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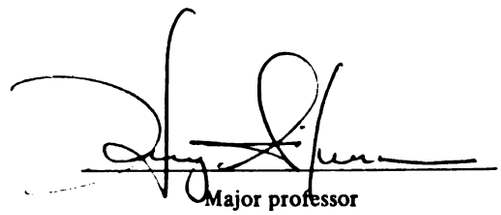

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THE CATHOLIC WOMAN'S EXPERIENCE IN NINETEENTH CENTURY AMERICA

By

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ABSTRACT

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by

Molly Gretchen Richter

There have been many studies that examine women's space, from the virtues of 'True Womanhood' to separate spheres and female networks. Yet most studies of nineteenth-century American women carry an unvoiced assumption, that being American meant being Protestant. A sizable number of middle-class Catholic women lived in nineteenth-century America, and their experiences cannot be assumed to be the same as their Protestant sisters.

The peculiarities of the convent and the convent school make the study of the Catholic woman intriguing for any feminist historian. In some ways Catholic women had more room to maneuver than non-Catholics, producing yet another valid expression of 'True Womanhood.' This difference, combined with the largely untapped resource of the convent archive, makes the middle-class American Catholic woman as worthy of study as the Protestant majority.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

This thesis examines the roles of the nun, the convent, and the convent school in nineteenth and early twentieth century America. This is an area which is remarkably absent from the history of women in America. In the American context Catholic women have often been excluded in favor of studying the overwhelming majority of the population - Protestants. Concentrating on the Midwest, I focus on St. Mary's Academy, which became St. Mary's College, and the convent of the Sisters of the Holy Cross at Notre Dame, Indiana. Saint Mary's is only one of a number of convents and academies which have maintained records. Many other communities possess a wealth of information just waiting to be examined. To examine the above-mentioned roles, I have used a Canadian book, Taking the Veil: An Alternative to Marriage, Motherhood, and Spinsterhood in Quebec, 1840-1920 by Marta Danylewycz to analyze and arrange my information on the Sisters of the Holy Cross.

During the nineteenth century the Church in Quebec became gradually feminized. Female orders grew rapidly in numbers and Danylewycz's book is an attempt to find out why this happened. Her discussion hinges especially on the definition of gender roles and industrialization. She is especially concerned with the non-religious reasons a woman might have had to join an order. Her goal is to prove that, basically, in Quebec, a number

of women entered the convent, not out of religious zeal, but out of a wish for personal and professional fulfillment, a desire to not marry and have children, and to avoid the economic difficulty a single woman faced in supporting herself. This alternative choice was not only approved of, women lost absolutely none of their femininity by entering a convent. This was a perfectly acceptable role for a nineteenth-, early-twentieth century *Québecoise*.

There is no reason why these theories cannot be applied to the American context. American society was equally concerned about women's roles, and equally affected by the changes brought about by industrialization. Even though Catholicism lacked the base of support found in Quebec, female religious orders and membership multiplied quickly in the United States, and there was an identifiable and separate Catholic culture. This suggests that Danylewycz's conclusions about Quebec may not be exclusive to that society. Though different in many ways, these national differences did not have a significant impact on the sheer numbers of women moving into religious orders, and perhaps they also did not have a huge impact on the reasons.

The feminization of the Church has its roots in France. By the middle of the seventeenth century there were more nuns than monks or friars in France. Women entered both as contemplative, passive members, and as active, lay members called *dévotes*. "Feminine religious life became a nucleus of real, though always discreet, strength."[1] By the nineteenth century the numbers of these women had increased threefold.[2] Most American and Canadian orders originated in Europe, and therefore consideration of the American religious experience as part of an elongated trend is important.

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[1] Elizabeth Rapley, The Dévotes. Women and Church in Seventeenth-Century France, (Montreal/Kingston: McGill Queens University Press, 1990) 5.
[2] Rapley 8.

The sources consulted for this project consist of a series of microfilmed rolls of the Congregation of the Holy Cross, and archival material at St. Mary's College. These rolls were compiled by convent archivist, S. M. Campion Kuhn throughout the nineteen-seventies and nineteen-eighties and contain a wide variety of primary and secondary source material such as personal letters, ledgers, course descriptions and advertisements for the schools and histories of the convent and college. Although much digging is required there was a massive amount of pertinent information here. I have also consulted several other primary sources including three separate collections of student work, Rosa Mystica and St. Mary's Chimes literary journals and The Mother Pauline Tradition Papers, which are essays. Unfortunately a large fire at Notre Dame in 1878 destroyed many of the records which would have provided much additional primary source material for a study such as this one.

Although there is a wealth of secondary sources, authored by St. Mary's graduates and Holy Cross Sisters, many of these are skewed by the tension which exists between community oral tradition and historical 'fact'. St. Mary's College campus today houses both the convent archives and college archives, each administered and run separately. The convent archives primarily contains material concerning the Sisters, and the college archives houses basically everything else. Since the nineteen-seventies the Sisters who have been charged with the archives of the college and the convent have been professionally trained as historians. There is in fact now an annual conference entitled, "Conference on the History of the Congregation of Holy Cross," at which papers on that subject are presented. The works that have recently been produced on the college and the

order diverge from some of the older works because of an accepted oral tradition (that has recently been highly scrutinized) making it more difficult to construct a coherent narrative on the history of the community.

The secondary sources that I consulted centered mainly on: American and Canadian women's history; questions of gender, roles, and femininity; education; and Catholicism.

Some of the terminology used in this paper will be unfamiliar. It makes more stylistic sense to explain it here than within the body of my thesis. Some of these words are rooted in Canadian history and Canadian society. When the term French-Canadian is used it denotes a person whose native language is French; a francophone. It also often designates someone who is a resident of the province of Quebec, a Quebecker, or in French, a *Quebecois (e)*. All three terms, French-Canadian, Quebecker, or *Quebecois* automatically refer to someone who is of the Catholic religion. When discussing nuns, Sisters, Brothers, and priests I have used terms like "religious" and "professed" as blanket-category terms to refer to men and women who entered a religious community, which can also be referred to as an order or a foundation.

The language used within this paper is in keeping with accepted terms in women's and gender history. I have used 'women' and 'men' as adjectives, and have used current buzzwords such as 'agency', 'construct', and 'informs' because they are necessary to the understanding of the reader.

Referring to nuns can be tricky. Accepted forms of address have changed from the time of the beginning of my study, the mid-nineteenth century, to the present late-twentieth

century. Before the turn of the century women were given a new name off an accepted list when they entered a religious community. They also stopped using their last names. In the early twentieth century nuns began using their last names again, and by the seventies many no longer took new first names in religion. Throughout the whole period, many religious women did not bother to use the title 'Sister' or 'Mother', but simply referred to a fellow Sister by her first name. In this study and in the bibliography I have included former secular family names of nuns in parenthesis (especially those of the older generation) even though they never actually used them once they were professed. This was done for ease of reference and to distinguish them from other members of their order with the same religious name. (a community had a stock list of names, when a nun died her name in religion was conferred on an entering postulant, a practice which makes narratives referring only to the name in religion, confusing.)

I have first approached the problem of writing about a group of American nuns by examining Danylewycz's very similar study. One of the most important things for me to assess was the extent to which Danylewycz's thesis about Canadian nuns is dependent on the peculiarities of Quebec culture, society, and politics. As already suggested, Quebec in the nineteenth century was primarily Catholic, the remarkable growth of Church influence, and the virtual lack of respectable options, other than marriage, open to francophone women of the upper classes were definitely major factors in the rise of female vocations in Quebec. The main difference between Quebec and the United States was the utter lack of options for 'respectable' francophone women in Quebec. The rise in vocations, and rise in

the number of Catholic women who remained single, were not, however, specific to Quebec.

Something peculiar to the convent, and the convent school, encouraged women to ignore the rhetoric telling them to marry and have children. Extolling the virtues of the home was not enough to encourage all women to marry and raise children. The experience of Catholic women, American and Canadian, was different from the experience of Protestant women, especially because of the convent school. Catholic women were presented with an additional role to choose from when they came of age - that of the nun. It was a highly respected choice which offered economic security and the chance for personal growth and fulfillment through various means. Nuns were usually beyond the reproach of society, their behavior was not questioned. As such, they were able to perform 'male' tasks, move in traditionally male areas of influence, and create a completely autonomous community of women. The role of "True Woman" in the Catholic context could allow a much broader spectrum of experience for the nun. Women who joined religious orders, whether consciously feminist or not, had a remarkable amount of maneuverability in constructing their own destinies. They had a very different and significant form of agency not available to Protestant women of the same time period and should be studied on their own terms as women, and as people.

It was not difficult to apply the conclusions of Danylewycz to the Congregation of the Holy Cross. Similarities in vocation; teaching and origins; French, and the upper classes, helped. Both the women who attended the convent schools of Holy Cross, and the women who entered the Holy Cross order showed slight variances from the rhetoric of

prescription. The nuns, as highly educated women provided a role model, and the academic standards were rigorous. Students at Saint Mary's were shown that it was acceptable to be intelligent and female. The entirely female community provided a safe space for expression of ideas unacceptable in secular society. When they left St. Mary's and entered the secular world, students were confronted with a different set of standards and ideas about women's roles and accepted behavior. Some married, but a significant number remained single or joined a religious order.

Benoit Lévesque's research was referred to in Danylewycz's study as providing a theory about women who joined religious orders. He describes the convent as rehabilitating 'surplus' women, women without men, into society. This is only a theory, a device for categorizing and writing, it does not explain the causes of the phenomenon of women moving into religious orders in unprecedented numbers. The convent school provided girls with a picture of another type of life, another option. The convent represented a perfectly acceptable life-choice for the Catholic woman. Danylewycz's order attracted many more women over the same period than the Sisters of the Holy Cross did. Perhaps this is due to the lack of options for French-Canadian women. In the American context women more readily remained single than entered convents. It seems that both groups of women rejected marriage for the same reason, the strong influence of the convent in their formative years. In Quebec the alternative was religious life. American women had more choice, not totally blocked from a professional career they could remain single, they could even continue with their education, they could also enter a religious order.

The only major difference between the behavior of Danylewycz's group of women and the Holy Cross Sisters becomes apparent in the last chapter of Danylewycz's book which discusses Catholic feminism. It has been suggested that the Canadian woman's entrance into religious orders drained secular society of those women who would have normally agitated for reform and feminism. It is here, however, that Quebec and the United States differ too greatly to be compared without more extensive research into the American Catholic experience. The power of the Church and its alliance with politicians had an enormous effect on the late appearance of francophone Catholic feminism in the province of Quebec. Quebec differs from the rest of Canada in this respect. Primarily Protestant, anglophone provinces like Ontario closely parallel the development of American feminism. The overall appearance of feminism in the United States was not delayed significantly because of a lack of Catholic participation. Catholic women may have been absent from reform and feminist movements because, as Danylewycz suggests in the case of Quebec, the 'best and brightest' women had entered the convent. Catholic women may have also found some of the goals of feminism contrary to their own concerns. As Catholics, many of these women were not interested in issues such as family size limitation, fertility control, divorce, and custody law reform. Agitation for women's suffrage was not even split along gender lines in the non-Catholic community. It would be more plausible in the American context to conclude that Catholic women entered into the feminist movement late because its goals did not constitute an important part of their lives.

Chapter 2: Themes in American Women's History

Because of the influence of industrialization during the nineteenth century, production moved out of the home. This resulted in a change in gender roles as men increasingly worked as wage laborers outside the home, while women acquired greater responsibility for child rearing and for the domestic sphere. Historians attempt to describe this gender shift by examining the rhetoric, as well as the actual experiences of women's lives. To examine only one of these dimensions gives an unbalanced, one-sided view. Both women's prescriptive roles, and the descriptive histories that detail women's actual experience was largely a white, middle-class experience and audience. Some women followed the role prescribed by 'True Womanhood,' while others attempted to follow it outwardly but were aware that their situation did not fit this supposed norm. A small minority of women ignored ideas about gender-specific roles and deliberately crossed male/female boundaries.

Societies' reaction to women's actions and judgment of these actions was based on women's ability to follow the strictures which governed gender roles. Above all, a woman

had to preserve her femininity. Women who stepped outside prescribed and accepted boundaries were ostracized, for example, feminists were viewed as unnatural and aberrant. A women might become highly educated or work and still be accepted, as long as she was able to maintain her image of femininity. A brief overview of the evolution of American women's history and its themes would provide a useful context for analysis. Many studies have examined the roles of nineteenth, and early twentieth-century woman. One of the earliest interpretive works was Barbara Welter's 1966 article which described the 'Cult of True Womanhood'. Welter's article was groundbreaking, setting a trend in the study of American women for the next three decades.

