy of her for she certainly did want the position."⁷¹ Despite her many qualifications, Whitton felt obliged to withdraw her candidacy in favour of a returned officer.

As soldiers returned from overseas, university authorities reinforced the primacy of the male student on campus. Beginning in 1911, the Queen's University Alumnae Association (Q.U.A.A.) and the Y.W.C.A. proposed building an official women's residence, with the support of the Queen's trustees, with a promise that the university

⁷⁰ Lorraine Shortt Diary, 11 November 1918. UWA.

⁷¹ Lorraine Shortt to Elizabeth Shortt, 8 April 1918. UWA.

would match funds raised by the Q.U.A.A. However, the plan was halted after the war due to the belief that a more fitting monument to the sacrifice of Queen's men who died in battle would be a new student union building. The Q.U.A.A. felt betrayed by this decision, especially after years of fundraising. Feeling isolated and believing that only women would support each other, the Q.U.A.A. set out upon the task of fundraising the money required to build a women's residence. Despite many setbacks, the QUAA eventually raised \$800,000 that was matched by the university, and Ran Righ hall opened in 1923.⁷²

It was impossible for students to ignore the changes on campus after the First World War. On 14 November 1919, an editorial in the *Queen's Journal* bemoaned the changes the students found at Queen's after the war. Entitled "The New Order," it argued "there remains a serious omission in our life this term. The old traditions are openly broken and occasionally consciously flaunted. There are traditions in dress which are perhaps wisely forgotten, for the influence of military life has brought to the walking-stick and to the moustache a new tolerance." The writer disapproved of dandyish style of dress and implied it was adopted to appeal to female students. He also disapproved of the mixing of male and female students on campus:

There are little regulations about where undergraduates go, and where they cannot go. In the New Arts Building especially, the majority who have formed its acquaintance this year have unfortunately broken almost every regulation that the Levana Council and the Arts Concurus had ever formulated and enforced, especially in regard to the use of the stairs and in regard to smoking. The corridors, this term, have frequently seen members of the Arts Society and of Levana in earnest conversation....⁷³

⁷² Frederick Gibson, *Queen's University Volume II 1917-1961* (Kingston and Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1983), 28, 40.

⁷³ "The New Order," *The Queen's Journal*, 14 November 1919, 2.

The student believed that the guidelines for appropriate behaviour broke down on the Queen's campus after the war. Men and women ("Levana") spoke to each other in the hallway and no longer upheld formal standards, making the student question the system of coeducation. Male students also seemed to relish flirting with women, who, prior to the war, were viewed as a distraction from the true purpose of higher education for men. How could the university develop "the best in that is in him" if male students were preoccupied with their appearances and flirting with their female classmates?

This male student was not alone in his argument that traditional expectations about student behaviour were breaking down in the aftermath of the First World War. Reports by the Dean of Women at Annesley Hall demonstrate that social mores changed so significantly after the war that Addison felt that maintaining the pre-war rules was impossible. In 1919, she noted that the two great crises of the academic year were "the influenza and the dancing."⁷⁴ While refusing to host dances at Annesley Hall, by 1921 Addison accepted that they had become a part of social life in Canada. She defended her position to chaperone the dances by arguing that "This is a new departure but after most careful thought it seemed wiser in these days, since public opinion has so greatly changed, to give a wide latitude to these things which are matters of decision for individual consciences."⁷⁵ Broader social changes forced Addison to recognize that her students would not accept the rules she established in 1906.

⁷⁴ Margaret Addison, Dean's Reports to Committee of Management 13 February 1919. VUA.

⁷⁵ Margaret Addison, Dean's Report 10 March 1921. VUA.

