



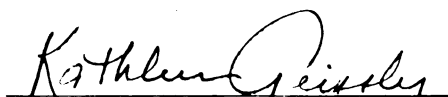
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"DO WHAT YOU CAN" : CREATING AN INSTITUTION,
THE LADIES' LIBRARY ASSOCIATIONS IN
MICHIGAN, 1852-1900

presented by

Mildred Louise Jackson

has been accepted towards fulfillment
of the requirements for

Ph.D. degree in English


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"DO WHAT YOU CAN" : CREATING AN INSTITUTION,
THE LADIES' LIBRARY ASSOCIATIONS IN MICHIGAN, 1852-1900

VOLUME I

By

Mildred Louise Jackson

A DISSERTATION

Submitted to
Michigan State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Department of English

1998

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ABSTRACT

"DO WHAT YOU CAN" : CREATING AN INSTITUTION, THE LADIES' LIBRARY ASSOCIATIONS IN MICHIGAN, 1852-1900

By

Mildred Louise Jackson

This study seeks to recover the historical record of the Ladies' Library Association in Michigan. It focuses on institution building activities as well as the literacy and reading practices of Ladies' Library Associations. I base this study primarily upon records of the Kalamazoo, Ann Arbor, Ypsilanti and Galesburg L.L.A.'s. Records include minutes of board meetings, annual meetings and study groups and are supplemented with local newspaper articles.

I examine organizational principles found in constitutions, by-laws and mission statements in the second chapter. The chapter focuses on how women used the state laws to gain status and power for the libraries before and after the Civil War. Through source materials that include contemporary and county histories, I examine what the L.L.A. meant to the women who formed them and to the community where they were located.

In the next two chapters I explore public and private reading practices. Reading circles and study groups in Kalamazoo are examined in chapter three. Topics of study, the format of meetings and the educational opportunities provided for members are discussed. The dynamic of gender is

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Chapter four investigates what women actually purchased and read. By examining thirteen library catalogs, the popular genres and authors between 1850 and 1902 can be determined. Minutes of the associations reveal the policies and practices for purchasing books as well as the requests made by readers for more fictional works and the ways that the women met the demand, while still providing high quality reading matter. By compiling circulation statistics in Galesburg, Michigan from 1877-1880 I examine what women actually checked out and presumably read.

Finally, I analyze the fundraising efforts and physical spaces where the women met. These activities positioned women as leaders in the community and made the L.L.A.'s more visible. Lecture courses, plays and social events were all popular. The records of the Ann Arbor association provide details about the problems connected to building a library.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I wish to thank the chair of my doctoral committee, Kitty Geissler, for her assistance in completing this project. Her suggestions have been invaluable. Marilyn Wilson has been a mentor and a friend for many years and I thank her for joining the committee part way through my program and for her support. Also, thanks to Roger Meiners and Jim Hill for their interest in my topic.

This project would not have been possible without the help of several librarians. Sharon Carlson, Director of Archives and Regional History Collections at Western Michigan University, shares my interest in L.L.A.'s and has been helpful for several years. Nancy Bartlett, Anne Frantilla and Karen Jania found materials for me at the Bentley Historical Library, The University of Michigan, that I may not have found on my own. Donna Kowalewski, Director of the Galesburg Memorial Library, allowed me to use the Galesburg Ladies' Library Association papers which proved to be the cornerstone of an entire chapter. Nancy Robertson, Library of Michigan, and Paul Gifford, Genessee Historical Collections, U-M Flint, also provided assistance. Evelyn Leasher at the Clarke Historical Library, Central Michigan

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University, led me to information about several libraries that I did not know existed. I am very grateful for the assistance of the Interlibrary Loan Department at Grand Valley State University. Thanks to K. Laurel Balkema, Yvonne Williams, and Milly Holtvluwer for their patience and persistence to get the materials I requested. Thank you to Neal Rogness of the Math and Statistics department at Grand Valley for running my statistical information. Finally, I would like to thank Lee Lebbin, Director of Grand Valley State University libraries, for his support and for allowing me time away to complete this study

My friends and family members have supported my educational endeavors throughout my life. Thanks to Helen who took me to Sage Library over thirty years ago and introduced me to the wonderful world of books and reading. The Hennigar family has always believed that I could do anything I decided to try. Special thanks to Bev and Oz, two friends who have listened to me throughout my doctoral studies.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

If you roam the streets of the towns and villages in Michigan and look up at the inscriptions still visible on many nineteenth-century buildings, you may discover a forgotten part of Michigan history, the Ladies' Library Association. During the mid to late nineteenth century women in many small towns and villages across Michigan established Ladies' Library Associations, some of the earliest lending libraries in the state. These institutions also promoted cultural and intellectual life within their communities. While most Ladies' Library Associations had closed or merged with the public library in their town by the early twentieth century, a few¹ still exist and remain influential in their community through public service and charitable work.

Educated, middle and upper class women began forming

¹Kalamazoo, Plainwell, Ann Arbor, Ypsilanti and Port Huron all still have active L.L.A.'s. Others may also still be active.

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Ladies' Library Associations in the 1850s. Most of these women, who had migrated from the Eastern states with husbands or families, desired a place to acquire books and a forum to discuss both the books they read and social and domestic issues. Ladies' Library Associations evolved into more than lending libraries when women formed auxiliary study groups or reading circles and sponsored entertainments and lecture series. With these additional activities the social libraries resembled the lyceums² of the early nineteenth century. While many of the auxiliary activities associated with the L.L.A.'s were exclusively for women, membership or subscription to the library was open to anyone who could afford the yearly fee, which ranged from \$.50 to \$1.00.³ Males in the community were given honorary memberships for various reasons. In Galesburg, for example,

²The lyceum movement began in 1826 and was prominent between 1830 and 1850. According to Jesse Shera, the "lecture platform soon became the focal point of the lyceum, though the original intention of the founders was to use any device for advancing knowledge that might properly be employed by the participants." (Foundations of the Public Library: The Origins of the Public Library Movement in New England 1629-1835 (Chicago: The U of Chicago P, 1949, 117.)

³The norm was \$.50 to \$1.00 per year. Some associations also charged .10 to take a book out of the library. Fines were assessed for late and/or damaged materials.

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all ministers were made honorary members.⁴ In other communities men could become honorary members if they paid \$25.00 to \$50.00 or if they made significant contributions to building funds. I have found no records of children's being allowed membership.

Ladies' Library Associations were hybrid organizations, combining the functions of both a library and a women's club. Collecting, cataloging and circulating books were all vital aspects of their missions. Providing access to reading materials in communities with no libraries or with no resources for women readers was of primary importance. The associations also functioned as one of the women's clubs in most towns. Through social activities, reading circles and other educational opportunities such as the lecture series they sponsored, the women promoted literacy and educational opportunities for the members and for the community at large. These activities, especially if they were meant for female audiences, were often under the jurisdiction of the women's clubs⁵ if no Ladies' Library

⁴I find no stated reason for this in the minutes. It may have been because of the support of the ministers in the community. Also, many of the women were also active in the churches and the association depended upon meeting space in the churches for large events.

⁵Other women's clubs included study groups with names such as the Tuesday Club or the Friday Club, groups such as the Women's Christian Temperance Union and, during the Civil

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Association existed. Some of the associations explored social issues such as education for girls, child care, and proper public behavior. All aspects of L.L.A.'s are discussed in the minutes and in articles about the Ladies' Library Associations and will be examined in later chapters of this study.

This dissertation grew out of a curiosity to know more about the women who organized the Ladies' Library Associations in Michigan. The primary objective of this study is to uncover the historical record of these associations that has thus far been neglected. My study focuses on the organizational principles of institutions founded by nineteenth century women as well as the literacy and reading practices of Ladies' Library Associations. I base my study primarily upon the records of the Kalamazoo, Ann Arbor, Ypsilanti and Galesburg Ladies' Library Associations.⁶ Primary records examined in this study include minutes from board meetings and reading circles, reports of associations' anniversaries, annual reports, and

War, Soldiers' Aid Societies and Sanitary Commission.

⁶The Kalamazoo Association has left the most extensive collection of records (19 linear feet); the other Associations that I focus on in this study have left between .5 and 2 linear feet of records. The records in the smaller collections consist mainly of minutes and secretary's reports.

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Examining the records of the Ladies' Library Associations provides an opportunity to study not only the institutional role of the library in the communities, but also to consider the influence of class and gender upon the composition of the membership for each association. The methods used by women to educate themselves through building a library that was ostensibly a community resource is one of the most important factors of this study. Based on their selections of books, usually heavy on biography and history in the early stages of development, it is clear that these were educated women who sought continuing education through personal reading and auxiliary study clubs.⁷ A commitment to service in the community, evident in the minutes and articles found in contemporary newspapers, was also very important to the women involved in the library associations and will be examined.

This study contributes to the knowledge we already have about women's organizations in the nineteenth century. My

⁷Censorship of material seemed to be common in all associations where records have been located. The women sought materials that reflected their own and their societies' moral codes. Selection of reading material will be covered in chapter 4.

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work expands upon previous studies by providing a missing piece of the history of women's organizations. This study focuses on a select group of records for L.L.A.'s that have been located; however, further records probably do exist.

The phenomenon of club women has been addressed in at least four book length studies and in many articles. Karen Blair's The Clubwoman as Feminist: True Womanhood Redefined 1868-1914, Theodora Penny Martin's The Sound of Our Own Voices: Women's Study Clubs, 1860-1910, Anne Ruggles Gere's Intimate Practices: Literacy and Cultural Work in U.S. Women's Clubs, 1880-1920 and Anne Firor Scott's Natural Allies: Women's Associations in American History⁸ all introduce issues surrounding the phenomenon of club women and examine their activities in the nineteenth century. These studies mention the L.L.A.'s only in passing.

Karen Blair explores the expanding definitions of what she calls "ladydom." Her work focuses on the post Civil War era and the women who "believed their sensitivity

⁸Karen J. Blair, The Clubwoman as Feminist: True Womanhood Redefined 1868-1914 (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1980); Theodora Penny Martin, The Sound of Our Own Voices: Women's Study Clubs, 1860-1910 (Boston: Beacon Press, 1987); Anne Ruggles Gere, Intimate Practices: Literacy and Cultural Work in U.S. Women's Clubs, 1880-1920 (Urbana: U of Illinois P, 1997); Anne Firor Scott, Natural Allies: Women's Associations in American History (Urbana: U of Illinois P, 1993).

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as ladies lent itself to cultural concern.”⁹ Theodora Penny Martin’s work turns to the study club. She claims that the women saw these clubs as “small centers of stability and status.”¹⁰ The attitudes that Blair and Martin find in the women who were members of the women’s clubs and societies can also be found in the membership of the Ladies’ Library Associations. Both Blair and Martin focus more on the eastern organizations and on the General Federation of Women’s Clubs¹¹ rather than on the Midwestern associations or on libraries. Blair and Martin assist me in defining women’s organizations, literary clubs and study clubs. Through their work I am able to clarify the differences between the organizations that concentrated solely on study and social activities and organizations that combined these pursuits with service to the community. Gere’s work adds the dimension of literacy to my definitions. Her study examines literacy through both reading and writing by the women and their social interactions. She crosses class, race and religious boundaries in her examination of ways that women connected with one another and gained power

⁹Blair 57.

¹⁰Martin 18.

¹¹The General Federation of Women’s Clubs was founded in 1890.

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through the formation of clubs. Further, Gere's work assists me in thinking about the role of federation and the importance of physical space for women's clubs. In "Literacy and Difference in 19th-Century Women's Clubs," she suggests that "nonfederated clubs that sprang up in the cities and towns across the country had no more than 25 members and could meet in the members' homes, so instead of concentrating on large fund-raising projects for clubhouses and guest speakers, they concentrated on literacy development."¹² My reading opposes Gere's contention about buildings for nonfederated clubs. Regardless of the size of the membership, physical buildings were symbolic of the success of the women who belonged to L.L.A.'s and were a showplace not only for books but also for the objects they collected. As an example, both associations in Kalamazoo and Ann Arbor note art, furniture and sculpture among their holdings which were proudly displayed for members and for the public.¹³

The question of federation that Gere broaches is also important to consider. Belonging to a federation indicated

¹²Anne Ruggles Gere, "Literacy and Difference in 19th-Century Women's Clubs," Literacy: Interdisciplinary Conversations ed. Deborah Keller-Cohen. (Cresskill, N. J.: Hampton P., 1994) 253.

¹³See photographs, Figures 11, 12 and 13.

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a commitment to a larger body of women and extended the influence of the local organization. At the end of the century some of the L.L.A.'s joined the Michigan Federation of Women's Clubs and the General Federation of Women's Clubs. The Ypsilanti group provided for affiliation with the state organization in its by-laws. I believe, however, that federation and affiliation with associations outside the community became far more important after the turn of the century.

With the exception of Scott, the authors mentioned above have all focused on women's clubs formed primarily after the Civil War and into the beginning of the twentieth century. In Natural Allies: Women's Associations in American History, Anne Firor Scott¹⁴ traces the work of voluntary associations and benevolent societies from the late eighteenth century forward. Scott provides the broader history for associations that helps explain the roots of the cultural and educational groups which developed from the mid-nineteenth century onward. She argues that voluntary work constituted a career for the women who undertook it. Since women of the middle and upper class were discouraged from working in paying jobs outside the home, they undertook

¹⁴Many of Anne Firor Scott's articles and books have been useful to this dissertation and will be referred to throughout the study.

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causes that benefited society at large through work in women's organizations. In uncovering the women's roles, Scott reveals that women in "such groups shaped both social values and the nature of community life."¹⁵ In "Women and Libraries,"¹⁶ Scott provides clues for a study such as the one I have undertaken. In her conclusion to this article Scott submits two propositions that are important to my study. First, she contends "that the history of public libraries as it has been written so far is incomplete, and that, when the part played by women's organizations in the creation of libraries across the country is adequately documented and published, the history will have to be rewritten"¹⁷ and second,

that if it is true that the history of libraries is a good window into changes in the culture, then the close study of the early days of many public libraries will throw new light on the tremendous social change represented by the education of women, the development of women's organizations, and then the movement of women into public and political activity.¹⁸

¹⁵Anne Firor Scott, "On Seeing and Not Seeing: A Case of Historical Invisibility," The Journal of American History 71.1 (1984): 10.

¹⁶Anne Firor Scott, "Women and Libraries," The Journal of Library History 21.2 (1986): 403.

¹⁷Scott, "Women and Libraries" 404.

¹⁸Scott, "Women and Libraries" 404.

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Though over a decade has passed since Scott's article was published, much work has yet to be done on women and libraries in the nineteenth century.¹⁹

Scott's proposals strengthen the importance of a dissertation on the Ladies' Library Associations before 1900. While the women sought to improve themselves intellectually by engaging in individual and group reading and discussion, they also sought to improve their villages and towns by hosting the lecture series, cultural and social activities. The history of the L.L.A. in Michigan enhances not only the history of library development in Michigan and the Midwest, but also in the United States. Studying the topics presented in reading groups, the organizational structure and the activities the women pursued to raise funds for books, buildings, rent and events helps me look through the "window into changes in culture" which Scott refers to. Looking not only at the overall patterns, but also at the differences between the pre-Civil War era versus the post-Civil War era reveals changes in culture, views of women's education and women's place in society and provides further points for exploration. My study examines how the

¹⁹I have searched through English, History, American Studies and Information and Library Studies bibliographies. I have discovered many studies about reading in antebellum America, literacy and library history, but little on Ladies' Library Associations.

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women struck a balance between fostering their own intellectual improvement and attempting to influence and serve the community at large. I will explore what was gained from the internal association meetings where women read, studied and discussed various texts and topics that in turn empowered them to go out and actually effect change in their communities. Perhaps more importantly, I will examine the skills that women developed through the organization of and building of an institution within their community. Further I will explore whether the need to organize and affiliate with a visible institution related to needs of particular classes.

The history of women's associations is not the only discipline that my study strengthens. This dissertation also contributes to the field of library history which has recently taken more interest in women's roles in developing and building libraries. Most library historians only mention the Ladies' Library Associations, if they include them at all. Jesse Shera's Foundations of the Public Library: The Origins of the Public Library Movement in New England, 1629-1855 and Sidney Ditzion's Arsenals of a Democratic Culture: A Social History of the American Public Library Movement in New England and the Middle States from 1850 to 1900, two of the classic library histories, ignore

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women's work almost entirely.²⁰ This is not surprising given the age of these studies; Shera's book was published in 1949 and Ditzion's in 1947. Still, both provide a framework for the library movement the L.L.A.'s fit into. Each of these authors outlines the historical development of the public library system in America and discusses the role of private libraries and subscription libraries in this development. They concentrate on the male contributions to librarianship and rarely mention women's work. Dee Garrison's book, Apostles of Culture: The Public Librarian and American Society, 1876-1920,²¹ was written more recently than Shera or Ditzion. Garrison, however, continues to concentrate on founders of the library movement, such as Justin Winsor, William Poole and Melvil Dewey, in the first part of her book. She includes information about what she calls the "gentry phase" of librarianship when one had to be male, upper class and well educated to even enter some libraries in the United States. Garrison does examine the

²⁰Jesse H. Shera, Foundations of the Public Library: The Origins of the Public Library Movement in New England, 1629-1855 (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1949); Sidney Ditzion, Arsenals of a Democratic Culture: A Social History of the American Public Library Movement in New England and the Middle States from 1850-1900 (Chicago: American Library Association, 1947).

²¹Dee Garrison, Apostles of Culture: The Public Librarian and American Society, 1876-1920 (New York: The Free Press, 1979)

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feminization of the library profession at the end of the nineteenth century; however, she concentrates on the exploitation of women rather than on their accomplishments. Garrison notes factors such as low pay and the public perception that women needed few skills to succeed in the profession. These factors contributed to "the inferior and precarious status of the public library as a cultural resource" according to Garrison.²²

Recently more attention has been accorded women but has focused on public libraries or on individual college librarians who broke ground. Suzanne Hildenbrand, Joanne Passet, and Cheryl Knott Malone are but a few of the library historians uncovering the work of women. Reclaiming the American Library Past: Writing the Women In, a collection of essays edited by Suzanne Hildenbrand, reflects some of the work now underway on the history of women's place in librarianship. Cheryl Knott Malone's essay, "Women's Unpaid Labor in Libraries: Change and Continuity," mentions the Ladies' Library Association in passing but does not focus on it in a meaningful way.²³ In her introduction to the

²²Garrison 174.

²³Cheryl Knott Malone, "Women's Unpaid Labor in Libraries: Change and Continuity," in Reclaiming the American Library Past: Writing the Women In ed. Suzanne Hildenbrand (Norwood, N.J.: Ablex Publishing Co., 1996) 279-299.

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collection, Suzanne Hildenbrand writes that Joanne Passet's²⁴ work on women "[concludes] that myths and oversimplifications obscure women's role in library development."²⁵ Her work on women librarians in the west provides us with a picture of librarianship on the frontier from 1900 forward. In work on Midwestern librarians Passet "exploded the myth" that only men were academic librarians in the 19th century.²⁶ It may seem odd that women have not received more attention in a field dominated by females; however, comparatively little has been written on women's roles in establishing libraries or of their importance in the profession.

Only a few authors have written about the Ladies' Library Associations in Michigan. Phyllis Hamner's 1954 thesis, "The Ladies' Library Association of Michigan: A Curious Byway in Library History," provides a broad overview of the Ladies' Library Association as does Evelyn Leasher's 1992 article, "A Brief History of the Ladies' Library

²⁴Joanne Passet, "You Don't Have to Pay Librarians," in Reclaiming the American Library Past: Writing the Women In ed. Suzanne Hildenbrand (Norwood, N.J.: Ablex Publishing Co., 1996) 207-220.

²⁵Suzanne Hildenbrand, "Women in Library History: From the Politics of Library History to the History of Library Politics," Reclaiming the American Library Past: Writing the Women In (Norwood, N.J.: Ablex Publishing Co., 1996) 12.

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Association."²⁷ Hamner relies upon the compilation prepared for the 1876 centennial celebration in Philadelphia, the Historical Sketches of the Ladies' Library Associations of the State of Michigan by Mrs. A. F. Bixby and Mrs. A. Howell²⁸, for most of her information. This book provides brief sketches about the L.L.A.'s that responded to Bixby's and Howell's inquiries and is an important historical text for L.L.A.'s, especially for those for which primary records have not been located. It is not a conclusive work, however. Leasher's article relies on the Historical Sketches and upon library histories written by residents for anniversaries or to document the library in a particular town. While she provides an overview of the L.L.A.'s, she also touches upon individual libraries and furnishes further details, like unique fundraising events for the libraries. In a subsequent article Leasher supplies a useful bibliography of L.L.A.'s for my study. She uncovered many

²⁷Phyllis Norris Hamner, "The Ladies Library Association of Michigan: A Curious Byway in Library History." Master of Science in Library Science thesis, Western Reserve University, 1954; Evelyn Leasher, "A Brief History of the Ladies' Library Association," Michigan Academician 25:4 (1993): 423-430.

²⁸Mrs. A. F. Bixby and Mrs. A. Howell, compilers, Historical Sketches of the Ladies' Library Associations of the State of Michigan (Adrian, Mich.: Times and Exposition Steam Print, 1876). Hereafter referred to as Historical Sketches.

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important secondary sources such as county histories and local library histories. Neither author, however, had access to the primary records that I have examined for this study. Therefore, they do not study many of the details that I have been able to discuss. Daniel F. Ring has written two articles about Ladies' Library Associations. In "Women's Club Culture and the Failure of Library Development in Illinois, Michigan and Ohio," Ring takes a dim view of the role that women played in trying to establish public libraries in small towns. He sees women's clubs, which include L.L.A.'s in his definition, as "not very confident nor independent...." because they left important matters to men.²⁹ Ring blames the women in these towns for the failure to gain Carnegie funding to build libraries and for "stifling" women's abilities to create libraries because they were neither leaders nor politically sophisticated.³⁰ In "Outpost of New England Culture: The Ladies' Library Association of Kalamazoo, Michigan,"³¹ Ring discusses the

²⁹Daniel F. Ring, "Women's Club Culture and the Failure of Library Development in Illinois, Michigan and Ohio," in Carnegie Denied: Communities Rejecting Carnegie Library Construction Grants 1898-1925 ed. Robert Sidney Martin. (Westport, CT.: Greenwood P, 1993) 54.

³⁰Ring 54.

³¹Daniel F. Ring. "Outpost of New England Culture: The Ladies' Library Association of Kalamazoo, Michigan," Libraries & Culture: A Journal of Library History 32.1

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L.L.A. as an unsuccessful operation. While Ring examines some primary materials for his article about Kalamazoo Ladies' Library Association, he reaches different conclusions than I have from my examination of the archival records, contemporary articles and secondary sources about Kalamazoo during the last half of the nineteenth century. Ring sees the short lived Library Club as the success of the Kalamazoo Association. In my reading, the Library Club was the sub-organization that created problems for the L.L.A. Power struggles existed between the two groups but these are only understandable when all of the various records are read in conjunction with one another.

Numerous studies exist on nineteenth-century literature and on reading practices which contribute to my study. Works by Nina Baym, Mary Kelley, Barbara Sicherman, Ronald J. Zboray³² and others provide context for the books that the women selected for their libraries. I draw on the work

(1997): 38-56.

³²Nina Baym, Women's Fiction: A Guide to Novels by and About Women in America, 1820-1870, 2nd ed. (Urbana: U of Illinois P, 1993); Mary Kelley, Private Woman, Public Stage: Literary Domesticity in Nineteenth-Century America (New York: Oxford UP, 1984); Barbara Sicherman, "Sense and Sensibility: A Case Study of Women's Reading in Late-Victorian America," Reading in America: Literature & Social History, ed. Cathy N. Davidson (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins UP, 1989) 201-225; Ronald J. Zboray, A Fictive People: Antebellum Economic Development and the American Reading Public (New York: Oxford UP, 1993).

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of these authors and others to examine the reading tastes of the American public during the second half of the nineteenth century. Baym and Kelley, in particular, help me unpack the reception of women's fiction by the general public.

Sicherman and Zboray assist me in discussing what and how readers interpreted what they were reading. Since this is not a study of nineteenth century literature, I will not discuss in depth the novels the women read. I will survey the kinds of books they preferred and will, briefly, examine a few novels that are generally unknown to the present day reader.

Records of the associations comprise the bulk of the material examined in this dissertation. As already mentioned, I have located extensive records for Ladies' Library Associations in Kalamazoo, Ypsilanti, Ann Arbor and Galesburg. The records become the primary texts to be analyzed rather than the literature collected for the libraries because these records reveal the women's experiences and their thoughts about the institutions they were building, the communities they were building them in, and their endeavors for self-education. A notable quality that the records reveal is the passion of the women involved in the associations for building an institution, not just a

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social club, and for expanding the association, the collections and their knowledge. This is especially true in the initial phases of organization but continues as the associations re-invent themselves and revise their visions of their purpose and work as library associations. For some women this project became the major work in their lives, as Anne Firor Scott has noted about other women and their clubs. Many served as officers and board members for years or even decades. Annual meeting reports, board reports and other news articles convey the public voices of the L.L.A.'s and the women who ran them. Contemporary newspapers reveal both the opposition and the support that the women garnered in their towns and villages. Private voices are not heard as often but are sometimes evident in the minutes of the reading circles and the study clubs as individuals recorded their impressions of the discussions and meetings.

The L.L.A. of Kalamazoo was particularly conscious of its history, leaving nineteen boxes of records, many from the nineteenth century. These include twelve volumes of secretarial minutes and six volumes of board meetings and annual reports. While there are fewer records for the associations in Ann Arbor, Ypsilanti and Galesburg, minutes that do survive provide detailed accounts of their meetings and of their concerns. Unfortunately no diaries or records

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This dissertation is neither chronological nor is it meant to be a comprehensive study of the Ladies' Library Association in Michigan. Specifically, I will analyze the records of the Kalamazoo, Ann Arbor, Ypsilanti and Galesburg associations. The Kalamazoo L.L.A. served as a model and often mentored new associations. It loaned its constitution and by-laws in addition to offering advice to fledgling associations. The Kalamazoo L.L.A. is also important to a study of the Ladies' Library Association in Michigan because of the meticulous records it preserved. Through the records one can see the wide variety of activities, both educational and social, that the members undertook. Growth and change in structure and organization can be examined over time since the records begin with the founding of the association in 1852 and continue to the present day. I will only examine the records to 1900 for this study. The Ann Arbor Ladies' Library Association also has a long history and has preserved its record books and minutes. I have included

³³Papers of Sarah Caswell Angell are at the Bentley Historical Library, The University of Michigan, but they do not cover her activities in the L.L.A. There are a few of Lucinda Hinsdale Stone's papers at the Kalamazoo College Archives. Again, these do not reveal much about her work with L.L.A.'s.

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this group because it parallels the Kalamazoo association in many ways; however, it also depicts the struggles of women in a much different social environment. Though the women in Kalamazoo also competed with male organizations and with college libraries, the women in Ann Arbor seem to have felt the strain of competition to recruit members and raise funds. There were also more women's clubs and educational or social organizations that competed for women's time, money and attention in Ann Arbor. Because many of the women were married to professors affiliated with the University of Michigan, there is a unique connection to a then primarily male institution. The Ann Arbor L.L.A. also preserved records which reveal the struggles to construct a building and which provide interesting perceptions about how financially sound it was. I include the Ypsilanti L.L.A. for different reasons. There are fewer records preserved prior to 1900 for this group, but the records which do exist disclose a group of women concerned as much with the social issues at the end of the century as with the educational mission of the L.L.A. The Ypsilanti Association is one of many who bridged the gap from L.L.A. to Ladies' Literary Club. Most L.L.C.'s concentrated on study clubs rather than on building a library. The Ypsilanti L.L.C., unlike some others, retained the character of the L.L.A. by collecting

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books and meeting as a study group. Newspaper accounts reveal that the Ypsilanti L.L.A. was particularly active in fundraising. Studying the frequency and genres of entertainment the women presented provides a picture of life in nineteenth century Ypsilanti. Finally, the Galesburg L.L.A. is the only group I have found so far for which circulation records have been preserved. Through examination of the Galesburg L.L.A.'s circulation records from the 1870s along with the catalogs of thirteen additional L.L.A.'s, I am able to analyze what women actually read and reading tastes of the day in southern Michigan. By searching through newspapers and by reading Bixby and Howell's Historical Sketches, I have located information on additional associations for comparison with the primary groups that I will discuss.

Uncovering the history of even one Ladies' Library Association, let alone many, is a difficult and time consuming task often resulting in a dead end.³⁴ Records can

³⁴Since many L.L.A.'s eventually became public libraries, records often wind up in a local history collection. This is not always the case, however. Kalamazoo's records are at the Archives and Regional History Collections at Western Michigan University and at the Kalamazoo Public Library; Ann Arbor's records are the Bentley Historical Library at The University of Michigan and at the Ann Arbor Public Library. Ypsilanti's records reside at the Bentley Historical Library and at the Ypsilanti Historical Society. Galesburg's records are still at the Galesburg Memorial Library. Some information about the

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be sparse or there may only be brief mentions of meetings in newspapers of the era. In Table 1 I have listed the Ladies Library Associations that I have been able to identify thus far. This list contains the name of the town or village and the starting date in parentheses if it is known. This list has been compiled from a variety of sources and more L.L.A.'s seem to come to light as I discover additional directories or histories. Bixby and Howell's Historical Sketches was a starting point. Additional entries were culled from Evelyn Leasher's "Ladies' Library Associations in Michigan: A Bibliography," Phyllis Hamner's thesis on L.L.A.'s and several county histories, local histories and various directories. Sources often contradict one another on dates, particularly on the beginning dates for Flint. Some sources list the beginning date as 1851 while most others cite 1853, the year that the Flint L.L.A. incorporated. Despite minor differences of opinion about dates, over eighty associations can be identified. I will concentrate on what I believe are representative L.L.A.'s for the bulk of this study.

Flint L.L.A. was found at the Genessee Historical Collection, The University of Michigan-Flint; however, the primary minutes have not been located. I believe that further records do exist for Michigan L.L.A.'s; however, I have not been able to find them at this time.

Table 1

Ladies' Library Associations in Michigan

Adrian (1868)	(1868)	St. Johns (1870)
Albion (1870)	Hadley	Schoolcraft
Allegan (1871)	Harbor Springs	Sparta
Alpena (1876)	(1894)	Springport
Ann Arbor (1866)	Hartford (1896)	Stanton
Atlas Twp.	Hesperia (1880?)	Sturgis (1872)
Augusta	Hillsdale (1879)	Suttons Bay
Avon	Holland	Swartz Creek
Battle Creek	Holly (1877)	Tecumseh (1883)
(1864)	Howell	Three Rivers
Big Rapids	Hubbardston	(1865)
(1871)	Ionia (1875)	Traverse City
Birmingham	Ithaca	(1869)
Blissfield	Jonesville	Union City
(1874)	(1874)	(1872)
Burton	Kalamazoo (1852)	Vicksburg
Carson City	Lansing (1871)	Wayland
Cedar Springs	Lapeer (1859)	Whiteville
Chesaning	Lyons	Ypsilanti (1868)
Clare (1905)	Manchester	
Climax	Marcellus (1985)	
Clinton	Marine City	
Coldwater (1869)	Marshall (1869)	
Corunna (1863)	Mason	
Dexter	Mendon (1882)	
Dowagiac (1872)	Milford	
Dryden (1871)	Mt. Pleasant	
East Tawas	Muir	
Farwell	Muskegon (1869)	
Fennville	Nashville	
Fenton (1869)	Niles	
Fentonville	Northville	
(1867)	(1889)	
Flint (1851)	Ortonville	
Flushing (1873)	Otsego	
Galesburg	Owosso (1867)	
Goodrich	Pewamo	
Grand Blanc	Plainwell (1868)	
(1869)	Pontiac (1882)	
Grand Rapids	Pt. Huron (1866)	
(1870)	Quincy (1874)	
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West Side (1875)	Rochester	
Greenville	St. Clair (1869)	

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The population of Michigan in the nineteenth century

To understand the need for women to organize libraries between 1850 and 1900, we must understand something about the background of the women who lived in Michigan at the time. The women who began these associations were primarily first generation, white, middle class Michigan residents. Many had moved from the Eastern United States, mainly New York, Vermont and Pennsylvania, in the years following Michigan's admission to the union in 1837.

Between 1850 and 1870 the population of Michigan nearly tripled, increasing from 397,654 in 1850 to 1,184,282 in 1870.³⁵ In 1850 98.3% of the population lived in the southern region where most of the larger towns were settled. At this time the northern region of the state was still lumbering territory. By 1880, as the northern half of the state was gradually being settled, only 85.1% resided in the southern region.³⁶ A study of Michigan's population between 1850-1880 shows that the average age of the households rose during that period and that the size of the household in

³⁵"Table 16," Statistics of Michigan, Collected for the Ninth Census of the United States, June 1, 1870....., (Lansing, Mich.: W.S. George & Co., 1873) lv.

³⁶This information is taken from a study by Susan E. Bloomberg, Mary Frank Fox, Robert M. Warner, and Sam Bass Warner, Jr., "A Census Probe into Nineteenth-Century Family History: Southern Michigan, 1850-1880," Journal of Social History, 5.1(1971): 29.

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villages and towns shrank from 5.0 in 1850 to 4.4 in 1880 and in rural areas from 5.4 in 1850 to 4.8 in 1880. Further, the researchers determined that in 1850 87.1% of residents of villages and towns had been born in the United States. This number dropped to 61.8% by 1880. The largest population groups came from New York state during both years. By 1880 there was also an increase in foreign immigrants with the largest group coming from Canada.³⁷

It is not just important to understand where the residents migrated from; it is equally important to understand the general character traits of the settlers. "The influence of the predominant New England-New York element in the population of Michigan is evident in many ways," according to Willis F. Dunbar. He cites J. Harold Stevens, who claims settlers were, "homeseekers, a thrifty, enterprising, plucky people, with high ideals of religion, morality, and education" and asserts that they "retained their hardheaded individualism, preserving that essential incentive to progress and prosperity, which would, in time, produce a better standard of living."³⁸ Many of the pioneer

³⁷"Table 9," Bloomberg, et al, 42.

³⁸Willis F. Dunbar, Michigan: A History of the Wolverine State, rev. by. George F. May, Third Revised Ed. (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1995) 244. Quoting J. Harold Stevens.

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women were old enough to have been influenced by the attitudes regarding domestic duties that were popular in the early nineteenth century. The "domestic sphere," according to Nancy Cott, dictated that women oversee the running of the home. Cott states that "women, through their reign in the home, were to sustain the "essential elements of moral government to allow men to negotiate safely amid the cunning, treachery, and competition of the marketplace."³⁹ With this kind of responsibility, women would not have time to go outside the home to improve communities. As they moved west, however, expectations changed. Linda Kerber makes it clear that "the phrase "separate spheres" is a metaphor for complex power relations in social and economic contexts."⁴⁰ The contexts of the Eastern life would have wrought different expectations than those in the unsettled Midwest. Institutions had to be established in the new towns. The "ideology of republican motherhood recognized that women's choices and women's work did serve large social and political purposes..." which drew them closer to men's

³⁹Nancy F. Cott, The Bonds of Womanhood: "Women's Sphere" in New England, 1780-1835 (New Haven: Yale UP, 1977) 69.

⁴⁰Linda K. Kerber, "Separate Spheres, Female Worlds, Woman's Place The Rhetoric of Women's History," in Toward an Intellectual History of Women (Chapel Hill: The U of North Carolina P, 1997) 184.

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work.⁴¹ This gave the women a chance to shape their communities and define the moral climate of where they lived and prove Stevens' point.

During the time that women were moving with families to Michigan, the social and political climate was changing for women. Most Michigan women were literate by the mid-nineteenth century according to census records. I believe that many of the women who helped found L.L.A.'s had some education, either at home or in a formal setting. Three women from Kalamazoo County provide an example. Lucinda Hinsdale Stone entered Hinesburg Academy in Hinesburg, Vermont at thirteen and by the age of fifteen began teaching.⁴² She went on to head the Female Department at Kalamazoo College. Elizabeth Balch of Kalamazo was "mistress of the French and Spanish languages, as well as the English, and a remarkable conversationalist."⁴³ Finally, Mrs. A.D.P. VanBuren, a founder of the Galesburg L.L.A., was a "lady of culture, having been educated in one

⁴¹Kerber 174.

⁴²Gail Griffin, "'Heretic': Lucinda Hinsdale Stone," Emancipated Spirits: Portraits of Kalamazoo College Women ed. Gail Griffin, Josephine Csette, Ruth Ann Moerdyk, Cheryl Limer (Kalamazoo: Ihling Brothers Everard Co., 1983) 39.

⁴³History of Kalamazoo County, Michigan. With Illustrations and Biographical Sketches of Its Prominent Men and Pioneers (Philadelphia: Everts and Abbott, 1880) 227-228.

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of the best schools of the East...."⁴⁴ These examples could be added to with women from other counties across the state. The combination of the "hardheaded individualism" and the desire for education was essential for the L.L.A.'s to succeed. While the men tamed the physical land, the women followed the tradition of the "domestic sphere" looking after the moral needs of the family not only within the home, but also throughout the community. The women, either as family or friends, banded together in a joint effort to make the associations succeed and life better. Women took advantage of residing in a young state where, despite laws restricting their rights as married women, they were still allowed the opportunity to influence cultural and intellectual activities. Marilyn Motz writes that the "Married Woman's Property Act of 1844 gave a married woman limited control over property owned before her marriage or inherited during her marriage" but that a woman's earnings still belonged to her husband.⁴⁵ By 1855 this law was "amended to allow a married woman's property to be `contracted, sold, transferred, mortgaged, conveyed, devised or bequeathed by her, in the same manner and with the like

⁴⁴History of Kalamazoo County... 393.

⁴⁵Marilyn Ferris Motz, True Sisterhood: Michigan Women and Their Kin, 1820-1920 (Albany : SUNY P, 1983) 23.

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effect as if she were unmarried.'"⁴⁶ These provisions are important for the L.L.A.'s because they gave women at least some control over individual property and finances.

The 1850 census from Kalamazoo County reveals that 50% of the members of the L.L.A. and Reading Circle who appear in the census were originally from New York.⁴⁷ (See Table 2) By 1850 Kalamazoo had settled into a respectable town that was concerned with its cultural life as well as its economic life. The anonymous author of an article celebrating the centennial of the Kalamazoo L.L.A. notes that the three women who began the Reading Circle in 1844 "were determined that the confines of their village never would limit them mentally, as it did physically."⁴⁸

⁴⁶Motz 23.

⁴⁷Statistics were gathered from the 1850 Census of Kalamazoo County. I examined minutes for names of participants and matched as many as possible from the minutes and other records from the Kalamazoo L.L.A. with the 1850 census. Since women were frequently only identified as Mrs. X, with no first name, this is not as accurate as it could be. Also not all participants were residents of Kalamazoo Township in 1850 or do not appear in the 1850 census. A survey of the entire Kalamazoo Township Census for 1850 reveals an overwhelming majority from New York, followed by Vermont.

⁴⁸Anon., "When Culture Came to Kalamazoo," Inside Michigan, Jan. 1951, 24.

Members of

Name
Allen, Marge
Balch, Anna
Balch, Eliza
Bares, Lucy
Gilbert, Char
Goss, Abby
Hemsey, J
Higgins, Harri
Howard, Eliza
Hoyt, Sarah J (S.J.)
Harvard, Sisa
Hedie, Eliza
Hellogg, Mary
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Table 2

Members of the Kalamazoo L.L.A. and Reading Circle who appear in the 1850 Census⁴⁹

Name	Age in 1850	Age in 1852	Place of birth
Allen, Margaret	33	35	New York
Balch, Anna ⁵⁰	10	12	Michigan
Balch, Elizabeth	33	35	New York
Eames, Lucy	38	40	New York
Gilbert, Charlotte	37	39	New York
Goss, Abby ⁵¹	8	10	Maine
Guernsey, Julia	43	45	Vermont
Higgins, Hannah	57	59	Ireland
Howard, Eliza	39	41	Vermont
Hoyt, Sarah J. (S.J.)	15	17	New York
Hubbard, Susan	50	52	Vermont
Kedzie, Elizabeth	33	35	New York
Kellogg, Mary A.	40	42	New York
Kellog, Irene L.	48	50	New York
Kendall, Helen	34	36	New York
Potter, Charity	24	26	New York

⁴⁹ Information for this table was compiled from Historical Committee, Lucinda Hinsdale Stone Chapter Daughters of the American Revolution, United States Census, 1850 Kalamazoo County, Michigan (Kalamazoo: 1942).

⁵⁰Anna Balch took part in the Reading Circle in 1861. At that time she would have been 21.

⁵¹Abbie Goss also took part in the Reading Circle. She would have been 18 at the time.

Name
Panson, Lois
Pice, Susan
Sealy, Charl
Sheldon, Har
Stone, Lucie
Hinsdale
Trask, Louis
Trask, Hanna
Wester, Rut
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Table 2 (con't)

Name	Age in 1850	Age in 1852	Place of birth
Ransom, Lois	37	39	New York
Rice, Susan	48	50	Vermont
Sealy, Charlotte ⁵²	20	22	Pennsylvania
Sheldon, Hannah	37	39	Massachusetts
Stone, Lucinda Hinsdale	37	39	Vermont
Trask, Louisa	42	44	Massachusetts
Trask, Hannah	20	22	Massachusetts
Webster, Ruth W.	40	42	New York
Woodbury, Caroline	14	16	New York

Ann Arbor was founded slightly earlier than Kalamazoo. John Allen and Elisha Rumsey, the founders of Ann Arbor, purchased a total of 640 acres on February 14, 1824. On this land they "imagined a thriving community where once there had been wilderness...."⁵³ The vision for the "thriving community" included the arts and educational institutions. As in Kalamazoo, a high percentage of the settlers came from New York state. Between 1820 and 1880 fifty-eight per cent of all settlers in Washtenaw County had

⁵²Sealy also appears as Seeley and Seely in manuscripts. This may not be the correct family.

⁵³Jonathan Marwil, A History of Ann Arbor (Ann Arbor: The U of Michigan P, 1987) 1.

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traveled from New York state to make new homes in Michigan.⁵⁴ The village grew and attracted new settlers who shared the vision of the founders. This penchant for culture and the arts shared by early settlers helped organizations like the Ladies' Library Association succeed in the city.

When the women formed the L.L.A. in Ann Arbor in 1866, six other libraries already existed in the town. Most of these libraries would not have been accessible to the general public, however. The 1876 survey of libraries that was completed by the Bureau of Education for the Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia lists three libraries at The University of Michigan,⁵⁵ a library associated with the Misses Clarks' Young Ladies' School (1839), a Y.M.C.A. library (n.d.) and a school library (1859).⁵⁶ Although the Ladies' Library Association was well underway by 1876, it was not listed. The Young Men's Literary Association

⁵⁴Richard Barton, "Early Settlers of Washtenaw County," unpagued.

⁵⁵The general library was established in 1841, the Medical library in 1850 and the Law library in 1858.

⁵⁶Public Libraries in the United State of America, Part 1, 1876 Report (Urbana: U of Illinois Graduate School of Library Science, Monograph Series, No. 4, 1965) 1066.

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Reading Room, established in 1867, was also not listed.⁵⁷ The L.L.A. did appear in the First Annual Report of the State Board of Library Commissioners of Michigan (1899). Two other Ann Arbor libraries also appear in this survey: The St. Thomas' Catholic Library (1873) and Tappan Presbyterian Association McMillan Hall (1891). The later is listed as a theological library.⁵⁸ Because of the social class of the women who shared the vision for the L.L.A., they would probably have had access to at least some of the libraries through their husbands, but this was obviously not enough. The women believed that access to books, and thus education, should be available to all members of families and that the individuals should be able to come to the library to select their books.⁵⁹

In addition, several societies competed with the L.L.A. The Student Lecture Association at the University of Michigan provided lectures that were very popular. The Methodist Church and other churches were also hosts of lectures that would have competed with the L.L.A. lectures

⁵⁷Public Libraries in the United State of America, Part 1, 1876 Report 1066.

⁵⁸First Annual Report of the State Board of Library Commissioners of Michigan 1899 (Lansing, Mich.: Robert Smith Printing Co., 1900) 12.

⁵⁹Children were not always welcomed in libraries at this time.

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and entertainments. Other reading clubs also existed. For example, the Young Ladies' Dime Reading Club may have been a promoter of dime novels or this group may have been named for the dues. I have only located notices but no history of the organization. Church affiliated organizations were also popular and the women involved in the L.L.A. were also active in these. Through these other organizations and through involvement in organizations such as the Sanitary Commission during the Civil War, women expanded their acquaintances and practiced their leadership skills.

Ypsilanti was founded about the same time as Ann Arbor. The town was named after "Demetrius Ypsilanti, a hero of the Greek War of Independence, which had excited much interest in the United States at the time [the] town was laid out in 1823-24."⁶⁰ The population of Ypsilanti City was 5,471 in 1870, comparable to Ann Arbor. Like Ann Arbor, Ypsilanti also had a college, the Michigan State Normal School, which would later become Eastern Michigan University. The only library listed in the 1876 census is the library of the State Normal School. Chicago Road and Territorial Road connected Ypsilanti to Detroit, southern Michigan and Chicago from the early part of the century.

During the 1870s Ypsilanti experienced commercial

⁶⁰Dunbar, Michigan 180.

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growth. According to Colburn's history of Ypsilanti, businesses were established throughout the city.⁶¹ For example, the Schade Block was built in 1871. A malt house, which eventually produced 40,000 bushels of malt, was built in what was the Peck School-House.⁶² Other businesses were also established which made Ypsilanti a thriving town during the last quarter of the nineteenth-century.

Several associations and organizations existed in addition to the Ladies' Library Association. The Home Association, which is sometimes mentioned as a predecessor to the L.L.A., began in 1857. Its activities included providing clothing for needy families. The association considered itself to be an auxiliary of the "American Female Guardian Society."⁶³ The Free Hospital Association provided the bedding, cash and clothing for the hospital run by Dr. Ruth A. Gerry and Dr. Cynthia Smith. Temperance was an issue from the beginning of Ypsilanti's history and this is reflected in associations as well. The Women's Christian Temperance Union formed in 1874. Other activities, sparked in part by a mayoral campaign a few years earlier, were

⁶¹Harvey C. Colburn, The Story of Ypsilanti (Ypsilanti? 1924?) 195-197.

⁶²Colburn 196.

⁶³Colburn 154, 174 and 204.

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Galesburg lies to the northwest of Kalamazoo. Founded in the 1830s, Galesburg was a small, but busy town until the railroad was built just outside of it. Like the other towns in this study, the residents of Galesburg came from the Eastern United States. The difference in Galesburg is that many residents had lived elsewhere in Michigan before settling in Galesburg. The L.L.A. was the only library in the town, but there were several other associations and societies. For example, the Coronet Band formed in 1870, the Protection Society was organized in 1851 to catch thieves and the Ladies Christian Temperance Union held its first meeting in 1878. The Galesburg Driving Park "afforded rare sport for men of the turf and the large crowds of people who attended the races."⁶⁵ Also similar to the other towns, church affiliation was important to the women who were involved in the L.L.A.

Development of libraries and the laws supporting libraries

The Ladies' Library Associations can be categorized as both social and subscription libraries. Haynes McMullen defines social libraries as "libraries formed by societies

⁶⁴Colburn 206-207.

⁶⁵History of Kalamazoo County 387.

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which were organized to acquire either specialized or general collections, for the use of their own members, or for the use of the persons of a particular age, gender, interest or vocation."⁶⁶ L.L.A.'s met this criteria. Though they tried to present themselves as open to everyone, members did pay fees for membership and sometimes for circulating books. Who could and could not afford the fees dictated who participated in the library. The book collections were general in nature and included large collections of fiction. Similar to social libraries, subscription libraries "were supported by user fees paid in exchange for use of the collections."⁶⁷ Subscription libraries that resembled L.L.A.'s were the "least formally organized and the most ephemeral."⁶⁸ Combining the definitions of the social library and the subscription library provides the closest formal definition even though the women did intend for their libraries to last.

Libraries such as the L.L.A.'s "flourished...well into

⁶⁶Haynes McMullen, "The Distribution of Libraries throughout the United States," Library Trends 28.1 (1976): 32.

⁶⁷Abigail A. Loomis, "Subscription Libraries," in Encyclopedia of Library History ed. Wayne A. Wiegand and Donald G. Davis, Jr. (New York: Garland Publishing, 1994) 608.

⁶⁸Loomis 608.

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the 19th century."⁶⁹ In the mid nineteenth century most libraries in the United States were still subscription libraries, formed by associations or societies and open only to members. On the East coast most of these libraries were formed by men, the first being founded by Benjamin Franklin in 1731. Social libraries remained prevalent throughout the entire nineteenth century. McMullen states that there were 738 social libraries in 1876 and by 1900 there were 867. During the twentieth century this number dropped. By 1923 there were 623 social libraries and by 1951 there were only 41.⁷⁰ Other kinds of libraries also existed, including school libraries, circulating libraries run by individuals, Sunday School libraries and libraries associated with businesses. Circulating libraries run by individuals often failed, according to Abigail Loomis. These libraries were generally run by booksellers. Some did succeed. "Among the most notable were the libraries founded by John Dabney of Salem (1789), William P. Blake of Boston (1792), Hocquet Caritat of New York (1797), Charles Callendar of Boston (1815), and Mary Carroll of New Orleans (c. 1830.)"⁷¹ Sunday School libraries were a specialized brand of

⁶⁹Loomis 609.

⁷⁰McMullen 32.

⁷¹Loomis 609.

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subscription library. "With simple organization and rules that limited circulation, these collections resembled contemporary circulating libraries with an emphasis on moral stories, historical examples, biblical study aids, and, in later years, religious fiction."⁷²

The first public library opened in Boston in the 1850s. Public libraries began "to grow in number by 1876, but fewer than 300 appear in the U. S. Bureau of Education's report for that year."⁷³ The American Library Association, the professional organization for all kinds of librarians, and the first library school located in New York were also founded in 1876. In the last quarter of the nineteenth century librarianship became professionalized and also began to be recognized as an alternative to a teaching career for women.

It is important to understand that the social climate as well as the legal climate supported library development during the nineteenth century. Michigan laws supporting library development made associations such as the L.L.A.'s possible. These laws had their roots in the Northwest

⁷²Donald G. Davis Jr., "Sunday School Libraries," in Encyclopedia of Library History ed. Wayne A. Wiegand and Donald G. Davis, Jr. (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1994) 611.

⁷³McMullen 31.