According to Welter, 'True Women' demonstrated virtues of piety, purity, submissiveness, and domesticity.[3] These respected virtues were articulated in women's magazines, gift annals and the religious literature of the time.[4] Piety or religion, was the basis on which purity, submissiveness, and domesticity were founded, and did not take a woman away from her proper sphere of the home.[5] Purity and submissiveness were the virtues which defined femininity, and it was through domesticity that woman became the "great guardian of society against the excesses of human passions."[6] Women were expected to remain within certain boundaries and if they did not, they were criticized sharply.[7]

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[3] Barbara Welter, "The Cult of True Womanhood: 1820-1860," American Quarterly 18,2 (1966): 152.
[4] Welter 151.
[5] Welter 153.
[6] Welter 163.
[7] Welter 172.

Even though this ideal was presented and encouraged, forces existed which impelled change, such as movements for social reform[8], westward migration, utopian communities, industrialism, and the Civil War.[9] The question is, does the descriptive phrase, "Cult of True Womanhood" accurately portray the reality of women's lives during this period? It may well have been the ideal, but even Welter concludes that, "Real women often felt they did not live up to the ideal of True Womanhood; some of them blamed themselves, some challenged the standard, some tried to keep the virtues and enlarge the scope of womanhood."[10] This resulted in the fleeting existence of the 'True Woman.' It is important to ask however, to what extent did the True Woman ever really exist? Was she simply a creation of rhetoric and certain literature ?[11]

Welter's ideas opened new avenues of research and provided a new language and rhetoric. Works that followed focused on the formation and creation of the feminine, the constructedness of gender roles, discussions of gender-segregated space, and prescribed roles. The recognition of sex as a social category allowed for the study of women as a definable group. This invited discussion of the social formation of femininity and the constructedness of these man-made gender categories.[12]

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[8] examples of 19th century American "female" social reform include: child welfare, temperence, abolition, mission work, working against prostitution, and teaching in Sunday Schools. for a more detailed account of this see: Robyn Muncy, Creating a Female Dominion in American Reform, 1890-1935, 1991. (New York: Oxford University Press) 1994. especially chapter 1, pp. 3-37.

[9] Welter 173-174.

[10] Welter 174.

[11] This question, the examination of the extent to which prescriptive literature and societal standards were internalized by women has been discussed frequently since the appearance of Welter's article. Two especially useful studies on this topic are: Frances B. Cogan, All-American Girl: The Ideal of Real Womanhood in Mid-Nineteenth Century America, (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1989). and Nancy M. Theriot, Mothers and Daughters in Nineteenth-Century America: The Biosocial Construction of Femininity, (Lexington, KY: The University Press of Kentucky, 1996).

[12] although Welter initiated the bulk of the discussion about women's roles, the notion of sex as a category of social analysis akin to that of race or class is generally attributed to Joan Kelly. For example, see Joan

The recognition of the humanity of role construction allows us to examine such roles as the Cult of Domesticity, the True Woman, and the "lady," not only as roles prescribed by "society" but as a conscious way of preserving class distinction and stratification.[13]

In the articulation, preservation, and function of these feminine roles a distinctly female culture can be identified with its own space and networks.[14] Originally notions of female culture were rigid and dependent on a dichotomy which defined the public as male and the private as female, from which sprang the idea of separate spheres. By defining the public as the place of history and history-making, women were then placed outside what was considered the historical. In an effort to bring women into history, historians such as Mary P. Ryan and Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham[15] have turned to examining women's presence in distinctly public, yet female, roles. The classic example has been that of the clubwoman. Some have taken the study of the female public sphere further in examining the creation of a historical sisterhood built on female networks and kinship. The study of this women's culture, referred to as female institution building, is frequently applied to the female-only Sister schools of the Ivy League.[16] Unfortunately most studies on genuinely

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Kelly-Gadol, "The Social Relations of the Sexes: Methodological Implications of Women's History." Signs 1/4 (1976): 809-823.

[13] see Gerda Lerner, "the lady and the mill girl: changes in the status of women in the age of jackson." Midcontinent American Studies Journal 10 (Sp. 1969): 5-15.

[14] for a discussion of women's networks in the midwest and on the frontier see: John Mack Faragher, "History from the Inside-Out: Writing the History of Women in Rural America," American Quarterly 33 (Winter 1981) esp. 548-557.

[15] see Mary P. Ryan, Cradle of the Middle Class. The Family in Oneida County, New York, 1790-1865, 1981. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992) for a discussion of a Protestant community and Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham, Righteous Discontent. The Women's Movement in the Black Baptist Church, 1880-1920, 1993. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1994.) for a rare discussion of women's culture, roles, and networks pertaining to Southern black women.

[16] for female institution building see Estelle Freedman, "Separatism as Strategy: Female Institution Building and American Feminism, 1870-1930," Feminist Studies 5/3 (1979): 512-529.

female space and women's culture culminate with women's involvement in the feminist movement.

Although women can be studied as a group, and as such share certain characteristics, it is important to remember that like any other group, women are not monolithic, there are many diverse ways to break down the study of women into subgroups. Unfortunately the bulk of the literature has been about middle-class, Protestant women and was deterministic as it has generally been used to explain the subsequent growth of feminism and the women's movement. This approach is incomplete since it does not take into account religious distinctions.

American society of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries possessed a Catholic female equivalent to the middle class women discussed so thoroughly in Mary Ryan's Cradle of the Middle Class. Although these women's lives were similar in some ways to those of middle-class Protestant women, they did not participate in first-wave feminism as did some of their Protestant counterparts.

Historians now accept that the study of women must include differences of class, thus, this discussion refers only to middle-class women's experience. Middle-class Catholic women did not identify with lower class Catholic women but instead, used the rhetoric of "True Womanhood", to consciously set themselves apart from the poorer, and less socially acceptable 'ethnic', immigrant Catholics who were often the target of the Know-Nothing and nativist movements. These women had more in common with middle-class Protestant women, yet their shared experiences were marked by the religious difference, and due to this religious difference they found feminism abhorrent. They did

not relate readily to the men of their own class and religion as adults, having been separated from them during their formative years. They were in fact members of their own distinct culture. This Catholic, middle-class women's culture was similar, yet not identical to that of Protestant women of the same class. There were boundaries, networks, roles, and relationships peculiar to Catholic women; an experience which deserves investigation.

Although most authors of books and articles on nineteenth-century women's history have been concerned with Protestant women, many of these theories about roles and femininity are applicable to Catholic women as well. Catholic women lived in the same society and were subjected to the same rhetoric. The difference was that strong female role models were part of Catholicism. Nuns had no children and no husband, they lived in a totally female community, and often did work or behaved in a manner unbecoming to the secular 'True Woman.' By virtue of being nuns, however, they wereviewed as 'True Woman' and therefore they had much more liberty in their accepted forms of behavior. With this freedom they were able to lead whole and fulfilled lives.

> to experience a self-supporting and self-directing female community, such as existed and continues to exist in the religious and lay schools of many European countries. Experience of a female controlled and directed world is essential, if women are to discover a sense of their own potential for self-directing activity.[17]

This view, that women would have been better off in discovering themselves as 'persons' in a gender-segregated community of learning, is a tantalizing one. Feminist historians' discussions of female institution building attempts to describe a women's culture and attribute its existence to a female-only space. The notion of a gender-segregated

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[17] Jill Kathryn Conway, "Perspectives on the History of Womens' Education in the United States," History of Education Quarterly XIV, no.1 (1984): 10.

community is even more applicable to the convent and the convent school, yet they have rarely been studied or even mentioned in works of mainstream women's history.

Frequently Catholic women are simply given a nod, a quick mention, if at all, in discussions of nineteenth-century American womanhood. Perhaps they have been neglected because they were not the majority of the female population, and the pervasiveness of Protestant values in the United States was taken as a given. Perhaps they have been overlooked because their narrative from the mid-nineteenth through the early-twentieth century could not be represented as an ever-climbing line on a graph representing women's radicalization which culminated in an expression of the sentiments of mainstream feminism. Perhaps Catholic lay and religious women are seen as submitting to a rigid clerical patriarchy.

> However, the restrictions under which women within the institutions of the Catholic Church carry on their work have certainly been vastly overestimated by most Protestants. The various women's orders are still very important, and within these orders the women have unusually good opportunity to develop special talents for religion, administration, the arts and professions...A career in religion is a definite possibility for the Roman Catholic girl.[18]

The opportunities open to a woman who chose a religious vocation could be, in the nineteenth century, interpreted as better than a woman's opportunities for personal fulfillment. The importance of the figure of Mary to female religious orders opens up questions about the ambiguity of the supposed position and role of women in the Catholic religion. In spite of the patriarchal power structure which controlled spiritual matters,

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[18] Elsie Thomas Culver, Women in the World of Religion (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1967) 221.

female religious communities were actually independent in administrative matters and they maintained what could be called an alternative family model in an entirely gender-segregated space. The aim of the following chapter is to explore some of the ways Catholic women, and religious women have been described by historians, and to demonstrate that the middle-class Catholic woman's experiences in nineteenth-century America offen differed greatly from the experiences of the Protestant woman, who has long been assumed to be the model for nineteenth-century American women. Not only are Catholic women different, it will be shown that they are worth studying in their own right.

Chapter 3: The Catholic Woman

The American Catholic woman and the American nun have been the subject of relatively few historical studies. The most abundant secondary source material has been produced within the hierarchy of the Catholic Church by both male and female members of religious orders. It has also been common for religious orders to produce their own histories. In the past very few of these works were produced by academically trained historians. Many lack footnotes, a bibliography, contextualization within the larger picture of American society, and are tainted by providential language. There has also been a tendency to treat traditional oral histories of congregations as actual events rather than the mythologized and embellished accounts that they usually become. More recent accounts are much more concerned with relating history than proselytizing for the Catholic Church or for their order. In the last thirty years more and more members of religious orders have obtained graduate degrees and in addition to producing dissertations on an aspect of the Catholic Church in America, many have written excellent histories of their own orders. In addition, the majority of religious orders now have a formally trained archivist and or historian on staff to assist with research.

Outside of histories produced about specific communities from within, very little has been written about American Catholic women by either religious or secular authors. One of the more comprehensive studies is a doctoral dissertation by Dominican Mary

Ewens, published in book form in 1978.[19] The goal of the book is to examine the role of the nun in nineteenth-century American society, and the conflicts and adaptations that grew out of cultural conflicts between European established institutions with American members.

This book is divided into periods of history beginning with Colonial America's first contact with nuns, when captives were carried to Canada. Two of Ewens' underlying themes are the actual acceptance of Catholics by Protestants, and the wide discrepancy between the stereotypical image of the nun and the reality of nuns' lives.

Ewens published again in 1979, this time devoting an essay to the life of the nun in America.[20] Her goal was not only to portray the nuns' experience, but to, in a way, empower them, by positing their status in nineteenth-century America as more liberated than that of the secular woman.

Another important work on American women is Nuns and the Education of American Catholic Women, 1860-1920 by Eileen Mary Brewer. Brewer looks at four female teaching orders in the American Midwest. Though some of her ideas are not adequately developed , her work is also concerned with the existence of a 'separate female world' and with the power held by nuns with respect to lay women.

Turning to the Canadian literature on Catholic women we find a much richer and larger body of works. One of the earliest was "Les Communautés Religieuses et la Condition Féminine" by Micheline Dumont-Johnson who unabashedly states that "...le cadre des communautés religieuses féminines a constitué la première manifestation d'un

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[19] The Role of the Nun in Nineteenth Century America, (New York: Arno Press, 1978).
[20] Mary Ewens, O.P. "Removing the Veil: the Liberated American Nun," in Women of Spirit. Rosemary Ruether and Eleanor McLaughlin,eds. (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1979.) 255-278.

féminisme québecois."[21] Whether they were self-proclaimed feminists or not, Dumont-Johnson sees Quebec *religieuses* as participating in an acceptable form of female protest. Protest, because they turned their backs on marriage and procreation, and acceptable because the role chosen was still an undeniably female one.

The work that brings together many of the themes and goals discussed above is also set in the Canadian context. Its well-articulated theories about the Catholic experience, and female roles, culture, and sisterhood are based on studies of two specifically Canadian orders, yet the questions asked and the conclusions reached are relevant to the American setting.

Taking the Veil: an Alternative to Marriage, Motherhood, and Spinsterhood in Quebec, 1840-1820 is an expansion of Marta Danylewycz's doctoral dissertation, published posthumously by her friends and colleagues. In it she delineates the nuns' experience in the province of Quebec, and primarily in the city of Montreal, by closely examining two female religious orders, the Congrégation de Notre Dame, and the Sisters of Miséricorde.

The Congrégation de Notre Dame was founded by a French woman, Marguerite Bourgeoys in 1653, during the early years of the colony of New France. Unlike most French orders of the time it was never a cloistered community. The Congrégation de Notre Dame was always a teaching order and grew to have schools across Canada in the form of academies, boarding schools, *écoles ménagères*, a normal school, a women's college, and parish schools.

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[21] Micheline Dumont-Johnson, "Les Communautés Religieuses et la Condition Féminine," Recherches Sociographiques XIX, 1 (1978): 79.