The rise of dance halls and restaurants was deeply concerning to Addison. She met with the female heads of the colleges, along with University of Toronto President Falconer's wife, to propose university-wide resolutions:

1. To limit social functions to two nights a week, preferably Friday and Saturday.
2. To have social functions close not later than 12. And to exercise some control over the character of them.
3. To reduce expenses – taxis, flowers, candy, etc., refreshments.
4. To discourage attendance among the men and women students at public dancing halls, and restaurants and hotels after theatres.⁷⁶

The university did not adopt these resolutions, largely due to male administrators being unwilling to curtail male behaviour, especially in the case of returned soldiers. Addison blamed the men's experiences overseas for their unwillingness to respect rules placed on the women's behaviour when none was placed on their own. Men encouraged women to break the rules at Annesley, and telephoned outside of approved hours. She argued that male students pressured her female students, who were otherwise well behaved, to disregard the rules.

The dangers of the dance halls were clear to Addison. She argued that public dance halls were less selective than private ones, and drunken men could obtain entry occasionally. This exposure to drunken people "present[ed] dangers," presumably in the form of a temptation to drink alcohol or to behave inappropriately. Addison felt a particular responsibility to anyone in residence:

The student in residence is away from home, and the powers that be are responsible to her parents for the kind of ideals that surround her at College & for her safety. Few parents would be so careless as to feel comfortable if their daughters went to public dancing halls, often with men whom they meet for the first time in a large city, who are unknown to either their home people or to the

⁷⁶ Margaret Addison, Dean's Reports to Committee of Management 13 February 1919. VUA.

authorities. Should anything unpleasant occur, the authorities would be held responsible.

Lastly, Addison called on Victorian notions of innocent women, as she argued, “The bloom and sweetness of youth is lost in such places.”⁷⁷

Rule breaking was not the only threat from the male students. In 1921, Addison organized lectures on “the origin of life & venereal diseases.”⁷⁸ While she was initially unsure about the reception by the women, she claimed, “such students as I have heard express themselves have been grateful for the first talk.”⁷⁹ The high number of soldiers who contracted venereal diseases while serving overseas necessitated sexual education for the Victoria University women. Addison believed her charges had to be protected from the dangerous influence, both physical and moral, of the young men. Prior to this period, sexual danger appeared in the form of lower class men who could intercept university students on city streets. If Addison approved of a date, he could walk an Annesley student home after a dance. Addison and the other administrators in Ontario did not believe that the male students presented sexual danger to the female students. Yet after the returned soldiers’ experiences in Europe, Addison believed she needed to protect female students from their male peers.

The changes on campus were initiated by young men and permitted because administrators believed that doing so supported returned soldiers. Social mores changed, sometimes benefitting women and giving them more choice about where to attend dates, but the university was also reestablished as a masculine territory. As discussed in Chapter

⁷⁷ Margaret Addison to Lady Falconer, 1 February 1919. VUA.

⁷⁸ Margaret Addison, Dean’s Report 10 March 1921. VUA.

⁷⁹ Margaret Addison, Dean’s Report 9 February 1922. VUA.

3, when female athletes at Queen's asked to wear the golden "Q" that male athletes wore in 1916 they were rejected on the grounds that it served as "a sacred tribute to those our athletes who so proudly wore their letters while at Queen's and who have since sacrificed their lives in the defense of the Empire."⁸⁰ Women were not permitted a building at Queen's until a men's student union was built. When male students flaunted the rules at Victoria University, Margaret Addison concluded that to uphold strident rules would be unfair to returned veterans.

Women enjoyed increased opportunities during the First World War, including employment opportunities that allowed them to keep the money they earned for their own use rather than provide accounts to their parents of money they were given by them. Some women were able to take on leadership positions, while others enjoyed relaxed rules about flirtations between men and women. Yet at the end of the war, the university reinforced its focus on male students to honor the sacrifices made by them during the war. When men objected to restrictions on dances and dance halls, these rules were changed, despite objections from female administrators across the University of Toronto. Men and women had greater opportunities to converse on campus and flirting was more openly accepted. Old rules were relaxed in recognition of the sacrifice of male students during the War. While some women such as Addison attempted to protect female students and encouraged sexual health discussions, the university at large seemed to believe that it could no longer impose morality over its male students. Female students were reminded of their secondary status, and most importantly, of their primary role as romantic partners to the male students. Like Charlotte Whitton, they were expected to

⁸⁰ Queen's University, *Principal's Report 1919-1920* (Kingston: Queen's University 1917), 48.

stand aside for returned soldiers as they resumed their rightful place at the forefront of Canadian society. The leadership and economic opportunities women obtained during the war, just like the freedom they experienced as university students, shrunk as men returned. Despite the unquestioned presence of women, the university was reaffirmed as primarily a male domain.