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Ordinance but were re-written both during the territorial period and throughout the nineteenth century.

Legal support for libraries began long before settlers came to Michigan. Authors of "An Ordinance for the government of the territory of the United States North West of the river Ohio," (1784) provided for education. In "Article the Third" they state, "Schools and the means of education shall forever be encouraged."⁷⁴ Broadly interpreted, education includes libraries. In Michigan's first state constitution of 1835 a section of each township was reserved for education. The delegates changed what had been done in other states, however. Instead of turning over a section to the township, delegates requested that a section be turned over to the state.⁷⁵ By doing this the money from selling the land could be placed in a state school fund and then could be distributed to schools. "The total grant of land to Michigan, consisting of section sixteen in each township, amounted to over a million acres."⁷⁶ The depression of the 1830s affected the price that was realized for the land but the legislature still

⁷⁴Qtd. in Peter S. Onuf, Statehood and Union: A history of the Northwest Ordinance (Bloomington: Indiana U P, 1987) 163.

⁷⁵Dunbar, Michigan 280.

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earned an average of \$4.58 per acre.⁷⁷

Earlier laws were written solely for library development. In 1831 the Legislative Council of the Territory of Michigan wrote "An Act to establish and regulate social libraries." This act allowed seven or more people to form a society or library. Provisions for incorporation, choosing officers and raising funds were included in this act. This progressive move made Michigan one of the earliest territories to provide for libraries in its laws. In the 1835 state constitution, adopted two years before statehood, an act was included to allow for libraries in every township. Sufficient financial support was not provided, however, so the libraries did not materialize in each township. The millage provided when this law was conceived amounted to \$25.00 a year, which was not enough to sustain a library even in the early nineteenth century. The women who formed the L.L.A.'s struggled to finance their libraries; however, they knew the laws that would assist them in their venture.

Library laws and acts continued to be written and revised throughout the nineteenth century. One provided for associations such as the L.L.A.'s to incorporate as autonomous bodies, an important move for the women because

⁷⁷Dunbar, Michigan 281.

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it gave them power to run their associations. Incorporation, according to Jesse Shera, made the library a "fictitious legal person."⁷⁸ Further, Shera notes that the colonial and state governments were "quite ready to recognize the social libraries, give them legal status, and grant them the power to control and regulate their affairs."⁷⁹ Incorporation took the burden of debt the library incurred off the shoulders of the women and placed it on Shera's "fictitious legal person." Although this is not mentioned in the minutes, women were probably urged to incorporate by their husbands. Debt incurred by wives would have fallen on husbands, many of whom were bankers, retailers, lawyers and professors. Incorporation was not just a way of making the association appear to be a serious venture, it also protected the finances of the families involved.

While I hesitate when I call the formation of Ladies' Library Associations a "movement," the libraries and associated literary, study and social clubs did enhance the educational and cultural life of the state and paved the way for establishing public libraries and for furthering women's

⁷⁸Shera 59.

⁷⁹Shera 59.

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educational opportunities in many of communities. Michigan has a large number of documented Ladies' Library Associations although L.L.A.'s also appeared in Vermont, Indiana, Illinois, Iowa, Utah and California.⁸⁰ I am not certain that the L.L.A.'s in other states had the same missions or organizational structure. The women who began and led the associations took great pains to follow the same procedures and protocol that male societies did for writing constitutions and by-laws and for conducting meetings according to set agenda. Although some eventually joined the General Federation of Women's Clubs, Ladies' Library Associations did not band together to form a unified state wide organization. They did, however, recognize one another's successes and failures and learn from them as previously mentioned. The Kalamazoo L.L.A. and the Flint L.L.A. served as models for many new L.L.A.'s in the state as well as for some clubs out of state when women relocated.

The women did not usually set out for greatness but often achieved it, raising funds, building their ranks and establishing viable institutions from the mid nineteenth century on. All of this was accomplished by the ingenuity of a few hard working women dedicated to the task who often

⁸⁰Many of the L.L.A.'s in Michigan were not listed in standard sources. I imagine that many more may have existed in other states as well and wait to be discovered.

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served as officers or board members for several years, sometimes decades. Their work is the heart of the Ladies' Library Association's story.

In the next four chapters I will examine the specific features of the Ladies' Library Associations. In Chapter 2, "The Power of Texts: Incorporation, Constitutions and By-laws," I delve into the constitutions, by-laws and missions of several L.L.A.'s. Through source material that includes contemporary histories and county histories, I examine what the L.L.A.'s meant to the women who formed them and to the community where they were. How did those who lived in a particularly town or area change over time? How did the L.L.A.'s sustain themselves through the Civil War era and what happened to those that did not? I also examine the duties of officers and the responsibilities that women took on when elected.

The next two chapters explore what the women actually read. Chapter three considers the reading circles and study groups in Kalamazoo. These groups reinvented themselves over the years. The Reading Circle met in the evening and allowed males to attend, both rare for L.L.A.'s. The dynamics of gender will be examined as a result. Social Meetings and the Ladies' Library Club followed the

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traditions of the women's club movement. Members of both of these groups prepared papers to present at meetings. The topics, as the format of meetings, will be examined. The Social Meetings studied social and domestic topics while the L.L.C. set a yearly program. The L.L.C. caused contention in the organization which will be analyzed.

Chapter four considers what the women actually had shelved in their libraries and what one group actually read. Through an analysis of 13 catalogs I have looked at genres and popular readings for the libraries from 1850-1902. What women read and collected reflects what they valued. This does not always coincide with what they stated was important in minutes. I examine the minutes where policies about collecting were stated and contemporary books on what should be read. The circulation records from Galesburg for 1877 to 1880 provide a slice of one community's reading habits. The list of the top twenty books read by the 259 members during these years is analyzed. A group of the most prolific readers is also analyzed to determine if its reading habits matched the overall group of 259 readers.

Chapter five will cover fundraising efforts and the physical spaces where the groups met. Since women did not have money of their own to invest in the associations they either had to rely on donations or devise ways to raise

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funds, especially for large projects. Lecture courses and plays or musicals were among the most popular forms of fundraising and entertainment chosen by the women. As will be seen in chapter five, a variety of other ways were also employed to increase the treasury. I will focus the discussion of fundraising on the Ypsilanti L.L.A. and L.L.C. in this chapter. These groups raised funds to remain debt free and to purchase books and rent space. They were very successful when they presented tableaux and plays in the community. Examining what they presented will provide not only information about fundraising, but also allow me to analyze the kinds of entertainment that people of the community found interesting. Other associations will be included for comparison and to examine the variety of ways women raised money.

This chapter will also explore space for the library. For many L.L.A.'s a building of their own was a primary goal. What was the importance of place, whether it was a building of their own or a basket in which to store books? How did they finance these projects and what resulted? I focus on Ann Arbor in this chapter because this group not only succeeded in building a physical building, it also transferred that building, which became the publicly funded Carnegie library, to the school board.

Chapter 2

The Power of Texts: Incorporation, Constitutions and By-laws

Anne Ruggles Gere notes that the "transformative power of literacy"⁸¹ was particularly apparent when clubwomen chose to represent their associations and their activities in print. Written documents demonstrated the level of literacy that the clubs had achieved, not only educationally but also politically. Texts produced by the women's clubs also "enabled clubwomen to assume some authority in a sphere dominated and controlled by men."⁸² The L.L.A. realized advantages of printed materials. An individual association frequently printed its constitution and by-laws in catalogs or in newspapers, circulated notices to recruit members and had annual meeting reports published in the press. Secretaries recorded the constitutions, by-laws and records of incorporation in the association minutes. Women also spread the word about their associations orally by going

⁸¹Gere, Intimate Practices 29.

⁸²Gere, Intimate Practices 29.

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door to door throughout a city, canvassing for new members and ascertaining women's interest in forming an association. These written records along with the accounts of the oral transactions are evidence not only of the "transformative power of literacy" but also of the women's work in building a community institution. Women drew on state laws for incorporation which legally enabled members to govern these associations and move the L.L.A. towards the status of community institutions. The association relied upon constitutions and by-laws to identify the purposes and structure internally for an association. Annual reports informed both the membership and the wider community of the activities and accomplishments of the association. These documents became what identified the associations publicly when they were printed in newspapers and catalogs or filed with the secretary of state, as the 1865 incorporation law dictated. Together these documents served as the tools that shaped the Ladies' Library Association and gave them power to act and develop as institutions within their communities. In this chapter I will discuss the articles of the constitutions and provisions written into by-laws in relationship to the laws that women used to incorporate the L.L.A.. I will also examine how the laws relate to the structure of the organization and the power that the women

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who ran the organizations were granted by such laws. Finally, I will discuss how these texts established the Ladies' Library Association as a community institution, rather than as just another women's club.

Anne Ruggles Gere's ideas about the power of literacy upon clubwomen's thinking are vital to the discussions in this chapter. Gere posits that "clubwomen saw literacy as a means of changing the way others perceived them."⁸³

Literacy was not just possessing the ability to read and write, it represented power to express thoughts and ideas. For the members of the L.L.A. literacy provided an avenue to communicate a need they saw in their communities. There were few libraries in Michigan in the mid- to late-nineteenth century despite several laws that encouraged funding libraries in each town and village. L.L.A. libraries were these educational institutions that provided a resource for the adult population and especially for women whose formal education had stopped and who had few outlets for intellectual stimulation in the towns where they lived. Through reading texts, discussing them and writing reports the women could provide educational opportunities for one another. By extending their activities to organize formal associations that were legal entities, the women could gain

⁸³Gere, Intimate Practices 26.

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Ladies' Library Associations began when a few women of the town decided that their community needed a library that was accessible to women. These women were civic and educationally minded and were usually the wives of businessmen, lawyers or bankers. In some towns, like Kalamazoo, the women had been meeting together informally since 1844⁸⁴ in reading circles before deciding to begin a library. Once associations began in the early 1850s, word spread across southern Michigan and other women began forming library associations in their towns. Founders took the lead, called for the first meetings, canvassed the neighborhoods to determine interest and wrote the first versions of the constitutions and by-laws which would shape the associations for the years to come.

The L.L.A.'s would not have started without the work of these pioneer women who began them. Before discussing their work further, however, it is necessary to examine the laws which gave the women the power to act.

⁸⁴"When Culture Came to Kalamazoo," 24. No records exist for meetings prior to 1852.

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Support for libraries dated from territorial days in Michigan. Olive Clarice Lathrop notes that "libraries were conceived as adjuncts of the schools and not as separate institutions" in territorial days and in the early days of statehood.⁸⁵ While establishing schools was accomplished, establishing the accompanying libraries was not always completed. Still, the laws were on the books and available for the women to use when organizing an L.L.A.. Two state laws were used by the associations for incorporation and were very important for establishing the L.L.A. as serious institutions. The first law, dating from territorial days, passed in 1831 and was entitled "An act to establish and regulate social libraries." The second law, used by many associations that incorporated after the Civil War, passed in 1865 and was entitled "An act to authorize the formation of corporations for literary and scientific purposes."

Incorporation had many positive aspects for the associations. It transformed the association into a body that could act as a unit when transacting business. Theoretically incorporation also eliminated class

⁸⁵Olive Clarice Lathrop. "A History of the Development of Libraries in Michigan," Bachelor of Science thesis, Illinois State Library School at the University of Illinois, June 1900, 2.

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differences by concentrating on the association as a body, rather than on the individual members. One of the most important components was allowing women to act without endangering personal or family finances. In the early years of an association's life debts generally amounted to rent for rooms and bills for book purchases. Later, however, when an association decided to construct its own building, debts could be much larger. Anne Firor Scott writes that "Incorporation was one way to reduce the normal limitations on women's legal right to act, and permitted them to do things otherwise forbidden to married women such as acquiring, holding, and conveying property."⁸⁶

Incorporation also bound the women to a structure and a standard that they might not have attained otherwise by requiring them to write constitutions, by-laws and annual reports.

In 1831, while Michigan was still a territory, the Legislative Council, predecessor to the state legislature, wrote "An act to establish and regulate social libraries." This law, which later became part of the state constitution, read that: "Any seven or more persons capable of contracting, in any township [sic] or districts in this Territory, who have or shall become proprietors in common,

⁸⁶Scott, Natural Allies 26.

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of any library, may form themselves into a society or body politic, for the express purpose of holding, increasing, preserving, and using such library...."⁸⁷ Further the law allowed the proprietors to elect officers, to "have power to raise such moneys, by assessments, on the several shares in said library, as they may judge necessary for preserving and increasing the same,"⁸⁸ and to write by-laws for governance. The proprietors could also dissolve the library and re-incorporate. This law only allowed for shares "real or personal estate, to the amount of three hundred dollars, over and above the value of their books...."⁸⁹ The 1831 law laid the groundwork for later laws which allowed the associations even greater power to raise money, elect officers and run their libraries like corporations. Provisions in the 1831 law explain the reasons for some of the articles in constitutions and by-laws.

In order to form an association under this law the women had to apply for a warrant which allowed them to call a public meeting. Once granted, the warrant had to be posted in a public place for at least seven days before a

⁸⁷"Sec. 4, "An Act to establish and regulate social libraries," Laws of the Territory of Michigan, v. 3 (Lansing, Mich.: W. S. George & Co., 1874) 863.

⁸⁸Laws of the Territory of Michigan 863.

⁸⁹Laws of the Territory of Michigan 863.

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meeting could be held. At the first meeting the proprietors were required to elect officers and to determine how future meetings would be announced. A corporate name was adopted as well. Once completed, these documents were certified by a clerk of the corporation and recorded by the county clerk. Later laws called for the treasurer to be bonded. This may have come about because people in the nineteenth century were by some accounts even more litigious than in the present day.

The second law commonly used was entitled "An Act to authorize the formation of corporations for literary and scientific purposes" and first passed in 1865. This act and its revisions differed slightly from the 1831 act and its revisions. The 1865 act specified that the corporation had to renew its incorporation every thirty years, allowing for a re-examination of the goals and mission of the association. Section 3 of the law allowed the association to focus on a broader scope by promoting "literary or scientific pursuits, or both."⁹⁰ Further, the articles of association had to be filed with secretary of state and county clerk before business could be transacted by the

⁹⁰Section 3, "An Act to establish and regulate social libraries," Laws of the Territory of Michigan 863.

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association.⁹¹ The 1831 law allowed the associations to write by-laws but had only specified certifying the results of incorporation. There was a greater provision for financial holdings in the 1865 law. By 1915 the associations were allowed up to one million five hundred thousand dollars in assets. At the same time the revisions of the 1831 law allowed \$25,000, not including books. Even though the earlier law did not allow as large a sum of money it did not mandate taxes as the later law did. The larger amount may have resulted from associations constructing buildings throughout the nineteenth-century. Both the Kalamazoo and Ann Arbor associations had to request special legislation to procure loans for building projects. Changing the law would have allowed women to raise funds and seek loans without special legislation.

Both laws granted the women control over the funds that they collected, whether these funds were from membership fees, shares or stocks, or fundraisers. This provision was a very important aspect in a time when women were not usually the wage earners in the family. Controlling funds allowed the women to decide how much to spend on rent, how much to allocate for book purchases and how establish a building fund. Many of these decisions were made with the

⁹¹Section 4, Laws of the Territory of Michigan 863.

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advice of their banker and lawyer husbands but the power resided in the corporation run by the women. The women in Ann Arbor first requested the assistance of Mr. Pond, for example, and later, when they were finalizing plans, added male members to the building committee. In addition to gaining financial strength through incorporation, the women gained power to structure their organization. While both laws dictate some of the structure through the writing of constitutions and by-laws, the women had freedom to customize the constitution to their own communities and membership. Although there is a certain uniformity across constitutions, the women of individual associations did sometimes add an article that represented their interests or concerns. For example, the Ann Arbor L.L.A. wrote an article regarding the reading of scripture before each meeting.⁹² The association also modified its constitution when it realized that certain articles no longer worked. The Kalamazoo L.L.A. revised the terms of office in 1897, stipulating that women could only serve two consecutive

⁹²Record Book No. 1 (1866-1872), 9 April 1966, Box 1, Ladies Library Association of Ann Arbor, Bentley Historical Library, The University of Michigan. I will use the Record Book number/date, date of entry, Box 1, L.L.A. of Ann Arbor and BHL for the remaining references to this collection.

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terms in an office.⁹³ This would prevent women from serving 20 to 30 years in an office or on the board as had happened up to this time. Although the women who had been in offices for many years were hardworking individuals and could be credited with much of the success the association enjoyed, they still had dominated the association. It should be noted that this revision occurred after most of the founding members were deceased.

Incorporation was not always completed when the association first formed and there is significant proof that the act of incorporating caused the associations to re-write portions of their constitutions. Some associations acted more quickly than others to incorporate. The Ann Arbor L.L.A. first met on March 19, 1866. During the April 9, 1866, meeting the members discussed the association's incorporation. At that time the constitution was "amended to conform to that law, and after reading the same, on motion of Mrs. Sinclair, it was resolved "to adopt it as

⁹³Board Minutes, 1897, Ladies Library Association of Kalamazoo, Archives and Regional History Collection, Western Michigan University. I will refer to the part of the collection, date, and Kalamazoo L.L.A., Archives and Regional History Collections; Kalamazoo L.L.A., WMU for the remaining references to the Ladies' Library Association of Kalamazoo.

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read."⁹⁴ The process was not complete, however. By-laws were not voted on until the May 25, 1866, meeting and minutes include both the accepted and rejected by-laws. Discussion is included for many of the rejections. For example, Article 2nd was rejected which demanded that the "rules contained in Cushings Manual or the American Debater shall govern this Association and Board of Directors...."⁹⁵ However, the next article requiring officers to make "full and complete reports" was accepted.

According to its history, the Kalamazoo L.L.A. originally incorporated in 1853; however, the first documents available are for the incorporation which took place at the end of 1858. In the annual report dated January 8, 1859, the women recounted their discovery in 1858 "that there were omissions in the first records of our organization, rendering its legality questionable."⁹⁶ The women began the process of re-organizing and on December 30, 1858, they petitioned John M. Edwards, Justice of the Peace of Kalamazoo County, to seek a warrant. The text of the

⁹⁴Record Book No. 1 (1866-1872), 9 April 1866, Box 1, L.L.A. of Ann Arbor, BHL.

⁹⁵Record Book No. 1 (1866-1872), 25 May 1866, Box 1, L.L.A. of Ann Arbor, BHL.

⁹⁶Secretary's minutes, 8 January 1859, Kalamazoo L.L.A., Archives and Regional History Collections; WMU.

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1858 petition is below:

The undersigned, residents of the Town of Kalamazoo in said County, having associated with others as proprietors under the name and style of "Ladies Library Association of Kalamazoo," and being desirous of forming a corporation under the above name, according to the provisions of Chapter 61 of the compiled Laws of said State, do respectfully request that you would issue your warrant directed to one of our members, empowering her to call a meeting of the proprietors of said association for that purpose at such time and place as to you shall seem meet and in accordance with the provisions of said Law.⁹⁷

The seven women who signed this petition included Mrs. J. Cadman, Mrs. W. G. Bulkley, Mrs. J. A. B. Stone, Mrs. M. J. Goss, Mrs. D. B. Webster, Mrs. A. H. Howard and Mrs. J. O. Seely. The warrant and the affidavit were both addressed to Mrs. Webster who was the long time treasurer of the association and wife of D. B. Webster, a judge in Kalamazoo County. The warrant dictated that a meeting be held in seven days on Friday, January 7th at 2:00 in the Court House of Kalamazoo. As directed by the law, Mrs. Webster was now responsible for placing two notices in public places to notify the citizens of the meeting. In an affidavit Mrs. Webster states that she placed "one copy on the outside door of the Court House in the Village of Kalamazoo, and one copy on the corner of Main and Burdick Streets in said

⁹⁷Petition, 30 December 1858, Kalamazoo L.L.A., Archives and Regional History Collections; WMU.

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Village.”⁹⁸ At the annual meeting “the proper steps were taken and the Association re-organized upon a legal basis.”⁹⁹ This warrant also dictated when future annual meetings would be held.

With the act of incorporation came responsibility, as I have already noted. Incorporating made the women a legal body with legal rights. With few individual rights under the law as individuals, this act granted women in associations the power to purchase land, to enter into contracts, or to engage an agent to act for the association. Even though women had support from their husbands through financial contributions, they wanted the right to act independently on some matters. The women who founded the L.L.A. desired the power to act when arranging contracts for lectures and fundraisers, renting halls for meetings and, most importantly, planning the construction of a library building. The acts to incorporate the libraries allowed women rights that married women’s property acts may not have allowed them as individuals.

Another powerful resource gained from incorporation was the ability to sell stocks or shares in the corporation. A

⁹⁸Copy of Affidavit, 30 December 1858, Kalamazoo L.L.A., Archives and Regional History Collections; WMU.

⁹⁹Secretary’s book, 7 January 1859, Kalamazoo L.L.A., Archives and Regional History Collections; WMU.

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share differed from paying a membership due or having a subscription to the library because it carried ownership of a piece of the library. The ability to purchase shares separated the wealthy women from the poorer women and dictated who would have the more power. While membership and subscription fees in a typical L.L.A. ranged from \$.50 and \$1.00 per year and might cover an entire family, a share generally sold for \$5.00. Buying even a five dollar share represented a significant investment when we consider that the price of a typical share represented a week's wage for a female domestic worker in 1870.¹⁰⁰ Examining a constitution that contains provisions for shares will provide a better picture of what being a shareholder meant. The Adrian L.L.A. included several articles relating to capital stock and becoming a shareholder in its 1865 constitution. Article III specified that "the capital stock of said corporation shall be five thousand dollars, and shall be divided into one thousand shares of five dollars each."¹⁰¹ Provisions were added for increasing the amount of stock available to purchase if more shares were needed. An

¹⁰⁰"Table X," Statistics of the State of Michigan, Collected for the Ninth Census of the United States, June 1, 1870, (Lansing: W. S. George & Co., State Printers and Binders, 1873)687-689.

¹⁰¹Bixby and Howell 9.

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important aspect of stock was that women could purchase as many shares as they liked until the shares allotted ran out. Becoming a shareholder suggests a different responsibility and privilege than being a member. According to the Adrian group's constitution, buying at least one share allowed a woman the right to "vote at all meetings of the Association for each share of stock owned by her, and such vote may be given by the stockholders in person or by proxy...."¹⁰² The article also stipulated that no privileges would be granted unless the member's obligations were paid in full. In other words, promising to purchase stock or a share was not enough; voting could not take place "until the whole amount of such share or shares, and all arrearages of any annual tax or dues assessed against such share or shares, or against the subscriber therefor, shall have been paid in full to the Association."¹⁰³ This article allowed the wealthier women to immediately wield more power in the association. The Adrian L.L.A. added further incentive for the financially well off. If a person contributed \$50.00 he or she could become not only an Honorary Life Member but also an Advisory Member of the Board of Directors.¹⁰⁴ Males

¹⁰²Bixby and Howell 10.

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in the community were allowed membership but must pay "not less than five dollars" to the association and the "same annual tax or dues as the members of the Association."¹⁰⁵

Selling shares gave the association an immediate cash supply for purchasing books and renting rooms. At the first meeting of the Adrian L.L.A. \$200.00 in stock was collected. In less than three weeks an additional \$1,000 was pledged. The women believed if they had set a goal to collect more, they would have. This also proves that detractors were wrong, at least initially. The women could garner support for a literary institution run by women.

Through incorporation an association became a public corporation rather than a private club because of the requirements to file legal papers and to report on activities and finances. These laws did not bind the group to reveal everything about the association but did encourage an openness that unincorporated women's clubs did not have to submit to. Gere notes that many such unincorporated clubs kept their papers private. She writes that these "controls made intimacy possible; by insisting on keeping information about themselves and their activities out of the public view, clubwomen created the spaces in which they

¹⁰⁵Bixby and Howell 10.

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could develop intimate relationships with one another."¹⁰⁶ While I believe that the women of the L.L.A. did keep some of their activities private, they also seemed to share a great deal of information about their organization. The associations maintained a space for women and the public. Space, especially when an association had a building, could be controlled by opening it to the public only at certain times. The nature of the L.L.A. required a public space but the women needed the private space for furthering their own educational mission through the reading circles and board meetings.¹⁰⁷ If the library was to be a community institution, then the community had to know about it. Annual reports were one venue to describe activities but some lectures were also published in newspapers. The catalogs allowed the potential reader to test the moral values of the association through seeing which authors and titles had been purchased. As with women's clubs, membership roles were not published, and often do not exist in archives as is the case for women's clubs.

¹⁰⁶Gere, Intimate Practices 45.

¹⁰⁷Space for reading circles will be discussed in chapter 3. Public space will be included in discussions about circulation in chapter 4 and 5. The physical spaces will also be discussed in chapter 5.

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Incorporation provided the frame for the rest of the documents that the associations would write. Constitutions and by-laws were two important documents because these provided the rules for running an orderly and efficient organization. In The Letters of the Republic, Michael Warner discusses the "unnamed we" of the constitution.¹⁰⁸ Although Warner is analyzing the United States Constitution, his concept can also be applied to the L.L.A. constitutions. According to Warner the constitution represents the body and its authority to act as a legal entity: the "unnamed we." Although signed, the anonymity of the constitution is important to the success of the association. This document did not represent individuals, but a collective that would work as an institution. Further, as James Boyd White writes, the constitution must "establish and organize" a community "not merely at a transcendent moment of crisis but in its ordinary existence and over time."¹⁰⁹ Like Warner, White is writing about the United States Constitution; however, the same principles apply to the L.L.A.

¹⁰⁸Michael Warner, The Letters of the Republic: Publication and the Public Sphere in Eighteenth-Century America (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard UP, 1990) 109.

¹⁰⁹James Boyd White, When Words Lose Their Meaning: Constitutions and Reconstitutions of Language, Character, and Community (Chicago : The U of Chicago P, 1984) 240.

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constitution. The document must not only provide the framework for the organization to exist, it must allow the association to exist beyond the initial drafting of the document. The crisis that prompted the United States Constitution is not equal to the "crisis" that might have prompted a group of women to write a constitution for a new L.L.A. Readers interpreted the state laws through the constitution and by-laws, however, and through these interpretations the structure of the association was formed.

Three articles of the constitutions are particularly important to examine more closely in this chapter because these articles reveal the character and the priorities of the associations as they envisioned themselves and structured their work.¹¹⁰ First, I will examine the objects of the constitutions which identify the association. Second, I will analyze sections containing the duties of individual officers. The extent of this portion of the constitution varied greatly and I think reveals something about the women and how they may have perceived their responsibilities and membership. Finally, I will review the statements included about membership. These statements reveal the underlying attitudes about class within the

¹¹⁰Articles that pertain to books and circulation will be examined in chapter 4.

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The two articles below are typical objects in many Ladies' Library Association constitutions and reveal the identities and the values of each L.L.A. In a concise statement the association speaks as a collective voice to its membership, its potential membership and to the community where it conducts business. The constitutions of the Flint (1869) and Kalamazoo (ca. 1853) associations were often used as models for the documents of Ladies' Library Associations formed later because these were the first L.L.A.'s formed in Michigan.¹¹¹ Given that fact, I will use those constitutions as the basis of my discussion in this part of the chapter. Examples will be added from constitutions which are divergent.

The object of this association shall be the establishment and maintenance of a Library, to afford and encourage useful and entertaining reading; to furnish literary and scientific Lectures; and other means of promoting moral and intellectual improvement

¹¹¹Constitutions are not always dated; however, revisions provide some clues about dates. Constitutions were recorded in manuscript minutes as often as they were printed for distribution. Also, revisions are written on printed copies, with and without dates, for many associations. Histories of several associations mention using either Flint's or Kalamazoo's constitutions as models. Since associations continued to form until the end of the 19th century and since both the Flint and Kalamazoo Associations continued to change and revise their constitutions, it is impossible to state that one version was used as a model.



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Article 2d - Object ; Constitution of the Ladies' Library Association of Kalamazoo, [n.d.]¹¹²

This Society shall be called the "LADIES' LIBRARY ASSOCIATION" of Flint. Its objects shall be reading and mental improvement; and its funds shall be appropriated to the purchase of Books and Periodicals for the use of the Association, and for such other purposes as may be deemed most expedient for the advantage of the Library.

Article 1 - Object; Constitution and Catalogue of the Ladies' Library Association of Flint, Michigan (1869)¹¹³

Education and improvement are at the heart of the objects for both the Kalamazoo L.L.A. and the Flint L.L.A. However, the women of the Kalamazoo association reached out to the community directly through their goal to "furnish literary and scientific Lectures and [provide] other means of promoting moral and intellectual improvement in the town of Kalamazoo." By including the town in the initial articles of its constitution, the Kalamazoo L L.A. states that it views itself as an institution in the town rather than an exclusive organization. The Flint L.L.A.'s object, on the other hand, concentrates on the library. The fact

¹¹²"Constitution of the Ladies' Library Association of Kalamazoo," Kalamazoo L.L.A., Archives and Regional History Collections; WMU.

¹¹³Article 1, Constitution and Catalogue of the Ladies' Library Association of Flint, Michigan, (Flint: Rankin & Warren, Printers, 1869) 7.

that the library is a *community* institution must be read into the object. The concentration on using funds for books, periodicals and "such other purposes as may be most expedient for the advantage for the Library" does not explicitly include the community. But articles from the newspapers of the day, The Genessee Whig and The Wolverine Citizen, dispel the notion that the community was excluded. For example, Mrs. R. W. Jenny, recording secretary for the L.L.A., referred to revisions of the original constitution when the cornerstone for the library building was laid in 1867.¹¹⁴ She notes that the first constitution shows that the women "though small at commencement, were like the good seed which fell upon good ground"¹¹⁵ of the community which nurtured the library. Documentation shows that the community provided generous support for the L.L.A.

Some of the associations cited briefer objects. The 1870 Owosso L.L.A.'s constitution, for example, listed the women who incorporated its association in the first article, named the association and meeting place in the second article and then listed its object in article three : "The object for which this association is organized is for the

¹¹⁴"Some Statistics of the Ladies' Library Association of Flint," The Wolverine Citizen, 28 September 1867.

¹¹⁵"Some Statistics of the Ladies' Library Association of Flint," The Wolverine Citizen, 28 September 1867.

promotion of literary pursuits."¹¹⁶ Note the omission of the scientific pursuits named in the 1865 law.¹¹⁷ Other associations, such as the Traverse City L.L.A., simply listed the object as "[establishing] a Library for the benefit of Traverse City."¹¹⁸ This object seemed to include the whole city, regardless of gender. This statement may be indicative of the difference between northern Michigan towns versus southern Michigan communities. Traverse City did not grow significantly until the railroad was completed in 1873.¹¹⁹ Its population "of 2,200, mostly native Americans," also included "a fair proportion of the better class of foreigners" by the 1870s. This difference in population from the southern Michigan communities may also have accounted for the slightly different object.

¹¹⁶Articles of Association, By-Laws, and Catalogue of Books, or the Ladies' Library and Literary Association of Owosso City (Owosso, Mich.: J.H. Champion & Co., 1874).

¹¹⁷Chapter 205, "Literary, Scientific and Art Associations," The Compiled Laws of the State of Michigan 1915 v.3 (Lansing, Mich.: Wynkoop Hallenbeck Crawford Co, 1916).

¹¹⁸Catalogue and Constitution & By-Laws of the Ladies' Library Association of Traverse City (Traverse City, Mich.: Traverse Bay Eagle Steam Print, 1875) 5.

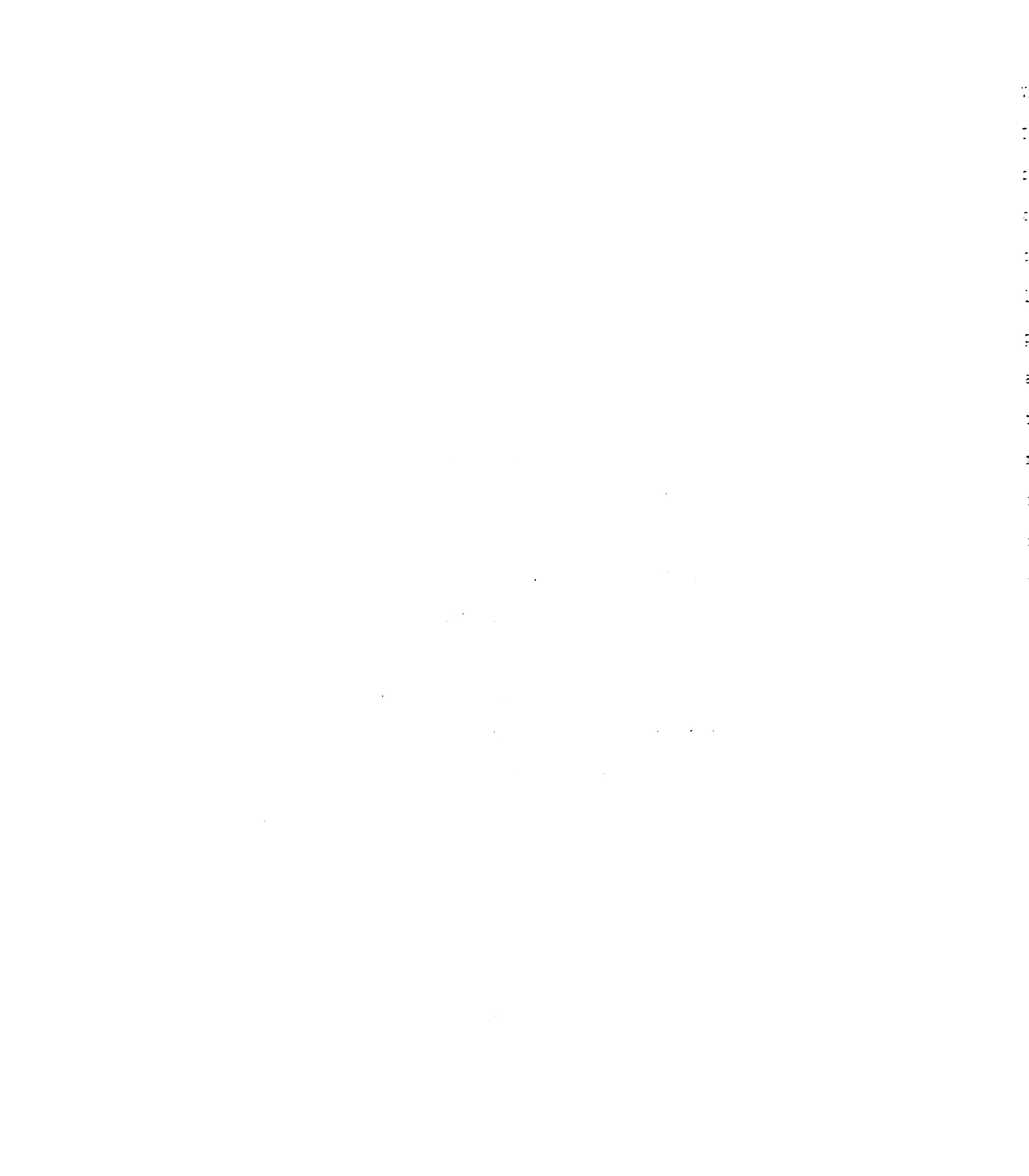
¹¹⁹See Resources and Attractions of the Cities and Towns along the line of the G.R. & I.R.R. (Northern Division) (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Cornell & Gill, Steam Book and Job Printers, 1880) 79.

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Objects were not the only way that women drew upon constitutions and by-laws to establish solid institutions. As mentioned in the discussion on incorporation, electing certain officers was dictated by the articles in state laws. Duties, however, were defined by the associations.

The number of officers, including board members, was dictated by the tenets of incorporation. Annual elections were held for a president, vice-president, secretary and treasurer. Board members, usually numbering between eleven and fifteen, served staggered terms. There may be additional officers depending on the law used for incorporation

The L.L.A. provided various schemes for selecting officers through articles in the constitution. Sometimes officers were elected by the general membership and boards appointed; other associations elected the board and then allowed the board to appoint the officers. Staggered terms at the formation of the association technically allowed for some turn over on the board; however, this change did not always happen because women frequently served several consecutive terms. The case of the Kalamazoo L.L.A. will illustrate how elections were handled. The Kalamazoo L.L.A. elected a board at the annual meeting and then allowed the board members to select "from their own number a President,



Vice President, Secretary, Assistant Secretary, and Treasurer" who carried out these functions for the larger body.¹²⁰ Although this article allowed for turn over in officers, it rarely happened. Perhaps as a result of observing women being elected and serving the rest of their lives, literally, some associations that formed later provided for limitations on terms. The Ypsilanti L.L.C. allowed women only two consecutive terms.¹²¹ As mentioned, the Kalamazoo L.L.A. revised its constitution in 1897 once many of the officers who had served lengthy terms were deceased.¹²² Long terms gave a great deal of power to a small number of women. Examples of officers serving long terms include Mrs. Cadman who served as president of the Kalamazoo L.L.A. from 1854-1862. Mrs. Sheldon was elected in 1863 and served until 1874. She was re-elected as president in 1878 and also served as treasurer from 1879-1894. Mrs. D.B. Webster was treasurer from 1854-1878 and

¹²⁰"Article 3rd," Constitution of the Ladies' Library Association of Kalamazoo [1882], Kalamazoo L.L.A., Archives and Regional History Collections; WMU.

¹²¹"Constitution," Ypsilanti Ladies Literary Club, Records, Box 1, Bentley Historical Library, The University of Michigan. The Ypsilanti L.L.C. will be referred to as Ypsilanti L.L.C, BHL with the appropriate date and identifying information.

¹²²Secretary's minutes, 8 January 1897, Kalamazoo L.L.A., Archives and Regional History Collections; WMU.

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served as assistant librarian from 1855-1858 and in 1860. In 1863 Mrs. Webster became librarian and remained in that position until 1878. The record holder, however, may be Mrs. Seeley who was the secretary from 1857-1896.¹²³ All of these women would have been board members during this time as well. In Kalamazoo as in other towns, the women who served long terms were frequently the founders of the L.L.A. as well as wives of important community members. It was not unusual for these "mothers" of the association to remain in power for many years. There are no clear reasons why this happened. Members may have felt pressure to keep the women in office or they may have thought it easier to let them continue in their roles. More often than not, other women may have felt they lacked leadership skills to be an officer or a board member, especially when building projects began. These doubts are very clear in the minutes of the Kalamazoo Reading Circle which will be fully discussed in chapter three. Particularly during the Civil War, when women divided their time between the library associations and causes such as the Sanitary Commission or the Soldiers' Aid Society, members not used to being in leadership positions were forced to step forward. They continually apologized for

¹²³Dates for offices were culled from information in the Minute Book of the Board Meetings. January 1853-January 1855. Kalamazoo L.L.A., WMU.

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their lack of skill and inadequacies as well as their longing for the day when the true leaders would return.

Most associations maintained "strict" rules for attendance by their members. In most associations different standards existed for board members than for the general membership. For example an early constitution of Kalamazoo reads

If any member of the Board be absent from two of its successive meetings without communicating satisfactory reasons therefore to the President, such member may be requested, through the Secretary, to make known her reasons for absence, or resign her office. If she still neglect to attend, the Board may declare her seat vacant.¹²⁴

This rule, or one similar to it, appears in many constitutions, but it was rarely enforced. Ypsilanti's L.L.A., which had a similar rule on its books, seemed to overlook certain members' lapses in attendance without much explanation. Brief mentions are made in minutes about women missing meetings, but if the woman was a prominent enough member of the community it seems that her absences were forgiven. What seems to have been more frequently the case was that women requested to resign from membership or office due to their own failing health, a family member's health or some other personal reason and the board refused to allow

¹²⁴Article 7th, Board of Directors, [1882] Kalamazoo L.L.A., Archives and Regional History Collections; WMU.



Figure 1 Mrs. T. P. Sheldon served as President of the [Kalamazoo] L.L. Association from 1863 to 1874. In Ladies Library Association of Kalamazoo collection. Courtesy of Archives and Regional History Collections, Western Michigan University.



Figure 2 Mrs. J. O. Seely served 32 years as Secretary of the Kalamazoo Ladies' Library Association. In Ladies Library Association of Kalamazoo Collection. Courtesy of the Archives and Regional History Collections, Western Michigan University.

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Figure 3 Mrs. D. B. (Ruth) Webster, one of the original founders of the Kalamazoo L.L.A. Librarian and Treasurer from 1854 to 1878. In Ladies' Library Association of Kalamazoo collection. Courtesy of Archives and Regional History Collections, Western Michigan University.

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it. Rather, the board members made amends and adjusted to the member's absence. This kind of adjustment is noted frequently in minutes of Ann Arbor L.L.A. On May 4, 1868, Mrs. A. E. Kellogg made her first attempt to resign as president.¹²⁵ This request was rejected and records indicate that she served for two more years before another member was elected to the office.¹²⁶ Mrs. Angell, wife of James Angell, president of the University of Michigan, requested over and over again that she be allowed to resign. The membership consistently refused this request, presumably because they did not want to lose a prominent member of the community.

Duties for offices were prescribed in the constitutions and by-laws with common threads running through all constitutions. Each officer was expected to be present at the board meetings and at the general meetings. The president led the meeting, called special meetings, and directed the business of the association. The secretary and sometimes an assistant secretary or corresponding secretary took the responsibility for the written record of the association and correspondence. The treasurer served as the

¹²⁵Record Book No. 1 (1866-1872), 4 May 1868, Box 1, L.L.A. of Ann Arbor, BHL.

¹²⁶ Ladies Library Association Ann Arbor, Michigan, Secretary's Book, Vol. I 1930-1962. [Ann Arbor: L.L.A.] 62. Ann Arbor District Library.

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accountant, collected subscription and membership fees, kept track of all funds and reported on them to the board and membership. Variations existed when librarians or other committee heads were also elected or appointed as officers. Committees took on responsibilities for selecting books, overseeing building projects, organizing lectures and establishing the functions of the reading or study clubs. The librarian oversaw the care and circulation of the collection. Generally all served without pay, although some associations eventually provided compensation for the librarian.

Duties for officers could vary, however, and women would have been wise to read the by-laws before accepting a nomination. While most secretarial job descriptions read as Kalamazoo's (below), others, such as Adrian's (which follows) were more extensive.

It shall be the duty of the Secretary to make and keep a record of the proceedings of the Association, and of the Board of Directors; to publish notices of the annual and special meetings; and in case of special meetings of the Board, to notify the members thereof, to maintain such correspondence as may advance the interests, keep a memorandum of all letters written, and a file of all letters received by her, subject to call of the Board of Directors; and to present a report at each annual meeting. In the absence or inability of the Secretary, her duties shall devolve on the Assistant Secretary.¹²⁷

¹²⁷"Article 5th," Constitution, [1882], Kalamazoo L.L.A., Archives and Regional History Collections; WMU.

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The basic duties included correspondence, publishing notices, keeping records and notifying members of special meetings. The secretary also prepared a report for the annual meeting, as did other officers. In later years these reports were published in the newspaper. The Adrian L.L.A. extended the secretary's duties considerably further, specifying duties and records to be kept. Section 8 of the 1869 By-Laws read:

It shall be the duty of the Secretary to keep a record of all proceedings of the Association and of the Board of Directors, and to act as corresponding Secretary of the Association.

She shall publish notices of the meetings of the Association and of the Board of Directors, when such notices shall be required. She shall keep a proper set of books of account, and such other books as may be necessary.

She shall keep an inventory of all the property and effects and a catalogue of all books belonging to the Association.

She shall take and preserve receipts and vouchers from the Treasurer for all monies paid into the Treasury.

She shall sign all orders and vouchers for the payment out of the Treasury and take and preserve vouchers and receipts therefor.

She shall keep an account of all contributions, subscriptions to stock, and all dues, fines, penalties and monies due, belonging to, or accruing to the Association.

She shall have the custody of all the books, vouchers and papers belonging to the Association not otherwise entrusted, and shall be able at any meeting of the Board to show a full and correct account of all the business, proceedings and affairs of the corporation.

She shall present at each annual meeting a full report of all the property, assets, effects and liabilities of the corporation and of all receipts and expenditures and of the conditions of its affairs.

And she shall perform such other duties as may be required of her from time to time by the Board of Directors.¹²⁸

In the Adrian L.L.A. By-Laws the secretary takes on some of the duties of the treasurer, librarian and historian in addition to the regular duties of correspondence and record keeping. In contrast, the President is expected to preside over all meetings, countersign orders and vouchers, sign certificates and stocks and other duties that the Board assigns. The Vice-President's duties read as follows: "In case of the absence or disability of the President, the Vice-President shall perform the duties devolving on the President."¹²⁹ Additional duties of the Vice-President are not specified. Certainly the President and Vice-President had important functions. They, in part, represented the image of the association to the public. However, a woman would have to carefully consider the duties of the secretary before accepting the post. The position as outlined by the Adrian L.L.A. required a high level of literacy, both written and mathematical. In order to carry out the duties of office all of the women need the support of their families, but this seems especially true for the secretary.

¹²⁸Bixby and Howell 12.

¹²⁹Bixby and Howell 12.

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Membership

Sally A. Myers notes that "The steady progression of the Women's Club Movement can be seen as a symptom, not only of women's growing need to assert themselves, but also of attempts by the middle and upper classes to build institutions to solidify their power."¹³⁰ Women did not have the opportunity to "[participate] in public decision-making, [however] through their own organized activities they were able to solidify their families' social positions and exert influence on the cultural life and cultural standards of their communities."¹³¹ Class distinctions can be noted through an examination of not only the founders of the associations, but also through studying the available membership rolls. In most of the towns and cities, only the mature, married or widowed, middle class women were members of the Ladies Library Associations. The average age of twenty two of the early members of the Kalamazoo L. L. A. was 40; the range was 22 to 59 years of age. A few single women were members but, they too, were from middle class families. Daughters' names begin to appear on the rolls and in the minutes of several L.L.A.'s after a few years. A few

¹³⁰Sally Ann Myers, Northwest Ohio Women's Literary Clubs as Arbiters of Culture: 1880-1918 Diss. Bowling Green State University (Ann Arbor: UMI, 1996) 40.

¹³¹Myers 40.

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associations, like Dryden, only allowed married women to become members.¹³² No explanation is provided for excluding unmarried women.

Based on census information from 1864 and 1870 and the membership numbers recorded in the minutes, it appears that only about 5% of the eligible population were members of the Ann Arbor Association. This is not surprising. In 1864 there were 1,807 women in the city of Ann Arbor between the ages of 18-75. By 1870 there were 3,758 females in the city. Of this last number only 16 could not read and only 19 could not write. In 1872 \$159.00 was collected in annual tax for the association. Assuming that this represents the membership of the association, then only about 5% of the 3,758 females listed in the 1870 population were members.¹³³ Numerous factors account for the small number of women who were members compared to the total population. Class, wealth, available time, other commitments and proximity to the library were all factors which influenced membership.

This census information suggests the influence of a particular class or women that is evident in the membership rolls of the Ann Arbor L.L.A. and in the rules it adopted.

¹³²Bixby and Howell 61.

¹³³Census information is not consistent from 1864 to 1870. The assumptions made about membership are based on minutes.

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Reading preferences of the membership dictated the holdings of the library and may have predicted those who would support the library as members, as patrons or both. The perceptions of women's abilities, especially related to finances and organizational leadership, are also obvious as one reads the minutes and news articles. The Ann Arbor association had to compete with other libraries and associations for readers and members. It also had to compete with a major university. While this was a problem at times, it was also a positive point for the association.

The membership rolls lack the names of the immigrant women from Germany and Ireland who populated the state beginning in the mid-nineteenth century. These traits are common of women's clubs that formed in the mid to late nineteenth century. According to Karen Blair, the club, or in this case library association, was a way to demonstrate and utilize the ideals of a lady in an acceptable manner. "In her quest to fulfill her role as upholder of the good life, she, of necessity, had to supervise the moral standards of her community, or wickedness would destroy the home she had uplifted."¹³⁴

The women could push the boundaries of the strictures of ladydom through their work as moral and cultural agents.

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Although the women were not promoting feminist issues related to suffrage, they were subversively carving out a place in their communities and wielding influence over the intellectual life of not only their families, but the general citizenry.

Even though the women were promoting the community, many of them met with resistance from male members of the community. At the twentieth anniversary celebration of the Flint Ladies' Library Association, Mrs. R. W. Jenny notes that:

The members who are present to-day of those who were at our first meeting, must well remember the arguments which were then urged against our success. It was said this society would soon be seen glimmering, with the dream of things that were -- women were not a power collectively, and could not sustain themselves; but, from that day to this we have held one session each week, seldom missing a Wednesday afternoon without an exchange of books.¹³⁵

Coldwater women met with similar resistance. As the women began their venture, a month's worth of editorials appeared in the Coldwater Republican during January 1870. The most vehement opposition was from "A.J.A." who was never identified but was obviously male and was clearly known by the writers of subsequent editorials. His editorial began with "The question of a Public Library seems at present to be a subject of agitation with the Ladies of Coldwater.

¹³⁵The Wolverine Citizen 9 April 1871.

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Many other efforts of the same kind have been set forth but they have all been marked failures."¹³⁶ He continues in nearly a column length letter, expressing his doubt at their ability to persevere and succeed in this effort. The letter concludes with "If you shall succeed in establishing a valuable Public Library, many in the future will rise up to call you blessed."¹³⁷ This final remark was taken as sarcasm by the respondents to the letter, who knew the writer's identity. Letters of support did follow and the Coldwater women were fortunate to gain Dr. Beech as patron soon after the resistance began. His offer to locate the library in his rooms helped support and legitimize the women's efforts. For a just over a decade the Ladies' Library flourished until it turned over its collections to the public library in 1881.

Opposition to the entire idea and presence of the Ladies' Library Association and similar organizations came from Mary C. Spencer, the state librarian.¹³⁸ Spencer advocated free libraries that were accessible to all

¹³⁶"A Public Library," The Coldwater Republican 1 January 1870.

¹³⁷"A Public Library," The Coldwater Republican 1 January 1870.

¹³⁸See Spencer's biography by Mary Spencer Hedekin, Mary C. Spencer of Michigan (S.N.: Four Corners P, 1986) for more information on Spencer and her views.