The Sisters of Miséricorde are a much more recently established group. They evolved out of the work of Montreal widow Rosalie Cadron-Jetté who had been taking in unwed mothers and their infants. At the urging of the Bishop of Montreal, Ignace Bourget, Cadron-Jetté and a friend, Sophie Desmarets founded a religious order in 1851 to continue this work. The order briefly provided the service of midwifery, until Rome ruled against that line of work for religious women in 1860; but it continued to provide its 'house of refugee' women. By the 1890s the community had become financially secure and began to professionally train its sisters as nurses, hospitals administrators and lab assistants.[22] By looking at these two very different orders Danylewycz was able to see a spectrum of experience representing one-fifth of the total female religious population of Quebec.[23]

Danylewycz choose to study the period from 1840 to 1920 because of the reversal of the trend of stagnation in the growth of religious orders. There was also a growth in the number of European based orders which established branches in the "New World".[24] In Quebec this began not only the rise of women's religious vocations, but the growth of religious leadership in education and the social services, and the concurrent weakening of lay influence in those areas.[25] The growth of the Church was the result of multiple forces at work that occurred not only in Quebec and Canada but in most industrializing 'Western'

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[22] Marta Danylewycz, Taking the Veil: An Alternative to Marriage, Motherhood, and Spinsterhood in Quebec, 1840-1920, ed. by Paul-André Linteau, Alison Prentice, and William Westfall (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1987) 20.
[23] Danylewycz 2. My review of Danylewycz's work will concentrate on sections pertaining to the teaching order of the Congrégation de Notre Dame as my own research involved a teaching order
[24] Micheline Dumont-Johnson, "Les Communautés Religieuses et la Condition Féminine," Recherches Sociographiques XIX, 1 (1978): 86.
[25] Dumont-Johnson 17.

nations. These forces were industrialization, the glorification of the home, the growth of female education, and the emergence of feminism.

Danylewycz's first chapter examines the religious, social, and economic factors which led to this increase in religious communities and vocations in Quebec.[26] During the nineteenth century something happened which, she argues, was peculiar to Quebec, "...the Church was able to become the dominant social and cultural institution in French Canada."[27] This growth in the power of the Church was the result of two things: the personal figure of Mgr. Bourget, Bishop of Montreal, and the truly peculiar political situation of Quebec.

The role of the clergy in Quebec was a unique one. Unlike many "Western", industrializing nations, the clergy had an enormous influence over the people of Quebec. Priests held extremely elevated and revered positions within the community. The clergy also had a significant influence in the political arena, and frequently instructed Catholics how to vote. They were also passionate speakers on the subject of French-Canadian nationalism and the preservation of the French-Canadian culture.

The clergy were responsible for injecting devotional exercises into popular culture and for erecting visible reminders such as cathedrals, shrines, and the cross on Mount Royal, to increase popular piety.[28] Along with this the Church venerated the image of Mary and the Immaculate Conception. The image of Mary was used by the Church in much the same way nineteenth-century United States theologians lauded the Cult of True Womanhood.

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[26] Danylewycz, Taking the Veil 20.
[27] Danylewycz 22.
[28] Danylewycz, Taking the Veil 39.

In Chapter Two Danylewycz puts forth the idea that it was possible for a woman to seek social mobility through marriage **or** through the spiritual life of a vocation. In order to comprehend this choice and what women were choosing between, the world for women outside the convent must first be understood. This was a time of limited economic opportunity, land scarcity, and migration. Thus many Quebeckers adopted a more prudent attitude towards marriage, marrying later than they had in the past.[29]

Limited white-collar 'feminine' positions did exist such as teaching, office work, clerking, and nursing, but women in these positions were treated worse and paid less than blue-collar workers or their male equivalents, "Although they were better educated and often came from a higher social class than women in service and manufacturing, they earned less than their supposed social inferiors."[30] They were also often forced or expected to quit upon marriage, and certainly upon the birth of the first child.[31]

The most viable employment option for a woman who wished to support herself was teaching. The salaries did not vary greatly from urban to rural areas and it was the only option which offered a pension. Even so it was assumed by school administrators that women teachers were single and without families to support and therefore did not deserve the higher salary accorded to male teachers.[32] This problem of inequality was compounded by the presence of religious teachers in the school system.[33] Members of religious orders were expected to and did work for next to nothing upsetting the whole

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[29] Danylewycz 52.
[30] Danylewycz 58.
[31] Danylewycz 57.
[32] Danylewycz 58.
[33] Dumont-Johnson 89.

labor system by devaluing the job. Nuns and brothers were cheaper and also stayed in a position longer than lay teachers.[34]

Teaching presented a welcome alternative to the women of the nineteenth century whose other paid job options included domestic service, mill and factory labor, dressmaking, and prostitution. It was an acceptable profession for a respectable young woman and afforded some social standing. Another positive aspect was that "Teaching was the only career open to women that led to a pension."[35] It was also one of the only paid careers open to the educated woman. It was not, however, a common choice for the French-Canadian woman.

Francophone institutions with teacher training courses opened their doors to women much later than did anglophone institutions.[36] Fewer positions were open to secular instructors in French language schools for two reasons: French Canadians were predominantly Catholic, thus most religious instructors were concentrated in the French language schools, public or private, leaving few job openings for the secular teacher.

Unfortunately teaching, as stated, was not much of a career option for francophone women. Although it was possible to obtain a position as a teacher without graduating from a normal school, figures indicate that the proportions of normal school graduates are very similar to the proportions of actual teachers in the census and educational reports.[37]

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[34] Danylewycz, Taking the Veil 60.
[35] Cross, 218.
[36] There were three teacher training (Normal) schools in the province of Quebec in the 19thc. The francophone Jacques Cartier in Montreal and Laval in Quebec, opened in 1856. They did not accept women until 1899. In contrast the anglophone McGill opened in Montreal in 1856 and accepted women in 1857. source: Louis-Philippe Audet, Histoire de l'enseignement au Québec, 2 tomes. (Montréal: Holt, Rinehart et Winston, Ltée, 1971, Tome 2, 1840-1971) 31. and D. Suzanne Cross, "The Neglected Majority: the Changing Role of Women in 19th Century Montreal," Histoire Sociale/Social History 12 Nov/nov. (1973): 217-219.
[37] Quebec Sessional Papers, 1869-70, 8-12, and 1870-71, 23.

Normal-school graduates dominated the profession. Francophone universities, and thus the professions, were not open to women until the turn of the century (unlike anglophone institutions). There were limited options for the upper- or middle-class French Catholic woman who wanted to maintain her respectability. Only a very small number of francophone women became teachers or nurses, most married or entered convents.

For those women who wished to remain single and needed to be self-supporting, or women who wanted careers, there were few easy options that did not involve financial or economic hardship or relocation. Therefore there was little to dissuade women from entering convents. "Almost everything, on the contrary, seemed to favour their movement into convents."[38] Secular society offered middle and upper-class francophone Catholic women little room for social mobility or self-fulfillment outside marriage. "What could an ambitious woman do except seek social mobility through marriage or spiritual life"?[39] If marriage wasn't desirable, that left one option- the convent. It is also possible that education in convent schools stimulated and developed girls' intellectual and spiritual desires, awakening urges that may not have been able to be satisfied in secular society. In order to reconcile their aspirations with the secular realities facing women in Quebecois society some women may have been encouraged "...to stay in the convent to develop further their spiritual and intellectual capabilities."[40]

Danylewycz asserts that unlike other North American or European societies, no one in Quebec questioned the right of convents to exist or women's choice to enter them, "On the contrary, women were consistently reminded that the 'heavens were their

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[38] Danylewycz, Taking the Veil 70.
[39] Danylewycz 70.
[40] Danylewycz 117.

domain'"[41] and that religion was their specific calling. Danylewycz interprets this encouragement as a green light for women to enter convents.

Danylewycz's next chapter examines an increase in vocations from inside the convent; a ground-up approach which uses the life histories of women who became sisters. In the past historians have stressed the motivation of personal religious affirmation and the importance of "providence." Fewer women attributed their religious vocation to providence in nineteenth-century Quebec, and instead, vocations presented an alternative to "...placement en service domestique, à l'émigration dans les régions de colonisation, à l'exil aux États-Unis, et même au mariage."[42]

In fact in the case of teaching nuns, the constraints of traditional, physical maternity were replaced by a liberated, spiritual maternity. Teaching nuns played the role of mother to many children without ever giving birth. The appellation 'mother' often meant both parent and teacher, the lines between the family of birth and the family of the convent boarding school were blurred. Danylewycz also sees teaching nuns as gaining social prestige and material reward for their community.[43] Due to community desire for prestige and recognition, a form of elitism about teaching grew. "The Congregation felt obliged to make rank distinctions between its teaching and non-teaching sisters, thereby undermining the impression that all nuns were of equal worth.."[44] Therefore Danylewycz sees entrance into an order with a teaching vocation as, in part, a selfish, pride-motivated activity,

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[41] Danylewycz 70.
[42] Dumont-Johnson 91.
[43] Danylewycz, Taking the Veil 75.
[44] Danylewycz 77.

"...women in nineteenth century Quebec hoped to satisfy their social needs and aspirations as well as their spiritual yearnings."[45]

Danylewycz presents two hypotheses in order to explain womens' rising vocations. The first hypothesis was advanced by Benoit Lévesque in Dénault's Élements pour une sociologie des communautés religieuses au Québec. Lévesque sees religious orders as an effective way of integrating growing numbers of 'redundant' women who avoided the traditional family role. "By submitting to the power of the priest and to the religious integration of the Church, these women were restored to overall society."[46] The figure of the priest provided the necessary male authority figure that every women must be linked to, in order to be non-redundant. The second hypothesis was advanced by women's scholars and sees the expansion in terms of women's intellectual and social aspirations, "...arguing that the organization of convents by women was a manifestation of incipient or "surrogate" feminism."[47] Danylewycz favors the second hypothesis since Lévesque had wrongly assumed that priests had control over nuns. Though they had spiritual pull, women governed their own temporals. The second hypothesis is important because purely spiritual factors for entrance into a convent must be balanced by social factors as well. A focus on the spiritual alone "...places convent women outside history"[48] by denying their humanity. It seems that the best approach is a combination of both hypotheses.

Convents, in general, offered a range of choices in terms of type; a chance to reconsider unlike marriage; skills-whether one stayed or not; a vocation; the chance to

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[45] Danylewycz 83.
[46] Danylewycz 85.
[47] Danylewycz 84.
[48] Danylewycz 87.

reject marriage; positions of power regardless of class background; rewards for good work.[49] Although it is unfair to claim that all nuns found convent life equally satisfying, "...through their commitment to religion, convent women developed a unique lifestyle that melded prayer and devotion to privileges that were generally denied secular women."[50] These 'surplus' women who might have had a marginal existence as spinsters otherwise were given a place in the community through their work-not marriage. In Quebec religious life represents a unique expression of femininity and an alternative path towards female self-realization. Danylewycz has argued that in New England this 'surplus' of women became the 'cradle' of agitation for women's rights.[51] This suffices for Protestant New England, but what about areas of the United States with Catholic communities?

Chapter Four of Danylewycz's book examines the role of the family and its relationship to religious institutions. Families were a means of recruitment, relatives who had entered religious institutions provided an example to children, "Women in religious communities facilitated the movement of younger generations of lay relatives into religious life. All of these interactions served to create in Quebec a society in which the spheres of secular and sacred, private and public, were distinct and separate only to the outsider."[52] To have a child in religion was an honor for the whole family, not only was it certain that the economic future of that child was secure, families believed that their own chances for salvation had improved significantly.[53]

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[49] Danylewycz 105-106.
[50] Danylewycz 108.
[51] Danylewycz 109.
[52] Danylewycz 129.
[53] Danylewycz 112.

The introduction to convent life began early for young girls, long before a woman made the final decision to enter an order or not. Many young middle- and upper-class girls were sent to be educated in various schools staffed by nuns. In the form of parish day schools and boarding schools, young girls were exposed to this life-path alternative to motherhood. Many young women spent their early years in a gender-segregated, female environment. "In effect, convent schools, which flourished in this period, also promoted the ideologies of religious communities as surrogate families, as well as presenting young girls with the role model of the nun and her varied accomplishments."[54] Boarders lived a similar life to that of the nuns with a tight schedule emphasizing prayer and devotion. Not only did they live communally, their social life was entirely group-oriented. Many schools had cultural and literary organizations, girls wrote and performed plays and published literary journals.[55] Girls lived in close proximity to their teachers, enabling them to admire the nuns and form special friendships, "School girls became acquainted with the ways of the convent through their boarding school experiences. Some also came to admire and love their mentors and began to identify with their life's work."[56] The sisters were not unaware of the influence they had over girls.