8. “The Happiest of My Days”: Conclusion

In 2014, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation revealed detailed misogynistic and homophobic comments written online by male students at the Dalhousie Faculty of Dentistry. The comments included an online poll asking which female classmate the male students most wanted to “hate fuck,” and described the penis as “the tool used to wean and convert lesbians and virgins into useful, productive members of society” which another student defined as “chefs, housekeepers, babysitters, etc.” Female students complained about a sexist environment in the Faculty of Dentistry where a male professor played a video of swimsuit models in class to “wake up” the students.¹ An official investigation into the culture found these comments “did not emerge in a vacuum, but within a particular culture. We found that modern norms about equity do not seem to have gained much ground in Dentistry. The culture condoned sexist, misogynistic, homophobic, and racist behaviour.”²

The report acknowledged, however, that this environment was not unique to the Faculty of Dentistry or even to Dalhousie University. In 2013, frosh orientation leaders at Saint Mary’s University taught a cheer to incoming students that included the lyrics “Y is for your sister... U is for underage, N is for no consent... Saint Mary’s boys we like them

¹ “Dalhousie dentistry students speaks out about sexism in faculty,” CBC News (17 December 2014), <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/nova-scotia/dalhousie-dentistry-student-speaks-out-about-sexism-in-faculty-1.2876591>

² Constance Backhouse, Donald McRae and Nitya Iyer. “Report of the Task Force on Misogyny, Sexism and Homophobia in Dalhousie University Faculty of Dentistry,” (26 June 2015), 66. <https://www.dal.ca/content/dam/dalhousie/pdf/cultureofrespect/DalhousieDentistry-TaskForceReport-June2015.pdf>

young.”³ A similar chant celebrating raping underage girls was also sung at the University of British Columbia in 2013.⁴ In 2015, students at the University of British Columbia said that they felt “abandoned” by the university after at least six women complained to the university about sexual assaults and harassment by a graduate student and the university did not expel the student for a year and a half after the first complaint.⁵ Each incident resulted in a public outcry, yet similar events have occurred for centuries on Canadian campuses, including the most violent assault on women on university campuses: the 1989 murder of 14 female students at the École Polytechnique in Montreal by a lone gunman who targeted them as feminists.

This resistance to female students on university grounds by male students and professors has strong historical parallels. Just as Dalhousie dental students were made uncomfortable by their male professor, so was Kathleen Cowan in 1909, when her male professor made remarks about divorce.⁶ In 1889 Bessie Scott discovered that her professor at the University of Toronto, who denied “that he objects to ladies” had celebrated their absence from his class when only male students were present.⁷ Like the Dalhousie men who rated the sexual desirability of their peers on an online forum, in 1909 students at The University of Western Ontario published a poem in the school

³ “Saint Mary’s University frosh chant cheers underage sex,” CBC News (5 September 2013), <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/nova-scotia/saint-mary-s-university-frosh-chant-cheers-underage-sex-1.1399616>

⁴ “UBC investigates frosh students’ pro-rape chant,” CBC News (9 September 2013), <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/ubc-investigates-frosh-students-pro-rape-chant-1.1699589>

⁵ “UBC ‘abandoned’ women who reported sexual assaults,” CBC News (20 November 2015), <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/ubc-sexual-assaults-complaints-expulsion-1.3328368>

⁶ Kathleen Cowan, *It’s Late and All the Girls Have Gone*, 281.