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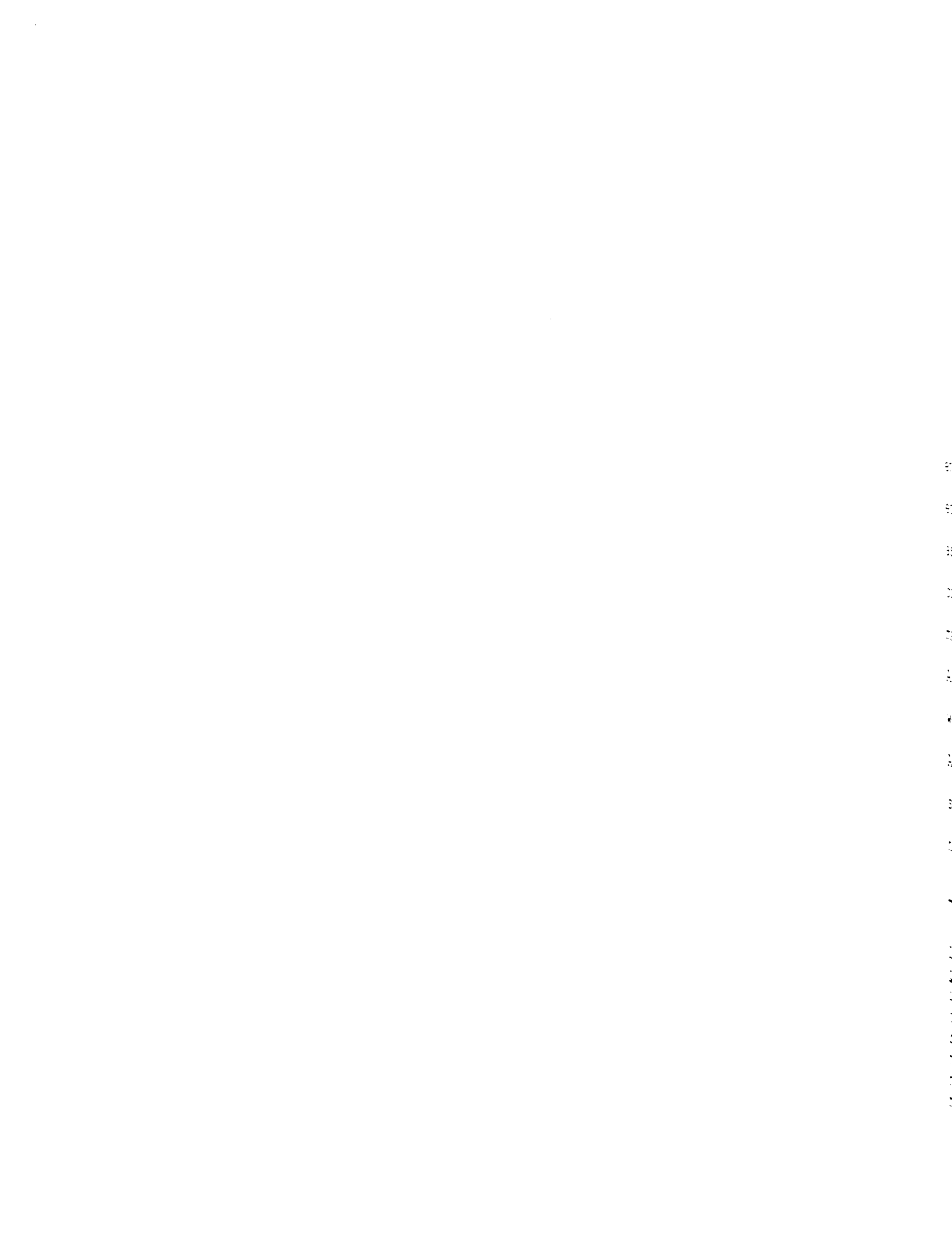
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citizens. She was responsible for opening the state library to the public and for establishing traveling libraries to areas where there were no free libraries available. Spencer had little use for subscription libraries that charged fees for membership or for drawing books.

Despite opposition, the women who believed in the purpose and objectives of the Ladies' Library Associations continued their work. As will be seen in the next two chapters, the women provided opportunities for public and private study through reading circles and study groups and through circulating collections to members.



Chapter 3

"A delightful entertainment" : Study groups as part of the Kalamazoo Ladies' Library Association

After the members established a structure for the entire Ladies' Library Association, they turned to the educational mission of the association. Most of the associations seemed to have formed some kind of reading circle or study group as a component of an L.L.A.¹³⁹ For many women the study groups of the Ladies' Library Association may have been one of the only places where they were able to study, read and discuss literature and ideas. Additional groups also existed within associations' structure for studying painting, needlework and other handcrafts but these never seemed to endure as long as the

¹³⁹Since the only information available about many L.L.A.'s comes from Bixby and Howell's Historical Sketches of the Ladies' Library Associations of Michigan (1876), it is very difficult to determine the extent of the reading circle or study group as part of the L.L.A. Even when records are available for board meetings or annual meetings, minutes of study groups are not always available. There are hints, however, that study groups were an important part of most L.L.A.'s.

study groups did. In this chapter I will examine these internal study groups which were formed to promote continuing education and self-improvement.¹⁴⁰

I will concentrate on minutes of study groups affiliated with the Kalamazoo Ladies' Library Association because it had at least three distinct versions of these groups before 1900. The Reading Circle included men¹⁴¹ while the Social Meetings and the Ladies' Library Club were exclusively for women. Through examining the structure of the meetings and the topics studied by these groups I will demonstrate the changes in how women studied and in what women studied.

Through an examination of the minutes for the Reading Circle, the Social Meetings and the Library Club I will document the educational interests of the women who belonged to the Ladies' Library Associations. Several questions can be answered through the available study groups minutes. How was culture transmitted to the members through reading and

¹⁴⁰ In the next chapter I will look at circulation of books, which serves as a bridge between the association members and the community.

¹⁴¹The only other L.L.A. that seems to have allowed men to attend meetings was the Greenville L.L.A. According to the sketch included in the Historical Sketches (1876), the Literary, Musical and Dramatic Society was established in 1873 as an outgrowth of the Ladies' Library Association. The society allowed both "ladies and gentlemen" to attend meetings. (75).

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discussing popular and classical literature or through the study of a chosen theme? How did the mode of study change between the pre-Civil War era and the last three decades of the nineteenth century? How did choices in topics evolve as the women's club movement gained momentum in the 1880's? Issues regarding the role of gender, class and influence will be discussed. I will look at the three groups by examining their structure, their choices of topics for study and the competition that developed among the groups. Membership and meeting places will also be discussed.

The women, and in the case of the Reading Circle, men, were highly literate. Census records from 1870 reveal that literacy rate were close to 100% for women in Michigan. The census for the city of Kalamazoo shows that out of 5,080 females only 35 women were listed as not being able to read and only 49 could not write.¹⁴² Based on the minutes and papers¹⁴³ that they wrote, I believe many of the women who were active in the Ladies' Library Association had had some kind of formal education in their early years. This is

¹⁴²Table II, Statistics of the State of Michigan. Collected for the Ninth Census of the United States, June 1, 1870 (Lansing, Mich.: W. S. George & Co., State Printers and Binders, 1873) 127.

¹⁴³Abstracts are available in the minutes of the Social Meetings; however, the complete texts of papers are not available.

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sometimes difficult to document because they rarely left diaries or letters and little is available about their personal lives. Many had been born and raised in the Eastern United States, especially New York, where literacy rates were also high and educational opportunities for young women were available. These were women who believed that it was important both to form a library to provide reading materials to individuals and to extend opportunities for study. This is another reason why I believe that many may have had some prior education.

Over a period of roughly twenty-five years the Kalamazoo Ladies' Library Association formed a Reading Circle, held Social Meetings and finally established a Ladies' Library Club. I will discuss the Reading Circle first, although it overlaps with the Social Meetings, because it differs from the other two groups I have included. Discussing the Social Meetings and the Library Club together will allow me to compare the groups that are similar. I will also be able to contrast the differences between the Reading Circle and the other two groups.

The Reading Circle met weekly and bi-weekly from 1861 to 1868. This group was unusual because it admitted men and allowed them the right to participate in the meetings. This fact allows me to compare reports written by male and female

participants. The Reading Circle met in the evening and discussed works of literature. Men may have been allowed to attend since women would not have gone out alone at night during this time. No reasons were given in any minutes for men attending the meetings. A study group known as Social Meetings was already underway when the Reading Circle began. This group began meeting in 1856 once a month in the afternoon. It took a different approach to study with women discussing domestic and social topics from prepared papers or articles. The Social Meetings disbanded in 1861 but reconvened in 1867 for a year. The second time the Social Meetings took place the women favored scientific and historical topics. A history of the Kalamazoo L.L.A. states that "Mrs. Lucinda Hinsdale Stone gave a course of 20 historical studies" during 1867-68.¹⁴⁴ According to the same history, a Shakespeare course was held during 1870.¹⁴⁵ Mrs. George E. Foote's History of the Ladies' Library Association (1941) states that the Library Club, formed in 1873, grew

¹⁴⁴"Kalamazoo Ladies Library Association Third Oldest Women's Club in United States, and First in State," n.d., Kalamazoo Ladies' Library Association Scrapbook, Kalamazoo Public Library.

¹⁴⁵The minutes of the Kalamazoo L.L.A. suggest that a Shakespeare Club met from 1877-1878. It is unclear if or how the course and the club were connected. Also, there are gaps in minutes for the Ladies' Library Club; therefore, it is not clear if it met without a break.

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out of the Shakespeare and history courses.¹⁴⁶ The Library Club, a semi-autonomous group, was far more structured and formal than any of the other groups. The Library Club met weekly on Monday afternoon and discussed topics that had been assigned a year in advance. Four committees rotated responsibilities for preparing meetings. The Social Meetings, Reading Circle and Library Club reflect the priorities of the membership and the changes in education for women that took place during the last half of the nineteenth century.

Mrs. Lucinda Hinsdale Stone, Mother of Clubs

Mrs. Lucinda Hinsdale Stone (1814-1900)¹⁴⁷ needs to be discussed briefly before moving onto a discussion of the

¹⁴⁶Mrs. George E. Foote, History of the Ladies' Library Association (Kalamazoo, Mich., 1941) 6.

¹⁴⁷Do not confuse Lucinda Hinsdale Stone with Lucy Stone as some biographers have done. Biographical information is available about Mrs. Stone in the following sources: Belle McArthur Perry, Lucinda Hinsdale Stone, Her Life Story and Reminiscences (Detroit: The Binn Publishing Co., 1902); Gail Griffin, "Lucinda Hinsdale Stone: Champion of Women's Education," in Historic Women of Michigan: A Sesquicentennial Celebration ed. Rosalie Riegle Troester, (Lansing, Mich. : Michigan Women's Studies Association, 1987) 41-60 and Gail B. Griffin, "A Desire to Know": Women's Education and the American Midwest," Emancipated Spirits (Kalamazoo, 1983), Gail B. Griffin, "'Heretic': Lucinda Hinsdale Stone," Emancipated Spirits (Kalamazoo, 1983). Stone is also included in Notable American Women, v.3, ed. Edward T. James, (Cambridge, Mass. : The Belknap Press of Harvard UP, 1971) 386-387.

three study groups. Mrs. Stone, a native of Vermont, was instrumental not only in the formation of the Ladies' Library Association, but also in creating the three study groups and in teaching the history classes for the association. According to Gail B. Griffin, one of Stone's biographers, she "understood fully how radical, how dangerous, was woman's desire to know."¹⁴⁸ Stone encouraged women's education by forming clubs and leading history classes throughout the state of Michigan, work which earned her the title the "Mother of Clubs." She did not just do benevolent work, however. Along with her husband, Rev. J. A. B. Stone, Lucinda H. Stone taught at Kalamazoo College as head of the Female Department. Mrs. Stone also sponsored Alice Boise, the first woman to attend classes at the University of Michigan, and Madelon Stockwell, first female student to be admitted to the University of Michigan.¹⁴⁹ Mrs. Stone was responsible for the formation of the Reading Circle and delivered a yearly opening address as its unofficial head. She was involved in the Social Meetings

¹⁴⁸Gail B. Griffin, "A Desire to Know": Women's Education and the American Midwest," Emancipated Spirits: Portraits of Kalamazoo College Women (Kalamazoo, Mich.: 1893) 3.

¹⁴⁹Rachel Brett Harley and Betty MacDowell, "Lucinda Hinsdale Stone," Michigan Women Firsts and Founders (Lansing, Mich.: Michigan Women's Studies Association, 1992) 72.



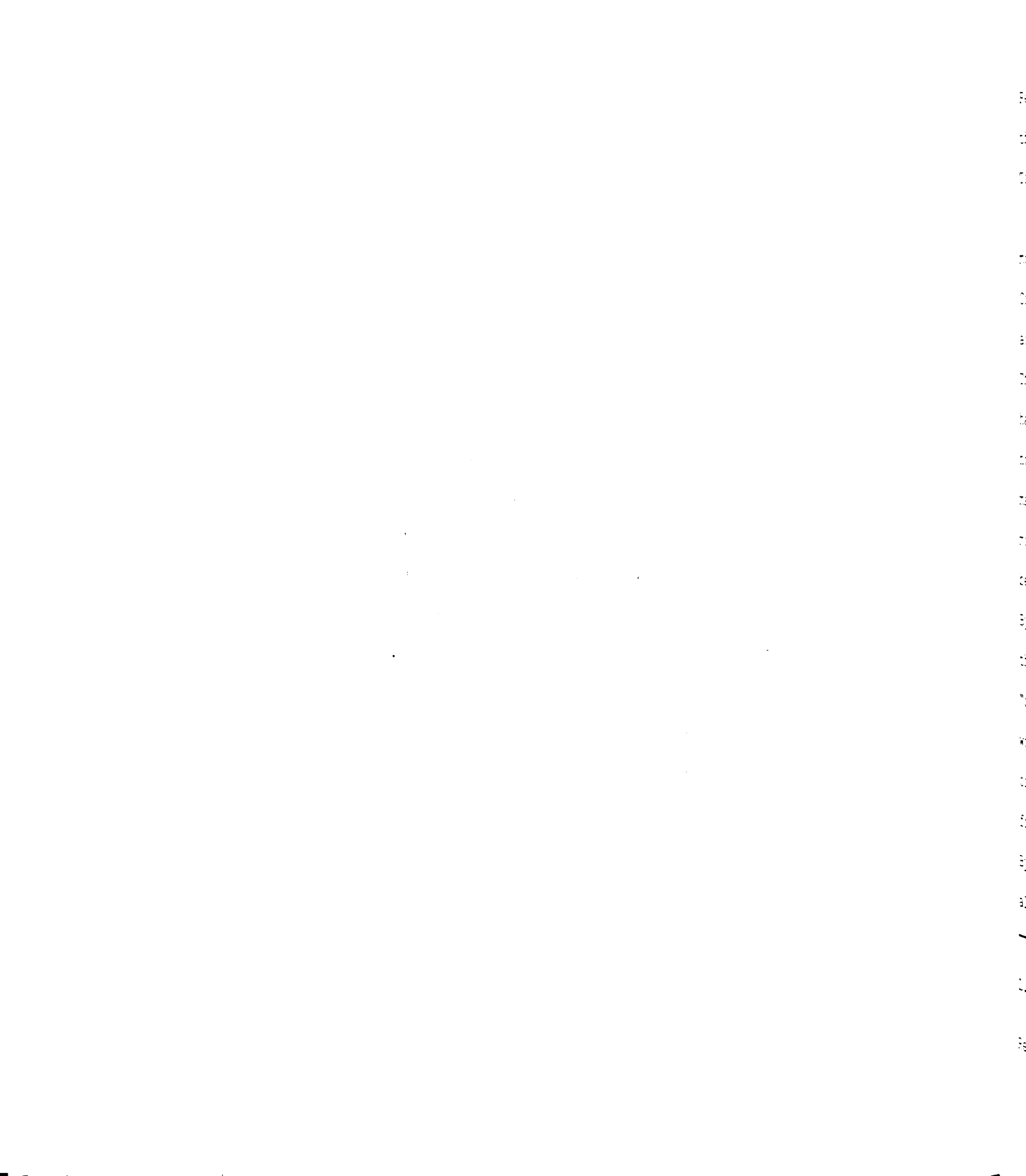
Figure 4 Mrs. Lucinda Hinsdale Stone was one of the founders of the Kalamazoo Ladies' Library Association. In Ladies' Library Association of Kalamazoo. Courtesy of Archives and Regional History Collections, Western Michigan University.

but did not seem to have an office. The Library Club was her invention when she saw the need and desire for a more serious kind of study from the membership of the L.L.A. in Kalamazoo.

Structure of the study groups

In this section I will discuss the structure of the study groups. The Social Meetings and Library Club both wrote by-laws to govern their organizations. The Reading Club followed a structure but it was not formally recorded. I see the structure extending beyond the rules or agenda, however. The mission of each group was either explicitly stated or implied. The meeting place, I believe, was particularly important and influenced who attended regardless of the stated policy for membership. As will be seen, the women who were members used the groups to attain power for themselves and possibly to assure the social standing of their family.

With the library firmly established, the Kalamazoo Ladies' Library Association embarked on an experiment and organized a weekly Reading Circle on January 4, 1861. The first meeting was held on January 12, 1861, at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Thomas. Meetings were initially held on Friday evening but were later moved to Wednesday evenings. The



Reading Circle met between January or the late fall through the spring months, unless the weather prohibited it.

Tickets were sold for \$1.00 for the season.

Although forming a reading circle was not an unusual move for a Ladies' Library Association, Kalamazoo's Reading Circle was an anomaly because male members were not only admitted, they were allowed to participate in the meetings. The minutes of January 29, 1866, note that the women could have excluded men but that these "republican dames" would not do so.¹⁵⁰ The minutes continue to state that each woman may bring a "cavalier" and the young women may bring two or more. In this case women encouraged men to attend, perhaps because of the meeting time that was chosen for the group. By labeling themselves "republican dames" they suggested that they were trying to be democratic and fair. A "cavalier" can be simply "a man who escorts a woman" but the word also suggests that the man is a "knight" or a "soldier" or a "courtier."¹⁵¹ Two further conclusions can be drawn from this definition. First, the men were the protectors. By accompanying the women to the Reading Circle, they allowed them to go out into the evening. Women would not

¹⁵⁰Reading Circle Minutes, 29 January 1865, Kalamazoo L.L.A., Archives and Regional History Collections; WMU.

¹⁵¹"Cavalier" The Random House College Dictionary, Revised Edition, (New York: Random House, 1975) 215.

have been permitted to go alone. Noting that young women would be allowed to bring two or more "cavaliers" suggests that this Reading Circle was more than an educational opportunity, it was also a place for social interaction and perhaps introductions. The structure of the meeting, as will be seen, allowed not only for study of a literary topic but also for socialization and for showing off talents that may attract a potential suitor or mate for a young lady. Although not blatantly stated, the women were also probably encouraged to coerce sons and daughters to attend these meetings because it was a safe social situation.

In the other two groups that the Kalamazoo L.L.A. sponsored, women felt strongly about excluding men from meetings. Usually this sentiment was communicated through a by-law specifically excluding men from meetings and governance but not from honorary membership or financial support. For evidence I will use an example about not allowing men in meetings which can be found in the minutes from the Ann Arbor Ladies' Library Association and is worth looking at briefly. Mrs. Pond recalled that the Ann Arbor L.L.A.'s social readings were "close communion affairs and gentlemen were rigidly excluded."¹⁵² The women's "close

¹⁵²Record Book No. 3 (1879-1890), 12 April 1886, Box 1, L.L.A. of Ann Arbor, BHL.

communion" resulted from being able to study and speak without having to worry about social decorum which would change with men present. Some women may have felt that they had to defer to men for comments on literature and would not have been as willing to speak. It is clear that some of the women in Kalamazoo felt uncomfortable speaking in front of men when they resisted being the reporter for the evening. Mrs. Pond teases in her remarks about the readings and the sounds of the women's voices, however, the women took the task and the education they were gaining seriously. Mrs. Pond writes that in Ann Arbor the men "were only expected to keep an eye on the several family clocks and at the appropriate hour in the evening go each his solitary way to the place of meeting, and if a little premature in their arrival, jointly and severally swing on the gate, sit on the horse block, or warm their toes by knocking them against the door steps...."¹⁵³ The women did not even want the men inside when they came to escort them home. Some exceptions were made. "In case the weather was as inhospitable as the association they were perhaps admitted to the storm door or permitted to occupy a stool in the hall to be tantalized by the hum of musical voices coming to their ears through the

¹⁵³Record Book No. 3 (1879-1890), 12 April 1886, Box 1, L.L.A. of Ann Arbor, BHL.

crevices of closed doors!"¹⁵⁴

Although Mrs. E. B. Pond, the Ann Arbor association's historian, "humorously refers"¹⁵⁵ to the Social Readings, the streets of Ann Arbor were dangerous for women, especially in the evening. A report in the Michigan Argus dated June 14, 1867 warns that "several ladies have been grossly insulted and assaulted in our streets recently, while returning in the evening - unaccompanied by gentlemen - from public meetings and social gatherings."¹⁵⁶ The writer hopes that the perpetrators are captured and given the severest punishment. An article in September 1867 notes a different kind of danger: uneven sidewalks. The editors of the Michigan Argus call for "immediate attention" to the problem because the "rise from two to four inches at one corner, with a corresponding drop down at the next, cause, especially in the dark, many bruised toes and not a few ejaculations more emphatic than polite."¹⁵⁷ These dangers along with attitudes of the day about women being out at night would have demanded that women have a male escort to

¹⁵⁴Record Book No. 3 (1879-1890), 12 April 1886, Box 1, L.L.A. of Ann Arbor, BHL.

¹⁵⁵Record Book No. 3 (1879-1890), 12 April 1886, Box 1, L.L.A. of Ann Arbor, BHL.

¹⁵⁶Michigan Argus 14 June 1867, col. 1, n.p.

¹⁵⁷Michigan Argus 27 September 1867, col. 1, n.p.



Figure 5 The Browning Club of Ann Arbor. This group is not related to the Ladies' Library Association; however, several women in the photo were also members of the L.L.A. The photo also depicts an example of the kind of parlor women may have used for study group meetings. From the James B. Angell Collection. Courtesy of the Bentley Historical Library, The University of Michigan.

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attend a meeting. There are no specific examples of the dangers in Kalamazoo but it was also a growing city and the women who attended the L.L.A. were aware of how they were expected to behave in society. They may have decided that it was far easier to allow the men to come to the Reading Circle meetings than to treat them like their sisters in Ann Arbor did.

The women of the Kalamazoo L.L.A. were well respected¹⁵⁸ and perhaps for this reason, the men participated fully without dominating the Reading Circle as their own. There were no formal by-laws for this group; however, a definite structure did exist. The lack of by-laws and the lack of officers may have been to prevent awkward situations for the women. The Reading Circle, like every other affiliated organization, was still under the control of the Board of Directors. If a man had been elected president of this subgroup it may have been difficult for the women to politely govern him. By rotating duties of reporter, the women and men shared responsibilities and only brief guidelines¹⁵⁹ for

¹⁵⁸See, for example, the reports from the 25th anniversary of Kalamazoo's founding on June 21, 1854. Men praised women's efforts for planning the celebration and for their work on the library.

¹⁵⁹The following "Hints to Reporters" appeared inside the cover of the second volume (1863-1865) of the "Reports of the Reading Circle," "Will Reporters in this book be so kind as to fill up the pages, save when there may be a blank

what to include had to be provided.

The Reading Circle was probably the most exclusive group. Numbers in attendance are rarely noted except for notations that there were often good crowds. The group met in members' parlors until the very end of its existence. During the Civil War numbers declined dramatically, as would be expected. At one of the final meetings in 1868 there were 150 in attendance; however, this meeting was held in the Corporation Hall, a larger venue than a parlor. The minutes and membership rolls reveal that many prominent citizens of Kalamazoo attended and participated in the Reading Circle meetings. Among those who took part were bankers, lawyers, the founders of churches and presidents of the village. Mr. and Mrs. T. P. Sheldon (banker), Mr. and Mrs. Luther H. Trask (lawyer, surveyor and president of the village), Mr. and Mrs. D. B. Webster (judge) and Col. Frederick Curteniss were among those who regularly attended the evening discussions.¹⁶⁰ These members and others had

space of less than half page at the end of a Report. When commencing on a new page, please begin always on the first line." No guidelines were given about what to include in the Report; however, a pattern seems to have developed of recording the place, the host and the reporter, the number of people present, though usually in terms of a "good crowd" or other similar descriptions, and then summaries of the readings and the reporter's opinions and criticisms.

¹⁶⁰Information was gathered from C. E. LaGrave, Kalamazoo County Directory, comprising a complete Business

moved to Kalamazoo from the Eastern United States, primarily New York, Vermont and Massachusetts. These families were what Nancy Woloch describes as "Middle-class Americans [who] had rising incomes, expectations and living standards."¹⁶¹ The Reading Circle provided an opportunity for them to gather not only for an intellectual activity, but also for social interaction. Though the price of admission was modest, (\$.05/week or \$1.00/season), some residents probably could not have spared that amount. Also, it is not clear that all reading materials came from the L.L.A. collection. When Shakespeare was studied, for example, copies were ordered for reading the play. Presumably this was another expense for the members.

Apprehension existed among those who attended about the potential for this venture. The reporter for the first meeting wrote that there was a greater turnout than expected, proving that the L.L.A. did have influence in Kalamazoo. Unfortunately the exact number was not recorded. At the second meeting the reporter wrote "Being an Institution of very recent birth we all felt some degree of anxiety to know if this young Hand Maid of the Association

Directory of Kalamazoo Village and Other Villages in the County (Kalamazoo, Mich.: A.J. Shakespeare, Books and Job Printer, 1873) and Dunbar's Kalamazoo and How it Grew.

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still lived and promised a healthy growth."¹⁶² One recorder was pleased to note that "we do not meet to while away the hours, or butterfly like to bask amid the noon day sun...", but rather "we have a higher motive in view, one which we trust will improve the heart and mind and which will characterize a high toned social life in our midst."¹⁶³ The good families wanted to use their time properly and morally. The motives also assured the members that they were not in the wilderness, but in a place that was civilized. The motives also support the higher standard of living that middle-class Americans were cultivating.

Beyond studying literary works, the members realized the importance of the social contacts that they made at these meetings and viewed it as their mission to improve not only the members of the Reading Circle but society in general. An example that communicates this was recorded on February 9, 1861, by Caroline Woodbury. After writing that the membership knows it possesses social abilities, she writes that "their thoughts directed to something higher than the ordinary chit chat of general society and this in

¹⁶²Reading Circle, 18 January 1861, Kalamazoo L.L.A., Archives and Regional History Collections; WMU.

¹⁶³Reading Circle, 22 February 1861, Kalamazoo L.L.A., Archives and Regional History Collections; WMU.

time gives a better tone to that same society."¹⁶⁴ Lucinda Hinsdale Stone toasted Kalamazoo in her notes. She records that a friend had been asked where he was from by a friend in Boston and when the friend replied Kalamazoo, the Boston gentleman said, "Kalamazoo! Ah! Indeed, Kalamazoo the Athens of Michigan I understand."¹⁶⁵ The self praise continues throughout many years of the minutes.

From time to time complaints were recorded about the lack of structure for the Reading Circle meetings. However, there did seem to be at least an attempt at an agenda though no officers were in charge to make sure the meeting remained on schedule. Social time began and ended meetings which started around 7:30 p.m. and lasted for about two hours. Reading from a selected text followed the social time. Following this, an intermission allowed for some informal discussion before the "criticism." This pattern was then repeated. Before the final social time another report was delivered by the previous week's recorder and announcements were given. Musical entertainments were sometimes performed during the intermissions and were considered a special treat. These meetings combined intellectual and social

¹⁶⁴Reading Circle, 9 February 1861, Kalamazoo L.L.A., Archives and Regional History Collections; WMU.

¹⁶⁵Reading Circle, 18 January 1861, Kalamazoo L.L.A., Archives and Regional History Collections; WMU.

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The only assigned role was that of reporter or recorder for the meeting. Sometimes the reporter volunteered for the duty and at other times he or she was coerced to serve in the role, as will be seen in the discussion which follows. It was this person's duty to summarize the readings and add impressions about the quality and value of the evening. In the midst of some of the more learned members of the group and important members of Kalamazoo society, some reporters felt inadequate. F. C. VanWych writes that she could not think of a "reasonable excuse" to rescue her from the duty. Since the previous reports were not available to her for some reason, she could not "give you a stereotyped form" of the report.¹⁶⁶ J. A. Dewing, a regular reporter, takes a lighter tone when he writes,

I find myself seated to the formidable task of writing not a petition to the President nor a letter of Condolence or sympathy to the Queen, but a report of the first meeting for this season of our Reading Circle. I recall as I write the horror and surprise, expressed in various countenances, at the bare mention of these writing and reading a report.¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁶Reading Circle, 15 January 1862, Kalamazoo L.L.A., Archives and Regional History Collections; WMU.

¹⁶⁷Reading Circle, 3 December 1862, Kalamazoo L.L.A., Archives and Regional History Collections; WMU.

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¹⁶⁶Reading Circle, 15 January 1862, Kalamazoo L.L.A., Archives and Regional History Collections; WMU.

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Mr. Dewing had no problems writing or delivering reports but he recognized that many of his cohorts did and could not pass the chance to poke fun at them. The year 1863 seemed to be a particularly difficult one for locating willing reporters. Attendance declined due to the war and those not accustomed to having to take on the duty were forced to. When there was an opportunity to make someone do it who was unaware, the members obviously did as can be noted in the March 1863 entry.

"I was a stranger and ye took me in" I had heard much of the Reading Circle, and it was with pleased alacrity that I accepted the *apparently disinterested* invitation to attend its meeting... Unsuspectingly I entered the bright cheery rooms, thinking only of the promised pleasure, and unwitting of the impending penalty of making a report. I left the rooms a wiser, if not sadder woman.¹⁶⁸

Most of the writers accepted the duty without complaint and served in the role over and over again.

Unlike the Reading Circle, the Social Meetings and the Library Club were both governed by a set of by-laws. As mentioned both of these groups met on a weekday afternoon. The Social Meetings were conducted once a month while the Library Club met weekly from the fall until early summer.

The Social Meetings began in 1856 when, "desirous of extending the beneficial influence of their society, [the

¹⁶⁸Reading Circle, March 1863, Kalamazoo L.L.A., Archives and Regional History Collections; WMU.

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association] invited all its members to meet once in every month for mutual consultation on subjects which they might deem important and improving."¹⁶⁹ The commencement of this group required an amendment to the L.L.A. by-laws allowing for an affiliated body. The addition to the L.L.A. by-laws provided for the election of a separate President and Secretary to be elected each January and allowed the by-laws to be "changed or amended at any regular meeting of the society, by a vote of two thirds of the members present."¹⁷⁰ Membership in this society was contingent upon membership in the association.

The members of the Social Meetings also wrote rules of order. The rules provided for calling the meeting to order, delivering reports, conducting business and discussing the topic for the day. Two rules provided for a stricter order than seemed to be present in the Reading Circle. Number five stated that following the reading of articles, "Conversation shall be in order, or illustrative incidents related, at the close of any article, or paragraph, as the

¹⁶⁹Record of the Social Meetings of the Kalamazoo Ladies' Library Association, 1856, Kalamazoo L.L.A., Archives and Regional History Collections; WMU. Hereafter, Social Meetings, date, Kalamazoo L.L.A., Archives and Regional History Collections; WMU.

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subject shall seem to suggest."¹⁷¹ Number six stipulated that only "one shall speak at a time, and it is desirable that all conversation should be addressed to the President."¹⁷² While addressing all the comments to the President gave her a certain degree of power to direct the discussion, it also assured that order would be maintained. Free flowing conversation would be avoided and the women would remain focused on the topic at hand.

After its hiatus between 1861-1867, the women decided to keep the same name for the Social Meetings. They amended the by-laws, to make sure only L.L.A. members were allowed to attend meetings. There is no explanation for the stricter wording. Only women who were members of the L.L.A. were to be allowed attendance at this meeting in the original form. Obviously, non-members had been allowed to attend and perhaps had taken advantage of the privilege. The new by-law read "No one can be admitted as members of these meetings but members of the L.L. Ass.¹⁷³ and all

¹⁷¹Social Meetings, 1856, Kalamazoo L.L.A., Archives and Regional History Collections; WMU.

¹⁷²Social Meetings, 1856, Kalamazoo L.L.A., Archives and Regional History Collections; WMU.

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members must have their names enrolled as such."¹⁷⁴ There were no additional dues to take part in the Social Meetings; therefore, women who were not members of the association would have participated without contributing to the well being of the library. The by-law may also have been a way to reinforce that this was a group for women, not for men.

Attendance at the Social Meetings seemed to fluctuate. There are few instances where actual numbers are recorded, but the group does not seem to have been very large for most of the time that it first met. The few times that attendance was recorded there were around 30 present. The same women took part in the Reading Circle and the Social Meetings, which seemed to cause problems. The debate about continuing the Social Meetings was tied to the amount of time the women spent in both groups. When they disbanded in 1861, lack of time was the primary reason.

A few women took responsibility for preparing papers.¹⁷⁵ Titles ranged from "Our duties to the rising

¹⁷⁴Social Meetings, 1856, Kalamazoo L.L.A., Archives and Regional History Collections; WMU.

¹⁷⁵See Table 2 in Chapter 1. Many of the women who wrote papers and served as officers in the Social Meetings appear on this list. Note that most would have been in their 40's and 50's at the time of the Social Meetings, meaning that children were likely to be older or away from home and the women had more leisure time to pursue their own interests.

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generation" to "How may we learn to judge the merits of a Picture?" The topics will be discussed fully later in this chapter. The discussions are not always recorded, so it is not easy to tell who took part in the meetings or what the reaction was to the papers presented. The discussion of the papers will clarify that the women were interested in topics that would help them develop better lives for themselves and for their families. The women's faith and religious commitment are evident in the texts of the abstracts which will serve as examples as I discuss the topics of papers. Christian teachings are the backbone of many lessons that are shared and for what women felt should be shared with children, in particular.

Little was written about the structure of these meetings beyond addressing questions to the president. The emphasis on conversation makes it clear that one of the primary purposes for these meetings was to improve women's ability to carry on conversation on selected topics. There was a break in the meetings for some social time but self-improvement through study was the goal. The skills developed in these meetings would have been useful to the women as they tried to educate their children, either formally or informally, and as they participated in Kalamazoo society.

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The Library Club, another study group, officially formed in 1873.¹⁷⁶ This was by far the most formal of the study groups to date. Like the Reading Circle, the Library Club was an idea of Mrs. Stone's. The L.L.C. met in the Library's rooms in Corporation Hall on Monday afternoons but had its own constitution, by-laws and officers. This division caused some dissension between the L.L.A. and L.L.C. as the members of the L.L.C. struggled for autonomy and power. The women did not have by-laws for this club for the first few years of its existence since it was viewed as an experiment by the Board.

The main differences between the by-laws for the L.L.C. and the Social Meetings were the inclusion of a critic and four committees for the L.L.C. The critic's duties included "[noting] any errors in the pronunciation of the members presenting articles."¹⁷⁷ The critic must consult two dictionaries, Worcester and Webster, but had the final say if more than one pronunciation was allowed. Critics took part in every meeting; however, their judgments were never recorded. Anne Firor Scott notes that critics commented

¹⁷⁶There are minutes for the Ladies' Literary Club for the year 1873. The Ladies' Library Club minutes begin in 1877. There are no minutes that I am aware of for the years in between.

¹⁷⁷By-laws, [1878] Kalamazoo L.L.A., Archives and Regional History Collections; WMU.

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"without undue regard for the feelings of the composers of papers."¹⁷⁸ The level of harshness was probably related to who took the role of critic and who was presenting a paper. While several of the women had at least some formal education and many had taken part in the Ladies' Library Association Social Meetings, Reading Circle and other opportunities for education, they would have certainly made mistakes. Recording each error probably would have discouraged the women's participation because the reports were a part of the association's records and some eventually found their way into the local press. Insulting members publicly would not have been a way to gain either supporters or funds.

The committees reflected interests of the women and were typical of women's club study group committees. Four committees were formed: 1) Art and Literature, 2) Science and Education, 3) History and 4) Miscellaneous. When the month had a fifth Monday, the President was required to prepare or arrange for the program. Each committee selected a chair and selected topics for study and discussion. The Library Club had many more members than previous study groups so the committees were large, averaging about 20 to 30 women each. Division of responsibilities for the

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programs is not clear. Some years the program books¹⁷⁹ list names of the women presenting papers each month and other years there are only lists of topics to be presented with the names of the committee chair and co-chair listed.

Membership in the Library Club was open to non-Association members, a departure in protocol that eventually resulted in misunderstandings. By-law eight provided that: "Any lady may become a member of the Club by the payment of \$1.00 annually but none are entitled to the use of books from the Library except those who by the payment of \$2.00 annually become full members of the Association. Occasional attendants to pay 10 cents each week."¹⁸⁰ The clause that women must be members of the Association to use the library may have been a way to encourage membership in both groups. If the women could not use the resources of the library, it would be more difficult to research their papers and present programs. The Kalamazoo Public Library¹⁸¹ did exist by this

¹⁷⁹Examples from program books appear on page 154 and in the Appendix A.

¹⁸⁰Sec'y Minutes Book, 1878 to 1880, Kalamazoo L.L.A., Archives and Regional History Collections; WMU.

¹⁸¹According to Willis F. Dunbar, a public library collection had existed since the 1850's. A public library was not formally opened until 1872, however. The public library was originally housed in Corporation Hall, the same building where the Ladies' Library Association had its rooms before its building was completed in 1879. See Willis F. Dunbar, Kalamazoo and How It Grew (Kalamazoo, Mich.: Western

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time, however, so women had an alternative source for material that did not cost them more money. Attendance was good at the Library Club meetings and membership was high, judging from the committee lists available in programs and minutes. The secretary notes the "warm and sunny spring weather, combined with the magnetic influences of the club served to draw a large number of Ladies from their houses" on March 11, 1878. A few weeks later attendance "was highly complimentary to the subject and the committee in charge, numbering about one hundred and ten."¹⁸² These statements seem to reflect attendance trends for this group, unless the weather was too bad to leave the house.

In a published pamphlet the Board of Directors had to dispel rumors and attempt to heal the misunderstandings that resulted from women not realizing that the Ladies' Library Club was a part of the L.L.A. In an undated pamphlet (ca. 1889), the women mention "misapprehension of [the] relation [between the L.L.C. and the L.L.A.] being a seriously disturbing cause."¹⁸³ The Board explains that "the

Michigan U, 1959) 107-108.

¹⁸²Sec'y Minutes 1878-1880, 11 March 11, 1878 and 1 April 1878, Kalamazoo L.L.A., Archives and Regional History Collections; WMU.

¹⁸³ "The Ladies' Library Association. Published for distribution by vote of the Association." undated pamphlet. Kalamazoo L.L.A., Archives and Regional History Collections;

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Association had no power to have within itself an organization that was not a part of its own work, nor could it, without forfeiting its privileges, rent its premises, or any portion of them."¹⁸⁴ The women explain that they, as the Board, are not interfering with the work of the L.L.C., they are just doing their job. Since non-L.L.A. members could participate, many of the officers of this organization did not belong to the L.L.A., which may have caused some of the problems. It was also a new era for the L.L.A., not only in Kalamazoo but also across the state. The flyer mentions that public libraries had taken over some of the functions that the Kalamazoo L.L.A. once performed for the community. The L.L.A. then had to return to its mission and to "some other means of carrying out the spirit of its constitutional aims."¹⁸⁵ These aims included the promotion of scientific and literary study which the Board of Directors saw the Library Club fulfilling.

Before turning to topics of study, the purpose of the

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¹⁸⁴ "The Ladies' Library Association. Published for distribution by vote of the Association," undated pamphlet, Kalamazoo L.L.A., Archives and Regional History Collections; WMU.

¹⁸⁵ "The Ladies' Library Association. Published for distribution by vote of the Association." undated pamphlet. Kalamazoo L.L.A., Archives and Regional History Collections; WMU.

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study groups, I would like to discuss meeting places. These I believe determined membership, especially for the Reading Circle. The Reading Circle met exclusively in members' parlors while the Social Meetings and Library Club met in the association's rooms and building.¹⁸⁶ The parlor was considered the women's sphere in the 19th century home. The furnishings should "display "elegance and the appearance of lady habitancy" according to Daphne Spain.¹⁸⁷ Although parlors "transcended social class, economic status, or geographic location,"¹⁸⁸ they were still in particular women's home. The parlors of the families in Kalamazoo must have been large, however, since sometimes as many as 90 people attended Reading Circle meetings. Katherine Grier describes parlors in her work, Culture & Comfort. She notes that homes had both formal and informal parlors and that in larger homes sliding doors were installed to increase the size of a room when a large number of guests were being entertained. Some homes in Kalamazoo may have had the

¹⁸⁶The Library rooms were in Corporation Hall until 1879 when the women moved to their new building at 333 S. Park Street.

¹⁸⁷Daphne Spain, Gendered Spaces (Chapel Hill, N.C.: The U of North Carolina P, 1992) 123.

¹⁸⁸Thomas J. Schlereth, Victorian America: Transformations in Everyday Life, 1876-1915 (New York: Harper Perennial, 1991) 119.

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capacity to increase the size of the parlors.¹⁸⁹

The Social Meetings and Library Club met on more neutral territory. The Social Meetings used the association's rooms, which were in Corporation Hall. The Library Club met in the association's rooms and later occupied the association's building. These rooms were not attached to one family nor to its status but rather to the association. The women could identify with the corporate body of the association or with the study group they were attending. While a home was owned by a family, the association rooms were "owned" by the women since they paid dues and supported the association through their work and study. Meeting in these rooms placed women on equal footing with one another, rather than in a competition. Theoretically, this neutral space would have also eliminated or lessened concerns about different classes.

The business of the groups did not waver through the disagreements or difficult times which occurred. Through discussions or preparing papers or articles for reading the women could improve their knowledge and their skills. All

¹⁸⁹Katherine Grier, Culture & Comfort: Parlor Making and Middle-Class Identity, 1850-1930 (Washington: Smithsonian Institution P, 1997). Also see Brendan Hendhan, Walking Through Time: A Pictorial Guide to Historic Kalamazoo (Kalamazoo: Kalamazoo Historical Commission, 1981) for descriptions and photographs of 19th century Kalamazoo residences.

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of the study groups provided training for women in the art of conversation. As Ellen M. Plante notes, "a woman's ability to converse well could determine her social success in life."¹⁹⁰ Plante goes on to write that women were expected to be knowledgeable about current topics and have confidence in conversational abilities. Each group provided a different way to achieve this and all contributed to increased literacy. The Reading Circle allowed women to converse with men in an acceptable social setting. Married couples as well as daughters, and presumably sons, gathered in parlors one evening a week to participate in intellectual discussion and entertainment. There seem to have been leaders for each week but minutes indicate that others were allowed to speak. The Social Meetings and Library Club were exclusively for women. These groups gave women the opportunity not only to practice speaking but also to write about domestic, social or current topics and present their ideas to the group. Spirited discussions seemed to occur, especially in the Social Meetings where members could continue for several weeks since there was no set agenda. The Library Club's rigid agenda allowed women to know before attending what would be discussed. The topics carried over

¹⁹⁰Ellen M. Plante, Women at Home in Victorian America: A Social History (New York: Facts on File, Inc., 1997) 110.

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from one month to the next as women examined various aspects of a theme or issue, from literature, art, history science and education.

Topics of study

Topics of study were the most important aspect of study groups since they were the primary reason for existence. Each group discussed in this chapter took a different approach to study. The Reading Circle concentrated on all genres of what we would now refer to as canonical literature. In the Social Meetings women examined a mixture of domestic and social themes either through writing original papers on a topic or by locating a relevant article. When Social Meetings began again in 1867, following the Civil War, women studied scientific and historical topics, again through original papers and articles. Similar to the women's club model, the Library Club selected a theme or topic of study and assigned topics to committees for an entire year. Each committee then prepared a program on the topic which could include papers, speakers or other appropriate entertainment.

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recording its activities and those records provide the reader a picture not only of what members read, but also of what they thought about the reading. Three volumes of minutes for the years 1861-1868 survive for the Reading Circle. These minutes include reports from each meeting and copies of Lucinda Hinsdale Stone's yearly addresses to the group.

William Shakespeare and Charles Dickens were particular favorites of the group. Selections from The Eclectic, a popular magazine, were frequently included. Gail Hamilton, John Greenleaf Whittier, Robert Browning, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Charles Lamb and Francis Bacon were among the authors who caught the circle's attention. On several occasions the members read their own verse to the assembly. Each week a different reporter recorded the events of the evening as well as his or her impressions of the readings and the meeting. Mrs. Stone urged the reporters to provide "a sketch" of readings because this "may at some future time prove an interesting volume in the Library of the Association."¹⁹¹ Her prophetic words were correct. Examining passages from several readings allows us not only to see what the members thought about literature, but also

¹⁹¹Reading Circle, 18 January 1861, Kalamazoo L.L.A., Archives and Regional History Collections; WMU.

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to compare the responses of both genders.

Notes taken by the reporters demonstrate their levels of literacy. Reports show the understanding of the novels and literature studied as well as an understanding and interpretation of the conversation that took place about the works. Connecting social issues and current events to the literary works and discussions that were taking place demonstrates educational levels.

Shakespearean plays were usually read in their entirety if time allowed. The following passage written by J. O. Seely reflects sympathetic feelings toward the characters in the Merchant of Venice, "As is usual in the reading of this play, the sympathies of those present were enlisted in behalf of Antonio, the so styled Christian, as was also their disgust for Shylock the caricature of the Jew."¹⁹² The reporter continues, expressing criticism against Shakespeare and his "representation of Christian character."¹⁹³ The reporter communicates that he is writing not just for himself, but for the whole Reading Circle. Of Shylock, J. O. Seely writes, "We have always felt that it was too bad for Shylock to personate the sons of Abraham. Shakespeare

¹⁹²Reading Circle, 19 March 1862, Kalamazoo L.L.A., Archives and Regional History Collections; WMU.

¹⁹³Reading Circle, 19 March 1862, Kalamazoo L.L.A., Archives and Regional History Collections; WMU.

often evinces an enmity toward the Israelites [sic] race, leading one to think him ignorant of, or a disbeliever of the glorious promises concerning the Jews."¹⁹⁴ Finally, the play is blamed for prejudices against the Jewish race.

When Lucia Eames wrote about the reading of As You Like It, she admitted that it was "worse than useless to attempt a criticism upon Shakespeare and folly to give any abstract of the play since all must know the story."¹⁹⁵ She did complain that the play "proved too long for the most patient of the number"¹⁹⁶ and that several scenes were cut as a result. This meeting took place on April 10, 1861, a few days before the beginning of the Civil War. Obviously the members' minds were upon the troubles of the country, and Mrs. Eames worked in an allusion of the coming war.

There is a time in certain very dangerous fevers called the crisis; which having been attained all anxiety ceases, and certainty takes the place of doubt and fear. So in this play as in similar plays which are being enacted among us almost daily. We need only go to a certain point to guess at the whole truth.¹⁹⁷

¹⁹⁴Reading Circle, 19 March 1862, Kalamazoo L.L.A., Archives and Regional History Collections; WMU.

¹⁹⁵Reading Circle, 10 April 1861, Kalamazoo L.L.A., Archives and Regional History Collections; WMU.

¹⁹⁶Reading Circle, 10 April 1861, Kalamazoo L.L.A., Archives and Regional History Collections; WMU.

¹⁹⁷Reading Circle, 10 April 1861, Kalamazoo L.L.A., Archives and Regional History Collections; WMU.

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Mr. Seely was obviously more comfortable criticizing Shakespeare and his writing than was Mrs. Eames. He also addressed the moral and religious issues that he saw in the play rather than just praising Shakespeare as a great writer. While the nature of the two plays is entirely different, the rhetoric of Miss Eames and of other entries written by women suggests that they were not as willing to be critical of literature or of the discussions. There are exceptions, of course. Social issues do find their way into both the writings of male and female recorders. Confidence in their abilities to record events and impressions is an issue for most of the reporters, however, especially as the war accelerates and the pool of reporters diminishes, requiring less confident members to record their thoughts about the meetings.

Dickens always received favorable reviews from the reporters. According to Isabella C. Roberts, the reporter on January 3, 1865:

What greater pleasure than to sit down for a leisure hour with a volume of Dickens in hand. We read his works again and again ever finding some new beauty in each time we study his characters, now smiling at their absurdities and now touched by their tender devotion for in his writings as in those of very many of our greatest authors, humor and pathos, laughter and tears go hand in hand.¹⁹⁸

¹⁹⁸Reading Circle, 3 January 1865, Kalamazoo L.L.A., Archives and Regional History Collections; WMU.

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Other reporters enjoyed Dickens but did not have complete praise for him. Henry Ford calls him a "gifted but godless novelist" in his report for December 17, 1861.¹⁹⁹ On the March 23, 1864 reading of Bleak House a reporter writes that "Dickens power lies in a sympathy of extraordinary range, great tenderness and wonderful truth, he weeps with all human sorrow and laughs with all human mirth...."²⁰⁰ Still the writer is saddened that "a mind with such power of delineating character has never known what true Christianity is...."²⁰¹ It is not clear if the group read David Copperfield on the night of this final example. The writer identifies with him however. The reporter for March 25, 1865 states that "you have one hearty sympathizer tonight in me" because "three weeks ago tonight I marked on my memory signs and characters which I thought ineffaceable and I now remember none of their meanings...."²⁰² This is compared to

¹⁹⁹Reading Circle, 17 December 1861, Kalamazoo L.L.A., Archives and Regional History Collections; WMU.

²⁰⁰Reading Circle, 23 March 1864, Kalamazoo L.L.A., Archives and Regional History Collections; WMU.

²⁰¹Reading Circle, 23 March 1864, Kalamazoo L.L.A., Archives and Regional History Collections; WMU.

²⁰²Reading Circle, 23 March 1864, Kalamazoo L.L.A., Archives and Regional History Collections; WMU.

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David's "making out parliamentary reports."²⁰³ Obviously the reporter is having a difficult time remembering the specifics of the meeting he needed to deliver a report on.

Other writers were also admired and read. On March 4, 1863, Mrs. Crux read "that noble and stirring "Appeal to my County Women" by Gail Hamilton."²⁰⁴ According to Lucia Eames, the reporter, Hamilton has "become a household word among us" and the members of the circle are proud that she is American.²⁰⁵ A second selection by Hamilton was also read and a "breathless silence...prevailed during the reading."²⁰⁶ John Greenleaf Whittier's poem "Snowbound" was read in late April, 1866. The reporter praises the poem "which brought almost too vividly before us the winter that had just left us but still lingered on the hill tops to breath once more over the sleeping earth."²⁰⁷ He goes on to note that the poem should be read when "not a breath of air stirs to

²⁰³Reading Circle, 23 March 1864, Kalamazoo L.L.A., Archives and Regional History Collections; WMU.