It was not only the girls of pious French Canadian families who were sent to convent schools. Often children of vehement and noted anti-clerics were also enrolled.[57] This patronage had nothing to do with religion; convent schools were often the best schools available, and they produced well-educated, well-disciplined young women in an

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[54] Danylewycz 116.
[55] Danylewycz 117.
[56] Danylewycz 118.
[57] Danylewycz 122.

excellent situation to contract a good marriage. The Congrégation de Notre Dame's convent schools, Villa Maria and Mont.-Ste.-Marie were leading educational institutions that trained the daughters and future wives of the province's elite.[58]

Boarding schools also provided reliable and necessary childcare services. Often students in attendance were orphans or left with only one parent. Children such as these were sent to boarding schools because "Nuns created a second home for the young, thus sharing with parents the responsibility of rearing daughters."[59]

The Church and the family were intertwined in this strange symbiotic relationship. "During the second half of the nineteenth century the goals of an expanding Church and the needs of families intersected, making the convent boarding school a viable institution."[60] Although there was conflict, this relationship continued strong into the twentieth century.

Danylewycz's concluding chapter chronicles the rise of francophone feminism in a region that often differed greatly and lagged behind other industrialized nations.

> In light of the argument that during the latter half of the nineteenth century religious life opened the door for some women to a variety of educational and social opportunities that women in other societies attained through the women's movement, it is necessary to ask what effect this possibility had on the development of a feminist consciousness among francophone lay women in Quebec.[61]

Danylewycz thinks that the slower movement of feminism in Quebec was inevitable because the option of religious life offered a partial solution to the problems which women

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[58] Danylewycz 122-126.
[59] Danylewycz 127.
[60] Danylewycz 130.
[61] Danylewycz 133.

agitated against elsewhere. In addition, the paths of insertion into the system that Protestant women followed - charitable and philanthropic work - were already occupied by religious women and controlled by the Church in Quebec. The Church in Quebec provided and outlet that other North American women found through the feminist movement, which in Canada included agitation for women's right to higher education, equality before the law, and the right to vote. Some branches of feminism in Canada were also interested in fertility control, family size limitation, divorce and child custody law reform.[62]

It is important, therefore, to understand the relationship between two groups of women in Quebec - nuns and lay francophone women. Lay women occupied a marginal place in social services as compared to the representation of the religious community and of Protestant women.[63] Those who began to be politicized around the turn of the century were the privileged few, and they questioned the nuns' dominance in the area of charitable work.[64] This feminism differed greatly from non-francophone, Protestant feminism, Quebec women's reactions were situated clearly within the tradition of Catholicism, producing a 'Catholic feminism' unavailable to Protestant and Jewish women. The early women of the church and the Virgin Mary were celebrated and glorified. Nuns were

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[62] It is difficult to make a blanket statement about feminism in Canada, or even in Quebec in the nineteenth century. As with many other issues there were divisions along the lines of language and religion alone. Although what we might call 'mainstream' feminism, that identifiable in other Western nations, was present in Quebec with the foundation of the National Council of Women in 1893, it tended to manifest itself in a much more conservative form in Quebec. Often rather than stressing equality between the sexes, Quebec feminism stressed the complementary nature of male and female roles. Francophone Catholic women did not have the same liberty of expression as Protestant women as they always risked the hostility of a vocal clergy. Many feminist reforms such as fertility control and family size limitation, interlinking issues, were effective much earlier in predominantly Protestant and anglophone Ontario than in Quebec. The average size of the family began to decline much earlier in Ontario and more quickly than that in Quebec.

[63] Danylewycz 134.

[64] Danylewycz 136.

pointed to as evidence that voting would not corrupt women. After all who could be more moral or beyond reproach than a nun?

'Catholic feminists' soon realized that they could not work against nuns and expect any success, so they began to ally themselves with the religious orders. This made the Church and politicians nervous; multiple efforts were made to divide nuns and lay women.

The Congrégation de Notre Dame was willing and able to respond to the demands of these middle-class women, many of whom were former students. "The challenge lay women put forward to religious women has been overlooked by historians in the past because its discovery and analysis are only possible in the context of a women's history that makes religious women and their lay counterparts the focus of study."[65] There needs to be more historical emphasis on religious women **as** women, and as active participants in the creation of history.

This reliance on religious women for services had put lay women at a political disadvantage, yet the existence of religious women also provided the method and impetus for questioning male dominance amongst middle-class Catholic francophone women.

> The lives of these sisters demonstrate the fact that convents offered an alternative to marriage and motherhood (and "spinsterhood") in a society that valued women chiefly as procreative beings. Under the protection of their vocations, women pursue life-long careers, wielded power, and, on occasion, entered the public sphere. In the final analysis, entering a convent could well mean overcoming the disadvantage of being a woman in a man's world.[66]

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[65] Danylewycz 158.
[66] Danylewycz 159-160.

Any discussion of nineteenth and twentieth-century Quebec needs to be situated in the province's rather peculiar historical context which was responsible for producing the bifurcated society of modern times and the divisions along language and religious lines not found elsewhere in North America. The uniqueness of Quebec can make comparison with other societies difficult. In addition to a culture and an educational system divided by language, Quebec society was also divided by class. There was no direct equivalent to St. Mary's students in Quebec, as most anglophone Catholics were of the working class. The middle and upper-class patrons of convent schools were almost entirely francophone.

Therefore, Catholic and Protestant women did not share the same experience in either nineteenth-century Canada or the United States. In Quebec some avenues of employment open to Protestant women were virtually closed to Catholic francophone women. In both Quebec and the United States, however, the experience of the convent school and the option of a religious vocation offered Catholic women a different choice, neither marriage nor spinsterhood, yet still an expression of femininity within the bounds of prescribed female roles. "Within the religious community, however, it was possible for women to rise to positions of great authority and responsibility that had no counterpart in the Protestant community."[67] The convent in Quebec attracted many of the women who, in a Protestant society, would have been vocal feminist activists. Religious communities not only drained the francophone community of those women most likely to support the feminist cause, they also lessened the avenues of protest due to their monopoly in the social services. This alternative expression of femininity represented the first expression of

[67] D. Suzanne Cross 220.

Québecois feminism, while at the same time it stifled secular francophone feminist movements.

Chapter 4: The Sisters of the Holy Cross, Notre Dame, Indiana

The position of Catholicism in the nineteenth-century United States was by no means as elevated as it was in Quebec. The institutions of Catholicism defined nearly every aspect of Quebec society, and directly affected all but a small Protestant and Jewish minority. However, even though Catholicism was not nearly so pervasive in the United States, it still played a significant role, and many of Marta Danylewycz's conclusions about women and Catholicism are equally relevant in the American context.

Most histories of the nineteenth- and early twentieth-century United States are based on an assumption that being American meant being Protestant. Certainly one cannot wish to deny the vast size and influence of Protestantism in the United States, but it was also not the only option. In addition to a number of native-born Catholics, the nineteenth-century United States became the home of many Catholic immigrants from Ireland, Canada, Italy, and the Germanic countries. Often it is assumed that all these Catholic immigrants were of the blue-collar, 'laboring' class; however, "Not all women of immigrant background lived in poverty and squalor. In the higher circles of immigrant and Catholic families women enlarged their sphere in the same fashion as had their native-born peers."[68]

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[68] Mary P. Ryan, Womanhood in America: From Colonial Times to the Present (New York: Franklin Watts, Inc., 1983) 156-157.

Nuns performed the same social service and benevolent activities as Protestant women. Narratives about nuns have, however, perpetuated a stereotypical image of nuns and Catholicism. Nuns are not known to historians as women who identified with the experiences of other women. Any history of nineteenth-century American women should also explore the experience of American nuns.

Historian Mary Ryan writes of the need to look for past evidence of women's power and autonomy. In doing so, historians have been able to find that, "Within segregated female spheres and women's networks they [historians] have discerned evidence of the ability of women to maximize their freedom and exert considerable social influence."[69] Within the segregated space of the convent school women also formed these same sort of networks and in addition, women who became nuns were able to act in some similar ways reserved to males in secular society.

European religious orders thought of America as a vast field for missionary endeavor. Between 1790 and 1920, 119 European orders established foundations in the United States, eight Canadian orders established American branches, and 38 American orders were founded.[70] In 1822 there were 200 nuns in the United States, in 1920 there were 88,773.[71] This growth is remarkable similar to the growth witnessed in the province of Quebec during the same time period.

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[69] Mary P. Ryan, "The Power of Women's Networks: A Case Study of Female Moral Reform in Antebellum America," Feminist Studies 5 (Spring 1979): 66.
[70] Eileen Mary Brewer, Nuns and the Education of American Catholic Women, 1860-1920 (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1987) 13.
[71] Brewer 15.

These orders were necessary to meet the needs of immigrant Catholics.[72] Catholics wished to provide education for their own community because they feared Protestant influence and secularism in the public schools.[73] To staff these schools American bishops needed the services of teaching nuns.

American nuns were almost exclusively teachers at this time, which presented problems for orders with European origins. The constitutions and rules of these communities were nearly entirely European in origin. The majority of European orders were cloistered, meaning that nuns were greatly restricted in movement and contact with the outside world. These restrictions were simply not practical in North America. This resulted in a cultural clash. "Many sisters whose rules required adaptations for American conditions fell into the unusual pattern of strained relationships with European superiors, bishops, and priest-directors."[74] Religious of European origin were generally quite inflexible and were frequently pitted against the more recent native-born (American) arrivals to the order in a struggle over whether or not to adapt the community to the American setting. Oftentimes these tensions seemed to threaten the existence of the community.

Another contrast to the European experience was the way in which religious orders were financed. In Europe they were established and maintained through royal grants or endowments from wealthy patrons. In the United States nuns were much more personally

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[72] Mary Ewens, O.P. "Removing the Veil: the Liberated American Nun," in Women of Spirit Rosemary Ruether and Eleanor McLaughlin, eds. (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1979) 257.
[73] F. Michael Perko, S.J., ed., Enlightening the Next Generation: Catholics and their Schools, 1830-1980 (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1988) 68, 243.
[74] Mary Ewens, O.P., The Role of the Nun in Nineteenth Century America Diss. University of Minnesota (New York: Arno Press, 1978) 211

responsible for financing their orders and participated in a variety of money-making activities, including spinning and sewing for neighbors and college boys, raising their own food and working their own farms, as well as printing and binding journals and prayer books.[75] The vocational aim of these orders, however, was usually intended to be teaching and "...the vast majority of American nuns were teachers, profession of vows most often meant joining the teaching profession."[76]

Between 1840 and 1910 the number of Catholic academies in the United States went from 47 to 709.[77] Although the all-over growth is significant, growth in the Midwest is especially noteworthy because "With few rivals in the educational field, the sisters' schools were welcomed by both Catholic and Protestant."[78] Often the only option for a quality education was a Catholic academy. Both Protestant and Jewish girls attended Catholic academies. Children of prominent families attended because they were the best schools available in many areas outside the urban Northeast.[79] The sisters were careful to respect the freedom of conscience of non-Catholic pupils, often releasing them from Bible and Church history courses, and forbidding them from joining the religious sodalities. These academies were the equivalent of the elite schools of the East, training girls to become Catholic gentlewomen.

In order to better understand the experience of the American nun and the influence of the convent school, it is necessary to examine an American female religious community and its school in-depth. Although some of the details may vary, Saint Mary's

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[75] Ewens 67.
[76] Casey 30.
[77] Brewer 15.
[78] Brewer 16.
[79] Ewens, "Removing the Veil" 269.

Academy/College, of Notre Dame, Indiana did not differ greatly from the other various convent schools and neither did the Sisters of the Holy Cross, the women responsible for it. Education was offered to girls and women from the age of five through high school completion. The majority of students were of the Roman Catholic faith but students of other faiths attended convent schools which were often the best schools in outlying areas. Many of these schools had European origins, like Holy Cross, and therefore the curriculum was more classical than the new American vocational, in form. Courses stressed not only the arts and humanities but also science and mathematics. Competition was a key characteristic encouraged amongst students. A concern for physical as well as spiritual well-being was expressed by the mandatory physical education classes. While many convent schools boarded students in some accepted only day students, some schools, like St. Mary's were a mix of both. The teachers in the convent school were predominantly professed sisters, often a product of the very same school. While the teachers (sisters) sometimes lived in the same quarters as the students, they also often had nearby, but separate quarters. At St. Mary's the students and sisters started off sharing facilities and when funds and space permitted, the students were given their own residence. Whole families and generations of families attended schools staffed by the same order, there were frequently male and female equivalents such as Notre Dame and St. Mary's.

Upon closer examination of St. Mary's we will see that as with the groups studied by Danylewycz, these were a uniquely well-educated group of women. Separated from the world and from men these women grew up confident in a nurturing, all-female environment. They were called upon to study subjects such as Greek, Latin, advanced

mathematics, and physical education which were largely absent from the normal public school curriculum for young women. Many strong ties were formed amongst the students, with the school, and with its faculty. Graduates found time to visit St. Mary's, as they had the schools of the Congrégation de Notre Dame, with their bethrothed, and their children. Their weddings and further education were announced happily in the school paper, as was the entrance of some into religion. Attendence at a convent school seemed to be a family affair and so was the profession of a religious vocation. Many young women were influenced by aunts and sisters, or by teachers with whom they had developed a strong friendship.