⁷ Diary of Bessie Mabel Scott Lewis, 30 October 1889. File 03, Box 1001. Bessie Mabel Scott Lewis fonds B1980-0033. University of Toronto Archives, Toronto, Ontario.

newspaper describing the desirability of their female classmates. The poem celebrated the fact that heaven sent a “bunch of fair freshettes,” including “Connie, fair with Celtic grace,” “Kathleen of the liquid voice,” and “Miss Torrey, of the thoughtful pose.” Happily, “none were suffragettes.”⁸

The historiography of women and higher education has long maintained the pioneering female students faced harassment, isolation and exclusion while they valiantly reformed a patriarchal institution to allow the following generations of women to benefit from higher education. Due to the opposition they faced on campus, the pioneers developed strong relationships with each other, including lesbian-like and romantic friendships. These exceptional feminists rejected traditional femininity and instead created feminist environments to nurture the next generation of women who wanted an education and an opportunity for a role beyond wife and mother.

Educational historians such as Martha Vicinus, Helen Leftkowitz Horowitz, and Roberta Frankfort argued that the next generation of women students lacked the same feminist commitment. They cite as evidence the small increase in marriage rates of the second generation and the development of co-ed social activities on campus to show that the second generation was less serious, less feminist, and faced little opposition on campus. Due to the fact that the historiography of women and higher education has not been recently revisited, these myths have continued to colour the interpretation of women who attended university from 1890 to 1920.

However, this dissertation has demonstrated that women attending Ontario universities from 1890 to 1920 faced significant barriers on campus. While they did not

⁸ “In Lighter Vein,” *Cap and Gown* (December 1909), 98.

face the same barriers that the pioneers did, misogynistic opposition to women on campus endured well into the twentieth century. While women's brains were reluctantly accepted by male students and faculty, the bodies of female students remained concerning to medical authorities, administrators, parents, and even female peers. The medical opposition to women's higher education in the 1870s and 1880s is well known, but a significant finding of this dissertation is that the medical opposition to women's higher education endured until at least 1920. Medical textbooks continued to warn against vigorous study, and university administrators, parents and students all shared the belief that women could "ruin" their health by vigorous academic work. This belief legitimized supervision over women's bodies in residence, and reminded female students that their academic aspirations were less important than their reproductive health. It was widely believed that a university education could endanger a woman's femininity. As a result, universities hired Deans of Women, nurses, and physical education teachers to oversee the health and behaviour of female students. As a result, female students from 1890 to 1920 faced more supervision and more conflicting rules about permissible behaviour on campus than their pioneering foremothers, an issue that has not been adequately noted in the historiography.

Another significant finding is that female students' inferiority was mapped onto the physical space of the university campus. Confusing rules about women's physical occupation of university space were used to marginalize women on campus. When women acted as the academic peers of male students, they were limited to small areas of campus and not permitted to speak with male students. However, when they acted as the romantic partners of male students at dances, they were welcome to share the social

spaces on university campuses. Women were isolated when they acted as academic peers, but welcomed in a traditionally feminine role on campus. The university campus was a gendered space that provided more lenience for women who did not challenge the patriarchal nature of the university.

Due to their physical and social isolation from male students, female students relied upon female friendships and homosocial relationships. They established women's groups and residences that fulfilled women's emotional needs. In fact, some of these relationships were lesbian-like or romantic friendships that were common in the 1860s and 1870s. Ritualized marriages between two women and close physical relationships occurred frequently with the support of residence matrons and other students. Lesbian-like relationships did not disappear at the turn of the twentieth century with the rise of the sexologists and classification of homosexual relationships as deviant. Strong female friendships were vital for female students facing misogyny on campus.

Women's interactions with male students were difficult. Female students were frequently unable to participate in mixed social events without male escorts and so women found themselves either excluded from social events or attending events with male students they disliked, and this left women vulnerable to sexual coercion. Women in romantic relationships were careful to ensure that their decision to marry an individual was prudent as they tried to craft companionate marriages. Yet they found it difficult to create equitable marriages.