²⁰⁴Reading Circle, 4 March 1863, Kalamazoo L.L.A., Archives and Regional History Collections; WMU.

²⁰⁵Reading Circle, 4 March 1863, Kalamazoo L.L.A., Archives and Regional History Collections; WMU.

²⁰⁶Reading Circle, 4 March 1863, Kalamazoo L.L.A., Archives and Regional History Collections; WMU.

²⁰⁷Reading Circle, 23 April 1866, Kalamazoo L.L.A., Archives and Regional History Collections; WMU.

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relieve the oppressive heat" of summer because "it would be as refreshing as to dream of icebergs floating on northern Seas or mountain tops shrouded in eternal snows."²⁰⁸

Occasionally a writer reveals a personal memory. A. H. B. Green responds to a reading on castles in Spain with memories of his childhood dreams. "In those days I built a great many castles in Spain, and best of all had a sincere faith in them." He continues to record that he was discouraged from this daydreaming because he was only wasting time. At the time Green "felt sure they were laboring under some mistake" but finally "woke myself to the sad consciousness that they were indeed airy." Green still finds his "airy castles" comforting though and disagrees with those who think daydreams are "unfitting one for the homely duties of life." He concludes that "It seems to me that like beautiful music or grand books they ennoble those who entertain even in imagination the gifted and the beautiful."²⁰⁹

The members were also comfortable performing tableaux. On December 12, 1864, the meeting was "filled to overflowing to witness scenes from Cinderilla [sic] which were to have

²⁰⁸Reading Circle, 23 April 1866, Kalamazoo L.L.A., Archives and Regional History Collections; WMU.

²⁰⁹Reading Circle, 10 February 1864, Kalamazoo L.L.A., Archives and Regional History Collections; WMU.

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been in Pantomime had the parties interested been able to carry out the original idea satisfactorily to themselves." Instead of pantomime, "The connected scenes were represented by Tableaux."²¹⁰ Tableaux was a popular form of entertainment in Kalamazoo, as well as other places. Women frequently performed these as fundraisers as will be discussed fully in Chapter 5.

Each fall Mrs. Lucinda Hinsdale Stone, the founder of the Reading Circle, delivered the opening lecture of the season. Mrs. Stone, the head of the Female Department at Kalamazoo College and the wife of Rev. J. A. B. Stone who was president of the College, held a reputation as an educator not only in Kalamazoo but throughout the state. Her association with the circle validated it as a serious intellectual enterprise and perhaps increased the popularity of the meetings.

The texts of the speeches delivered by Mrs. Stone combine themes of patriotism, faith and encouragement. Through her yearly "greetings" she attempted to uplift the members of the Reading Circle, urging them to keep their faith in God, to soldier on in the spiritual and physical battles before them, and to continue meeting as a society.

²¹⁰Reading Circle, 12 December 1864, Kalamazoo L.L.A., Archives and Regional History Collections; WMU.

The overall theme, however, was the power of individual thoughts and actions. How each person chose to live and to think would, according to Stone's beliefs, transform society for good or for ill. Stone was not afraid to chastise her fellow members in an attempt to spur them on to good. Some years her greetings appear to have little to do with the actual mission of the Reading Circle. In the second year Mrs. Stone uses the pyramids as a metaphor for continuing to climb to the top of the mountain and continuing to strive for good. She concentrates primarily on inspirational matters, rather than intellectual ones.

On the Pyramid we build there are landing places where we stop to count over together the steps ascended, to admire together the widening prospect, and to exchange friendly salutations, and wish words of mutual cheer inspire strength for new essays.²¹¹

This vein continues throughout the essay on the first anniversary of the Reading Circle.

The Civil War is never far from Stone's thoughts nor from her listener's thoughts. In her 1861 address she refers to the broken spirit of the people and to the sins of a nation.

We have been learning the past year our great National faults, and they are but an enactment on a broader platform of our social and individual faults. Every great sin that has made the very heart of the Nation

²¹¹Reading Circle, Second Year [no date], Kalamazoo L.L.A., Archives and Regional History Collections; WMU.

sick, has its fibres running out into communities and from communities to individuals,....²¹²

She concludes this speech with "We cannot heal the nation, but we can heal ourselves, and our cure will be one branch dropped into the bitter waters, and it will not, cannot be lost in its effect upon the fountain."²¹³ Again, the power of the individual is stressed. The men and women sitting in parlors in Kalamazoo cannot heal the nation by themselves but Stone stresses that they can heal themselves and can work in the community to help the healing there.

The following year she again concentrates on the strength of the individual spirit while also trying to provide comfort and encouragement for the losses all have suffered. She writes "That man or woman is to be pitied, who has outlived the freshness of life, or has drained its richest wine in youth."²¹⁴ She champions the wisdom of age throughout this address. (Stone would have been 48 at the time.) She encourages her audience to concentrate on the "wealth with which our sorrowful experience has enriched us"

²¹²Report of the Reading Circle, 1861, Kalamazoo L.L.A., Archives and Regional History Collections; WMU.

²¹³Report of the Reading Circle, 1861, Kalamazoo L.L.A., Archives and Regional History Collections; WMU.

²¹⁴Report of the Reading Circle, 1862, Kalamazoo L.L.A., Archives and Regional History Collections; WMU.

and to "believe, feel and know, that there is mercy in all this...."²¹⁵ Finding good in the tragedy of the war experience seems to be a primary theme in Stone's message. Realizing the individual strengths gained through the experience also is foremost in her mind.

In 1864 and 1865 Stone shifts her remarks from the individual to the work of the association. The message is still that the individual must contribute; however, the work that they should contribute to is strengthening the association.

In 1864 she asks the "anxious and perplexing question" that is on the minds of Board members:

What shall we do to promote [the association's] interests? What kind of a Frailty can we form that shall at the same time afford amusement, a little social intercourse and instruction, all of which must be so skillfully balanced and presented as to render the evening not only worth spending but worth a trifling compensation to the Library which finds itself under a sad pressure in these times when books have doubled their price and yet the old price for being read remains at the old stand post.²¹⁶

Numerous issues are addressed in this quote. Balance and the importance of uplifting the attendees seems important. As the war draws to a close the financial concerns of the

²¹⁵Report of the Reading Circle, 1862, Kalamazoo L.L.A., Archives and Regional History Collections; WMU.

²¹⁶Report of the Reading Circle, 1864, Kalamazoo L.L.A., Archives and Regional History Collections; WMU.

library are once again addressed. The Reading Circle is inexpensive entertainment but the library can neither sustain its collections nor build its collections on donations from the Reading Circle. This opening speech signals a re-examination of the mission of the L.L.A.

The remarks for this year recall the "great work of reform and illumination in our Society" because of the L.L.A.'s presence. The association has "[contributed] richly towards social progress" in Kalamazoo.²¹⁷

In 1865 Mrs. Stone remembers those faithful women who have died. Mrs. Travers, Mrs. Taylor and Mrs. Kedzie, all founders of the association, are remembered for their dedication and hard work. Throughout her illness Mrs. Travers still "would exert herself to talk over [the associations] interests and plan for its advancement...."²¹⁸ Mrs. Kedzie is remembered as a "woman in whose character gentleness and energy wrought as harmoniously together, whose life was as continuously a fulfilment of the injunction 'To do good and to communicate forget not,' as of

²¹⁷Report of the Reading Circle, 1864, Kalamazoo L.L.A., Archives and Regional History Collections; WMU.

²¹⁸Reading Circle, 14 November 1865, Kalamazoo L.L.A., Archives and Regional History Collections; WMU.

any person I have ever known."²¹⁹ Mrs. Taylor's many gifts for patience and perseverance under trial are also recalled. Following the recounting of individuals who have been lost, Mrs. Stone welcomes a member. This member is not one person, but rather the spirit of the male members who support the women's mission and efforts. In part Stone characterizes qualities that support the women's right to study and to gain knowledge. She writes that the women appreciate the

man who was not jealous and fearful lest we had touched upon those evil times, when woman knowing too much should transcend her sphere and introduce some terribly disturbing forces into the family; but a man who was wise enough to see that woman is not made less womanly by liberal literary culture, and that through any influences that should lift modest, intelligent womanhood above the dread of the ridicule of pedantry, manly culture will gain no less than womanly. In short, a man reverent of true womanhood and wisely thoughtful of the variety of human companionship -- matronly, maidenly, sisterly, daughterly.²²⁰

This seems to be Stone's thank you for the men's support of the women's educational pursuits. Men were not afraid of or challenged by the women's pursuit of knowledge because they realized that the women would not ruin the home. "Liberal literary culture" will not detract from the woman's other

²¹⁹Reading Circle, 14 November 1865, Kalamazoo L.L.A., Archives and Regional History Collections; WMU.

²²⁰Reading Circle, 14 November 1865, Kalamazoo L.L.A., Archives and Regional History Collections; WMU.

roles as wife, mother, sister or daughter. Rather, this education will make her better at those roles and, it is implied, a better companion.

Stone ends this address, the last one available in the archives, with the concerns of the larger association. There were three more seasons of the Reading Circle before it finally disbanded. When she sat down to write the final available address, Mrs. Stone says she was so "pressed with a thousand cares and interrupted by as many calls" that she did not know what to write.²²¹ The good of the Association, however, must have been on her mind. A lengthy tribute is included to the Association's librarian, Mrs. Webster, who keeps the library open one afternoon per week, cares for the room, the books and attends meetings, all without compensation. This librarian is not named in this tribute but has worked "more than seven hundred half days" for the Association.²²² The librarian is also credited with working "cheerfully, hopefully for the sole purpose of circulation in our community healthful, wholesome reading."²²³ Although

²²¹Reading Circle, November 1865 , Kalamazoo L.L.A., Archives and Regional History Collections; WMU.

²²²Reading Circle, November 1865, Kalamazoo L.L.A., Archives and Regional History Collections; WMU.

²²³Reading Circle, November 1865, Kalamazoo L.L.A., Archives and Regional History Collections; WMU.

this address is to the Reading Circle, Stone speaks about the L.L.A.'s work as a whole. She shares her admiration and fondness not only for the librarian's work, but for the work of the association in general. The subscription to the library may be seen as "cheap" to some of the subscribers, but it is "dear" to those who founded the association and believe in its mission and principles. She believes that those who work for the association are "compassed about by a cloud of approving witnesses of their humble labors." After 14 years in existence, that it "remains for [the association] to gain literally a foothold, an abiding place" in Kalamazoo.²²⁴ This will be realized during the coming year when the "neat, architecturally tasteful building" will be completed.²²⁵ This final speech, delivered after the close of the Civil War, includes more about the work of the L.L.A. than any of the previous speeches. The cares of war are no longer on Stone's mind and she concentrates on spurring the members to action for the good of the library, rather than contributing to the patriotic mission to support the war effort. While Stone concentrates on the good done by the body of the association, she recognizes the

²²⁴Reading Circle, November 1865, Kalamazoo L.L.A., Archives and Regional History Collections; WMU.

²²⁵The building was not completed until 1879.

individual contributions without which the success of the association would have been possible. I believe that Stone was aware of her audience when she delivered this speech. Male members, who had money to give the association, would have been listening that evening. Women would not have had to go home and report on the work of the association or the hopes for future efforts.

The Reading Circle contributed to the educational well being of the association and the community. This group helped the association maintain support throughout the Civil War. Through the weekly meetings both women and men could escape for a few hours from the troubles that surrounded them.

Social Meetings

In the Social Meetings women were concerned with domestic and social issues rather than literature. Later, during the second phase of the Social Meetings beginning in 1867, the women explored scientific and historical topics. Minutes remain from both phases of the Social Meetings. Early minutes were reconstructed from memory because the group had not assigned secretarial responsibilities to a member. The practice of including abstracts of papers did not last throughout the history of this study group. No

complete papers have survived. Women did not ignore literature; however, they discussed it in the context of what was moral or what was a good influence on themselves and on their children. By-laws were written to govern the Social Meetings and provided guidelines for discussing topics. Number four stipulated that "Subjects for discussion or investigation shall be given at a previous meeting, and may be discussed by original articles, or by a conversation or by selections from the press."²²⁶ Number five provided for the discretion of the President to allow discussion of other topics if the discussion of a topic is finished. Finally, a provision was made that "Any subject may be rejected by a majority of the members present."²²⁷ Selections of a variety of topics could be influenced by who actually attended the meeting that week. Frequently the minutes reveal that topics were continued because women did not feel that they had exhausted what they had to say on a subject. Papers were also sometimes repeated because the women wanted to hear them again or because a member who was preparing a paper did not attend on the day her paper was scheduled. It is not clear if the papers were kept at the

²²⁶Social Meetings Minute Book, 1856-1868, Kalamazoo L.L.A., Archives and Regional History Collections; WMU.

²²⁷ Social Meetings Minute Book, 1856, Kalamazoo L.L.A., Archives and Regional History Collections; WMU.

library or if women brought their collections of the papers they had written with them each week.

The first subject that the Social Meetings addressed was "Why are not American women as healthy as the Europeans?"²²⁸ This topic took several meetings to discuss, according to the minutes. Mrs. Cadman and Mrs. L. Slater contributed articles for the discussion. Mrs. Cadman concluded that "all our faculties are strengthened by use and weakened by disuse" and that American women do not compare favorably to European women, "especially in regard to our physical condition." Mrs. Slater focused on parents and children. She wrote "The spirit of independence is manifested in young America as he pushes with eager haste into that extravagance and insubordination that end often in physical and moral ruin." She includes an example, writing that "the mother would not crush the spirit of the daughter" and, therefore, indulges her whims even if they do her harm. The English mother, on the other hand, "has dignity and authority and the daughter bows in submission, hence dress, exercise and amusements are more in accordance with health and propriety."²²⁹

²²⁸Social Meetings Minute Book, 1856, Kalamazoo L.L.A., Archives and Regional History Collections; WMU.

²²⁹Social Meetings Minute Book, 1856, Kalamazoo L.L.A., Archives and Regional History Collections; WMU.

Other early topics included "What benefits be derived from our Social Meetings?", "How to correct public opinion so as to make house work a reputable employment?", "How shall we improve our conversational powers?" and "Our duties to the Rising Generation."²³⁰ From this list we can see that the women were concerned about self-improvement and improving their families. These kinds of topics continued to be the focus of papers and articles until 1861.

Etiquette and carrying on conversation were topics at several meetings. On July 28, 1858 a long discussion on the principles of etiquette took place. Calling included being honest. For a lady to say she was not at home when she was could "not [be] approved by this society." The length of a call was also addressed, shorter calls were "more ceremonious."²³¹ According to the writer, "a constant round of calls is dissipating to any mind -- but calls in general may be made interesting and profitable by a little effort and reflection."²³² In a somewhat related topic, Mrs. Cadman explored the differences between the home and the business

²³⁰Social Meetings, taken from various minutes, 1856-1861, Kalamazoo L.L.A., Archives and Regional History Collections; WMU.

²³¹Social Meetings Minute Book, 28 July 1858, Kalamazoo L.L.A., Archives and Regional History Collections; WMU.

²³²Social Meetings Minute Book, 28 July 1858, Kalamazoo L.L.A., Archives and Regional History Collections; WMU.

world. The husband "returns home exhausted and gives no thought to his wife's intellectual needs."²³³ The husband is criticized for thinking "the female mind is only suited to domestic duties and that it is incapable of much improvement in anything else...." Given this, "her mind becomes contracted" and she "is either unsocial or else becomes one of those incessant talkers who never say anything of consequence."²³⁴ The women who participated in the Social Meetings had an outlet for discussion, even though they were not in the business world. Their home life and the presence or lack of discussion with their husbands is not discussed but by participating in these meetings, they did not become isolated and in danger of being an "incessant talker" with nothing to say.²³⁵

Women were quite concerned about the raising of children and influences on young ladies. Mrs. Cadman's article compared how young gentlemen and young ladies would

²³³Social Meetings Minute Book, 14 November 1858, Kalamazoo L.L.A., Archives and Regional History Collections; WMU.

²³⁴Social Meetings Minute Book, 14 November 1858, Kalamazoo L.L.A., Archives and Regional History Collections; WMU.

²³⁵Social Meetings Minute Book, 24 November 1858, Kalamazoo L.L.A., Archives and Regional History Collections; WMU.

fare "after the close of school days."²³⁶ The discussion expanded to include the usefulness of continued intellectual development for young women. The women decided that "it was shown by many examples that intellectual culture, accompanied with proper physical exercise, is promotive of youthful vigor, both of body and of mind."²³⁷ Continued intellectual training was "promotive of happiness and consequent health."²³⁸ Examples were given of old people who remained vigorous. The final paper of that day addressed the sphere of women. "The department of school teaching is crowded to overflowing because it is more reputable to be even a poor school teacher than a good housekeeper."²³⁹ Discussion continued on how to correct this problem and resulted in the next meeting topic: how to correct public opinion so as to make house work a reputable employment.

Whether or not the sexes should be educated together

²³⁶Social Meetings Minute Book, 30 September 1857, Kalamazoo L.L.A., Archives and Regional History Collections; WMU.

²³⁷ Social Meetings Minute Book, 30 September 1857, Kalamazoo L.L.A., Archives and Regional History Collections; WMU.

²³⁸Social Meetings Minute Book, 30 September 1857, Kalamazoo L.L.A., Archives and Regional History Collections; WMU.

²³⁹ Social Meetings Minute Book, 30 September 1857, Kalamazoo L.L.A., Archives and Regional History Collections; WMU.

drew attention on April 28, 1858. The women returned to their precepts of faith, stating that "we should consider what God teaches" as well as "what experience and observation teach."²⁴⁰ Education in the family was distinguished from education in the schoolroom. In the family, the women thought, boys and girls could be educated together. In the schoolroom, however, some thought the boys were harmed if they were educated with girls. Some women disagreed saying "boys gain gentleness and refinement. The girls, strength and fixedness of purpose" if they are educated side by side.²⁴¹ The only conclusion that seemed to be reached was that children of a certain age are difficult no matter what.

During the meeting of February 29, 1860, an "animated and spirited" discussion on the "subject of amusements" took place.²⁴² Concern was expressed about individuals who disagreed with the staging of tableaux. "It was thought that a few individuals in some of our churches objected to

²⁴⁰Social Meetings, 28 April 1858, Kalamazoo L.L.A., Archives and Regional History Collections; WMU.

²⁴¹Social Meetings, 28 April 1858, Kalamazoo L.L.A., Archives and Regional History Collections; WMU.

²⁴²Social Meetings, 29 February 1860, Kalamazoo L.L.A., Archives and Regional History Collections; WMU.

tableaux and kindred amusements."²⁴³ The women discussed this and thought they should take into account who it was who objected in an effort to understand their reasons. "Mrs. Stone replied that position in society or the church did not necessarily exempt men from narrow mindedness."²⁴⁴ The women present decided "tableaux were unanimously considered to be innocuous amusements."²⁴⁵

Literature did occupy the women's minds and was a focus of discussion from time to time. Generally the topics concentrated on who their favorite author was or whether topics such as what a "suitable book for young people of 15 or so" would be. When asked to select a favorite author, one woman "found it as difficult to choose her favorite author as her favorite color."²⁴⁶ Most of the women selected male authors as their favorites. As in the Reading Circle, Dickens was a favorite author for the women. Mrs. Eames

²⁴³Social Meetings, 29 February 1860, Kalamazoo L.L.A., Archives and Regional History Collections; WMU.

²⁴⁴Social Meetings Minute Book, 29 February 1860, Kalamazoo L.L.A., Archives and Regional History Collections; WMU.

²⁴⁵Social Meetings Minute Book, 29 February 1860, Kalamazoo L.L.A., Archives and Regional History Collections; WMU.

²⁴⁶Social Meetings Minute Book, 27 February 1861, Kalamazoo L.L.A., Archives and Regional History Collections; WMU.



finally concluded that, "Scott comes to us as a draught of cold water, in a thirsty and weary moment rising and strengthening, without any effort, on the part of the recipients, while Dickens reads us a lesson of love for the erring and unfortunate." She goes on to say that Dickens "writes as a bird sings, because he can't help it!"²⁴⁷ Ralph Waldo Emerson and Charles Kingsley were also selected as favorite authors.

At the September 1, 1858, meeting the topic "Are all Fictitious works unprofitable?" was discussed. Women generally agreed that it was not fiction, it was the kind of fiction that created problems. "Its motive power is the imagination -- its parables have a divine sanction -- its teachings in morals and Christian living have been given, with great profit to us in the forms of fable and allegory."²⁴⁸ Some authors were favored over others. Mrs. Opie, Mrs. Barbauld and Miss Edgeworth were "considered as highly beneficial" to women. Fiction harms the reader when an "unprincipled hero" is included in the story. Fiction is discouraged that leaves "the mind ... clogged with so much

²⁴⁷Social Meetings Minute Book, 27 February 1861, Kalamazoo L.L.A., Archives and Regional History Collections; WMU.

²⁴⁸Social Meetings Minute Book, 1 September 1858, Kalamazoo L.L.A., Archives and Regional History Collections; WMU.

that is useless, and the engrossing book, [that] when laid aside, leaves a sense of want, and wasted time, and unfitness for the duties of life."²⁴⁹ A "judicious selection" gives "thoughts enriched from deep fountains of truth and nature and make them our own for time and eternity."²⁵⁰ Fiction that "advocate[s] high duties and noble deeds may be beneficial" as well.

If women were concerned with what they should read, they also discussed how much they should read. On March 30, 1859, the women addressed the question of quantity in several original articles. The importance of mothers' developing intellectual talents in themselves and their children was stressed by several women. One encouraged women to take time to read with the following example:

The fashionable lady who thinks that the dress of her children is all that needs a thought is contrasted with another who thinks less of dress and more of mind. Her children are trained to virtue and usefulness. One of her sons (not undistinguished for talent) said he profited more by his mother's criticisms than that of any other. Her embroidery was wrought on the minds, not on the garments of her children.²⁵¹

²⁴⁹Social Meetings Minute Book, 1 September 1858, Kalamazoo L.L.A., Archives and Regional History Collections; WMU.

²⁵⁰Social Meetings Minute Book, 1 September 1858, Kalamazoo L.L.A., Archives and Regional History Collections; WMU.

²⁵¹Social Meetings Minute Book, 30 March 1859, Kalamazoo L.L.A., Archives and Regional History Collections; WMU.

Other women stressed similar thoughts, encouraging young wives not to forget their intellectual growth upon marriage. Again, the spiritual requirement was included. Women "received from her Makers' hand a talent of inestimable price which he requires her to improve and cultivate and no human laws can rid her of this responsibility."²⁵² Mrs. Dewing encouraged women to "claim some portion of every day for reading." Reading should not be without purpose though. The women were reminded to read "carefully and considerately" and advised that "a novel reader, devouring a book at a sitting, without gaining a single thought worth remembering" does not profit.²⁵³ At the next meeting this topic continued. Although suggestions for readings were made, "no prescribed course of reading could be given, applicable to all."²⁵⁴

In the second era of the Social Meetings (1867-68) women selected subjects like the "Tides" or "the Wind" or "Druids." They also continued to discuss etiquette and good behavior. Minutes from these meetings are shorter and not

²⁵²Social Meetings Minute Book, 30 March 1859, Kalamazoo L.L.A., Archives and Regional History Collections; WMU.

²⁵³Social Meetings Minute Book, 30 March 1859, Kalamazoo L.L.A., Archives and Regional History Collections; WMU.

²⁵⁴Social Meetings Minute Book, 30 March 1859, Kalamazoo L.L.A., Archives and Regional History Collections; WMU.

always as detailed as those from the first phase.

An early discussion on etiquette concerned the Reading Circle. The women felt that when music was performed "the practice of inviting any one to play and then drown[ing] the music by conversation and laughter was ... impolite and insulting to the performer beyond all endurance."²⁵⁵ The women could not decide what to do about this "evil" behavior but were sure that those who talked while performers attempted to entertain did not really mean to be rude. However, "the thoughtlessness of those who do thus disturb the music is certainly reprehensible."²⁵⁶

The subject of druids was taken up at the March 21, 1868, meeting. A factual report of the meeting was recorded as was also done for the subjects like wind and tides. There are no explanations about why these topics were selected, but the women who presented the papers had to read and research their topics, presumably from the collections of the L.L.A.

Between the time that the Social Meetings disbanded in 1868 and the Library Club began in 1873, the association sponsored classes on history and Shakespeare. There are no

²⁵⁵Social Meetings Minute Book, January 1868, Kalamazoo L.L.A., Archives and Regional History Collections; WMU.

²⁵⁶Social Meetings Minute Book, January 1868, Kalamazoo L.L.A., Archives and Regional History Collections; WMU.

surviving minutes from these classes. The history class was led by Mrs. Stone, who taught similar classes throughout the state of Michigan.²⁵⁷ Foote's history of the L.L.A. suggests that the Library Club grew out the history class but she does not document her source for that c conclusion.²⁵⁸

The Library Club

The Library Club, which began in 1873, had a prescribed course that it followed each year. Record books, program books and newspaper articles all provide documentation about the topics studied and the meetings held by this group. The L.L.C. printed program books which included the names of the members, the committee members and the topics for discussion. Topics ranged from literature to scientific explorations to art and history. The authors who interested the women in the Social Meetings and the Reading Circle remained interesting to them here, namely Charles Dickens, Charles Kingsley and William Shakespeare. Theodora Penny Martin says that "most clubs took their first bite in the part that looked juiciest and most nutritious -- Dickens's

²⁵⁷Mrs. Stone's history class began at the L.L.C. in Grand Rapids. She also taught the class in Ypsilanti.

²⁵⁸Foote 11.



novels or the philosophers of early Athens."²⁵⁹ The Kalamazoo L.L.C. was no different. Reports were recorded in the secretary's book by an elected woman. The reports tend to be factual, briefly summarizing what was read with little response to the subject. The abstracts that were included in the Social Meeting minutes have disappeared. Papers from the meetings are not available either. The Library Club submitted brief articles to the Kalamazoo newspapers each week. These summaries are always highly complementary to the women and to the club.

Table 3 presents an example of a fairly typical yearly program for 1891-1892. Some years the committees selected themes that were carried out over the course of several months. For example in 1895-1896 the Art and Literature section concentrated on religious architecture. Papers included Greek Temples, Gothic Ideals and Stained Glass and Interior Decorations. The historical section for that same year concentrated on Spain and conducted meetings on early history, the Moors, literature, and the House of Bourbon.

In addition to delivering papers, the women presented a wide variety of "items" for consideration. This is similar to another technique frequently used by women's clubs -- the

²⁵⁹Martin 86.

roll call. "Untrained in sustained composition (never mind critical analysis), women *had* been "trained to silence" and often had to be regulated into discussion."²⁶⁰ For example on February 11, 1878, items were presented on the manner of electing a pope, liquefaction of gases, deaf mutes, and the origins of the saying "Tis an ill wind that blows nobody any good."²⁶¹ Sometimes the items were connected. On Monday, February 25, 1878, two of the three items concerned Thoreau. One dealt with Thoreau as a writer, one was a quotation from his works. The final item was an explanation about why popes change their names. Items sometimes were carried forward from week to week with women either answering questions that had been raised or adding to previous information. Others seemed to disappear from the minds of the women and minutes of the Library Club. These brief conversations at the beginning of meetings gave the women a chance to bring up current topics that interested them but that did not fit into the programs planned for the year.

On October 7, 1878, Mrs. George reviewed Charles Kingsley's Alton Locke. Her "review was very comprehensive and at its close all felt quite familiar with "Alton

²⁶⁰Martin 88.

²⁶¹Library Club, 11 February 1878, Kalamazoo L.L.A., Archives and Regional History Collections; WMU.

Table 3

Programme 1891-1892 -- Ladies Library Club, Kalamazoo

September 21	Bits of Travel
September 28	Women's Clubs
October 5	James Russell Lowell
October 12	Growth of Ideas in the Education of Women
October 19	Romance of Spanish History
October 26	Mexico -- Geographically, Politically and Socially
November 2	Courage and Courtesy among Famous Men; An Art Sketch
November 9	Pundita Ramebi
November 16	Period of the Renaissance
November 23	Complex Personality
December 7	Schliemann and his Work
December 14	The Public Library as a Factor in Education
December 21	Spanish Ballads
December 28	A history of the New Year; The Jewish New Year; A New Year's Story
January 4	The Examples of a Great Life; A Personation
January 11	Naval Architecture -- Past and Present
January 18	The Alhambra
January 25	George Meredith's Women
February 1	The Place of Poetry in Literature
February 8	Great Observatories and their Contributions to Science
February 15	The Spanish Gypsies
February 29	Fifth Monday
March 7	Art of Conversation; The Great Conversers
March 14	The Grand Canon of the Colorado; Rapid Growth of Western Cities
March 21	Symposium: Age of Ferdinand and Isabella
March 28	Incidents of European Travel
April 4	Some of the Old Masters; Poem
April 11	The Education of the Greeks
April 28	Orphan Homes and Something about their Founders
May 2	Homer and his Works; A Parallel; A Recitation
May 9	History of Telegraphy
May 16	Murillo and his Times; Informal ballot for officers
May 23	Henrik Ibsen
May 30	Annual Election of Officers
June 6	English Novelists
June 13	Physical Culture

Locke."²⁶² When no provisions had been made for a meeting that the committee on Science and Education was supposed to conduct, the president stepped in with a program on Dickens. Mrs. Sheldon read from Taines' English Literature "in a most acceptable way."²⁶³ Having books available for such emergencies was one distinct advantage of meeting in the library rooms. Mrs. Cornell, the Assistant Secretary, wrote that the "authors [sic] wonderful power of description was dwelt upon. When he describes the singing of a bird, imagination immediately produces the sweet sounds -- a gust of winds, and we feel it sweeping past...."²⁶⁴ She continued with a lengthy passage regarding Dickens' characters, saying that they are "living beings" to the reader who "laughs immoderately over the peculiarities or jokes...." of the characters.²⁶⁵

On April 25, 1878 three women gave papers on the Knights of the Round Table. "Mrs. Metcalf had spared no

²⁶²Library Club, 11 February 1878, Kalamazoo L.L.A., Archives and Regional History Collections; WMU.

²⁶³Library Club, 11 February 1878, Kalamazoo L.L.A., Archives and Regional History Collections; WMU.

²⁶⁴Library Club, 11 February 1878, Kalamazoo L.L.A., Archives and Regional History Collections; WMU.

²⁶⁵Library Club, 11 February 1878, Kalamazoo L.L.A., Archives and Regional History Collections; WMU.

pains to make the meeting a most enjoyable occasion."²⁶⁶ Miss Minnie May's paper on King Arthur was described as "written in a graceful finished style, combining with legendary tales the authors [sic] original reflections upon the same."²⁶⁷ The second paper was by Mrs. Rice, who "gave a very pleasing and interesting sketch of Sir Lancelot, the most famous knight of the Round Table."²⁶⁸ Finally a paper about Merlin was read. These are only a few examples of papers delivered. The women made use of the Association's library for their research. In some programs a list of books supporting a topic is also included.

The women continued to worry about what should be read, especially by children. The March 5, 1883, meeting addressed American literature for children. The meeting focused on what was good for children to read. Indirectly, there were also comments on children's interests and priorities:

The modern books for children, their style, appearance, and increasing numbers were then compared with those of fifty years ago, the latter being then treasured by the owner and loaned time and time again, while the child

²⁶⁶Library Club, 25 April 1878, Kalamazoo L.L.A., Archives and Regional History Collections; WMU.

²⁶⁷Library Club, 25 April 1878, Kalamazoo L.L.A., Archives and Regional History Collections; WMU.

²⁶⁸Library Club, 25 April 1878, Kalamazoo L.L.A., Archives and Regional History Collections; WMU.

of today has not the time in some instances to read the many books in its possession.²⁶⁹

Thus, children were not only spoiled by owning so many books, according to the women delivering the papers, they did not take time to read the ones they owned. Books for boys were specifically addressed, with an appeal to parents who had power to influence what boys read. The women criticized "exciting books" by Oliver Optic and in the "Elm Island" series in favor of Jacob Abbott's "Rollo Books" and his "Franconia Stories." Abbott's books, according to the author, lead "young people unconsciously to an investigation of nature, the sciences and arts" but the Optic books and the "Elm Island" series "create in the mind an admiration for recklessness and daring, which by boys are considered bravery."²⁷⁰ Praise was not given to all older literature. Miss Nellie Sheldon read from "Sanford and Merton" to demonstrate "priggishness" and Miss Campbell read "a very pathetic chapter from Elizabeth Stuart Phelps' story of Trotty."²⁷¹

²⁶⁹Library Club, 5 March 1883, Kalamazoo L.L.A., Archives and Regional History Collections; WMU.

²⁷⁰Library Club, 5 March 1883, Kalamazoo L.L.A., Archives and Regional History Collections; WMU.

²⁷¹Library Club, 5 March 1883, Kalamazoo L.L.A., Archives and Regional History Collections; WMU.

The examples illustrate what members wanted to know more about. The minutes of the Ladies Library Club continue well into the twentieth century and provide many more examples of topics discussed and programs given by members. The Library Club, in particular, paralleled the growth of the women's club movement following the Civil War. Like other women's clubs across the U.S., the Library Club, "took off, witness to some women's urgent desire for formal education."²⁷² Topics were so wide ranging, however, that it is at times "hard to see how any fundamental learning could have taken place;"²⁷³ however, the women returned week after week for more.

The archival records available for the three study groups in Kalamazoo provide evidence that the educational mission of the Ladies' Library Association was important. The topics studied reveal an interest in literature and in current social topics of the era. Consistent with the women's club movement, the women in Kalamazoo were concerned about mental development and self-improvement. The phases of study groups that I have examined in this chapter show the reader how the women moved from a model that resembled the lecture or lyceum movement toward a model that emulated

²⁷²Scott, Natural Allies 118.

²⁷³Scott, Natural Allies 115.

the women's club movement of the post-Civil War era. The Reading Circle minutes provide a look at the interactions between men and women during the Civil War era in Michigan. Individual voices are heard through the interpretations of readings and meetings. The Social Meetings and Library Club filter the voices of the women through a secretary. Though the abstracts of papers are provided for a brief period, this does not continue when the Social Meeting reconvenes in 1867 or when the Library Club is formed in 1873. These examples have shown us the public side of reading by the members of the L.L.A. Private reading took a different character.

"DO WHAT YOU CAN" : CREATING AN INSTITUTION,
THE LADIES' LIBRARY ASSOCIATIONS IN MICHIGAN, 1852-1900

VOLUME II

By

Mildred Louise Jackson

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Chapter 4

Fit to read: Circulating texts in Ladies Library Associations

Encouraging individual reading was as important to the Ladies' Library Associations as providing opportunities for group study. Through providing book collections for circulation, each Ladies' Library Association simultaneously tried to determine and influence the reading habits of its members and of their communities. Owning a permanent circulating collection of books was also one more way that the L.L.A.'s could establish themselves as community institutions.

Near the beginning of individual associations' histories the women tried to purchase works that were historical, religious and scientific in nature rather than works that were fictional. This pattern reflects the women's desire for improvement through education and for promoting moral reading instead of pleasurable reading. Collection choices were justified through statements in the minutes about purchasing books which would uplift and

enlighten readers, through reading in the associated study clubs and reading circles, as seen in the previous chapter, and through distributing printed catalogs of the collections. The women had no more than moderate success in promoting only reading that was considered morally superior, and all associations eventually gave into the public desire for fictional works.

In this chapter I will compare the catalogs of several libraries with the reading lists that were popular during the nineteenth century. Trends and patterns in book purchases will be examined for catalogs spanning the years 1865 to 1902. Reading habits and desires reflected in nineteenth century prescriptive literature will be taken into consideration as well as the comments in the available minutes. While the catalogs alone cannot reveal what was actually read by subscribers, they can reveal the preferences of the L.L.A. book committees and Boards of Directors and their interpretations of community standards for reading. I will examine the Ann Arbor Ladies' Library Association's minutes for specific examples regarding book buying habits and for discussions of issues surrounding circulation of and care for the collections. The minutes from the Ann Arbor Association are a rich source for this purpose because they span the years 1866 to 1900. While the

women did not always include comments as specific as I might like, the Ann Arbor women did record actions and decisions about purchasing books and caring for the library that are valuable to a study such as this one. Purchasing and maintaining a book collection were major investments for the associations and involved expenditure of financial resources, investments of time by volunteers, and renting or purchasing space for storing the books. In the second half of this chapter I will examine circulation records from the Galesburg Ladies' Library Association. These are the only circulation records I have located during the preparation of this dissertation.²⁷⁴ Records for the years 1877 to 1880 demonstrate that fiction was the most popular choice for personal reading material.²⁷⁵ I will examine the top twenty books circulated for that period for the entire membership and for a selected group of twenty individuals who seem to have been the most voracious readers in the Galesburg Ladies' Library Association.

²⁷⁴During my final revisions and editing of this manuscript, the circulation records of the Kalamazoo Ladies' Library Association came to my attention. The records are available for the years 1855-1900. These records will be analyzed and included in a subsequent study.

²⁷⁵Sample reading lists for Elsie Dunning, Ella Proctor, and Mr. and Mrs. R. G. Smith are included in the Appendix B-E.

Nineteenth-century reading

By the mid-nineteenth century fiction had become a commercial commodity.²⁷⁶ The concept of the popular author was becoming a standard and the notion of a best seller was becoming a familiar idea to the American public. Books were promoted and advertised based on the number of volumes sold and the number of editions printed. Yet the consistent messages that were delivered to the nineteenth century reader were that books should educate and should uplift, not waste valuable time. Examples of proper reading were distributed through lists in advice books for young women and men and through books written specifically on what to read. Works such as Noah Porter's Books and Reading; or,

²⁷⁶Many studies contribute to my understanding of literature in nineteenth-century America. The studies I have found particularly useful include, Nina Baym, Woman's Fiction: A Guide to Novels by and about Women in America, 1820-1870 2nd ed. (Urbana: U of Illinois P, 1993); Richard H. Brodhead, Cultures of Letters: Scenes of Reading and Writing in Nineteenth-Century America (Chicago: The U of Chicago P, 1993); Cathy N. Davidson, ed., Reading in America: Literature & Social History (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins UP, 1989); Cathy N. Davidson, Revolution and the Word: The Rise of the Novel in America (New York: Oxford UP, 1986); Susan K. Harris, 19th-Century American Women Novels: Interpretive Strategies (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1990); Mary Kelley, Private Woman, Public Stage: Literary Domesticity in Nineteenth-Century America (New York: Oxford UP, 1984); Jane Tompkins, Sensational Designs: The Cultural Work of American Fiction 1790-1860 (New York: Oxford UP, 1985); Ronald J. Zboray, A Fictive People: Antebellum Economic Development and the American Reading Public (New York: Oxford UP, 1993).

What Books Shall I Read and How Shall I Read Them? (1875)²⁷⁷
and Frederic Beecher Perkins' The Best Reading Hints on
Selection of Books; On the Formation of Libraries, Public
and Private; on Courses of Reading, Etc. (1877)²⁷⁸ provided
readers with instruction and with classified lists²⁷⁹ of good
books. Augusta H. Leypoldt and George Iles edited a volume
entitled List of Books for Girls and Women and Their Clubs
.... (1895).²⁸⁰ This volume classified books by genre and
provided brief notes on both the authors and selected books.
Charles Moore provided hints such as "avoid all books which
are trashy, 'smart,' or, if I may apply the epithet to a
book, cunning"²⁸¹ in his book What to Read and How to Read

²⁷⁷Noah Porter, Books and Reading; or, What Books Shall
I Read and How Shall I Read Them?, 4th ed. (New York:
Scribner, Armstrong & Co., 1875). Porter's book was
published in several editions.

²⁷⁸Frederic Beecher Perkins, ed., The Best Reading Hints
on the Selection of Books; on the Formation of Libraries,
Public and Private; on Courses of Reading, Etc. (New York:
G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1877).

²⁷⁹A second edition of Best Reading... was published in
1882. This edition was edited by Lynds E. Jones.

²⁸⁰Augusta H. Leypoldt and George Iles, ed. List of
Books for Girls and Women and Their Clubs with Descriptive
and Critical Notes and a List of Periodicals and Hints for
Girls' and Women's Clubs (Boston: Published for the American
Library Association Publishing Section by The Library
Bureau, 1895).

²⁸¹Charles H. Moore, What to read, and how to read,
being a classified list of choice reading, with appropriate
hints and remarks, adapted to the general reader, to

It, being classified lists of Choice Reading... (1871).

Moore suggested reading books of a "better class" even if these books seemed "heavy and hard to understand" at first.²⁸² In his section on "Novels, Romances and Tales" Moore wrote that "it is a waste of time to read any but the best," which "can be cultivated" by "a little self-denial for a time, and the patient perusal of a few good models."²⁸³ Moore classed novels either 1st, 2nd, 3rd, or 4th class²⁸⁴ with 1st class being superior. It is no surprise that few women authors are included in the 1st class since they wrote sentimental works rather than works which were considered great fiction. Moore consistently places authors such as Charles Dickens, William Thackeray, and Anthony Trollope as 1st class writers. Female authors who do earn a 1st class ranking include women like Maria Edgeworth, who scripted moral tales for children and adults. This kind of attitude toward fiction was not unusual in the books which provided model lists for libraries or in advice books for women and

subscribers to libraries, and to persons intending to form collections of books. Brought down to September, 1870 (New York: D Appleton and Company, 1871)12.

²⁸²Moore 13.

²⁸³Moore 101.

²⁸⁴Moore notes books with numbers ("1st" rather than "first" and so on) in his work; therefore, I have chosen to follow his pattern for numbering.

young ladies. Perkins book employed an alphabetic rating system for books and attempted to classify fiction "more precisely" than other departments.²⁸⁵ Perkins attempted to combine the cost of a work with the quality of a work, thus a book classed as "a" is not only good, it is of a moderate cost. Perkins admits that "Any classification is necessarily arbitrary and incomplete, and we submit this as merely suggestive, and without any claims to finality or infallibility."²⁸⁶ This comment refers to the classification of fiction which has a slightly more rigid system than other genres like history or biography. Perkins writes that "the task of indicating in any adequate manner "the best books" on any one subject is obviously a delicate and difficult one."²⁸⁷ He goes on to reveal that "in some departments we do not attempt it at all."²⁸⁸ In looking through his list these unclassified departments are actually difficult to locate and appear to be short lists of books on subjects such as "Carving, Fret Work, etc." or the "Cat" or geographic areas.

Leyboldt and Iles do not attempt to classify books with

²⁸⁵Perkins viii.

²⁸⁶Perkins 105.

²⁸⁷Perkins vii.

²⁸⁸Perkins vii.

a system like those used by Perkins or Moore. In the "Preface," the editors write that "Men and women who know have chosen the books and said about them just what they would tell an inquirer face to face."²⁸⁹ The authors include 2100 titles and provide information about the "cheapest of fair quality."²⁹⁰ This volume divides fiction and literature into two sections. The section on fiction includes many female writers and contemporary male writers while the literature section classifies "the best English and American authors in the departments of Poetry and Belles-lettres."²⁹¹

As discussed in the previous chapter, the women worried about proper reading and making choices both for themselves and for their children and families. This was true not only in Kalamazoo, but seems to have been a sentiment expressed by women in several L.L.A.'s. The women had to rely on books such as Moore's, Perkins' and Leypoldt and Iles' and on reviews in the magazines, such as Harpers, The Eclectic, The Nation, Scribners or Littell's Living Age, that they subscribed to for advice about books. Little is included in the minutes about the actual criteria used by women for book selection. It is unclear, for example, how

²⁸⁹Leypoldt and Iles, "Preface" [v].

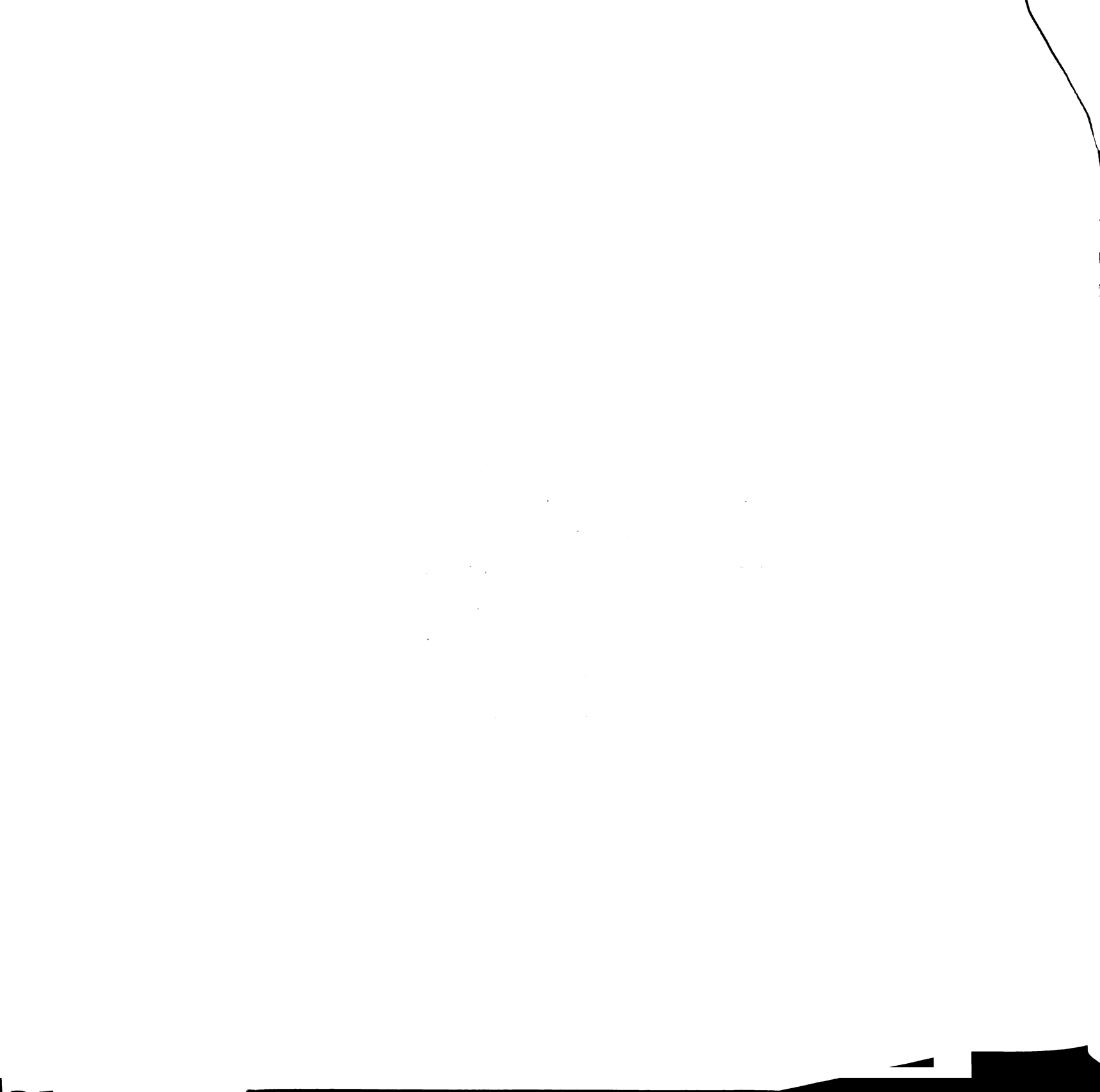
²⁹⁰Leypoldt and Iles, "Preface" [vi].

²⁹¹Leypoldt and Iles, "Contents" [vii].

the women in Kalamazoo determined that Oliver Optic books were bad and Jacob Abbott's books good for boys to read.²⁹² The women may have read the books before deciding or they may have read reviews or relied on advice from friends. When book selection criteria are discussed, women usually write about selecting "moral" literature or literature which conforms to the community standards. Comments expressing concerns about selecting certain titles sometimes appear, though the titles are not always noted. Donations were difficult to deal with because if the book was rejected the Board of Directors would have to carefully tell a member that the work was not acceptable. For example, women in Galesburg were allowed to submit books in place of some or all of their membership dues but only after the book had been reviewed for content and condition. Few books were rejected though some were considered more carefully than others. Comments seem to indicate that most books were rejected for wear and tear rather than for content. On November 9, 1878, for example, the Board accepted a book entitled The Barton Experiment from Mrs. McCollum in place of money due for fines.²⁹³ On other occasions only a partial

²⁹²See discussion on pages 147-149 in Chapter 3.

²⁹³Secretary's Minutes, 9 November 1878, Galesburg Ladies Library Association, Galesburg Memorial Library.



credit was given. Twenty five cents was allowed when Mrs. Whitford donated a book for membership fees on April 9, 1879.²⁹⁴ These two examples are typical of what is found throughout the Galesburg L.L.A. secretary's minutes. Explanations are not included about why the books were accepted or rejected or why only partial credit might be allowed.

Women in all L.L.A.'s strove to select the "better class" of books for their institutions but had to give in to the desires of their readers in the end. Graff notes that although reading was considered "an important activity for women, ...some fiction...was considered potentially dangerous, appealing to the emotions and sentiments and undercutting morality."²⁹⁵ The members of the Ann Arbor L.L.A. were aware of the dangers and the potential of reading. During its second annual meeting, April 13, 1868, the board notes its desire to "furnish good and useful reading" to its patrons.²⁹⁶ It reinforces the advantage of a library for families in the community. The secretary asks,

²⁹⁴Secretary's Minutes, 9 April 1879, Galesburg Ladies Library Association, Galesburg Memorial Library.

²⁹⁵Harvey J. Graff, The Legacies of Literacy: Continuities and Contradictions in Western Culture and Society (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1987) 355.