On Aug. 1840 five men of the diocese of LeMans, France made religious vows that formed the Congregation of Holy Cross.[80] One of these men, Father Edward Sorin went on to become a key figure in the order, and was instrumental in founding the Holy Cross Sisters. Father Moreau, founder of the brothers of Holy Cross saw his new religious congregation as having two branches, one male, one female. He had gathered around him 'pious girls' as domestic workers, and in 1841, four of these women became the first Sister Marianites of Holy Cross.[81] This same year a request from Bishop de la Hailandière of the diocese of Vincennes, Indiana, was put forth, calling for missionaries to his 'pioneer' diocese. In response to Hailandière's request Father Sorin set out for America with six brothers. The Holy Cross men were given a choice of two rural sites near Vincennes to settle on, and they chose one called St. Peter's.[82] They wished to begin a college for men

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[80] Sr. M. Georgia Costin, C.S.C., Priceless Spirit: A History of the Sisters of the Holy Cross, 1841-1893 (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1994) 1.
[81] the Sisters of the Holy Cross were originally called Marianites, the name of the order changed in the United States. Costin 2.
[82] Costin 3.

there, but since there was already such a college in the Vincennes area the bishop offered them another site, at South Bend.[83] They established themselves on the new property called Notre-Dame-du-Lac and in 1843 they were joined by three priests, a brother, and four sisters.[84]

The sisters lived a harsh life at first, sleeping on straw in a loft above the chapel.[85] They were formed into their own governing council and one of their first decisions that year was to create a library, "This was, after all, a fledgling college, so, not to be too far behind they decreed a convent library into existence on Dec. 2, though they had no more books than they had had postulants a few months before."[86]

Everything went smoothly for the little community until the Holy Cross order wished to establish a novitiate for Sisters at South Bend. This presented the problem of having two female novitiates in one diocese, as the Sisters of Providence already had a foundation at Sainte-Marie-des-Bois (Terre Haute).[87] Bishop de la Hailandière felt that the diocese would not be able to support more than one novitiate and forbid the opening of an additional one for Holy Cross.

The problem was solved in a most unique way. South Bend is located just over the Indiana-Michigan border, and was therefore close to the border of the diocese of Detroit, under the jurisdiction of another bishop. The community found the bishop of Detroit willing to support a female novitiate in his diocese, so a novitiate was founded at Bertrand,

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[83] Costin 4.
[84] Sisters of the Holy Cross, Superior Generals Centenary Chronicles of the Sisters of the Holy Cross II (Paterson, NJ: Saint Anthony Guild Press, 1941) 9.
[85] Costin, Priceless Spirit 4.
[86] Costin 5.
[87] Sr. M. Rita (Heffernan) C.S.C., A Story of Fifty Years: From the Annals of the Congregation of the Sisters of the Holy Cross, 1855-1905 (Notre Dame, IN: The Ave Maria, 1905) 23.

Michigan, just six miles north of Notre Dame. The sisters moved to Bertrand in 1844 but left a substantial number of their community behind at Notre Dame to do the manual work for the priests, brothers, and students.[88]

This brings to light the confusion as to what the original purpose of the sisters was to be. Was it missionary work with the Indians, keeping house for the priests at Notre Dame, or providing education? There has been great conflict and debate over this later in histories of the community, perhaps the original intention will never be known, in any case, in actuality, the Sisters performed all three tasks.[89] One suspects that the original purpose of the female community of Holy Cross was to provide education, the other two simply evolved over time. One of the earlier constitutions of the congregation, found in archival material dating from Bertrand days, states under Nature, Object Means and Government of the Congregation, "...to secure the sanctification of its members by the practices of the Religious life and the Christian of female youth, by the foundation and direction not only of primary and boarding schools, but also of industrial schools, orphan asylums, and hospitals."[90]

It would seem logical to assume that the primary aim of the community was to teach, having sisters do the menial labor at Notre Dame may have developed due to one of several reasons. It was traditional for French female communities to divide their members into choir, or upper-class, and lay, or lower-class nuns. The choir nuns of the Marianite order would have been teaching nuns while the lay nuns would have done the menial labor

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[88] Sr. M. Campion Kuhn, C.S.C., ed., Sisters of the Holy Cross microfilm Roll 33.
[89] Sr. Maria Concepta (McDermott) C.S.C., The Making of a Sister-Teacher (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1965) 165.
[90] Kuhn, Roll 33.

of the congregation.[91] Since the Marianites and Josephites (male religious of Holy Cross) were originally part of one Congregation, these lay nuns would have been charged with the menial labor of both branches. The Marianites were unprepared to begin their work as teachers immediately, and so perhaps all the Sisters worked at the same sort of tasks until the order was ready to open their intended school. Another possible cause for confusion as to the original purpose of the Marianites lies in the difficulties of financing a religious community in nineteenth-century America. Many orders took in laundry and sewing for payment. Some started 'cottage industries,' and some grew and sold their own food. Saint Mary's owned farmland (separate from Notre Dame) until the latter part of the twentieth century, they may well have taken in laundry and sewing for the neighboring community as well as for the Holy Cross Brothers and their school.

When the Brothers had barely settled in, Fr. Sorin wrote to Fr. Moreau about the necessity of the Sisters keeping a school, but also of tending to the laundry and an infirmary.[92] Apparently the men could cook, but they could not handle such things as the clothes room, laundry and infirmary.[93]

In these frontier times location was everything. In the 1830-40's Bertrand was actually more accessible to the rest of the country than South Bend, receiving regular mail delivery. It was located for easy lake travel and had stage coach access to the Sauk Trail.[94] The order slowly attracted postulants, but life was hard. The Sisters at Bertrand shared the laundry tasks with the Sisters remaining at Notre Dame. Lacking their own

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[91] It is not known how long this class-based distinction persisted after the foundation of the Marianites in North America, it is assumed, however, that such a distinction would not have lasted long.
[92] Costin, Priceless Spirit 6.
[93] Costin 7.
[94] McDermott 178.

transportation they walked the six mile distance between the two settlements daily and rinsed the laundry in the St. Joseph River.[95] In 1847 a branch was established at St. Laurent, Quebec, and in 1849 at New Orleans.[96] By the fall of 1848 the sisters were able to open and begin instruction at St. Mary's Academy, teaching orphan girls and the daughters of local farmers, merchants, and professionals.[97] Having embarked on their mission of teaching, the order took preparation of teachers seriously sending some of its teaching nuns to study at Notre Dame under private tutelage, and also with other female orders.[98]

At this time the woman who really did the groundwork to make St. Mary's into the institution that it later became, arrived. Neal Gillespie had been a student, and was now a young priest and instructor at the male college at Notre Dame. His sister Eliza and his mother came to visit him on their way to Chicago where Eliza was to join a religious community. Upon seeing the academy at Bertrand she changed her mind and joined the Sisters of the Holy Cross. She became known as Sister, and later Mother, Angela in religion. Sister Angela Gillespie was always committed to the higher education of women Under her, the procedures of the Academy were codified, and teaching was further professionalized. She was even responsible for authoring her own textbooks to meet the needs of the school. By the end of 1855 the academy had 60 boarders and 30 Sisters.[99]

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[95] Costin, Priceless Spirit 8.
[96] Heffernan 57-58.
[97] Costin 40.
[98] Costin, Priceless Spirit 49.
[99] Costin 89.

Though the school was doing well, Bertrand's favorable geographical position had begun to decline. The town now found itself off the principal routes of transportation.[100] In 1851 the Northern Indiana and Southern Michigan Railroad completed its Chicago line through South Bend. This brought increased enrollment to Notre Dame but the pupils of St. Mary's were now obliged to travel to Bertrand by an additional stagecoach ride. By this time the community's nemesis, Bishop de la Hailandière had been replaced by a much more cooperative and stable bishop. These factors all combined to make South Bend a better location for the Sisters to have their Academy.[101] Land was purchased by Fr. Sorin and St. Mary's Academy and the Sisters novitiate were moved to a location just opposite the Brother's foundation at Notre Dame.

Though the Sisters did face some anti-Catholic prejudice they also made many friends in the predominantly non-Catholic community. A Protestant judge of South Bend helped the order out legally, incorporating the newly transplanted Academy before it opened for the 1855-56 school year.[102] A charter had also been issued in 1855 which allowed the Academy to grant college degrees, making it the first legally authorized Catholic college for women in the United States.[103]

Unfortunately the Sisters were now caught in a power struggle between Moreau and Sorin. In 1857 Fr. Moreau wished to separate the Marianite sisters (temporally) from the priests and Brothers of Holy Cross.[104] This was accomplished successfully, but Sorin

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[100] McDermott 18.
[101] Costin, Priceless Spirit 31.
[102] Heffernan 66.
[103] Anna Shannon McAllister, Flame in the Wilderness: Life and Letters of Mother Angela Gillespie, C.S.C. 1824-1887. American Foundress of the Sisters of the Holy Cross (Paterson, NJ: Saint Anthony Guild Press, 1944) 126.
[104] McAllister 134.

was hurt and angered and this touched off a series of power struggles and conflicts in which two prominent women of Holy Cross, Mother Angela and Mother Augusta, were caught. Fr. Sorin looked upon this autonomy for the sisters as 'unseemly rebellion.' The vocation of the sisters as teachers was officially confirmed by Moreau.[105] The sisters' constitutions were to be revised after the temporal separation, and the sisters were organized into four provinces: France, Indiana, Canada, and Louisiana. All the above actions were opportunities for the two men, Sorin and Moreau to battle against each other.

The sisters also wished to separate from the French Marianites. Though there was a novitiate in Indiana, the ultimate control and authority still rested in LeMans, France. This presented many problems for the American Sisters, mostly related to the length of time required for communication with the Motherhouse, which often took up to seven weeks.[106] Other female orders which had been founded in Europe, such as the Sisters of Providence, had already separated from their Motherhouse.[107] Separation was by no means a radical move but a logical outcome of the North American situation. At this point 90 percent of the Sisters were either American-born or had entered the order in the United States, and the community had a distinctly American character.[108] Sister M. Georgia Costin, historian and author of many works on St. Mary's goes so far as to state that "American women religious were much more likely to accept responsibility and voice their conclusions than their European counterparts..."[109] making them seem less like the stereotypical Catholic following orders and more like women who thought for themselves.

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[105] McAllister 142.
[106] Costin, Priceless Spirit 149.
[107] Costin 70.
[108] Costin 161-162.
[109] Costin 141.

In 1861 the Indiana branch of the Holy Cross sisters asked to be independent of the French motherhouse. Mothers Angela and Ascension traveled to France for the annual chapter meeting to plead their case. The French Sisters would not hear of a separation and sent Angela home. Ascension, as a French citizen, was kept in penance for her actions.[110] Fr. Sorin smuggled secular clothes to her and paid for her return passage to the United States. Despite French opposition, permission to separate was eventually received from the Holy See in 1868,[111] and the separation was completed in 1869.[112] This change had been heartily supported by the majority of the Sisters, only two left, going to Canada.[113] After this separation the Sisters were placed under the authority of the Bishop of Ft. Wayne, and they were known from then on as the Sisters of the Holy Cross, not Marianites of Holy Cross.[114]

Sorin again disrupted the peace of the community in 1872 by proposing the formation of an additional female branch to be composed of lay Sisters who would be responsible for the domestic duties of Notre Dame.[115] He was unsatisfied with the number of sisters he was getting from St. Mary's to perform the domestic labor at Notre Dame, the formation of his 'own' order of sisters, would solve this problem. The Sisters at St. Mary's were upset and angered over Sorin's ideas about starting an additional novitiate and order of Sisters, so they appealed to the Bishop of Ft. Wayne for help and waited patiently. Fr. Sorin founded a new order at Notre Dame anyway. It did not take Church officials

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[110] Costin 199.
[111] Sisters of the Holy Cross 10.
[112] Kuhn, Roll 7.
[113] Costin 207.
[114] Kuhn, Roll 7.
[115] Costin, Priceless Spirit 211.

long to close the order, which was found to be uncannonical and was closed by1890 at the insistence of Rome.[116] Then in 1903 the school changed its name from St. Mary's Academy to St. Mary's College.[117]

For the purpose of this paper, the history of St. Mary's will stop here as only the early part of the twentieth century will be discussed. A deeper look at the composition of St. Mary's Academy; its curriculum, extra-curricular activities, and students; will demonstrate the similarities and differences between St. Mary's and the Congrégation de Notre Dame. The students themselves came from families who were well off, who could afford both the tuition and the loss of an unpaid domestic helper, and who felt that it was important to educate a daughter as well as sons. Mothers, daughters, and female cousins often attended the same school. The convent boarding school was also a favorable option ,combining child care and education, for the families of orphaned children. High academic standards and a broad curriculum were shared by the schools of both orders. Sodalities and academic societies were as popular at the Congrégation de Notre Dame's Villa Maria and Mont.-Ste.-Marie, as they were at St. Mary's. Graduates at both schools kept in touch with each other and with former teachers through correspondance. Many graduates also visited their alma mater anually.