Due to the conflicting expectations of femininity and university education, most supporters of higher education for women advocated for it on the basis of personal development. University was used to create good "all round girls" rather than capable

employees. While this justification was used publicly by both administrators and students, students also privately valued the resulting employment opportunities and took advantage of the freedom from domestic duties while on campus. Interestingly, proponents of women's higher education were ultimately right in that a university education proved transformative. Students embraced the opportunities their education gave them. Many worked after graduating, even for a short period before marriage, like Kathleen Cowan and Miriam Marshall. Others, like Lorraine Shortt and Florence Neelands, never married and took advantage of the professional opportunities their degrees afforded them.

Ultimately, this dissertation demonstrates the limitations of feminist reforms on patriarchal institutions. By 1920, female students were a permanent fixture on university campuses in Ontario. Their status was reflected in women's residences and Dean's of Women positions that were established to supervise female students. Yet they continued to face opposition and backlashes to their presence on campus. Deans of Women held female students to a higher standard of behaviour than their male peers they experienced a greater degree of surveillance than the first generation of female students through new institutions designed to care for them such as university residences. After gaining access to new positions when many male students fought during the First World War, female students were pushed back to the margins when veterans returned to campus and demanded their place of primacy on university campus. This dissertation has shown that female students during this time period faced many barriers to their participation in higher education. Opposition to female students did not disappear at the turn of the century. Instead, the means of opposing women's participation in university changed.

This dissertation has also illustrated how misogynistic opposition can change over time. While women in the 1870s and 1880s were cautioned that they would be unable to compete with men intellectually, from 1890 to 1920 women were warned that while they could compete with men intellectually, doing so would place their reproductive organs and therefore their femininity at risk. Women were permitted to participate in student governments, but held to strict rules about how they could exercise their participation and not jeopardize their reputations by sitting with men. This degree of supervision did not exist for the few female students on university campuses in the 1880s. From 1890 to 1920, female students were superficially accepted on university campuses, but in reality were unable to participate fully and equally in university life.

Despite the challenges female students faced on campus, many recalled their time at university as a special period in their lives. They retained emotional connections to the institutions, whether in the forms of ongoing close friendships, husbands they met while at university, or by participating in organizations like the Queen's University Alumnae Association, the Women's University Club in Toronto, or the Canadian Federation of University Women. These provided companionship, networking, and an avenue to help ensure other young women were able to attend university. Despite the many difficult environments in which women found themselves, and as hard as they had to work to balance their femininity and higher education, it was an experience they cherished and wanted other women to have. It was a special period in these women's lives when they were freed from domestic work and given the opportunity to step outside the domestic sphere.

Students like Anne from *Anne of Green Gables* and Miriam from *Miriam of Queen's* retreated back into the domestic sphere after university. Their marriages resulted in the end of their careers as teachers and the end of Anne's literary ambitions. While Anne loved motherhood and her life as a country doctor's wife, she remembered her university days fondly and kept up her friendships with her four college roommates for the rest of her life. She also encouraged her daughters to attend university so that they too could experience this special period in their lives of expanded horizons and opportunities. While women faced opposition on campus from male students and faculty, a university education gave economic and social opportunities to women so that they did not have to marry to avoid poverty. Half of university-educated women opted not to marry, and the ones who did marry carefully selected their husbands to try to create companionate marriages. Having options, however limited, made a difference in female graduates' lives. Whether they retreated to the domestic sphere or chose employment, most women agreed with the end of the poem "Back to the College Again" published in the *S. Hilda's Chronicle* in 1910:

Perhaps some day in the future when out from these halls I go,
And I'm out in the world and far way from the college friends I know,
I'll come to the old conclusion, expressed in various ways,
That the days of my college training were the happiest of my days.⁹

⁹ "Back to the College Again," *S. Hilda's Chronicle* Vol. 7 No. 7 (Michaelmas 1910), 23.