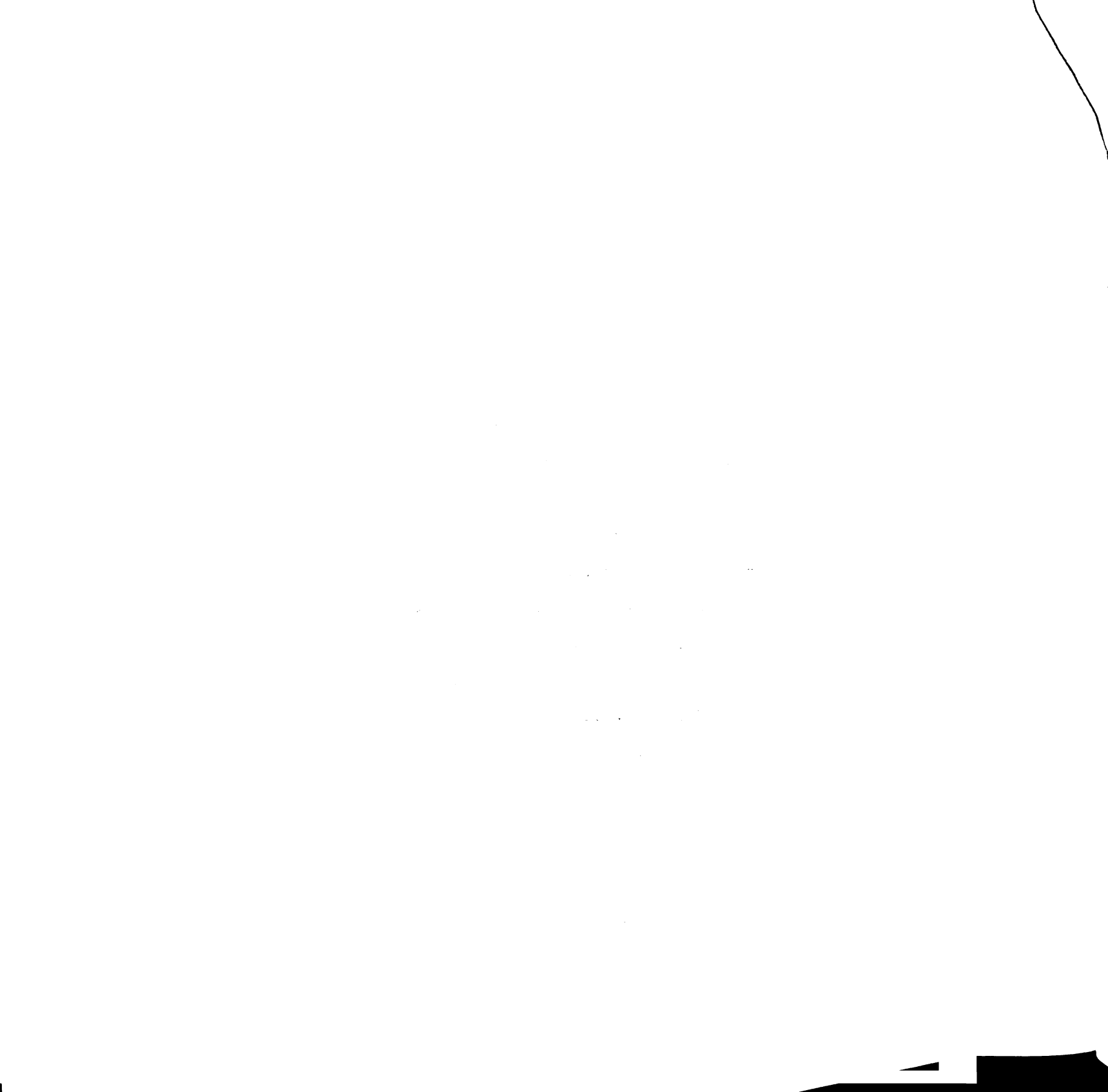
²⁹⁶Record Book No. 1 (1866-1872), 13 April 1868, Box 1, L.L.A. of Ann Arbor, BHL.

"What parents will not gladly welcome the aid thus afforded in carrying on the education of their children from the period when school books are laid aside and the mind needs new stimulus."²⁹⁷ Note that although the appeal is to parents and families, that carrying on education after school years is what is stressed. This emphasis on use of the library by older children and adults is not unusual among L.L.A.'s.

While women proposed following a prescribed reading list for study, actual private reading choices do not always conform to these lists. When the lists from the thirteen libraries are combined, a balance of reading fiction and books considered more educational can be found. Ronald Zboray has studied the perceived differences in reading choices between men and women during the Antebellum era, noting that women did not read in a "separate sphere" as is sometimes imagined. On the contrary, women read about the same proportion of novels, biography and belles lettres as men read.²⁹⁸ In the L.L.A.'s women seem to have read more

²⁹⁷Record Book No. 1 (1866-1872), 13 April 1868, Box 1, L.L.A. of Ann Arbor, BHL.

²⁹⁸For a further discussion of gender and reading habits see Ronald Zboray's chapter "Gender and Boundlessness in Reading Patterns," in A Fictive People: Antebellum Economic Development and the American Reading Public (New York: Oxford UP, 1993).



fiction privately and read more history, biography and scientific essays in groups. Reading lists generated from the Galesburg Association, which will be discussed in the last section of this chapter, show many women read more novels than any other genre. In reading or study groups, however, women were reading and discussing a variety of non-fiction works as well as fictional works.²⁹⁹ There is not enough data to study several groups of women conclusively for reading choices; however, the minutes of associations suggest that the members wanted fiction, thus, that was what they read. Several recent studies have documented a public demand for fiction similar to that communicated to the Boards of Directors of the L.L.A.'s during this time period and until the end of the century. James Machor notes that "the Antebellum period was especially characterized by a significant growth in general in the reading and writing of fiction and in periodical and newspaper publication, particularly for middle class audiences in cities and

²⁹⁹The Galesburg secretary's minutes note a reading group but no minutes from that group seem to have survived. It is difficult, therefore, to tell what they read or how long the group may have existed. From examining the lists of books read by the members of the L.L.A. in Galesburg I have noticed histories, for example, being circulated at various times to a number of women which suggests to me that either the women were recommending books to each other or were involved in a study class or group. For a more complete discussion of study groups see chapter 3 of this study.

towns."³⁰⁰ Fiction had become a good to be sold rather than just a moral tale to teach lessons to the young and uneducated. The nature of the fictional story was changing too. Women were portrayed as independent survivors, rather than as weak females who gave in to the first male to come save them. Nina Baym argues against classifying nineteenth-century novels by women as "domestic fiction" or "sentimental fiction."³⁰¹ She claims, rightly, that the tales that women wrote are far deeper and more significant than the connotations that we attach to such terms. Women writers, such as Fanny Fern and Susan Warner, were depicting strong heroines who had to fight for survival. Many novels were "full of poverty, coarseness, brutality, exploitation, treachery, pettiness, illness, exhaustion, degradation, and suffering."³⁰² Indeed, one might wonder why anyone would choose to read such depressing books. The tales told included all these aspects of life listed, but they concluded with triumph for the heroine. Marriage plots were not uncommon in the books that the women selected to purchase and read, but marriage was not always the most

³⁰⁰James Machor, "Fiction and Informed Reading in Early Nineteenth-Century America," Nineteenth Century Literature 47:3(1992) 320-348.

³⁰¹Baym 24.

³⁰²Baym 24.

important element in the plot. The Old Helmet by Mrs. Wetherell (Susan Warner)³⁰³ ends with marriage of the heroine but not to the man her mother wanted her to marry. Many books, such as Mrs. H. B. Goodwin's Madge: or, Night and Morning³⁰⁴ and Fanny Fern's (Sara Parton) Rose Clark,³⁰⁵ focused on the orphan who fought against the odds to educate herself and to re-establish a family. Other books, like Mrs. A.D.T. Whitney's The Other Girls,³⁰⁶ depicted families who lost everything, struggled but still survived. What seemed important to readers was a story that carried a message, that educated and that was not too frivolous. Definitions of what was moral were based on individual and community opinions and standards. William F. Poole's remarks may summarize choices of books best. When he was asked to define "trash" at the International Conference on Librarians meeting in October, 1877, he said, "Any book or pamphlet which has been printed is worth preserving, not everywhere,

³⁰³Mrs. Wetherell, The Old Helmet (New York: Robert Carter & Brothers, 1864).

³⁰⁴Mrs. H. B. Goodwin, Madge: or, Night and Day (New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1869).

³⁰⁵Fanny Fern, Rose Clark (New York: Mason Brothers, 1856).

³⁰⁶Mrs. A.D.T. Whitney, The Other Girls (Boston: James R. Osgood & Co., 1873).

but somewhere."³⁰⁷ Poole also points out that there will be no universal agreement on what trash is, but that definitions depend upon community tastes. The truth of this statement will become clearer as I examine library catalogs from the various locations.

Library Catalogs

The catalogs of the Ladies' Library Associations reveal the reading tastes of the women who worked to form library collections. Many of the early catalogs favor history and scientific works rather than novels. Few catalogs reveal that libraries have juvenile collections and some libraries did not buy books for children at all. Some problems exist when looking at lists of books as opposed to circulation lists because the lists that appeared in catalogs do not reveal actual reading choices. We do not know if the books were actually circulated or read by the members. Still these catalogs represent what the women desired to present as the culture of the association and how they interpreted their memberships' reading tastes and their communities' reading habits. Common threads do run among the catalogs in choices of authors and series of books. The catalogs, which

³⁰⁷Qtd. in Esther Jane Carrier, Fiction in Public Libraries, 1876-1900 (New York: The Scarecrow Press, 1965) 38.

were printed to show the membership what was owned and to encourage new members to join, also provided a way to establish the library as an institution in the community. By circulating a catalog of books the non-members could see what was available to read for a small fee. Catalogs from existing L.L.A.'s were also used by new L.L.A.'s as models for what to purchase. Many catalogs included a copy of the constitution and by-laws and a short history of the association. These texts along with the list of books held told the reader that this was a serious institution with rules, regulations, and resources. By-laws included the stipulations for drawing books from the library. Most of the associations allowed one book at a time although some exceptions existed. The Adrian Association allowed members who lived in the country to retain books for four weeks, rather than two weeks.³⁰⁸ Most of the remaining rules for borrowing books from the Adrian Association are typical of those found in other associations by-laws. The rules include what happens when a person "injures" a book or does not return it. She is fined for both.³⁰⁹ The Adrian Association does have an unusual by-law because of its stock. Section 22 reads:

³⁰⁸Bixby and Howell 16.

³⁰⁹Bixby and Howell 16.

Any person owning two, or four, or any other even number of shares in capital stock of the Association, shall be entitled to draw two books each week for any two shares, upon which an annual tax of one dollar shall be paid for every two of such shares. Persons owning three, five, or any uneven number of shares, shall be entitled to draw one book each week on account of such third, fifth, or other uneven share, provided the annual tax shall be paid on account of such share.³¹⁰

In other words, the more shares of capital stock a person buys, the more books he or she can borrow. With the shares of stock comes the responsibility for paying more annual tax. Thus, this particular rule catered to the wealthy patrons of the library and allowed them extra privileges for their support. Most of the associations allowed only one book per week per patron regardless of contribution. Some allowed non-members to borrow books for a nominal fee, usually \$.10 per week. In 1866 the Ann Arbor Association voted to "permit strangers and others, visitors in town, to draw books from the Library when introduced by some officer or Member of the Board in consideration of the payment of one dime per volume."³¹¹ This article was rescinded in 1868 and later re-adopted as a by-law in 1871.

Associations rarely published catalogs until they had

³¹⁰Bixby and Howell 16.

³¹¹Record Book No. 1 (1866-1872), 10 July 1866, Box 1, L.L.A. of Ann Arbor, BHL.

substantial collections. Arrangement of the catalog was up to individual associations and there is no consistent pattern. Dictionary catalogs in alphabetic order are as popular as classified catalogs, or those arranged by genre. Table 4 shows the associations and dates of the catalogs consulted for this chapter. The information in table 5 is taken from a compilation of the catalogs in table 4. Only one catalog from each location was included in the combined list.³¹² Sometimes only one catalog was printed though there are indications that many associations updated and reprinted catalogs. The number of titles that appear in the combined catalogs for the thirteen Ladies' Library Associations is 8,811. Of these titles, just under 3,000 were fictional works. (See figures 6 and 7) While fiction was heavily collected and read, other genres remained important. Biographies represent 915 titles, history equals 671 titles, religion or divinity contributes 443 titles and travel and expeditions 468 titles. There were also 230 scientific titles and 34 classified as wit and humor.

³¹²Note on method for compiling catalogs: The catalogs were Xeroxed or lists were typed from the catalogs, depending on the condition of the catalog. Titles, authors and genres were then entered into a database created using Microsoft Access. Authors' names and titles were verified using standard bibliographies and OCLC. Spelling was normalized and duplicates were eliminated so that titles and authors appeared consistently.

Table 4

Chronological list of library catalogs compiled

Place	Year
Kalamazoo	1865
Flint	1869
Adrian	1869
Coldwater	1870
Dowagiac	1872
Owosso	1874
Traverse City	1875
Ann Arbor	1887
Mt. Pleasant	1894
Galesburg	1895
Port Huron	1895
Albion	1900
Hartford	1902

Fiction and Juvenile

Titles in Catalogs

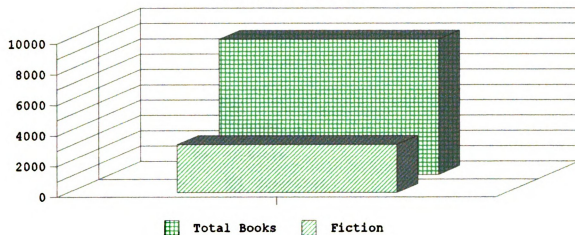


Figure 6

Classification is not always perfect because there was not a single system used by all L.L.A.'s and as noted, some arranged catalogs in alphabetic lists. These numbers represent a close tally of number of titles in various genres, however. Only two titles were owned by every library surveyed: Oliver Twist by Charles Dickens and Shirley by Charlotte Bronte. Both authors were popular in all the libraries. When examining selected catalogs from each decade, for example, three Bronte titles and seven

Selected Genres

of books in combined catalogs

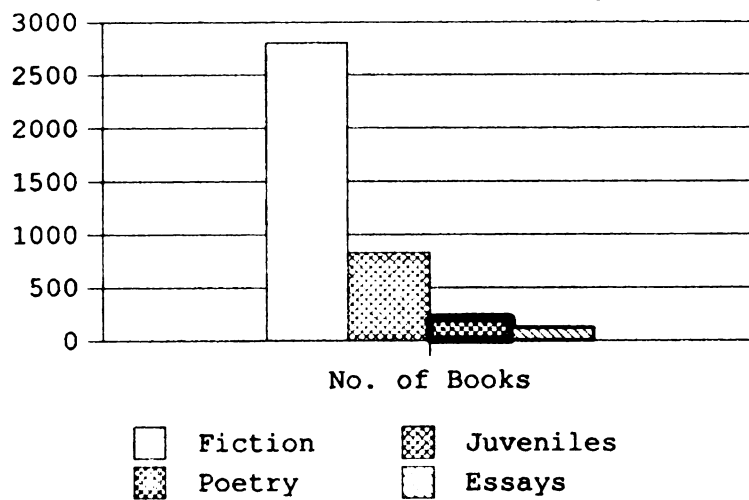


Figure 7

Dickens titles appear on a list of fourteen common titles. Since Dickens was also quite popular with study groups, it is no surprise that his works appear in the combined catalogs.

Each library held a wide range of genres. What they actually owned depended upon the membership's interests and the community where the library was located. The Ann Arbor L.L.A., for example, purchased more history, biography, and essays than some other libraries. The Owosso L.L.A. owned many more juvenile titles in comparison to other collections. Although many of the novels I will discuss are unfamiliar to the modern day reader, the libraries did own what have been classified as canonical author's works. Authors such as Charles Dickens, William Thackeray, Sir

Walter Scott, and James Fenimore Cooper appeared in every catalog. Poets such as Tennyson and Hawthorne were also quite popular. Jacob Abbott, an author of children's stories, histories and biographies, was included in most collections. Several female authors were also popular. Susan Warner, Charlotte Yonge, and E.D.E.N. Southworth are among those who appear in the combined catalog of the thirteen libraries surveyed

Compiling a catalog was a major task for the women of the associations. The expense of compiling and of printing a catalog had to be considered before the job was undertaken. Committees were formed to investigate local printers, costs and the number of catalogs that had to be printed at one time. The women generally called books in from the members in order to compile the most complete and accurate catalog possible. The right to call in books was not exercised only when a catalog was being compiled, however. The Port Huron L.L.A. included a provision in its articles allowing the librarian the "power to call in all books belonging to the Library on the first Friday in December of each year to ascertain if the number is complete and retain the same for two weeks if necessary."³¹³ The

³¹³Article XII, By-Laws, Catalogue of the Library of the Ladies' Library Association, Port Huron, Mich. (Port Huron: D. L. Ballentine, 1895).

Ypsilanti group attempted to compile the catalog for its association without calling in books. This resulted in books being listed under more than one genre and women thinking that some books were missing from the collection when in fact they were just in a different section. Catalogs were sold after they were completed. The treasurer's reports from the Ann Arbor L.L.A., for example, show that catalogs were sold for \$.25 apiece.³¹⁴

Women wanted to collect books that were worth reading but the combined catalog reflects that decisions varied about what this meant. Table 5 reflects authors represented in the combined catalogs with twenty or more titles. While this is not a perfect way to look at titles because some authors were more prolific than other authors, it does show which authors were purchased in larger quantities. Only one library had to own a book by an author for him or her to appear in the list; however, generally more than one library owned some or all of the works by each author listed.

Most authors on the list were novelists though some wrote in more than one genre. The list reflects that women did not shy away from purchasing "controversial" literature.

³¹⁴See 1881 Treasurer's Reports, Box 1, Box 1, L.L.A. of Ann Arbor, BHL.

Table 5

Authors in the Compiled
Catalogs with Twenty or more titles

<u>Author</u>	<u>No. Of Titles</u>
Oliver Optic	86
Sir Walter Scott	54
J. S. C. Abbott	50
G. A. Henty	50
E.D.E.N. Southworth	47
Miss Mulock (D.M.Craik)	46
Pansy	46
Charlotte M. Yonge	46
Bayard F. Taylor	41
Mrs. A. Wister	40
U.S. Government Documents	39
Mayne Reid	37
William Black	36
Mrs. Oliphant	36
James Fenimore Cooper	35
Amelia E. Barr	34
George MacDonald	34
Charles Dickens	33
Jared Sparks	32
Amanda M. Douglas	31
Harry Castlemon	30
William M. Thackeray	30
Rosa N. Carey	29
Mrs. Mary Jane Holmes	29
Mrs. (A. F. Hector) Alexander	28
Harriet Beecher Stowe	28
Louisa Muhlbach	27
Louisa May Alcott	26
T. S. Arthur	25
Edward Bulwer, Lord Lytton	24
The Duchess	24
Martha Finley	24
Wilkie Collins	23
Nathaniel Hawthorne	23
Walter Besant	22
Charles Kingsley	22
E. P. Roe	22
Jacob Abbott	21
May Agnes Fleming	21
E.E. Hale	21
Captain Marryat	21

Table 5 (con't.)

<u>Author</u>	<u>No. Of titles</u>
Kirk Munroe	21
Anthony Trollope	21
Bertha M. Clay	20
Sir Arthur Conan Doyle	20
Henry W. Longfellow	20
John Ruskin	20
Charles Reade	20
J. T. Trowbridge	20

The first author on the list, Oliver Optic,³¹⁵ was dismissed by the women in the Kalamazoo study groups as an author unsuitable for boys to read. The Kalamazoo L.L.A. did not own any Oliver Optic novels according to the 1865 catalog of the collection.³¹⁶ In fact, at this time the Kalamazoo L.L.A. owned no juvenile fiction at all. Many libraries owned both Optic's books and other juvenile authors' books, however. The Owosso Ladies' Library Association, for example, owned 31 Oliver Optic titles³¹⁷ while the Albion

³¹⁵Oliver Optic is the pseudonym of William T. Adams.

³¹⁶Kalamazoo Ladies' Library Association, Catalogue of Books Belonging to the Ladies' Library Association, (Kalamazoo: Printed at the "Telegraph" Book Establishment, 1865).

³¹⁷Owosso Ladies' Library and Literary Association. Articles of Association, By-Laws, and Catalogue of Books, of the Ladies' Library and Literary Association of Owosso City, (Owosso, Mich. : J.H. Champion & Co., 1874) 26-27.

L.L.A. owned 58 Optic titles.³¹⁸ The minutes of the Ypsilanti L.L.A. reveal that the women were not worried about Optic's books. The 1889 annual meeting minutes note that the book committee had been working to increase juvenile literature. Oliver Optic, "the old reliable," was one author "whom one of the boys lately grown superior to such childish folly, happily characterizes as 'clean and good, full of adventure, and no nonsense about girls.'"³¹⁹ Reviewers were not as harsh about Oliver Optic's books as librarians or book committees were. The "lack of literary value, combined with his use of bold and exciting incidents to hold the attention of his readers, were the elements to which many librarians objected."³²⁰ The stories were thought to create unrealistic expectations for readers. The author did not see his novels in this way. He wrote that he wanted to make "stories just as exciting [as] could be written without any ... evil tendencies."³²¹ Other authors who were considered controversial but were still collected by many associations include E.D.E.N. Southworth, E. P. Roe and Mrs.

³¹⁸Albion Ladies' Library Association, Catalogue of Books Belonging to the Ladies' Library Association, Albion, Michigan, (Albion, Mich.: The Recorder Press, 1900) 41-43.

³¹⁹Ypsilanti Commercial, 19 April 1889.

³²⁰Carrier 347.

³²¹Carrier 347.

Mary Jane Holmes. Mrs. Southworth and Mrs. Holmes were both very popular but their novels were considered too sensational. Contemporary reviewers seemed perplexed when Mrs. Holmes was considered controversial; however, both Nina Baym and Mary Kelley write that her works challenged women's traditional roles in the home. A reviewer in Literary World wrote that Holmes' stories had "very little local coloring" and that the "dramatic interest is slight."³²² Another reviewer said Holmes' books were "rather prosy and dull" and that "the secret of their long popularity has never been divulged by their readers."³²³ Holmes' novels did not excite the reader in the same way that Mrs. Southworth's did. Leypoldt and Iles include the following assessment of Southworth: "Her distortion of truth and fact is wonderful, and her sentimentality appalling."³²⁴ Readers of Southworth's fiction "would doubtless be wiser and more sensible if [they] had never learned to read."³²⁵ Nina Baym writes that Southworth "was not a moralizing writer and her plots lack the educational organization characteristic of

³²²Qtd. in Carrier 291.

³²³Leypoldt and Iles 20.

³²⁴Leypoldt and Illes 33.

³²⁵Leypoldt and Iles 33.

much fiction of the fifties."³²⁶ Southworth's fiction, owned primarily by the Mt. Pleasant and Port Huron libraries, contained "fearless heroines and the fearless author behind them."³²⁷ Several other authors on the list also appear to have been controversial. Children's authors, such as G. A. Henty, Martha Finley and Mayne Reid, were the main targets because these authors wrote stories that were adventurous or exciting but not of high literary quality. Finley's "Elsie" books were actually pious and moralistic and some reviewers, such as Agnes Repplier,³²⁸ could not figure out why children would find them appealing. Reid was "manly, healthy in tone, and good in purpose" according to one review; however, the information in his books was not always considered historically accurate.³²⁹ His books were objectionable to some because of this last fact and because he wrote to entertain boys but not necessarily to educate them. Henty was also considered a sub-standard writer who used the same plot devices over and over again.

Most of the books selected for Ladies' Library Association collections were not controversial. Many of the

³²⁶Baym 112.

³²⁷Baym 112.

³²⁸Carrier 357.

³²⁹Carrier 353.

authors who appear on the list with twenty or more titles were considered writers of high moral value and literary value. Sir Walter Scott was immensely popular with L.L.A.'s. His historical romances appear in almost every library. James Fenimore Cooper and Charles Dickens also endure throughout the century as popular choices to include in collections. Several female authors were not only prolific writer, their books were also purchased by libraries and, as will be seen later in the chapter, were quite popular with readers. The authors on this list represent a broad range of fictional works from "serious" to "sensational." Only a few have endured to the present day, however.

Building a collection in Ann Arbor

The women of the Ann Arbor L.L.A. considered the library a "central gathering point, [which promoted] a more cultivated taste in the choice of reading matter, less demand for the trivial and more for the solid publications."³³⁰ With this responsibility in mind, the women proceeded to work on the book collection for the library. Deciding on the books to purchase for circulation

³³⁰Record Book No. 1 (1866-1872), 7 April 1869, Box 1, Box 1, L.L.A. of Ann Arbor, BHL.

1. The first part of the document is a list of names and titles, including "The Hon. Mr. Justice G. D. C. O'Connell, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of the State of New South Wales" and "The Hon. Mr. Justice G. D. C. O'Connell, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of the State of New South Wales".

2. The second part of the document is a list of names and titles, including "The Hon. Mr. Justice G. D. C. O'Connell, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of the State of New South Wales" and "The Hon. Mr. Justice G. D. C. O'Connell, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of the State of New South Wales".

presented a major undertaking for any L.L.A. This task was generally relegated to a committee that prepared and presented lists to the Board of Directors at monthly meetings. Once purchased, books had to be cataloged and cared for. These functions will also be discussed in the context of circulation. The storage of books and the library buildings themselves will be addressed in the next chapter.

Like other Ladies' Library Associations, the Ann Arbor L.L.A. had a book selection committee to choose books for the library. This committee compiled lists of books to present to the Board of Directors for approval. It is not clear how the committee arrived at its recommendations for purchase because little is recorded in the minutes about the criteria. This is not unusual in the minutes of the L.L.A.'s that I have examined. Even though the contents of the collections became public knowledge when catalogs were published and distributed, the way books were selected and rejected was not. The lack of specifics from discussions about books may reflect the desire to keep decisions private. If the community did not possess a written record of why the women accepted or rejected a book, then the women could not be criticized. For many years the lists of approved books were recorded in the minutes. There are no

notes directly suggesting that books were rejected or that the board disagreed with the committee; however, occasionally the lists were resubmitted to the committee. In the annual report of 1872, the secretary notes the serious nature of the task of book selection. She writes that the board desires that "the intellectual food thus furnished may possess a healthful moral influence" for the subscribers.³³¹ Because the women felt such responsibility, "they have been cautious and slow to recommend new works, till their character, as far as possible, could be ascertained."³³² Although there were booksellers in Ann Arbor, there were problems involved with locating and ordering titles. "In most instances, books must be ordered from the cities without the opportunity given of learning more of them than the criticisms and reviews of the press afford."³³³ Women wanted to examine the books they chose to purchase. It is not clear if a member of the Ann Arbor Association actually read each title before it was placed on

³³¹Record Book No. 1 (1866-1872), Annual Report 1872, Box 1, L.L.A. of Ann Arbor, BHL.

³³²Record Book No. 1 (1866-1872), 8 April 1872, Box 1, L.L.A. of Ann Arbor, BHL.

³³³Record Book No. 1 (1866-1872), 8 April 1872, Box 1, L.L.A. of Ann Arbor, BHL.



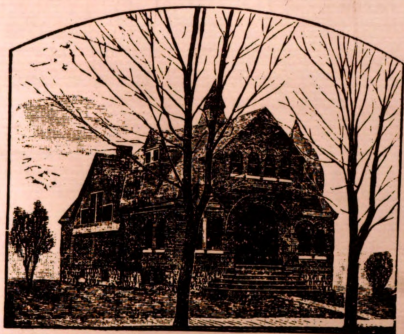
the shelf as was the case in some associations.³³⁴

Books were also donated to the association, as already mentioned, or exchanged for books in the collection. The association was approached by agents on at least two occasions. This was not an unusual practice in the nineteenth century. A Mr. Fiske, who was not clearly identified, was the first to approach the association. He wrote that "he would be able to furnish books to the Library at especially advantageous rates and from his interest in its prosperity would be very glad to do so."³³⁵ The board considered and accepted his offer. The second offer came from an Appleton's agent offering to sell the association the index and seven annual volumes of Appleton's encyclopedia. The offer was rejected because of the price (\$6.00 bimonthly) and because the women thought they might be able to obtain the volumes at a better price.³³⁶ This was only one occasion when the association could not afford the books it may have desired. The secretary notes that the women thought the volumes would be very valuable for the

³³⁴Kalamazoo and Galesburg women seemed to have read the books, if possible, before accepting them.

³³⁵Record Book No. 3 (1879-1890), 6 October 1878, Box 1, L.L.A. of Ann Arbor, BHL.

³³⁶Record Book No. 3 (1879-1890), 25 September 1883, Box 1, L.L.A. of Ann Arbor BHL.



Ladies' Library Association.

Figure 8 Bookplate from the Ladies' Library Association of Ann Arbor. Ladies' Library Association. Ann Arbor. Courtesy of Bentley Historical Library, The University of Michigan.

library but "the present condition of the treasury hardly warranted the purchase even on the favorable terms offered."³³⁷

Although the method for selecting books was not spelled out, comments about what should be collected were. On several occasions the secretary recorded the progress the L.L.A. had made in collecting books which were beneficial to the readers. These are worth quoting in full and examining because they reveal the tastes of the Board, the L.L.A. and both groups' interpretation of the community tastes. Along with the catalog, the comments reveal standards for reading during this time period in Ann Arbor.

The women were cognizant of the complaints that there were not enough volumes of fiction and members' requests for more fiction. At the April 8, 1872, Annual Meeting, the secretary recorded the following statement on the library and its collections:

Our Librarian informs us that the demand for works of fiction exceeds the supply. If so, it may be a question for serious consideration whether we are bound to yield to this demand. By so doing, do we not seem to be dragging the standard down to the level of those who seek to be constantly amused and superficially excited, instead of seeking to arouse them to grapple with themes that tax the attention and reason? That sickly sentimentality which finds gratification only in works of this description should not find supporters in

³³⁷Record Book No. 3 (1879-1890), 25 September 1883, Box 1, L.L.A. of Ann Arbor, BHL.

those who earnestly seek the good of their followers.

We are happy to state that a larger proportion of the books purchased during the year are of a character to stimulate to earnest thought, and fully to meet the wants of intellectual minds.³³⁸

This report communicates a quandary found throughout the Ann Arbor record books -- should we yield to the desire for fiction or should we stand firm and purchase what we feel is good literature? The book committee and board of directors did yield to the fiction readers by eventually having a collection that was one third fiction; however, they tried to purchase fiction that they considered of higher quality. It is clear from the statement above that the women who sat on the board did not value fiction as highly as some of members of the association or at least did not want it to appear that they did. A particular kind of fiction is addressed in this statement, the "sickly sentimentality" found in the writers already discussed is criticized. A lack of intellectualism is cited for those who desire these kinds of books. The attitudes expressed by board members did not seem to influence the readers, however. By trying to control the reading choices of the subscribers, the board was taking part in the "process of recreating cultural

³³⁸Record Book No. 1, 8 April 1872, L.L.A. of Ann Arbor, BHL.

hegemony," or "a complex and subtle process" which allows one class to control another.³³⁹ The minutes of the Ann Arbor Association and of other associations make it clear that the board and the book selection committee wanted the subscribers to read what they thought was good literature. In 1879 the secretary noted that subscribers still wanted more fiction. The secretary wrote, "It must moreover be remembered that stories are generally very quickly read, hence to furnish all that are desired by the many readers during the year would doubtless exhaust the whole amount which can be expended on books of any kind."³⁴⁰ The women wanted a library that "shall be valuable not alone this year nor next but always and to ensure this permanent value the majority of books must be something else than novels."³⁴¹ The librarian "endeavors to induce those who heretofore have chosen fiction almost exclusively to draw from other divisions."³⁴² The librarian in Ann Arbor was not alone in her desire for readers to select books other than fiction.

³³⁹Graff 264.

³⁴⁰Record Book No. 3 (1879-1890), 14 April 1879, Box 1, L.L.A. of Ann Arbor, BHL.

³⁴¹Record Book No. 3 (1879-1890), Box 1, L.L.A. of Ann Arbor, BHL.

³⁴²Record Book No. 3 (1879-1890), 14 April 1879, Box 1, L.L.A. of Ann Arbor, BHL.



Comments throughout Bixby and Howell's Historical Sketches reveal further interesting facts about choices for reading and the rules that women imposed on their membership. Union City Ladies' Library Association did not purchase dime novels for its library. This "insinuating proviso" resulted because the Young Men's Christian Association turned over its funds to the L.L.A. with the condition that the women would not purchase dime novels.³⁴³ The Owosso Association wrote of its practice:

while recognizing the need of light reading to meet the public demand, [the board] have always striven conscientiously to cultivate a taste for better and more nourishing mental food, and have provided a selection of the best authors, to which they constantly invite the attention of the younger members more especially, hoping to awaken in the minds of this class of readers, a desire and relish for those literary pleasures which "perish not with the using," but become the foundation of great and lasting benefit to themselves, and to mankind.³⁴⁴

The Blissfield Association sought "to exclude from its shelves all books having the least pernicious tendency" and bought only those "of a pure and moral tone."³⁴⁵ Further, the women wanted to "procure works of a solid character;

³⁴³Bixby and Howell 133-134.

³⁴⁴Bixby and Howell 99.

³⁴⁵Bixby and Howell 45.

calculated not only to afford entertainment to the minds of the people, but at the same time to furnish valuable information."³⁴⁶ A final example about influencing readers comes from the Coldwater Association: "While the Board cannot dictate the patrons of the library what shall be read, it is their purpose to make the other departments as full and interesting as possible, with a view to awaken a desire for something more improving" than fiction.³⁴⁷

The Ann Arbor collection, at least in 1887, did not contain the novels of Oliver Optic, E.D.E.N. Southworth or the other controversial novels mentioned in the preceding section. The collection contained a larger selection of biographical, essay and art works than other libraries. Many titles were not owned by other L.L.A. libraries. The book selection committee and the Board of Directors monitored the number of volumes added in each genre, particularly in fiction. In the secretary's report dated April 14, 1884, it was noted "that of fiction 2 more have been added this year than last."³⁴⁸ This was during a year when fewer books were purchased because the endowment for

³⁴⁶Bixby and Howell 45.

³⁴⁷Bixby and Howell 52.

³⁴⁸Record Book No. 3 (1879-1890), 14 April 1884, Box 1, L.L.A. of Ann Arbor, BHL.

books had been exhausted. In order to keep the subscribers happy and not compromise the integrity of the collection the board decided to include a table of "light literature." This is not defined but is presumably fiction that might otherwise not find its way into the collection. "It was voted to have a table of unbound light literature to be drawn as other books are drawn but *not to be catalogued*. It was hoped that many such books *would be contributed*."³⁴⁹ The two passages I have italicized in the previous sentence provide a clue to the kind of literature this really is. Most likely it is cheap fiction that the board really did not want to spend money on for the collection but knew would attract readers. On April 9, 1894, the secretary wrote that "the library itself is in good condition and is well used especially in its department of fiction...."³⁵⁰ She added that a "goodly number of carefully chosen books" had been added that year and "Those drawing books will find that we have many very bright and interesting volumes among our books of travel, history and biography, as well as in the

³⁴⁹Record Book No. 3 (1879-1890), 4 October 1886, Box 1, L.L.A. of Ann Arbor, BHL.

³⁵⁰Record Book No. 4 (1890-1901), April 1894, Box 1, L.L.A. of Ann Arbor, BHL.

line of fiction."³⁵¹

The duty of the board for circulation went beyond what was purchased, however. It extended to making sure subscribers knew what the library held and could obtain books. These goals involved employing or engaging a librarian and preparing catalogs periodically. The librarian was a member of the association and was compensated for her time. In addition to keeping the library open once a week, the librarian delivered a report at the annual meeting on books purchased and circulated and on the number of members using the library. Problems or questions that came up regarding circulation or other matters were referred to the board for final decisions. When some board members felt that books were being handled by too many members, they discussed putting a railing in front of the bookshelves. They decided to place a table there instead.³⁵² In 1879 the Ann Arbor L.L.A. began using a card system for circulation. This system is not fully explained in the minutes but from what is included, it seems that each member had a card.

For several years the association board debated the

³⁵¹Record Book No. 4 (1890-1901), April 1894, Box 1, L.L.A. of Ann Arbor, BHL.

³⁵²Record Book No. 1 (1866-1872), 6 April 1868, Box 1, L.L.A. of Ann Arbor, BHL.

hours for the L.L.A. As other associations did, in the beginning the Ann Arbor L.L.A. opened its doors one day a week for the purpose of circulating books. In 1882 the association voted to keep the library open every day. "It was finally voted that the Library be opened every day, (except Sunday) from 2 to 4 P.M., and the ladies of the Board serve as Librarians (except on Saturdays, when the regular librarian has charge of the rooms) until further notice."³⁵³ The library was opened from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. and 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. on Saturdays. This experiment continued on a month to month basis until the board members could not handle it anymore. In April 9, 1883, the secretary reported that there was "sufficient evidence of the great convenience resulting from the new arrangement" of being open daily.³⁵⁴ The women admitted, however, that "it has been a great tax" for the board members to keep the library open and "other arrangements must be made."³⁵⁵ Other problems were noted as well. There was "increased wear and tear upon the books" which cost the association more for

³⁵³Record Book No. 3 (1879-1890), 2 Oct. 2, 1882, Box 1, L.L.A. of Ann Arbor, BHL.

³⁵⁴Record Book No. 3 (1879-1890), 9 April 1883, Box 1, L.L.A. of Ann Arbor, BHL.

³⁵⁵Record Book No. 3 (1879-1890), 9 April 1883, Box 1, L.L.A. of Ann Arbor, BHL.

upkeep. Expenses were justified if readers developed a "taste for better and more solid literature" as a result of the library being opened more.³⁵⁶ At the board meeting following the Annual Meeting Miss Hill was engaged as a librarian for two hours every day at a rate of \$156.00 per year as a solution. Some members were worried about the expense so it was proposed as an experiment for six months.³⁵⁷ The following spring it was reported that the number using the library daily was "comparatively small" so in early July the hours were returned to Saturday only. This was not the only time the association contemplated and tried being open more days a week. In 1896 the library was once again open daily from 10 a.m. to 12 noon.³⁵⁸ By 1898 the association considered hiring a trained librarian instead of paying a member of the board.³⁵⁹

Most libraries seemed to stay open one day per week, usually on Friday or Saturday afternoon. Little else has been found in archival records about experiments such as the

³⁵⁶Record Book No. 3 (1879-1890), 9 April 1883, Box 1, L.L.A. of Ann Arbor, BHL.

³⁵⁷Record Book No. 3 (1879-1890), 9 April 1883, Box 1, L.L.A. of Ann Arbor, BHL.

³⁵⁸Record Book No. 4 (1890-1901), 6 April 1896, Box 1, L.L.A. of Ann Arbor, BHL.

³⁵⁹Record Book No. 4 (1890-1901), October 1898, Box 1, L.L.A. of Ann Arbor, BHL.



ones the Ann Arbor association tried for providing daily access to collections. In the last section of this chapter I will explore what the women actually checked out of one collection, the Galesburg Ladies' Library Association.

Galesburg Readers

Thought, through the power of books, magazines and papers, is sowing its effusions broadcast among the masses, aiding to produce new thought by the agitation it produces.

To make mankind wiser, better, purer, is the prime object of this organization, and to this end, we expect to devote our energies. For no one can read books of high moral character and not improve thereby.

Secretary's report, Annual Meeting, 1879³⁶⁰

The secretary who wrote this report recorded the wishes of the Galesburg Ladies' Library Association -- to improve the community of Galesburg through the promotion of reading that contained "high moral character." The manuscript catalog included in the Secretary's book along with the printed catalog reveals a number of books that could be classified in this way. Unfortunately the records never fully reveal what the women mean by "books of high moral character." We are only able to base conclusions on what was purchased and read by the members.

The Galesburg Association's records provide some of the

³⁶⁰Secretary's Minute Book, Annual meeting 1879, Galesburg Ladies' Library Association, Galesburg Memorial Library.

only circulation records located thus far for a Ladies' Library Association. Circulation records exist for each week for the period between February 17, 1877 to December 25, 1880. Analysis of these records will be the primary focus of this section. During this time 259 citizens drew books from the library, although not all belonged to the association consecutively or simultaneously. For example, the January 3, 1880 Annual Meeting lists "Total number of members 60 - 55 ladies and 5 gentlemen, an increase of five for the year."³⁶¹ Many members withdrew books consistently while others only checked out an occasional book. Through the choice of reading matter, we can examine whether the books circulated appear to have been of "high moral character."

A brief history of Galesburg, a small village near Kalamazoo, will provide context for the readers I am examining. Galesburg "lies on the Michigan Central Railroad, nine miles east of Kalamazoo, four from Comstock, and five miles west of Augusta."³⁶² The 1869 Kalamazoo County Directory, presents the following picture of Galesburg:

³⁶¹Sec'y Minutes, 3 January 1880, Galesburg L.L.A., GML.

³⁶²History of Kalamazoo County, Michigan (Philadelphia: Everts & Abbott, 1880) 377.

Galesburg lies within two townships, Comstock and Charleston, though only a small portion is within the latter township. It has several dry good stores, five groceries, a hardware store, drug stores, two cabinet stores, two hotels, three saloons, and a good number of tradesmen. A driving park with a half mile track, has opened during the past year near the village.³⁶³

The description goes on to state that "professions are well represented" and that there is a "very pretty railroad depot and telegraph office."³⁶⁴ Several churches ministered to the people of Galesburg as well. Religious activity and participation seem to have been quite important to the members of the L.L.A. On October 2, 1879, for example, the board meeting was canceled because "of a church meeting which many of them wished to attend."³⁶⁵ This was not the only occasion when members were missing or meetings were rearranged for meetings at church.

The earliest settlers came to Galesburg in the 1830s; however, the village was not officially organized until 1861. According to the Galesburg Area Centennial, 1869-1969, "the 1860's were progressive years for Galesburgh

³⁶³History of Kalamazoo County, Kalamazoo County Directory...., 1869. 108.

³⁶⁴History of Kalamazoo County, Kalamazoo County Directory...., 1869. 108.

³⁶⁵Sec'y minutes, 2 October 1879, Galesburg L.L.A., GML.

[sic]."³⁶⁶ During this decade a plank road was built, the schools were "changed from an ungraded to a graded system," and most importantly, "a charter was granted by the State of Michigan incorporating our village."³⁶⁷ A large number of those living in Galesburg and the surrounding townships list eastern states as their place of birth in the 1870 and 1880 census.³⁶⁸ Several immigrants from England, Ireland, Scotland and Holland also appear on the census roles. This information conforms with the migration patterns common in Michigan during this era. Many of the men listed in the census were farmers and the women were listed as "keeping house."

Although the 1860's were a decade of progress, the 1870's seem to have been a decade of decline. "The railroad took a great deal of trade from [Galesburg] and the village entered into a period of decline. Property values began to drop and Galesburgh [sic] became a place of cheap homes and

³⁶⁶"Early Settlers," Galesburg Area Centennial, 1869-1969 (Galesburg, Mich, 1969) 1. Note that Galesburg was also spelled Galesburgh.

³⁶⁷"Early Settlers" 1.

³⁶⁸I used the census records from 1870, the ninth census, and 1880, the tenth census, to determine who the residents of Galesburg were during this time. Population Schedules of the Ninth Census of the United States, 1870, Michigan (Washington: National Archives, 1965) and 10th Census, 1880, Michigan (Washington: Bureau of the Census, 196-?) are on microfilm at the Library of Michigan.

ambitionless people." ³⁶⁹ This last image does not seem to ring true when reading the work of the women who formed the Ladies Library Association in the 1870's.

The founders and board members of the Ladies' Library Association were ambitious. The women hosted their first annual meeting, wrote a constitution, held their first entertainment and voted to form a literary society within the first month of existence. By March 3, 1877, 112 volumes were in circulation. This number represents an increase of 100 volumes within two months. The minutes for the annual meeting of 1879 state that there were 208 books in circulation at that time. At the 1880 Annual Meeting there were 240 volumes. The History of Kalamazoo County praises the library, stating that it had "done much already to awaken a desire for reading."³⁷⁰

Membership was open to anyone in the community for a fee of fifty-cents a year for ladies and one dollar for men. During the first year the board established the practice of making local ministers honorary members of the association. Rev. L. M. Hunt, minister of the Congregational Church, was the first honorary member. His wife was also a member.

Evidently the membership did not entirely understand

³⁶⁹"Early Settlers" 1

³⁷⁰The History of Kalamazoo County 386.

the privileges of belonging to the library because the board added the following by-law: "Any member loaning a book belonging to the Association shall be fined twenty-five cents."³⁷¹ Considering that membership for the year was only fifty cents, this is a severe penalty. No records remain to prove that this by-law was enforced.

Two sets of statistics reveal the reading habits of members compiled from circulation records. The first table lists the top twenty books that circulated among the entire membership between February 1877 and December 1880 (Table 6). Most of the books read were novels by women authors. The second list reveals the top twenty choices by some of the most voracious readers in the association. These were also mostly novels by women. There are several parallels between the lists. By reading several of the titles on the list I have gained some understanding of the kind of fiction the women preferred. The common denominator among the books seems to be a story about a young girl who struggles in some way and eventually succeeds in life and marriage. In many of the books the girl is orphaned or abandoned and makes her way on her own. Sixteen of the top twenty books were written by female authors. Nearly one third of the books in

³⁷¹Sec'y Minutes, 3 March 1877, Galesburg L.L.A., GML.

Table 6

Top Twenty Books circulated to the entire membership in
Galesburg, 2/1877 to 12/1880

Number of Readers	Author	Title
68	Wetherell, Mrs.	The Old Helmet, v.1
66	Goodwin, H. B.	Madge
66	Mulock, Miss	A Brave Lady
63	Wetherll, Mrs.	The Old Helmet, v. 2
62	Black, William	Madcap Violet
62	Bronte, Charlotte	Jane Eyre
62	Wetherell, E.	Wide, Wide World
61	Mulock, Miss	John Halifax, Gentleman
60	Pennot, Rev. Peter	Achsah: A New England Life Study
59	Aguilar, Grace	Home Influence
58	Whitney, Mrs. A.D.T.	Faith Gartney's Girlhood
57	Holmes, Mrs.	Rose Mather
54	Harland, Marion	Sunnybank
53	Prentiss, E.	Stepping Heavenward
52	Whitney, Mrs. A.D.T.	The Other Girls
51	Fern, Fanny	Rose Clark
51	Townsend, Virginia	Living and Learning
50		Harper's Magazine
47	Prentiss, E.	Aunt Jane's Hero
46	MacDonald, George	The Vicar's Daughter

Table 7

Top Twenty books read by the sample group
from Galesburg

Number of readers	Author	Title
11	Garrett, Edward	By Still Waters
11	Bremer, Frederika	Miss Bremer's Works
10	Pennot, Rev. Peter	Achsah
10	Muloch, Miss	A Brave Lady
10	Aguilar, Grace	Mother's Recompense
10	Wetherell, Mrs.	The Old Helmet, v.1
10	Whitney, Mrs.	The Other Girls
10	Gaskell, Annie	The Widow of Windsor
9	Shay, T. B.	Danger; or Wounded in the house of a friend
9	Aguilar, Grace	Home Influence
9	Muloch, Miss	John Halifax, Gentleman
9	No Name Series	Kismet
9	McCarthy, Justin	Lady Judith
9	Goodwin, H.B.	Madge
9	Wetherell, Mrs.	The Old Helmet, v.2
9	Prentiss, Mrs.	Stepping Heavenward
9	Howells, W. D.	Their Wedding Journey
9	MacDonald, George	The Vicar's Daughter
9	Collins, Wilke	The Woman in White
8	Ames, Mary Clemmer	Alice and Phebe Cary

Handwritten text, possibly bleed-through from the reverse side of the page. The text is mostly illegible due to fading and bleed-through, but some words like "The" and "of" are visible. There is a small mark resembling a "6" or "9" in the center of the page.

the list were by the same four authors -- Mrs. Wetherell (Susan Warner), Miss Mulock (Diana M. Craik), Mrs. A. D. T. Whitney and Mrs. Prentiss. The latter two authors are considered Sunday School writers or writers for younger girls, rather than adult audiences. Heros or heroines in the books on the top twenty list underwent self improvement, and the plot delivered a moral message. Novels on these lists represent stories that depict "social relations" and were "generally set in homes or other social spaces" described by the author.³⁷² The novels also portray what Elizabeth L. Barnes calls "interior housekeeping"³⁷³ or the story of the heroine's determination to purify her soul and triumph over the evil forces she faces. The plots, thus, move beyond just the heroine's marrying the proper man. The tales educate the reader in how to act and react to unexpected trials he or she may face in life.

What individual readers received from the novel must be deduced from the plot, the heroine's message and struggles, and the repetition of the same kind of book on the lists. Readers did not leave journals or notes about their

³⁷²Baym 26.

³⁷³Elizabeth L. Barnes, "Mirroring the Mother Text: Histories of Seduction in the American Domestic Novel," in Anxious Power: Reading, Writing, and Ambivalence in Narrative by Women ed. Carol J. Singley and Susan Elizabeth Sweeney (Albany: State U of New York P, 1993) 157.

Gender of Authors

in the overall list

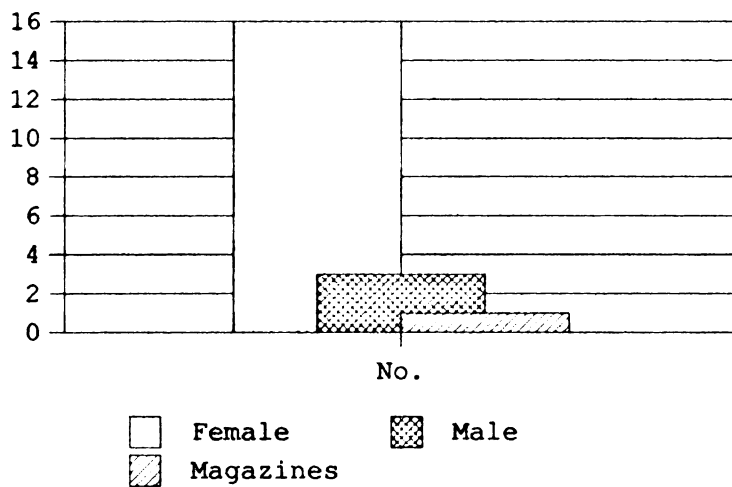


Figure 9

readers to the particular volumes.

Before looking at plots of some of the top novels on both lists, let us look at reviews that may have attracted readers to particular novels on these lists. Charlotte Bronte's Jane Eyre appears on the top twenty overall list but not on the top readers' list. Since the novel was published in 1849, many of the members may have already read it. The Dublin Review notes that in Jane Eyre Bronte "originated a new style of novel-writing, as distinct from anything we have yet had" and that Jane Eyre and Shirley have "a raciness and charm which we shall not find again in any of their imitators."³⁷⁴ The reviewer "would give neither of these novels to very young people; they are too worldly,

³⁷⁴Review of "Jane Eyre - Shirley," The Dublin Review 28.40 (1850): 210.

too passionate; they strike upon chords in our nature too deep and intricate to be within their comprehension."³⁷⁵ The review continues at length, quoting passages from both novels, and concluding that these books are charming. The North American Review was not as kind to the author of Jane Eyre. The reviewer lumped several novels together, noting that "romances must be reviewed in battalions, or allowed to pass unchallenged."³⁷⁶ The reviewer complains about "Jane Eyre fever" and states that "When it came, it was purchased and read with universal eagerness; but, alas! It created disappointment almost as universal."³⁷⁷ The Atlantic Monthly's review of Mrs. Wetherell's (Susan Warner) The Wide, Wide World calls it a "time honored piece of American fiction" and notes that it has a "strong flavor of evangelic teaching."³⁷⁸ Although this review appeared several years after the dates for my lists, the reputation of Susan Warner's book shows why 62 readers selected it. One does wonder why Rev. Peter Pennot's Achsah: A New England Life Study was so popular after reading the reviews. The

³⁷⁵Review of "Jane Eyre - Shirley" 210-211.