As in many convent schools the curriculum at St. Mary's was academically rigorous, though the schools was unique among female academies in its ability to grant degrees which it had done since 1855. Completion of the highschool program was judged to be the equivalent of three years of a liberal arts college course. To acquire a bachelor's

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[116] Kuhn, Roll 32.

[117] though it had been empowered to grant college degrees since 1855

at St. Mary's one had to complete only one additional year beyond the four-year high school program.[118] Unlike many of the non-Catholic female academies, a St. Mary's graduate was required to complete two years of Greek, four years of Latin, and six years of a modern language.[119] Successful completion of the classical languages made a St. Mary's girl eligible to attend a secular university if she wished. Courses offered at St. Mary's included:

> Church history and dogma (for Catholics), Philosophy, Ethics, Psychology, Logic, Physics, Chemistry, Botany, Astronomy, Geology, History (Ancient, Medieval, and Modern), Mathematics, French and English History, Creative Writing in Prose and Verse, English Literature, Greek, Latin, German, Spanish, Italian, French, Voice and Instrumental Music with Theory and Composition.[120]

St. Mary's offered decorative and ornamental arts courses as well, but they were what we would term today "elective courses." Unlike many Eastern female seminaries and ladies' academies, St. Mary's girls were held to a strict academic standard for their diplomas. They were required to complete not only the "feminine" liberal arts courses, but also a battery of science courses, such as Geology, Botany, Chemistry, Physics, and Physical Geography. The curriculum for St. Edward's and St. Mary's differed on one point only, St. Edward's required its students take a course entitled "Military Drill." The similarities between the curriculum of the Notre Dame preparatory school for boys, St. Edward's Hall, and St. Mary's, is evidence that there was no distinction made between the intellectual **capabilities** of the sexes. The desired vocations and life-paths are another story altogether.

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[118] Marion McCandless, Family Portraits: History of the Holy Cross Alumnae Association of Saint Mary's College, Notre Dame, Indiana, 1879-1949 (Notre Dame, IN: Saint Mary's College, 1952) 38.
[119] McCandless 39.
[120] McCandless 39.

St. Mary's girls had reason to believe that life held something beyond that of motherhood for them because of their education at the Academy. It would not be easy to play the role of the "True Woman." Their worldview did not facilitate transition to the home.

Young women became part of female networks at St. Mary's. Through membership in societies, sodalities, the alumnae association, and visits to the campus, women remained part of these networks after graduation. Female academies often had clubs such as reading or literary societies, musical and writing groups, as well as sodalities or religious organizations. Sodalities were a unique feature of Catholicism. They were organizations devoted to religious figures. Most frequently they were devoted to Mary, Mother of God. Unlike evangelical Protestantism, Catholicism did not adhere to a literal interpretation of the Bible, and incorporated tales such as the Assumption of Mary, which were not part of the Biblical record.[121] Mary can be seen as a symbol of wisdom, power, and humanity. She is interpreted in two ways, as the antisexual virgin, and as Mary of the people, or the earth mother.[122] Mariology offered a different example from the Protestant tradition as a strong role model to Catholic women.

There were many other female saints available as role models for these young woman, represented at St. Mary's in the names of extra-curricular organizations. These included: St. Catherine's Society; St. Teresa's Literary Society; St. Agnes' Literary Society; the Children of Mary Sodality; the Sodality of the Holy Angels; the Rosary

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[121] Rosemary Radford Ruether, Mary-the Feminine Face of the Church (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1977) 70.
[122] Ruether 58.

Society; and St. Luke's Art Society.[123] Membership in sodalities was reserved for St. Mary's Catholic pupils, however, membership in societies was open to anyone. Every student belonged to at least one organization.

Graduates from St. Mary's frequently returned to the school for visits, most often at commencement time, even prior to the formation of the alumnae association. The visits of the 'old girls' were spoken of fondly in the school's primary literary publication, Saint Mary's Chimes, as were their marriages, birth of children, entrance into religion, or attainment of additional degrees. Visits were most frequent in the few years after graduation, they grew less so as time went on, and after the women married. As most of St. Mary's student body was from the region, the midwest, one or two visits a year were made with little difficulty.

Another way for graduates to keep in touch with their former schools was through alumnae associations. St. Mary's Alumni Association was founded in 1879, making it the seventh American college to have a women's alumni association.[124] The membership consisted of the graduates in the Academic, Music, and Art courses. Throughout the early years of St. Mary's Alumnae Association it was associated with the person of Marion McCandless. Marion McCandless graduated from the B.A. course in 1901 and was active throughout her life in the affairs of St. Mary's. She never married and in her later years she built herself a residence on the grounds of St. Mary's. Because of her lifelong affiliation with the College she was asked by the Mother Superior, (Sr. M. Madeleva Wolff), to write

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[123] Saint Mary's Chimes Vol. V, no.2, Oct. 1896, 22 and Vol. V, no.3, Nov. 1896, 33-34.
[124] Kuhn, Roll 33.

a history of the alumnae association; this book, published in 1949, is a prime source for information on St. Mary's.

After the formation of the alumnae association, there were biannual alumnae 'receptions' at St. Mary's. Festivities usually lasted several days and consisted of presentations and elaborate dinners. They were a means of connecting the women to their educational past, to enjoy the company of old friends and educated women, and to, as many put it, "come home." Students formed incredibly strong and close friendships at convent schools that lasted throughout their lives.[125] Attendance at a convent boarding school was different from that of other schools, "In the convent boarding school warm friendships between teachers and pupils grew rapidly. The school was a little world, somewhat remote from the great world beyond its gates."[126] The influence of the convent school stayed with a woman for the rest of her life, "Not until we have left the scene of our school-life do we realize how strong has been the influence of our early surroundings."[127] At any time a woman could return to St. Mary's and made to feel important for being something other than a wife or mother. 'St. Mary's girls' had a strong sense of loyalty and affection for the school and remained connected to it throughout their lives.

While in attendance at St. Mary's, pupils not only had their choice of academic societies, they also often wrote and produced plays, exhibited artwork, and gave musical recitals. Many academies also published literary journals, and one piece of student work that survives from St. Mary's is the student-authored literary journal, Saint Mary's Chimes.

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[125] see Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, "The Female World of Love and Ritual: Relations between Women in Nineteenth-Century America," Signs 1/1 (1975): 1-29. for a discussion on female friendships of the 19thc.
[126] McCandless 11.
[127] Saint Mary's Chimes, "The Influence of Surroundings" by Lena Brady, '99, May 1898, 130-131.

Begun in 1892, the journal was aimed toward parents. It was produced in conjunction with English classes and supervised by teachers. Its intent was to promote the advancement and elevation of the girls' literary taste.[128] The journal published both literary and artistic work. As a rule each issue had a piece devoted to an author or work of literature, a scientific piece, poetry, and artwork. Often the fall months included an account of the travels the girls had taken in the summer. Every September issue listed all the new postulants and novices and detailed the ceremony. In addition to these pieces produced by the students, there would often be a summation of a presentation or speech, or the content of speeches would be produced in their entirety. Visiting speakers included local officials and authors, but most often they were visiting priests and bishops. Often St. Mary's received similar journals from other schools, ranging from the Notre Dame Scholastic to the University of Ottawa Review . These journals, often from male schools, were reviewed, usually quite harshly. Reviews were also included of magazines such as Catholic World, The Atlantic Monthly, Harpers', Scribners', and Blackwood.

Looking at the journal, Saint Mary's Chimes, provides one of the best insights into the mentality of the school and its students. Published for parents and reviewed by the nuns, the girls could not write of things which were unacceptable. Contrary, unbecoming, and radical opinions would be censored for this reason. It is reasonable, therefore, to assume that the opinions expressed within Chimes, represent the students, the teaching nuns, and what the nuns thought the parents would find appropriate.

It is curious, therefore, that the opinions on women, women's roles, women and higher education, and women and work, expressed in the priests' speeches presented

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[128] Saint Mary's Chimes Vol. I, no.1, Sept. 1892, 1.

verbatim in Chimes, do not necessarily match the opinions expressed by the students. Opinions put forth by students on these topics, and the pieces of others' work chosen in summaries, allow for flexibility in the 'prescribed' role of Catholic woman.

Father Spalding, a frequent speaker and visitor at St. Mary's, probably best represented the opinion of the clerics when he asked in:

> What is the best education for woman? That which will best help her to become a perfect human being, wise, loving and strong. What is her work? Whatever may help her to become herself. What is forbidden her? Nothing but what degrades or narrows or warps. What has she the right to do? Any good and beautiful and useful thing she is able to do without hurt to her dignity or worth as a human being.[129]

Spalding's method of posing questions yet not dignifying them with a specific answer says, on the surface, nothing, and yet implies everything. The choice of words to describe woman and women's roles: good, beautiful, useful, wise, loving, and strong, was a careful one. It reinforces both the Church's views on woman's place and American society's views as a whole. The Church had appropriated the jargon of "True Womanhood." Women were meant to be morally superior, strong in spirit, character, and faith; thus always good and loving. The idea of woman as wise comes from the Catholic image of Mary.

That which Spalding says a woman is not to do is to damage her dignity, and worth, to degrade, or warp. Therefore engaging in the unnatural push for suffrage or the feminist movement would degrade and damage a woman's dignity. Remaining single, pursuing education in "feminine" areas, and acquiring a job like teaching, would allow a woman to be good and wise, without contesting male authority or male areas of dominance.

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[129] Saint Mary's Chimes Vol. III, no. 11, July 1895, 121.

Commencement speeches and formal addresses were characterized by such ambiguities. Male authority figures encouraged behavior which would easily be categorized as fitting the traditional women's history narrative of "True Womanhood." Female students, while not contesting convention outright, attempted to maneuver within this prescribed role. The question that cannot ever be fully answered is, did the strong role model of the nun and the aggressively competitive and intellectual curriculum encourage students to question society's dictates about women?

A frequent theme was the 'womanly' woman, though this had various degrees of expression. Bishop Richter of Grand Rapids felt that "...a womanly woman is one to whom the art of arts is that of making the home happy"[130] and therefore a wife should not be chosen for her beauty but for her kitchen accomplishments. The St. Mary's girl was out of luck in this department. There was not a home economics course at the school and the girls were only home during a brief time in the summer. Authorities felt that there was more to a woman than culinary skills. Women were to be concerned with moral and intellectual culture to become the "...highest ideal of Christian and cultural womanhood."[131]

Women were supposed to be chaste, noble, mild, and to possess 'sweet reason' , to exude faith, hope, and love. They were also to be instrumental in the progress of the race.[132] To be successful, women were not supposed to amass wealth but to "...acquire knowledge, to cultivate a true heart, to develop love for duty, for righteousness, for good,

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[130] Saint Mary's Chimes Vol. IV, no. 8, April 1896, 93.
[131] Saint Mary's Chimes (Father Zahm) Vol. V, no. 11, July 1897, 138.
[132] Saint Mary's Chimes (Spalding) Vol. III, no.11, July 1895, 121.

and to strive after these things."[133] Clearly as late as 1897, the virtues of purity, piety, submissiveness, and domesticity were equally lauded by the Catholic Church as by the Protestant majority.

Even so, Spalding felt that women should be more than wives or household drudges. He found the contempt for the single woman savage and barbarous.[134] He also showed surprising insight into the plight of women in the home:

> To tell them they are the queens of the home...is an insult to their intelligence...and at home women are, for the most part, drudges. What need is there of a hollow phrase when the appeal to truth is obvious?[135]

Unfortunately, or perhaps fortunately for them, the majority of St. Mary's girls would never find themselves in the position of having to do housework themselves, but would rather hire domestics. Bishop Ireland, in the same year, encouraged women to work in their homes, in charitable work, and in religious work. St. Mary's graduates were more likely to behave as their Protestant counterparts did in terms of volunteer and charitable activities.

Education was encouraged but in an open-ended manner. There was no distinction between men's and women's education, standards, and knowledge, yet the goal of women's education seemed to be to become a better influence in the home, a better example to one's children. While men's education led to career opportunities. A small number of women were recognized for their professional achievements in teaching and literature but the political woman was chastised, as being in danger of losing something of "sacred power of

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[133] Saint Mary's Chimes (Spalding) Vol. VI, no. 4, Dec. 1897, 46.
[134] Saint Mary's Chimes Vol. III, no.11, July 1895, 123.
[135] Chimes 123.

the wife and mother."[136] A woman was no longer confined to the home doing needlework, but encouraged to be a public figure in the form of a teacher, nurse, or doing charitable or volunteer work. Yet these public roles fit a certain definition; they were never a threat to male power and they did not contradict the image of the "True Woman."