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Curriculum Vitae: Marilla McCargar

EDUCATION

Doctor of Philosophy in History 2016
“Femininity and Higher Education: Women at Ontario Universities, 1890 – 1920”
Supervised by Dr. Katherine McKenna
The University of Western Ontario

Comprehensive examinations in Transatlantic Women’s History, First Nations History in Canada, and Modern Canada

Master of Arts in History 2008
Supervised by Dr. Katherine McKenna
The University of Western Ontario

Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in History and Political Studies 2007
Queen’s University

AWARDS, DISTINCTIONS AND FELLOWSHIPS

The University of Western Ontario

SSHRC Doctoral Fellowship	2010 – 2012
Western Graduate Research Scholarship	2007 – 2012
Ontario Graduate Scholarship	2010 – 2011
The Jean Armstrong Fletcher Award	2011
The Alwyn F. Patience Memorial Fellowship	2009

Queen’s University

Adam Shortt Prize in Political Studies, Queen’s University	2004
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TEACHING EXPERIENCE

WS/HIS 2140: Women in Canadian History: Changing Roles and Diverse Social Realities (online), The University of Western Ontario	2016
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HIS 2182: Social History of Women in Canada The University of Western Ontario	2016
--	------

WS/HIS 2140: Women in Canadian History: Changing Roles and Diverse Social Realities (online), The University of Western Ontario	2014
---	------

HIS 2182: Social History of Women in Canada The University of Western Ontario	2014
--	------

WS/HIS 2140: Women in Canadian History: Changing Roles and Diverse Social Realities (online), The University of Western Ontario 2012 – 2013

WS/HIS 2140: Women in Canadian History: Changing Roles and Diverse Social Realities (online), The University of Western Ontario 2012

WS/HIS 2140: Women in Canadian History: Changing Roles and Diverse Social Realities (online), The University of Western Ontario 2010 – 2011

COURSE DEVELOPMENT

Course Co-Author 2009 – 2010
WS 2140: Women In Canadian History: Changing Roles and Diverse Social Realities,
The University of Western Ontario

TEACHING ASSISTANTSHIPS

HIS 1701: Comparative History of Canada, the United States, and Mexico 2011 – 2012
The University of Western Ontario

HIS 2201: Canada: Origins to the Present 2009 – 2010
The University of Western Ontario

HIS 2182: Social History of Women in Canada 2009
The University of Western Ontario

RESEARCH ASSISTANTSHIPS

NiCHE Environment Canada Research Project 2012 – 2014
The University of Western Ontario
Supervised by Dr. Alan MacEachern

SSHRC Insight Development Grant 2010 – 2012
McMaster University
Supervised Dr. Michael Gauvreau and Dr. Nancy Christie

RESEARCH INTERESTS

Women's History in the Atlantic World
History of Modern Canada
History of First Nations
History of Medicine

PUBLICATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

“Private Bodies in Public Universities: Female Students at Ontario Universities at the Turn of the Century,” Berkshire Conference of Women Historians, Toronto (May 22, 2014)

“Medical Men and College Women: Reassessing the Effect of Medical Warnings on Canadian Women,” Edging Forward, Acting Up: Canadian Committee on Women’s History Conference, Vancouver (13 August 2010).

“For League Members and their Friends’: Gender, Ethnicity and Class in the St. Louis Catholic Women’s League,” Canadian Catholic Historical Association Annual Meeting, Congress 2009, Carleton University (25 June 2009).

“‘With Love to You Both, Jess’: A Case Study of Femininity and Higher Education Among the Second Generation of University Students,” Bruce McCaffrey Memorial Seminar Series, The University of Western Ontario (20 November 2008).

Review of Suzanne Evans, *Mothers of Heroes, Mothers of Martyrs: World War I and the Politics of Grief* (Montreal-Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2007.) Canadian Military History Book Review Supplement (Spring 2008)

SERVICE

Blind Reviewer, *Scientia Canadensis* 2013

Graduate Representative, 2009–2010
Department of History Graduate Committee, The University of Western Ontario