³⁷⁶Review of Jane Eyre, et al, North American Review 67 (1848): 354.

³⁷⁷Review of Jane Eyre, etal 355-356.

³⁷⁸Review of The Wide, Wide World, Atlantic Monthly 70(1892): 852.

Atlantic Monthly says that it has "some amusing characters" but its plot is "so old but unvenerable a sort that it cannot be warmly commended."³⁷⁹ The characters are caricatures of New Englanders according to the review but it does complement some of the dialog. "If all the rest had been as good, [as the dialog] it would have been a readable book..."³⁸⁰ The Nation is not much kinder to this book and its author. The reviewer does say that there is a "certain smartness...which may make it popular in those rustic communities where living examples of the models portrayed in its pages are to be found."³⁸¹ This is not much of a compliment after reading the descriptions of the characters, however. William Black, one of the other male authors on the list, fares better in reviews of his Madcap Violet, a triple decker. According to this review, "it is not often that one would have to take up a novel of Mr. Black's for anything but the enjoyment of good-humoured dialogue, brilliant sketches of scenery, kindly hits at social foibles, and some additions to a now well-filled gallery of

³⁷⁹Review of Achsah, Atlantic Monthly 38 (1876): 244-45.

³⁸⁰Review of Achsah 244-45.

³⁸¹Review of Achsah, The Nation 8 June 1876, 369.



portraits of pretty, and pleasant, and natural girls."³⁸² This novel, unlike his others, has "more of the cast of thought" and has a tragic ending.³⁸³ Black was a popular Scottish novelist and the same year this review appeared a brief biographical sketch was published in The Eclectic. In it Black is asked why Coquette, a character in one of his novels, died and he replied "Why, you see, I didn't want to make her die; but I had to do it. If she had lived, the reader would not have remembered her six hours after he had closed the book."³⁸⁴ Obviously he was a man who knew his audience. Both Mrs. Prentiss and Mrs. Whitney, who appear on both lists, were considered Sunday School writers. Elizabeth Prentiss was the daughter of a minister. Her mother, who was a "forceful woman, intellectually vigorous, and punctilious in religious duties," was the model for the mother in Stepping Heavenward.³⁸⁵ This novel, published in 1869, "sold over one hundred thousand copies in America" and "was widely used in Sunday-school libraries."³⁸⁶ In a

³⁸²Review of "Three Novels," The Fortnightly Review 21 n.s. (1877): 88.

³⁸³Review of "Three Novels," 89.

³⁸⁴"William Black" Eclectic Magazine of Foreign Literature, Science and Art, n.s. XXV (1877) 504.

³⁸⁵"Elizabeth Payson Prentiss," DAB v. VIII 188-89.

³⁸⁶"Elizabeth Payson Prentiss," DAB 188-89.

lengthy essay in Old and New, Henry W. Bellows reviews all of Mrs. Whitney's works to date. Whitney writes "books for all ages and seasons, for summer and winter, seed-time and harvest, and worthy of the most adult and exacting minds and hearts."³⁸⁷

Reviews would only give the reader some idea of what to expect and, truthfully, we have no idea about the Galesburg women's access to reviews. More than likely the women passed books to each other and recommended titles to friends to read, or not. The proximity to Kalamazoo may have influenced the Galesburg women's reading habits. A trip to Kalamazoo would not have been a daily occurrence at that time but it was not impossible and records left by some residents of the period show that trips to Kalamazoo were more frequent than one may expect.³⁸⁸ Looking at the plots of a few novels reveals more than the reviews do about the kinds of books readers preferred.

Volume one of Mrs. Wetherell's The Old Helmet ranks first on the overall list while volume two ranks fourth.

³⁸⁷Henry Bellows, "Modern English Novels, No. II Mrs. Whitney's Novels," Old and New 5:47 (microfilm Civil War Reconstruction series A.P.S. III reel 131, film x 1005).

³⁸⁸See the diaries of William Schroeder and the Lyman Ina family at the Clarke Historical Library, Central Michigan University for details about life in Galesburg during this time. Neither family belonged to the L.L.A. as far as I can tell.

This book chronicles the life of Eleanor Powle, the heroine, a willful and stubborn girl who could teach readers how to improve themselves. Eleanor's story also represents the spiritual journey that many heroines undertook. Further, Eleanor's character opposes her mother's character who is the kind of woman who Baym calls passive and dependent.³⁸⁹

First, Eleanor rejects her mother's wish for her to marry Mr. Carlisle, the Lord of Rythdale. The marriage and the union of the two families would benefit her mother's position in life as well as Eleanor's. Eleanor, however, grows to despise Mr. Carlisle and his demands on her.

Eleanor's struggle to be independent includes questioning her religious convictions. She has met Mr. Rhys, a missionary and preacher, who was once the tutor of her younger brother. Mr. Rhys sees Eleanor's questioning and tries to explain that she needs the "helmet of salvation" but she cannot comprehend his meaning. She continues to question Mr. Rhys, however, and visits him on several occasions. She also seeks the counsel of her own minister, Dr. Caines, an old family friend, on the matter. He dismisses her worries and tells her she merely needs to be confirmed.

Eleanor winds up rejecting her family's way of life for

³⁸⁹See Baym 26-28.

a simpler life. She becomes the independent woman that she desires when she goes to live with her aunt and finally makes a commitment to the religious life that she has been trying to imagine. She also chooses to marry Mr. Rhys rather than Mr. Carlisle, rejecting the comfortable life for one as a missionary's wife.

Stories of orphans were quite popular with the general public and proved to be just as popular in Galesburg.

Madge; or, Night and Day by H. B. Goodwin was the second most popular title during this time. Rose Clark, Jane Eyre, and Living and Loving also have orphans in the stories.

Madge's story is actually similar to Eleanor's because she faces trials and struggles; however, Madge is like many of the other heroines in the popular fiction of the day: alone and an orphan. Madge's mother, Kate Foster, dies at the beginning of the book. Madge is left in a poor house and is taken as a bound girl at age five by Sarah and Robert Hardy. After Robert dies, Sarah has nothing but harsh words and harsh treatment for Madge.

This book stresses the importance of education for survival. Madge perseveres to gain education because she knows that is the one thing that will free her from her current situation. Maurice, the Hardy's son, "taught her to read, and furnished her with a few books. What a debt of

gratitude she owed him for this blessing!"³⁹⁰ Mrs. Kempton, the new minister's wife, takes Madge under her wing. When she asked to help Madge and possibly take her in to teach, Mrs. Hardy becomes angry and cut off Madge's hair. Mrs. Kempton is finally able to help Madge for a short time before she died.

Like Eleanor, Madge explores her faith. She believes that God will care for her through her trials. When she runs away, she is guided to Mrs. Greene's where she lives until she leaves the town of Preston. Mrs. Greene watches over Margaret, as she is now called, takes her to the mills, finds her employment and cares for her through illness. Margaret is free to study in this house and can save her money for her future education. She is free to go to church and Sabbath School where she meets Miss Johnson, who becomes a faithful friend and mentor. Madge encounters temptation in the form of Mr. Stanley but continues to resist. Her dreams and her faith are too strong.

Moral strength is demonstrated through Madge's choice of reading materials. She favors books with religious messages and history. When Mr. Stanley tries to tempt her with novels, she replies: "I'm not used to seeing many

³⁹⁰Goodwin 20.

people, and I like to read."³⁹¹ He offers her a "perfectly fascinating" book which he purchased to win her affections.

She glanced at the title - "The Mysteries of Udolpho, by Mrs. Radcliffe." Margaret loved stories, but Mrs. Kempton had often told her of the pernicious influence of most novels; that they gave one false ideas of life, and destroyed all relish for useful books. She thought Maurice would rather she would read history; and, then, she had never seen this book in his library, or Mr. Kempton's. She returned the book.³⁹²

Madge's refusal to read a popular novel shows her strength. The fact that she refuses a Gothic novel, complete with Castles and a heroine who is saved by a handsome man, speaks for her morals. Stanley does not relent in his attempts to sway her and encourages her to read the book "just to oblige a friend." She continues to refuse and his "irreverent, sneering tone" deepens her conviction to turn away from Stanley's choice of fiction.³⁹³ Mr. Stanley and the other boarders continue to question Margaret's love of reading and study. Miss Thompson is sure she is reading "trashy novels" and, though she appears pious, has a novel under her pillow. When Mrs. Greene assures them that Margaret is pious and good, Miss Thompson says, "Oh! She's a little Methodist then? Well that accounts for her looking so shocked at my

³⁹¹Goodwin 158.

³⁹²Goodwin 158.

³⁹³Goodwin 159.

harmless fun."³⁹⁴

Margaret proves her worth as a moral example in other ways too. She would rather spend her money on the poor than on herself and helps those in need. She falls ill from too much hard work in the mills and too many hours of study. The doctor who is called turns out to be her Uncle Atherton. Finally, Madge begins receiving the rewards for all her work and her persistence as a moral heroine. Uncle Atherton gets her a job as a teaching assistant at the primary school. Maurice, her childhood friend, finds her through his friend Rev. Briarly, who is also her pastor. She is finally able to go to school at Cherryville Institute, a boarding school, where she studies hard and despite some of the girls' disparaging remarks continues on to a teaching career.

Madge is very successful in her teaching career. But she must face two more deaths. First Mrs. Greene dies and then Mrs. Hardy, who raised her, departs. She goes to both and cares for them -- Mrs. Greene because she loves her and Mrs. Hardy in spite of her hatred for Madge. Dr. Atherton comes to live in Hayden with Madge. She also adopts a young girl to care for so she does not have to face bound life as Madge did. Miss Johnson joins the household when Madge quits her academy job to teach private pupils. Maurice

³⁹⁴Goodwin 162.

finally returns and realizes his true love for Madge. They marry and move to Uptonville with the child and Dr. Atherton.

Rose Clark by Fanny Fern only appears on the list of books circulated to the entire Galesburg membership. Fern's book conveys another story of an orphan. In the introduction, Fanny Fern defends the book as entertainment, writing, "Should any dictionary on legs rap in opportunity at the door for admittance, send him away...."³⁹⁵ Rose is sent to an orphanage when her mother dies. She endures the orphanage where she is mistreated, until she is bound out to her Aunt Dolly. Over time Rose becomes "more capable of judging the gross injustices done her." She tries to escape through marriage but her new husband soon leaves her to go to sea. Rose is already pregnant and, in the first of many coincidences in the novel, believes that rather than being married to Vincent, she has just been tricked by him. Dolly sends Rose to Mrs. Bond until she delivers her child. After more abuse by Dolly, Rose finally leaves to search for Vincent because she does not want to believe that he truly abandoned her. Rose boards a ship for New Orleans where she encounters people who take her in and care for her under the

³⁹⁵Fanny Fern, Rose Clark (New York: Mason Brothers, 1856) intro.



guise of "employment." In New Orleans Rose meets another "wife" of Vincent and listens to her story. Soon she learns that Vincent is dead and finally admits his true character. In further coincidence, Rose falls ill and Chloe, a former slave of Vincent's family, is sent to care for her by a doctor she met on the ship. Rose continues to meet people who can lead her to Vincent or to information about him. Finally, she meets her Vincent. He had not been killed, rather his cousin, a rogue and womanizer who was also named Vincent, was the man who was killed. Rose had been virtuous all along and had been married to Vincent. In the end her honor is restored and she has the happy family that has eluded her to this point. In a final twist of irony, a beggar appears under Rose's window. She is brought into the house and dies there. The beggar is Mrs. Markham, the matron of the orphanage, who had mistreated Rose in her childhood. The story ends with "God is just."

These plots typify the most popular choices for reading by the members of the Galesburg community. Novels which contained a good story and a moral message were widely read by all though the individual reading lists show that history and non-fiction were also enjoyed by many readers. In the final section of this chapter I will analyze two readers and their reading choices.

Twenty readers

Table 8 shows the names and the number of titles read by twenty of the most avid readers in Galesburg. Between 1877 and 1880 these men and women read between 25 and 120 books each. The readers were selected because they represent the leadership of the L.L.A. as well as members at large. Ten of the readers served on the Board of Directors or the book committee for the association. Two, Elsie Dunning and Ella Proctor, were the librarians during this time which may explain in part why they read so much. The list of books for this set of readers can be compared with that of the overall membership for those years. Several authors appear on both lists. Just as the overall list indicates, novels were the most popular form of entertainment for the twenty readers selected. The list of books read by the selected group contains more books by male authors (7) while the overall list only contains 3 titles written by men. Novels by female authors were still the ore popular than any other genre.

Elsie Dunning and Ella Proctor held the record for most books read. These two young women had advantages that other members did not since they served as librarians for the association during the years. Their high reading numbers

Table 8

Number of books read by
Twenty sample readers from Galesburg

Name	Number of books read
Beach, Coral	95
Beckwith, Mrs. A. J.	31
Beckwith, Sarah	40
Blake, Jennie	36
Blake, Mrs. Wm.	58
Byington, Mrs. Mary	25
Clark, Miss Olive	104
Dunning, Elsie	120
Harris, Julia	75
Hunt, Mrs. L. M.	63
Hunt, Rev.	45
Olmstead, Mrs. M. B.	43
Olmstead, Mrs. M. J.	34
Proctor, Ella	116
Smith, Mrs. R. G.	111
Smith, Mr. R. G.	27
Towne, Fannie	75
Van Vleet, Sarah	51
Van Buren, Mrs. A. D. P.	47
Whitford, Mrs. P. H.	64

may account for this because as the librarians they not only cared for the books, they would have been expected to recommend books. This may have been a great challenge for the young women since both still lived at home at the time. Proctor had a distinct advantage because the library rented rooms in her parent's home during this time period. According to the 1870 census Dunning was 14 and Proctor was 16. This would have made Miss Dunning between 21-24 and Miss Proctor between 23-26 for the time period examined. Age itself is not significant but may account for some of the more sentimental novels which appear on each woman's list and for their greater time for reading.

I also included two couples in the list: Mr. and Mrs. R. G. Smith and Rev. and Mrs. Hunt. Hannah Smith was the third most active reader. She was between 25 and 32 during these years. Her husband, R. G. Smith, served as justice of the peace for Galesburg. Rev. Hunt was the minister of the Congregational Church and was the first honorary member of the association. His wife had been a member from the beginning of the association. Rev. Hunt may have had an interest in reading books that his congregation read but there is no real proof of this.

Elsie Dunning and Ella Proctor

Dunning and Proctor, as I have already mentioned, were the most prolific readers during the period examined. Elsie Dunning's reading list is in Appendix C and Ella Proctor's reading list is in Appendix D.

Both lists contain a number of novels. Dunning and Proctor read twenty-eight of the same books. Most of these books were also fiction. The two young women both read three novels by Miss Muloch for example: A Brave Lady, Christian's Mistake and John Halifax, Gentleman. Muloch's novels were considered melodramatic and often told stories that followed a hero or heroine through difficult times. Moral themes were common in Muloch's novels and would, therefore, fit with the general reading choices of the Galesburg membership. Dunning and Proctor also shared novels by Mrs. A. D. T. Whitney, a Sunday School writer, Charles Dickens', and Grace Aguilar. There are no records of their reactions to these novels nor any records of why both might have read them.

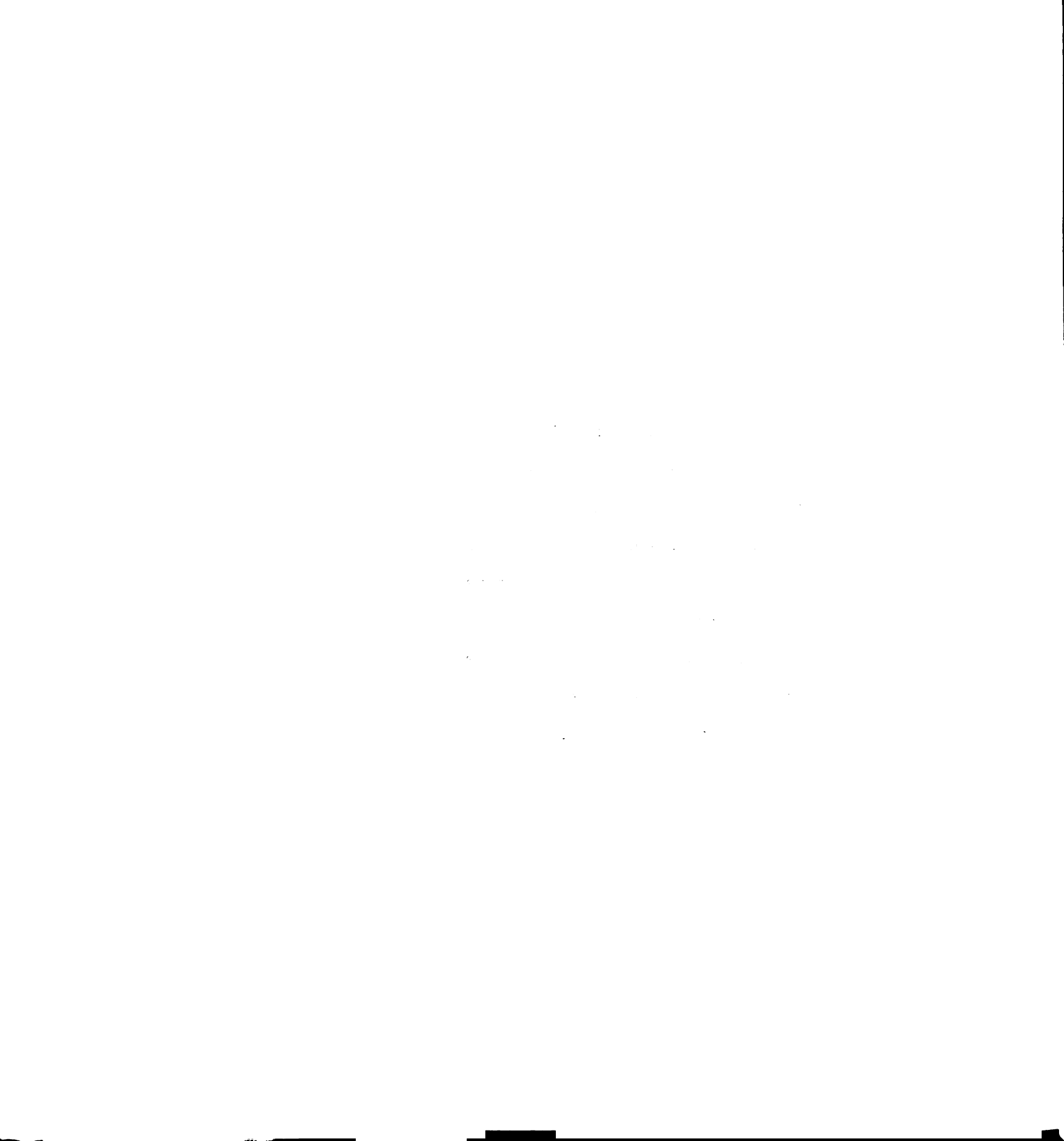
Most of their reading did not overlap. Elsie Dunning read more novels than Ella Proctor did. Dunning read mostly sentimental fiction and fiction by female writers. She only departed from fiction once to read volume 1 of Hume's History of England. Ella Proctor seemed to have a wider



interest in reading non-fiction. Her list includes four volumes of the History of the Reformation, which may have been read for a study group. Proctor also read Chaucer, Shakespeare and Milton as well as authors such as Margaret Fuller and Mrs. Jameson. Her list was rounded out with choices in travel literature and biography. Again, since no reading journals or minutes from study groups have been located it is difficult to determine if some of her reading was for a study group.

The two young women's reading lists provide examples but without further analysis of circulation records I can not say that they are typical. They do reflect what we may think is typical in Miss Dunning's avid novel reading and what Zboray and Baym have shown us is just as typical in Miss Proctor's wider reading choices.

Selecting books and promoting reading were the main function of the Ladies' Library Association. In the opinion of many of the board members who selected books for purchase, moral tales and non-fictional works which would foster character development would also encourage membership in the library. The catalogs reveal the attempts to buy books which reflected the individual L.L.A.'s values while the circulation lists show what the women and men who used the L.L.A. libraries really wanted to read.



Chapter 5

Institution building: Raising funds and creating permanent homes

In the last three chapters I have examined the ways that the Ladies' Library Associations situated themselves to become institutions in their communities. Constitutions brought the associations into being, study group minutes told what the members thought about and desired to learn, book collections revealed the values and moral beliefs of the women and their interpretations of their communities beliefs. All of these helped to establish the idea of an institution, but there are still other aspects which helped firmly establish the Ladies' Library Association as institutions that could endure. Fundraising was an important activity for all Ladies' Library Associations. Financial stability was a necessity for the women to fund their book purchases, rent rooms and eventually build library buildings. Funds were raised primarily through entertainments, lectures and plays. Performances of plays, musicals and tableaux were opportunities to demonstrate

literacy practices developed in the association meetings and through reading.³⁹⁶ Popular forms of entertainment and the financial gains will be explored in this chapter. These activities also promoted the association by raising community awareness about the mission and purpose of the association. Other kinds of publicity also assisted the libraries. Frequently a local newspaper printed regular notices and articles about the L.L.A. of its town. These included annual reports with summaries of activities, numbers of books held and circulated and treasurer's reports. Book lists were also sometimes printed in the newspapers. In 1876 Mrs. A. F. Bixby and Mrs. A. Howell compiled a volume entitled Historical Sketches of the Ladies' Library Associations of the State of Michigan. Contributions came from several L.L.A.'s though not all. This volume, prepared for the centennial celebration in Philadelphia, spread the word about the L.L.A. back to the East Coast where many were still unfamiliar with what was going on in Michigan. Finally, buildings were a goal of many L.L.A.'s. Not all L.L.A.'s achieved a building of their own but many did. Examining the various ways women coped with finding meeting places and looking closely at the

³⁹⁶See Gere's discussion of drama and tableau as "literacy practices" in Intimate Practices: Literacy and Cultural Work in U.S. Women's Clubs, 1880-1920, 36-37.

process of building a library by the Ann Arbor L.L.A. will conclude this chapter.

Entertaining the masses; filling the coffers

Many Ladies' Library Associations began fundraising quite soon after forming. Membership and subscription fees generated some income but generally not enough to sustain an association's activities or library. Since the women did not have money of their own, they had to devise ways to raise funds to purchase books, rent rooms and buy furniture. The women turned to events such as ice cream socials, strawberry festivals and lecture series to raise additional funds.

Lecture series met with mixed success depending upon the lecturers the women brought to speak, the town where the L.L.A. was located and the competition in town from other organizations. By engaging speakers on the national lecture circuit the women took a great risk. The lecturers had to be paid whether or not the women realized a profit. Weather, negative press, or competing lectures or events could all keep crowds small and result in fewer tickets sold. The Kalamazoo L.L.A. joined with the Young Men's Association between 1858-1860 to host lecture series. The union did not last, however. According to the Annual Report

of 1861,

Too late for us to take any measures for providing lectures on our own account, we learned at the commencement of this present season that an alliance with the "Young Men's Association," which we had supposed permanent, they considered annual, and had therefore quietly dropped our Association out of their arrangement for the present course of Lectures.³⁹⁷

The secretary writes of the women's "disappointment and regret" that the arrangement was not continued. There is no further explanation about why the Young Men's Association dropped the affiliation. In 1866-67 a Union Lecture course with the Y.M.L.A. commenced but it is not clear if the Young Men's Association and the Y.M.L.A. were the same organization. The lecture series included speakers on the national lecture circuit such as John B. Gough, "the great Temperance Advocate and Orator," P. T. Barnum, Miss Anna Dickinson and Rev. Joseph Haven, D.D. of Chicago. A series of ten lectures cost \$3.00 for a single season ticket and \$5.00 for a couple.³⁹⁸

The Ypsilanti L.L.A. hosted a formal lecture series beginning in 1872. The Lecture Course advertised for February and March 1872 drew on talent from the Michigan

³⁹⁷"Ladies' Library Association Secretary's Report," Jan. 4, 1861, Ladies Library Association of Kalamazoo, Archives and Regional Historical Collections; WMU.

³⁹⁸ [Flyer], "Union Lecture Course. 1866-1867. Y.M.L.A. and L.L.A. Kalamazoo," Peck family papers, Archives and Regional History Collections; WMU.

State Normal School and included Prof. J. Estabrook, Prof. D. Putnam, Prof. A. A. Griffith and Rev. Dr. Cocker. A Mrs. Allen had already lectured in January 1872. Promotions for her lecture appeared in the Ypsilanti Commercial on January 20 and 22. Mrs. Allen, the daughter of a former Ypsilanti resident, seemed to be on the lecture circuit because the promotional articles include quotes from other readings. She recited poetry in Hillsdale and the Huron Post states "No lecturer has stood before a more appreciative audience in Hudson for the past year."³⁹⁹ The review of Mrs. Allen's lecture appeared in the same issue as the announcement for the remaining lectures of the season. The review was not as complimentary as the publicity before she appeared. The writer thought "there were some fine passages, a vein of wit and humor," but that she "is evidently capable of doing better."⁴⁰⁰ The writer did not state which poems she read, only that "You have fine talents, but your poems fall lifeless, for you are attempting to lift a burden that no mortal woman or man in America can lift."⁴⁰¹ Fortunately the remaining lecturers for the 1872 season "embrace the best

³⁹⁹"Mrs. Allen's Lecture," Ypsilanti Commercial, 20 January 1872.

⁴⁰⁰"Mrs. L. A. Allen," Ypsilanti Commercial 10 February 1873.

⁴⁰¹Ypsilanti Commercial 10 February 1873.

talent of our city" rather than those on the lecture circuit.⁴⁰²

The Ypsilanti women undertook the lecture series to finance new rooms in hopes of remaining debt free. In a column promoting the lecture series the author writes "these gentlemen all very cordially contribute their services for the benefit of the Association, and Mr. Hewitt generously offers his Hall for a merely nominal price, so that most of the gross receipts will go into the Treasury."⁴⁰³ Tickets were sold for one dollar for the course, but single tickets were also available. Using local talent would have been a distinct advantage since making the most money possible was a goal of the board. Also, they could avoid negative press like that for Mrs. Allen's lecture which might prevent residents from attending future events when they were not familiar with the speaker. The women had high hopes for the lectures as money raising events. The committee thought it would be no problem to sell "three to five hundred season tickets."⁴⁰⁴ In the final paragraph of the article introducing this enterprise the committee wrote, "We shall feel greatly disappointed and discouraged if this community

⁴⁰²Ypsilanti Commercial 10 February 1872.

⁴⁰³Ypsilanti Commercial 10 February 1872.

⁴⁰⁴Ypsilanti Commercial 10 February 1872.

fails to support liberally these efforts of the ladies to improve the public taste and morals by the higher order of their entertainments."⁴⁰⁵ It seemed that the public responded to the women's pleas because a week later the committee reported "having excellent success in selling their tickets for the course of lectures" but noted that "there is room for others."⁴⁰⁶ The women's perception that the lecture series was, in fact, a failure as a money making event is not evident until the final profits are reported at the annual meeting. The Ypsilanti L.L.A. Annual Report for 1873 reinforced that the lecture series was not the financial success the women had hoped for and that they would have to devise additional money making ventures.⁴⁰⁷ In the later half of 1873 the women changed tactics to attract crowds, appealing to the good the audience would gain from attending the lectures rather than only the good that the association would gain.

Emphasis was placed on morals and on the quality of entertainment that the public received from the lectures. Good moral lessons were delivered by Rev. Cocker and Prof. Estabrook. Prof. Putnam provided scholarly information and

⁴⁰⁵Ypsilanti Commercial 10 February 1872.

⁴⁰⁶Ypsilanti Commercial 17 February 1872.

⁴⁰⁷Ypsilanti Commercial 19 April 1873.

entertainment was furnished by both Prof. Griffith and Prof. Pease. The lecture season for 1873 was predicted to be "profitable and entertaining, and it is sincerely hoped that they will be better attended."⁴⁰⁸ Lecturers for the 1873 season came from beyond Ypsilanti's borders and included James Angell, President of the University of Michigan, and John B. Gough, a popular temperance speaker on the lecture circuit. President Angell spoke on the subject "Alone, or with the Majority." The announcement of his speech quoted the University Chronicle, saying that Angell's "style of delivery is very pleasing" and that "his hearers feel that he is putting himself to no particular inconvenience in order that they may enjoy an evening's entertainment."⁴⁰⁹ The notice in the Ypsilanti Commercial indicates that Gough was a popular speaker in Ypsilanti. It was also a "happy coincident that the following Monday, the 7th, will come off our charter election, a memorable one as the first conflict in this city at the polls, on a square issue, irrespective of party, between temperance men and those engaged in liquor traffic."⁴¹⁰ Gough may have incited a crowd to act out because of his tactics at the podium. According to David S.

⁴⁰⁸Ypsilanti Commercial 23 November 1872.

⁴⁰⁹Ypsilanti Commercial 23 November 1872.

⁴¹⁰Ypsilanti Commercial 1 March 1873.

Reynolds, Gough was a controversial speaker. Gough "was repeatedly charged with tawdry lecture tactics, with excessive emphasis on the grisly details of alcoholism rather than on the cure for it, and, most damaging of all, with drinking and whoring on the sly himself."⁴¹¹ Despite his alleged tactics, Gough drew crowds in Ypsilanti, Kalamazoo and probably other towns across lower Michigan.

A summary was printed in the Ypsilanti Commercial following each lecture in 1872. All were highly complimentary to the lecturers and the audiences. Prof. Estabrook lectured on "Our Blessings and Duties" for the first lecture. This lecture had a moral tone. The summary states that he spoke on the following:

The climax of our blessings flow from the Bible - Christianity. The splendid educational results that flow through this channel, and the "higher life" of thousands -- the glorious "immortality" that awaits millions of ransomed ones -- the fruition and rewards of a blissful hereafter were happily portrayed.⁴¹²

The second lecture by Prof. D. Putnam drew "a select but appreciative audience."⁴¹³ The lecture on "Ancient Culture" may not have been as interesting to the general public. The

⁴¹¹David S. Reynolds, Beneath the American Renaissance: The Subversive Imagination in the Age of Emerson and Melville (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard UP, 1988) 36.

⁴¹²Ypsilanti Commercial 17 February 1872.

⁴¹³Ypsilanti Commercial 2 March 1872.

author of the article hints at this when he or she writes that an extended lecture on the topic may be more appropriate for a lyceum. The differentiation between the lectures sponsored by the L.L.A. and the lyceum movement provides us with a clue about how the women viewed their mission. The lyceum movement, popular in the earlier part of the nineteenth century, emphasized learned lectures and debate. The L.L.A. lectures promoted learning and education; however, the lectures were meant for the public and to be understood by the public. The goal of the board was to have as large a crowd as possible. Dr. Putnam could not be left out of a lecture series because not only was he a professor at the Michigan State Normal School, he was also the husband of an active member of the Ypsilanti association.⁴¹⁴ Prof. A. A. Griffith and Rev. Dr. Cocker seem to have been immensely popular speakers. Prof. A. A. Griffith, who also lectured for other associations⁴¹⁵, read works of literature and poetry for one of the largest crowds

⁴¹⁴According to Daniel Putnam's A History of the Michigan State Normal School at Ypsilanti, Michigan 1849-1899 (Ypsilanti, Michigan, 1899), he became a professor at the Normal School in 1868-9. Prior to coming to Ypsilanti, Professor Putnam taught at Kalamazoo College and was Superintendent of schools in Kalamazoo.

⁴¹⁵Record Book No. 1 (1866-1872) of the Ladies' Library Association of Ann Arbor notes that Prof. Griffith lectured for the Ann Arbor L.L.A. in the fall of 1868.

of the season. Rev. Dr. Cocker, an "eminent lecturer" and "one of the ablest preachers and lecturers in the country"⁴¹⁶ probably drew a large crowd but I did not locate the article summarizing his lecture. His topic was "The Mystics" and was described afterwards as "one of his ablest efforts."⁴¹⁷ The season ended with an amateur concert conducted by Prof. Pease, professor of music. It was reported that there "was a literal jam, an immense crowd"⁴¹⁸ at the concert. The reporter who wrote the article received the information second hand because "It was a serious question who should stay home and care for the babies. It was finally decided that the editor, who can't sing, should perform this agreeable duty, read his large bundle of newspapers, while all the rest who could sing and appreciate good music should go."⁴¹⁹ The report was complimentary about the music, the audience and the direction. It is also interesting that the editor was not only willing to share domestic duties, but also to publish his willingness in the newspaper. This is an important clue about the underlying support given by husbands to the women involved in the L.L.A.

⁴¹⁶Ypsilanti Commercial 23 March 1872.

⁴¹⁷Ypsilanti Commercial 23 March 1872.

⁴¹⁸Ypsilanti Commercial 20 April 1872.

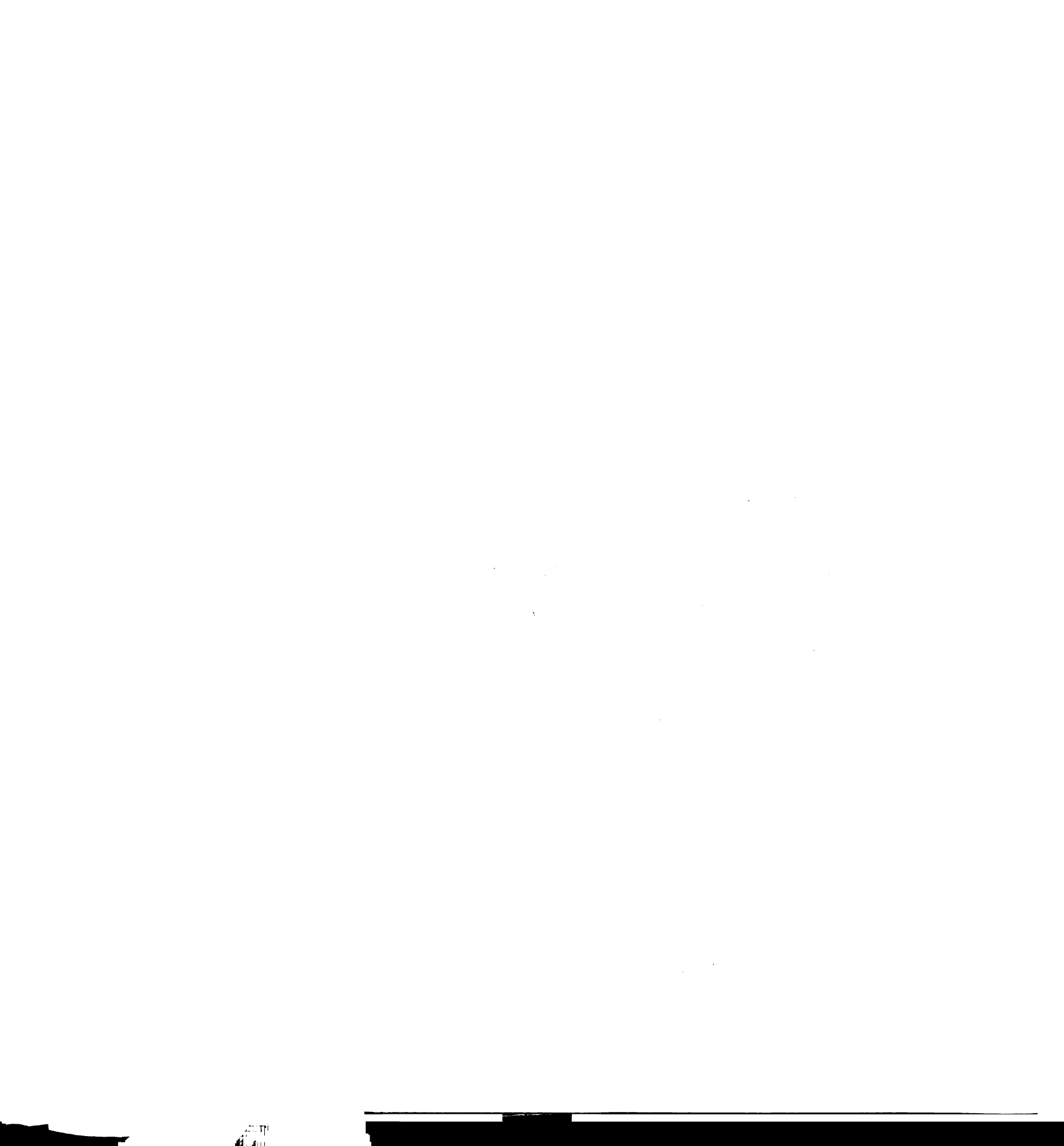
⁴¹⁹Ypsilanti Commercial 20 April 1872.

The Ypsilanti lecture series and the way they were promoted indicate important steps in building an institution. In most towns the women instituted the lectures to raise funds for purchasing books, renting larger meeting rooms and remaining debt free. With little or no money of their own, the women would have had to rely on their husbands for financial support of the association or close their libraries if they had not undertaken an enterprise such as this. In Ypsilanti the support of the community is shown through the local lecturers donating their time and efforts and the reduced price for renting Hewitt Hall. The Commercial's editorial tactics to encourage attendance included very pointed remarks to make residents feel the L.L.A. was an organization they should support. According to articles in the local press, audiences included the best residents in the city and country. The unstated message seems to be that if you want to be a part of Ypsilanti society, attend these lectures. The lectures probably took little effort to arrange when compared to entertainments like plays or tableaux. In an article dated November 23, 1872, the disappointment about turnout was reported. "Only one hundred and fifty-two individuals in our city, of nearly six thousand inhabitants, who were willing to risk one dollar for the success of this

enterprise!"⁴²⁰ The writer warns residents that if they do not support the lecture course the "city will be ignored entirely" when quality lectures and entertainments are planned. This reaction is extreme because a perusal of the newspaper shows that many lectures and programs competed with the Ladies' Library Association course, a fact which the women did not seem to take into account. They, of course, wanted a larger share of the audience. While the L.L.A. lectures were inexpensive, the cost of attending many lectures sponsored by various groups might have been beyond the means of most residents. Ypsilanti was only a short distance from Ann Arbor too where there were many more lecture choices. There is no concrete proof that the residents would have traveled to Ann Arbor for lectures or other entertainment, but it was entirely possible.

Other associations had problems with attendance as well. The Ann Arbor L.L.A. did not always draw the crowds it hoped for when it sponsored a lecture but acknowledged that other groups competed with it for audiences and money. In one of its earliest annual reports, the secretary wrote, "The lecture field seems closed against us -- entertainments of a social character have not proved successful, and nothing seems left but to appeal to the good sense and

⁴²⁰Ypsilanti Commercial 23 November 1872.



patronage of the community."⁴²¹ Scanning the newspapers from this era reveals numerous lectures sponsored by other local groups or clubs and organizations affiliated with The University of Michigan.

For the price of printing tickets and minimal outlay the Ypsilanti association did make quite a bit of money. In the report of the treasurer for the year ending April 1, 1873, the proceeds from Prof. Pease's concert equaled \$173.25 and the proceeds from the lecture tickets, both season and individual, amounted to \$217.17. The rent for Hewitt Hall cost \$65.00 for the year, thus the net was \$325.42 for the lecture course. This seems to be a good amount of money though it is not the \$500.00 plus the women hoped for at the beginning. Compare this to the expenses and profits reported by the Kalamazoo L.L.A. Between 1854-1857 the association spent \$600.00 for "lectures by eighteen distinguished men." No profit is reported. When they joined with the Young Men's Association, the two groups split profits and losses. In 1858-1859 the L.L.A. earned \$22.81 for three lectures by Lieut. Maury, Horace Greely and John G. Saxe and lost \$10.56 on a fourth lecture by Prof. Youmans. The 1859-1860 season only showed a profit of

⁴²¹ Record Book No. 1 (1866-1872), 13 April 1868, Box 1, L.L.A. of Ann Arbor, BHL.

\$19.21.⁴²² Even if the L.L.A. had not split profits, it would still have earned less than \$50.00 each season. Considering these figures, the Ypsilanti association made a decent profit on its lecture series. When figuring expenses of the association for rent, books and other expenses, however, the amount made turned out to be minimal.

Management of the lecture series included more than scheduling speakers, renting halls and selling tickets. A letter to the editor from J. Willard Babbitt⁴²³, a lawyer in Ypsilanti, dated December 12, 1872, indicates that the women may not have always been wise in their business decisions. The writer complains that "it is a move in the wrong direction" to sell reserved tickets for the entertainments.⁴²⁴ He held a season ticket and assumed that would grant him a choice of seats; however, reserved seats were sold to non-season ticket holders for the seats that remained. When he went to a lecture he found himself seated in the back of the auditorium instead of the front, where

⁴²²Facts on the lecture series are found in "Ladies' Library Association Secretary's Report," Jan. 4th 1861. Kalamazoo L.L.A., Archives and Regional History Collections; WMU.

⁴²³The earliest city directory for Ypsilanti lists J. Willard Babbitt as the city attorney for Ypsilanti. See Ann Arbor, Ypsilanti and Washtenaw County Directory 1888-9, Volume III (Detroit, Mich.: R.L. Polk & Co., 1888) 217.

⁴²⁴Ypsilanti Commercial 14 December 1872.

those who had purchased single tickets were already seated. He thought that practice "decidedly unfair."⁴²⁵ I located no response to this letter but in the next announcement regarding Prof. Griffith's reading the following was included: "Those wishing seats should go early. No reserved seats will be sold."⁴²⁶ The women obviously learned quickly from their mistakes.

Lectures continued in Ypsilanti with various local and national lecturers taking the podium on behalf of the Ladies' Library Association. Parlor entertainments took the place of lectures after a few years. These appear to have been similar to lectures and many of the same speakers delivered entertainments. There is no explanation for the format of these lectures, but they may have been less formal in a parlor than in a hall. "Parlor pastimes encompassed a range of games and activities including guessing and word games, amateur theatricals and similar entertainments....," according to Katherine C. Grier.⁴²⁷ Parlors probably did not hold as many people as the hall had but the cost would be lower because there would not be rent, thus higher profits

⁴²⁵Ypsilanti Commercial 14 December 1872.

⁴²⁶Ypsilanti Commercial 11 January 1873.

⁴²⁷Katherine C. Grier, Culture & Comfort: Parlor Making and Middle-Class Identity, 1850-1930 (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1997) 78.

would result.

Lectures were not the only form of entertainment and fundraising. Plays were also a popular form of entertainment and fundraising for many L.L.A.'s. "The Mistletoe Bough," a play by Charles Somerset, was presented by at least the Ann Arbor, Coldwater and Kalamazoo associations. Two popular plays of the era had this title but based on a program from the Ann Arbor performance, one appears to have been the version commonly presented. In this version subtitled "The Fatal Chest" a wedding takes place in the first scene. The young bride, "weary of dancing" hides in an "old oak chest." A search takes place but she is not found even though the groom, "Young Lovell sought her wildly...." Years passed, Lovell lived a sad life and then in the final scene the old oak chest was discovered, opened and "a skeleton form lay mouldering there / In the bridal wreath of the lady fair." The Ann Arbor L.L.A. presented this melodrama as Christmas entertainment along with the tableau "Cinderilla"[sic].⁴²⁸ The Annual Report of 1872 noted that the "Mistletoe Bough" was "a

⁴²⁸All quotes from [Program] "Pantomime of the Mistletoe Bough, for the benefit of the Ladies' Library Association, Followed by Representation of Cinderilla and the Glass Slipper, in Tableaux, Tuesday and Wednesday Evening, December 5th and 6th, 1871." L.L.A. of Ann Arbor, vertical files, BHL.

decided Artistic success. That it was not more so financially, was owing in part to the inclemency of the weather."⁴²⁹ The women still earned \$94.00 from the play. The Ann Arbor Ladies' Library Association presented several plays with the assistance of the Glee Club from the University of Michigan and the Chequamegon, a band and orchestra made up primarily of University of Michigan students. Males and females from the community acted, sang and participated in these productions. The program for a "Ladies' Library Musicale" included selections from Beethoven, Mozart, Schumann and Sauret. "The Kirmess" was presented at the Grand Opera House in Ann Arbor. Music and dance from ten countries was presented along with a "Grand Tableau" that included "100 people in Group."⁴³⁰ An entry on May 8, 1887 in the treasurer's book records \$576.24 from "The Kirmess."

Another play seemed just as popular with late nineteenth-century audiences as the "Mistletoe Bough." "The Spy of Shiloh" by Frank Howard was so popular in Ypsilanti that it was continued beyond its planned run. The review in

⁴²⁹Record Book No. 1 (1866-1872), 8 April 1872, Box 1, L.L.A. of Ann Arbor, BHL.

⁴³⁰[Program] "The Kirmess given by the Ladies' Library Association." L.L.A. of Ann Arbor, vertical files, BHL.



Figure 10 This photo depicts the play "Ici on Parle Francias" being performed by the Ypsilanti L.L.C. at Starkweather Hall. Ypsilanti L.L.C. Collection. Courtesy of the Bentley Historical Library. The University of Michigan.

the Ypsilanti Commercial states, "Everyone who has heard this grand military allegory speak of it in highest praise."⁴³¹ The next paragraph relates the experience of a mother and daughter attending the play:

A mother and daughter attending one evening, the former cautioned the latter not to be carried away with it, as it was only a representation, and not a reality -- a mere play. When Andersonville prison, with all its blackening-horrors, came to be represented, the tears rolling down the mother's cheeks, the daughter said, "Ma, remember, it is only a play." It was only a play, but one that throughout brought out the reality in living and striking colors.⁴³²

Here emotional response is presented as a good thing -- the representation and the acting were so well done that they moved the mother to tears. The play, presented in September 1873, took place nearly eight years after the Civil War had ended, yet it produced raw emotions in the viewers that made them relive the war experience. Letters in the newspaper requested that the play be extended two more nights. This request was granted, gratefully, by the president of the association.

The Ann Arbor and Ypsilanti L.L.A.'s were not the only associations to produce plays and musicals. Productions were popular ways to bring attention to the association's

⁴³¹Ypsilanti Commercial 23 September 1871.

⁴³²Ypsilanti Commercial 23 September 1871.

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work and to raise funds, particularly building funds. As with the lecture series, women did not always realize the amount of money that they wanted or thought the plays would produce. In 1865 the Coldwater Association decided to present "The Mistletoe Bough" to offset any future debts. "In pursuance of this resolution, four entertainments were given, consisting of three representations of "The Mistletoe Bough," and a masquerade ball, the whole netting about five hundred dollars."⁴³³

At least one association realized that not all members or residents could afford to attend entertainments. The Quincy Association had a plan "of giving tickets of admittance to all entertainments given by the society, to women unable to indulge in such expenditures for themselves, but whose hard working days and monotonous lives, needed all the more the brightening which a pleasant evening amusements afford."⁴³⁴ According to the article about the Quincy Association, it held a number of lectures, entertainments and socials between 1871 and 1876. It is not clear how members of the board decided how to identify the women who received the tickets. When entertainments failed to produce the expected revenue, some associations came up with

⁴³³Bixby and Howell 47.

⁴³⁴Bixby and Howell 124.

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ingenious solutions. The Plainwell Association staged the "Cantata of Queen Esther" but "owing to the intensely cold and unusually stormy weather....the ladies at the close found themselves \$50.00 in debt."⁴³⁵ Because of the debt, the women "immediately mortgaged their library, and applied themselves to the task of canceling their indebtedness." The cantata was repeated when the weather was better and was a success.⁴³⁶

Women strove to remain debt free in numerous creative ways. As mentioned, strawberry festivals and ice cream socials were also popular fundraising activities. These were often more work than they were worth, however. The Galesburg L.L.A. held Oyster Suppers to raise funds. In 1869 the Battle Creek Association hosted a Railway Ball to celebrate the "laying of the first rail of the Peninsular Railway."⁴³⁷ Tickets were sold for \$1.50 and, according to the advertisement, "two dancing floors, 100x50 feet each, have been secured in Upton, Brown and Co's. New Building. The Refreshment Room, 600x50 feet, will be under the

⁴³⁵Bixby and Howell 102.

⁴³⁶Bixby and Howell 102.

⁴³⁷"Railway Ball...." Battle Creek, Mich.: Pease & Worcester, 1869. Clarke Historical Library, Central Michigan University.

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supervision of the Ladies' Library Association."⁴³⁸

The various entertainments provided publicity for the associations. Additional kinds of publicity were also necessary to provide information to the community. Use of the local press to promote the Ladies' Library Association should be obvious from the preceding discussion. Most L.L.A.'s seemed to have access to at least one local newspaper, usually through a husband who was the editor or owner. Annual reports and notices of meetings appeared regularly in the press.

In 1875 the Adrian Ladies' Library Association decided to prepare a volume about the L.L.A.'s in Michigan for the Woman's Department at the International Centennial Exhibition to be held in Philadelphia in 1876.⁴³⁹ The women contacted libraries that they knew existed and sent notices to the Tribune, Post, Evening News and Free Press of Detroit. Twenty six associations responded with sketches of their work and history. Mrs. Howell and Mrs. Bixby, the two women chosen to complete the task, were both active in the Adrian L.L.A. Little information is available about Mrs.

⁴³⁸"Railway Ball...."

⁴³⁹Information in this paragraph is from the "Introductory" of the Historical Sketches of the Ladies' Library Association of the State of Michigan (Adrian, Mich.: Times and Expositor Steam Print, 1876) unless otherwise noted.

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Howell.⁴⁴⁰ Mary Adelia Beecher Tower came from Rochester, N.Y. and married Judge Andrew Howell in June 1859. All that is known about Mrs. Howell is that she raised two sons. Mrs. Bixby, the former Emma L. Kenney, was born in Le Roy, Genessee County, New York. She married her husband on October 19, 1851. Mrs. Bixby graduated from the Le Roy Female Seminary in 1845 and moved to Michigan to teach in Adrian. The biographical sketch says she is a "lady of genial nature, public-spirited and possessing great energy, and much of her time and efforts have been given to works of public interest, while no home duties have been left undone."⁴⁴¹ The volume for the centennial celebration is mentioned and was viewed as a success. The Historical Sketches would have brought attention to the work of the L.L.A.'s in the state and to people on the East Coast. Reading histories of early women's clubs makes it clear that little was known about the earliest efforts of the women in Michigan until many years later. Histories credit Sorosis and the New England Women's Club as the earliest women's club when in fact women had been hard at work in Michigan

⁴⁴⁰Personal information about Mrs. Howell and Mrs. Bixby comes from sketches about their husbands. Portraits and Biographical Album of Lenawee County, Mich. (Chicago: Chapman Brothers, 1888). "Alonzo Foster Bixby," 1021-1022 and "Judge Andrew Howell," 1036-1037.