Clerics had an advantage over other authors expounding on the subject of True Womanhood; they could claim the authority of God when speaking, asserting that God wanted this or that. This religious tone also added another moral element in encouraging woman to dedicate herself to God, or to live a God-like life. The aim of the higher education of women was to "...develop the human being for the greatest good of humanity and the greatest glory of God."[137] The only way to be certain of true happiness was to yield fully to God. Perhaps this was the great appeal of the convent. In entering the convent most women were fulfilled both spiritually and personally.

Many of these speeches and commencement addresses were not printed intact but summarized and commented upon by student authors. These young women focused on the idea of Christian womanhood, the idea of women as keepers of the country's conscience, and education of women. They were also careful to focus on the long tradition of the Church's openness to the cultivation of women's talent and abilities. There was never anything derogatory to women and nothing was printed which discouraged particular forms of behavior or encouraged participation in professions. This is not positive proof that opinions debasing women were deliberately excluded, yet the speeches recorded in their entirety, made by the same men, often had such negative content.

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[136] Chimes 123.
[137] Saint Mary's Chimes (Most Rev. J.J. Keane, D.D.) Vol. XVI, no. 2, Oct. 1908, 16-17.

These student-authored pieces provide important information about student opinion. The male-authored pieces speak to the expectations and accepted behavior of women; student-authored pieces offer a different perspective. Student-authored pieces speak to the actualities of the student's experiences and opinions. The majority of student-authored pieces focused not on education for intellectual and moral cultivation, but rather, for employment. "The question-'What are you going to do with your education?' would then resolve itself into-"What are you going to do with your life?' For education should mean life..."[138] Young women did not choose to take male jobs out of maliciousness, but for reasons of self-fulfillment, and self-worth. Women sought occupations out of choice, not necessity; a choice not to waste her talents but to assert her independence.[139] Even a student as forward-thinking as Mary Harrison would not allow herself to sound too much like a feminist. She concluded the aforementioned piece with an affirmation that women's true fields were domestic, social, or church work, asserting the "...refining influence of women..." and the greater magnification of all these things which would be achieved through educating women.[140] Harrison herself never married.

In a school with a curriculum as rigorous and challenging as St. Mary's it is not surprising that there was a strong work ethic amongst its students. According to Chimes studies were taken seriously and were quite competitive. Laziness, especially, was looked down upon, as Agnes Ewing Brown wrote, "I think that any girl who neglects to work in an Institution like this must have the attribute of laziness abnormally developed."[141]

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[138] Saint Mary's Chimes Vol. X, no.3, Nov. 1901, 36.
[139] Saint Mary's Chimes (Mary Harrison, '99) Vol. VII, no. 11, July 1899, 143-144.
[140] Chimes 144.
[141] Saint Mary's Chimes (Agnes Ewing Brown, '98) Vol. VI, no. 2, Oct. 1897, 20.

Brown was another St. Mary's alumnus who never married. A cousin of Mother Angela, she capitalized on her intellectual abilities and received a B. Lett. in 1898 from St. Mary's and later an M.A. from the University of Michigan. Other women graduates did not use their education as Brown did and were heard to rue their lack of domestic preparedness:

> I know the argument to be contrary, I used to write about it myself, and believe it too; but that was before the serious days settled down upon me, when I would gladly have exchanged my small birthright of Latin and Greek for the ability to make one single, respectable mess of anything half so good as pottage.[142]

Women at St. Mary's were in a protected and exclusive environment. Notions of intellectual attainment and professional achievement sprang up amongst students and were fostered by the challenging, competitive environment. Some women, however, were unable to reconcile an academic background with the demands of homemaking. Perhaps this is the reason that so few American convent-educated women married; and that some entered convents themselves. In Eileen Mary Brewer's study of four midwestern convent schools she found that only approximately 50 percent of graduates married.[143] Amongst the alumnae of St. Mary's there was a large number of never married graduates, but not nearly so high a percentage entered religious orders as in the groups studied by Danylewycz. There was no easy way to achieve any sort of agreement between the preparation of their early life with the expectations imposed by a home and family.

The alternative of the convent was a highly respected one in the Catholic community. "Marriage, motherhood, or worldly achievement never could surpass the

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[142] Saint Mary's Chimes Vol. VI, no.1, Sept. 1897, 7.
[143] Brewer 115.

supreme honor of choosing religious life."[144] Convent schoolgirls, such as those at St. Mary's, celebrated the reception and profession of postulants and novices in their publications. The September issue of Saint Mary's Chimes always contained a detailed description of the ceremony, the names (original and in religion), and the origins of those women who professed themselves in the Holy Cross order. Coming of age in the convent school, this option was constantly before Catholic girls.

It is helpful now to turn to a discussion of those women who did choose the convent, the women who entered the Holy Cross order; to try to discern why they made this choice, and to examine how it was both an accepted yet alternative expression of femininity **and** allowed women increased opportunities for personal fulfillment outside marriage and motherhood. Profession of a religious vocation was not a magical experience, the women who entered convents had their peculiar strengths and limitations. Entrance into a convent was, in part, another, if you will, occupational choice for women. Usually these women were more religious than most, yet their faith was not childlike or blind. Entrance into a religious order was and is a serious matter. The postulancy and novitiate are as much a period of trial as one of preparation and learning. A woman was generally a postulant for six months to one year, a novice for one to two years, she did not make her final profession until she had spent many years with her community. The convent was considered "...a highly esteemed alternative to marriage."[145] Nuns were able to exercise real power as teachers and administrators. This must have been a stimulus for women to join a religious order in addition to religious and professional motivations.

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[144] Brewer 98.; see Table 1 in Appendix for figures on St. Mary's
[145] Ewens, "Removing the Veil," 259.

> No other women in America so fully controlled their own destinies or lived in a world so radically separate from men as did the nuns. The convent provided an extraordinary alternative for those dissatisfied with the options available to women outside society and might partially explain the absence of middle-class Catholic women's reform movements.[146]

Choosing religion meant, for the educated woman, escaping the responsibilities of the household, family duties, and marital strife (or perhaps just marriage in general). The convent provided women with scope for meaningful fulfillment through service to others and the Church. In 1850 there were 1,375 nuns in the United States, by 1900 there were 40,000.[147] Regardless of the political and structural differences between Quebec and the United States, the same remarkable boom in convent membership occurred during the same period of time.

Sisters were not consciously feminist and would have scorned the term. They rarely questioned male authority. Yet "...they managed to construct a separate female world for the ostensible purpose of spiritual sustenance and church work."[148] Nuns were able to construct the female community as an alternative family model so wished for by women's historians.

> At a far deeper level than their politically active Protestant counterparts...many Catholic women thoroughly yet unintentionally rejected male domination by choosing to live in an all-female society. Nuns provided their female co-religionists with examples of productive, happy lives without the benefit of husbands and family.[149]

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[146] Brewer 124; note the incredible similarities here between Brewer and Danylewycz
[147] Ewens, "Removing the Veil," 272.
[148] Brewer 136.
[149] Brewer 136.

Many women who joined the Congregation of the Holy Cross had themselves been educated at convent schools. One such woman was Mother Angela.[150] Born Eliza Gillespie, her family was well-to-do and connected politically. As a girl she attended a Dominican convent school and later graduated with high honors from Georgetown Visitation Academy in Washington D.C. Like many Holy Cross sisters she was a highly educated woman for her time. It was the opinion of her parish priest that, "Eliza should never marry; I do not know a man who is her mental superior."[151] That may well have been the reason she chose to stay single, and eventually committed herself to a life of religion.

She taught at an Anglican Female Seminary but was not fully happy as a Catholic in a Protestant school. She could have stayed at the school, she had been offered the principalship, or married one of the many men who courted her. If she stayed at the seminary she would continue to work in an environment that was not of her own faith, if she married she would have had to give up teaching. The convent represented a way to make a career of teaching, while immersing her in her own faith.

Like many religious, she was not the only professed member of her family. Her younger brother, Neal, had proceeded her into religion by entering the Holy Cross order of Josephite Brothers. She was a woman of wealth and intelligence, rather than stay in 'society', she used this wealth to expand the financially strapped order, and she used her intelligence to convert St. Mary's from a small, backwater school, to a well-known and respected institution of female instruction. By entering Holy Cross she had a much larger

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[150] b.1824-d.1887
[151] McAllister 60.

impact on Catholic women and was able to achieve a much greater degree of personal fulfillment than if she had remained in the secular world.

Mother Angela was not the only woman of means to enter the Holy Cross order. Mathurine Salou was born in France to bourgeois parents.[152] She too was educated before entering the French Marianites. She became known as Mother Ascension and held many administrative positions in addition to teaching after she came to America in 1848. It was she who was most severely punished when the American Sisters wished to separate from the French Marianites. Kept in France in penance for her actions she was forbidden to return to the United States and her position as directress of a Holy Cross school in Philadelphia.

Although it was Father Sorin who provided the money for her passage and secular clothing to disguise her retreat, as a Sister Marianite she was not required to answer to him. Father Sorin was both her confessor and her friend, but he had no temporal command over the Sisters. This belonged to the French Motherhouse. By leaving France, Ascension was overtly disobeying the will of her superiors. She felt she was answering to a higher power, that her presence in America would better serve the order than remaining in France.

This is the perhaps the most extreme example of defiance in the annals of Holy Cross, it is an illustration that the nuns could resist hierarchical authority. They did not follow blindly. Ascension was never criticized by her American *confrères*. The Motherhouse did not choose to do anything to further punish her and the American Sisters achieved their independence soon after. This is an example of a strong-willed, dedicated

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[152] b.1826-d.1901

woman willing to do anything for the good of her order. Luckily she was not punished and her name is remembered reverently at St. Mary's.[153]

Another example of a woman willing to risk both punishment and character defamation for the good of her order was Mother Augusta. Born Amanda Anderson in 1830, her widower father sent her to a convent school believing that he could not raise a girl. As one of many nuns who worked as a nurse during the Civil War, Mother Augusta came upon two orphan children, a brother and a sister. When she was transferred back to St. Mary's she brought these two children with her and became their benefactor. Basically, however, she was their mother. Most teaching nuns mothered children in the classroom and dormitory, Mother Augusta actually became a mother to these children in the strictest sense of the word, she raised them and was responsible for their every need.

Unfortunately Mother Augusta, as first Mother General, was the sister awkwardly caught in the middle of Frs. Sorin's and Moreau's feud over Sorin's plans to establish a second, manual labor novitiate. Augusta was sent to Utah to teach in 1875. Many feel this was because of her opposition to Sorin. It was a touchy situation. In fact, Catholic author, Maurice Francis Egan, while writing on the history of the order, stated "She [Mother Angela] was succeeded as General of the Congregation, by Mother Augusta, now living in Washington, whom a wise etiquette forbids me to praise..."[154]

Mother Augusta had, in fact, resigned in 1884 over the problems with Sorin. When the truth of the story became known of Sorin's deliberate persecution of her and uncannonical establishment of an order, her resignation was refused and Sorin was

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[153] Sisters of the Holy Cross, Pioneers and Builders Centenary Chronicles of the Sisters of the Holy Cross. III. (Hammond, IN: W.B. Conkey Company, 1941.) 28-31.
[154] Saint Mary's Chimes Vol. VIII, no. 11, July 1900, 147.

reprimanded. When the offensive novitiate was finally closed she refused to support the petition of numerous priests to have it reopened. She was perfectly within her rights, she did not answer to them in matters governing her community. In her later years Mother Augusta said, "I have asked God for only one thing; What I have had to suffer does not count...I have asked Him to fix my Sisters so that no man can ever lay his hand upon them. I have asked nothing more. He has done all I asked."[155] One wonders if Mother Augusta knew what sort of feminist implications her statement would have. The priests only had power over the Sisters in spiritual matters as their confessors. The Sisters were a completely autonomous female community in terms of administration and governance.

Another orphaned sister was Sister M. Charles Borromeo.[156] Born Joanna Flynn, she and her sister Alice were brought over from Ireland by their uncle. The girls' uncle also paid for their tuition at St. Mary's, Bertrand. Joanna attributed her vocation to the example and friendship of Mother Angela, and she followed her sister Alice into the order in 1856.[157]

Many Holy Cross Sisters had been pupils at St. Mary's. A very few of St. Mary's Protestant pupils entered religious orders. Alida Fuller was sent to St. Mary's by her father, a judge, when her mother died.[158] While at St. Mary's she converted to Catholicism. Her father did not originally support her decision to join the Congregation of Holy Cross upon her graduation from the Academy and she was forced to return to his home in Michigan. Once she was home, she arranged to send her personal items back to

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[155] Sisters of the Holy Cross, Superior Generals 104.
[156] b.1833-d.1890.
[157] Sisters of the Holy Cross, Pioneers and Builders 41-54.
[158] b.1845-d.1903

St. Mary's and then traveled there herself on the pretense of attending a party. Instead she entered the novitiate. Her father pursued her trying to force her to leave with him. He eventually agreed to her choice and she became Sister Lucretia. Both a niece and a nephew later converted to Catholicism.[159]

Alida Fuller showed remarkable courage. Until marriage, a woman's father could exercise total control over her. She risked a great deal in defying her father, luckily he proved to be more concerned for her happiness and welfare than her religious choice. Alida definitely did not behave like the submissive "True Woman" in declaring her vocation. For whatever reason, she acted in her own self-interest, by choosing a life of religion, she chose a life of fulfillment.

Women who entered religious communities often strayed from societal standards for women's roles. As the sisters handled all their own finances, several sisters were required to enter the very male world of business and finance. In the nineteenth century this was the work of Mother M. Aquina. Born Emma Kirwin in 1852, her father was a doctor. Orphaned early, she was placed with the Sisters of Mercy by her guardian. She did both the high-school and post-graduate (college) course at St. Mary's and received her B.A. in 1879. She was a multi-talented woman, active in the alumnae association and responsible for organizing the first Normal course at St. Mary's. She was especially known for her business acumen and was paid the high compliment that "...she entered into business transactions with the shrewdness of a financier and reached decisions with the directness of a man."[160] Mother Aquina moved in the world of business without much

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[159] Sisters of the Holy Cross, Pioneers and Builders 71-82.
[160] Sisters of the Holy Cross, Superior General 163.; 155-168.

reproach or criticism because of her status as a nun. She did not pose a threat to businessmen and was thus allowed to enter an arena almost completely monopolized by men. Her position as a nun guaranteed her femininity, and she was therefore permitted to step outside regular female roles.

Another factor influencing women to join religious orders was the special friendship that sometimes grew up between students and teachers in the convent school. Eva Wolff was born in Wisconsin in 1887 and attended St. Mary's. While there she became good friends with her English teacher, Sister Rita (Heffernan). Eva excelled in English and because of similar interests and abilities the two became very close. Sr. Rita was a published author, of verse, and she had also published a history of the community, A Story of Fifty Years . It was by reading this history that Eva Wolff was convinced to join the Congregation of Holy Cross. She became Sister Madeleva in religion.

Sister Madeleva was also part of a new generation of sisters who studied at secular universities for advanced degrees. She received and M.A. from Notre Dame, and a Ph.D. from the University of California at Berkeley, both in English Literature. Like her mentor, Sister Rita, she also became a published author, writing several volumes of verse, and an autobiography. It is this autobiography that really shows the character of this woman who became a Mother General. Although she was obviously a religious woman, that was not her only trait; her religiosity did not define her as a person.

> The chronicle of my threescore years and ten is
> not a story of a nun on her *prie-dieu*. It does
> not move in an atmosphere of pink and blue devotions.
> It is quite free from devout aspirations. Aspiration and
> inspiration may be implicit. I hope that they are.[161]

[161] Sr. M. Madeleva (Wolff) C.S.C., My First Seventy Years (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1959) xi.

Reading Mother Madeleva's autobiography gives the impression that she was an intelligent, dedicated student, a tough administrator and businesswoman, a dutiful daughter, a talented author, and a beloved teacher and friend. She was also a nun.

Like the Congrégation de Notre Dame in Quebec, many Holy Cross sisters were convent-educated themselves, of a well-to-do background, and came from a family with a tradition of entering orders. Convents provided a family to all women, and were especially attractive to orphaned or motherless girls such as Mother Aquina and Sister Charles Borromeo. They allowed a woman an education, a vocation, and power in administrative positions and over the creation of new generations of Catholic women. Nuns were able to 'mother' without bearing children. The example of Mother Augusta who raised two war orphans is unique, but many students formed strong student-teacher attachments, like Sister Rita and Mother Madeleva (Eva Wolff). Convent school girls were away from their families nearly all year, save two months in the summer. In light of this, it was the nuns, not their families that truly raised these girls.

Many times the woman who entered a religious order had other options in terms of life-choice, but the best personal option appeared to be religious life. Though devout and pious, nuns were also human. There were many outside factors which influenced a woman to enter a convent, religiosity was by no means the only one.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

No woman stated explicitly, "I entered religion to become actualized as a women" OR "I entered religion to escape the patriarchy and find myself a career," but these conclusions can still be drawn from sources concerning religious women and their convents. All choir nuns had white-collar 'careers', many had more than one. In addition to teaching, nursing, or administrative duties, some were noted artists, scientists, and authors. One nun was an auto mechanic.[162] These were careers that were most likely denied them had they remained in secular society. Nuns were a highly educated group of women, yet they were not ostracized like some feminists and female social reformers.

Although there is no evidence for overt feminism in the convent or convent school there was a tension between the prescriptive ideal of women articulated by priests and Brothers, and the opinions of female students and ways in which nuns constructed their identities. Students and teachers were concerned with exhibiting correct female behavior, but they were more interested in careers and scholastic excellence. There were articles in Saint Mary's Chimes which extolled the virtues of careers, and of a religious vocation but there were never any articles which praised motherhood or expressed a burning desire to get married. This can be interpreted as a tacit acceptance by women, but not a

[162] Sister Maria Assunta Werner, C.S.C., ed., The Mother Pauline Traditions Papers (Notre Dame, IN: St. Mary's College, 1993) 14.

wholehearted agreement, with ideals of nineteenth-century domesticity. Women of both religions played their expected roles, that did not mean that they agreed with them.

Although some experiences were similar for Protestant and Catholic women, the articulation of roles and standards of behavior differed for Catholic women compared to the Protestant 'norm.' One cannot simply read texts dealing with theory and American women's history and blindly apply them to Catholic women. The majority of American women's historians do not even acknowledge Catholic women in their work but we should not assume that Catholic women did not matter, did not constitute a large enough group for research, or generally had life experiences comparable to Protestant women. Any one of these three assumptions would be grossly inaccurate. To say that they didn't matter is dismissive; to say that they didn't constitute a large enough group for study is untrue, because a few studies have already been done, and the source material, largely untouched, is certainly there. It has been one of the goals of this thesis to demonstrate that middle-class Catholic women are worth studying, and that their experiences did differ from that of Protestant women. Due to convent schools there was, in fact, a more accessible and more easily identifiable female space, network, and culture for Catholic women than for Protestant women.

Because the Catholic experience was different, we cannot simply apply theories based on Protestant women to Catholic women. Theories such as 'True Womanhood,' 'Imperial Motherhood,' and 'Real Womanhood' affected Catholic women, but they were not the only acceptable female role. Catholic women, especially those who attended convent schools, not only had their mothers for role models, they also had the Catholic

nun, who showed them that they did not have to marry and have children to become a woman. Entrance into a religious order was a perfectly acceptable expression of femininity. Nuns were supposed to imitate the life of Mary, what could be more maternal? Female saints offered still further models.

Remaining single and supporting oneself in a feminine profession such as teaching was another acceptable alternative. Salaries may have been low, but it was not altogether impossible for a single woman to make a living as a teacher. Women who became teachers entered a world where the educated opinion of the time felt that women teachers were ideal, **because** they were women. Teaching was women's 'true profession.' Teaching was by no means the only acceptable career, fields which did not stray from accepted, female standards of behavior, such as the liberal, fine, and performing arts, as well as nursing, were viable alternatives to marriage for some women.

The alternatives to marriage open to American Catholic women were much greater than the alternatives for *Quebecois* women. There will always be differences when taking a theory out of one society and applying it to another. These differences do not preclude the many similarities or the value of the comparison. *Quebecois* women entered convents to avoid marriage, to guarantee economic security, to have a career, and for reasons of personal fulfillment. American Catholic women entered convents for these same reasons, but they also remained single in large numbers.[163]

The example of strong, seemingly independent women who were nuns and the experience of the American convent school produced many never-married convent graduates. Some came from wealthy backgrounds and did not have to work, some

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[163] please refer to appendix

continued their education at co-educational or Eastern female schools, and some entered the female professions. The end results were played out differently in Quebec and the United States, but the 'radicalizing' experience of the convent school produced many women ready and able to challenge conventions about women and marriage.

In some respects Catholic women had more room to maneuver than did Protestant women. They grew up with examples of strong women, and were taught to respect them. These women were respected by men, women, Catholics, and even some Protestants. The convent and the convent school were safe spaces for female expression. As long as a woman remained at the convent, lay or religious, she was not bound by the standards of secular gender roles. Graduates of convent schools who returned to secular society were once again subjected to the same standards of gender roles as were Protestant women. Those who did not choose motherhood needed to choose feminine professions to remain acceptable examples of womanhood.

Women who entered convents were freed from this distinction. They could not directly disobey their superiors or break their vows, but they could ignore societal standards on what was 'womanly' behavior, and what were female roles. By becoming a nun, a woman, in a way, removed herself from social scrutiny. She was a nun, so of course she was feminine. As long as she did not break the rules of her community, her behavior was socially acceptable.

There was only a small window of opportunity for this sort of Catholic women's agency in the United States. Decline in financial support and attendance caused many Catholic female academies and convent schools to close in the 1940s and 1950s. There

are now very few left in the 1990s. With the growth of the feminist movement, the convent was no longer the only socially acceptable place where a woman could challenge notions about gender roles. Perhaps it is no longer as important for women to have a gender-segregated space in which to come of age and to express themselves.[164]

Female vocations declined in the twentieth century when the Vatican became more strict about duties which nuns were allowed to perform, and began to monitor their behavior much more closely. This presents an interesting paradox because of increased numbers of female religious who are self-identified radical feminists and vocal activists. The appearance of outspoken women could be reactionary to the tightening of Vatican control, but it makes a search for past roots to present trends all the more interesting. It is important, however, to be careful not to apply twentieth-century feminist ideas and standards to nineteenth-, early twentieth-century women who would have been appalled at the term. Discussing female agency is one thing, but it must be done in accordance with the standards and accepted roles of the time period. We cannot force our opinions and judgments on women of the past.

The vast amount of records and personal papers retained, and sometimes catalogued, by female religious orders represents a wonderful historical research opportunity, an untapped resource. It has been customary in religious orders to assign record-keeping as an obedience. Annual reports are abundant, though their value varies with the thoroughness of the author. Most congregations have written their own histories, but these are often limited to 'Great Women's' history or flawed by their hagiographical

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[164] radical feminists still believe that separate, segregated female space is necessary, the more popular and accessible liberal feminism is dedicated to achieving male-female equality, gender/sex-segregated space would be contrary to the goals of equality

intent. There are many other options open for further research. The initial class distinction in orders of European origin lends itself to class analysis. This sort of analysis might address questions like: What were the respective percentages of lay vs. choir nuns? Did one group have more control than another, or did they have equal voices? Were the different distinctions dependent only upon level of education at the time of the postulancy, or was it truly a distinction based on class of origin? How and when did this change as congregations became Americanized?

Another avenue for further research would be an analysis of the language nuns used to refer to themselves, and to other women. Was there a difference, and how did the language used conform/or not to ideas about 'womanly' women, and 'True Women?' In addition, the study presented could be expanded to encompass more than one American order, as well as Catholic women who did not attend Catholic academies and convent schools. The study of women and Catholicism in America has long been the domain of the Catholic Church. Many theses and dissertations have been written on this subject by male and female religious. It is time to integrate works like these into the mainstream of American women's history. Women's historians have long made distinctions based on race and class, they should also make distinctions based on religion.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX

Marital Status of Saint Mary's Graduates 1860-1900

Year	Single	Married	Entered Religious Order	Total Single	Total Graduates
1860	4	2	0	4	6
1863	0	2	0	0	2
1864	1	2	0	1	3
1865	1	1	1	2	3
1866	2	3	1	3	6
1867	1	3	0	1	4
1868	3	6	8	11	17
1869	3	1	2	5	6
1870	4	5	3	7	12
1871	2	4	3	5	9
1872	3	7	1	4	11
1873	0	9	1	1	10
1874	5	5	1	6	11
1875	2	8	1	3	11
1876	5	6	0	5	11
1877	2	11	1	3	14
1878	5	5	1	6	11
1879	5	2	0	5	7
1880	4	5	0	4	9
1881	5	11	0	5	10
1882	0	4	2	2	6
1883	2	8	0	2	10
1884	3	2	0	3	5
1885	1	4	1	2	6
1886	0	6	0	0	6
1887	4	11	1	5	16
1888	6	5	2	8	13
1889	5	15	0	5	20
1890	0	6	1	1	7
1891	3	9	1	4	13
1892	3	7	1	4	11
1893	1	8	0	1	9
1894	0	10	0	0	10
1895	2	15	0	2	17
1896	2	8	1	3	11
1897	3	10	0	3	13

1898	2	6	1	3	9
1899	7	5	0	7	12
1900	2	7	0	2	9

table 1

***source for information in table 1:** Marion McCandless, Family Portraits: History of the Holy Cross Alumnae Association of Saint Mary's College, Notre Dame, Indiana, 1879-1949 (Notre Dame, IN: Saint Mary's College, 1952) 453-456.

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