⁴⁴¹"Alonzo Foster Bixby," Lenawee County 1022.

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for many years by the time these organizations formed. This volume documented the work women had been doing and the work they hoped to do in years to come.

Rooms and buildings

Renting rooms and constructing buildings consumed most of the financial resources of an association. The primary purpose of a room or building was for housing collections of books and, for some associations, art or other museum pieces and for meetings. Rooms ranged from parlors in private homes to city buildings to rooms over storefronts. The ultimate goal for most L.L.A.'s was a building of their own.⁴⁴² Proceeds from the entertainments already discussed, along with private donations, financed many of the buildings. Buildings, or at least a permanent rented room,

⁴⁴²I know that associations in the following cities had buildings: Ann Arbor, Kalamazoo, Port Huron, Ypsilanti, Flint and Traverse City. The L.L.C. in Grand Rapids also built a clubhouse which still stands at 61 Sheldon Blvd. SE, Grand Rapids. More associations probably also had buildings. The Kalamazoo L.L.A. sits at 333 S. Park St. It is a historical building. Ypsilanti had a building on Huron Street and later purchased a building at 218 N. Washington. The building on Washington is still used. The building on Huron Street still stands and is in the historic district. Its most recent use, to my knowledge, was as an office building for a real estate agency. The Ann Arbor association built a library at 324 E. Huron in Ann Arbor. The building was demolished in 1946. The Flint building burned. I believe that both the Port Huron and Traverse City L.L.A. buildings still exist but have not been able to locate addresses or information about their current use.

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were one of the most important factors in establishing the libraries as institutions in a community. Buildings were also important also because they were women's spaces. Daphne Spain discusses the "idea that domestic architecture mediates social relations, specifically those between men and women."⁴⁴³ While Spain is mainly discussing the home in this chapter, her argument can also be applied to public places. When women rented rooms over stores or banks or leased public spaces, they were invading male territory. In parlors they were sometimes in "women's rooms," but although the notes do not directly say this, the husbands were still not happy with the arrangements because libraries had to be moved from house to house. The Galesburg Association rented the parlor from Mrs. Proctor, for example. In the annual report of 1869 the secretary of the Marshall association conveys one of the most direct desires for women's space that I have found.

We look forward to no very distant day, when we shall have a *home* of our own. A place we shall delight to beautify and adorn as we do our own private places of abode, where we may gather cabinets or mineralogical and geological specimens, pictures, statuary, and music; where we shall have lectures, historical lessons, and literary entertainments to which we shall be proud to invite our friends, and where we ourselves shall love to linger, communing with the learned and eloquent, whose better part remains with us, though

⁴⁴³See Daphne Spain, Gendered Spaces (Chapel Hill: The U of North Carolina P, 1992), especially chapter 5.

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Aesthetics and a place where members can "linger" and feel "proud to invite our friends" are as important as having a place to meet for educational purposes. While a plain room would serve the purpose, a "home of our own" would be better. With a building the women could have a both a public place to exhibit collections and entertain as well as a private place to meet and seek education.

L.L.A. members frequently had to move libraries, whether renting space in public and private buildings. Sometimes this was due to rent increase; sometimes it was due to a better or larger space becoming available. Homes of their own came at great expense to the associations but these were what I believe finally established permanent institutions and what provided space for women's work in a community. As mentioned earlier in this study, Anne Ruggles Gere's work⁴⁴⁵ contends that nonfederated clubs did not concentrate on buildings, but rather put their energies into literacy development. I believe they sought both. As the quote from the Marshall women proves, a home of their own allowed them a space to meet and to commune with the

⁴⁴⁴Bixby and Howell 93.

⁴⁴⁵Gere, "Literacy and Difference in 19th-Century Women's Clubs," 253.

"learned and eloquent" who "have long since passed away." Gere mentions the self-consciousness and "sense of historical importance" realized by the women in the clubs she studied. I believe that the women who were members of the L.L.A.'s broadened this self-conscious sense to include the historical legacies of buildings. Choices of books as well as decoration communicated the values and the pride of the women in their building and in their organization. A building, as will be seen in the discussion of the Ann Arbor library building, provided not only a place for the members to meet but also a place for other groups in the community to meet. Controlling the use of the building by other groups allowed the women to select who they were affiliated with, provided exposure in the community and frequently produced income for the association.

In Bixby and Howell's Historical Sketches, the sketch about the Kalamazoo L.L.A. states that it has "not yet been able to establish itself in a home of its own, but after several migrations from one small room to another, has been, for the last seven years, very pleasantly located in two spacious rooms in Corporation Hall, generously furnished by the town, for a trifling rent."⁴⁴⁶ In 1879 the Kalamazoo L.L.A. dedicated what it claimed was the first building

⁴⁴⁶Bixby and Howell 80.

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exclusively for women's meetings in the United States.⁴⁴⁷

The structure, which still stands and has been designated as a historic landmark, contained a library, an auditorium and meeting rooms. Figures 11 and 12 depict the building and the interior of the reading room / library. The building is a "two story brick with stone facings and tiled cornice."⁴⁴⁸

Rooms include the library room and an auditorium with a stage. Stained glass windows depict authors and quotes. The article reporting on the dedication of the library says that "the architect, builder, and workman ... make the structure in all its minutiae a genuine work of art...."

The library in Kalamazoo was made possible by generous donations from its members. Mrs. Ruth Webster donated the lot which cost \$1,375.00. Henry W. Gay, a Chicago architect, designed the building for \$75.00 and Frederick Bush, a local contractor, erected it for \$8,000.00.⁴⁴⁹ The women report that of the \$8,000.00 only \$3,000.00 remained

⁴⁴⁷The Flint L.L.A. dedicated its building in 1868 but the Kalamazoo L.L.A. must not have seen that building as exclusively for women's clubs meetings. The Flint L.L.A. donated its library and collections to the school district in 1884.

⁴⁴⁸Footnote 8.

⁴⁴⁹ See "Special Correspondence to the Leader, Kalamazoo, Mich. May 20" 1879, in Secretary's Book, Kalamazoo L.L.A., Kalamazoo L.L.A., Archives and Regional History Collections; WMU.

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Figure 11 Exterior, Kalamazoo Ladies' Library Association.
Ladies Library Association of Kalamazoo Collection. Courtesy
of Archives and Regional History Collections, Western
Michigan University.



Figure 12 Interior showing the memorial window. Ladies' Library Association of Kalamazoo Collection. Courtesy of Archives and Regional History Collection, Western Michigan University.

to be paid at the dedication. The photograph of the library room shows how the women chose to furnish the library. Statuary as well as art and books complete the room's decor. The couch appears to be leather and accompanies other well appointed pieces of furniture to complete the Victorian room. From studying the photograph it seems that the women wanted a showplace as well as a functional library and meeting area.

Many associations began with only a bookcase. The Dryden Association had "a little box nailed to the wall, with room on its one shelf for six books. Mirthfulness called it a "famous affair," and proposed a white curtain to improve it."⁴⁵⁰ The association was eventually able to rent a room. On the day it moved, "each lady took her chair; others carried the rags [sic]; another conveyed the books, now four in number, and the library was moved to the rooms since then occupied by the Association."⁴⁵¹ Some associations had less than Dryden had. The librarian of the Port Huron Association began by "transporting [books] from place to place in a basket."⁴⁵² It eventually achieved a building. The Blissfield Association rented "a very

⁴⁵⁰Bixby and Howell 61.

⁴⁵¹Bixby and Howell 62. "The rags" refers to the carpet.

⁴⁵²Bixby and Howell 109.

convenient library room ... in the new post-office building."⁴⁵³ A location in a public building, something that many associations chose or sought, helped raise awareness of the association's existence and increased membership.

In the Annual Report of 1884, the Ypsilanti L.L.A. contemplated a building for its association. It desired a building "suited not only to the needs of the Library, but an ornament to our city as well."⁴⁵⁴ In 1890 Mary Starkweather donated her home at 130 N. Huron to use as the library. This building was used as the library until 1963.⁴⁵⁵ Later the Ypsilanti L.L.C., a group affiliated with the L.L.A., procured a second building, a Greek Revival style house, at 218 N. Washington in 1914.⁴⁵⁶ There are two paragraphs in the Ypsilanti L.L.A. 1884 annual report about other L.L.A.'s successes with building, noting their understanding of how the buildings were acquired and the value of the buildings. Minutes state that the Flint L.L.A.

⁴⁵³Bixby and Howell 44.

⁴⁵⁴Ypsilanti Commercial 12 April 1884.

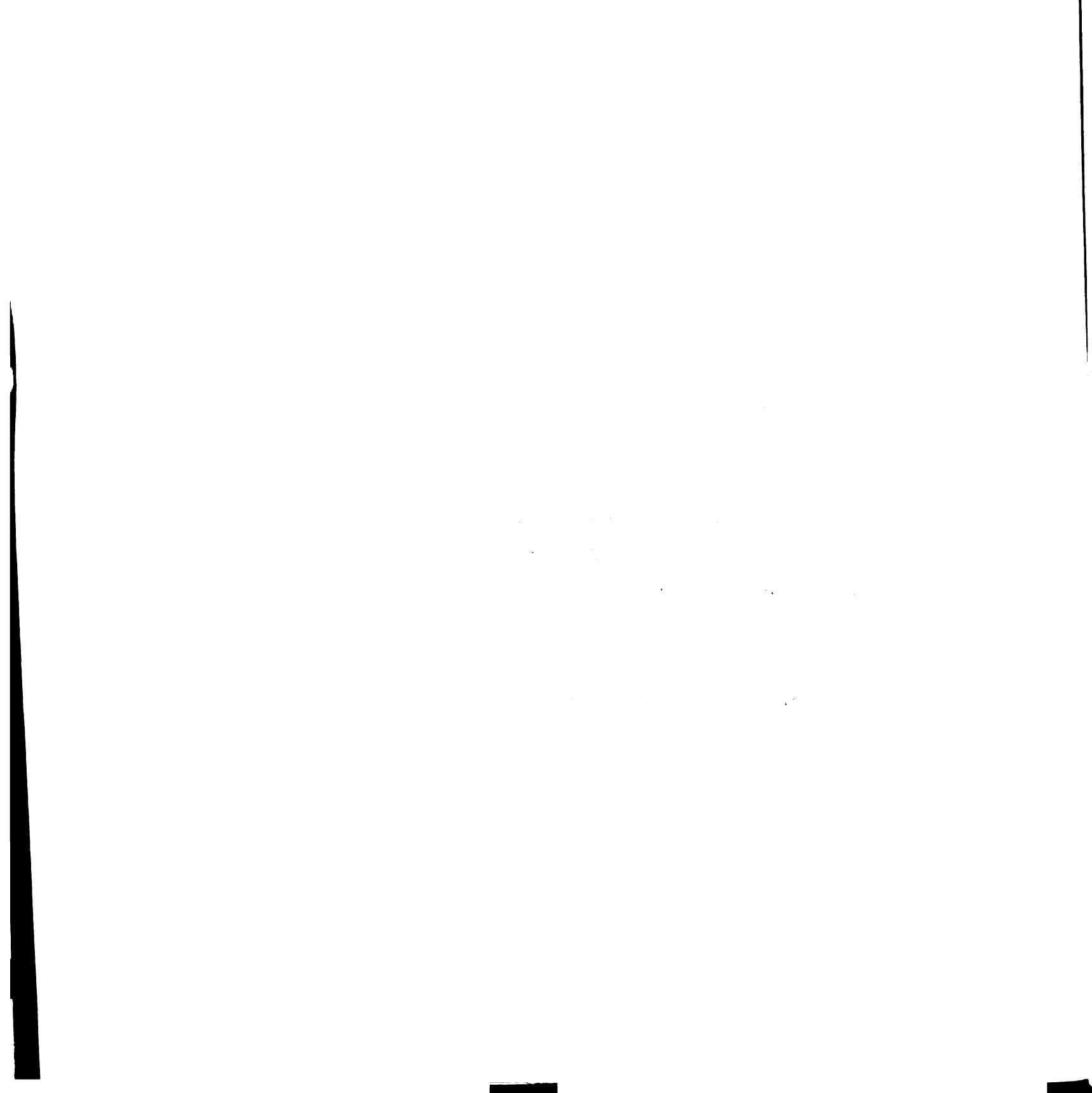
⁴⁵⁵"Troubled library's roots go back to 1868," Ypsilanti Press, 19 October 1981. In the "Ypsilanti Library" vertical file at the Ypsilanti District Library.

⁴⁵⁶"Ypsilanti Homes-Historical" vertical file, Ypsilanti District Library.

had a "building valued at six thousand (6000) dollars [that] was built with the help of valuable donations." The Port Huron Association owned a "building worth about thirty five hundred (3500) dollars, fifteen hundred (1500) dollars was donated." Of the Kalamazoo L.L.A., the secretary writes "With their own fund of two thousand (2000) dollars and three thousand (3000) dollars of borrowed money, and the remainder in cash donations, they put up a building whose actual cost, including the lot on which it stands was twelve hundred (1200) dollars." The secretary, Mrs. John Goodison, concludes her report with a question, "What, if any encouragement our society should derive from those facts, is a problem the solving of which we leave to our successors."⁴⁵⁷ There are no sources for the information that Mrs. Goodison provides and reading the information from the Kalamazoo dedication reveals that all of the information she possessed may not have been accurate.

The Flint Ladies' Library Association dedicated its building on the corner of Kearsley and Beach Streets on June 30, 1868, less than a year after the cornerstone was laid. Records show that donations for the building fund ranged from \$.50 to \$200.00, with most of the donations averaging

⁴⁵⁷All quotes from the Ypsilanti Commercial, 12 April 1884.



\$1.00 to \$5.00.⁴⁵⁸ State dignitaries spoke at both the ceremony for the laying of the cornerstone and the dedication of the building. Governor Henry H. Crapo, a resident of Flint, spoke both times. A Masonic ceremony was included as part of the ceremony to lay the cornerstone. The main oration on that day was delivered by Dr. George W. Fish. Following a speech which commended the women's work and encouraged them to make sure that "Neither political creeds nor theological dogmas are to be introduced within these halls," he asked the women to dedicate a panel to the soldiers who died in the Civil War.⁴⁵⁹ Governor Crapo describes the building as a "beautiful structure" and while "not elaborate nor marked in its style of architecture, is nevertheless a substantial and tasty [sic] edifice...."⁴⁶⁰ The remainder of the speech praises library collections and the work of the women of Flint for creating the institution.

⁴⁵⁸[Flint Ladies' Library Association donor list], Genesee County Historical Society Collection, Sloan Museum, #65.29.1423.

⁴⁵⁹"Laying the Corner Stone of the Ladies' Library Building," The Wolverine Citizen 21 September 1867.

⁴⁶⁰Address Delivered by His Excellency, Gov. Henry H. Crapo, at the Dedication of the Library Building of the Ladies' Library Association of Flint, on June 30th, 1868 (Flint, Mich.: Wolverine Citizen Steam Press, 1868) 6.

The Ann Arbor L.L.A. constructs a building

The Ann Arbor L.L.A. recorded the trials and triumphs associated with raising money for a building and its final construction at 324 E. Huron Street. For this reason and because the Ann Arbor L.L.A. documented the process of building a library, I will use its minutes to discuss problems encountered when L.L.A.'s tried to build a library building and how the Ann Arbor L.L.A. solved the problems it faced. Several issues and obstacles surrounded construction of a library building. The first obstacle was a commitment from the membership to pursue a building. Without this commitment to carry out the work, constructing a building was more difficult. The board members, in particular, were aware of the importance of gender roles and frequently consulted male community members who had influence and legal knowledge. Members also had to raise funds, negotiate contracts, purchase land, engage an architect and oversee the final building project. Once the building was completed, furnishings had to be selected and the library building had to be maintained. Preparation for building, fundraising and completion of the building will be the focus of the discussion in this section.

Preparing to build

The Ann Arbor Ladies' Library Association's catalog of 1887 notes that the "library lived an itinerant life till the year 1886, when it settled down in its own handsome building."⁴⁶¹ Adequate space for the library collections and meetings was a desire from the beginning of the association's history in 1866, but preparation for the library building did not begin until the spring of 1880. It is somewhat difficult to pinpoint the exact time when discussions of a building rather than rented rooms, may have begun since the second book of secretary's minutes has not survived with the rest of the archival records. The annual report for 1879 opens the minutes of book three. The year 1879 had been a financially prosperous one for the association because of increased membership recruitment and community recognition. The membership had voted to reduce dues and as a result gained forty-four new members, which was very encouraging to the board. Community recognition resulted from the reputation of the library and possibly as a result of internal operating changes. Both a classification system for books and a card system to keep

⁴⁶¹Catalogue of the Ladies Library Association of Ann Arbor, Michigan Incorporated April 1866. Sixth edition, 1887. (Ann Arbor: Register Publishing House, 1887). BHL.

track of circulation of books were under consideration by the board. Implementing these systems would add credibility to the library. During the year the association was approached by the school board to consolidate the two libraries. The members rejected the offer because the L.L.A.'s library was far better than the school board library. The secretary notes that "many perplexing questions" arose and that a partnership with the school board would be "quite suicidal to the Ladies' Library, tho' very beneficial to that of the school."⁴⁶² The financial well being of the association, the proposed reorganization and the attractiveness of its collections to other libraries in the city may have influenced the members to begin thinking about a building of their own. An additional factor also may have helped influence the women. Members were allowed to use the rooms where they began meeting in 1879 rent free. This, as recorded in the minutes, was seen as a sign of confidence from the community of the L.L.A.'s success and its desirability as an organization in Ann Arbor.

Actual preparation for building began when it was announced to the board that a desirable lot was available.

⁴⁶²Record Book No. 3 (1879-1890), 4 April 1879, Box 1, L.L.A. of Ann Arbor, BHL.

At the April 5, 1880, meeting,

The statement was made that a valuable lot on the north east corner of State and Huron Streets was for sale, and as many of the board thought it would be a very desirable situation for a library building, it was voted that Mr. Pond be requested to make inquiries as to the sum for which the property could be bought.⁴⁶³

It is not entirely clear from the minutes whether this is the lot that the members eventually purchased. The members of the board were aware of the importance of gender differences from the beginning of the campaign to build a library and were not afraid to request help from various influential men in Ann Arbor who could provide legal or financial advice and assistance. The members knew their limitations in both the legal and public arenas; however, they were not hesitant to pursue the matters that they could, such as inquiring about lots and planning fundraisers.

By April 12, 1880, Mrs. Cooley reported that the lot could be bought for \$2800.00. She also reported "that the house could easily be rendered very convenient for the use as a library."⁴⁶⁴ Mrs. Hunt, Cooley, Prescott, and Pond were named to a committee to investigate the cost and "to

⁴⁶³Record Book No. 3 (1879-1890), 5 April 1880, Box 1, L.L.A. of Ann Arbor, BHL.

⁴⁶⁴ Record Book No. 3 (1879-1890), 12 April 1880, Box 1, L.L.A. of Ann Arbor, BHL.

ascertain what sums might be raised by subscription for the purchase."⁴⁶⁵ The committee was also authorized to explore the possibility of purchasing a different lot. The committee and board members seemed quite confident about raising the money needed despite previous years of financial worry.

For purposes of moving the building project forward, a additional by-law was adopted to allow special meetings for the association.⁴⁶⁶ A special meeting could be called by the president and secretary for "the transaction of business in which the consent or cooperation of the members shall be necessary or desirable...."⁴⁶⁷ These additional meetings allowed the membership to consider the purchase of a lot more quickly than if it had to wait for monthly or annual meetings. This was important in generating and maintaining enthusiasm for the project.

On May 22, 1880 the Association purchased a lot "on Huron St. next [sic] west of Dr. Herdman and to contract a

⁴⁶⁵Record Book No. 3 (1879-1890), 12 April 1880, Box 1, L.L.A. of Ann Arbor, BHL.

⁴⁶⁶Record Book No. 3 (1879-1890), 24 April 1880, Box 1, L.L.A. of Ann Arbor, BHL.

⁴⁶⁷Record Book No. 3 (1879-1890), 24 April 1880, Box 1, L.L.A. of Ann Arbor, BHL.

debt therefor [sic]."⁴⁶⁸ The purchase price was \$1260.00. Although the same person sold the lot to the L.L.A., this does not seem to be the original lot under consideration as there was no mention of an existing building. Nothing was recorded in the minutes about how the reduction in the price came about, but the committee had been given power to negotiate and explore all possibilities. A resolution was prepared to "empower" the Board of Directors to purchase the land for the building. "Be it therefore resolved by the Board of Directors that the Society will purchase the easterly portion of the said lot now owned by Aretus Dunn being three and a half rods in width on Huron Street for the sum of twelve hundred and sixty dollars."⁴⁶⁹ The resolution further allowed the secretary and president to enter into a contract with Arteus Dunn for the land under the tenets of incorporation. Mr. Pond prepared the papers for the association and guided members through the legal complications of contracts and land deals. He was present at this meeting with the papers that the association needed to sign.

The association was now committed to own land. Money

⁴⁶⁸Record Book No. 3 (1879-1890), 22 May 1880, Box 1, L.L.A. of Ann Arbor, BHL.

⁴⁶⁹Record Book No. 3 (1879-1890), 22 May 1880, Box 1, L.L.A. of Ann Arbor, BHL.

still had to be raised to pay Arteus Dunn for the lot and further decisions about constructing a library building and raising the necessary funds for the project awaited the association. There is little more recorded in the minutes until the decision the following spring to erect a building. By the spring of 1882 the women were able to cancel their debt for the land.⁴⁷⁰ Taxes still had to be paid, however, and money had to be raised for architectural plans and for the actual building.

Building plans and fundraising

By March of 1881 the association was determined to erect its own building. "It being the opinion of most of the Board as well as of many gentlemen that it would be wise for the Association to erect a building at once, it was deemed desirable to obtain plans if possible which might be presented at the Annual Meeting."⁴⁷¹ Plans did not proceed smoothly because the members either lacked experience or because of the lack of a perceived need for a library building in Ann Arbor by the members and the community. Land ownership was only the first of many steps. At the

⁴⁷⁰Record Book No. 3 (1879-1890), 10 April 1882, Box 1, L.L.A. of Ann Arbor, BHL.

⁴⁷¹Record Book No. 3 (1879-1890), March 1881, Box 1, L.L.A. of Ann Arbor, BHL.

following meeting the members discovered a problem. The state did not allow Library Associations to "hold property to exceed \$5,000.00 in value."⁴⁷² Since this law would "interfere with the erection of a building it was voted that a request be presented to the legislature for permission to hold property exceeding that amount. Mrs. Pond was requested to ask her husband to attend to the matter on behalf of the Association."⁴⁷³ Once again the importance of employing a male with proper legal knowledge and influence was realized. Permission must have been granted, as it had been for the Kalamazoo L.L.A., but I have not been able to find any record of any special provision or amendment.

Estimates for building were presented at a special meeting in December 1881. Some were "too high for any consideration."⁴⁷⁴ A bid for \$7,000 met with the approval of the Board; however, "raising this means to build, called up much discussion and many plans."⁴⁷⁵ Several ways to raise

⁴⁷²This is somewhat confusing. The Kalamazoo L.L.A. had already discovered and addressed this problem in 1879. Perhaps the Ann Arbor L.L.A. did not realize this at the time.

⁴⁷³Record Book No. 3 (1879-1890), 4 April 1881, Box 1, L.L.A. of Ann Arbor, BHL.

⁴⁷⁴Record Book No.3 (1879-1890), December 1881 Special Meeting, Box 1, L.L.A. of Ann Arbor, BHL.

⁴⁷⁵Record Book No.3 (1879-1890), December 1881 Special Meeting, Box 1, L.L.A. of Ann Arbor, BHL.

money were discussed. The women decided to place subscription papers in Mr. Phillip Bach's and Mr. J. C. Lewis's dry goods store and to "prepare a plea for the public...calling upon them to remember the library in a substantial way."⁴⁷⁶ The women also conferred with the gentleman, especially with businessmen. "The gentlemen thought \$7000.00 might be raised by dividing it into shares larger or smaller as might be deemed advisable. These shares or bonds should yield six per cent interest."⁴⁷⁷ While the citizens of Ann Arbor had to contribute part of the money for the building to become a reality, husbands of the women involved contributed a great deal. Judge Cooley, for example, "was ready to take \$200.00 of stock" when the plan was discussed.⁴⁷⁸

At the Annual Meeting held April 12, 1882, the women were still not convinced that they should borrow such a large sum for construction. Following a vote to ask Mr. Wheeler and Dr. Herdman "to act as trustees for the Assoc. [sic] in negotiating the proposed loan," the women entered

⁴⁷⁶Record Book No.3 (1879-1890), December 1881 Special Meeting, Box 1, L.L.A. of Ann Arbor, BHL.

⁴⁷⁷Record Book No. 3 (1879-1890), 3 April 1882, Box 1, L.L.A. of Ann Arbor, BHL.

⁴⁷⁸Record Book No. 3 (1879-1890), 3 April 1882, Box 1, L.L.A. of Ann Arbor, BHL.

into an "animated discussion ...whether it was safe to borrow so large a sum."⁴⁷⁹ "The question when put to vote was lost by a tie" and it was thought wise that the "whole matter lie over until the next meeting."⁴⁸⁰ The report was not recorded at the May meeting. It was, however, noted that the women would make an "effort...to obtain \$2000.00 by subscription and \$5000.00 in bonds."⁴⁸¹ Work proved to be slow for in June Mrs. Jaycox reported that only "\$300.00 had been subscribed...but a part of this was on condition that at least \$1000.00 should be given." Even though the "prevailing sentiment" was that building would be delayed because of the poor response, the women committed the entire Board to "solicit subscriptions during the Summer."⁴⁸² They believed that if enough could be raised then perhaps they could lay the foundation in the fall. This was an extraordinary commitment by the women. The entire Board, consisting of 15 prominent Ann Arbor women, went out with the mission of raising funds for the building. As can be

⁴⁷⁹Record Book No. 3 (1879-1890), 10 April 1882, Box 1, L.L.A. of Ann Arbor, BHL.

⁴⁸⁰Record Book No. 3 (1879-1890), 10 April 1882, Box 1, L.L.A. of Ann Arbor, BHL.

⁴⁸¹Record Book No.3 (1879-1890), 1 May 1882, Box 1, L.L.A. of Ann Arbor, BHL.

⁴⁸²Record Book No.3 (1879-1890), 5 June 1882, Box 1, L.L.A. of Ann Arbor, BHL.

seen, this had essentially been their mission for nearly two years already. Support from the board member's husbands and families also was essential to carry out the planning, fundraising and completion of the library building. This support is never directly discussed in the minutes, however.

With so much time spent on fundraising the other work of the library had to be scaled down. In May 1881, Mrs. Wells suggested that the board needed to do something so "general interest could be awakened in the library and membership."⁴⁸³ The board had continued to purchase books and hold readings and entertainments.

Fundraising and repaying the debt became the major issue for the association. During the years of planning and construction the members devised various ways to obtain funds. Frequently the members favored plans which involved one time or long term pledges by community members. The members of the association also used assets to pay for building related expenses. A donation in the form of gas stock had been left to the L.L.A. These stocks were sold to generate cash for the library building. The members also loaned money and negotiated deals for the use of the lot until a building was started.

⁴⁸³Record Book No. 3 (1879-1890), 10 May 1881, Box 1, L.L.A. of Ann Arbor, BHL.

The board members learned about breaking contracts when they had to settle with Mr. Gordon Lloyd, the original architect who was from Detroit. Mr. Lloyd, who we know little about from the minutes, worked on plans for the library building for nearly three years. At a special board meeting in May 1881, Mr. Lloyd's plans were approved if a basement was added and the building could be completed for \$5,000.00.⁴⁸⁴ When the board finally decided that the association could not afford Mr. Lloyd's building, it still had to pay him for his time and plans. Finally, in May 1884, Mrs. Cooley "was appointed to confer with Mr. Lloyd" and settle the bill and contract.⁴⁸⁵ The choice of Mrs. Cooley to settle the contract once again demonstrates the board's awareness of the importance of gender. In addition to being an original member of the building committee and a long time board member, Mrs. Cooley was also the wife of Judge Thomas Cooley which may have been a reason for selecting her. If there were problems in settling with Mr. Lloyd, Mrs. Cooley had a source of support and legal information.

On April 7, 1884 another plan for building was

⁴⁸⁴Record Book No. 3 (1879-1890), 10 May 1881, Box 1, L.L.A. of Ann Arbor, BHL.

⁴⁸⁵Record Book No. 3 (1879-1890), 5 May 1884, Box 1, L.L.A. of Ann Arbor, BHL.

presented, although no architect was mentioned.

Mrs. Adams ... showed to the ladies a plan of an inexpensive library building. She read also the specifications for it and a carpenter's estimate of the cost which was a little less than \$2000.00. If \$500.00 raised by subscription could be added to the \$500.00 of the invested building fund it would then be necessary to borrow but \$1200 to cover the estimated cost and allow for extras. The interest of this \$1200 and the expense of fuel, janitor and insurance.⁴⁸⁶

This is a considerably smaller amount than the original \$7000.00 thought necessary. The women by this time, nearly four years later, were more reflective about the prospect and the process of engaging in constructing a building. "There was no special discussion of the plan, the ladies desiring to reflect upon it and therefore the meeting adjourned."⁴⁸⁷ It is not clear if this was the final plan that was adopted. The board remained the driving force behind the desire for a building and acquiring plans and estimates for this project. Owning the lot seemed to drive the board members to also pursue building a library building, despite the difficulties encountered. Not only did the board and association face dilemmas about how much to spend and to borrow for building, general economic conditions caused problems. In the annual meeting minutes

⁴⁸⁶Record Book No.3 (1879-1890), 7 April 1884, Box 1, L.L.A. of Ann Arbor, BHL.

⁴⁸⁷Record Book No.3 (1879-1890), 7 April 1884, Box 1, L.L.A. of Ann Arbor, BHL.

for 1885, the secretary notes that there had been a business depression and that "it is a subject for congratulation that this little Assn. has been able to sustain itself."⁴⁸⁸

On May 4, 1885 a Building Committee was appointed and the Board was once again "authorized to borrow the money necessary for the erection of the building."⁴⁸⁹ The committee consisted of Mrs. C. K. Adams, Prof. C. K. Adams, Mr, and Mrs. J. M. Wheeler, Mrs. Hunt and Mrs. Palmer. Mrs. Hunt was the only original member of the building committee. The architect this time was Irving K. Pond, the son of a long time member, Mrs. Elihu Pond, and a graduate of the University of Michigan. Pond lived in Chicago where he worked for the William Le Baron Jenney firm and the Solon S. Beman firm before opening his own firm with his brother, Allen.⁴⁹⁰ Plans and building evidently went forward without a problem because by fall, the association occupied a new building.

The library building finally opened in October 1885 but the previous year the Association had mortgaged the land and

⁴⁸⁸Record Book No.3 (1879-1890), April 1885, Box 1, L.L.A. of Ann Arbor, BHL.

⁴⁸⁹Record Book No. 3 (1879-1890), 4 May 1885, Box 1, L.L.A. of Ann Arbor, BHL.

⁴⁹⁰Information from Chicago Landmarks website
<<http://www.ci.chi.il.us/Landmarks/Architects/Pond.html>>.

building to Robert Lilly for \$2600.00 with interest of 7% principal to be paid in five years. This was necessary, according to the minutes, in order to get the loan. The reasons were not given. Insurance on the building was also purchased.⁴⁹¹

Further donations were received once building finally began. Some came in forms of gifts for the building rather than cash. For example, Mr. John Hunt "promise[d] to do the gasfitting. Dr Douglas will give \$25.00 worth of gas and Mr. Hamilton will insure the building for three years."⁴⁹² These gifts were as important as cash because the board would have had to raise additional funds to pay for these services. As the members settled in the new building, further needs were discovered: a screen for the fireplace, a clock, the need to hire a janitor. These all required additional funds or donations as well. The board and membership now faced paying the debt incurred, maintaining the building and the continuing work of promoting the library.

⁴⁹¹Journal 1881-1886, Box 1, L.L.A. of Ann Arbor, BHL.

⁴⁹²Record Book No.3 (1879-1890), 7 September 1885, Box 1, L.L.A. of Ann Arbor, BHL.

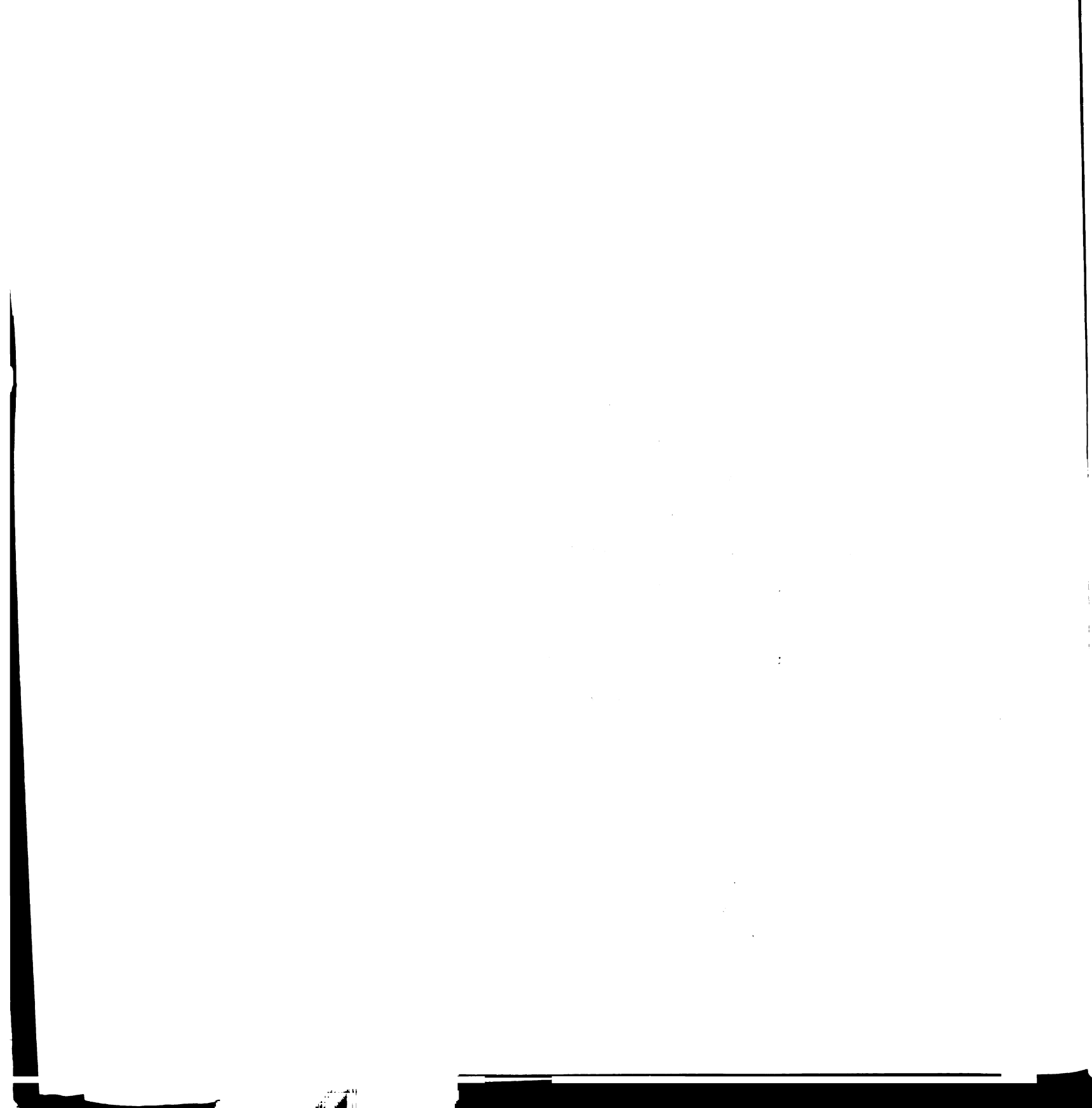
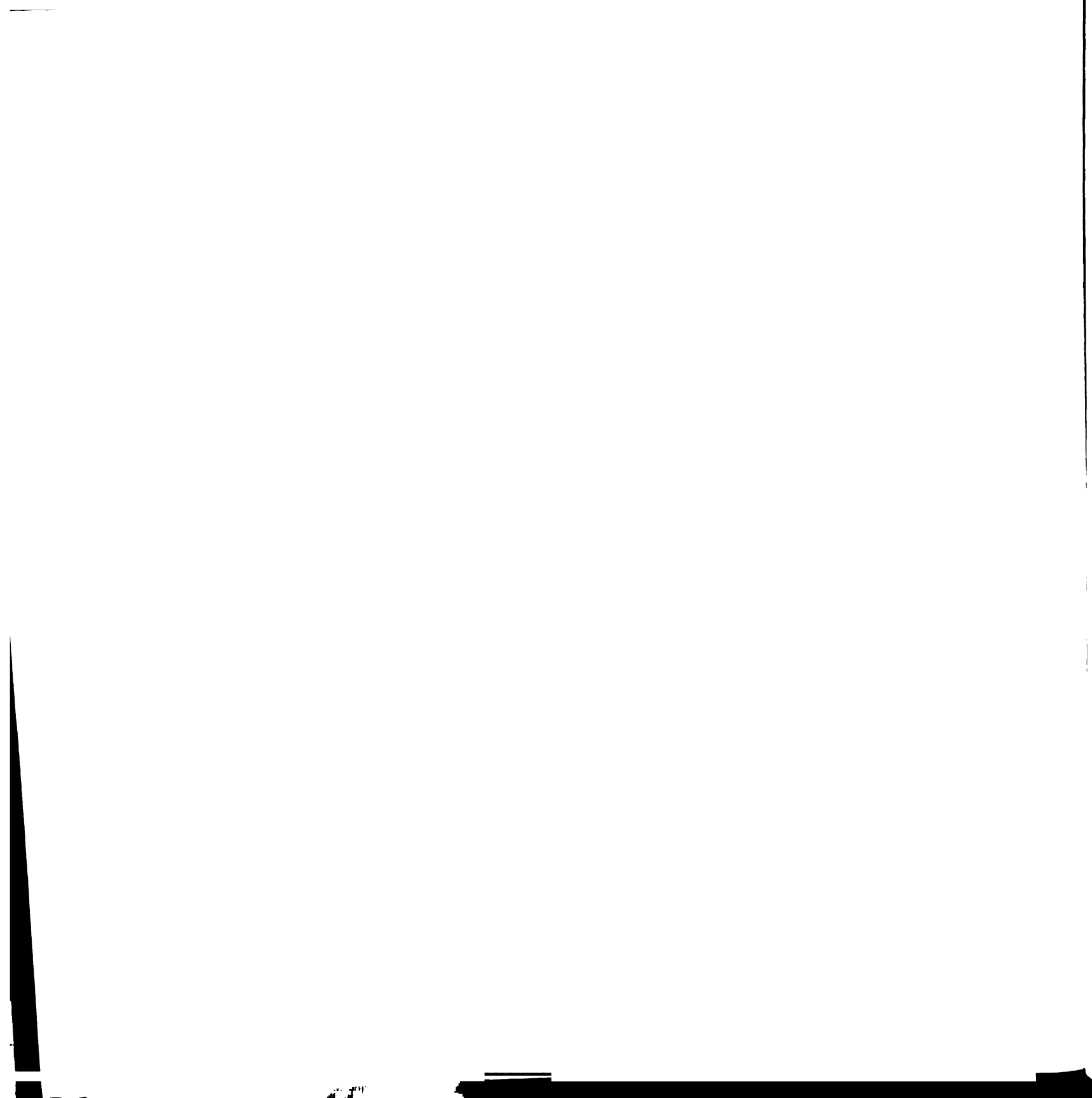


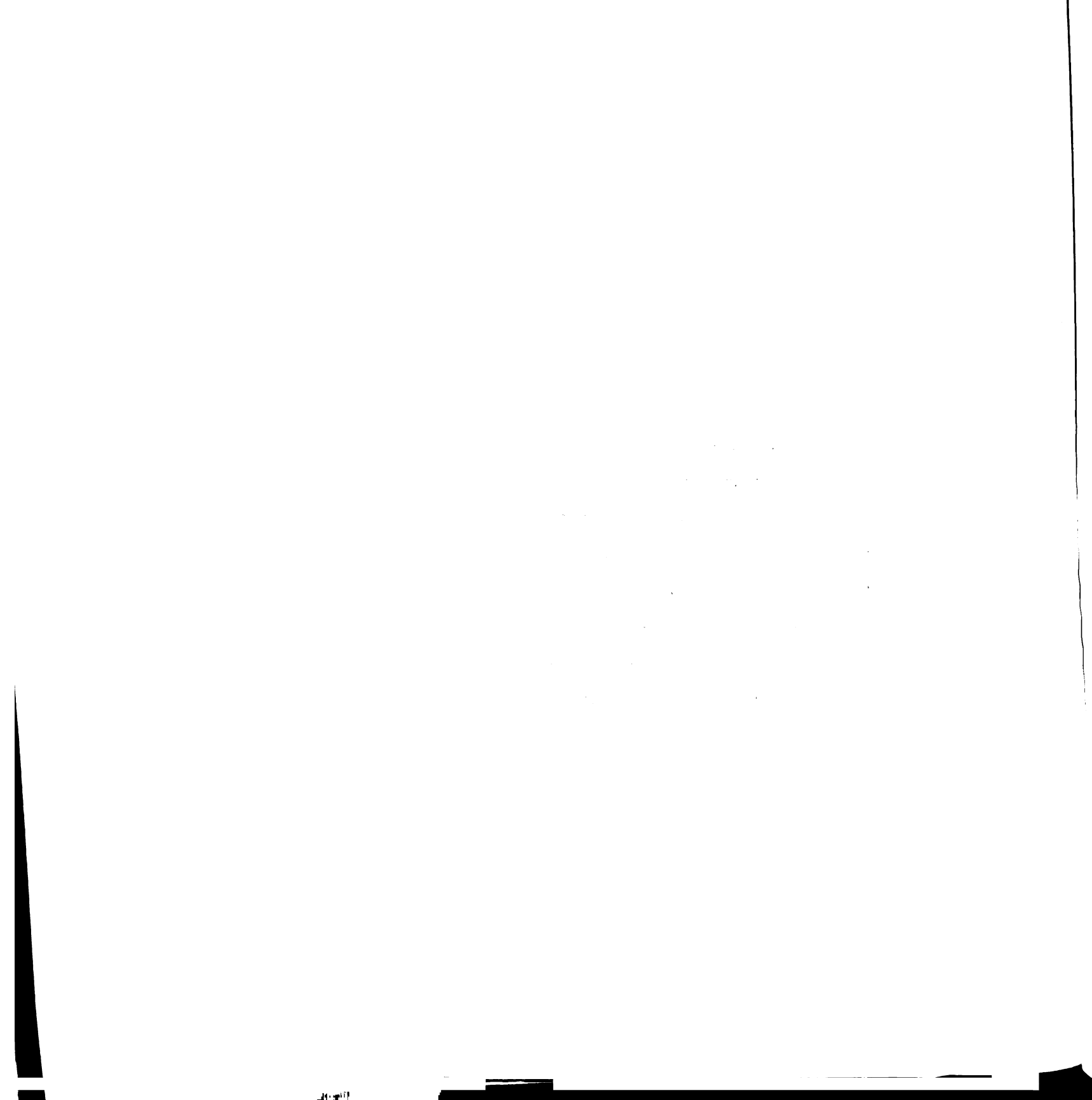


Figure 13. Exterior of the Ann Arbor Ladies' Library Association. Ladies' Library Association of Ann Arbor Collection. Courtesy of Bentley Historical Library. The University of Michigan.



Debt, completion and upkeep of the building

When the building was completed the secretary noted that the L.L.A. was indebted \$2,240.48 and that the interest equaled a little less than what the association had been paying for an entire year's rent in its previous space. This must have been daunting to the board and the membership. Although the costs of building and the wisdom of incurring debt had been carefully considered over the previous five years, the association was now faced with repaying the money it had borrowed. The board continued to plan and carry out fundraisers to retire the debt. It also considered requests for renting the space to outside groups. Within weeks of the public dedication, requests were made for use of the space. Young ladies asked to hold dancing classes in the building twice a week and the clergy of the city asked that the building be kept open each evening for reading and study. The young ladies' request was granted with little debate, perhaps because they were viewed as the future of the L.L.A. There are no names of the young ladies in the minutes but at least some of them may have been daughters of members. The board made it clear that allowing the use of the building for dancing lessons was a privilege. The clergy's petition was considered more carefully and the board wrote several conditions for the use of the space.



This request was for the "benefit of a certain class especially young men."⁴⁹³ The plan was "freely and thoroughly discussed by the Board."⁴⁹⁴ Fears about the reading needs of the young men, that they might injure books and that the membership would object were all considered. The board also thought that the clergy might find a less expensive room in the city. Finally, however, the board did agree to appoint a committee to confer with the gentlemen and to propose an experiment for using the library building as a reading room. At the same time the board agreed to allow Mrs. Rathburn "to act (as agent) for the board in renting the Library,"⁴⁹⁵ which would simplify screening requests for renting the building.

The library building became a meeting place and showplace for the association and a resource for the community. The board members, as can be seen in the examples above, were not willing to rent to everyone who asked to use the building. While renting the rooms provided a source of income, it also afforded a means for further

⁴⁹³Record Book No.3 (1879-1890), 2 November 1885, Box 1, L.L.A. of Ann Arbor, BHL.

⁴⁹⁴Record Book No.3 (1879-1890), 2 November 1885, Box 1, L.L.A. of Ann Arbor, BHL.

⁴⁹⁵Record Book No.3 (1879-1890), 2 November 1885, Box 1, L.L.A. of Ann Arbor, BHL.

exposure and for affiliation with other groups in the city which may uphold and strengthen the reputation of the association in the city. In 1889, for example, \$94.25 was paid for rent of the rooms.⁴⁹⁶ For the next three years, the amount of rent collected increased. While this income was positive, use of the building also caused wear and tear and more expenses for upkeep.

By 1892 the Ann Arbor Ladies' Library Association became "owners in reality" of its building and stated that it "may now keep house with security and pleasure."⁴⁹⁷ During the 1890s the Ann Arbor L.L.A. had much to celebrate and continued to change and grow. The worth of the L.L.A. as an institution continued to be recognized by both the membership and by the community.

Shortly after the turn of the century, the L.L.A. faced a challenge that may have equaled raising funds for a building -- seeking Carnegie funding. This quest culminated in the L.L.A. and Board of Education's resolution to join the two libraries. While a detailed discussion of this process is beyond the scope of this study, it is worth mentioning because it signals the members' desire for better

⁴⁹⁶Quarterly and annual reports, 1889, Box 1, L.L.A. of Ann Arbor, BHL.

⁴⁹⁷Record Book No.4 (1890-1901), 11 April 1892, Box 1, L.L.A. of Ann Arbor, BHL.

access to the library, continued growth and change and the association's commitment to both the community as well as the membership.

Chapter 6

Conclusion

Anne Firor Scott has written that if one "spends much time with club records [she] is in danger of being carried away by the women's own infectious enthusiasm for their work, to the possible detriment of balanced analysis."⁴⁹⁸ Scott continues by outlining the tasks that must be done to avoid this imbalance and concludes with the statement, "Still, it is necessary to try."⁴⁹⁹ The women's enthusiasm is infectious and it is difficult at times to remember that they were probably not always recording events and meetings as accurately as they might have. Yet, I must agree, it is necessary to try.

Throughout this dissertation I have sought to uncover the history of an association that has largely been ignored up to this point. I think I have only begun to do so. Although I have provided pictures of the Kalamazoo, Ann Arbor, Ypsilanti and Galesburg Ladies' Library Associations,

⁴⁹⁸Scott, Natural Allies 112.

⁴⁹⁹Scott, Natural Allies 112.

I believe that there are more records to be analyzed. Some have come to light too late to be included in this work. The records of the East Tawas Ladies' Literary Club which, like the Ypsilanti L.L.C., began as a library association have been located at the Iosoco County Historical Society. Some records for the Northville L.L.A. also exist at the Northville Historical Society. Forty-five years of circulation records for the Kalamazoo Ladies' Library Association were discovered during the final revision of this project. These newly discovered records, and the ones yet to be found, will strengthen the argument for the importance of the L.L.A.'s as institutions of learning and as the beginnings of the public library movement in the state of Michigan.

In addition to uncovering the historical record, I have attempted to make a case for the L.L.A. as an institution. Although the L.L.A.'s did not form a unified organization, each provided a service in its own community by providing opportunities for women to further their education, learn leadership skills and participate in social activities. A strength of many L.L.A.'s was that they unified women within a community in their work to establish and maintain a library.

Through using the state laws available to them, the

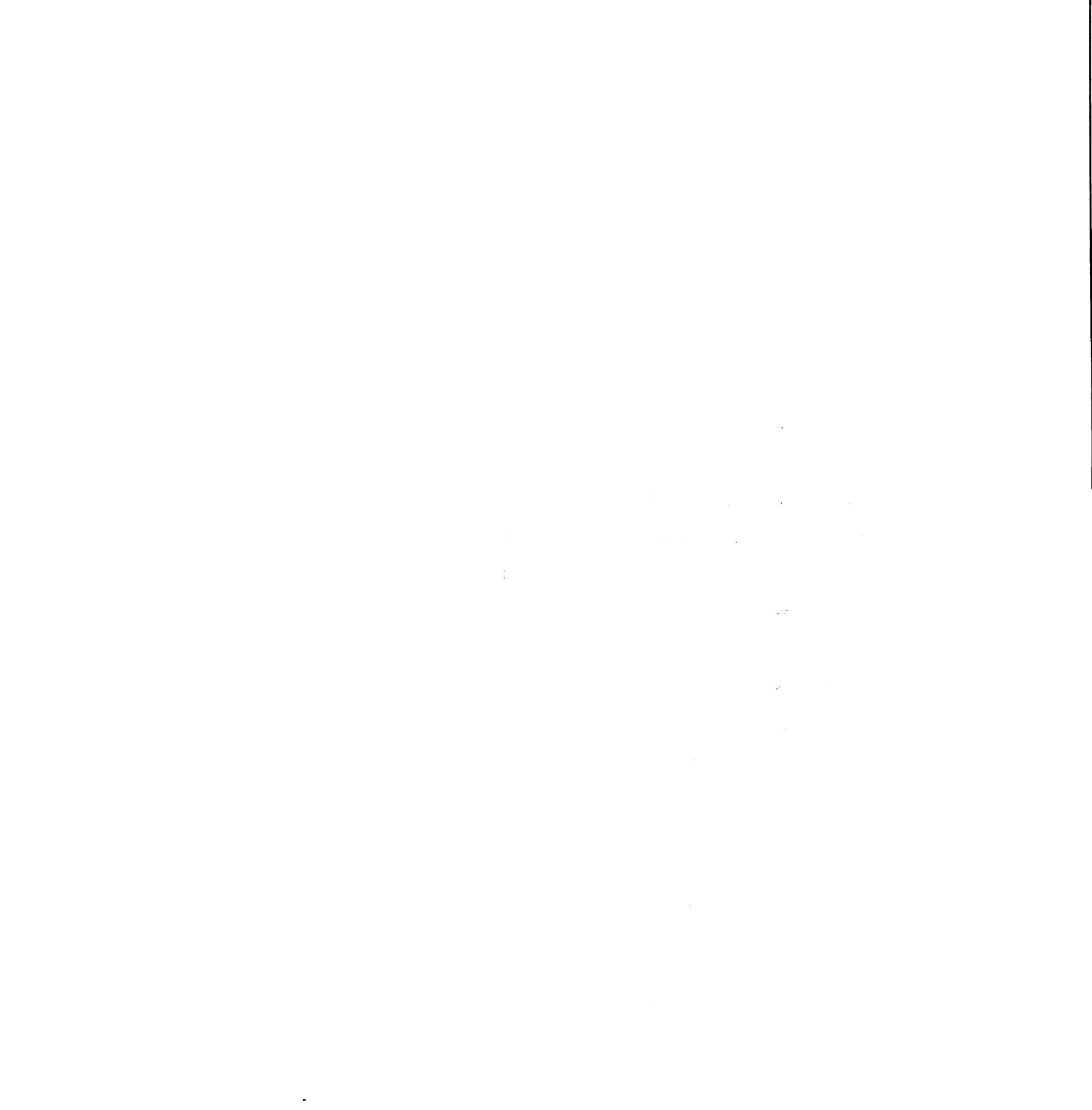
founders made sure that their associations were able to act as corporate bodies. This move to legalize the association, rather than to just meet as a group, made the difference between survival and failure. Incorporation, and the resulting constitutions and by-laws, gave the women power and legitimized their work. These activities helped the associations develop as institutions and women as leaders. Anne Firor Scott writes that, "women who yearned to be leaders, to exercise ability, and even to acquire fame had a chance to do so"⁵⁰⁰ in women's clubs. Women who joined L.L.A.'s certainly had these opportunities. Scott continues to say that through the records of nineteenth-century women's groups we "identify latent or covert feminism."⁵⁰¹ Writing and revising the constitutions provided the members with a chance to learn and practice leadership skills and a covert feminism. The board members, in particular, learned how to promote the association in the community to gain recognition and respect. Dedicated board members often served for decades, honing skills that were also used in other community organizations. The board also discovered ways to motivate the membership so the women would work for

⁵⁰⁰Anne Firor Scott, "As Easily as They Breathe..." Making the Invisible Woman Visible (Urbana : U of Illinois P, 1984) 264.

⁵⁰¹Scott 264.

the association as well as remain members and recruit new members.

The last half of the nineteenth century was an era when women's study clubs were becoming prevalent and the opportunity for women to work in the community was growing. The ladies' library associations moved beyond the women's study clubs, which concentrated primarily on literary studies. The main objectives of the associations, to establish and maintain libraries and to promote moral and intellectual improvement, were only the beginning of the work they actually accomplished. The significance of the L.L.A. movement is evident in the training of women, not only as officers, but also as committee members. Participation in the L.L.A. seemed to encourage women to take on active roles in other organizations. In Kalamazoo, for example, the women who were members of the L.L.A. before the Civil War became active in sanitary commission and soldiers' aid societies, using organizational skills to serve the country. Participation in the L.L.A. helped women gain confidence to not only lead, but also to manage financial and legal affairs. The women who were most active in the L.L.A.'s did not work outside the home and may not have managed the major portion of the money for their families. The opportunities afforded them through



organizing fundraisers, purchasing books and carrying out building projects taught them how to negotiate contracts and balance budgets. Literacy development, therefore, was not only promoted through writing and reading texts for study groups. Women developed literacy in legal affairs and public policy which made them better citizens. Promoting lectures and fundraisers helped women become literate as authors of public texts and as speakers about their activities.

The board members of the Ladies' Library Associations listened to the membership and provided for their needs and desires. A variety of activities were offered including study groups which focused on reading texts and writing papers, drawing classes, sewing classes and lecture courses. Through offering educational opportunities the women furthered their missions and their attempts to be regarded as credible organizations in their communities. Offering classes and forming reading circles and study groups provided women with a place to learn after their school days had ceased. Although some of the women had formal schooling, the associations activities may have replaced formal education for other women. These groups also provided women with the chance to improve conversational skills. Free forums for discussion were one of the most

important aspects of the study circles. Again, the members were able to develop leadership skills in study groups and reading circles when they were responsible for leading discussions or planning programs. Formal rules were often followed and reports were recorded of the meetings. By reporting on activities in the local press and opening meetings to those who were not members of the L.L.A. the women reached out to the community. The associations also offered opportunities to improve the domestic and artistic talents of members. The classes that were offered in these areas did not seem to last as long, or at least did not gain as much attention, in minutes as the study groups did; however, these groups demonstrated that the women did not forget the domestic arts.

The primary purpose, of course, was to provide a library for the membership and for the community. Many of the L.L.A.'s formed the core collections of public libraries which would follow and are, thus, important in library history in Michigan. I have identified nearly one hundred Ladies' Library Associations that were active before 1900. This is a significant number for a state that was settled primarily during the later half of the nineteenth-century.

As Suzanne Hildenbrand⁵⁰² and Paula D. Watson⁵⁰³ have noted, male historians have often ignored women's contributions to library history and development. This study provides evidence for women's active involvement in developing libraries as community resources during the nineteenth-century, thus, the women in Michigan's history can no longer be ignored. Since many of the Michigan L.L.A.'s were not identified in the standard library history sources, it is not yet clear how important women may have been in other states as well. There were L.L.A.'s in other Midwestern and Western states; how many actually existed has yet to be discovered.

Selection of reading material became a primary focus for most L.L.A.'s. The members learned that they could not always control reading preferences as much as they would have liked, but they attempted to do so never the less. The board members and book committees did decide which genres and titles would be made available to members. These discussions were not usually recorded, which leaves us with little evidence about exact reasons for selection and

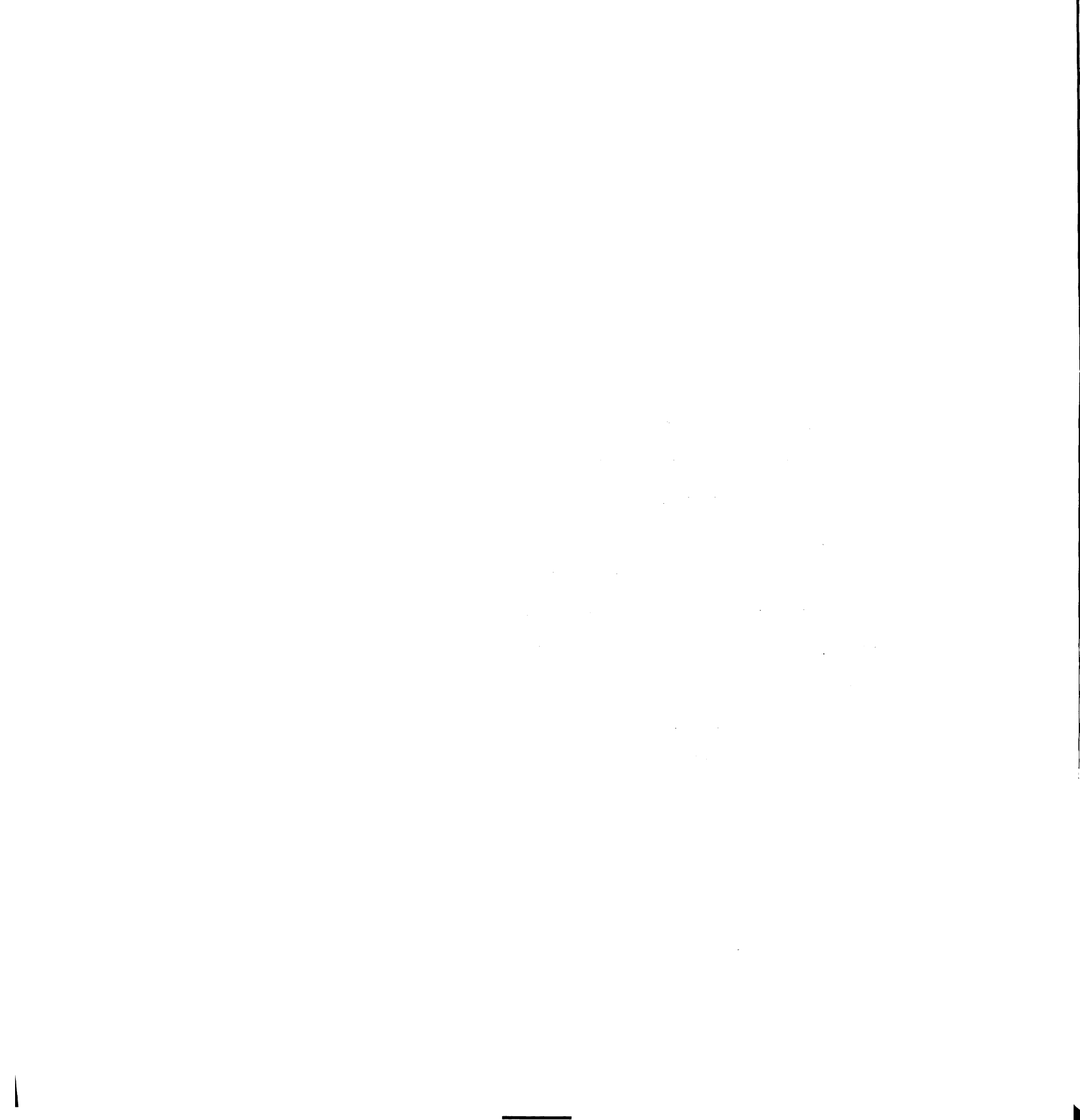
⁵⁰²Hildenbrand 2-3.

⁵⁰³Paula D. Watson, "Founding Mothers: The Contribution of Women's Organizations to Public Library Development in the United States," The Library Quarterly 64.3 (1994): 237-238.

rejection of particular titles. Surviving catalogs of collections, particularly when more than one catalog exists as in Ann Arbor and Kalamazoo, do indicate the significance of particular genres and authors. Further analysis of the nearly 9,000 authors and titles in the combined catalog remains to be done.

Along with the educational opportunities, the book collections provided for literacy development, especially for women. Circulating collections, advertised through printed catalogs, showed the community what the women owned and enticed community members to join or use the library. Circulation records reveal what women and men in Galesburg, Michigan, actually read. These records show us what we may have suspected -- that fiction was the genre of choice. Adding the Kalamazoo circulation records to the Galesburg statistics will prove or disprove the novel as the most requested genre.

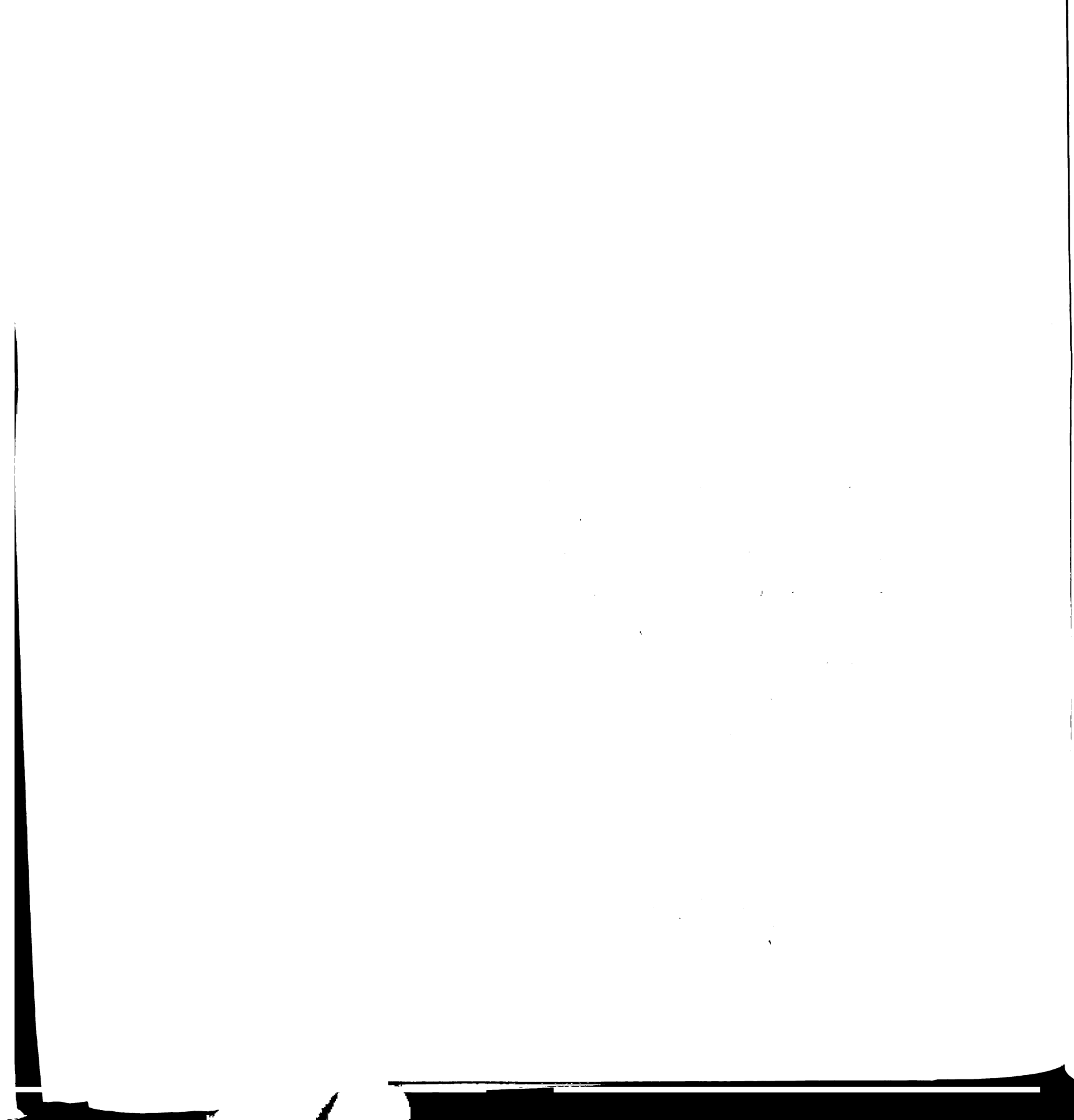
The public face that L.L.A. members assumed when they raised funds and promoted projects also separates them from the women's study clubs of the late nineteenth-century. Members of associations became avid fundraisers when they decided to build a physical space for the book collections. When Andrew Carnegie began granting funding for libraries, many associations helped seek money to make their



collections accessible to the general public. The associations in Ann Arbor, Niles, Dowagiac and Mendon were among those that joined with other community organizations to seek Carnegie funds. The Ann Arbor Carnegie library was funded in 1904; however, the L.L.A. did not turn over its collections until 1916. Discussion of the Carnegie process in Ann Arbor is beyond the parameters of the present study. Niles and Dowagiac gained Carnegie funding in 1903, while Mendon waited until 1905. Other L.L.A.'s joined existing libraries, such as school board libraries or existing public libraries, to form a better collection for the community. Plainwell, in 1918, and Holly, in 1906, merged collections with free public libraries to better serve their communities. The Farwell L.L.A. rented its building to the city for use as a free public library while continuing to exist as an association.⁵⁰⁴ In 1881, Fenton turned over its collection to the Firemen's Library to strengthen its collection. In 1906 this library became the public library of Fenton.⁵⁰⁵ Many of the associations that turned over the book collections remained active as literary associations or

⁵⁰⁴Hazel G. Littlefield, Farwell-The First Fifty Years. (1970) 33.

⁵⁰⁵Ruth Anne Silbar, A Time to Remember: An Episodic History of Fenton, Mich. (Fenton, Mich.: Independent Printing Company, Inc., 1926?) 23-24.



friends' of the library groups. The Ann Arbor L.L.A. still exists as an association and works to support the public library collections. The East Tawas Ladies' Library Association continues to meet to study and work on community projects. Not all associations sought Carnegie funds or joined with other libraries. Both the Kalamazoo Ladies' Library Association and the Ypsilanti Ladies' Literary Club are examples of associations that remain independent to the present day, and the Kalamazoo association, at least, continues as a private, for-members library.

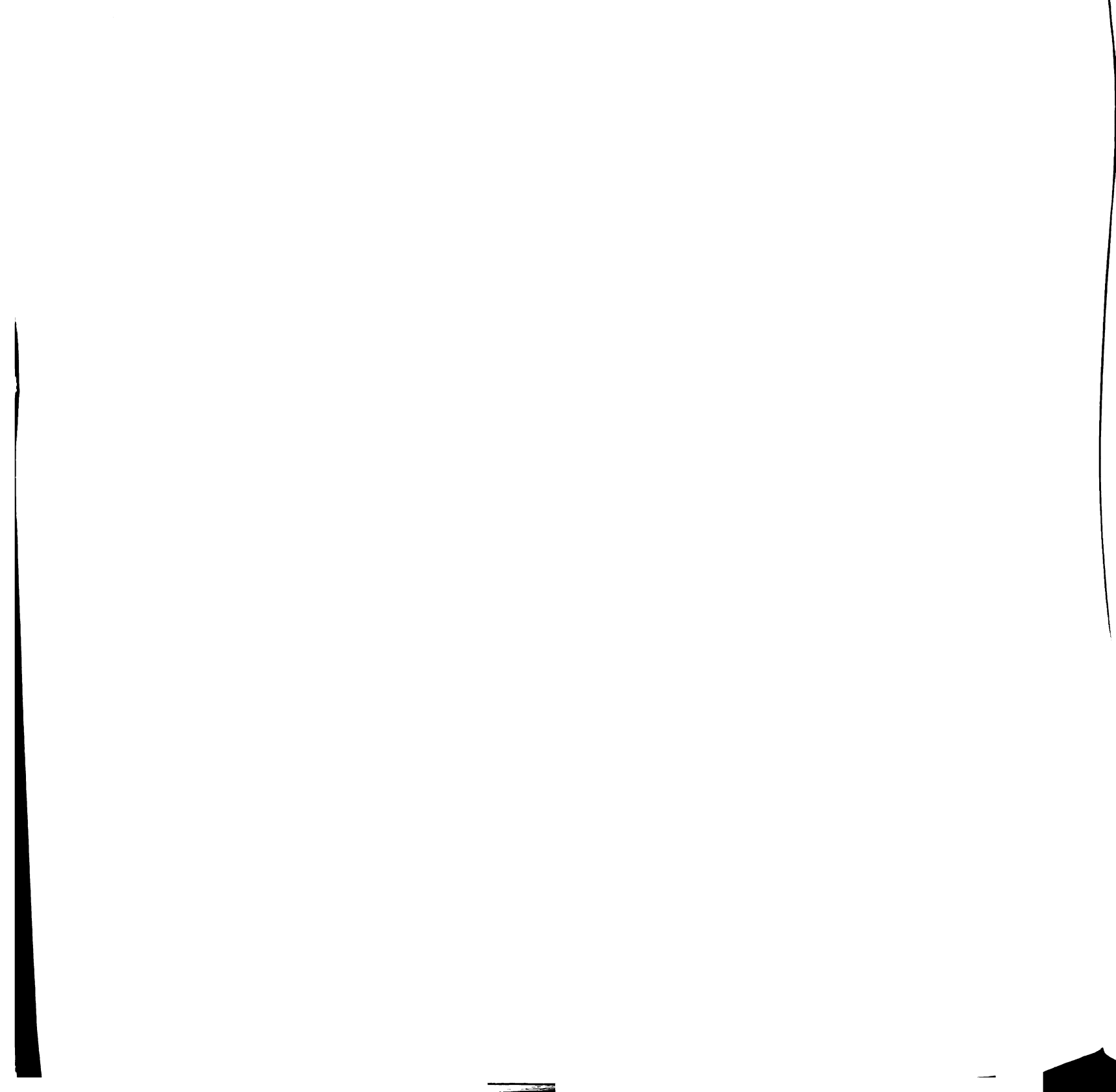
"Determined" may be a good word to describe the women who led the L.L.A.'s across the state. Despite the difficulties they faced raising funds and paying for books and buildings, they continued to host lectures, put on plays and host suppers and festivals. Through these activities the associations' presence was felt in the community and the women received funding to continue their endeavors. Although they did not always make as much money as they would have liked, they rarely gave up.

Part of the title of this dissertation comes from the motto of the Kalamazoo Ladies' Library Association. "Do what you can" is an apt description of the work the members pursued and continue to pursue. The founders of the Ladies' Library Associations knew their limitations in society, but

pushed the boundaries to expand what they could accomplish for themselves, their families and their communities. The board members and the general membership were not content to wait for educational and social opportunities to appear; instead they created these opportunities through the work of the Ladies' Library Associations. The women did what they could do by organizing a library. They then sought assistance to do what they could not do by themselves legally or financially.

Overall this dissertation examines the internal workings of ladies' library associations from 1850 to 1900. The associations' work did not end at 1900, although many associations turned over collections to public libraries around that time. It is difficult to know exactly what the women always thought about their work because minutes can be cryptic. It is evident from reading minutes that the members of the associations knew they were leaving a legacy for the future of libraries and women's education. In 1876, the members of the Ann Arbor L.L.A. prepared a time capsule to be opened in 1976 for the celebration of the country's bicentennial. One of the entries in this time capsule show the women's awareness of their historical importance as well as any of the detailed minutes and ledgers they left. In the first entry a "member of the first Board," writes about

the celebration of the tenth anniversary of the L.L.A. and the "100th year of the nations' existence." She closes the passage with the following: "Should any who were then present be permitted to revisit Ann Arbor at the opening of this volume, further particulars may be communicated." As this work has shown, attention to the particulars of the Ann Arbor association and others, is well deserved.



APPENDIX A

APPENDIX A

Programs and Yearbooks
Ladies Library Association of Kalamazoo

Ladies' Library Club Programme. 1888

Programme Committee

Mrs. L.H. Stone; Mrs. J.C. Tyler; Mrs. C.H. Caryl; Miss Alice Campbell; Mrs. W.S. Dewing; Mrs. E.E. Pollard; Mrs. J.K. Wagner, Mrs. T.P. Sheldon; Mrs. A. J. Mills

Programme

Feb. 6 Wordsworth. Coleridge. Analysis of "The Ancient Mariner."

Feb. 13 Growth of American Literature. Noted Literary Women. Women as Educators of the Young.

Feb. 20. Autobiography of John Ruskin. Ruskin as Art Critic. Items and conversation.

Feb. 27 The City of Washington; Public Buildings and Institutions of Washington; Social Washington

March 5 Sir Walter Scott. Scott's Heroines. Pen-Pictures from Scott.

March 12 Association of Ideas. Development of Mathematical Ideas.

March 19 Intimations of Ruskin's Idea of Art; Ruskin and English Art; Pre-Raphaelism.

March 26 Easter legends. Recollections of Holland House. Personations: Xantippe; Mr. Pickwick.

April 2 Poems of Sir Walter Scott. Poetry of Thomas Moore Conversation.

April 9 Women of India; an Address.

April 16 The Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood: Hunt, Rosetti and Millais.

April 23 American Humorists. Louisa May Alcott.

April 30 Christian Legend. "The Holy Grail" Legend of St. Cecilia.

May 7 "The Four Georges." Thackeray, the Man. Thackeray in his Representative Novels.

May 14 Science of Cooking. Classical Dinners. Conversation.

May 21 *Club adjourned in respect to the memory of Dr. Stone.*

May 28 The Bacon - Shakespeare Controversy.

June 4 Analysis of "Bleak House." Dickens in America. Conversation

June 11 The Women of the Bible

Sept. 17 The Sistine Chapel; its meaning; relation to St. Peter's Church; to Rome; to Christendom; its decorations an expression of the Age.

Sept. 24 Literary Clubs. Chicago Reform Club.

Oct. 1 A Paper: Dr. Foster Pratt

Oct. 8 Recollections of Switzerland Rev. J. F. Loba

Oct. 15 Albert Durer and Holbein

Oct. 22 Russia; Russian Domestic Life; Political Life among the Russians

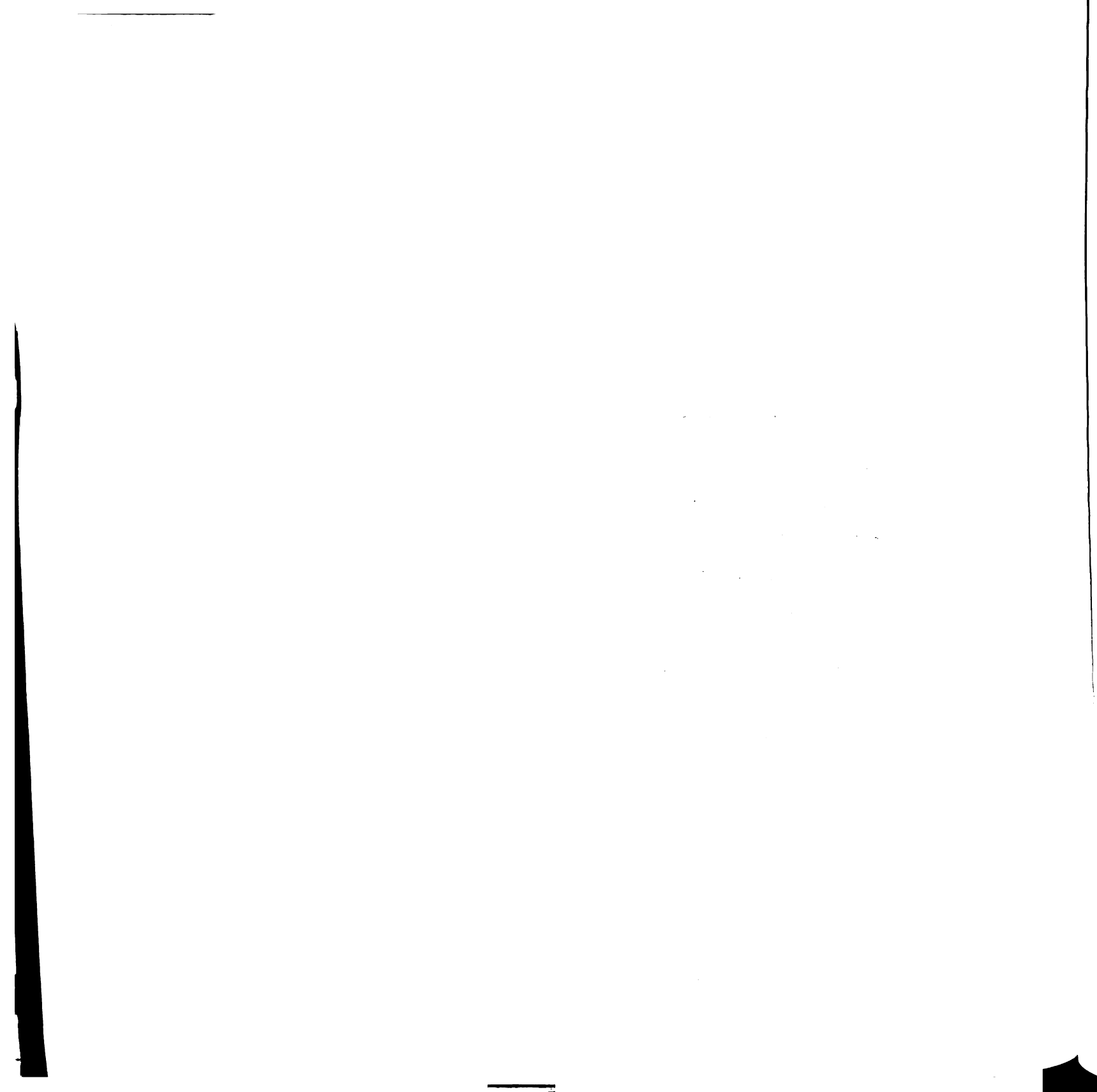
Oct. 29 Recent American contributions to Science. The Smithsonian Institution. Prof. Asa Gray, the Christian Scientist.

Nov. 5 Woman in the Literature of our Country. Woman as Poet - Mrs. Browning. Woman as Novelist - George Eliot.

Nov. 12 Is Classical Education of Practical Value to Men and Women?

Nov. 19. Modern French Art and some of the Great Artists of the French School

Nov. 26 Critics and Reviews. Fiction, its Influence.



Dec. 3 England in the time of Macaulay. The Warren Hastings Case.

Dec. 10 A Comparative Study of the Status of Higher Education of Women.

Dec. 17 English Art, and some of England's Living Artists.

Dec. 24 Cipher Writing. Riddles.

Dec. 31 The Art of Conversation. Madame de Stael. Madame de Sevigne. Address Mr. E.M. Irish

Jan. 7 the English Drama of our Times. Contributions to Dramatic Literature. Modern Interpreters of the Drama.

Jan. 14 The Cost of Good Work.

Jan. 21 American Art. Revelations of the Spirit of the Age in the Art of the Present Time.

Jan. 28 Poets and Poetry of the West. Alice and Phoebe Cary.

Programmes/Yearbook 1889

"In addition to its function as a Library, lectures and other entertainments were given, and classes in French, Shakespeare, Art and History held, finally culminating in 1873 in a most valued branch of Association work, the Ladies Library Club" (3).

Meetings 2:30 - 4:30 every Monday Sept - June.

Jan. 7 Mrs. J.C. Tyler; Topic - George Eliot. The Spanish Gypsy. Talk on the early home of Marion Evans.

Jan. 14. Mrs. J.K. Wagner; Cost of Good Work

Jan. 21 Miss Alice Campbell; Spirit of Modern Art. Sketches of Several Prominent American Artists. American Etchers and Etching.

Jan. 28 Mrs. A.J. Mills; American Poets. Alice and Phoebe Carey.

Feb. 4 Mrs. C.H. Caryl; England in the Time of Macaulay. The Warren Hastings Case.



Feb. 11 Mrs. E.E. Pollard; Observation and Comparison
Crossing the Atlantic. Educational systems of Europe and
America.

Feb. 18 Mrs. J.E. Kellogg; Topic American Art, continued.
Early American Art. Student life in New York Art League

Feb. 25 Mrs. T.P. Sheldon; Ciphers and Cipher Writing
Concerning Riddles

March 4 Mrs. J.C. Tyler; Lecture upon Robert Browning by
Mrs. L.H. Stone

March 11 Mrs. A.M. Stearns; A Talk on the State Board of
Corrections and Charities by the Very Rev. Frank A. O'Brien.

March 18 Miss Alice Campbell; Descriptions of Tribune in
Uffizi Gallery. Music as an Art: A lecture

March 25 Mrs. A.J. Mills; Topic - Character. Character as
expressed by the Face. Character as expressed by the Hand
Aids to Moral Character

April 1 Mrs. C.H. Caryl; Girlhood of Portia. Portia, the
Woman.

April 8 Mrs. Irwin Simpson; Land of the Midnight Sun
Within the Arctic Circle. Glimpses of Peasant Life in Norway

April 15 Mrs. J.E. Kellogg; Wonders of Egypt. Talk upon the
Pictured Literature and Symbols of Egypt

April 22 Mrs. T.P. Sheldon; Topic Fire. Fire in Myth and
Poetry. Use of Fire in Religious Worship. Agency in Fire in
the formation of the earth and some of its present phenomena

April 29 Mrs. M.S. Turner; Heroes and Heroines. A Series of
Personations

May 6 Mrs. J.C. Tyler; Topic Alexander Pope. A Resume of
Pope's Life. "The Rape of the Lock." Criticism on "The Rape
of the Lock."

May 13 Mrs. E.E. Pollard; Topic Scientific Gleanings. The
Aluminum Age. Color Hearing. Phosphorescent Flowers

May 20 Miss Alice Campbell; The Salon Carre in the Louvre,
and Some of the Greatest Pictures. A Personation

May 27 Mrs. A.J. Mills; A Lecture on Mythology. A Tip to Malmaison

June 3 Mrs. C.H. Caryl; The Real and the Ideal in American Fiction.

June 10 Mrs. A. M. Stearns; Progressive Housekeeping Is Housekeeping a Failure? Mistress and Maid. Housekeeping Past and Present

Sept. 16 Mrs. J.E. Kellogg; Topic Egyptian Art, continued. Earliest Pictures in the World, - their motive

Sept. 23 Mrs. T.P. Sheldon; Topic - Equatorial Africa. The Plague Spot of Africa. Life of Henry M. Stanley. Emin Bey.

Sept. 30 President's Day Triumphs of Ingenuity.

Oct. 7 Mrs. J. C. Tyler; Necessity for Imperialism in Russia Tolstoi's Representative Novels.

Oct. 14 Mrs. Irwin Simpson; Topic land of the Midnight Sun, continued. Government and Royal Families. Notable Men and Women. Educational Institutions

Oct. 21 Miss Alice Campbell; Legends of the Madonna. The Immaculate Conception - History of the Dogma and Illustrations in Art.

Oct. 28 Mrs. A.J. Mills; The Age of Chivalry. A Description of a Tournament

Nov. 4 Mrs. C.H. Caryl; The Typical Nihilist. The Realistic School of Russian Literature

Nov. 11 Mrs. E.E. Pollard; Topic Language. Proper Use of the Dictionary. What we Owe our Mother Tongue.

Nov. 18 Mrs. J. E. Kellogg; Topic Legends of Madonna, continued. The Annunciation as Illustrated by Ancient and more Modern Artists. The Assumption - its Meaning and Art Illustrations

Nov. 25 Mrs. T.P. Sheldon; Topic Ireland. Early History Characteristics of its People. Its Superstitions and Folklore

Dec. 2 Mrs. J.C. Tyler; ANNUAL MEETING Election of Officers

Dec. 9 Mrs. A.M. Stearns; Topic Thomas Edison. The Man. The Inventor. In the Work Shop.

Dec. 16 Miss Alice Campbell; Some of the Greek Myths. Illustrations in Art; especially those of Athena and Demeter

Dec. 23 Mrs. A. J. Mills; Christmas Tide. Wise Men of the East. Reading from Ben Hur

Dec. 30 PRESIDENT'S DAY. Poets and Poetry of Scotland

APPENDIX B

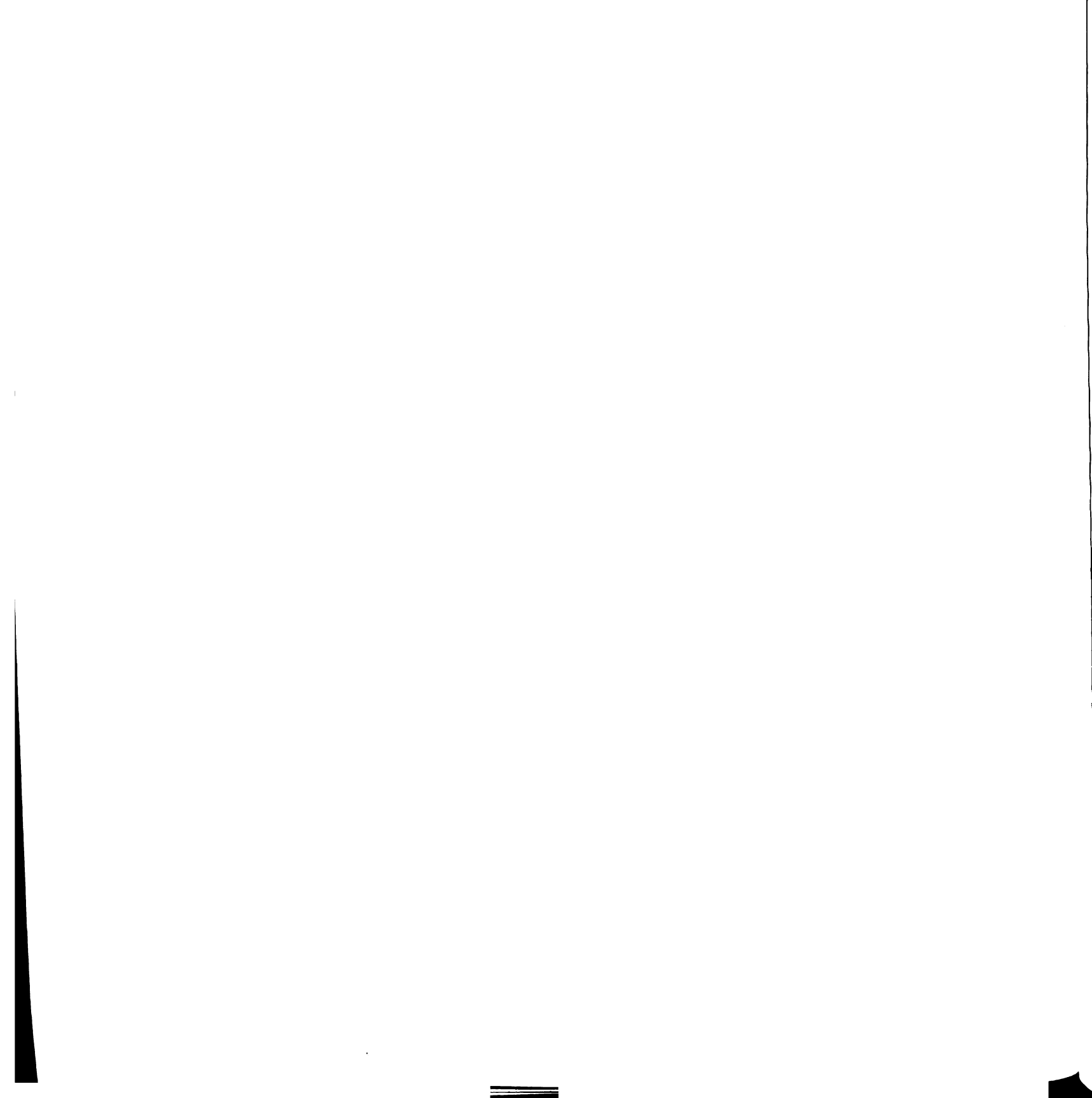
APPENDIX B

Elsie Dunning -
Reading List in alphabetical order

Achsah	Rev. Peter Pennot
Alice and Phoebe Cary	Mary Clemmer Ames
Aunt Jane's Hero	Mrs. Prentiss
The Barton Experiment	Habberton
Blush Roses	Mrs. Marsh
A Brave Lady	Miss Muloch
The Bravo	Cooper
By Still Waters	Garrett
Christian's Mistake	Miss Muloch
The Chronicles of the Schonburg Cotta Family	
Cousin William	
Danger; or, Wounded in the House of a Friend	T. B. Shay
David Crockett	J.S.C. Abbott
The Dodge Club	DeMile
Dora Deane	Mrs. Holmes
The Duchess of Rosemary Lane	Farjeon
Eugene Aram	Lord Lytton
Faith Gartney's Girlhood	Mrs. A.D.T. Whitney
First Learns from Western Woods	
The Hand but not the Heart	Arthur
Harper's Magazine	
Helen's Babies	John Habberton
Home Influence	Grace Aguilar
The House of Seven Gables	Hawthorne
Hugh Worthington	
Hume's History of England, v.1	
Innocent	Mrs. Oliphant
Jane Eyre	Charlotte Bronte
Japhet in Search of a Father	Marryat
The Jericho Road	Habberton
John, A Love Story	Mrs. Oliphant
John Halifax, Gentleman	Miss Muloch
Jottings on the South	A.D.P. Van Buren
Knight in the XIX Century	
The King's Own	Marryat

Kismet	No Name Series
Laneton Parsonage, v.1	Sewell
Last Days of Pompeii	Lord Lytton
Lessons in Life	
Life with Open Air	
Lillian	
Lives of Madison and Monroe	J.Q. Adams
Living and Loving	Virginia Townsend
Madcap Violet	Wm. Black
Madge	H.B. Goodwin
Marjorie Daw	T.B. Aldrich
Memoir of P.P. Bliss	Whittier
The Mercy Seat	
Midshipman Easy	Marryat
Miss Bremer's Works	
Miss Bremer's Works, The	Neighbor
Mother's Recompense	Grace Aguilar
The Mother's Trials	Marryat
Nicholas Minturn	Holland
Occupations of a Retired	
Life	Garrett
Off the Skelligs	Jean Ingelow
Old Curiosity Shop	Charles Dickens
The Old Helmet, v.1	Mrs. Wetherell
The Old Helmet, v.2	Mrs. Wetherell
The Old Man's Brides	Arthur
Old Middleton's Money	Mary Cecil Hay
Oldtown Folks	Mrs. Stowe
Orley Farm	Anthony Trollope
The Other Girls	Mrs. A.D.T. Whitney
Our lives of Msc. Women	
and Things	Mary Clemmer Ames
Our Mutual Friend	Charles Dickens
Percival Keene	Marryat
The Pickwick Papers	Charles Dickens
Priest and Nun	
Put Yourself in	
His Place	Reade
The Quiet Wife	
Rose Clark	Fanny Fern
Roxy	Eggleston
The Scripture Club	
The Shady Side	
Sidonie	
Stepping Heavenward	Mrs. Prentiss
The Sun Maid	
Sunnybank	Marion Harland
Tales of the Border	Wilson

Their Wedding Journey	Howells
Theo.	Burnett
Tract Illustrated	
Uncle Sam's Palace	Emma Willmont
Uncle Tom's Cabin, v.1	Mrs. Stowe
Uncle Tom's Cabin, v.2	Mrs. Stowe
The Vale of Cedars	Grace Aguilar
Valerie Aylmer	Christian Reid
Walter's World	James Payne
Wandering Heir	
Westward Ho!	Charles Kingsley
The Wide, Wide World	E. Wetherell
The Widow of Windsor	Annie Gaskell
The Woman in White	Wilkie Collins



APPENDIX C

APPENDIX C

Ella Proctor
Reading list in alphabetical order

[no title]	Mrs. Anderson
93	Victor Hugo
Achsah	Rev. Peter Pennot
Additional Memoirs of My Youth	
Alice and Phoebe Cary	Mary Clemmer Ames
At Home and Abroad	Margaret Fuller
The Barton Experiment	Habberton
Blush Roses	Mrs. Marsh
A Brave Lady	Miss Muloch
Bride of Lammermoor	Sir Walter Scott
Characteristics of Women	Mrs. Jameson
Chaucer	
Christian's Mistake	Miss Muloch
Chronicles of the Schonburg Cotta Family	
Cloister and the Hearth...	Reid
Daniel Deronda	George Eliot
The Days of Bruce, v.1	Grace Aguilar
The Dodge Club	DeMile
Don Quixote	
The English Governess	
Eugene Aram	Lord Lytton
Every Day Topics	J.G. Holland
Expedition to the River Jordan	
Faith Gartney's Girlhood	Mrs. A.D.T. Whitney
Fool's Errand	
Goldsmith's Works	
Heart of Midlothian	Sir Walter Scott
History of the Reformation, v.1	
History of the Reformation, v.2	
History of the Reformation, v.3	
History of the Reformation, v.4	
Home Influence	Grace Aguilar
The Hoosier Schoolmaster	Eggleston
Ivanhoe	Sir Walter Scott
John Halifax, Gentleman	Miss Muloch
Jottings on the South	A.D.P. Van Buren
Knight in the XIX Century	
Kingdom of Brass	
Kismet	No Name Series
Lady Judith	Justin McCarthy

Last Days of Pompeii	Lord Lytton
Legends of the Madonna	Mrs. Jameson
Les Miserables	Victor Hugo
Life in the Rocky Mountains	
Life of A. Judson	
Longfellow's Poems	
Memoirs of my Youth	Dr. Laurentine
Miles Standish	J.S.C. Abbott
Milton's Poetical Works	
Miss Bremer's Works	
Mother's Recompense	Grace Aguilar
The New Magdalen	Wilkie Collins
Oliver Goldsmith: A biography	
The Other Girls	Mrs. A.D.T. Whitney
Our lives of Msc. Women and Things	Mary Clemmer Ames
Our Mutual Friend	Charles Dickens
Philip's War of 1675 and 1676	
The Pickwick Papers	Charles Dickens
The Pirate	Sir Walter Scott
Plain Talks on Familiar Subjects	Holland
Pope's Homer's Iliad	
Pope's Poetical Works	
Raphael or Pages of a Book	
The Romance of the Heavens	
Rob Roy, Old Mortality	Sir Walter Scott
Sam Lawson's Fireside Stories	
The Scripture Club	
Shakespeare's Complete Works	
Tennyson's Poems	
That Lass O Lowries	Burnett
Their Wedding Journey	Howells
Theo.	Burnett
Tour Around the World	
Travel Explorations and Adventure	Bayard Taylor
The Two Paths	John Ruskin
Vicar of Wakefield	Goldsmith
Wandering Heir	
Whiston's Josephus	
The Wide, Wide World	E. Wetherell
The Woman in White	Wilkie Collins

APPENDIX D

APPENDIX D

Mrs. R. G. Smith
 Reading list in alphabetical order

[no title]	Mrs. Anderson
Achsah	Rev. Peter Pennot
Alice and Phoebe Cary	Mary Clemmer Ames
Among the Ides of Shoals	
Amy Herbert	
Aunt Jane's Hero	Mrs. Prentiss
Blush Roses	Mrs. Marsh
Bride of Lammermoor	Sir Walter Scott
California Life	
Christian's Mistake	Miss Muloch
Cloister and the Hearth	Reade
Cousin William	
The Days of Bruce, v.1	Grace Aguilar
Don Quixote	
Dora Deane	Mrs. Holmes
The Duchess of Rosemary Lane	Farjeon
The English Governess	
Eugene Aram	Lord Lytton
First Learns from Western Woods	
Fool's Errand	
From Jest to Earnest	E. P. Roe
Goldsmith's Works	
Heaven Opened	Alline
Helen's Babies	John Habberton
History of the Reformation, v.1	
The Hoosier Schoolmaster	Eggleston
The House of Seven Gables	Hawthorne
Hugh Worthington	
Innocent	Mrs. Oliphant
Japhet in Search of a Father	Marryat
The Jericho Road	Habberton
John, A love story	Mrs. Oliphant
John Andross	
John Halifax, Gentleman	Miss Muloch
Knight in the XIX Century	
Lady Judith	Justin McCarthy
Laneton Parsonage, v.1	Sewell
Laneton Parsonage, v.3	Sewell
Les Miserables	Victor Hugo
Lessons in Life	
Life in the Rocky Mountains	
Life with Open Air	
Living and Loving	Virginia Townsend

Madcap Violet	William Black
Marjorie Daw	T.B. Aldrich
Mary Lyon	
Memoir of P.P. Bliss	Whittier
Milman's Gibbon's Rome, v.1	
Miss Bremer's Works	
Miss Gilbert's Career	J.G. Holland
Mother's Recompense	Grace Aguilar
The New Magdalen	Wilkie Collins
Nicholas Minturn	Holland
Not Wisely by too Well	
Off the Skelligs	Jean Ingelow
Old Curiosity Shop	Charles Dickens
The Old Helmet, v.1	Mrs. Wetherell
The Old Helmet, v.2	Mrs. Wetherell
Old Middleton's Money	Mary Cecil Hay
The Other Girls	Mrs. A.D.T. Whitney
Patience Strang's Outings	Mrs. A.D.T. Whitney
Priest and Nun	
Put yourself in his place	Reade
The Quiet Wife	
Raphael or Pages in the Book of Life	
Rattlin the Reefer	Marryat
Rose Mather	Mrs. Holmes
Rob Roy, Old Mortality	Sir Walter Scott
Sam Lawson's Fireside Stories	
Scarlet Letter	Hawthorne
The Scripture Club	
The Shady Side	
The Small House	Allington
Stepping Heavenward	Mrs. Prentiss
Summer Rest	Gail Hamilton
Sunnybank	Marion Harland
That Lass O Lowries	Burnett
Their Wedding Journey	Howells
Tom Brown at Oxford	
Tom Brown's School Days	
Uncle Sam's Palace	Emma Willmont
Uncle Tom's Cabin, v.1	Mrs. Stowe
Uncle Toms' Cabin, v.2	Mrs. Stowe
The Vale of Cedars	Grace Aguilar
Valerie Aylmer	Christian Reid
Walter's Word	James Payne
Westward Ho!	Charles Kingsley
Whiston's Josephus	
The Wide, Wide World	E. Wetherell
The Woman in White	Wilkie Collins
Yesterdays with the Author	Field



APPENDIX E

APPENDIX E

Mr. R. G. Smith
Reading list in alphabetical order

A Brave Lady	Miss Muloch
By Still Waters	Garrett
Chronicles of the Schonburg Cotta Family	
David Crockett	J.S.C. Abbott
The Days of Bruce, v.2	Grace Aguilar
English Traits	Emerson
Faith Gartney's Girlhood	Mrs. A.D.T. Whitney
Harper's Magazine	
Helen's Babies	John Habberton
Home Influence	Grace Aguilar
The Jericho Road	Habberton
Laneton Parsonage, v.2	Sewell
Madge	H. B. Goodwin
Marie Antoinette	
Memoirs of Mrs. Shuck	
Miss Bremer's Works, The Neighbors	
Occupations of a Retired Life	Garrett
The Old Helmet, v.2	Mrs. Wetherell
Sidonie	
Travel Exploration and Adventure	Bayard Taylor
The Vicar's Daughter	George MacDonald
The Way We Live Now	Anthony Trollope
The Widow of Windsor	Annie Gaskell
Wonderful Adventures	

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$$\text{Yield} = 0.002 \text{ Fertilizer} + 0.0001 \text{ Irrigation} + 0.000001 \text{ Fertilizer} \times \text{Irrigation} + 1.5$$

The regression coefficients are:

- Fertilizer: 0.002
- Irrigation: 0.0001
- Interaction term: 0.000001

The R-squared value is 0.85, indicating that 85% of the variation in Yield is explained by the model.

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